



Happenings

a publication for students and parents of
Horace Mann Elementary

May/June 2011



Horace Mann Hot Topics By Principal Jeff Strasnick

✿ MCAS testing is planned for May for grades 3-5. All three grades will be doing the Math sections of the test and grade 5 will be doing the science/technology and engineering portion of the test. The testing schedule has been sent home and is posted on the school's website.

✿ This month a fourth and fifth grade math team from each of the elementary schools participated in the 2nd annual City Wide Mayor's Cup Math Meet at the Lincoln Elementary School on Monday May 2nd. Representing Horace Mann were fourth grade students Lauren Abramson, Jake McNeely, James Moro, Heer Patel, Aidan Brenner-Slagle, and Drew Scacchi. Representing the fifth grade team were students Samantha Kroon, Tara O'Shea, Eric Taitano, Julia Talbot, Denis Taylor and Kyla Waring. They represented the Horace Mann School with great pride!

✿ The Memorial Day Parade is planned for May 29. Come and march with other Horace Mann families and show your Horace Mann School pride.

Horace Mann Happenings Editorial Staff

The *Horace Mann Happenings* Editorial Staff appreciates your support throughout the school year. Your editorial contribution is important to maintaining positive communication within the Horace Mann community. This will be our last newsletter for the 2010-11 school year.

Unfortunately, Sam Sullivan and Sharon Lavery will not be continuing their roles in the newsletter next year. If you are interested in volunteering to help with the monthly production, or if you would just like more information, please contact any one of us.

- ❖ Nancy Murphy – Designer/Editor jn95murphy@verizon.net
- ❖ Sam Sullivan – Writer/Editor samantha.sullivan1@verizon.net
- ❖ Sharon Lavery – Editor/Production Coordinator sklavery@comcast.net

Important Dates in May and June



May 13 – Golf Tournament
May 18 – PTO Meeting
June 2 – Field Day (Raindate June 9)
June 20 – Last Day of School, Noon Dismissal



April PTO Meeting Notes

Our meeting was attended by 8 members, as well as several teachers and Principal Strasnick.

After introductions, the following topics were discussed:

- 🌱 An update on our monthly Dine Arounds was provided. Brueggers (January), was confirmed to have raised \$25. Fuddruckers (March) was sponsored by the 5th grade and raised \$202. We elected not to have an April Dine Around given other events scheduled for the month and April Vacation. The Garden Committee will be hosting in May; details to follow.
- 🌱 Equipment donations are needed for the Community Garden. The Committee is targeting an Opening Ceremony for May; details to follow. Everyone is really excited about this new addition, including students who are preparing seedlings for planting.
- 🌱 The March Wine Tasting and Gold Party was a new event this year. There were thirty-one attendees and we made a profit of \$400. Horace Mann parent Giovanna Spinale did an amazing job catering the desserts. Everyone enjoyed the live Irish Music provided by Horace Mann parents Lisa and John Coyne.
- 🌱 April's Red Sox Opening Day raised \$365 for the Family Fund. Hamburgers and hotdogs were available on the lunch menu and students were excited to purchase popcorn and hoodies for 50 cents. Students also gave \$1 to be able to wear a hat at school that day.
- 🌱 The Spring Concert occurred the night before and the students did a wonderful job! A big thank you to the music teachers for all their hard work.
- 🌱 The Ice Cream Social was a great success! Thank you to VP Jackie Skane for her coordination efforts and to all the volunteers for their scooping hands. Waters and peanut-free items were available for purchase. Families also enjoyed the Open House and were able to see their children(s)' classroom before or after having a scoop of ice cream. A great time was had by all!
- 🌱 Mrs. Barbagallo's class won the Math-a-thon Ice Cream Party for the most participation and a date for the party will most likely occur after MCAS testing is completed. Congratulations to her classroom!
- 🌱 Jen Ward provided an update on the International Walk to School Day. The event is scheduled for Tuesday 4/26, rain date 5/3. Students who walk to school will receive a prize such as zipper pulls and bookmarks. Principal Strasnick will be the conductor on our Walking Train, walking students from Main Street to Horace Mann. Students who are not able to walk to school have the option to do a lap around the school to receive a prize.
- 🌱 5th Grade Teacher Mrs. Capaldo provided an overview of E-Camp, which will take place April 27th, 28th, and 29th. This is an outdoor environmental educational program that all 5th grade students in Melrose Public Schools attend. Each school goes to different location for different lengths of stay. Horace Mann attends Natures Classroom in Yarmouth on Cape Cod, www.naturesclassroom.org/Yarmouth.htm. Food allergies are taken seriously by Horace Mann and concerns in this regard were raised well in advance to Natures Classroom, who takes them seriously as well. Mr. Strasnick will attend Wednesday and Thursday.
- 🌱 Laurie Armstrong spoke about Teacher Appreciation Week. From May 2nd through May 6th, a variety of thoughtful gestures will occur including the Teacher Appreciation Luncheon on Wednesday May 4th.
- 🌱 Krissy Carter provided a quick update on the 8th Annual Horace Mann Golf Tournament, scheduled for May 13th. Get an Early Birdie Special if you sign up your foursome by April 28th for \$125 per golfer. Teachers were also given a discount for golf or dinner if they wanted to attend. A reminder that non-golfers may attend the dinner, as it includes raffles, silent auctions and a DJ.
- 🌱 The 1-182nd Infantry Regiment of the Melrose National Guard, based at the Melrose Armory, deployed on March 25th for a yearlong tour in Afghanistan. A brief discussion was had about sending cards, pictures and/or other donated items to the soldiers.

