

PROJECT UPDATE



VOLUME 33 MARCH, 2000

Okay, Now It's *Our* Move



HEIDI JAMES

Well, it's March, which means that it's time for our annual blockbuster issue of Project Update: six giant pages, but still not quite enough to distill the events that have transpired since our last ish in November. It hasn't been that long, but we've done a lot of stuff, beginning with *It's Your Move: The Strategic Plays*, the 1999 edition of our Playback program.

Playback is probably the most complicated of all our programs, but here's the basic structure: 1. Seven kids go out to **Wareham, Massachusetts** over Columbus Day weekend to write plays for themselves and their adult partners to appear in. 2. A week later, the adult partners turn in "answer plays" that usually employ the same settings and characters the kids used. 3. The kids and adults rehearse their shows and then present the pairs of plays onstage back to back. Get it? Great! Here's what happened this time.

Candy Godoy opened the show with *The Pigeon Decision*, an in-depth examination of the little-known society that inhabits the ledges and window sills of our city. Candy and **Jose Soto** played two pigeons that clash and are later baked alive in a pie in **Jackie Reingold's** sequel, *Coo-Dependency*. In his action-packed adventure, *A Day In The Life of An Agent*, **Hakim Latimore** took on a French master villain (**George Babiak**) who happened to be an enormous wedge of cheese. Cheeseman got creamed in **Suzen Murakoshi's** *Afraid 2...*

Tanika Parson and **Tanya Gingerich** explored the ugly side of sibling rivalry in Tanika's play *Stepsisters* while **Jonathan Bernstein's** *Maria, Susan, and Jessica Say Grace* brought peace to the household and broke new ground by avoiding dialogue entirely. A Project play in dance! The ever-graceful **Denise Burse** played the Mom in both plays. We returned to more traditional material with *Wacky Burger*, in which **Marci Mysak** created for herself the part of a wise-cracking white mouse who gnaws at the self-esteem of counterman **Robert Sean Leonard**. Bob followed up by writing himself a breathtaking dual role as the burger vendor AND his dad in *Wacky Burger II*.

Act II began with **Noel Polanco's** *The Most Interesting Day*, in which he played a doctor whose sole dream is to be the "best singer in the biz." Exactly which biz is never stated, but **Gus Rogerson's** *Surgeons* answered many other questions and supplied us with the best show-within-a-show ever seen on a Project stage. Up next was **Osage Lewis-Ashley's**

erie Masters and its equally un-earthly second installment: **Keith Reddin's** *Masters II: The Revenge of the Begonians*. **Osage** and **Danyon Davis** played two young kung fu masters in the year 3000 who battle an entire alien race ruled by the one with the biggest head (Keith Reddin, whose head isn't really that big).

The evening ended on a serious note with *Sisters Make a Move* by **Jaya Rosado** and **Adriana Trigiani's** response *Sisters Tell the Truth*. **Jaya** and **Jeanne Simpson** played two sisters who are forced to deal with an abusive father (**Michael Bernard**).

On hand for small but impressive roles in the shows were our versatile intern **Ariel Aver**, the remarkable **Jonathan Goldblatt**, the mysterious **Zsuzsa Mysak**, and the mercurial **John Sheehy**. A strategically placed "thank you" goes to **Rusty Magee** for the music, to the **Randolph** family for putting us up, and to **Christopher** for cooking. GB

I'LL HAVE A SLICE OF THAT

Gus Rogerson, our illustrious Artistic Director, was convinced that our December round of Playmaking plays should somehow celebrate the hopeful dawn of a new century without actually mentioning the words "millennium," "Y2K" or "apocalypse." Banned, too, were "Happy," "New," and "Year." Faced with this quandary, Gus slowly consumed a large portion of peach cobbler and stared into the heavens for some time. It wasn't long before he conceived the theme *Pie In The Sky: The Possibility Plays*. Honestly, we don't know how he does it.



