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## Watering Gardens

Welcome to the Sport of Motherhood. Do April showers bring May flowers? Just like in nature, we need to water our own family gardens. Sport of Motherhood's recent two TV Shows involve a look at family dynamics as well as kid development.

[The Sport of Motherhood: Training Tips for a Full and Balanced Life](#) is out and hitting the bookstores. You can order it on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), or ask for it at your local bookstore and they can get it for you. The book is now a part of Stanford's Health and Wellness Library.

Our TV Show times are as follows: Tuesdays at 4:00 pm, Channel 15 in Mountain View, Los Altos, Sunnyvale and Cupertino, and Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday on Channel 30 in Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Atherton, Woodside and Stanford. There are occasional small changes in the programming times, so please check with the web sites. Click [here](#) for the complete schedule.

We are proud to announce that we have partnered with [Classy Mommy](#), [AllergyKids](#), [siliconmom.com](#), [Mothers Click](#), [Sitter City](#), and [Runners High](#) to bring you a wealth of new services.

### **Book Signings (Kids welcome!):**

April 10, 7:30 pm, Books, Inc. 301 Castro St., Mountain View, CA 94041

May 16, 7:00 pm, Books Inc, 3515 California St, San Francisco, CA 94118

June 6, 7:30 pm, Books Inc, 1344 Park St., Alameda, CA 94501

### **Bootcamps:**

Summer Kick-off Topic: "Super Mom Does Not Live Here: Streamline Your Week and Boost Your Energy"

May 7, 10-11 am @Twisters Gym, 2639 Terminal Blvd. Mountain View, CA 94043

May 8, 10-11am @ Overtime Fitness, 1625 Shoreline Blvd. Mountain View, CA 94043

May 15, 1-2 pm @ Curves, 4117 El Camino Real, Palo Alto, CA 94306

Cost: \$10 per person

### **TV Show Tapings and Topics:**

April 23 – Surviving Cancer and Thriving: Georgi and the Rough Week

May 28 – Empowering Teens: Media Awareness and Personal Roadmaps

June date TBD – Pets and Kids: Tricks and Treats

### **In This Issue:**

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### *Using Our Senses To Journal*



by Lucy Rector Filppu

The Sport of Motherhood Newsletter

April/May 2007

## *Kids Build Character: 5th Grade Boat Trip*



How do kids build character? Often it is by putting them in a situation that is outside of their comfort zone. Sport of Motherhood's April TV show features a 5th grade overnight historic simulation on a fully rigged ship. There are many wonderful maritime programs around the country that feature different programs such as a Moby-Dick whaling ship simulation. This show focuses on San Francisco's Age of Sail program. Students are prepared in school to learn about turn-of-the-century history and about rigging and running a ship. The Setting: 1906 San Francisco after a big earthquake. The challenge: each student-led crew has tasks to complete so the ship can set sail for Oregon to get lumber.

Students are in charge of the ship for almost 24 hours – with adult supervision of course. Here's the catch, the parents are only supposed to intervene for safety issues. They are not allowed to help the kids. The kids are part of a real crew, albeit green hands, who must work together and listen to the 4 educators/actors on board: the Captain, First Mate, Second Mate, and Cook/Doctor.

Students are divided in to 4 crews: Rigger, Longboat, Galley and Deckhand. Each crew is has specific tasks to complete such as: rigging and operating a Bosun's Chair which enables a sailor to be lifted up into the sails, raising and lowering a dory, preparing and cooking meals for the ship, and swabbing the decks.

Students learn safety rules as soon as they get onboard. "No hands in pockets" because on a ship at sea, you could fall overboard if the ship lurched. "No stepping in the coils" so that you are not pulled overboard by getting your foot caught in the ropes if the sails are suddenly let out.

In our crazy harried lives as mothers, the idea of sitting down to write in long hand, let alone to sit down at all, seems absolutely decadent. But getting in touch with ourselves, through writing in our journals, is exactly what most of us need most. Natalie Goldberg, author of *Writing Down to the Bones*, encourages us to keep it simple and just keep our hand moving across the page. I tell my workshop participants the same thing...your journal is not a college term paper.