April PTO Notes continued

🌱 J.D. LaRock, a Melrose School Committee Member, presented an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the School Committee. The SC approves the MPS Budget, sets policy, hires and provides yearly review of the Superintendent, and is heavily involved in district performance. J.D. briefly described recent policies that have come under the SC's review such as bullying, class size, Kindergarten and 1st grade placement, Kindergarten fees, and a textbook take-home policy. In regards to district performance, the School Committee reviews MCAS results for each school within the district, in comparison to other towns and within Massachusetts itself; they review and approve School Improvement Plans that are provided by the individual schools; and discuss district-wide issues that may occur. J.D. also responded to parents' questions throughout the presentation, including the subject of "Gifted and Talented".

🌱 Sub Night is still under review. Since the April PTO Meeting, it has been decided that the event will not be taking place this year.

🌱 A brief discussion about printing The Happenings occurred. This is a line item in the budget that is about to go over budget. We would like to bring the copying 'in house' for teachers and families that are in need of a hard copy. This is a savings of \$450 to the budget.

🌱 The co-treasurer reviewed the PTO Monthly Budget Report. The budget is showing an estimated surplus of \$4,300 for next year. The Family Fund looks to be in good shape for next year. Reminder that the budget is always available to be viewed online. Details to access this info can be found on the "from the treasurers section" of the HM website.

Principal Strasnick discussed the following items: spring concert, reading and math pilot programs, strep throat update, and dog issues.

🌱 The Spring Concert ran smoothly and having the students sit with their parents during the event was a positive change this year. A target date for the slide show is still under review and may occur at the talent show (a student-only event during school hours). Pictures from various events or pictures taken in the classroom are still needed and should be sent to Mr. Strasnick.

🌱 Last month, a review of the piloted Lexia Reading Program was given - www.lexialearning.com. This month, Horace Mann is piloting Symphony Math - www.symphonylearning.com and a deeper review can occur at the May PTO Meeting. This web-based program provides opportunities at various levels. It focus' on the students' abilities and understandings, enabling them to advance at their own pace.

🌱 As families were made aware, many students at Horace Mann were diagnosed with Strep Throat in April. Mr. Strasnick was in contact with the Dept. Of Public Health who said it is common to have a spring outbreak. Mr. Strasnick stressed that parents need to keep their child home if they are symptomatic as the bacterial infection is spread by person-to-person contact - touching, sneezing, etc. Extra cleaning took place at the school to help rid of any germs or bacteria laying on surfaces. Additionally, the cleaning products donated by PTO Today could not be used in the classroom due to student allergies. The products were donated elsewhere and the Bounty rolls were donated to the teachers.

🌱 While we are only in early April, we already seeing issues regarding dogs. Dogs are not allowed on school property or in the fenced in tot-lot. Dogs should not be brought to school at drop-off or pick-up time, even if you have your dog on a leash. Please keep your dogs at home. There is a leash law and we are aware that some dog owners are using Hesseltine Park as a place for their dog to run around unleashed. There is also a 'pooper scooper' law that is also being ignored by some dog owners that utilize Hesseltine. The dog feces is unknowingly being stepped in or comes into contact other ways, and spreads as students utilize the park during school hours, after-school and while attending the Education Stations after-school program. Mr. Strasnick is working with the town to have the laws more strictly enforced and has asked for tickets to be issued. Signs for dog owners are now posted at various locations throughout Hesseltine.

Thanks to all who participated. Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 18th. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.



Classroom Update

Second graders have entered the spring season by planting different vegetables and flowers for our community garden. We have been working hard to record and observe our plant growth in our "Garden Journals". After planting our seeds and caring for them in our classrooms, we are very excited to transfer our individual plants into the community garden.

Reading and writing continue to be a major focus in second grade. Learning about different literary genres has been exciting and challenging. We will be putting our knowledge to good use at the end of May, when we will be writing and researching our own reports on animals.

Currently we are building our understanding of "Communities", both past and present in our Social Studies unit. We are looking at the differences and similarities in the world from long ago and today.

