

# THE HARRINGTON HERALD

HARRINGTON SCHOOL ♦ 148 MAPLE STREET ♦ LEXINGTON, MA 02420 ♦ (781) 860-0012

David C. Crump, Principal ♦ Suzanne Cherson & Mary Ann Stewart, PTA co-Presidents

## A Message from the Principal

*David C. Crump*

Oh, the weather outside is frightful!! So how do we decide whether we send the children outside for recess or have indoor recess? This question usually gets asked by parents at the beginning of the Winter season, or just after the first snowfall. I am reprinting this article from previous years to clarify just how those decisions are made.

The two factors that usually determine when we have outdoor or indoor recess are weather conditions and safety conditions. As far as weather conditions are concerned, when it is raining outside, we keep the children inside. When the temperature is below 20 degrees F. we also have indoor recess. This is a standard that is held throughout the elementary school across town. Another weather factor is if we have had a heavy snowfall (snow accumulation over one foot) and the hardtop area out back has not been plowed. Very often many children do not have boots at school and subjecting their little toes to those extremes could be damaging. So again we will not have outside recess.

*Continued on page 2*

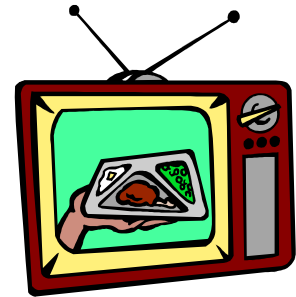


## Upcoming Events December

- 13** Gr. 4 and 5 chorus, band, and string concert: 8:30am performance for school
- 14** Gr. 4 and 5 chorus, band, and string concert: 8:30am performance for parents
- 25** **No school** – Christmas
- 26-29** **No school** – Winter vacation

## A Message from PTA Co-President

*Mary Ann Stewart*



This won't come as news to any of you: marketing to children is big business - and not only for the holidays. Children under 12 influence \$500 billion in purchases each year as corporations try to establish cradle-to-grave brand loyalty. Marketers actively target babies through licensed toys and accessories that feature media characters, even though there is no evidence that screen media is beneficial for babies and some that it may actually be harmful. Children are bombarded with marketing every waking moment of their lives. Huge amounts of money and effort are invested in making kids literate in the language of consumerism, thus apprenticing them for a lifetime of consumption.

The Center on Media and Child Health, at Children's Hospital Boston, reports kids 8 – 18 years old spend over six hours each day on average using media outside of school (watching TV, videos, or movies, listening to CDs, using computers, reading, and/or playing video games). Two-thirds of these kids watch TV in their bedrooms and almost half report watching TV during meals. Eighty-three percent of children under six and 59% of children under two watch TV on a typical day for an average of about two hours ([www.cmch.tv](http://www.cmch.tv)). Children see about 40,000 ads a year on TV alone, not including product placement in movies and television, plus the ads they see on the internet, at the movies, on school buses, in their classrooms, and cafeterias. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children age two and under view no screen media at all, yet

*Continued on page 3*

As far as safety issues are concerned, ice is a huge determining factor. If the hardtop area is too icy, we do not want to risk serious injury. When the field is extremely muddy, we may keep the children inside as well. Avoiding unnecessary slips and falls is the driving reason for any indoor recesses related to safety issues.

The decision about whether we have recess indoors or out is usually made by me. Depending on the weather on any given day, I check the temperature, inspect the playground and decide what course of action needs to be taken. If I am not in the building, Mrs. Turo makes the call. If neither of us is available (upon rare occasions) Mrs. Donovan and the Aides decide.

As parents, you need to keep in mind several things. We tend to have outdoor recess more often than not. Do not assume that because it's below 20 degrees before school that your child will not have recess outdoors that day. This is New England and weather conditions do change rapidly. In some cases we have indoor recess in the morning, but outdoor recess after lunch. You should always send your child to school dressed with the assumption that we will be going outside. There are times when we do not send the children outside for recess for several days in a row. I can't control the weather conditions, but I will always make decisions about recess that are in the best interest of your child and his/her safety.

For parents who haven't heard, I have only one rule about snow at school. Children are not allowed to throw snow, period. If they have boots on, they may walk in it. If they wear snow pants, they may roll in it. But under no circumstances should they ever throw snow.

As always, if you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please do not hesitate to contact me.