If you're having trouble getting started, close your eyes and remember the kitchen in your childhood home. How did it look, smell, feel, taste? Where did you like to sit? Who is in that kitchen with you? What does their voice sound like? When we use our senses to tap into our earliest childhood memories, our writing will often lead us back to current day dreams, fears and frustrations. So start with a childhood memory and dig deep. Close your eyes and focus on your senses; you'll be amazed how easily your writing will flow.

For more information on Lucy's upcoming journaling workshops for parents, click [here](#). *Lucy Rector Filppu brings journaling practices and creative writing exercises to parents, teens and others. A graduate from New York University's creative writing program, she has been published in the Education.com, Palo Alto Weekly, New York Times, Time Magazine, Time for Kids magazine, Stanford Magazine, among other publications. Her next journaling workshop will be at Parent's Place May 30th and June 6th.*

## Stop The Clock

by Tom Anderson, aka ClutterBoy

Every time I turn on the TV, it seems there's another show about organizing, clutter, hoarding, and the viselike grip our stuff has on our lives.

But now, you can do the work yourself, or at least put a huge dent into it. So you know the old rule regarding the paper on your desk: Touch it Once. That's the prime directive in de-cluttering, as well.



Let's take your garage (or your neighbor's if you don't want to admit that yours is less than perfect). The first thing you do is open the garage door, and floored by the overwhelming and daunting task, you do what I call the "the two hand head-hold."

Then, having taken a few deep cleansing breaths, you think: "Where do I start?" The trick is -- start anywhere. As my mama used to say, "A job begun is a job half done." But wherever you start, whatever it is, touch it once. That pile of empty cardboard boxes -- gone. (I bet I say three times a week: "Do you like your computer? Is it more than a year old? It's worth zero. You don't need the computer boxes; you're never going to ship the thing back.") So flatten the boxes and tie them up with some good twine (left /right AND up/down, so you're not wrestling with them any more). Get them to the curb on recycling night. This week.

Speaking of computers: the monitor, the CPU's, printers, keyboards, can all go. For example, if you live in Silicon Valley, take computer items to Green Citizen in Los Altos or the Computer Recycling Center in Sunnyvale. That mountain of Styrofoam you've been meaning to recycle, it all can go (both the big stuff and the packing peanuts) to the Recycling Center at the end of Embarcadero. This center also can take that pile of magazines you may or may not get around to reading, several different kinds of glass, all sizes of fluorescent bulbs, all kinds of batteries, motor oil, cooking oil, phone books and more. It's really all amazingly simple. Clothes and Household items can go to the Shelter Network in Menlo Park, Ecumenical Hunger Program in East Palo Alto, and on and on.

Happy De-Cluttering!

*Tom Anderson a.k.a. Clutterboy makes headaches and "houseaches" go away! He is also a very hands-on Papa of a pair of five-year old twins (boy and a girl!) he and his wife adopted from Siberia. He has a passion for his job and for Clutter, including his own. He always says, "I understand what you're going through. My garage is worse than yours!"*

*Tom is insured and bonded, a member of the National Association of Professional Organizers and of the Los Altos Chamber of Commerce and the Silicon Valley Association of Realtors. He was also a Boy Scout and an Altar Boy.*

## Harriet Tubman



Each crew is "disciplined" if one person breaks a rule. Disciplining involves coiling lines or collecting firewood -- all of which is necessary to run the ship. Why discipline all? According to Captain Greson, the crew is responsible for the welfare and safety of each member. This teaches them to look out for each other. "Tall Sailors," or the silent parent safety officers, are occasionally disciplined for talking to the student crews. Why? Because the students need to buy into the idea that this is their ship and that they are truly in charge to get the most out of the program.

Humor plays an important role on the ship as well. The Second Mate and the Cook concoct stories about mermaids and pirates to keep the kids laughing and their spirits up. T. Keen Butcher, a Rigger Mate on the show, brought up a funny story that the Cook told them. During Dogwatch, just before Night watch, the Cook was convinced that some of the student crew had provoked the mermaids. For some reason, the mermaids, who were usually the Cook's friends, tossed a heavy canvas bag at her and told her she smelled! Turns out, the bag said "US MAIL" and was full of letters from parents! The kids thought "this was hilarious" and then settled in to read letters from home that were written as if the families lived in 1906 just after the quake.

