

Playgroup Programme Newsletter

www.playgroupprogramme.org

Number 5 : May/June 2008

Registration! Registration! Registration!

It is time to re enrol for 2008/2009 academic year. The 2007-08 Registration will take much the same format as previous years.

Enrolment process will be as follows:

1. 7th May Enrolment Forms available to fill on-line at www.playgroupprogramme.org or from the small toy room at Crossroads Church
2. Forms should be printed/completed and sent to me at my home address which is listed on the form.
3. Insurance documents must accompany the forms otherwise it will be returned. Examples of what we need are on the notice board outside the small toy room.
4. 31 May - Deadline for forms to be returned (after this enrolment will be opened to new members and therefore cannot guarantee existing members places)
5. Mid-June- Places will be allocated
6. End June- Beg July. Confirmation/invoice letters will be sent to all successful applicants. You will be contact personally if we are unable to find a place for your child.
7. 31 August - Deadline for fees to be paid to keep your child's place at Playgroup
8. Any applications received after the 31 May 2008 deadline will be dealt with when possible.

The proposed schedule for 2008-09 is shown on the Enrolment Form and also on the Bulletin Board.

I would like to remind members that for your child to be eligible for the literacy programme, he or she must be fluent in English, and you, as parents, must be able to help with the English homework.

The criteria for entry is clearly stated on the registration form. It also depends on which class they will attend in September 2008 in their regular

French or Swiss school. For more clarification on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

To run our playgroup and literacy classes we rely completely on volunteers. We already have many past volunteers continuing into next year and a number of new volunteers, but there are some positions still to be filled. Please check on the notice board for these openings. Or contact either myself, (pgp-registrar@hotmail.com) Colette Foort, Playgroup Director (pgp-director@hotmail.com), Jane Kwiatkowska Del Pozo, our Literacy Coordinator (kwiatkowska@libertysurf.fr), or Trish Clements our Leader Trainer and Board Representative, (trish_clements@yahoo.com).

Don't forget that as a volunteer you will have priority when places are allocated, free places for one, two or all your children (depending on the role), an invitation to our Volunteers Appreciation Dinner, and the chance to make new friends and feel involved with this great organisation!

Please direct all enquiries regarding registration to me. Thank you.

Deborah Luisier pgp-registrar@hotmail.com or
call 00 41 (0)22 747 1901



UPCOMING PGP EVENTS

- **1 June**—Literacy Show @ 2.30pm
- **8 June**—Summer Picnic
- **12 June**— Volunteer's Appreciation Dinner
- **20 June**—END OF YEAR



Time for a break!

Hi everyone! It is difficult to imagine that the PGP year 2008 is coming to an end, and so is my stint as Director

The past two years in the Director's chair have gone reasonably quickly for me. Last year, was stressful and time-consuming with the uncertainty over the premises issue, i.e. whether or not we could continue to hold PGP at the Crossroads Church in Fernay Voltaire. I am glad to say that this year has been less stressful and has passed without too many worries.

I have had the good fortune to work with a great team of volunteers on the Board who have supported me and helped me in a job which (you all probably know) I didn't really want from the beginning.

However, I am now glad that I was "pressured" to accept the position as I have learned so much about being "responsible" for so many enrolled children and about running the reasonably large organisation that we are. I have also learned a lot about myself. I am not longer shy to delegate, make quick decisions and put up my hand when I don't know the answer. I am also tremendously proud of the Playgroup Programme and the wonderful job it does for the English speaking community in and around Geneva. I am very glad to be one of its many volunteers.

Of course, my stepping down as Director does not mean that I will no longer be a part of PGP. I still have two daughters in the Literacy programme, and will be an assistant for the pre-literacy class on Tuesday next year.

I am, however, looking forward to spending more time with each of my three girls, and hopefully playing a little more golf!

Finally, I would like to thank you, our members, for all your support over the past two years. I am sure that you will all agree that PGP is a wonderful organisation which certainly achieves a lot given its 100% voluntary basis. Please continue to support it!

Yours faithfully, *Colette*

Colette Foort—Director Playgroup Programme

THE NOTICEBOARD—PGP NEWS & INFO.

WE NEED SOMEONE FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP TO COME FORWARD FOR THE POSITION OF:

DIRECTOR

We are in danger of not having a Director for next year.

This is a busy but fun and rewarding position. It involves leading meetings with a well organized team of Board volunteers, liaising with Crossroads Church on any matters regarding the premises, and being the "face" of PGP. If you have an interest in the position, please contact **Colette Foort** on pgp-director@hotmail.com **URGENTLY.**



OTHER OUTSTANDING VACANCIES FOR NEXT YEAR

We need volunteers for the following positions for next year:

18-3ys Group

Leader & Assistant	-	Monday am
Leader & Assistant	-	Thursday am
Leader & Assistant	-	Thursday pm
Leader	-	Friday am

3-4 ys Group

Assistant	-	Thursday pm
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If you feel that you can help with any of these roles or would like more information, please contact Trish Clements (trish_clements@yahoo.com).

Pre-Literacy

Assistant	-	Wed 9.30am
Teacher & Assistant	-	Wed 1.00pm

Literacy 1

Assistants (x2)	-	Wed 9.30am
Teacher	-	Wed 1.00pm

Literacy 2

Teacher & Assistant	-	Wed 11.15am
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Literacy 3

Teacher & Assistant	-	Wed 9.30am
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If you feel that you can help with any of these roles or would like more information, please contact Jane Kwiatkowska-del Pozo - kwiatkowska@libertysurf.fr.

