

The HARRINGTON HERALD

Harrington School • 148 Maple Street • Lexington, MA 02420 • (781) 860-0012

David C. Crump, *Principal* [Suzanne Chersonson & Mary Ann Stewart, *PTA Co-Presidents*

A Message from the Principal



Whenever there is a school emergency, my heart beats strongly and the wheels in my head begin to spin more rapidly than usual. The snow storm that we had on Friday, March 16th caused all Lexington Schools to release children before the end of the school day. Would we be able to contact all parents? Would all of the children get home safely? What if one of the busses was involved in an accident? These and many other questions raced through my mind.

Fortunately, this time, all children made it home safely without too many difficulties. However, there was a lot of confusion, and we were not sure that ALL parents got the message. We had 10 people making phone calls and only one hour to try and reach parents. There's got to be a better way!!!

And there IS. This year the Harrington School Council has looked into several companies that are capable of contacting thousands of parents in a matter of minutes. These companies are set up to contact parents in a variety of ways to let them know accurate information whenever there is a school emergency. Some of the emergencies that parents could be contacted about are: before school weather-related school closings, during the day

Continued on page 2

A Message from the PTA Co-President

What a difference a week makes! Today, as I write this article, it is warm and sunny – practically balmy! But, last Friday, there was chaos, freezing rain, sleet, and snow and miserable wind and cold. And rain or shine, our amazing volunteers are always there supporting our kids, teachers, and staff!

I feel fortunate that many of the PTA Board members will be staying on in their

Continued on page 3

APRIL CALENDAR

- 4 Teacher Conferences
(1/2 day; 11:45am dismissal)
- 5 Teacher Conferences
(Thursday, 11:45am dismissal)
- 5 METCO Family Friends Day
- 6 **No School** – Good Friday
- 11 Teacher Conferences
(1/2 day; 11:45am dismissal)
- 12 Teacher Conferences
(Thursday; 11:45am dismissal)
- 12 HED Show for parents (5:30pm)
- 13 HED Show for school (1:00pm)
- 16 Patriot's Day Parade: Harrington's 50th Anniversary
Jubilee Celebration Float
- 16-20 **No school** – April Vacation
- 23 School Resumes
- 26 PTA Meeting (7:00-8:30pm): Everyday
Mathematics Workshop



Principal's Message *continued...*

weather-related school closings, school closings for reasons other than weather (heating system failure), bus delays, bus accidents, school lock downs for security reasons, and a host of other emergencies. I certainly wish we had had such a system in place for the recent early release due to weather.

The School Council reviewed materials and met with consultants from several of these companies. We have identified one that we believe will meet our needs. Parents who sign up for the service can be contacted via an unlimited number of phone numbers, text devices and email addresses. In addition, parents can sign up for a variety of communication groups - whole school messages, class specific messages, grade specific messages, and bus route messages. All parents will be given the same official message generated from the school office. The system is set up so that the school is given a report of who has and who has not been contacted. Then the school can try reaching perhaps a handful of parents instead of hundreds.

The cost for signing up for such a system is only \$2.50 per child. While this service will be set up on a voluntary basis (you don't have to sign up if you choose not to) I would STRONGLY encourage all families to enroll. Fiske School has this kind of service in place. I am told that within 17 minutes, all Fiske parents were notified about the weather-related early release from school that we recently experienced. This kind of service is invaluable, especially in this day and age, when you can never tell what kind of emergency situation will occur.

At the beginning of school in September, you will be asked to sign up for the instant alert program that has been selected by the School Council. The old adage, "It's better to be safe than sorry" takes on a whole new meaning when it comes to the safety of children and how rapidly parents can be notified about emergency situations. More information will be provided to parents about this service as we get closer to the beginning of the new school year. In the meantime, should you have any questions about this service, please contact me or one of the School Council representatives.

David C. Crump, Principal

Phone: (781) 860-0012

E-Mail: crump@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us



PTA NOMINATIONS

A Harrington PTA Nominating Committee has been formed and is composed of three Harrington parents: Tracy Battite, Ellen Cameron, and Doreen Mitchell. If you are interested in serving on the board as our new Treasurer for next year or as Vice President of Communications, please make your interest known to Tracy, Ellen, or Doreen.

