

Clinton Courier

A Publication of the Clinton Parent Teacher Association
Issue 8, April 2010

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

According to folklore, April showers bring May flowers, something we all look forward to (unless you have bad allergies). Well, this year, April showers will not only bring us nature's beauty in all its glory, they bring us a maelstrom from Trenton in the form of deep cuts in financial aid for the public school districts in our state, something we are not looking forward to.

While we usually begin planning for our students' next school year around this time, this year we find ourselves trying to save the educational and extracurricular programs that your children are entitled to. In doing so, we have been meeting to determine not only how to maximize space in each of our schools, but how we can wade through this storm with as little impact on our students as possible.

This situation reinforces how incredibly important our home/school partnership is and will become as we work together to weather this storm and maintain the educational excellence and equity that drives our work. I have no doubt and am comforted in the talent of those in the Clinton community who will work with us to rise above what is proving to be a long, tough road ahead to creatively find solutions to the barriers we may face.

I wish this was all a bad April Fool's Day joke, but sadly it is not. I would take the "spider on my head" that one of our amazing kindergarteners told me was lurking in my hair on April 1st rather than have to think about what might lay ahead.

As always, I thank you for your continued support and hope to see everyone tiptoeing through the tulips....

Patty

BOARD OF ED ELECTIONS

Board of Education elections will take place on **Tuesday, April 20th**. There are four candidates running for three seats. To learn more about the candidates please attend the Board of Education Candidates Night, sponsored by The League of Women Voters of South Orange & Maplewood & South Orange Maplewood Presidents' Council, on **Tuesday, April 13, 7-8:30 pm** at the Jefferson School Auditorium, 518 Ridgewood Ave., Maplewood.

APRIL-AT-A-GLANCE

- 1-30TH FAMILY HERITAGE MONTH
- 13TH BOARD OF ED CANDIDATES NIGHT, 7-8:30 PM,
JEFFERSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PLANT SALE ORDERS DUE
- 14TH PTA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 7:15 PM
- 16TH SCHOOL PRIDE DAY
- 20TH BOARD OF EDUCATION ELECTIONS
- 22ND CLINTON'S EARTH DAY PARADE, 2 PM
A TASTE OF CLINTON, 6:15 PM

COMING IN MAY

- 1-31ST ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH
- 3-7TH TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK
- 4TH TEACHER APPRECIATION LUNCH, 3 PM
- 7TH SCHOOL PRIDE DAY
PLANT SALE PICK-UP DAY
- 12TH PTA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 7:15 PM
- 15TH SPRING RENAISSANCE FAIR, 11 AM-3 PM
- 15TH-21ST SPRING SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR
- 21ST LOCOMANIA



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FROM THE PTA PRESIDENT

Wow! Spring has arrived and our Clinton Community has once again proven to be one large group of dedicated, talented people with one goal: to enhance the lives of our children and come together as one school, celebrating our differences and sharing our similarities. Our spring is filled with so many events and so many volunteers that I must thank the many individuals who made it all possible.

Our Tricky Tray Silent & Live Auction was a huge success as we raised over \$20,000 for Clinton School. This money goes directly to fund the many school programs supported by the PTA. I want to thank our Tricky Tray chairwoman, **Cecelia Cancellaro**, for all her hard work. Also, **Nancy Mattia** worked for 365 days to prepare for her last Tricky Tray and she will be sorely missed next year! **Leah Gomberg** and **Barbara Cokorinos** deserve a huge thank you for making the desserts of the evening. The Tricky Tray committee deserves a big thank you for all their hard work canvassing stores and helping to prepare the Woman's Club for the event.

We never thought we'd be able to top last year's All School Musical Revue, but somehow we managed to gather even more volunteers and involve even more students in this year's show! *It's What's Happening* was a huge success and absolutely an amazing production. Thank you to **Suzanne Roghanchi** and **Jeremy Moss** for creating the ideas and producing the show. Your dedication over the last few months and your attention to every small detail produced a masterpiece that our children will never forget. Thank you for creating a lifetime of memories for the children of the school. The rehearsals and the shows were run with such organization and precision thanks to **Colleen Broderick**. Thank you for all your hard work and insistence that there must be deadlines and paperwork for every detail! Thank you to all the directors for working so hard with their casts for the last three months and for being part of the show. The show couldn't have gone on without you, and we so appreciate your talent and hard work.

