

February Newsletter

Dear Parents,

- January Highlights -

In **Cultural Studies**, we began the new year by unrolling our loong **Civilizations Timeline** which shows us when important civilizations happened, and with that, other important events and people related to them in recorded history. This now hangs in its permanent central location in our room where it can be viewed and pondered for the rest of the year as we continue to study those civilizations. We have now begun this journey with our big study of the **Egyptian Civilization**. We're becoming steeped in pyramids, hieroglyphics, and pharaohs, just to name a few. The children have really taken to these activities and discussions. We will have a few more Egyptian talks, and then we will cap off our study with an "Egyptian Feast" of barley, flatbread, peas, dates, and real Egyptian chamomile tea. You might want to include any of the above in an upcoming meal at home. If you want to further your child's Egyptian experiences, we also suggest a family visit to the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum in San Jose. It houses one of the largest collections of Egyptian artifacts in the United States. There are many highlights the children would enjoy seeing including a reconstructed tomb from Egypt. It's a great Saturday outing. You can get more information about the museum online, and also look up the album of photos from our last trip there which is on our G+ page (including pics inside that tomb!).

Our biggest event, though, was finally completing our study of **Native Americans**. We're certain you enjoyed your child's Native American book which is now home. So much effort went into it on their parts. Then the long-awaited Feast became the highlight. Each tribe served to their visitors from other tribes, food typical for their area: Arctic Tundra - shaved ice and (real!) Alaskan Glacier water; Pacific Northwest - smoked salmon, pine nuts, blueberries; Coastal California - walnuts, "acorn" (corn) mush; Desert Southwest - giant desert corn nuts, sunflower seeds; Grassy Great Plains - wild rice, beef jerky; Woodland Northeast - cranberries, succotash; Swampy Southeast - baked yams, and pecans. Quite a number of children said they wanted to ask their parents to buy some of these at the grocery store so they could have more (!) Hopefully this list will assist you.

In **Botany** we took some time to learn all about **stems**, both above the ground and those which live *under* the ground. In conjunction with that study everyone planted either a tulip or daffodil bulb which are all now tucked away for the Winter out in the garden. We also have some narcissus bulbs which we're watching day by day as they begin to sprout leaves and roots in our warm classroom - which tricks them into "thinking" it is Spring. We will anxiously await their flowers!

- February Events -

February is such a short month, but so much goes on. In **Botany** as branches also start to blossom, we will study **buds**. Please notice the beautiful almond blossoms that are just beginning to blossom. You can watch their progress as you enter our parking lot each day.

Our first "big day" will be when we celebrate **Mardi Gras**, or Fat Tuesday - the traditional day of feasting before the Christian observance of Lent. More details about how we will celebrate it will be coming home next week.

The next big event will be our **Valentine's Party**. On this day, the children should bring a valentine addressed to each child in the class. Attached to this newsletter will be a list of all the children's names. After passing out our Valentines, we will enjoy some valentine treats. *If you would like to send something, please let us know ahead of time so we can coordinate.* The children may have free dress on that day if they wear red, white, pink, purple, or something with hearts on it. Of course it's always ok to just wear your uniform... (We will also have some special writing projects connected with Valentine's Day.)

Our **field trip** this month is our annual trip to the **San Francisco Symphony's Concert for Kids**. It's always one of the highlights of the year. The Symphony sends us a CD of the music ahead of time, including comments by the conductor. We will be listening to it and will be very familiar with it by the time of the trip. How fortunate we are to live in a part of the U.S. where it is possible for our children to have the experience of hearing a world-class symphony orchestra.

