



Beyond the Ordinary

Established 1998

March 4, 2010

| Upcoming Events |                             |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| 3/9             | JISP                        |
| 3/11            | Community Pot Luck          |
| 3/12            | Open House                  |
| 3/16            | JISP                        |
| 3/18            | Clark Field Trip, PK/K, 5-8 |
| 3/23            | JISP                        |
| 3/30            | Final JISP                  |

**Clark Art Museum Field Trip**

The PK/K and 5-8 classes will be traveling to the Clark Museum on 3/18. The previous trip was cancelled due to the weather.

**Public Hearing Moved**

The Senate and House Education Committees have rescheduled the cancelled meeting to 3/10 at 5:00 p.m. in room 11 at the Statehouse. Any parent able to come is invited. Remember to write your representatives regarding school choice!

**Elementary Basketball**

Pre-K-4<sup>th</sup> grade basketball started yesterday after school. This program runs for 6 weeks and is only \$40. The dates are 3/3, 3/10, 3/17, 3/24, 3/31 and 4/7. Sign up in the office today!

**Tae Kwon Do**

Pre-K-8<sup>th</sup> grade Tae Kwon Do starts today after school. This program runs for 6 weeks and is only \$40. The dates are 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, 4/1 and 4/8. Sign up in the office today!

**School Choice Petition**

Be sure to stop in and sign the petition, sponsored by EdWatch Vermont, to keep School Choice in Vermont. Check out the letter sent home with students last Friday.

**Survey, Potluck, and Parent Forum**

Just a reminder to all MSW families to complete their “Programs and Facilities” **survey** by this Friday. The link was sent last week or can be found on our website. This link expires 3/5/10 at midnight. Please take the time to complete it...your feedback is important!

We will gather all survey responses and then discuss ideas at the *Potluck/Parent Forum* next **Thursday, March 11**. There will be a potluck at 5:30 p.m., followed by a discussion time until 7:00 p.m. Childcare will be available—teachers will be in their classrooms to be with students from 6:00-7:00. We ask all families to bring a sharing dish, and **remember your own place settings** so we may conserve! We’ll see you next Thursday at 5:30 p.m.!

**NECAP Scores Released**

This year’s NECAP scores will be sent home today. MSW again has an all-school average score of “3” (Proficient). Be sure to review your child’s scores and see your teacher if you have any questions.

**School Open House**

There will be an All-School Open House on March 12 for prospective families. If you know of any interested families in the area, please have them call the office to RSVP by 3/10. Thanks!

**Headmaster’s Holiday Scheduled**

Please note that there will be Headmaster’s Holiday on Friday, April 9. Our teachers and families have spent a lot of extra time at the school to provide childcare so the school could host the Parent Forums in January, February, and March. Therefore, there will be **no school Friday 4/9**. Thank you!

Daren M. Houck, Headmaster  
Karli Spence, Assistant Head  
Carol A. Stachelek, Office Manager

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## A Word from the Headmaster

*“Commitment”*

By Daren M. Houck

Commitment. Merriam-Webster defines commitment as “an agreement or pledge to do something in the future.” The Mountain School at Winhall is committed to several things, including: maintaining an open admissions policy (we accept all children); providing a personalized educational experience with high expectations and a unique curriculum; fostering a sense of community for students, parents, staff members, residents; and more. MSW has come quite a ways in the last 12 years, doubling in size, expanding program offerings, increasing student achievement, and keeping costs low. We have been able to do that not only because of our own commitment, but also because of the commitment of others. We cherish such a commitment because only together—family, school, and community—can we help every child succeed.

Today, as I attach Re-Enrollment Contracts for the 2010-2011 school year, we ask for your commitment again. The Mountain School, while experiencing so much positive growth to date, is on the cusp of an even greater future. As we plan to care for our students not only for today, but also for years to come, we hope that each of you will continue to commit to MSW, its beliefs, and our future.

