

CONSERVATORY NOTES

Holiday Craze in the Arts

By Carol Forbes Scheig

The holiday season can put a glow upon one's face and strike terror in the hearts of others. Having been a preschool teacher and director at South Shore Conservatory for many years (more than I wish to count), I have been privileged to witness not only the splendid joy but the hectic, frazzled, and conflicted emotions that spell h-o-l-i-d-a-y.

I often tell parents not to worry about decorating their back deck, which nobody sees anyway, and focus on the special magical moments which the holidays afford our families to share with each other. Many parents over the years have tried to be kind to me when they utter the words, "Are you kidding me? Miss Carol, it is all I can do to get to Christmas in the Square... the rest is up to Santa's magic!" So much for holiday wisdom.

I am chagrined to say I have been party to the silly notion that preschool conferences should happen around the holidays. Really? What poor parent wants to add another hectic meeting upon their already burdened schedule? A few years back when I had this silly policy in place, I scheduled a conference call with a mother who had four boys under the age of six. Was I really thinking I would have an intelligent conversation with this stressed mom? She cordially accepted my call, only

to stop me in mid sentence. "Excuse me, Carol," she said. "I am hearing something going on upstairs that I am afraid needs my attention." And off she went.

I politely waited for her return only to be amazed and giggly at the reason for the quick departure. "Carol," she said, "The kids are sending Harold our Jack Russell terrier down the laundry chute, and although he seems happy going for another run, I should really see if he is OK!" I could not have loved that mom more at that moment for disclosing what should have been a private moment but, due to the circumstances, became embarrassingly public. We still laugh over that story.

During the holiday season we sometime expect our young treasures to perform, so that we adults can be overjoyed by our children's accomplishments. As a community school for the arts, we try not to fall prey to the "perfect" preschool performance myth. Here it's more "go with the flow." My favorite story comes from the voice of a tiny three-year-old who announced during holiday "sharing time" that she absolutely hated singing in a circle. "And besides, my mom put me in a dress that's gross!" she announced to all. Moments like these carry me forward on the humor train called early childhood education.



SSC strives to make the hectic holiday time less stressful by giving children an outlet, such as music, for self expression and for time to "play" with their friends.

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Take time to listen to and enjoy the magic of this season with your children. It will leave you giggling, and may even transport you back to your own treasured holiday memories.

"Miss Carol" can be found most days in the lobby at SSC, gathering more loves, laughs and stories!