Tracy: mtbattite@comcast.net

Ellen: eusol@aol.com

Doreen: pdmitchell@rcn.com

PTA Message *continued...*

board capacities. Helen Goodreau, Harrington's awesome treasurer, would like to take on a different role and is stepping down as treasurer. We also have a cadre of committed Committee Heads and co-chairs. I would like to recognize several people who are retiring and several Committee Head positions that need filling. If you find something here that sparks a connection with your interests, please let us know!

Suzanne and JR Lowry have been organizing the **5th Grade Food Pantry Drive** for the past few years. It used to be the work of fifth graders to go out on Halloween Night, but pantries are neediest in winter, long after the holidays, so this drive has taken place in February for the last two years.

Paul Campbell has been organizing our school community outing to the **Boston Red Sox** and **Lowell Spinners** games. Needless to say, both are very popular family events and Paul has done an awesome job of it!

Xiaowen Wen has brought **Science Enrichment** to all grades at Harrington and we need one, preferably two, people to do this next year.

Diane Coste and Helen Goodreau have teamed up for both **Bingo** and **Hobby Night**. These events are part of many events that bring us out as a community. In the case of Bingo, teachers, staff, and parents have fun calling numbers and running prizes. For Hobby Night, we all love seeing collections of passionate collectors!

Harrington Night Out and Silent Auction is an event that takes place off school property every other year. Businesses are solicited for one-of-a-kind-

donations, as are families, teachers, and staff. It's a wonderful community event that raises much needed funds!

If you are interested in taking on an important committee role, please speak to any member of Harrington's PTA Executive Committee: Suzanne Cherson, Mary Ann Stewart, Regina Wiryaman, Peggy Gibson, Helen Goodreau, or Suzanne Bruno.

- Mary Ann Stewart

PTA Morning Coffee

February 27, 2007

Tuesday 8:30-10:00 am

Harrington School Library

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Bruno, PTA Secretary



PTA Co-president Suzanne Cherson opened the meeting by introducing the morning's speakers Kate Cremens-Basbas and Liz Weiss.

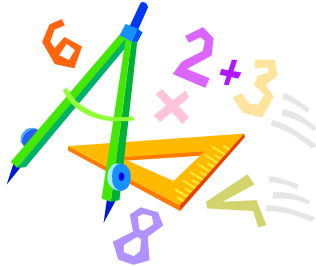
Ms. Cremens-Basbas spoke first. She is the Director of Phys Ed and Wellness for the Lexington Public Schools. Prior to taking this position, Ms. Cremens-Basbas worked in Arlington, Mass. for 20 years as director of physical education.

Ms. Cremens-Basbas noted that her current role is to focus on our students' total wellness, rather than just sports or physical education. She hopes to teach Lexington children that they need to have balance and wellness in their lives.

Given that formal health classes, particularly at the elementary level, meet infrequently, Ms. Cremens-Basbas believes it is important to use her role to work with the Lexington community to find ways for children to incorporate wellness into their daily lives.

Ms. Cremens-Basbas has observed that Lexington students, particularly at the high school level, are very stressed. They do not have enough time or make enough time to de-stress. We need to put an emphasis on children finding a balance in their lives between academic and other pursuits.

Harrington PTA presents:
Everyday Mathematics
A WORKSHOP for
PARENTS



Karen Tripoli,
K-8 Mathematics Curriculum
Coordinator
Thursday, April 26, 2007
7:00 PM

CHILDCARE PROVIDED

Please RSVP your childcare request via email
to Regina Wiryaman no later than April 22:
regina.wiryaman@rcn.com

FOR CHILDREN AGE 4 AND UP ONLY

Ms. Cremens-Basbas explained six dimensions of "wellness." There is **physical wellness**, which included not only sports and physical education, but a broader focus as well on nutrition, meditation, and other ways of de-stressing the body. There is also **emotional wellness**, which includes finding ways for children to balance and deal with their emotions in a constructive way. She also discussed **spiritual wellness**, which goes beyond any type of religious pursuits to include mindfulness, and positive psychology. The fourth type of wellness is **occupational wellness**, which focuses on finding a rewarding career path. The fifth kind of wellness is intellectual wellness. And, finally, **social wellness**, which includes teaching compassion and tolerance.