Re-Enrollment and Tuition Authorization Forms are attached. Please note that both forms are due back by **Friday, March 26**. Due to a change in Vermont Law, school boards need to notify the state by April 15 of the school residents will be attending for the 2010-2011 school year. Due to the fact that contracts have been given to parents a month later than previous years (usually handed out in February) and this new April 15 deadline, MSW will no longer offer contract extensions. All contracts are due by March 26. Failure to return contracts by this date will result in students being withdrawn from the school at the end of this school year.

MSW is proud to commit ourselves to each of our families again next year...we look forward to your return commitment and partnership in 2010-2011 and beyond!

## Development Report

This year's **Annual Giving Campaign** is still at almost **\$10,000**. Thank you to those families that have participated. If you have not given, please do so today to support our children. Thank you for giving! Please check out our thermometer attached to the newsletter!

## A Word from Development

One of the hallmarks of a strong primary school, whether public or private, is parent involvement. The Mountain School at Winhall is no different, and by many measures MSW is a role model of interactive parental participation in the life of the school. I am writing to you in my role as part-time Director of Institutional Giving, however, to encourage you to increase our rate of participation in the Annual Fund.

I have been working as an administrator and fundraiser in higher education for over 20 years and I know from experience that rates of participation in annual giving or a capital campaign have a pronounced effect on levels of corporate and foundation support coming to the school or college. The much talked-about and referred-to *U.S. News and World Report* issue on college rankings uses alumni participation in annual giving as one of its indices of quality. Parent participation in private primary and secondary schools' annual giving provides the same measure of excellence.

My appeal comes at a particularly important time in the 12-year history of The Mountain School as a community school. As Daren has written and spoken about in the recent past, the School is on the eve of the possible passage of a school choice measure before the Vermont State Legislature. If passed, a new cohort of children and their families will be considering The Mountain School at Winhall as a new choice. They will be looking at, among other things, your involvement in the school as parents and the rate

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of participation in providing support to the school will be one factor of consideration.

The amount you decide to give is, of course, up to your personal situation – the larger the amount, the more that the School will have for the many areas provided for through the annual fund. What I encourage you to do is give something, so that you'll be counted in our important rate of participation. I look forward to communicating with you in the future.

Thank You,  
Hersey Egginton  
Development

### Pre-K/K News

In PreK/K, we try to let the kids see how things are interconnected as we transition from one theme into the next theme each month. This spring, we are going from weather to seasons to the sun. We were disappointed (and found it a bit ironic) that we needed to postpone our fieldtrip to look at weather in paintings at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Massachusetts due to weather. We are working on our "Seasons" unit. The students did assemble a model of the earth on its axis by running a knitting needle through a tennis ball. You can try to replicate this model using a small orange and a tooth pick. We wanted to point out that the earth is on its axis leans towards or away from the sun in our explanation of the seasons. We still need to read the Greek story of "Persephone and the Pomegranate Seeds". I found a kid-friendly version of the reason for the seasons in Greek Myths retold by Geraldine McCaughrean that the class should enjoy. Next, we will try to make a large picture of the solar system in March. Our objectives for the unit in March, "The Sun," are:

- 1) Identifying the sun as a source of heat energy.
- 2) Identifying the sun as part of our solar system.

We also wanted a little recognition of the passage of time this school year. So, we will celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> day of school soon! We had to postpone our 100<sup>th</sup> celebration due to snow days this month. Thanks to all the PreK/K

parents for sending in your child's 100 collection.

If you want to read a silly book about snow on your next snow day, try Waiting for Winter by Sebastian Meschenmoser!

### 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> News

We are continuing to work on our study of China. The children have been learning to say poems in Pinyin, write and paint Chinese characters, count in Chinese and say simple words or phrases. We have also begun a study of some of the important inventions the Chinese people have discovered. Each student will be responsible for presenting information about one invention. They will also make some type of representation of their invention and present all of this information in the form of a wax museum at our next OPUS event on April 1st. Literature is also tied in with our study as we have been reading Magic Tree House: The Day of the Dragon King as well as some traditional Chinese folk tales.