What did the student-led crews do if they ran into a problem or did not understand the logistics of a task? As MJ Harris, Director of the Age of Sail Program, points out, "By not having the adults in charge, students had to learn to look to each other and to turn inwards to problem-solve." They were learning what they were capable of figuring out.

Sometimes we have to let our kids get uncomfortable so that they can learn what they are made of, when to gather more information, and how to ask for help. These are important life skills that come from experience -- not by being hand-delivered by a well-meaning parent. Programs like Age of Sail not only enable students to learn about themselves and each other, but also bring history to life.

*For more information on Age of Sail or other maritime programs go to [www.maritime.org](http://www.maritime.org)*

Do you have a story or a personal experience that you'd like to share? Write to me at [gen@sportofmotherhood.com](mailto:gen@sportofmotherhood.com).

by **Joanie King,**  
**Editor,**  
[www.rhymingtributes.com](http://www.rhymingtributes.com)

Born Araminta Ross in Dorchester County, Maryland,  
 She was the fifth child out of a total of eleven  
 Her owners were Edward and Eliza Brodess  
 She was their slave, in case you hadn't guessed.  
 From age six she was hired out to other masters,  
 Endured countless beatings among other disasters  
 Like when a weight was thrown and clipped her in the head  
 Poor Araminta Ross should have wound up dead  
 She watched three sisters sold; Linah, Soph and Ritty  
 Taken from their loved ones, sent to some far-off city  
 A young adult, she took the name of her beloved mam  
 And later wed John Tubman, a fine, free, black man.  
 Edward Brodess died in 1849,  
 And left his wife and eight children behind  
 Harriet feared being sold further down South  
 To help offset the debts her master left his spouse  
 She ran away instead, though John refused to join her  
 But she would simply not have another man own her.  
 She was helped to freedom by the Underground  
 Once safely relocated, she turned right around  
 And helped 100 slaves or so sneak off, out of bondage  
 Never captured once, her bravery astonished.  
 She worked as a spy during the American Civil War  
 A raid she planned in '63 freed 700 slaves or more.  
 A lumberjack, laundress, cook and nurse,  
 Abolitionist, activist, she helped fill the purse  
 Of a movement that would set her people free  
 "Moses of Her People" would go down in history  
 Harriet Tubman had no children of her own,  
 But through courageous acts, she brought so many home.

### Crying Fowl

by **Shana McLean Moore**

I walked past the meat counter at the grocery store this afternoon and couldn't help but bristle at the sight of the chicken skin. In my younger years, I would've been more disturbed by the bulging-eyed fish or the hanging sides of beef that looked like supper for the carnivore exhibit at the zoo. But it seems as though my relationship with the chickens just got personal. Because when I saw their skin today, in all of its pasty, dimpled and gelatinous glory, my only thoughts were, there but for the grace of long pants go I.



Winter can do that to a girl. Under the protective custody of corduroy, denim and wool gabardine, our gams haven't been on display for discerning meat shoppers, or anyone else, for a whole season. This is not a bad thing. In fact, for those of us women of the proverbial "certain age," the need for full-body coverage is reason enough to toast the winter solstice. With Dom Perignon and party hats.

But now that spring has just officially sprung, it is simply too hot to encase our tender meat in the clothing equivalent of breasting. So we default to the only option we have left and become honorary Italians in our Capri pants—an invention so ingenious that I celebrate it like I do the aspirin that cures my migraine headaches, the barista who makes my lattes, and the teachers who make sure my daughters are separated for six hours each weekday.

*Shana McLean Moore is the author of Caffeinated Ponderings on Life, Laughter & Lattes and the co-author of Femail: A Comic Collision in Cyberspace. Sign-up for her free newsletter by visiting [www.caffeinatedponderings.com](http://www.caffeinatedponderings.com).*

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