The Lexington schools are conducting a curriculum review of the phys ed and wellness curriculum right now. There is a need to coordinate and build communication between various departments as well as in the broader community. This includes working with librarians, science teachers, guidance counselors, physical education teachers and other departments to look at creative ways for children to focus on wellness and stress management.

Ms. Cremens-Basbas opened the meeting up for a general discussion. Many parents expressed concerns about the focus on MCAS and the stress that it puts on children and teachers. Also, many parents with elementary school children discussed ways to strategize at the elementary level to help children learn to deal with stress before they reach middle and high school. Ms. Cremens-Basbas noted that her role would be to find good ideas and hang onto them – like incorporating yoga and relaxation techniques into the classroom and the physical education classes.

Ms. Cremens-Basbas hopes to conduct another youth risk behavior survey, which has not been done in three years.

There was a discussion on finding a balance between over-programming children and allowing them to have safe, unstructured "down-time." Many parents questioned the level and amount of homework being given to children, particularly at the higher grade levels.

The next speaker of the morning was Liz Weiss, MS, RD. Ms. Weiss is a registered dietician, and co-author of "The Moms' Guide to Meal Makeovers." Ms. Weiss is also the parent of two children in the Lexington schools.

Ms. Weiss emphasized that her philosophy was to add good nutrition to snacks and meals on a daily basis. She noted that she did not necessarily cook "low-fat" all of the time, but that she focused on "kicking up" the nutrition in the foods that our children eat. For example, Ms. Weiss emphasized adding whole grains, lots of fruits and vegetables, low-fat

dairy, lean meat, fiber, and "good" fats like olive and canola oil.

Ms. Weiss gave many examples and recipes for her nutritious (and easy!) snacks and meals. She suggested making smoothies using frozen fruit and yogurt; grating peppers and carrots into meals, dipping strawberries into chocolate; steaming broccoli and then drizzling with olive oil, kosher salt and grated cheese; as well as many other fast and nutritious ways of adding vitamins and fiber to our diets.

Ms. Weiss noted that our bodies absorb more nutrients if they are combined with a little of the "good fat" – including almonds, nuts, olive oil, canola oil, grated cheese, etc.

In order to satisfy picky eaters, Ms. Weiss discussed presenting familiar foods in a slightly different way (i.e. using toothpicks to make "finger foods"; freezing grapes and other fruits, etc.)

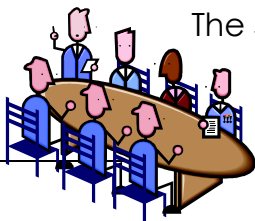
Another important nutrient that is often missing from our children's diet is Omega-3. This nutrient is found in flaxseed, Omega 3 eggs, walnuts and salmon.

Ms. Weiss emphasized the importance of eating together as a family. Parents are able to model good behavior and kids eat healthier. It also encourages children to talk about their day and communicate as a family.

In order to get children to try new foods, Ms. Weiss noted that it is often important to offer new foods over and over again; to change the texture or presentation of foods; and to offer choices to children (choosing between good foods and other good foods).

At the end of the meeting, Ms. Weiss shared her delicious muffins with the group! To contact Ms. Weiss or to sign up for the online "Meal Makeover Moms' Club" visit www.MealMakeoverMoms.com.

School Committee Update



The School Committee voted 4-1 on March 21, 2007 to bring forward to Town Meeting the

budget for the Lexington Public Schools. The School Committee's Recommended Budget for 2007-2008 requires \$69,756,487, which is an increase of \$6,336,987, or 9.9% over the FY07 appropriation at the Fall Town Meeting.

The budget recommendation is driven by three key factors: Special Education Mandates, Staffing Increases, and Personnel Salaries. The Lexington Public School budget will now appear as a single line item to be voted by Town Meeting Members as part of the annual Town operating budget during Town Meeting.

Town Meeting began Monday, March 26, at 7:30 PM and continues every Monday and Wednesday night until all of the articles contained in the Warrant are voted (no Town Meeting during Passover, April 2, or School Vacation week, April 16-20). Residents may sit in the balcony or in the back section of Cary Memorial Hall and may address the Town Meeting, but they may not make motions and must not participate in any votes. The proceedings of Town Meeting sessions are usually made available for home viewing on local cable TV: RCN, channel 3 or Comcast, channel 8.