This past Wednesday marked the 100<sup>th</sup> day of school! It is a big deal in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. We celebrated the day with many writing, math and art activities associated with the number 100.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Grade News



In February, Third and Fourth graders were thrilled to have Derek and Teri from **Turning Wheel Pottery** teach us how to make African Udu drums. The **Udu** is an African **drum** originated by the Igbo people of Nigeria. **Udu** means vessel. We built our drums by forming pinch pots and coiling clay. We then decorated them by stamping them with geometric patterns

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and painting the drums with clay slip. As this newsletter is being written, the drums sit in the kiln, awaiting the big reveal! Our creations will be featured in our upcoming Opus presentation, April 1, 2010.

## 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Grade News

Fifth and sixth grade will be ending their immigration unit on Tuesday with a “Heritage Buffet”! Students will be bringing in traditional family snacks or snacks that connect to their family’s heritage to share with the class. While tasting bits of each other’s heritage, students will be discussing difficult questions, such as “Is your personality determined more from your genetics or your environment?” Our immigration unit has been filled with learning about the history or immigration, the role of culture and the experience of immigrants as well as learning about genetics, traits, heredity, DNA and current technologies.

We will also begin our next thematic study on Ancient Greece next week. We are excited to use Greek myths, culture and contributions as a creative launching point for our Opus performance on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

## Say, “Hi!” to Our Baby Salmon!

You may have noticed a large tank in the front foyer of the school covered by silver Styrofoam. Inside the tank are 200 Atlantic salmon eggs. Currently, the water is kept at very cold temperatures to mimic what it is like in the cold rivers that surround us. In May, we will be releasing the salmon into the river and hope for their survival. The Atlantic salmon is endangered and we hope that this effort can help rejuvenate their population!

## March Reading Challenge

The Mountain School will be participating in this year’s March Reading Challenge organized by Windham County Reads. Students will be making a daily reading goal and if they achieve their goal and log it over the month of March, they will be entered into a prize lottery. Parents are welcome to participate for a separate draw! There is a letter and reading calendar in the

newsletter and if you have any questions, please ask Ms. Tutsch. The first day is Monday, March 8<sup>th</sup>!

## 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade News

March. Already. I hope this find you well. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade finished reading Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible*. Students did a magnificent job bringing the play to life during in class performances. Furthermore, I have made arrangements for the students to see *The Crucible* in Albany on April 16<sup>th</sup>, more on that as we come closer. However, we will need drivers, so be in touch if you are interested.

Before we begin our next book, students are studying dialogue poems, also known as poems for two voices. As an extension of the themes we have focused on this year, conversations lately have circulated around the following: what is perception? What do I value? What affects an individual’s values? Furthermore, we are looking closely at craft—primarily word choice, tone, metaphor, simile, and imagery.

Students are finishing up their multi-genre cancer research projects. I am looking forward to their presentations.

Also, LOCAL ORGANIC PRODUCE AVAILABLE AT BULK PRICES SUMMER/FALL 2010. Please see the column about Justin Hart’s CSA offering.

Thank you!

Kate Muir

## Visual Arts

In the next few weeks we have two important events that we are participating in:

First, we will be participating in the Art From The Schools Show at the Southern Vermont Arts Center. This year I hope to equal last year’s achievement of having work from every student in our show. I may be asking both teachers and parents to temporarily “loan back” some student work that has gone home. The show runs from

The other big project that we are working toward is our Spring Opus event. This year we will be having a mixed bag of performances and

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exhibitions, which will showcase the many different thematic studies that we have been undertaking this trimester. I am still looking for help in setting up and taking down the stage for the performance. Please call me or leave a message with Carol if you can help.