Asian Lunar New Year, 4716 Year of the Dog, also is coming, and our room will become quite festive looking with many artifacts from China. We will be making

paper lanterns for our desks so the good spirits will find their way to them. We'll even have a big dragon hanging from the ceiling to scare away any evil spirits. This will ensure a great semester ahead! And of course we will be the "noisy" end of the kindergarteners' big **Dragon Parade** (wear red if you can). Also, as has become our tradition now, everyone is looking forward to the **Chinese Luncheon** which we'll have in the Social Hall afterwards. It will take place on Friday, February 23rd. The **Lunar New Year Parade in San Francisco** will be on **Saturday, February 24th** and is always broadcast live on **KTVU Channel 2 from 6 to 8 p.m.** If you're home, we know your child would enjoy watching. Could be a Chinese take-out dinner night!

Always looking for more writing projects... our long **Personal Timeline** will see its finish too this month. Thank you so much for sending in all the information so that they can create this work. We think you'll enjoy the final product.

Our **new poem** this month will be ***Escape at Bedtime* by Robert Louis Stevenson**. It's perfect to go with all our attention to the night sky these past weeks, with super moons, blue moons, and eclipses. It is a longer and more challenging poem to memorize, but the children are ready for this stretch. And the art work done with it will be the incentive and reward. Then they can go out and recite this wonderful poem right to the night sky itself.

Our literature and library areas will focus on **Black History Month** with many books and stories about important individuals in the Civil Rights Movement and also African American scientists, explorers, and in particular the beautiful poems of Langston Hughes.

We'll have a real treat again this year when David Zimring, a college professor of American History (& Jo's son-in-law) brings his annual History visit to MCH. This year he will be portraying Abraham Lincoln. How very fortunate we are!

The beginning of this new month brings our first semester to a close. With your child's **Report Card** and work portfolio, please also look carefully at the Criteria for Evaluation that is enclosed with the Report Card so that you will be able to better understand why each grade was given. As we evaluate your child's work, behavior, and study habits, these are the questions we ask ourselves before we decide upon the grades. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the

Report Card, please contact us. We would like the Report Cards back by the beginning of next week (Feb. 5th). The work sent home you may keep, except for the current Math Operation book, Timed Test record sheets, Journal, and Language books. If any of you would like to come for an observation visit to further help you know just what your child is doing, we would be happy to have you. Please contact us so that we can schedule a mutually convenient time.

Sincerely,

Mary Anne and Toni

Calendar:

Monday, Feb. 5th - First Semester Report Cards (signed) due back

Friday, Feb. 9th - Sharing Day - bring a photo of someone you love;
Book Orders due

Tuesday, Feb. 13th - Mardi Gras celebration
(free dress if you wear green, gold, or purple)

Wednesday, Feb. 14th - Valentine's Day Party
(free dress if you wear red, white, pink, purple, or something with hearts on it)

Friday, Feb. 16th - Field Trip to San Francisco Symphony. Be at MCH 8:15 a.m.!

Monday, Feb. 19th - Presidents Day - no school and no Day Care

Tuesday, Feb. 20th - Pres. Abraham Lincoln visits all elem. classes;
Chinese Luncheon orders and money are due

Thursday, Feb. 22nd - Washington's Birthday,
(free dress if you wear red, white, and blue, or something with flags on it)

Friday, Feb. 23rd - Chinese Lunar New Year Celebration, 4716 Year of the Dog
Dragon Parade 11:30 a.m. in the courtyard,
Chinese Luncheon immediately following in the Social Hall
Free dress if you wear red

Please have your child bring a Valentine addressed to each of the following children on **Wednesday, February 14th**

Andrei An

Hadia Nikzad

Alivia Black

Marlee Maghanoy

Tacuma Brown

Kishan Maharaj

Priashna Chand

Lucas Mitchell

Elijah Colmenero

Raylon Parmer

Nixon del Rosario

Mariana Renteria

Mehak Dhindsa

Katelynn Ritz

Lutfi Elwir

Agamdeep Singh

Sofia Garcia

Isaiah Tomas

Betty Ghirmay

Ethan Unisa

Giancarlo Guerra

Sebastian Vasquez

Evie Gutfeld

Loui Yamashiro