Opening the evening of kid-written/adult-acted plays at the Ensemble Studio Theatre was **Ivana Lugo's** *Bully*, which had nothing to do with Teddy Roosevelt but told the story of a schoolyard oppressor (**L. Trey Wilson**) who gets his come-uppance from a spunky classmate (**Nedra Gallegos**) and her foul-tempered dog (**Jonathan Goldblatt**). *Bad Good Luck Coins* by **Giovanna Mendez** featured an ill-starred young girl (**Liliana Amador**) whose blind friend (**Paul Butler**) guides her to better fortunes. In **Jonathan Hagemeyer's** *Bob, The Hero of the Day*, a landlubbing fish

Inside:

Big Fat Lie
contest winners



A Visit to London



Snowboarding Report



On The Town



and more!



WAING

Kathy (Catherine Mueller) smacks down Underwearman (Angel David).

(**Buzz Bovshow**) conquers his overpowering b.o. and befriends the town bully (**Jack Gwaltney**) of Tyler Hill where, coincidentally, all the plays were written.

Adalberto Rodriguez wrote of a man named Cowboy Dog (**Ray Anthony Thomas**) who gets some valuable tips on real estate from a friendly fruit salesman (**Tom Carrozza**) in *The One Who Slept In The Doghouse*.

Act I ended with the epic of the evening: **Frankie Ventura's Underwearman and**

Kathy Get Married and Underwearman Wins. The play centered around a champion wrestler (**Angel David**) who defeats one opponent after another by using a deadly wedgie maneuver. He is undone by a winsome, but vengeful lady wrestler (**Catherine Mueller**) who thoroughly trounces both U-Man and his mom (**Anne Torsiglieri**).

Act II brought us *Alice and Ida*, by **Amelia Whitney**, which told the tale of a simple country girl (**Angelina Phillips**), her urbane mom (**Messeret Stroman**) and their conflict over where to live. In what is becoming an honored tradition, **George Babiak** became the most recent in a long line of male actors to don the Project cow suit. **Marilyn Sanchez's Change of Life** brought us a French girl (**Angelina Fiordellisi**) and a Jamaican young woman (**Myra Lucretia Taylor**) who discover that visiting one another in person is not quite as simple as entering an on-line chatroom.

Gus Rogerson had every kid in the house trembling with his portrayal of "the meanest principal in town" in **Jason Bula's** dark character study *Dealing With The Principal*. **Alex Draper** and **Anna Li** played two students who exact a brutal revenge on the hapless educator. **Johnathan Ladines' The Weird Battle between Space Weirdo and Mr. Hunter** may be a long title, but it saves us column space by being a synopsis as well. **Jenny Pollack**, in a role she shared with an enormous fake beard, was the eponymous Mr. Hunter while **Yul Vasquez** was Space Weirdo, a name that needs no explanation.

Bringing a recurring theme of the evening to a close, *Nerds Strike Back*, by **Oscar Padilla**, featured another revenge against a bully, but this time with magic. **Billy Crudup** got even with **Florencia Lozano** through the use of a spell that turned her into first a rock, then a chocolate nut brownie, and finally and fittingly, a bespectacled nerd.

Pie In The Sky could not have been baked to a crispy



WAING

Billy Crudup researches vengeance.

golden-brown yumminess without the help of our tireless director/dramaturgs **Susan L. Vitucci, Cecilia Arana, Greg Allen, Jyllian Gunther, Michael Bernard, Kate Ryan, Melissa Murray, Josh Lewis, David Schwab, and Tom Schall**. These hardy souls traveled with us to our kid-writer's retreat in Pennsylvania at the beautiful home of our generous friends **Mike Sell** and **Eric Karpeles**. We're also grateful to **Rusty Magee** for supplying some wonderful music to go with our kids' lyrics.

Tom Schall? Well, he gets his name mentioned a second time in this piece simply because he always shows up for load-in and light hang.