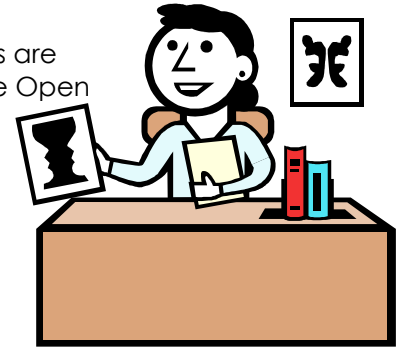
**David C. Crump, Principal**

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## Counselor's Corner

Harrington teachers are busy implementing the Open Circle curriculum in their classrooms. These one or two weekly 15-30 minute meetings where teachers and children sit in a circle and work on various



social skills are designed to foster a cooperative classroom environment as well as give students the skills they need to solve interpersonal problems and build positive relationships. You may have already seen come home, one or more of the parent "**Open Circle Update**" notices summarizing a particular lesson your child participated in. Sometimes, you may be asked to help your child complete an assignment. At other times, you may simply want to ask your child what was talked about in Open Circle and what their reaction was to the lesson.

An Open Circle evening parent group is also currently under way. Parents are delving into the social competency skills their children are learning in the Open Circle program, as well as how to successfully apply these skills at home. I am now taking enrollments for a second **Open Circle Parent Group**, this one running on five consecutive Thursday mornings, beginning Jan. 18 and ending on February 15 (a third parent group will be offered in the Spring. This series will take place in the evening). The cost for the program is five dollars, to cover material fees. Each session will go from 8:15 - 9:45 AM and will be held in my office, Rm. 267. Places will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis, **so please register early**. To register, please call 781-860-0012x3266 or email me at [achamberlain@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:achamberlain@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us). Thank you and I hope to hear from some of you soon.

**Amy Chamberlain,**  
**Harrington School Counselor, K-8 Guidance**  
**Chairperson**

companies are intensifying their efforts to get them to do so.

Marketers work to create a strong peer culture where children have a lot of power in influencing what is cool and what children want. At the same time, marketers work to undermine the status of adults; in ads directed at children, adults are either being invisible, stupid, or stand in the way of getting what children want. Such representations can reduce the influence adults have on children and even contribute to premature adolescent rebellions. Marketing also exploits children's developmental vulnerabilities: children under eight years old can't distinguish between commercials and program content and even older children don't always recognize product placement as advertising.

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*... in ads directed at children, adults are either being invisible, stupid, or stand in the way of getting what children want.*

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Systematic commercialization of schools is a relatively new marketing ploy, though its roots go back to in-school "banking" programs and the occasional fundraiser, such as magazine drives. School-based marketing perpetuates a subtle and pernicious endorsement from schools without competition to the sponsoring corporation. Schools accepting corporate funding or promotions are at the mercy of corporate agendas, which have yet to prove they care one iota for the health, education, or welfare of the students they purport to serve. Increasingly, parental goals of raising their children in ways that reflect and perpetuate the values and norms of their culture are at odds with a dominant culture which pits media conglomerates and corporations against them. Instead of helping them to raise their children, families find themselves protecting their children from a commercial culture which undermines parental goals.

Every moment is a teachable moment to a corporate marketer. With little or no state legislation or district policy regulating commercialism, marketers have begun introducing hundreds of commercial messages into the school day - despite research and testimony from educators, health care

professionals, and parents that public schools are being misused for commercial purposes and that the teacher-student relationship is being eroded by outside commercial interests.

Kids and their families are swimming upstream against a flood of increasingly manipulative marketing, and they need help reversing the onslaught of marketing to children. There is a growing movement to protect children from marketing: activist, professional, and public health organizations are working in the public's interest to stop the commercial exploitation of children. I'm curious to know what you think and I welcome your thoughts on this issue. Please email me: [maryann@redoniondesign.com](mailto:maryann@redoniondesign.com)

**Mary Ann Stewart,**  
Harrington PTA Co-President

## From the Librarian ...

Mrs. Widhu would like to thank all the people who sponsored a book this past month. Seventy books were sponsored and are happily being read and enjoyed. If



you missed the sponsor a book event but still want to help the library you can call or drop by as we often have books in the works that could be sponsored. The book fair was successful as always. The library got around **\$2100** from the profits. I hope you enjoyed it. We are considering changing it to the spring as there is so much going on in the fall. It would be during conference time in the spring. If you have any thoughts you'd like share about the date of the book fair please contact Mrs. Widhu or Karen Skoff.

**Mrs. Sarah Widhu**  
Library Media Specialist



# School Council Minutes

October 17, 2006

**Present:** Mr. Crump, Karen Petersen, Gerri O'Neill, Nancy Adler, Denise Omobono, Shelley Isaacson, Deborah Zuckerman, Mary Ann Stewart and Julie Shapiro.

**General Business:**

- September minutes approved.