As a volunteer you will have priority when places are allocated. You are also entitled to free places for one, two or all your children (depending on the role).



WE HAVE A FAB NEW WEBSITE

Be sure to check out PGP's new webstie. Same address, different look!



WE ALSO HAVE A NEW LITERACY COORDINATOR

A big thank you to Jane Kwiatkowska-del Pozo for agreeing to take over this important role. Jane can be contacted on kwiatkowska@libertysurf.fr.



... AND IT'S GOOD-BYE FROM US



I have been on the PGP board for 2 and a half years as secretary. It has been a learning experience, a good way to get back into a professional environment and has been very pleasant to work with other women on our "Playgroup Programme". The board meetings allow you to see the inside of PGP and what it takes to run such an organization. It is amazing how well it works despite having people from such different backgrounds, cultures, and accents.

I am not leaving PGP, I will continue as an assistant in literacy 4-5 class. Nadine Nassiflips has volunteered to replace me as secretary on the board. I am sure she will do an excellent job as she has all the "real" qualifications and works part-time as a personal assistant.

Clarisse Mason

It has been a fun three years being editor of the PGP newsletter. I started with no experience and now feel that I have mastered a few of the "tricks of the trade". A huge thank-you to all the regular contributors who made my job a lot easier. I would also like to thank all those members who provided us with useful tips of where to go on holiday, and where to shop for what in the "Interview" segment. I hope that you enjoyed the newsletter as much as I enjoyed putting it together.

Liz Stevenson (who has been my assistant this year) will take over the editor role next year and Claire Dorey (who is involved in putting together "Croque Loisirs") has agreed to take over the role of assistant. I know that the two of them will do an awesome job and continue to keep you informed of what's new and handy to know in and around Geneva.

Karen van Dieren

Calling All Hardworking Mums & Dads!

Publicising the PGP's Playgroup

We would like to spread the word about the Playgroup to new young families arriving over the summer to the Geneva region. We thought that as so many of our members work in international companies and organisations that you could perhaps help in this endeavour and do a small bit of legwork!

Is there a notice board in your place of work where you could pin-up a PGP brochure? Maybe you have details of a relocation company that assists new employees getting settled? Do you know of a website where a link to the PGP website could be displayed? You may know of other locations where we can reach parents of English-speaking pre-schoolers. These are just a few ways in which you can help, and your additional suggestions are most welcome.

Micala Jackson, a brand new member to Playgroup, has kindly offered to take on this project. You can contact Micala by email at micala.jackson@gmail.com. She will arrange for you to receive the necessary brochures or documentation.

Thanks in advance for spreading the word about PGP's Playgroup!

AN INTERVIEW WITH ...

another amazing Mom—Anoushka Tarimo

Tell us about yourself? I am English, French and Swiss and have been in Geneva since 1993 with a 4 year break where I followed my husband to Thailand and Zambia. I have two kids who have been with playgroup since 2005. My eldest has now gone to ENP (English National Programme) but my son is in Literacy 2.

I have a Human Resources background and worked in both the UN and the private sector for over 10 years. After this I decided to go solo into something completely different—REAL ESTATE. I started off working with a real estate agency (“regie”) on a consultant basis, just to get to know the business, and then decided to open my own company. I chose real estate because it has always been my passion and hobby.

I specialize in real estate in Geneva and La Cote areas.

What should people know when they start looking for real estate here? The first thing people should know is if they are allowed to buy in Switzerland (work permits wise etc.). Then, they need to know if they would be able to get a bank loan (“hypothèque”) and how much their budget could be. People wishing to buy property in Switzerland need to have 20% personal funding for their project, banks will only lend up to 80% of the value of the property—perhaps if you are lucky 85%.

Is there anything interesting about the real estate market here, i.e. you said to me that the market is traditionally slow during the winter months? Indeed, the real estate market is slower during the months of August to December (“low season”) and picks up again in January up until July (“high season”). It seems that people looking for property are more resolute in actually going through with a purchase during the “high season” period. Maybe they have other things on their minds during the “low season” (start of school, Christmas, etc.). It is quite strange as one would probably get the best deals during the low season.

How can you help anyone looking or selling property? I have a strong network in the private banks, United Nations, multi-nationals and commodity trading companies which enable me to bring in interesting properties to see, as well as find suitable clients for them. I have a strong understanding of Swiss laws and speak both English and French fluently, which is an advantage to both the buyer and seller often helping to bridge the communication and cultural challenges. And last but not least, I have a good team of bankers, solicitors and notaries to help make the whole process of buying and selling as hassle free as possible.

If you are interested in contacting Anoushka her details are:



Tarimo Immobilier, 11 chemin de la Fouinne,
1294 Genthod

0041 79 833 5212, info@tarimoimmobilier.com,
www.tarimoimmobilier.com

COMMUNITY SUPPORT: SOUP KITCHEN

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A FEW HOURS CAN MAKE

Why is it when we give a little of ourselves, we get so much in return?

I buzzed all weekend because of the few hours I spent at the soup kitchen on Friday morning. I still smile when I think about it! I worked with friendly volunteers from Crossroads Church. The work was the same as I do at home – chopping fruit, just on a bigger scale. Our goal: prepare and serve lunch (on-time) to 100 needy people.

Once every two months Crossroads Church sponsors the soup kitchen ‘Carrefour-Rue’ in Geneva by purchasing the food as well as organizing the help to prepare and serve it. The regular staff are given the day off.