Miffed because you missed this great show? Fear not! The next Playmaking show is taking place this very month! I'm referring, of course, to *Follow Your Nose: Plays of Instinct*, which will take place on March 24-26 at the sumptuous **Peter Norton Space** (a.k.a. **The Signature Theater Company**). See the flyer enclosed in this issue for further details. *GB*

SUPER BOWL? WHAT SUPER BOWL?

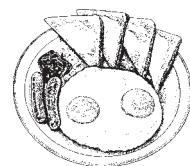
Forget that Kurt Warner guy. The real show on Sunday January 30th was at the Women's Interart Theatre, just across the hall from the Clubhouse, where the 2000 2 on 2's, *Through Thick and Thin: The Reliable Plays*, heralded the new millennium way better than any goal line stand or cold bucket of Gatorade dumped over your head.

The long journey from Thick to Thin began with **Tim Blake Nelson's** epic ode to, well, bums: *The Northern Line*. The bums were wonderfully played by **Isaac Trujillo** and **Aisha Jabour**, while **Noel Polanco** scared us silly with his vicious rendering of a psychopathic yard bull. Director **Eris Migliorini** heaped on lots of great schtick. Next up was *The Mirror*, by **Tim** and **Michelle Meadows** (the Project's own **Stiller and Meara**, except they have the same last name), with **Jonathan Villanueva** and **Alejandra Rodriguez** getting lots of laughs as the most clueless dad ever and his very tolerant daughter. The Mirror Dancers were led by **Jumpin' Jed Clarke**, among others. **Liz Tuccillo** was the brilliant and faithful helmswoman. The first act curtain call came down on **Regina Porter's Speak Up**, written for **Vionel Ortiz** and **Mayleen Cancel** and directed splendidly by **Anne Torsiglieri**. Both girls shone in a dream play set in a psychic South Pole. As always, **Carol Ochs** was the voice of Truth.

The happy patrons floated back in from intermission sated with floats provided by **Mary Moore** and **D'Agostino Supermarkets** (vanilla ice cream) and **Ron Fiorina** and **Boylan's Soda** (root beer!). Wrist action came from a bunch of fine guest scoopers, led by the proprietor of Ray's Root Beer Oasis, the Project's own **Ray Ocasio**.

CAN YOU DRAW THIS BREAKFAST SPECIAL?

Or just color it? Of course you can! So why not join us for our next Prop Party on Saturday, March 18? Call George for details at 333-5252.



First off in the second act was **Susan Kim's** *She's Da Bomb*. **Zabryna Guevara's** in-spy-ring guidance of **Zaida Natera** and **Yazzy Troche** as two sleuths in a spy ring (yeah, baby!) was a delight to behold, as was **Johnathan Roldan's** scene-stealing turn as the infamous **Molasses Pirelli**. They were followed by **Jayme Rosado** as a rodent with a wooden stick, or a "rat with a bat" and **Christina Ramirez** as a human with no talent, or "author Judy Hack," in **Mo Rocca's** *Unexpected Tail*. They were guided to glory by funnyman **Adam Felber**. The closer was a **Willie Reale** special, *The Blue Carlotta*. Matthew Jellison and Joel Lind brought down the house as two dashing chaps named Quimby and Rumbleton who do battle with an unseen enemy on a giant existential game board. I can't remember who directed that one.

Patrick Barnes tickled the ivories and wrote some amazing music. Shouts of thanks to our weekend hosts **Maria Tucci**, **Wendy Ettinger**, **Derek McLane**, **Fran McDormand** and **Joel Coen**. **Daniel Swee** made all the meals; if the show hadn't been so damn good, we'd all still be talking about nothing but the four different types of mouth-watering meatloaf (sorry, Willie) on Saturday night or the pear and apple tarts...which left us more thick than thin. *GR*

Project Invades U.K.

Kate Coleman, the artistic director of the Project replication in London, England, was in town recently and stopped by the clubhouse to chat about how things have been going across the pond.