As I am thanking certain individuals in this letter, I want to take the time to express a thank you to every volunteer at Clinton School. The events highlighted in this letter are just a sampling of events that are made possible by volunteers. There are so many parents who dedicate time in our school that I would be here for hours and take up the entire *Courier* if I tried to name every one! Our parent involvement reaches far and wide, and we can only accomplish as much as we do because of the numbers of people who commit themselves to our efforts throughout the year.

I hope everyone enjoyed the spring break and everyone's relaxed to tackle the next few events! Mark your calendar for our International Dinner, April 22nd at 6:15.

Happy Spring,
Karen Bethel

REMEMBER EARTH DAY ON APRIL 22

At Clinton, our children have learned a great deal from Martin Luther King, Jr. and his struggle to affect change in the world. As Earth Day approaches on April 22, 2010, one quote from Dr. King strikes to the core: "The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people but the silence over that by the good people."

What does that mean for us from an environmental perspective? Who (or what) can we imagine to be the recipients of "oppression and cruelty" in the natural world? The answer is heart-breaking: just about all the living creatures of the planet, plus the soil, the water, and the air. Dr. King provided such an ecstasy of inspiration on how to do better in the world. One of his rays of hope speaks to our community: "Almost always, the creative dedicated minority has made the world better." What if it turns out that we are that minority? What if we are the leaders we have been looking for?

We don't need an Earth Day to be reminded that we are actively harming our health and the health of the entire Earth. We are a great nation and a great people. We can do this, and we can do it now.—*Clare Payton*

CLASSROOM NEWS

Classroom News provides a wonderful opportunity for everyone in the Clinton community to learn about all the different activities that engage students during the school day. Please send information about classroom activities to bobhugel@gmail.com.—*Bob Hugel*

Kindergarten Ms. Shelffo's class has spring fever and is ready to break free from hibernation. Students are excited to be learning about the growing cycle of spring through hands-on activities such as the planting of seeds and observations of plant growth. They will be focusing on recycling and Earth Day to heighten their awareness of the importance of protecting the environment. In addition, students have been developing their skills in graphing, measurement, and the concept of time. Finally, rumor has it that the class was visited by a leprechaun on St. Patrick's Day!

First Grade The first graders in Ms. Moskowitz's and Ms. Zalinski's class had a busy March, full of fun and educational activities. For St. Patrick's Day, they made leprechaun hand prints, wrote stories, and enjoyed a wee bit of Irish folklore and feasting. In honor of women's history month, students learned about several illustrious women, including Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Eleanor Roosevelt. The class has also been working on contractions, long and short vowel sounds, graphing, and currency. Finally, Ezra Jack Keats was the class's author of the month.

Third Grade Mrs. Pomares' third-grade class is learning about body systems in science and doing a study of author Roald Dahl in language arts. Students are also learning about the birth of the United States in social studies. The class is excited to see the movie *Oceans* in April. Congratulations to Ms. Bradshaw, who will be teaching all subjects after the April vacation break. And..shhh! The class parents are planning a surprise for students sometime in early May!

Fifth Grade Congratulations to fifth grader Erin D., whose synchronized ice skating team, the Synchroettes, won first place in the 2010 Juvenile Synchronized Team Championships held in Minneapolis in early March!

GET YOUR APPETITES READY

Our 8th Annual International Dinner, "A Taste of Clinton," will be held on **Thursday, April 22nd from 6:15 to 7:45 pm**. Come and taste what makes our culturally diverse school so very special! This wonderful buffet-style dinner will offer delicious dishes from different countries, cultures, and traditions prepared by our own Clinton families. Join us to sample food and socialize with other families as you enjoy a wonderful international meal. It's a great opportunity to meet new people as you try new foods!

We need your help to make this event successful and more scrumptious than ever. Please let us know if you are interested in preparing a dish from your country of origin or culture. We could also use some volunteers at the event. You can let us know by phone, email, or by returning the invitation flyer that will be sent home in the next week. Reservations will also be requested for the number of family members who plan to attend (*Clinton families only please*).