The work is straightforward – follow directions in the kitchen and then serve up canteen-style with a smile. Food preparation starts at 9:30, we serve from 12:00 – 12:45 and we are cleaned up and finished by 1:30. Volunteers are welcome to arrive when they can and stay as long as possible.

There were hungry people from the world over, speaking a multitude of languages – including English. A few people were delighted to be able to speak English with native English speakers. There was a mixture of young & old, refugees, working poor and the very needy. Everyone was very appreciative and polite. They even wash their own dishes!

I was proud to tell my children how I had spent my morning. We had some great discussions about needy people, the soup kitchen and the amount of food we waste every day!

I am looking forward to the next soup kitchen on **FRIDAY, 30 MAY**. If you would like to help or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact Bill Morin of Crossroads Church at Bill.Morin@wanadoo.fr (phone 06 11 30 65 42) or myself at gillfamily@aliceads.fr or at home (04 50 41 98 83).

Jonna GILL, Leader, Tuesday afternoons 3s & 4s



IN NEED OF A BIT OF PAMPERING AT HOME

Natalia is a beautician with 6 years of experience who moved to the region in January. She works for a French company, “Viadom”, offering a wide variety of beautician services to clients in the comfort of their own home: facial care, make-up, American nails, waxing, massage etc. Details of the beauty care services she offers can be found on her website (the english version will be online very shortly) at <http://monsie.orange.fr/natalia-esthetique/> or you can call her on 06 19 18 89 54 if you would like more information.

Recommended by Jane Kwiatkowska-del Pozo



THE LITERACY PAGE

(HEALTH continued from page 7)

HOMEWORK

I am not sure if it is the same in your house but the word "homework" seems to almost always provoke a kind of hysteria amongst my children and turns me into a impatient "mummy -monster" who needs to practice deep breathing at regular intervals.

In an effort to reduce my high blood pressure during these times and turn "doing homework" into a positive experience for all concerned, I turned to the internet. I came across a very informative site called www2.scholastic.com

It was interesting to note that on the site it stated that students in elementary school should do between 10 and 15 minutes of homework each week, for each year in school. This period of time should include some reading. To ease the stress of both child and parent, it suggests setting up a regular schedule for after school by agreeing on a regular bedtime hour, and then working backward to set up the schedule. The site provides the following example:

4:00 Time to rest and relax, eat a snack and then run around and "blow off some steam" with physical exercise.

4:30 – 5:30 Time for extra-curricula activities, i.e. sports, music, play dates with friends

5:30 – 6:30 TIME FOR HOMEWORK!. The site suggests that you have your child do the homework in the kitchen or somewhere close by while dinner is being prepared, so he/she can ask questions and doesn't feel isolated. IT IS IMPORTANT NOT to wait until just before bedtime, when your child will probably be too tired to concentrate.

6:30 – 7:30 Time for dinner and being with the family.

7:30 – 8:00 MORE HOMEWORK TIME, if needed

8:00 – 8:30 Free time. If your child wants to watch TV, watch it with him/her.

8:30 – 9:00 Reading and getting ready for bed.

As is always the case with children, there is nothing so comforting and effective as a regular routine. It is all about developing the homework habit! Once you find out what kind of planned schedule suits you and your child you need to stick to it even through the initial difficult stages.

Another area discussed on the site is the need for children to do the homework independently. For the sake of time and my sometimes complete lack of patience, I have often found myself wanting to complete my own child's homework which I know is strictly "outside the rules"!

The site suggests that to avoid becoming too involved with homework you MUST clearly inform your kids that you have already completed Literacy and can read and write already and therefore you

don't need to do it again! However, at the same time, it is important to let your children know that you can help them to understand the instructions and to set the priorities.

If your child is consistently in need of your help to complete the work then it is important to find out why, i.e. is the assignment too hard, are the instructions unclear, or did your child not understand what was taught in class. Whatever the cause, it would be worthwhile to speak to your child's teacher so as provide your child with the help that is needed.

Karen van Dieren



Literacy teacher profile:

DRU MASSIE—Literacy 3, Wednesday pm

I joined the Playgroup Programme with my son Finn immediately after moving to Geneva five years ago. I took on the role of Assistant Registrar for the first couple of years and then began teaching also in the Literacy Programme. I confess that I preferred the relatively calm atmosphere of teaching a Literacy 3 class after my first year of running an Almost 5s class, so I seem to have settled comfortably into a pattern of teaching Literacy 3 along with my trusty assistant, Sam Cox.

Despite teaching at this level for some time now, each year presents new challenges and surprises as we meet eight new little people each September. This level also seems to be a fairly pivotal year, many of the basic skills gained in Literacy 1 and 2 seem to cement together and the children really develop their independent writing skills, most of them are already competent readers.

As a teacher in the Programme, I find it really rewarding to see the progress that the children make throughout the year and continue to admire the enthusiasm and commitment of the children and their parents who attend classes and complete homework faithfully each week. As a parent, I appreciate the motivation and structure of the weekly class which encourages both my son and myself (!) to continue the learning process at home.



Conclusion: The best way to prevent skin disease, or at least to reduce its effects, is to look after your skin. A skin in top condition can fight off germs more easily. It also feels better. Follow this simple guide to give you skin the glow of good health:

Cleanliness: Your skin is constantly shedding and renewing itself; dead skin cells are rubbed off as new skin forms. Gentle cleansing helps to wash away perspiration, grime and the oils which skin glands produce all the time. Wash you skin with mild soap and warm water each day. It is important to remember that too much washing can stop the skin's oils from doing their job properly.