The fledgling company called **Scene and Heard** serves a low-income area known as Somerstown. "It started out as an Irish neighborhood at the turn of the century," Kate says, "and now we have Bangladeshi, Somalians, Kosovans, Turkish, and a lot of Afro-English, too. It's very multi-ethnic. One of the schools we work with has 30 languages spoken in it."



Kate Coleman with Tommy Doolan, her first playmaking partner.

Scene and Heard was founded in January, 1999 by Kate and her friend, **Sophie Boyack**. Though the pair work part-time and have only one year under their belts, they've racked up three Playmaking shows (the first one was themed *In At The Deep End*) and are working on their first Replay class, which will mark their first show in a real theater (their performances thus far have all been in community halls). They are planning to have their first One-on-One in the summer of 2001.

Just as in New York, the work of Scene and Heard would be impossible without the support of local institutions and the help of London's artistic community. Office space is donated by St. Mary's, a local church, and time and talent are provided by a host of actors and directors. "We started with

a bunch of friends, then moved on to friends of friends. Our last show was the first one in which we worked with people we didn't know earlier." Scene and Heard is making friends in high places as well. **Emily Watson**, now visible in U.S. theaters as **Frank McCourt's** mom in *Angela's Ashes*, has become a patron and is spreading the word about the company whenever she gets the ear of the press.

Kate and Sophie are adept fund-raisers. "We started off by literally writing a letter to every single person we knew and inviting them to be 'Eyes and Ears.' They wrote checks and the first term was entirely funded by that money. Since then we've gotten money from government and from trusts." The annual budget is currently about £25,000.

Kate is not exactly a newcomer to her work. Most of her professional life has been in directing and theater-in-education ("I worked briefly as an actor before I realized that wasn't my forte."). She knows our city well, having spent two years here teaching Shakespeare in public high schools with the Lark Theater Company. Her art college background has also made Kate Scene and Heard's chief foam-core prop maker.

We marveled at how boldly Scene and Heard has plunged into its work in the past year. Kate had a quick answer: "Well, one of the nice things is that we knew the formula worked. We trusted the formula, and as long as we trusted it, we knew something was going to come out at the end. Thank goodness you guys did the work for us before we started!"

Well, all we can say to that is thank goodness the children of London have a Kate Coleman! *GB*

Project Newbies Carve and Shred The Corduroy

Yep, snowboarding has a lingo all its own, but thanks to **Burton Snowboards** and a unique program they founded called **Chill**, five Project kids and a couple of their grizzled elders have been learning that arcane argot. Every Monday afternoon, **Justin Aponte**, **Michael Feliciano**, **Jaysunn** and **Jaymaree Rosado**, **Peter Ventura** and their adult chaperones **Cecilia Arana**, **George Babiak**, and **Suzen Murakoshi** have been boarding a VCR-equipped bus crammed with kids from other city agencies and journeying to the slopes of the Sterling Forest Ski Area. After outfitting ourselves with boots, boards, and warm clothing (Chill does it all!) the kids get to spend two hours riding up the lifts and careening down the trails. Kids and adults agree that it is "mad fun" and beats sitting at home watching *Pokémon* re-runs. Well, the adults agree on that, anyway.

Chill, which is now based in four cities (New York, Burlington, VT., Boston, and Seattle) has been teaching kids to snowboard since 1995.

We'd all like to learn the "Rodeo Flip," the "Inverted 720," and "the Stale Egg," but the maneuvers at which we all definitely excel are "bailing" and "butt planting." We'd be even better at those if it weren't for Chris Potter and his excellent team of instructors. Thanks also go to Jenn Davis, Chill's director, who paid us a visit last year and decided we might be a good match for her well-run organization. *GB*

DINNER, THEATER

If the Project's new Teen Ensemble doesn't sport opera glasses or autograph books, it's not because they haven't been seen at practically every show in town. Since they came together in October for two years of acting study, they've been making regular outings to the thea-tuh.