For more information or to volunteer, please contact: **Deidra McLaughlin** at 973-313-1760 or deidra.mclaughlin@yahoo.com or **Robin Davenport** at 973-763-9165 or rdavenpo@caldwell.edu.

FOCUS ON BULLYING

As a culture, we are focusing new attention on childhood bullying and harassment. Based on decades of research we now know that there are ways to reduce much of this behavior. Here at Clinton School we have a zero tolerance policy for bullying. The following are ways in which our Clinton Community addresses this important issue:

- 5th Grade Anti-Bullying Club
- Peer to Peer and High School to Elementary Mentoring Programs
- Clinton School Girls/Boys Groups
- Class Meetings
- Student Government
- Student Mediation Program
- Social Skills Lessons

All of these programs are run by our school social workers and social work interns. In addition, we maintain a school wide reporting expectation for verbal and physical aggression. We encourage all students and parents to report any acts of bullying as soon as possible so that we can address the issue in a timely and effective manner. There are consequences for any child who bullies another student. Consequences are given based on the severity of the behavior.

The safety of our children is our main concern. Know that any information that comes to our attention is taken very seriously. Please report any incidents of bullying that your child may report to you about themselves or any other child in our school. The connection between school and home is essential to creating an environment for all children to feel safe, secure, and happy.

Thank you,
Clinton School Staff

SPRING PLANT SALE

Don't forget to return your completed Spring Plant Sale order forms by **Tuesday, April 13th**. Plants will be delivered to the school and available for pick up on **Friday, May 7th**. Anything left after designated pick-up times will be unsupervised. If you have any questions or you can help sort and distribute plants on May 7th, please contact Elizabeth Deutsch at edeutsch2001@verizon.net or call 917-655-4971.

YEARBOOK PHOTOS

We need yearbook photos! If you have photos taken at any 2009-2010 Clinton School events, please send them as soon as possible to Maureen Davenport at maur760@hotmail.com. We have plenty of Halloween photos but need more of everything else. Please also indicate the grade of students in the photos you send.

ANOTHER CLINTON FLOAT!

For the second consecutive year, Clinton is building a float for the Memorial Day Parade! Designed by Jeremy Moss and Melissa Healey, the new float promises to be a work of art! Our theme this year is “Clinton Elementary School Celebrates Diversity.”

Please help us gather materials. There will be a drop-off box inside the school entrance. We are collecting **newspapers** and **yellow plastic bags (Star Ledger or other)**. We also need **small-holed, hexagonal chicken wire**. If you have some taking up space in your garage, please bring it to Melissa Healey’s house, 221 Coudert Place, the week of April 26th. If you have any questions, please call Melissa at 973-275-9870.

Mark your calendars for our float-building days: **Saturday, May 22; Sunday, May 23; Saturday, May 29; and Sunday, May 30**. We welcome participation of both children and adults! Be on the lookout for further announcements. Please plan to march in the parade on **Monday, May 31**. Every child is encouraged to march in a Clinton T-shirt. If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, please call Jackie Lahey at 973-313-9757 or email jaclahey@aol.com.

CLINTON CELEBRATES FAMILIES

This month we will highlight the rich diversity of the collective Clinton family in our cultural heritage display case. If you have a family story or tradition you would like to share, please lend us your family photos, memorabilia, and/or a paragraph or two telling something about what makes your family unique and wonderful. This display will be going up right after spring break so please contact **Tricia Bloom** rubybloom@earthlink.net to participate.

LET’S GO LOCOMANIA!

The Clinton PTA, in collaboration with our awesome physical education teachers, Mr. Jeff Lehman and Ms. Jordyn Freede, is proud to once again present a fun fitness fundraiser-LoCoMania! On **Friday, May 21st** all Clinton students will spend fifty minutes skipping, hopping, galloping, and dancing on the Underhill Field Track led by **Mr. Lehman and Ms. Freede**. Music will be provided by **Clinton Dad and resident DJ Jeremy Moss**. The Electric Slide, the Hokey Pokey, the Cha Cha Slide, and YMCA are just a few of the fun dances they’ll do. Students are learning these dances during their physical education classes in the weeks leading up to the event, so they’ll be eager to show off their moves!