Exercise: Do some outdoor exercise every day. It could be a swim at the pool or a job at lunchtime—any activity that will stimulate your circulation and bring a glow to your cheeks. Remember to wear a sunscreen to protect your skin from damage.

Rest: Get a good night's sleep. Your skin renews itself while you sleep and needs time to do this job well. The amount of sleep needed to maintain good health varies from person to person.

Diet: As a rule, if a food is good for you, it is good for your skin. Try to follow these guidelines:

- Choose a nutritious diet from a mix of foods
- Control your weight
- Eat more bread and cereals, vegetables and fruits
- Avoid eating too much fat (including fried foods)
- Avoid eating too much sugar (including sugar in processed foods)
- Eat less salt
- Limit your consumption of alcohol

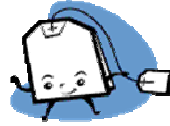
Sun protection: Skin can burn in the sun in less than 10 minutes. Sun-damaged skin can lead to early wrinkles and /or skin cancer in later life.

Always wear a 15+ broad spectrum sunscreen, hat and shirt when outdoors to help protect your skin from damage. Avoid the summer sun between 11.00am and 3.00pm (this is when the sun does the most damage).

Look for signs of melanoma (a form of cancer). If a new mole appears, or a mole changes shape, size, colour or texture, see a doctor.

The information above and on page 7 was obtained from the website NSW Health Department, "Your Skin Common Conditions".

PG TIPS



As this is the final 'PG-Tips' of the year, a number of leaders/assistants have kindly shared a few highlights from their groups – just a few examples of the fun had this year. A big thank you to our contributors.

Trish Clements—Leader Trainer

I really enjoy my role as assistant - I look forward to coming early to prepare the different activities of the morning with Sandrine, the leader, and to think ahead of new games and songs to share together. My two and a half year old, Trevor, also profits of that extra time on the premises. He loves to help organising the chairs, covering the table with paper and more...

During the session, I take care of animating the games and songs. Last Monday, I took out a box of cymbals to accompany our songs. The moment all the children had them in hand, I knew it was a mistake. No, I shouldn't say a mistake; the children's faces were beaming with joy. They were so happy being allowed to make such a racket! "Hum!" I thought glimpsing at Sandrine who I could feel, was thinking the same as me, "The challenge is to keep all the noise and happiness without getting it out of hand!". "Let's sing "The wheels on the bus" and use the cymbals for the end of each verse, as loud as you can!!" That allowed it to work for us, adults, too! When the song was finished, I told the children to put the cymbals back in the box. We then could move on to quieter songs.

This little episode of our Monday morning session only lasted four or five minutes, but the smiles on the children's' faces and the feeling of semi-controlled chaos made my day!!

Rebecca Pedretti - Assistant Mon AM 18m-3y

In our group with 3-4 year-olds we tried the parachute as described in a previous newsletter. Unfortunately our kids turned the space under the parachute into a dance-floor and completely ignored our instructions. The mothers exchanged worried looks and whispers of "this is not working, is it?" while the children were having un-supervised fun under the wavy fabric.

Cendrine Jupin-Petit— Assistant Mon PM 3-4y

Probably my favourite thing about leading a group has been watching the development of the children. They are a relatively young group and they have turned from tiny toddlers interested only in themselves and their toys to being a real group. Relationships are developing, they play, and sometimes share, and more than once certain members have left with their grown-ups singing "Chuffa, Chuffa" to themselves! They are even capable of ganging up against us. I have lost count of the times I've tried to get them sitting in a circle for song time, only to look up and see them bunched at the end of the room waiting for "Down at the Station" to start. And they will not be convinced to move!

One funny incident I can remember (probably due to my embarrassment as the parent of the child involved) was when Kim raced towards me during "Down at the Station" - only her nappy was clearly in need of a change, and it ended up around her ankles. This would have been embarrassing on its own, but she calmly stepped out of it and ran at top speed out into the foyer, where there were more church people than I have ever seen gathered for coffee! I have a lasting memory of scooping up a bare-bottomed girl with at least twenty open-mouthed faces looking at me!

Kerry McCance—Leader Thurs AM 18m-3y

**If as leader you try something new
Be prepared for the tots to look blue**

« We detest innovation

Only 'Down At The Station' –

And of course 'Sleeping Bunnies' – will do » !

by Anon, circa 2008

SPOTTY & STRIPY DONATIONS

The Playgroup Leaders and Assistants are in need of some Spotty and Stripy items for an activity for the children. The activity is done in conjunction with a book called 'My Mum & Dad Make Me Laugh' by Nick Sharratt. We already have the book, but need more items for the children to sort before we can do the activity during the sessions. We would like to have 3 bags of items in all. The more varied the items the more fun it will be for the children to sort. All items must be either Spotty or Stripy – some ideas of items are napkins, cards, little boxes, small toys, odd socks & gloves, hats, etc. As we will have 3 bags of items, you can provide 3 of the same item too.

Please pass your donations to your group Leader who will put them with our collection. Thank you for your help!

JUST LET THEM BE



In the hustle and bussle of today's world where success is valued as being best, better than, faster than, cleverer than, first, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that children should be allowed to JUST BE.

To ensure that my small children had an edge on the success factor, I confess I have often considered getting them extra lessons. I have hesitated to do this only because their week is very full with school and outside activities already.