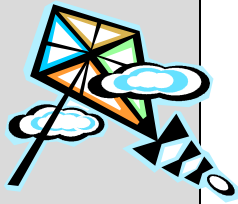
-Mary Ann Stewart

Harrington sweatshirt and T-shirt sale

Sales start again on Tuesday April 10, 2007. Look for a flyer (including the order form) in home folders the first week of April. Please contact Regina Wiryaman with any questions: regina.wiryaman@rcn.com

Save the date:

Harrington Spring Fair



Sunday June 3rd 12-4

Special guests this year include:



- Allie-gator (mascot for the Lowell Spinners baseball team)
- Silly Willy the clown
- The Lexington Fire Dept.
- Pony rides from Pony Express

New this year:

- Cake decorating contest (great prizes!)
- Tennis can surprise game (everyone's a winner!)
- Double-lane giant slide
- *Snip-its* beading hair design station
- *Candy Castle* guessing game

Oldies but goodies:

- Red Sox tickets raffle
- Class baskets raffle
- Dunk tank
- Rancatore's ice cream featuring "Mr. Crump Crunch"
- Upper Crust pizza
- Thai Cuisine from Lemon Tree restaurant in Burlington
- Fun & games & prizes
- Exciting rides
- Fun with friends & family

Help wanted:

- MCs to make announcements
- Volunteers for everything imaginable!

Contact: Ellyn Michelson,
ellyn@michelsonshoes.com

Box Tops Update

Great news – we earned more Box Tops dollars this year than ever before! In October we submitted \$430.00 worth of Box Tops and our submission in February was for \$318.00 for a total of \$748.00! Thanks to all of you that clip and submit your Box Tops every Tuesday for great prizes. A special thanks to Alex and Daniel Resnick for counting all these Box Tops (with a little help from their mom, Linda). We couldn't do this without all of you, and our entire Harrington community benefits – well done!

ACT Corner



March was a busy month for the ACT Committee. Chiao-Bin Huang came on March 6 to teach the Kindergarteners about the history of Chinese Ribbon Dancing. They even got a chance to try ribbon dancing themselves.

Clara Barton visited the 2nd graders on March 15 and shared stories of her life as a school teacher, nurse during the Civil War, and her tremendous role in the foundation of the Red Cross in the United States. In addition, through the generosity and quick coordination of a Harrington parent, two friends from the Crow Reservation in Montana chatted with the 2nd graders on March 19. We were so lucky to be able to take advantage of this opportunity and arrange for Pastor Pretty on Top and Kennie Pretty on Top to share information about Crow culture and current happenings on the reservation.

The 3rd graders took a journey back to Colonial America with the Bay Colony Educators on March 27. They learned what everyday life was like for children back then. They also had the opportunity to see and touch many Colonial artifacts.

A number of events are upcoming in April as well. The 5th graders will enjoy a

second Friday Boston Symphony Orchestra concert on April 13th. We would like to thank the Lexington Council for the Arts because this program is supported in part by a grant from them, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

On April 27th, Sazi Marden will visit with the 3rd graders as a Colonial School Mistress. The students will be able to see, hear, and feel what it was like to go to school in Colonial America

METCO Family Friends



One of Lexington's elementary students, Melissa Solomon, grade 3, is the winner of the *METCO Has Transformed My Life* essay contest. Melissa will be reading her essay at the Lobby Day on Beacon Hill this Thursday. Thanks to everyone who participated in this contest as well as the METCO rally and lobbying event on March 22.

Lastly, the Harrington School would like to welcome Parris Johnson to Mrs. Sherriff/Krasco's class. Parris transferred from the Fiske School and joins the first grade while his sister, Chyna, is in the second grade at Harrington. Please let me know if you are able to be a Lexington Family host for Parris next school year.

- Leslie Zales, Family Friends Coordinator

Discussion on 504 Plans

The Lexington Special Education Parent Advisory Council invites you to a discussion of 504 plans, a segment of the continuum of services provided by LPS to students with disabilities. Section 504 is a civil rights law that ensures that a child with a disability

has equal access to an education. Our speakers will be Amy Chamberlain, Counselor at Harrington, Abbi Maxton, Guidance Counselor at Diamond, and Lester Eggleston, Director of Guidance and Counseling at LHS. Please join us in the LHS Library Media Center, room 147, on April 5th at 7:30pm. Following the 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.