Barry Edelstein and **Beth Emelson** of **Classic Stage Company** treated them to a full helping of venom at *Look Back in Anger*, which featured another brilliant turn by long-time Project vol **Angelina Phillips**. Then the Project's First Gentleman **Bruce McVittie** gave us the V.I.P. treatment by getting us into the invited dress rehearsal of the outstanding new play *In the Blood* at the Public. Bruce played a character named Trouble, so of course he was perfect. Last month we all got our hair curled at the wonderfully raunchy Roundabout production of *Cabaret*, courtesy of **Todd Haimes**. And just last week, we had our house rocked at *Bomb-itty of Errors*. Our gracious hosts **Daryl Roth** and director **Andy Goldberg** even got us a post-show audience with the cute young all-male cast. The girls were beside themselves. The boys seemed less transported.

All this cultural edification has been matched by a steady diet of appetite gratification; once a month we also break bread together. The "bread" has been lovingly prepared on three different occasions by, respectively, **Wendy vanden Heuvel** (juicy chicken), **Willie Reale** (mouth-watering meatloaf), and **Fran McDormand** (particularly good pasta.) Thanks to them and to all our good friends. *GR*

HIGH ROLLERS ON THE HIGH SEAS

Avast, ye seafarers! 'Tis time again to set sail for the Puck Building for The 52nd Street Project's annual benefit. But beware! Ye will be sailing some dangerous waters this year at **AAARGH! The Piratical Benefit** on Monday, May 8, 2000.

Since the laughs just never stopped at last year's *Everyone's A Comedian Benefit*, we will be rolling in the aisles once again at the Puck Building. Or perhaps, more appropriately, rowing in the aisles, as we take to the high seas for danger, romance, and some good old-fashioned plundering.

The voyage begins with cocktails and dinner, and leads us into the uncharted comic waters of an original show written especially for the occasion by **Willie Reale** and **Lewis Black**, directed by **Mark-Linn Baker** and assisted by the scruffy Project Staff. They promise that sides will be split "one way or t'other!" The honorary co-chairs of the evening are **Kevin Kline** (who once did *The Pirates of Penzance*) and **Edie Falco** of *The Sopranos* (who better to host an evening of comic singing, gun-toting intimidation and illegal traffick-ing?) An invitation will be sailing your way in April. For more information call **Captain Long John Sheehy** at the Project, (212) 333-5252. *JS*



SMART PARTICLES

The "Smart Partner" Report
Brought to you by Boylan's beverages

They took our breath away as dancing cowboys in *The Brothers Mendoza* back in the August One-on-Ones, but did you know these two have been Smart Partners for nearly two years? Smart Kid **Justin James Aponte** and adult **Ed Vassallo** are a match made in heaven. With dazzling energy, they dance, read, write raps, do multiplication, and even perform card tricks! In addition, Justin checks in almost every day at the Project for socializing, homework help and a little more socializing.

Together Ed and Justin have been to the Cloisters, gone on endless auditions for Broadway's *The Lion King* (Justin was called back 5 times for Simba!), played some serious basketball and read anything Ed could convince Justin to read. As SP, Ed's job is to help Justin channel his incredible energy for entertaining into school tasks. He finds the challenge pretty familiar, since he was a lot like Justin as a kid.



Justin and Ed as brothers

Justin about Ed: "I think I would have been friends with him (then) because we would both be in trouble together. He learned his lesson about how to be a man, to be serious about life and a disciplined human being. I'm on my way, too." And the work is paying off: since last year, Ed beamingly reports, Justin has advanced at least 3 levels in reading -- exceeding their Smart Partner goal. Ed's not surprised. This talented kid is good at everything he focuses on. Everyone at the Project is impressed with Justin's amazing progress in his new Catholic school and awed by the powerful friendship these guys have developed. For "they are the Brothers Mendoza, they are strong, they are proud, and when they walk, they hold their heads up high!"