I now realize that perhaps extra tutoring is not what is required and, while they are not failing, they should be able to learn at their own pace.

On the website www2.scholastic.com, Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, Ph.D., co-author of *Einstein Never Used Flashcards: How Our Children Really Learn and Why They Need to Play More and Memorize Less* and a professor at Temple University in Philadelphia is quoted as saying "... childhood is not a race; it's a journey. And faster isn't always better."

In the same article child psychologist, Alvin Rosenfeld, M.D., coauthor of *The Overscheduled Child: Avoiding the Hyper-Parenting Trap*, is quoted as saying "Parents have to walk a fine line between helping a child and pushing too hard. Kids don't have to be excellent in everything. If you push a child in an academic area before she's developmentally ready, it will take twice as long for her to learn the material than it would if you waited for the appropriate time."

Furthermore, when a child is doing just fine and a parent pushes for more, the parent runs the risk of undermining the child's self-confidence and perseverance. "In the same way that aspirin is appropriate when you have a headache, taking gobs of aspirin when you don't have a headache is not going to make you feel better," says Hirsh-Pasek. "If your child has a learning disability, yes, he needs extra help. If there is something that is holding him back, yes. But children learn more about mathematics in kindergarten by baking for the class and figuring out how much batter they need to fill up the muffin tins than they do from being drilled in multiplication tables."

"Children need a balance in their lives," says Hirsh-Pasek. "Making every moment count is exactly the wrong way to go. It's in the down time that our children learn the physics of rolling balls, the biology of worms that dig holes, the mathematics in the muffin pans. If we don't schedule down time, our children will suffer."

Wise words which, sometimes, we forget in our effort to give our kids the best chance for success!

Karen van Dieren

Julie Anderson's Top Ten Tips for Working (paid) Mothers

After over four years of staying at home full time with my three children, I have recently started back working outside the home. In preparation for this big transition, I contacted several "working mother" friends to get their tips on how to best juggle personal needs, family needs and work. Some of the best advice was sent to me by my friend Julie Anderson in the United States. Julie, a bright business woman and full-of-life mother of three, shared with me her "top ten tips" below. To hear more from Julie, check out her very funny and insightful blog at <http://chubbymommyrunningclub.blogspot.com>

Here are her "top ten tips":

- Just say no to mommy guilt and anxiety attacks.
- God invented cleaning ladies for a reason.
- You're doing the best you can for your kids, and you might actually like doing grown up things away from them, and it is okay.
- Your children are luckier than most, and it won't harm them to watch t.v. or play video games in the evening so you can catch a break.
- Take long baths every night. The running water drowns out the kid's and husband's whining, and you can say "I can't hear you, you'll have to wait until I'm done!" Sing while the water's running. This improves your mood and makes it clear to everyone around you that you're busy and can't hear them.
- You're not crazy if you talk to yourself all the time. It's actually quite normal, and helps you figure out how to deal with work stress before it eats you alive.
- Cheezy paperbacks were written for a reason: "escape." Spending a Saturday reading in the living room is a clever trick; the kids can jump around you and still feel like you're with them, but your brain can take a break. You can smile and nod when forced to watch them jump off the back of the couch 100 times in a row, while you're still thinking about the character in your book, who is doing something engaging, like getting ready to have sex or catch a thief. Don't read "important" or "Useful" books on Saturdays or this tactic won't work. I recommend Janet Evonovich's "Stephanie Plum" series, they are like little soap operas, and you can read them in a few hours. She's an accidental bounty hunter from New Jersey.
- Despite what French women say, there is nothing wrong with cooking frozen pizza for dinner. It's actually quite normal, and if your kids will eat it with green peppers or spinach on top, voila, veggies! Also, orange juice counts as a fruit, and the kids can drink it at dinner with their pizza so you can feel smug about giving them fruits *and* veggies at dinner.
- Drink wine within a half an hour of walking in the door at night, and definitely while cooking dinner. You may even feel like playing a game with the kids after dinner, if you drink enough wine. Careful, though, if you drink too much, even the little ones will beat you at checkers, so pace yourself. Of course, you can tell yourself that the four year old is just above average to notice that triple jump, it doesn't have anything to do with her drunk mommy not paying attention. Don't drink too much, though, or you'll fall asleep, miss your bath, and your husband will get crabby.
- Try to have sex regularly, even if you're tired, because you're husband will be much less crabby, and so will you, actually.

Lisa Mc Carthy—Leader, Weds. am, 18 mos-3 yrs group



THE SOUP LADY— Soups that are a Little Bit Complicated but so Worth the Effort

We've moved our computer downstairs so that SoupyHusband doesn't have to run upstairs every time he needs to check his e-mail, or do our accounting. It means he gets to spend more time with the children. In my opinion, he has more time to play his computer games while the kids run around wildly. But, cattiness aside, the point of this information is to tell you that in the last two months I have become addicted to blogs. I never really saw the point of them, but I got hooked to <http://www.acatinthekitchen.com/>. She's a home baker from Sweden and her cake blog is divine. From cakes it was a short leap to soups – now I have developed a habit of picking random ingredients from my fridge and finding a soup recipe to use them up. We've had loads of new flavours – courgette and lettuce is my favourite so far. If you are truly a soupaholic, you should visit <http://www.soupsong.com/>.

I suspect that SoupyLady herself is about to go global– watch this space!

Anyway, this month's recipes are slightly more fiddly than usual, but they are well worth the effort.