**Cafeteria Rules and Consequences:**

- The students had a lot of questions, but are willing to follow the rules. There will be another discussion with the students and adults in charge regarding the rules and appropriate consequences.

**Emergency Call-Back System:**

- One message can be broadcast to the telephone (not email) of anyone who signs up. It is sometimes called a Reverse 911 system. It is generally used for school closings, delayed buses and other emergencies.
- The goal is to get the same message out to everyone quickly, if an urgent situation or emergency arises. The hope is to prevent inconsistent or confusing messages.
- Question whether a good use of the system would include PTA announcements i.e. like a list serve. This might undermine the real benefit of a system like this, which is to get information out in an emergency. If it is used for too many other announcements, people may not pay attention to it.

- Fiske is trying out such a system now, with their PTO paying for the cost. The system is working.
- The cost is \$2.50 per family per year. There is no start-up cost. Some families may not want to pay the fee, and PTA might be able to supplement those who cannot pay.
- Two companies are being considered at this time: *Global Connects*, which uses information a school has and the information gets input into the system; and *Honeywell*, which has parents input the information.
- Presently, Mr. Crump is able to put a message on the telephone for people to call in for information. However, there is no way to tell people to call in if there is an emergency, and there is no way to let people know when an emergency occurs.
- This is a school specific system – the broadcast does not go out to all of the schools in the Lexington school system.
- Deborah Zuckerman and Shelley Isaacson will make some calls to find out more information.

**Parking and traffic:**

- Some people are still driving on and around the playground on the weekends and other non-school hours. This presents a safety problem, as there are still children on and around the playground.
- Teachers and staff are doing their best to manage drop-off and pick-up. However, at dismissal, the conflicting time with Early Childhood Ed. It is still presenting a safety issue.

Respectfully submitted,  
**Julie Shapiro**

## METCO Family Friends

On November 2, I had the privilege of seeing 20 pairs of children leave the school in anticipation of a playdate with their family friend! What a thrilling sight! Thanks to all the Lexington Families who hosted in November. Our next Family Friends Day is early in the New Year, Thursday January 4. I've also heard that some families will get together on their own over the holiday break!

We have one last opportunity for hosting a METCO fourth grade boy. This student has a family already hosting him in March and June. Therefore, he only needs a host family for four other Thursdays: January, February, April and May. It would be from 12nn until 3pm. Would you kindly consider hosting these four afternoons? Please call me for more details.

Thanks so much for considering METCO participation.

Sincerely,

**Leslie Zales, METCO FF Coordinator**, 781-652-8669, [LSZALES@rcn.com](mailto:LSZALES@rcn.com)



**Photo 1 Chyna and Gracie together on their first Family Friends Day in November.**



# School Committee Update

Mary Ann Stewart, School Committee Liaison

As we go to print, the Lexington School Committee plans a meeting Tuesday evening, November 28, in the Clarke Middle School Auditorium. Elementary redistricting and Special Education programs will be the featured presentation/agenda items then, along with discussion of date(s) for School Committee public hearing(s) on redistricting. Dr. Ash is expected to present the redistricting recommendations for the six elementary schools. The LPS three and ten year enrollment projections, which figure significantly in the redistricting process, and the date(s) for public hearing(s), may be viewed on-line: <http://lps.lexingtonma.org/>

Dr. Mary Sullivan Kelley, Director of Student Services, will present a major report on Pre-K to age 22 Special Education Services to the School Committee. Dr. Sullivan Kelly's report will show that the cost of out-of-district placements has increased significantly during the past year due to three primary factors: an increase in the number of students placed in out-of district schools, an increase in the number of students requiring more intensive placements, and an increase in mandated tuition rates. Dr. Sullivan Kelley will also discuss new in-house SPED programs, as well as recommendations for the program for the 2007-2008 school year. Her comprehensive report may also be viewed on-line: <http://lps.lexingtonma.org/>

On November 14, the School Committee heard a presentation on the master planning process, based in part on 2006-2007 redistricting lines. Even after adjusting to account for new housing at Avalon Bay in September 2008, K-5 enrollments are expected to continue to decline, requiring the likely closure of one of the existing elementary schools. The enrollment report referenced above was a key component of the presentation that night.