Room Parents & Committee Chairs
SAVE THE DATE



**Please come to a
Wine & Cheese Party**

**Tuesday April 10th
at 7:30 p.m.**

(Location to be determined)



As you know, Harrington will be welcoming a new principal and many new families in September, including redistricted families from Bridge, and Harrington PTA needs your help doing this!
Join us for an informational/ brainstorming session.

Please RSVP via email:
Peggy Gibson – peggibson@rcn.com

Counselor's Corner



Enrollments are now being taken for the **Open Circle Parent Program** series, this one running on five consecutive Tuesday

evenings, beginning Apr. 26 and ending on May 22. Parents delve into the social competency skills their children are learning in the Open Circle program in the classroom, as well as how to successfully apply these skills at home. We all know how rewarding, yet challenging parenting can be. This workshop can help! The cost for the program is five dollars, to cover material fees. Each session will run from 7:00 to 8:30 PM and will be held in my office, Rm. 267. Places will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis, **so please register early.** Dads are encouraged to attend! To register, please call 781-860-0012x3266 or email me at 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

Getting to Know... Susie Woodland

I recently sat down with Susie Woodland, Harrington's new third grade teacher, to find out a little about her. She taught last year at Fiske from December through June covering

for someone who was out for maternity leave. Before that she was an inclusion specialist in Dover and before that she taught second grade in Newton.

Susie is from West Hartford, CT where she grew up with her parents and two sisters. She was a history major at Wheaton College with a minor in Women's Studies. She had a great time her junior year when she went abroad to Galway, Ireland.

Susie worked at Putnam Investments after college, where she met her husband, Tripp. They have a black lab named Emma, who they take on hikes in Medfield. Tripp and Susie will be married 4 years in June. They enjoy watching the Patriots and the Red Sox. She spends her spare time renovating her house and doing outdoor stuff. She loves reading mysteries and her favorite meal is New England clam bake. Her parents live on the Cape. Susie has a very large sea glass collection, mostly from Cape Cod. Maybe we can convince her to bring it in next year for hobby night! She enjoys shellfishing and tennis. Ms Woodland loves to travel. The farthest she has gone is Japan. She tries to walk in at least one charity event each summer, having walked for the American Heart Association and Cystic Fibrosis.

Susie would like to stay in Lexington. She is very happy in Harrington. She finds the people down-to-earth and supportive. The third grade team is great and works well together. Ms. Woodland is happy to report that she has an awesome class this year! Both they and the entire Harrington school are lucky to have her. Welcome, Ms Woodland!

- Leora Tec

Our heartfelt thanks to. ...



...all of the **Second Graders** who offered their wonderful musical games and to all of the **Third Graders** for their inspirational recorder music at the music concert! Also, to their teachers, **Mrs. Whitehouse-Nevens, Mrs. Nason, Ms. Omobono, Ms. Martin, Ms. Woodland, and Ms. Salamone**, for all of their support; and to our fantastic music specialist, **Mrs. Stumpf** for enriching our lives through music!

...**Diane Coste** and **Helen Goodreau** for organizing another winning BINGO night; to awesome teachers, staff, and parents who were our callers and who helped things run smoothly: **Mary Yardley, Mary Turo, Mary Ann Stewart, Stevie Pedler, Phyllis Neufeld, Suzanne Kouri, Peggy Gibson, Dolores Donovan, Ellen Cameron, and Tracy Battite.**

... our custodial **team Paul Cuzzupe, Mark Freitas, and Ron Miles** – you know we couldn't do any of it without you!!

... all of the members of our community – students, teachers, parents, and staff – who continue to write, call, and email their concerns about next year's school budget to the School Committee – you ROCK!

The Harrington Herald

Designwork & Contact: Cristina Burwell, cristinaburwell@mac.com
Proofreader: Leora Tec

The Harrington Herald is the monthly newsletter of the Harrington PTA, published ten times a year. Newsletter material may be emailed as Word, plain text, or rich text format attachment to cristinaburwell@mac.com. If you cannot email your submission, please call.

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>.

Webmaster: Jerry Michelson, jerry@michelsonshoes.com

Next Deadline: April 20, 2007