



The Observatory

Los Gatos-Saratoga Observation Nursery School ~ Issue 3 ~ January-February 2009

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2009 Mountain School Benefit Auction Update

By Staci Checklenis

March 14th is right around the corner and we're expecting this year's auction to be chock full of fun and surprises! The evening's theme is Le Club Cirque – A Night Under the Big Top. Feel free to get your circus on and dress for the occasion (all clowns are welcome). This is the one school event where we get to gather as grown ups in a social setting – complete with amazing food, wine and great company. And most importantly an excellent opportunity for all of us to share our financial support of the Mountain School – “the Greatest School on Earth!”

Terrific Auction Item Donations!

Parents are already working hard on their committees. A big thank you to the Auction Items (solicitations) committee for their efforts over the holidays to get a head start on procuring wonderful items for the auction. Auction Items committee includes Ashleigh Coffeng, Maura Dietz, Anne-Michelle Frances, Kathleen Graham, Sierra Hogan, Vilma Huertas Colliou, Jean Lattie, Laura Le, Laura Murphy-Wilkens, Julie Walukiewicz, and Katja Wick. Watch out for Hot Auction Items of the Week in a weekly email starting in February!



The Mountain School Annual Fundraising Auction FAQs:

Who?	Mountain School Families, Alumni, and Community*
When?	Saturday, March 14, 2009 from 6:00 – 10:00pm
Where?	Redwood Estates Pavilion – Los Gatos
Why?	Raise funds for the Mountain School
How?	School-wide volunteer effort and support from local businesses/families/alumni
Format?	Live and Silent Auction. Food & Beverages will be served.
Theme?	Le Club Cirque – A Night Under the Big Top
Cost?	\$20 per person
Contacts?	Staci Checklenis (Event Planning), Jennifer Chen (Auction Items), and Jill Drouin (Logistics)

(Cont. p.2)

Auction Update (Cont. from p.1)

*If you know someone who would like to receive an invitation to the auction, please contact Sharon Elder at Sharon_m_barnes@yahoo.com.

Auction Commitment Reminders:

- Buy two tickets to the auction
- Work on an auction committee
- Donate goods/in-kind services for the auction valued at \$50 or more (Family Donation)
- Participate and help fund an auction item with your class (Class Donation)

Family Donations/Class Projects:

Some great ideas are floating around for both family donations and class projects. Please see newsletter article (p.4) for more details. You may contact Ann Dubois at annmariadubois@yahoo.com or Sherry McNamara at sherry@scsi.com if you would like specific ideas on purchasing an item for your family donation.

Auction Committee:

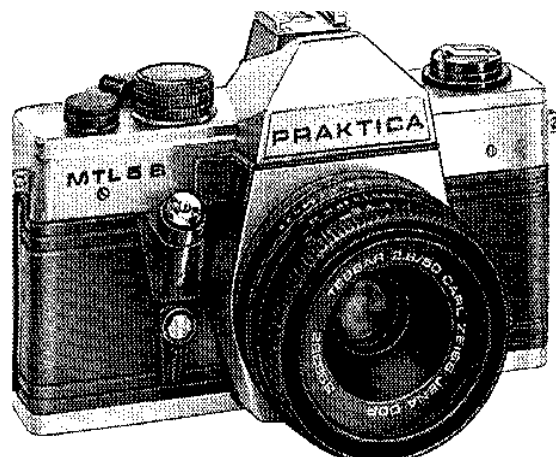
If for some reason you have not been notified of your auction committee assignment, please send an email to stacicheck@yahoo.com.

Buy-Out:

You may also choose to buy-out of your auction volunteer requirements. The cost to buy-out is \$450 on or before February 14 and \$500 after this date. Please contact Jennifer Chen at jjparkster@hotmail.com if you are interested in buying out.

