

Spotted Salamander

BIG NIGHT IN NELSON

Every spring, as the melting snow and warmer weather slowly draws us out of our winter hibernation, an army of amphibians wait for their 'Big Night'. From marshes, wetlands, roadside ditches and vernal pools everywhere, a mighty chorus begins to rise. The high-pitched peeps of the aptly named spring peepers counterbalance the clackity quacking of wood frogs while the American toad trills melodiously above the fray.

They are just a few of the many amphibians patiently waiting for the first rainy night when the temperature gets above 40 degrees. Once that evening arrives it is officially time to mingle and the amphibians begin to move. Big Night, as the fans of amphibians call it, has finally arrived. While Big Night is essential to the survival of their species, it is also a time of great peril. Countless

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DREAMS COME TRUE

By Joy Birdsey

This school year, the Nelson PTO's goal has been to strengthen community relationships and fundraise in a different way. We asked Sheila Vara, principal, what the students and staff would like if they could have anything in the world. Without hesitation, she exclaimed, "A New Slide"!

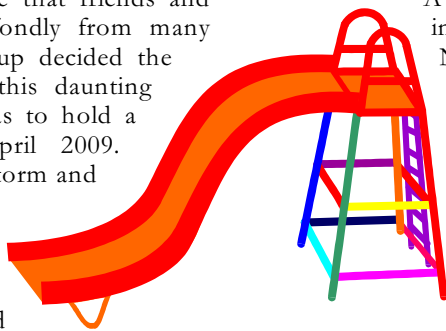
The children have been missing the wonderful metal slide that friends and families remember fondly from many years ago. The group decided the best way to tackle this daunting fundraising effort was to hold a live Auction in April 2009. Shortly after the ice storm and winter holidays preparations began on the Auction to be held Saturday, April 4th. Word spread

quickly throughout the community and the children and staff at the Nelson School began making items, posting services, and soliciting family, friends and businesses for donations. Chris Wallenstein, auctioneer, volunteered his time for the event. The school children worked on their projects in school, as well as making the auction paddles, an all school quilt with the school's animal theme, and pictures of

themselves on a new slide!

Talented Nelson folk gladly donated services, works of art, time, and desserts for this exciting event.

The day of the auction many folks dropped by the town hall to view the displays, sign up for next year's auction, (Yes there will be one in April 2010!) and post silent bids, hoping to win. That night the town hall was packed. A group of children participating in the afternoon Hip Hop Class entertained the crowd with dance routines they had learned. And the desserts poured in.....



A movie night was held in the Melvin Hall, Nelson Congregational Church, for children of all ages with Nelson School Alums supervising them. Other children "worked" the auction as runners, paddle distributors, and greeters. Everyone

mingled over the delicious goodies!

7:00 pm - auction time... Over 150 items to sell, "How much do you think we will raise?" the children kept whispering. As the bidding started, our auctioneer, Chris, gleefully prodded the bidders to get the best possible prices on all items. The amount rose higher and higher and the children became more

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The brigade watches for salamanders during the rainy Big Night.