Dear Parents and Friends:

Early morning walk up Horn Canyon, deeply shaded on one side, sun creeping slowly down opposite slope. Much to note: at dry stream crossings, what was powder two weeks ago is now paste, intervening rains having at least moistened the dust. At other parts of the trail, larger rocks bear the white nicks and scrapes of generations of horse hooves heading to The Pines or beyond. Up the steep side of the hill, where the 1999 Ranch Fire blazed through, black skeletons of bushes and trees stand exposed and starkly beautiful, spindly testament to elemental force. Time’s up, though, and I turn around, hiking back to campus on a path cut into the hill, high up from the canyon’s bottom. Something’s moving down there on the still-shadowed trail, going in the opposite direction from me: I squint to see a string of horses, the mantees tied over the pack saddles almost glowing. It’s a horse trip – Chuck Warren and his freshman boy advisees -- going not where no man has gone before (recall those generations), but rather replicating a time-honored Thacher event. I holler for them to have a great trip, a safe trip. What comes back across the canyon is, I’ll admit, something of a surprise, but music to my ears nonetheless, more moving than even the sights and smells of these outdoors: “Ms. Mully!” yells Chris Willoughby. “I’ve got my Odyssey with me!”
Fred Kim, Yui Scribner and Carlos Soriano; and, from the senior class, Chris Bonewitz, Kevin Cahill, Logan Clark, Caitlin Mulholland, Kevin Schmidt, Anthea Tjuanakis and Simon Xi. Scholar with Distinction honors (granted to students who receive an average grade of at least 3.5 on all exams and grades of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams in full-year courses) went to last year’s graduates Kevin Schmidt, Evy Disner, Ellie Fletcher, Felicity Howe, Annie Nyborg, Richie Parks, Carissa Ridgeway, Celeste Thomas, Andrew Warren, Anwar White and Marisposa Widdoes—all of the Class of 2000—and current seniors David Babbott, Mary Ann Bronson, Jennifer Bowie, Chris Brown, Blake Caldwell, Canyon Cody, Matt Cohen, Bo Eison, Max Greene, Addie Hearst, Brian Kelly and Smitha Reddy. With an average grade of 3.25 on all exams taken and grades of 3 or higher on four or more of these in full-year courses, students named as Scholar with Honor were graduates Wallis Adams, Erin Blankenship, Amissa Bongo, Brendan Fitzgerald, Suriya Jayanti, Matt Schuman, Mia Silverman, Sara Thacher, Allegra Towns and Juliette White, and Lee Wittlinger, Emmett Hopkins and Meredith Flannery, of this year’s senior class.

Last spring’s Advanced Placement tests yielded some impressive results among those Thacher students sitting for the exams in eighteen subjects. Named by The College Board as Scholar by earning an average grade of 3 or higher (out of a possible 5) on three or more exams for full-year courses were Bennett Barbakow, Darren Bechtel, Evy Disner, Ellie Fletcher, Felicity Howe, Annie Nyborg, Richie Parks, Carissa Ridgeway, Celeste Thomas, Andrew Warren, Anwar White and Marisposa Widdoes—all of the Class of 2000—and current seniors David Babbott, Mary Ann Bronson, Jennifer Bowie, Chris Brown, Blake Caldwell, Canyon Cody, Matt Cohen, Bo Eison, Max Greene, Addie Hearst, Brian Kelly and Smitha Reddy. With an average grade of 3.25 on all exams taken and grades of 3 or higher on four or more of these in full-year courses, students named as Scholar with Honor were graduates Wallis Adams, Erin Blankenship, Amissa Bongo, Brendan Fitzgerald, Suriya Jayanti, Matt Schuman, Mia Silverman, Sara Thacher, Allegra Towns and Juliette White, and Lee Wittlinger, Emmett Hopkins and Meredith Flannery, of this year’s senior class.