A little further on down the road on at the end of April, we will be participating in the Empty Bowls Project, held at Long Trail School. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade is helping to organize and facilitate this expanded program for this year. We will be sending out information regarding specific dates and times for community participation.

In the art studio, we have been working on various projects, both integrated units and art skills and concepts. The 7-8 classes have finished their perspective unit and are now working on solving the problem of transferring a 2D drawing into a 3D sculptural object based in the work of Spanish artist Joan Miro. We are using both additive and subtractive sculptural methods to make this work, which we hope to show as a group installation at the Art From The Schools show.

Grades 5-6 are just completing their unit on Immigration. For this unit they created personal Statues of Liberty and are busy researching, drawing and writing proposals for monuments to important immigrant groups in the US. These "proposals" will be on view during the Opus culminating event. We are also just beginning a new unit on Ancient Greece. In this unit we will be exploring Greek theater, art, music architecture, science, and government among many other things.

Grades 3-4 are working on costumes and scenery for their adaptation of an African Folk tale, which will be performed at the Opus Culminating Event. They have also made repousse works depicting various African Animals. Thanks to Derek and Teri from Turning Wheel Studio for coming in to make awesome Udu drums with the kids. They are cooling off in the kiln as I write this.

Grades 1-2 finished up a unit on constellations. Check out their "original" constellations and stories, along with the cool dioramas they did with Mrs. Thompson and Ms. Melville. We are moving on to China and Ms. Thompson famous "Wax Museum" of Chinese Inventions. This year we will be showing this at the Opus Culminating Event.

Grades P-K have done some awesome group sculptures with our wood blocks – learning to work together, take turns and build on what others have built. We are working with Mrs. French on their Seasons unit – making collages of "Crazy Seasons" with other similar projects coming up.

As always, please stop by and say hello, watch or help in a class or to discuss any questions you might have about the visual art program and your student.

Thanks,  
Paul

### Library News

We have been studying Famous Black Americans during the month of February. We focused on Marion Anderson, who was the first black woman to sing at the Metropolitan Opera. We learned about her struggles to finally be accepted and believed in. We also worked on Rosa Parks and her story, as well as many others who made a difference in our society. This month, we will be studying artist Vincent Van Gogh and composer Peter Tchaikovsky. We will be taking a school trip to the Clark Art Museum later this month. We will be changing the look of the library after spring break, so I am doing a weeding process with many books. If your child brings home a book with the term **DISCARD** in it, it means that the book is no longer a part of the library and can belong to any child who wants it. Please take a minute to stop in and see what we have. Everyone is welcome to get a library card. Hope you have a great March.

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## Math Lab News

4<sup>th</sup> graders are continuing our in-depth investigation of fractions and division. We are also beginning to explore algebraic patterns. 6<sup>th</sup> graders are wrapping up their unit involving fractions, percents and decimals and moving into a unit exploring operations with fractions. A reminder to 6<sup>th</sup> grade families: all classwork and homework assignments are available on Ms. Spence's website. Algebra students continue to work with solving and graphing linear inequalities. Ms. Spence's maternity leave is approaching and her last day of planned teaching is Friday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Mr. Ovenden will be joining the MSW team on Monday, March 8<sup>th</sup>- we look forward to this new addition to our math family! As always, feel free to stop in and join a math investigation!

## Music News

Thanks to all the students and staff who participated in the Haiti relief Concert. What a great job....from making posters, to setting up the room, selling tickets and performing!

Some students are asking me if I would be able to offer Beginner Guitar. Others have asked me about a Middle School Chorus. I would be happy to offer these as after school programs to students grades 5 – 8 (younger students may participate if real commitment is shown). I am here on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Tuesdays, after school would of course have to wait until JISP is over. If you are the parent of a student who is interested in either of these, please contact me and let me know which day works for you and your family and we can try to set up a schedule that works best for everyone. You can reach me at 874-4743, or by email through the Mountain School website. Thanks!