Sponsorship Opportunities:

Available at \$500 and \$250 levels. If your family is interested in sponsoring this event, please contact Jennifer Chen at jjparkster@hotmail.com or 408-761-9838. Sponsor benefits include tickets to the event, sponsor recognition on event signage, event program, auction invitations, and verbal acknowledgement by event emcee. ■



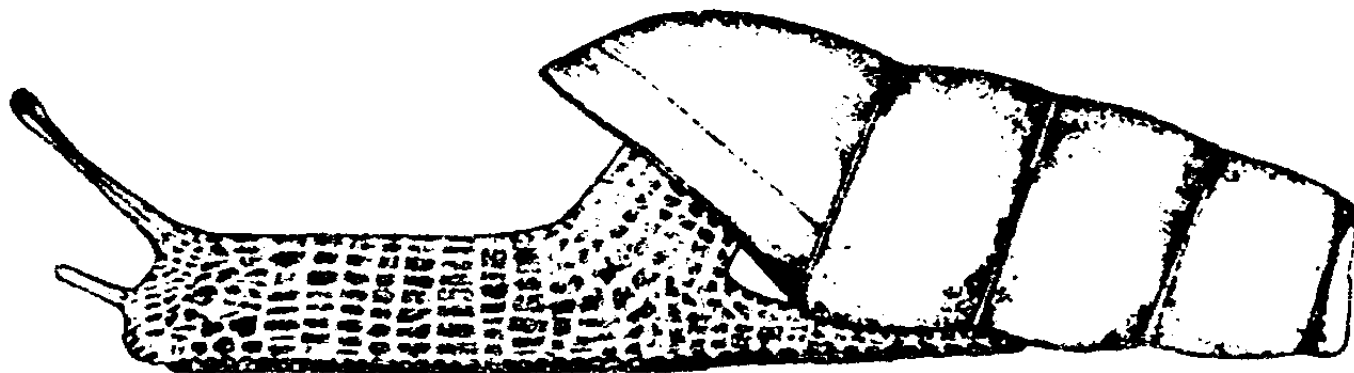
Class Photo Days are Coming

By Linda Aggarwal, Photography Chair

Individual and class photos will be taken in color in an outdoor setting on your class photo day:

Saturday, February 28 - All Saturday classes
Wednesday, March 4 - Wed 2's and 4/5's
Thursday, March 5 - 3's and 3/4's
Friday, March 6 - Fri 2's

Sibling and/or buddy photos can also be taken upon request. Please dress your children in colorful play or dress clothes. ■



Go Green with Klean Kanteen

Special Mountain School Kanteens!

By Priscilla Amend
Go Green Chairperson

In an effort to give you an alternative to disposable bottles and show some school pride, we now have a co branded Mountain School Klean Kanteen available to purchase. Klean Kanteen bottles are made with high-quality, 18/8, food-grade stainless steel, one of the healthiest and most durable materials available. They are non-leaching and 100% recyclable. Klean Kanteens are designed to be used over and over again and are strong enough to last a lifetime.

“13,000 pieces of plastic litter are floating in every square kilometer of the ocean worldwide”

Every time you refill your Klean Kanteen bottle, you are making a positive choice for your health and the health of our planet. When it doesn't end up in our landfills, most plastic eventually makes its way to our oceans where each year millions of fish, birds, and other animals die from plastic because they eat it or get caught in it. The United Nations Environment Programme estimates that more than 13,000 pieces of plastic litter are floating in every square kilometer of the ocean worldwide. The Surfrider Foundation estimates that more than half of the litter on beaches is plastic. Many researchers and environmental organizations now list plastic as the number one threat to marine environments around the planet. In addition, chemicals in some plastics have been linked by researchers to a long list of diseases, including breast cancer, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, liver abnormalities, and prostate cancer.

Facts about Plastic and Bottled Water

- In 1976, the average American drank 1.6 gallons of bottled water a year. In 2007, that number had increased to an average of 28.3 gallons per person. (Fast Company, December 2007)
- Americans spent \$15 billion on bottled water last year. This year the projected number is \$16 billion. (Fast Company, September 2008)
- Americans throw out 38 billion empty water bottles a year, more than \$1 billion worth of plastic. (Fast Company, December, 2007)
- The United States alone moves 1 billion bottles of water around a week in ships, trains, and trucks. That's a weekly convoy equivalent to 37,800 18-wheelers delivering water.

(Fast Company, September 2008)

If you are interested in purchasing a Mountain School Klean Kanteen bottle, please send an email to gogreen@lgsons.com with the following information:

Name; Class; Quantity; Total

Each bottle costs \$18. There is an envelope in the Parents Room at the Schoolhouse where you can leave your check made out to LGSONS. You can also mail your check to my home. Orders will be left at the Schoolhouse after your check has been received.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me. ■



Auction Donations & Projects

By Sherry McNamara and Ann Du Bois

LGSONS's annual auction is less than 2 months away! Saturday March 14th is our night to party! This year's theme is Le Club CIRQUE – A Night Under the Big Top. If you have never been to an auction for Mountain School before - this promises to be one not to be missed! The auction is our primary way to raise funds for our school and what a great time we have doing it.