VARSITY GIRLS’ TENNIS
Coach: Rae Ann Sines
Captain: Elizabeth Sanseau
In addition to Cap’n Sanseau (1st in singles play), seniors Caitlin Mulholland (2nd in doubles), Emily Dachs (1st in doubles), Andrea Black and Meredith Flannery (the latter two both third in doubles and recipients of Most Improved Player honors) gave critical support to the younger racqueteers on this spirited squad. Among those, Evan Dawson, a new junior, proved a valuable addition to the #1 doubles team, as well as in the #2 singles spot: she wound up a mere two points away from sweeping all three singles opponents at Cate on their Parents’ Weekend. When the last ball rolled to the corner of the court, the team had racked up a 3-2 Condor League record and a season record of 9-5.

JV GIRLS’ TENNIS
Coach: David Johnston
Captains: Smitha Reddy, Emma White
Abundant joie de vivre matched joie de tennis in this crew, who wound up with a season record of 3-4 in the League. Joining Smitha and Emma as senior leaders were Grace Logsdon and Nikki Silverman, and rounding out the ranks were seasoned juniors Claire Faggioli, Jane Kwett, Laurel Peterson, Tamima Al-Awar, Iyana Reid and a slew of promising sophomores: Sarah Tapscott, Lizzy Brewer, Carrie Blayney, Vivian Wu, Charmiane Lieu, Cameron Ridgeway, Mary White and Hana Chang. When forced to the net to name Most Valuable and Most Improved Player, Coach Dr. J submits: “The whole team!”

GIRLS’ CROSS COUNTRY
Coach: Pierre Yoo
Captain: Deloria Many Grey Horses Lane
With the loss of five of the top seven runners of last year’s squad, the 2000 runners turned a page to write a new chapter. Captain Deloria and her fellow classmates Mary Ann Bronson, Lily Mitchem, Erica Reynolds, Clarissa Caldwell, and Carina Fisher led a pack of hoofers new to the sport, introducing them to the joys of running.
The National Merit Scholarship Corporation sent news that was announced at Assembly in late September: Part of the fewer than one percent of the nation’s high school seniors designated as Semi-finalists who entered the Year 2000 Merit Program by taking the 1998 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test were Clay Pell, Juliette White, Lucinda Brown, Fritz Rice and Brooke Halsey. These students must now complete certain requirements to advance to Finalist standing. Placing among the top five percent of the more than 1.2 million students entered — and therefore named as Commended Scholars — were Wallis Adams, Kristin Berona, Marisa Binder, Paul Bonewitz, Wayne Chang, Lucy Milligan, Carlos Soriano, Sara Thacher and Allegra Towns. As the press release said, “The young men and women named Commended Students have demonstrated outstanding academic potential by their high performance in the extremely competitive National Merit Program. These scholastically talented youth represent a valuable resource to our nation.”

“Stay as long as you can, and keep your horse all five years.”
Skip Porter, CdeP ’62, giving extemporaneous advice at Assembly

Though Cultural Weekend sits, tantalizingly, on the horizon, there’s been no shortage of interim trips “abroad” initiated by both faculty and students. Gallia Vickery (Mathematics, Dance) organized about fifty students and a handful of faculty for a jaunt down to Santa Monica to take in the dazzling spectacle of Cirque du Soleil, an eye- and ear-popping blend of dance, gymnastics, original live music, on stage and a hundred feet above it. Junior Alden Blair arranged for two dozen Thacher folks to hear the Dalai Lama speak in Los Angeles, a talk preceded by a performance by the Crenshaw High School Gospel Choir, a Native American dance company and an instrumental group called Buddha’s Light Youth Orchestra. The ubiquitous Jake Jacobsen (English, Drama) took a group of students to the Getty on one weekend, and on another, a cadre to see the documentary Soldiers of Peace, a film on the efforts of several young people from Colombia to make a dent in the drug business of their country. The “soldiers,” who’ve been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, were present at the screening. AJ Goldman (Mathematics) loaded up a van with kids to head to Santa Barbara to hear Thacher dad (of Richard) and musician Van Dyke Parks play blue grass and jazz piano in a trio headlining at the Lobero Theatre. Head of the Spanish Club, Clay Pell organized a trip to the Bilingual Foundation for the Arts in Los Angeles to see Garcia Lorca’s Blood Wedding. Greg Haggard (Music, Arts Chair) rounded up some appreciative students to see performance artist Lori Anderson at UCLA one Friday night. “It was like nothing I’ve ever seen,” declared Grace Logsdon. The House of Blues — for gospel singing and brunch — was the destination of the recently formed Arts Appreciation Club, headed by Mariposa Widdoes and Nicole Haggard.