Staying on top of School Committee discussions and actions helps us

understand the impact of decisions affecting students and families in the Harrington and Lexington communities. Meetings generally convene at 7:30 PM on the announced date; the agenda is posted on the LPS website by 6:00 PM the day of the meeting. Harrington PTA members are encouraged to get to know School Committee members and to contact them with their concerns via the link on the Harrington School website:

<http://harrington.lexingtonma.org>. Public hearing(s) to discuss the redistricting plan, once announced, will be posted on the LPS site – please bookmark and check regularly for updates: <http://lps.lexingtonma.org/>



## LEF STARs - the Perfect Holiday Gift

Looking for a way to thank all the teachers in your child's life this holiday season? An LEF STAR (Staff Teacher Appreciation & Recognition) is the perfect gift. It always comes in the right size, doesn't require batteries, and you won't have to find a parking space at the mall. With a minimum donation of \$20, each STAR recipient receives a certificate acknowledging a donation in their honor. For the teachers who make a difference in your child's school day, it is the ideal way to let them know you value what they do while benefiting the entire Lexington school community. Now, can a coffee mug do all that? Contribute on-line at [www.lexedfoundation.org](http://www.lexedfoundation.org), and the Lexington Education Foundation thanks you!



**Figure 1** Cover page of Mrs. Widhu's Picturing Writing project. Color. 8.5"x11"

## Story Painting

Mrs. Widhu

I was the lucky recipient of a LEF fellowship this past summer to take the course Image Making, which follows up on the course, Picturing Writing, offered to Harrington teachers last school year. The funding enabled me to stay in an air-conditioned dorm nearby for three nights so I could recover from the excoriating heat in our elementary school classroom during the day. This experience made me appreciate Harrington's air-conditioned splendor even more.

The class instructs teachers on how to combine research and collage to help students learn how to write more descriptively. First a student does research typically on an animal but I think it could be used with social studies as well. Based on their research they decide on a three-page story plotline: the introduction of the animal and its habitat is the first page, a problem the animal might encounter is the second page and the third is the resolution of the difficulty and the ending. Then the students create a series of painted papers with varied techniques to create many textures and colors that will be used to represent the weather, the habitat, the animal(s) and whatever else they think might be in the story. They create the first page of their story using their painted papers to make a collage. After creating the first page they write the first page of their story looking at their artwork as they describe what is happening on the page. Creating each picture first, then writing the words. The teacher models all these activities by following the process with the creation of their own book and/or using children's literature to show examples of what the student is trying to create both visually and verbally. There are many brainstorming activities to give students specific ideas of what to write or how to create their pictures. It is very structured but with a lot freedom for individual choices within the structure.

As a result of this experience I plan to build our library's collection of books that model this approach listing them in the catalog as appropriate for use with this program, help our students with their research projects, and assist teachers with any part of the process for which they may need support. Mrs. Wehmeyer is hoping to help with some of the art activities creating the papers and/or the final pages. I did my project on the quezatal bird of Mexico and Guatemala to tie in with the fourth grade curriculums of birds and the Mayan civilization. Stop by to see it. I love to show it off. ☺



**Figure 2** An illustration page from Mrs. Widhu's Picturing Writing project. Color. 8.5"x11".

# BOX TOP UPDATES

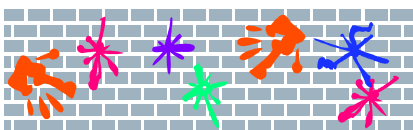


## Earn Cash for Our School!

Thanks to all of you that clipped and saved your box tops and remembered to send them in with your children on Tuesday mornings. Our first submission was due October 31st. Thanks to **Alex Resnick** and his family for counting all those box tops. We raised over **\$425.00!!!** Our next and final submission for the year is **February 28th**. Look for our flyers with fun ways for your kids to participate in this program. We'll be having Penguins for the Winter and we'll try and see how many Hearts we can collect in February - look for our flyers in your kids' backpacks. Try and help us reach our goal of **\$800.00**. Look for Box Tops on General Mills products such as Cheerios and other whole grain cereals. You can now find Box Tops on Saran Wrap and Ziploc Bags in addition to many other products. Thanks to all of you who help raise money for our students at Harrington.

# BRICKS UPDATE

Have you noticed the addition of Harrington Bricks lining the sidewalk just to the right of the entry doors at the front of the school? The bricks were purchased to help personalize our new school after moving in. There are plans to add plants to soften the area and further beautify the entrance. The parent who started the Harrington Bricks, Irene Dondley, has since moved on to Clarke. If you would be interested in keeping the tradition going – especially if you did not purchase a brick and would like to do so – please email a member of the PTA Executive Committee. Thank you!