Honey Roasted Parsnip Soup

A friend once told me that my asparagus soup was orgasmic – she is mistaken. Insofar as a soup can be orgasmic, this is it. It is quite complicated, but **so** worth the effort. I found the recipe a few years back on the BBC Food site but was dieting at the time so I removed all the fattening ingredients. It is still delicious. Miss out the cider if you want and it will still be lovely, but its addition gives it *a je ne sais quoi!* The original recipe remains on the site, if you want to check it out.

1 tsp olive oil	500g parsnips, roughly chopped
½ onion, roughly chopped	1 carrot, roughly chopped
1 small clove of garlic, roughly chopped	1 tsp thyme leaves
1 small bay leaf	1 tbsp clear honey
1 litre vegetable stock	6 tbsp dry cider

Preheat your oven to 220C. Heat the oil in an ovenproof casserole dish, then add the parsnips and roast in the oven for 25-30 minutes, until golden brown. Add the onion, carrot and garlic and continue cooking for a further 10 minutes. Mix in the herbs and honey. Cook for a further 10 minutes until the vegetables have caramelized. Remove the dish from the oven, add the stock and bring it to the boil on top of the stove. Reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Add the cider, then pour the soup into a blender and purée until smooth. Meg Ryan, eat your heart out!

Oven Roasted Red Pepper and Tomato Soup

This soup is the reason my husband married me. It is by far his favourite. It originates from The New Covent Garden Soup Company's Book of Soups.

6 medium red peppers, halved & deseeded	6 - 8 tomatoes, cut in half
2 tablespoons olive oil	1 teaspoon sugar
salt and pepper	1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil
1 medium onion, chopped	1 garlic clove, crushed
900 ml vegetable stock	

Preheat the oven to 190C. Place the peppers skin side up, and the tomatoes skin side down in a large roasting tray. Drizzle with 1 tbsp of the oil and sprinkle with the sugar and a dusting of salt and pepper. Scatter over the basil and bake for one hour.

Heat the remaining oil and gently cook the onion and garlic for about 15 minutes in a covered pan without colouring. Add the peppers and tomatoes (if I can be bothered I take the skins off at this point – it does make the final soup smoother, but it can be a wee bit of a faff.) Add the stock, cover and bring to the boil, then blitz. You could serve this cold if you felt like it. I love it piping hot with a swirl of cream. BON APPETIT!



HEALTH — Skin Care

The **skin** is the body's protective covering. However, it is not an insensitive wall. It is alive, and its cells are constantly multiplying to replace cells shed from the top of the horny external layer.

Many bacteria and fungi (germs) normally live on the skin—some of them helpful and most of them harmless. When the skin is healthy there is a balance between the skin cells and bacteria and fungi. A number of causes, such as exposure to chemicals or germs not normally found on the skin, can upset this balance. If the body's defenses are down, this can lead to disease.

The following are a number of common skin problems which can affect us all.

Herpes: Herpes is a viral disease which has two forms. The first, cold sores, often occur around the mouth or nose — its medical name is herpes simplex type 1. Although less common, it may also occur on the genitals or on other areas of the body.

The second form, genital herpes, usually appears on or near the genitals or in the anal area—its medical name is herpes simplex type 2.

An attack of either type begins with a tingling itch. A red patch appears, and then small blisters develop and turn into scabby sores which gradually disappear. The whole attack takes about 7-10 days.



As long as the sores can be seen, herpes can be spread from one person to another by contact (touching the affected area).

If you have had herpes once, you usually get it again. The herpes virus may become active when you are under stress; when you are run down or suffering from another infection; or after sun exposure.

Treatment: Keep the sores dry and clean. There are a number of special creams available in pharmacies. To avoid spreading the virus it is essential that you wash your hands thoroughly after any contact with a sore. Genital herpes is very serious and you should consult a doctor for a proper diagnosis and treatment of the symptoms.

Exposure to sun can also bring on an attack of cold sores. Avoid a lot of exposure of the sun. If attacks recur, daily use of a 15+ broad spectrum sunscreen and lip balm can be helpful.

Prevention: If a person has herpes, avoid touching the affected area from the first sign of an attack (e.g. tingling or itching) until the skin returns to normal. Also avoid touching anything that has come into contact with the sore, cups, forks, spoons, towels, face clothes etc.

Prickly Heat (heat rash): Prickly heat is an itchy rash or a patch of small, red spots, usually on the back or chest. It occurs when the body overheats, and the skin becomes wet with sweat for a length of time. You may get it with or after a fever.

The rash can cover a large area and is extremely itchy. It may remain for a few days or weeks.

Prickly heat is not contagious, but if you have had it once, you may get it again. Babies under two year of age are prone to prickly heat, but are hard to diagnose. If you think your baby may have prickly heat, take him or her to a doctor.

Treatment: Apply calamine lotion to ease the itch. Wear light clothing to let air circulate. Help the skin to dry off by sitting near a fan to increase air movement over the skin. Try to keep to cooler spots in the house. If you must work outdoors, schedule it for the cooler times of day, make use of shade and take regular breaks.

Prevention: If you are prone to prickly heat, take short, cool showers. Avoid hot showers and baths, and avoid using soap on areas normally affected by prickly heat, such as the chest and back. Try not to sit or lie on plastic for any length of time.

Impetigo ("school sores"): Impetigo is a bacterial infection which mainly affects the exposed parts of the body, such as the face, hands and knees. It takes the form of sores covered with thick crusts or scabs which may release pus. Impetigo is highly contagious. It is particularly common in children.