## PE News

There was great enthusiasm for the floor hockey unit, with many scrimmages played. There was so much excitement for the game that many middle school students elected to play during their recess. Our volleyball unit is underway now and everyone is practicing, with Beach Ball-Toss and Catch in PK/K, to solid bump/set/spike teamwork in 8<sup>th</sup>. We are looking

forward to playing some exciting games, parents are welcome to come, cheer, and play. Thanks again PAB for purchasing our volleyball standards.

Chris

## Still (Yes, Still!) Need Those Soccer Uniforms

We still have **soccer uniforms out**. Please search for and return the uniforms ASAP. Thank you!

## Girls on the Run/Girls on Track

“Girls on the Run” and “Girls on Track” are coming to The Mountain School at Winhall! Prepare your girls for a fun 10 weeks. By now you should all have received your registration packet (if not please let me know)

Girls on the Run© is a non-profit prevention program that encourages girls in grades 3-8 to develop self-respect and healthy lifestyles through running. Our curricula address all aspects of girls' development—their physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being.

Sessions will run for 10 weeks from March 23<sup>rd</sup>- June 3<sup>rd</sup>, on Tuesday and Thursday from 3:45pm–5:15pm, culminating in the Girls on the Run 5K run in Brattleboro on Saturday May 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The \$70 fee includes lesson-based sessions twice a week for 10 weeks, entry fee into the 5K, a GOTR T-Shirt. There are scholarships available from GOTR for those that need help. Please contact Susie Thiele at 297 0021, or you can go to [www.girlsontherunvermont.com](http://www.girlsontherunvermont.com) for more background on this program. Your volunteer GOTR trained coaches will be Robin Apps, Megan McMahon, Tara Senecal, Miss Muir and Susie Thiele.

Registration and payment should be given to Carol in the school office ASAP. **GIRLS ON THE RUN is FUN!**

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## **Remember Those Hats and Gloves!**

Winter is here. Please remember warm coats, hats, and gloves. Students need all three items everyday for recess. We go outside as long as it is above 10 degrees. Thank you!

## **Extended Care Program**

A reminder that MSW offers extended care to families for a small fee. Students may arrive at the school at 8:00 a.m. (costs for mornings are only \$3/day) and/or stay after school until 4:30 p.m. (costs for afternoons are \$5/day). Students must have a permission form on file. Drop-off and pick-up take place in the Library. If you are interested, please contact the office.

## **Mrs. Clark's CD's for Sale!**

Laura Clark, our music teacher, has offered 15 CD's to the school for sale at \$15/CD, with \$5 of every sale going to the school. Mrs. Clark is an extremely talented singer/songwriter with three CD's to her name. If you are interested in purchasing any of her music, please see the office.

## **Lost & Found**

Our Lost & Found bins are full. Please remind your children to check the bins regularly for personal items. All unclaimed items are donated.

## **Procedures for public participation at Board meetings:**

Individuals wishing to address the Board must contact the Board Chair at least 3 days in advance of the Board meeting. The contact should include the subject of the presentation and the approximate time needed to speak. Board meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month.

## **The Mountain School Board of Trustees:**

Debbie Peretz, Chair \* Chuck Scranton, Vice Chair \* Thom McMahan, Treasurer \* C.J. King \* Virginia Morgan \* Ric Swenson \* Betsy Wadsworth

## **Parent Advisory Board:**

Amy Peckel, Chair  
Lisa Bauch, Co-Chair  
Susie Thiele, Treasurer  
Abby Birch, Secretary  
Megan McMahan/Rebecca Mann – PK/K  
Katie Cyr/Sarah Weber – 1/2  
Jodi Morrison – 3/4  
Abby Birch/Denise Scholander – 5/6  
Sherry Nowicki/Christie Archer – 7  
Robin Apps/Susie Thiele - 8



Thank you to the Cyr family for their donation of a 10X10 storage space for our School!