During the evening “Dog Watch,” the Captain will take the entire crew below decks. Here he will share nautical lore, sing sea chanteys, and discuss the history of the times. A great addition to this activity is the “letters to the sailors.” These letters are a very important aspect of the program and greatly enhance this “Dog Watch” time.

Encourage the parents to write letters to their “lads” as if they were living in the year 1851. These should be secretly delivered to the teacher or group leader who will bring them the day of the program and hand them over when checking in with the administrator. Imagine the amazement of the sailors when the Captain gives them their letter telling them of life back home or friends living in the gold fields! Please strongly encourage parent participation in this activity. While the Captain will make an excuse for students who do not receive a letter, it can be very disappointing for a child to be left out of the excitement. Our desire is that every student receives “news” from home.

The idea is to incorporate news items of the times; developments of California or the hardships of life at home or in the gold fields. These letters should help build upon the lessons the students have learned as well as provide some entertainment. Teachers – please be sure the parents understand that the letters should not refer to or reflect modern times. The year is 1851 and the students have signed aboard the *Euterpe* as male sailors to pay for their passage to gold country in central California. The letters can be from the “parents,” “children,” “wife,” “suitor,” “friend” or whomever, but should mainly attempt to recreate the atmosphere of the times. They can talk about tough times in San Diego; what’s happening in California, new inventions, etc. Here are some interesting facts from 1851:

- First prefabricated wooden structure arrives from Maine and is assembled in San Diego.
- Mr. Light left San Diego for the goldfields after five year successful business in San Diego. Mr. Light is a former slave and expert trapper.
- Local and Los Angeles Indians encouraged by Major General Joshua Bean revolt against property taxes. Antonio Garra executed in San Diego.
- Isaac Singer invents the sewing machine.
- Louis Daguerre, pioneer of photography died.
- Edwin J. DeHaven leads the first U.S. expedition to the Arctic.
- President Millard Fillmore enlarges the Capitol to accommodate additional representatives from new states.
- Herman Melville publishes *Moby Dick*. 