Treatment: You need to see a doctor for treatment. He or she will prescribe antibiotic capsules and/or a cream to be applied to the affected area. Symptoms should clear up within five days of starting treatment.

Prevention: To stop impetigo from spreading, fingernails should be kept short and clean. Everyone in the household should have their own towel, handkerchief and mug, and have a bath or shower daily. If affected children go to school, it is important that the sores are treated and covered with a clean dressing.

Tinea: Tinea is caused by a tiny fungus. The main form it takes are ringworm and athlete's foot (tinea of the foot).

Ringworm—is a contagious skin condition caused by a fungus. It may occur on the scalp (in children only) or other parts of the body. On the scalp, ringworm begins as a small, round, scaly patch which may be red. The patch slowly gets bigger and the hairs in the patch become brittle and break off, leaving a ring-shaped sore. There may be one patch or several. On other parts of the body, it usually

begins as a round or oval patch, which soon becomes scaly and red. The centre of the patch then clears, leaving a ring-shaped sore.

One can get ringworm by touching the infected area on another person. You can also get it by using the personal objects of an infected person, such as their hairbrush or towel. People living in the same house often catch it from each other, or from cats, dogs, guinea pigs and other pets. It is most common in children before puberty.

Treatment: Your doctor may prescribe anti-fungal cream to be applied to the affected area and you may need to take tablets as well. The symptoms should clear up in two to six weeks. Sometimes, you may be required to undergo many months of treatment.

Prevention: Cleanliness is important to stop ringworm spreading. When infected, wash your scalp gently every day in comfortably hot water. Use a separate basin and cake of soap from the rest of the household.

Sleep alone and don't let anyone else use your hairbrush, comb or towels. Wash your towels, sheets and pillowcases with soap and hot water twice a week and allow them to dry in the sun.

It is a good idea to check the fur of dogs and cats regularly. Take them to a vet if you spot any signs of ringworm. A kitten with a "moth-eaten" coat has almost certainly got ringworm and should be kept away from children. Children should stay away from school until proper treatment has begun.

Athletes Foot- In mild cases of athlete's foot, there is a soft, whitish skin between the toes, often with cracks. In severe cases, small blisters, raw area and scaly patches may be seen. This form of tinea usually affects young adults and people whose feet perspire a lot. Athlete's foot is probably passed on from an infected person to others by bathmats and wet floors of bathrooms or dressing shed at swimming pools. It is more common in warm weather.

Treatment: Your doctor may prescribe a cream to be applied to the affected area. You may need to take tablets as well.

Prevention: Dry carefully between your toes. Your feet will be less prone to athlete's foot in summer if you wear sandals.

(continued on page 4)



What's On In and Around Geneva: May/June/July/Aug 2008 (researched & compiled by Liz Stevenson)

MAY

Apr 10 to Sep 28 - Fragiles beautés: les coups de cœur d'un collectionneur Porcelaines et faïences du XVIIIe siècle. Collection includes 19th century European & Chinese ceramics @ the Ariana Museum. mah.ville-ge.ch

Apr 25 to May 18 - Cirque Nock. Circus at Plainpalais. www.nock.ch

Apr 30 to May 5 - Agapé - 9e Festival de Musique et d'Art Sacré. A festival of medieval & baroque music with a special program for children. For the various locations & events see www.festivalagape.org

May 3, May 31 and Jun 1 - Roadshow Euro 2008. Play Football Switzerland Tour presented by the Swiss Assoc of Football at the Esplanade des Palettes. www.football.ch/ontour/fr/start.aspx

May 6 to 10 - Les rêves de Karabine Klaxon. Modern dance for children at the Théâtre Am Stram Gram. www.amstramgram.ch

May 7 - Roches et pierres précieuses. The Natural History Museum invites the children to come & make a big book about rocks & precious stones. Another day is organized on June 4. www.ville-ge.ch/mhng

May 10 and May 31 - Salsa des petits: un jeu d'enfants. Salsa dance class for children 2 to 6 at the Moulin à Danses. www.mad.coop

May 11 - Croisières Fête des Mères. Invite your mom for a lunch cruise. Leaves from the dock in the Jardin Anglais at 12h20. www.cgn.ch

May 11 and 12 - Concerts Bach de Pentecôte. Classical music. Monday's concert is especially intended for children. Musique classique Temple de la Madeleine. Call 022 319 61 11 for more information.

May 14 to 28 - Goûter des sciences: Petit corps tu bougeras, biscoteaux tu auras Health workshop for children 5 to 7 at the Geneva University Hospital. www.unige.ch/science-cite

May 15 - Observations astronomiques. Observe the moon at the History of Science Museum (Perle du Lac). www.astro-ge.net

May 15 to 29 - Mai en fanfares. Series of free concerts at various locations. www.ville-ge.ch/culture

May 17 and 18 - 10e grande Braderie carougeoise. Street market in Carouge. www.carouge.ch

May 17 to Sep 21 - La Ville est à Vous. Block parties in different neighborhoods. www.lavilleestavous.ch

May 18 - Délégué Junior. Become a junior humanitarian delegate for the day @ Red Cross Museum. www.micr.org

May 18 - Journée Internationale des Musées. Special activities planned in all the museums for the day. www.museums.ch

May 20 to Jun 29 - Le Muséum des visiteurs en herbe. Exhibition of local children's artwork at the Natural History Museum. www.ville-ge.ch/mhng