An important part of the make up of the auction is the family donations and class projects. We are fortunate to receive many donations from generous merchants in our area and beyond. However, family donations are an important part of our auction offerings and this generates a great deal of excitement.

Creative baskets filled with art supplies, cooking goodies, family board games (all ages), handmade items (quilts/sweaters), gadgets (Ipods), art, jewelry (handcrafted and specialized) are but a few of the donations we have had in the past. Would you be willing to host a dinner party? Are you or someone you know a tax preparer? April 15th is just around the corner! Also, let's not forget the men who attend our auction!

Did you know that many of the Live Auction items also come from our families in the form of family donations? Do you have a place in Tahoe you would be willing to donate for a weekend or a week? What about Hawaii or Mexico? We all crave some sun (just wait, the rains will come!) Do you have an item or idea that will fit within this year's theme? Please throw it into the ring!

Do you have an idea for a donation but need another family to team up with? Or are you drawing a blank as to what you want to do – give us a call and we will send you some fantastic ideas or hook you up with another family.

We need to stress that the intent of the family donation is for it ideally to be something personal or meaningful from the donating family. We are in no way asking you to solicit for a donation from a merchant-that is the Solicitation Team's job. If you have a personal connection with a merchant/company, please check with the Solicitations Chair Jennifer Chen (jjparkster@hotmail.com) before contacting them.

Class projects are also shining stars at the auction. Class projects are voluntary but are highly encouraged. It is up to the individual class to determine what they would like to do – sometimes the project is driven by time involved in the creation, the cost everyone is willing to share, if it is child decorated or done by the adults. Be creative and enjoy the project! Also- sometimes two classes come up with the same great idea - lock in your class project with us asap! Now is a great time to start discussions about your class project and use the upcoming circle meetings to vote and discuss the how, when and who of the project. Descriptions of class projects are due by February 7th

but the project itself may be turned in later (All donations, including class projects, are due by February 28th.).

Storage for the auction is currently under discussion. There will be a basket for smaller items at the school house for your convenience. If you have a larger item - let us know when it will be there and we will make arrangements to get it to a designated storage area.

We (Sherry and Ann) are your contacts for both family donations and class projects this year. Please give us a call, shoot us an email or track us down at school if you have any questions. We have lots of suggestions and ideas - including wish list items from our Auction Chairs that would nicely round out some auction packages already in the works. This list will be posted shortly at the school house.

Important things to remember:

*Each family is required to donate \$50 or more, in the form of item(s) or services for our bidding pleasure. (LGSONS families also have the option to donate a \$50 check payable to LGSONS to represent their family donation.)

*Please completely fill out the Family Donation Form – especially the description of the item or service as this information is used in the auction catalog.

*Please fill out (2) donation forms – one to be attached to your actual donation and one to be turned in. We want to give credit where credit is due.

*Donation Forms are due February 7th (can be dropped at the school house, faxed to Sherry, or emailed to Ann or Sherry)

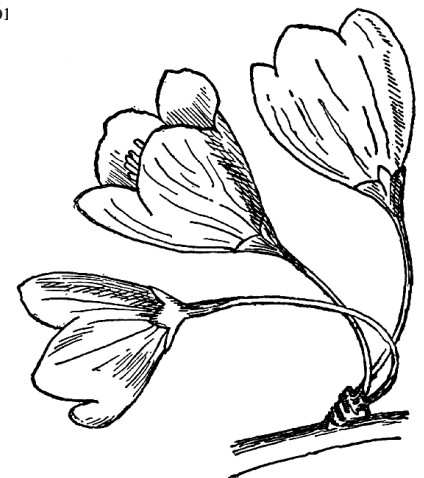
*Physical donations, family donations and class projects, are due by February 28th (but we would really like them sooner then later)

*Class Project information is due February 7th – please use the Family Donation Form

It is through the fantastic support and energy of our Mountain School community that our auctions are a success! All your support is greatly appreciated! Thank you!