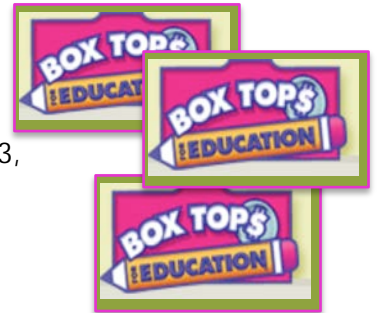
Finally, we are entering the world of geometry. Second graders are taking a closer look at shapes and solid figures and beginning to understand concepts surrounding symmetry and congruency.

Box Top Update

As of the end of February the classrooms had the following:

KW= 140, KF/T=69, 1P=521, 1R=140, 2K=615, 2S=351, 3B=191, 3M=337, 4L=153, 4S=352, 5G=393, 5L=100

Great job everyone! Since the last deadline the school has earned \$121. Please keep looking for the Box Tops over the summer and bring them for the next school year. Congratulations to Mrs. Kostandos class for sending in the most Box Tops and winning the Ice Cream Sundae party.



A special thank you to all of the parents who helped collect and package the Box Tops: Jannine Hairston, Karolyn Ormond, Jennifer Beshel, Sherry Roberts, Lynda Field, Janetarena, Lisa Cunningham, and Jill Tully.

Horace Mann Supports the Troops



The 1-182nd Infantry Regiment of the Massachusetts National Guard, based at the Melrose Armory, recently departed for a year-long deployment in Afghanistan. To show our support for the troops, Horace Mann 2nd and 4th grade classes creatively designed pictures and cards that were sent to the Regiment overseas. We know these messages from home are greatly appreciated by our service men and women, and we hope we can continue to show our support for this local Regiment throughout their deployment. If you have any thoughts or suggestions on additional ways to show our support, please contact us at hmpto@yahoo.com.

And the Winner is...

Congratulations to 3rd grader Sabrina Gardner for winning the PTO's Count the Jelly Bean Contest. There were 773 jelly beans in the jar and Sabrina made an incredible guess of 777. Hope you enjoyed your jelly beans!



ATTENTION Members of All Committees



The end of our fiscal year is approaching, and the PTO Treasury is reconciling our budget for year end. If you are on an HM committee and have made personal expenditures on behalf of HM for which you have not yet been reimbursed, please submit your reimbursement requests as soon as possible.

Similarly, if you are holding vendor invoices which need to be paid, please submit them right away. We need to finalize these 2010-11 expenses so that we can plan for the 2011-12 budget.

Please submit requests with receipts to Colleen Levesque by June 1st. Reimbursement and check request forms can be found online in the Treasurers section of the HM website, or hard copy outside the school's main office. Please leave completed requests, along with all original receipts in the Treasurer's hanging file located outside Mrs. Jeffrey's office. If you expect to incur expenses after June 1st, or have any other questions related to your budget, please contact Colleen to review so that we may plan accordingly. Colleen can be reached at 781-662-7272 or via email at nuthouse5@comcast.net.

Enrichment Committee News

The Enrichment Committee has had great time this year planning fun and educational events for the HM students.

- ☀ The College Fund Band visited and performed some popular songs.
- ☀ The New England Aquarium presented "Rock Hopper Hop", a program all about penguins.
- ☀ Yarina, a family of musicians from Ecuador, performed indigenous music.
- ☀ Horace Mann's very own Coyne Family with the Boston Comhaltas Music School performed an educational Irish music and culture program.
- ☀ Stars Science Theater set up a self-contained Star Lab planetarium that each class was able to experience.
- ☀ Historical Perspectives performed a character life portrayal of Harriet Tubman.

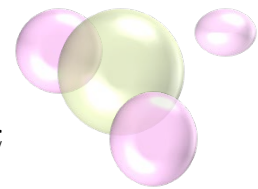


Curious Creatures will be coming later in May to have an interactive presentation about the appreciation for exotic animals. If your child comes home saying they held a giant snake or a flying squirrel, you will know what they are talking about.



Lastly, we have several events planned for Field Day in June, including:

- ☀ In the afternoon, the students will be entertained by the Bubble Music Man;
- ☀ Grades K-2 will participate in Kidzfun, a fun way to move and groove; while
- ☀ Grades 3-5 will learn martial arts from Olympic hopefuls of Pedro's Judo Center.



We are already planning next year's schedule! The committee members are: Andrea Szekely-Hill (co-chair) and Karolyn Ormond (co-chair), Camarie Clark, Lisa Coyne, and Ms. LaVita. If anyone has ideas or talents you would like to share, please do not hesitate to contact us. Please contact Karolyn at kkmelrose@yahoo.com or Andrea at alszekely@yahoo.com if you have any great enrichment program ideas – we would love to hear from you!