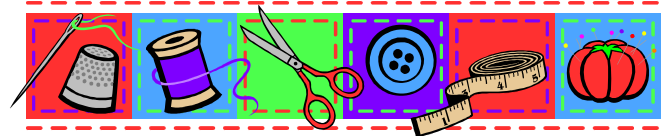
# SEPAC MEETING

On Thursday December 7th at 7:30pm, the Lexington Special Education Parent Advisory Council will host a presentation by Dr. Ellen Braaten about assessment tools used by schools and neuropsychologists to evaluate a student who may have a disability. Dr. Braaten is a neuropsychologist at MGH and has a private practice in Lexington. She is a co-author, along with Gretchen Felopulos, of the book "Straight Talk about Psychological Testing for Kids". Please join us in the LHS Library Media Center, room 147. Following the hour-long presentation, there will be time for networking with other parents. If you have any questions or a need for accommodations, please contact the PAC co-chairs, Larry Belvin or Dale Hernquist.

# HOBBY NIGHT

**JANUARY 11, 2007, THURSDAY, 7-8:30 PM**

Bring your collections of rocks, coins, baseball cards, artwork, poems, Polly Pockets and so on. Be creative in your collection ideas and enjoy displaying them.



# Boston Celtics Tickets from Sally Foster:

If you placed an order for gift-wrap and would like to redeem your Free ticket to see a Boston Celtics game, you can pick up the coupon on the stairs at the front entrance of Harrington. Have fun!

# BOOK FAIR RESULTS

Thank you very much to all of the volunteers who helped out at the book fair this year. We couldn't have done it without you! Thank you also to everyone who shopped at the fair this year. We earned a little over \$2,000 for the library, a portion of which Mrs. Widhu immediately spent on books from the fair. (At a 40% savings!) Keep reading and start making those wish lists for next year!

# Jubilee Thanks You

We want to thank everyone who helped out at the Arts and Dance Café in October. We couldn't have done it without the many wonderful volunteers manning the crafts, selling tickets and working the kitchen. The event was well received and everyone seemed to have a good time. We raised just over \$3700 for our A.C.T. programs.

We would like to give a special thank you to **Henrietta Mei** for all her work at getting in the

vendor's for our marketplace, to **Michelle Mabardy** for contacting craft stores, to **Lynnell Stern** for teaching the dances, **Ben Ryterband** for spending the day helping kids make pasta skeletons and to **Nicole Rhodes** for running the very popular cup stacking workshop. Thanks to all the teachers who let us use their rooms, and, thank you to everyone who showed up to participate in this brand new Harrington event. A big thank you to our custodians for all their hard work setting up and taking down all those tables and for their creative problem solving.

## *Our Heartfelt Thanks to ...*

...**Laura Brattain** for her dedication and patience creating the Harrington School Directory; to **Kerry Heyda**, **Peggy Gibson**, and **Suzanne Chersonson** for their help proof-reading it; and to **Lauren and Kerry Heyda** for attaching the membership cards, organizing, and distributing all of the directories to classrooms the day after they were printed.

...**Jeanne Clifford** (parent), **Rose Culkins** (HED Director), and **Leora Tec** (parent) for their fearless representation of Harrington in the LEF Trivia Bee on November 9<sup>th</sup>. Harrington Hawks rawk!

...**Mark McCullough** and **Joe Byrne** (of MJM Masonry) for lining the Harrington Bricks along the edge of the sidewalk near the flag at the front of the school. The bricks are a beautiful addition to the landscaping and we look forward to seeing them expanded to over the years!



...**Tricia McLaughlin** for organizing another successful gift wrap sale and to all the Girl Scouts who helped with distribution.

...**Kerry Heyda** for loaning her barstools to the PTA for our meeting on Public Education.

...**Tracy Burke and Leslie Fagen** for organizing our Harrington Reads program and leading lively discussions among 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders and their parents.

...**Leslie Zales** for taking on the awesome role of METCO Coordinator at Harrington. ... **Catherine Bergh**, **Kerry Hughes**, **Shelley Isaacson**, **Suzanne Lowry**, **Laura McCullough**, **Carmen Mincy** and **Irene Rosensweig**, who so willingly arrived to help distribute the Sally Foster Gift Wrap orders!

## The Harrington Herald

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*The Harrington Herald* is the monthly newsletter of the Harrington PTA, published ten times a year. Newsletter material may be emailed as a Word, plain text, or rich text format attachment to [huadong@rcn.com](mailto:huadong@rcn.com). If you cannot email your submission, please call or email Beth to make other arrangements for delivery.

In keeping with the PTA Newsletter Policy, the *Herald* will print items directly related to the schools and their PTA's. This includes curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities that are PTA- or system-supported, and school-sanctioned projects. All articles are subject to editorial discretion.

Visit the Harrington School Web Site at <http://harrington.lexingtonma.org>.

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## Next Deadline: December 20, 2006