Balmy nights and increasingly cool days have made for just-right outdoor weekend activities, beyond the “usual” riding, camping trips, sports, pick-up soccer and lacrosse. In fact, the Indoor Committee, headed by seniors Nicole Haggard, Anwar White (pictured here setting up for an event with classmate and willing hand Marley Orr) and Sam Grumman, and fueled by the energy and inventiveness of Pierre Yoo (Chemistry, Mathematics), has packed every weekend with loads of entertainment options for students: all-School Capture the Flag, pool parties, “drive-in” movies on the Upper School lawn (a distinctly Thacher experience, especially if the sprinklers go on), a dodgeball dance (don’t ask), class and all-school barbecues, Casino Night, a black light dance under the stars, “Back to Your Childhood” games on the lawn. And that’s only on-campus. The IC has also sponsored buses to Ventura and Santa Barbara for beach trips and strolls along State Street for movies and food.

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WORTHY ADDITIONS
To the faculty and staff include John “Jack” Crawford (B.A. Johns Hopkins, M.A. Georgetown), who joins the History Department after having taught World History, Humanities, World Geography and Cultures at Landon School in Bethesda, Maryland. He’s also coached that school’s nationally ranked boys’ lacrosse team. Here, in addition to his

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“There’s something about the outside of a horse. ...”

Some of the gifts of learning and progress are discovered through the never-ending process of practice that each and every ride represents: Out on location when the sun would be coming up, I used to practice to see how steady I could make my head go, by watching my shadow, recalls Roy Rogers. You get the rhythm of the gait between your ankles, your knees and your hips. Good riding is all a matter of practice. Even the King of the Cowboys was constantly working to improve.

I asked a wonderful old horse trainer in the Dakotas if he had a secret to his great success, says Jack Huyler. He said, “Yeah. Wet blankets. Lots of wet saddle blankets.” – in other words, lots of riding. So the secret to horsemanship is no secret—it’s simply doing it, learning it, living it, one little gift at a time.

From Rebekah Ferran Witter’s Living with Horse Power
ADVANCED PLACEMENT AWARDS

This just in from The College Board, which oversees the Advanced Placement exams: Thacher students named as Scholar with Distinction (granted to students who receive an average grade of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken and grades of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams on full-year courses or the equivalent) from the Class of 1999 were Michaela Andrews, Brendan Bechtel, Kim Cahill, Eliza Gregory, Alex Lee, Tim Liu and Sarah Sawyer; from the Class of ’00 earning AP scores at this level were Clay Pell, Sara Thacher and Lucy Milligan. Earning Scholar with Honor (students who’ve received an average grade of at least 3.23 on all AP Exams taken and grades of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams on full-year courses) were Jonathan Berman, Sarah Bruss, Hugh Foster, Emily Logsdon, Shay Mamo and Benjamin Wallace, all of the Class of 1999; current senior Lucinda Brown also won this award. Designated as AP Scholars (students receiving grades of 3 or higher on three or more AP Exams on full-year courses or the equivalent) were the following members of the Class of 1999: Thomas Beatty, Mary Craver, Robert Grether, Catherine Jessop, Evan Kanaly, Claire Kendrick, Alex Kitnick, Melanie Larkins, Brooke Macdonald, Laura McCarty, James Schroeder and Walter Woodhead, as well as this year’s seniors Marisa Binder, Paul Bonewitz, Wayne Chang, Sam Grumman, Fred Kim, Matt Schuman, Yui Scribner, Allegra Towns and Juliette White. Bravo, brava!