Help Wanted submitted by Melinda Stockwell



I am writing again to publicize some of the openings we have for volunteers. Since many of the activities we as a community do are organized and staffed by volunteers, if people don't step forward and do the work, the activities will not happen. We will all decide what is important to us as a community by noticing which projects get volunteers and which do not. This is a way to see which activities are important to us and which may not be as important. Sometimes it takes missing something to understand what it meant to us.

If there is an activity or project that you enjoy attending or your student feels is important, consider volunteering for that event or activity. As always, thanks to all the people who have volunteered.

Pumpkin Festival - seeking an organized individual (or duo!) willing to take on this community event, in Fall 2011 with current organizer, Debbie Brooks' assistance, and then in Fall 2012, putting your own skills and creative mark on it!

HM Happenings Newsletter - looking for a writer/editor to help manage the school newsletter during the 2011-2012 school year. Contact Sam Sullivan or Sharon Lavery if interested.

Innisbrook - seeking a pair of friends interested in running one of HM's most successful fundraisers. Get this off the ground in the fall, distribute everyone's purchases and by the holidays, put your feet up and congratulate yourselves on a job well done!

Volunteer Coordinator - meet many of the school's families and learn about what goes on at the school with all the volunteer opportunities. This job is busy in September/October and slows down significantly as the school year progresses. If you are even considering this position, please email me.

Memorial Day Parade - a lot of this work has been already done by the Board for this year's parade, but they are looking for your ideas, energy and organization! This is a great way to get your feet wet in organizing an event. It is very informal and is over by the end of May!!

If you have any questions about any of these opportunities, or you would like to try to squeeze volunteering into your schedule, please contact me.

Melinda Stockwell

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It's the Most Wonderful Day of the Year....FIELD DAY



Horace Mann students will be asked to dress in their team colors on June 2 to participate in this year's Field Day program! Students are organized into teams (Red, Blue, or Yellow) to participate in Field Day events ranging from relay races, to parachute, to sack races. Slush will be served, and a great enrichment program is planned for the afternoon. A flyer will be sent home soon asking for volunteers to help staff events, and will identify what team your child has been assigned. Mr. Goodwin leads the planning for this annual event, but if you have any questions or concerns, please contact Rita Colucci or Sam Sullivan.

Community Garden News



May is an exciting month for the Horace Mann Community Garden. The Garden opening on May 6th is the result of a collaborative effort that began in September of 2010. Six raised beds were built and filled with soil on April 30th. The 2nd and 3rd grade classes "dug in" the garden for the first time and are now watching their seeds grow into a tossed salad garden. The 2nd grade classrooms will also explore "Companion Planting" with their "Three Sisters Garden" (corn, squash and beans). The Community side of the garden is underway and will be planted this Spring.

Without the time given by our committee and volunteers, and donations from school families and others in the community, this would not have been possible.

A special "thank-you" goes to the following:

- 🌸 Ken Brammer for donating the fence
- 🌸 Weiss Farms for donating 5 yards of soil
- 🌸 City of Melrose Park Commission for providing the water source for the garden
- 🌸 The Home Depot of Saugus and Mahoney's Farm of Lexington for their contributions
- 🌸 Garden/Beautification Committee for the countless hours of planning and working to make the garden a reality
- 🌸 Horace Man families who recycled plastic and won the Trex bench for garden
- 🌸 The 2010-11 P.T.O. Board for supporting the garden and for making Horace Mann a better place
- 🌸 Principal Strasnick and the entire faculty for supporting the garden and the possibilities it represents.

The garden has brought teachers, parents and students together to create a "hands on" outdoor classroom that inspires curiosity and exploration of the nature world around us. As this school year comes to an end, we look forward to seeing the garden grow over Summer months and into the Fall. Please feel free to stop by the garden and see what we started and maybe pull a weed or two!

March in the Memorial Day Parade with HM Friends

Join Horace Mann as we march in Melrose's Annual Memorial Day Parade on Sunday, May 29th. Along with other Melrose schools, and many local youth and civic organizations, we'll participate as a group in the leisurely walk from City Hall to Pine Banks Park, where all HM marchers will be rewarded with a refreshing treat! We invite all students, parents and teachers to join us in showing our school spirit and patriotism!



Fifth Grade Thanks

The Fifth Grade class and teachers would like to thank Walter Caffey and Rob Venuti for volunteering at Ecamp this year. The kids had a great time – thank you for taking the time from your busy schedules to participate in this wonderful school tradition!



Thank you!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the PTO and all the Horace Mann families for the beautiful teacher appreciation luncheon! We know how much work families put into making this day (and the entire week) special for us and we truly appreciate those efforts. It was absolutely wonderful and we especially loved the candy comments!

A special thank you to Lori Armstrong for organizing this event yearly.

Thank you for another great year at Horace Mann.

*Fondly,
The Horace Mann Faculty*