Pledge sheets will be sent home the week of May 3rd and students can ask family, friends, and neighbors to sponsor them (either through a flat rate pledge or by pledging a particular amount for the three 15 minute segments). One hundred percent of the profits will go to Clinton School. All students will participate in the event, whether or not they seek pledges. Pledge forms and payment must be sent to school by June 1st.

If you can volunteer to hand out water, keep things organized, and cheer on our great kids, please contact **Leah Gomberg** (ldgomberg@verizon.net or 973-275-0927). We need lots of help to keep things running smoothly!

THE CLINTON GREEN

This month, I’ve got a secret code for you: IPM. Just say “IPM” to all your friends and family. Integrated Pest Management, or IPM, is a set of clean, green strategies for getting Mother Nature to help you manage your garden. Let your children discover the wonders of the earth and get them involved in these ten steps of IPM.

Select plants carefully. Choose plants for your region, space, light, and soil. Use native plants. Select high-rated cultivars developed for disease resistance. Your best selections are found at catalog companies.

Prepare the beds well. Dig deeply (2+ shovels down). Till, or turnover, your soil. Weed. Add compost, manure, and sand (or greensand). Dig, baby, dig.

Fertilize organically. Add organic soil amendments, such as blood meal, kelp, chicken manure, etc..., to enrich and balance your area before you plant. Do a soil test first to determine your needs. This is a great science project.

Find companion plants. Companion plants are those that detract pests away from each other or attract predators to those pests. Roses and garlic is one classic pairing, but there are many more.

Practice crop rotation. Just as farmers rotate their crops every year, you, too, should move your vegetables and annuals around. Or, change the types of plants. This messes with the minds of your bug enemies!

Know your beneficial insects. Not every bug is bad. Some are on your side, so don’t kill your army. Bugs, such as ladybugs, spiders, praying mantis, and lacewings, are willing to work for you all day, for free.

Set up bug traps. Bowls of beer can trap slugs in hosta gardens; sugar water can lure aphids. Find out ways to snare those little devils. Make a game out of it.

Apply organic pesticides. You can’t use chemical pesticides without killing the good bugs. Instead, use organic soaps, pepper sprays, and other natural liquids when it is necessary to keep the pests at bay.

Lay weed barriers. Wet newspaper covered with mulch can be placed around shrubs or anywhere you don’t want weeds. It breaks down over time naturally.

Weed by hand. Get knee pads and a tall lemonade. Weeding by hand ultimately takes less time, because chemicals just have to be re-applied (and worse, they are insanely toxic). Extract those weeds to the roots and shriek in triumph! Your neighbors will want to find out what is so fun over at your house. Invite them over for refreshments, and give them a trowel.—*Clare Payton*

THE BOOK FAIR IS COMING!

Coming to the Clinton cafeteria in May is the spring Scholastic Book Fair, an event not to be missed! The book fair kicks off at the Clinton Spring Fair on **Saturday May 15th** and will run through **May 21st**. It's the perfect opportunity to stock up on some great summer reading, pick up a literary gift for a friend or sibling, or donate a book to a Clinton classroom or the library via teacher wish lists.

We can always use help at the fair setting up and decorating, supplying refreshments for the teachers' preview luncheon, staffing the room during the fair hours, or packing it up. Keep an eye out for the volunteer flyer which will come out later this month. We will also soon have a dedicated website up and running that will be a convenient one-stop resource for ongoing information about the fair. Any questions, please contact Sharon Geraghty at 973-761-4120 or s_geraghty@comcast.net, or Kris Stringer at 973-313-1970 or kristine.stringer@gmail.com.

SPRING RENAISSANCE FAIR

Here ye, here ye! The Clinton School Renaissance Fair will take place on **Saturday, May 15th, 11 am-3 pm**, on the Clinton School grounds. It's an event not to be missed, so mark your calendars now!