Ann Du Bois
(408)279-2092 home
annmariadubois@yahoo.coi

Sherry McNamara
(408)353-3556 home
sherry@scsi.com



Information Session

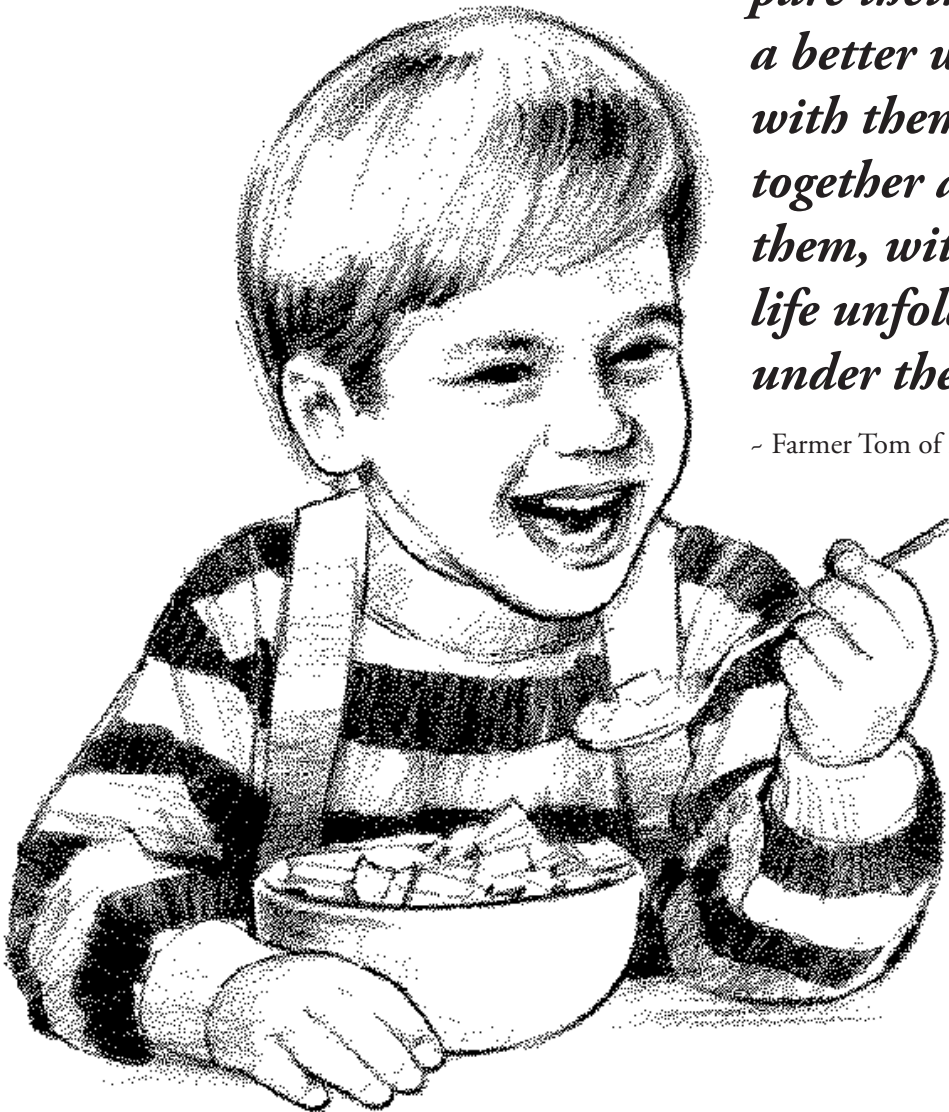
By Karen Paculba, Information Membership Chair

It's hard to believe that it's already time to start thinking about the 2009-2010 school year. If you have any friends or family who are interested in learning more about our unique, outdoor-focused developmental program, please let them know we are hosting an Information Session on Sunday, February 8th at 4pm geared toward prospective parents. At this session, we will review in depth the Mountain School approach, curriculum, carpooling component and more. Nursing babies are welcome, otherwise this is a parent-focused meeting.

Please note: New this year, we are requiring new applicants to attend either the open house, information session or a class visit. ■

“Native Americans believe that we don't really inherit the earth; we borrow it from our children. If we agree that this is the case, we are obliged as trustees to care for our children's environment much as we care for our children themselves. Much of our children's future depends on how we decide to grow and prepare their food. I can't think of a better way than spending time with them in the kitchen, eating together and getting dirty with them, witnessing the miracle of life unfold in their hands and under their feet.”