☆☆☆☆☆

Smart Partners welcomes our newest 9th grade pairs: returning kid **Mayleen Cancel**, teamed up with **Carol Ochs** (you'd think she had enough to do) and smart kid **Marcus Mysak** with adult **Valerie Walsh**.

Smart Partners partied it up at the mid-year bowling bash at Leisure Time Lanes on February 10th. On the whole, grade point averages were higher than the bowling scores. *JF*



The following foundations, corporations, and government agencies recently made generous grants to the Project. We are grateful to them for their support as well as to the many individuals who help sustain the Project's programs year-round.

Blythmour Corporation	\$1,000
Educational Foundation of America	\$17,000
Department of Cultural Affairs	\$6,000
Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation	\$5,000
Holland Lodge Foundation	\$2,000
JKW Foundation	\$25,000
Rita J. and Stanley H. Kaplan Foundation	\$5,000
James A. Macdonald Foundation	\$800
Newman's Own	\$5,000
The O'Grady Family Foundation	\$6,250
Wiener Family Foundation	\$15,000

TRUTH UNDER ATTACK AS PROJECT RAISES CASH

What a bunch of LIARS! Of course, that was the general idea of The 52nd Street Project's *Say Anything* contest which challenged entrants to tell the biggest, fattest lie they could think of. This provided quite an insight into the minds of some of our Project supporters, none of whom should be trusted any further than they can be thrown.

We enlisted the help of a celebrity panel of judges who really knew what they were talking about including **Phineas T. Barnum, Benedict Arnold, Ivan Boesky, Princess Anastasia** and **Mata Hari**. (We give no credence to the rumors that the actual judging was carried out by the Project staff. That would be unethical.) It was a spirited debate, but their verdicts on the biggest and fattest liars follows.

Truth to tell, it was our most successful fundraiser to date. Many thanks to all who participated and to our wonderful sponsors, John A. Vassilaros & Sons Inc., Gap Inc., Steve Scher and Calle Ocho, and Paris Chocolates.



The \$25 Java Jive

Prize: A one-month supply of coffee.

Lead-In: "I need that coffee more than anyone else because..."

WINNER:

"...the octuplets are teething."

- Karen Trott and Peter Herdrich

RUNNERS-UP:

"...my/our son won't come to visit because he doesn't like my coffee."

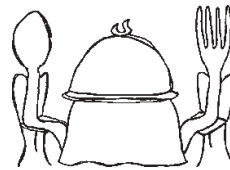
- Myrna & Barry Bernard

"...the Vassilaros-intravenous-drip (VID) is no longer covered under my health insurance."

- Cecilia Arana-Grant

"...I'm Linda Tripp and I spilled the beans."

- Annette Insdorf



The \$100 Supper Whopper

Prize: Dinner for two at Calle Ocho

Lead-In: "I need that dinner more than anyone else because..."

WINNER:

"...I have a date with John Rocker who LOVES nuevo latino food! Whenever he comes to New York, we love to take the subway to different neighborhoods in order to experience a variety of ethnic cuisines."

- Karin and Thom Schall

RUNNERS-UP:

"...I have never been out to dinner."

- Ruth Cohen

"...I was kidnapped by a vegan-cult & for 17 days was held in a lettuce bin & am down to 80 lbs."

- Sloane Shelton

"...I told my husband that my Latino parents opened this great restaurant and he's wondering why they haven't invited him to dine. Help me."

- Becky Browder



The \$50 Pantalone Baloney

Prize: A pair of pants from the Gap

Lead-In: "I need those pants more than anyone else because..."

WINNER:

"...I am nothing without drawers."

- Mr. & Mrs. H. Gerald Bissinger, II

RUNNERS-UP:

"...I really don't need pants but I don't drink coffee, I try not to eat chocolate, and in order to have dinner at Calle Ocho I'd have to come to NYC. To do that I would need pants. We who live in Vermont don't need pants."