To make the School Fair the huge success it is every year, we need your help. All we ask is that you give one hour of your time. The rest of the day can be spent enjoying the fair's fun activities, which include games, inflatable rides, crafts, music, food, and prizes! To volunteer, please contact Deb Yohannan, Volunteer Coordinator at deb1105@optimum.net or 973-761-4055. Please provide a time slot during which you are available (set up, 11-12, 12-1, 1-2, 2-3, or break down). Your participation makes this event an awesome one every year. Please volunteer! —*Leah Gomberg*

SUPPLY KITS FOR NEXT YEAR

It's hard to believe that it's time to think about school supplies for next year, but it is! The pre-packed school supply kits will be put together using specific school supply lists provided by Clinton teachers. The company we use—School Kidz USA—features quality products like Crayola, Prang, and Staples at competitive prices.

There are many advantages to getting your back-to-school supplies this way including not having to spend time shopping and not having to pay taxes on the supplies. Order forms for each grade will be sent home in backpacks shortly.

This will be your only chance to order the kits (**deadline is June 1st**), which will be available for pick up the day before the first day of school and the morning of the first day of school. If you have questions, please contact Leah Gomberg at 973-275-0927 or ldgomberg@verizon.net.

SOMEF'S NIGHT ON THE TOWNS

On **Sunday, May 23rd**, The South Orange-Maplewood Education Foundation (SOMEF) will celebrate its 20th anniversary with a salute to the performing arts at Columbia High School at a multi-faceted event called "A Night on the Towns." The dazzling program, the start of a long term initiative to raise significant funds for the restoration of the Columbia High School auditorium, features a star-studded musical review, "**Gotta Sing, Gotta Dance, Gotta Give**," directed by local residents Bethany Pettigrew and Tricia Benn. The performance will take place at Columbia High School at 7:30 pm. Already scheduled to perform are Tony winner Christine Ebersole, Emmy winner Andre Braugher, film and television actress Suzanne Douglas, Lydia Johnson Dance, a music faculty Trumpet Trio, and CHS alumna, Heidi Burgermaster with an Alumni Jazz Band. The cast will be joined by more local performers as well as Columbia High School's own impressive talent from the past, present, and future! Tickets for the show, which include a post-show dessert reception sponsored by the CHS Music Parents' Association, are \$75 (preferred seats), \$50 (standard seats), and \$25 (students with valid ID). An additional option for event-goers is an extravagant pre-show cocktail party at the home of Patricia Bell. Admission to the cocktail party is included in several show and pre-party package choices.

Since its inception, SOMEF, soon to adopt the new name, The ACHIEVE Foundation, has raised more than one million dollars to support the South Orange/Maplewood schools. For reservations and further information, go to www.somef.org, call 973-378-2055 or send e-mail to info@somef.org.

—*Cecelia Cancellaro*



Last month Mr. Lehman and Ms. Freede enjoyed a special pizza picnic in the gym with Mrs. D'Addozio's class.

CLINTON'S ANNUAL EARTH DAY PARADE

We will hold our second annual Earth Day parade on Earth Day, April 22nd, at 2 pm. Try to pick up your child a little early that day and you will be rewarded with visions of hats and instruments fashioned entirely from recycled materials!

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2009-2010 PAC COMMITTEE

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Second Grade: Geraldine Caparruva (gacaparruva@gmail.com) and Amy Janay (amyjanay@gmail.com)

Third Grade: Shauna McFadecan (shaunamc@gmail.com)

Fourth Grade: Mary Barber (marybarber8@verizon.net) and the Rev. Herrys Angerville (herrysangerville@yahoo.com)

Fifth Grade: Francine Anderson Campbell (Francineandersoncampbell@gmail.com)

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Member at Large: Victoria Khazan Pigault (Victoria.Khazan@handsonchange.com)

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READATHON A BIG SUCCESS!

Thank you to everyone who participated in our 2009-2010 PTA Readathon. Thanks to your efforts we were able to raise \$1,800, all of which will be used to purchase new books for the much loved Clinton School Library. And thank you to **Liz Salituri** for organizing this wonderful fundraiser. And congratulations to the three winners of our Readathon raffle, who won gift cards to Words Bookstore in Maplewood: **kindergartener Zachary J., 1st Grader Lilly B., and 3rd grader Josh R.**

The hundreds of books purchased with the proceeds from last year's Readathon have been circulating since the autumn, and each one includes a sticker thanking Readathon participants.

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