HIGH JUMP

Members of Thacher’s newly formed Equestrian Team have been rising in the wee weekend morning hours for long hauls to hunter & jumper competitions all over the Southland. Kristin Berona, Lucinda Brown, Wallis Adams, Amanda Grumman, Libby Rauner, Alex Herbert, Phoebe Barkan, Ronald Wu, Erik Fiske and Eita Hatayama, are coached by Elizabeth Reynolds Mahoney; (providing elbow grease is Caitlin Mulholland, who has no time to compete but who helps muck stalls and otherwise provide boon support to her friends). All work after hours to include this special activity in their lives. As testimony to their hard work – and their horses’ – they’ve brought home to Thacher many a fluttering ribbon this fall.

OFF THE DEEP END

The pool’s had more than just a face-lift – though that’s certainly part of the effect, the sparkle of which many of you will have seen in person by the time you receive this epistle. In fact, the pool has been taken down to its bare bones, scraped and buffed and shined and retiled around the inside edges. The pool deck has also been totally resurfaced. Looks great. Feels better! Just ask Hugh Gordon, making a splash as classmate Will Johnson looks on.

SPECIAL DELIVERY

Interested in what Library Director Elizabeth Bowman’s buying for the Library? Go to www.thacher.org/library and select “Recent Acquisitions.” Or when you’re next on campus, visit the continuous display in the reading room. Or write to me for a copy in print!
Three packed days of tantalizing food, knock-your-socks-off art, music and dance, stimulating classes and conversations, spirited competitions and speeches – and a demonstration of what near-miracles can happen when kids and horses mix.

“Students learn best when they are known and held accountable for who they are. They learn not by candy-colored computers or even shiny labs, at least not primarily. They learn through connections with caring adults, through relationship with those along with they parents who can help mentor them to adulthood. . . . I hope that during the Family Weekend, you will bear witness to this among your children and our faculty. It is, in fact, a relational alchemy that makes Thacher far more than a school fortuitously located in the far east end of a magical valley.”

Michael K. Mulligan, Head of School, Family Weekend remarks
GOT MILK?
Actually, we’ve got the milk. What we’d like to go with it are your kids’ favorite cookies. Send me your recipe, at the School’s address, and I’ll quadruple it for an Open House surprise. (We’ll see how many kids, in their vacuuming up what comes hot out of the oven, notice that they’re eating something mysteriously familiar!)

from page 9

Jesus Carbajal (Maintenance), wife Letecia and sons Beto and Luis were finally relieved of craning their necks skyward when, on September 15, the stork delivered Vanessa — all 8 lbs., 12 oz. and 20 inches of her — to their home near the Upper School.

DEEP IMPACT
Several evenings of a film about foreign correspondents in danger zones around the world — called Dying to Tell the Story — preceded the arrival on campus of Kathy and Amy Eldon, whose son and brother Dan, a 23-year-old photojournalist for the news agency Reuters, was killed in 1993 when a mob of angry Somalians — people Dan had actually befriended in his time in Mogadishu — turned on him and two others. The Eldons, who spoke with students and faculty both formally and informally about the photojournalist’s recurrent need to balance the importance of a story with the risk involved in telling it, brought with them gifts of two of their recent works — Soul Catcher and angel catcher, both guided journals built on the connection between loss and remembrance. When you’re next in our library, look for these, as well as for The Journey is the Destination: The Journals of Dan Eldon and Images of Conflict: The Photographs of Hansi Krauss, Hos Maina and Dan Eldon.

SHORT TAKES
Senior Class President Annie Nyborg galvanized students and faculty to pitch in their spare change for a Thai working elephant that had lost its leg. Believe it or not, once news of Motala’s faulty fibula hit, donations from around the world (including Thacher’s $263.44) found their way, via the Friends of the Asian Elephant Foundation, to his village in southeast Asia and helped buy him a prosthetic leg. (Read more about it in the 11/8/99 issue of — you guessed it — People Magazine.) Mid-September, Spanish Club seniors Anwar White, Annie Nyborg, Clay Pell and Besse Gardner spoke at Assembly about Mexican Independence Day, following which Evy Disner, accompanied by Greg Haggard on the guitar, sang “Cielito Lindo” a traditional Mexican song. One of the best aspects of formal dinner is the opportunity weekly for what are known as Language Tables — where conversation swirls around in Spanish or French. Recently launched was the Chinese Table, where students try out the language and savor a Chinese dish, concocted by