- David S. Rogerson

"...I'm too sexy for my current pants, too sexy for my shirt, I'm too sexy."

- Andy Taylor

"...I'm returning to my home in a parallel universe where pants are used as floatation devices for three-toed narcoleptic midjet sailors."

- Michael Potts



The Any Amount Chocolate Fudge

Prize: A selection of Flyer bars

Lead-In: "I need that chocolate more than anyone else because..."

WINNER:

"...if I don't win, I'll cleave the natural world in two and pour out my vengeance upon all flesh and your little dog too!"

- Michael Potts

RUNNERS-UP:

"...if my son doesn't get 12 lbs. of chocolate a day he turns into Don King."

- Julie Ridge

"...we need to strap these flyer bars to our arms to fly to the chocolate forest."

- Jane Musky & Tony Goldwyn

And finally, a special mention for **Willie Reale** and **Jenny Gersten** for their very generous gift and totally unmentionable submission.

JS



PROJECT **P.U.** UPDATE

Editor-In-Chief:
George R. Babiak

Ray Anthony Thomas as
Cowboy Dog in "Pie In The Sky."



Ron Fiorina

Occupation: President/CEO, Boylan Bottling Company." (Boylan's provides our Smart Partners program with beverages to have at every S.P. meeting.)

Why do you do what you do: "Halfway through my senior year of high school, my Grandfather became ill. My family asked me to make a decision between college or taking over the small family-business. I took the job (It came with an Alfa Romeo)."

Hobbies: "Snowboarding, mountain biking, city folk music and Starbucking — that's drinking coffee and reading your favorite newspaper at your favorite cafe (not necessarily Starbuck's)."

Last book read: *Patton on Leadership, Strategic Lessons for Corporate Warfare* by Alan Axelrod.

Most Recent Accomplishment: "Three consecutive dates with the same girl."

Credo: "Don't stress, it's only life after all."

Advice to the Kids: "Your friends will have a big influence on your life. Choose them wisely."

Place of birth: "Paterson, New Jersey — home of the Great Falls."

On Flyer Bars: "We keep a bountiful supply at work for our secretaries. This way they'll always be certain to get the messages straight."



Don't wait for a Project show to get a Flyer Bar! We always run out, anyway. Call 1-800-CANDYBAR.

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Megabits sends a warm welcome to our newest Project Board member **Jenny Wiener**, a past Smart Partner and a general smarty-pants. We send a fond farewell to **Elizabeth Williams** who is leaving the Board to spend more time working for **The Passin Waxman Center**, a home for severely disadvantaged and orphaned Russian children.

Also on the big news front, Megabits has just learned that long time Project pal **Neil Mazzella** is now the proud papa of **Sophia Anne**, born on Christmas Day. The Project baby clan is eagerly awaiting the day when they can ask Sophia Anne for a ride on her first Harley.

Smart Partner extraordinaire **Beth Janson** was proposed to by **Bill Ohlson** while on safari in South Africa. Only thing was, he had to pop the question indoors because it was too dangerous to walk on the grounds after dark. It seems the Africans have had a lot of problems with people leaping out of the bush and proposing.

On the wedding bliss line, **Hannah Finn**, smart partner consultant, was married on November 6th to **John Wiltshire** at the Players Club in front of 135 people. (Hm. Players...players. There's just got to be something funny in that...)

The Project is proud to announce that after 19 years of driving kids out of town, we've taken a huge leap forward into the 21st century by investing in our own jumper cables. We've named them **Jumpy** and **Cabley**. So long AAA!

Joe Dimaggio is gone, so the nation might think about turning its lonely eyes to the Project's own **Matthew Gonzalez**, who closed out the last millennium by saving a lunchmate from his last meal. When the apple pie went down the wrong way, Matthew was right there with the Heimlich maneuver for his fellow seventh grader at P.S. 111. Matthew had this to say about his timely rescue: "It was nothin'."