

Back-to-School Night = Video Release Night at Cragmont Elementary

Elementary schoolchildren throughout the Berkeley Unified School District were excited last Thursday, May 24 for Back-to-School Night, when family members were especially welcomed for a “look-see” into District classrooms. But perhaps, there was no class of students more excited than the 2nd graders of Carlos Cruciani (Cal, '97, '98) at Cragmont Elementary. That's because Back-to-School Night coincided with the release of 17 individual videos that each student had produced after a two-month long creative process carefully guided by Cruciani.

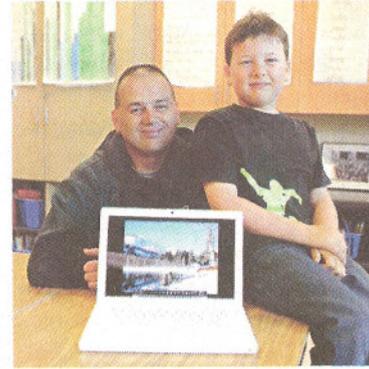
Each of the videos was available for viewing at Back-to-School night, and all were fabu-

lous. Just consider some of their titles: *Pokemon* by Hwapyeong Yoo, *Aardvarks* by Ed Agnew, *Human Body* by Aminata Valery, and *San Jose Sharks* by Rachel Kopelman.

“When it rains or snows, you need to dry your dog with a towel,” stated a voice over in the video by Cragmont second grader Czar Fleischman. Her video was a survey of dog-care tips that Fleischman had gleaned from the Internet combined with those she learned while caring for her own dog, an energetic Rhodesian Ridgeback-Labrador mix. Perhaps that's what inspired her to conclude her video with the rowdy anthem, *Who Let the Dogs Out?*



With her family at Back-to-School Night, Czar Fleischman presents her video, *Dogs*.



Cooper Richmond with his dad, Lauren Richmond (BHS, '81) who also attended Cragmont Elementary back in the day.



With his family, budding videographer Jayshan Parameswaran (yellow shirt) celebrated the release of his production titled *Hyenans*.

Talking about his video, Cooper Richmond said that Wikipedia was not very useful as he developed the script for his video, *Tahoe*, which was all about his experience of Lake Tahoe during the wintertime. Richmond's video memorialized his favorite runs at the Northstar Ski Resort (Sidewinder, The Stack), making snowballs before a snow fight, and his favorite meal: his dad's (almost famous) chicken pesto pasta. And when asked about the assignment, Cooper described it as being fun.

“Rather than writing,” Cooper said about the work effort, “We were actually making something.”

For videographer Liam Mattingly-App, the project was an opportunity to share about one of his favorite topics: *Wolverines*. Combining facts that he learned through research with his knowledge of these elusive beasts, Mattingly-App said that his effort was motivated by the fact that he knew that others would be regard-

ing his work. For that reason, he was careful when selecting the tune for his video, *Smells Like Teen Spirit* by Nirvana.

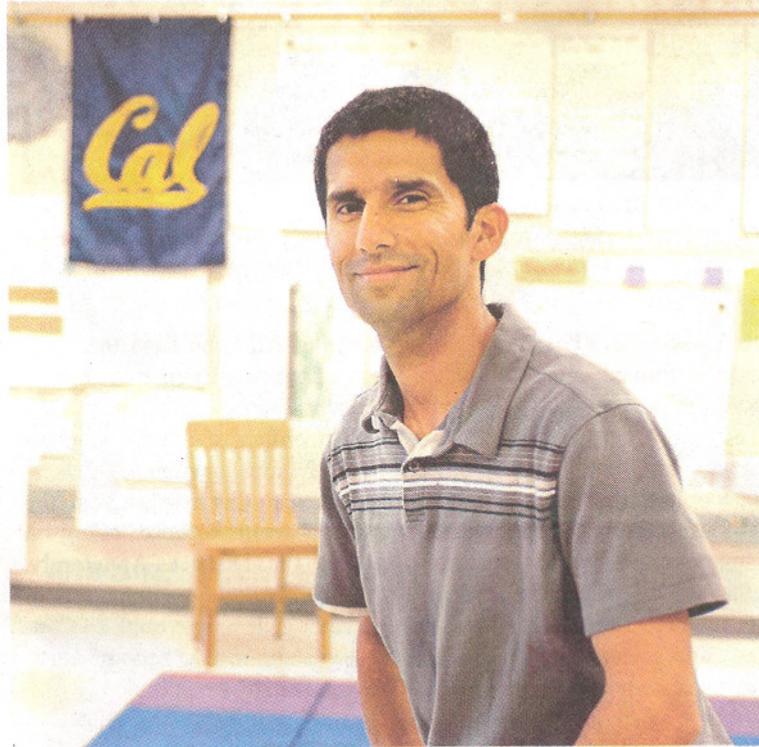
One of the longest (2:57) and most elaborate of the videos was *Argentina* by Daniel Dugatkin, a tour de force, which described in great detail the homeland of his parents, its culture, and its people. Nothing about Argentina was left out. In his video, Dugatkin depicted famous soccer professionals, tango dancers, its tallest mountain (Aconcagua), delicious foods empanadas and alfajor (for dessert), NBA star Manu Manu Ginóbili, and even a voice over by his uncle Fabio Friedlaender (from Argentina) who had visited Cruciani's classroom for that very purpose.

After all of the students had departed from last Thursday's Back-to-School Night, Cruciani said that he was proud of his students – and glad for the grant and special training he received to make this especially long project a reality for each of his second

graders.

Cruciani described how the task had challenged students in different ways, offering learning at different levels. Some students learned the importance of organizing information and editing; while others learned (during the recording of their voice-overs) the purpose of punctuation. Others benefited simply by the motivational aspects of creating something uniquely their own.

Cruciani said that he uses video production whenever possible in the classroom, and that parents seem to appreciate it. Earlier this year, in preparation for the first Back-to-School Night, Cruciani's second graders collaborated on a video that documented the rituals of their day. The video was such a hit with the parents, that he received many requests for it. In fact, that video was included on the DVD collection that each family took home with them last Thursday night.



Cragmont second grade teacher Carlos Cruciani (Cal, '97, '98).