May 21 - Souk des 5-Continents - Marché aux puces par les enfants. Street fair by the children@ the Place des Cinq-Continents www.ahvm.ch

May 21 to 23 Aug 2009 - Hors jeu. Exposition about football at the Ethnography Museum - Conches. www.ville-ge.ch/meg

May 23 to 25 - Festival Mai au Parc. Festival in the Parc Bernasconi. www.lancy.ch

May 24 - Fête de l'Espoir 2008. Free music festival at the Centre sportif du Bout-du-Monde www.espoir.ch

May 24 - Les Cadets de Genève. Concert at Victoria Hall. www.cadetsge.ch

May 24 - The Harlem Globetrotters 2008. Legendary basketball group at the Centre Sportif de la Queue d'Arve (Halle Vélodrome). www.harlemglobetrotters.com

May 25 - Parade Navale CGN. Celebration of the historical fleet serving Lake Geneva. www.cgn.ch

May 27 - Fête des Voisins. Invite your neighbors over for a drink. www.immeublesenfete.ch

May 27 to Oct 12 - Jardins de Maths. Find mathematics in the world of plants at the Botanical Gardens- Villa Le Chêne. www.ville-ge.ch/cjb

May 28 to Jun 1 - 14e Festival International de Country Music. Get out your cowboy boots and two-step on over to the Parc Marignac. www.festival-country.ch

May 30 - 75e anniversaire CPM. Band music at the Parc des Bastions. www.cadetsge.ch

May 30 to Jun 1 - lafete@meyrin. The village of Meyrin's fair. www.meyrin.ch/lafete

May 31 to Jun 2 - Vogue de Perly-Certou. Fair in the village of Perly-Certou. www.perly-certoux.ch

JUNE

Jun 4 to 20 Apr 2009 - De temps en temps. This exposition @ History of Science Museum (Perle du Lac) on different aspects of time. www.ville-ge.ch/mhs

Jun 5 to 8 - Caribana Festival. Music festival in Crans-sur-Nyon (Vaud). The Euro 2008 matches will be broadcast. www.caribana.ch

Jun 7 and 8 - 41e championnats suisses juniors. Competition organized for the best 200 junior male gymnasts at the Centre sportif Sous-Moulin. www.agg.ch

Jun 13 to 15 - Bol d'Or Regatta. Sailing event on Lake Geneva from Port Noir to Le Bouveret & back again. www.boldor.ch

Jun 14 - Vogue d'Hermance. The village fair in Hermance that is organized by the region's rugby club. www.hrrc.ch

Jun 16 - Concours international de roses nouvelles. Started in 1947, this competition selects the finest rose that professionals are able to grow. Visit the Roseraie du Parc La Grange. Call 022 757 30 44 for information.

Jun 20 and 21 - Sur les planches. A series of stories performed by children and young adults at the Théâtre du Loup. Additional productions are scheduled for June 27 and 28. www.theatreduloup.ch

Jun 20 to 22 - Fête de la Musique. 20th edition of this festival of street music. www.fetedelamusique.ch

Jun 25 to 27 - Fête des écoles enfantines et primaires. End of the school year celebrations for young children in the Old Town & the Parc des Bastions. www.ville-ge.ch

Jun 25 to Jun 29 - L'AMR aux Croupettes. Free, open-air jazz concerts in Parc des Croupettes. www.amr-geneve.ch

Jun 29 to Jul 6 - La croisée des cultures. 14th edition of classes on music and dance from around the world. Scheduled in various locations. www.adem.ch/stage08/programme.html

Jun 30 to Jul 4, Jul 7 to 11, Jul 14 to 18 - Piccolo Opera Stages et atelier spectacle. The School of Opera is offering a workshop for children 6- to 9-years old based on the theme of Bizet's Carmen at the Théâtre de l'Espérance. www.piccoloopera.ch

Jul 4 to 19 - Montreux Jazz Festival. www.montreuxjazz.com

Jul 4 to 8 - Coop Beachtour 2008. Beach volleyball in the Place du Rhône. www.coopbeachtour.ch

Jul 5 and 6 - Nuit de la Science. 7th edition of two days of science. This year's theme is time. Set up at the History of Science Museum (Perle du Lac). Call 022 418 50 60.

Jul 22 to 27 - Paléo Festival. You can try to get tickets on the day of a concert, but good luck! www.paleo.ch

JULY

Jul 31 to Aug 10 - Fêtes de Genève 2008. This annual carnival is the highlight of the summer with spectacular fireworks. www.fetes-de-geneve.ch

Jul 31 to Aug 10 - Village Tropical. African and latino groups will offer concerts and other events on the Baby Plage. www.villagetropical.ch

Jul 3 to Aug 19 - Cinélac. Open-air film festival at Port Noir. www.cinelac.ch

Jul 2 to Aug 21 - Musiques en Été. Live concerts and recitals at various locations around Geneva. www.ville-ge.ch/musiquesenete

AUGUST

Aug 1 - Fête nationale Suisse. Help the Swiss celebrate their national day at the Parc des Bastions. Call 022 345 35 44 for more information.

Aug 28 to Sep 18 - Cirque Knie avec Cuche & Barbezat. This long-time (90 years) circus comes to Plainpalais. www.knie.ch

Aug 29 to 31 - Vogue de Carouge. The village fair in Carouge. www.carouge.ch

Aug 29 to Sep 13 - La Bâtie - Festival de Genève. Music, dance and theater festival at various locations. www.batie.ch