- Farmer Tom of Live Earth Farm (Submitted by Jane Krejci)



Alfie Kohn in March

By Jamie Fleming, Programs Chair

I'm very excited to inform you that in March the speaker at our General Meeting will be Alfie Kohn. Alfie Kohn is the author of eleven books on human behavior, education and parenting. He has been on Oprah twice and on many other radio and TV programs. We are a co sponsor of this event. Registration is on a first come basis and they are expecting spots to fill fast. Don't wait until the last moment to register! The website to register is www.McAuliffeK8.com. How exciting for our school, I hope you all can attend!

LGSONS General Meeting with Alfie Kohn
March 18th, Wednesday
7:00pm to 9:00pm
San Jose State University
Morris Dailey Auditorium
■

Living Proof

By Jane Krejci, Director

We teachers often talk about the importance of making mistakes which are actually 'learning experiences.'

I have just been reminded of this first hand. I made a mistake on the first round of Survey Monkey. I still have lots to learn regarding the use of technology (I obviously didn't grow up with computers!). However - with the help and support of some of you (particularly Jill Drouin and Jennifer Chen), I understand a bit more. I also appreciate that many of you offered to help.

It reminds me how fortunate I am to be a part of this Mt. School community. THANK YOU! Teacher Jane
■

Whining

By Jane Krejci, Director

Who of us has not been annoyed by a whining child (our own or another's)?

Typical responses include:

"Stop whining! You are driving me crazy!"
"I can't hear you (or I won't listen) when you whine!"
"Go to the 'whining chair' - now!"

These responses aim to stop the whining and may work for the short term. Whining will occur again if we do not really respond to what the child is trying to say.

So, what is really going on?! What is the message (the 'good

idea') behind the whining? In order not to get 'hooked' by whining, we need to understand what the child is trying to communicate. Whining is a unique form of emotional expression. Janis Keyser ("Becoming the Parent You Want to Be") says that we need to provide "subtitles" for children. Children do not always have a clear understanding of their feelings; or the words to express them. This is where we can help. Do they need our attention? Are they trying to tell us something? Can we help them identify their feelings (are they frustrated, sad, tired, scared, mad...)? Can we help them put words to their feelings?



Some alternative responses:

- "Wow, I'm wondering if you are feeling a bit frustraed (or another emotion)?"
- "I bet you need a big hug right now."
- "Let's just sit here together for a while."
- "Is there another way you could tell me what you want?"
- "What are you feeling?"
- "I hear you - but I prefer your regular voice; I don't like to answer whiny voices."
- "Can you ask in another way?"
- "Try it again."

To promote healthy emotional development in our children and to save our sanity, we need to find creative and effective ways of dealing with whining. I would welcome your ideas - and what has worked for you and your family. ■

Take a Hike

By Nicole Engel, Co-Chair

My family and I decided early in the fall that we would go explore a Santa Clara county park (www.parkhere.org) or a state park (www.parks.ca.gov) one day each weekend since we live in an area where they are so plentiful. We decided that we needed to start small given the age range of our four children and have the expectation that each hike would not be more than what they could handle. I do have to admit that a hike or two ended in tears and an early trip back to the car. Through trial and error we now know that snacks and water are a must no matter the length of the hike as well as a restroom stop before we begin. Sometimes it's a little harder to get someone to come along, but we're doing this as a family and there's no opting out.

We have been very fortunate this winter to have had so many beautiful days of weather. It's a little harder to brave the outdoors when it's cold and rainy, but it is also worth discovering what's out there in not so nice weather. The same trail looks different in the rain and you never know what different creatures you may encounter. Once we came upon 20, yes that's right 20, salamanders!

When my eight-year-old daughter Hannah was in the 4/5's class, I commented on the rainy weather and not wanting to play outside. Hannah looked up at me and said "Mommy, we can still go outside, teacher Marie says our skin is waterproof!" So with that in mind, take advantage of our many local parks and take a hike. ■



“Mommy, we can still go outside, teacher Marie says our skin is waterproof!”

The best parts of these hikes are the time we are spending as a family and discovering new things along the way. The trove of “treasures” that the kids have discovered are many, from bugs and rocks and sticks to bricks from the foundation of the formally submerged city of Lexington. Our trip last week took us along the cliff above the ocean at Wilder state beach where we discovered the sea gulls were flying at the same height as we were walking. What may be a treasure to one is not necessarily the same for another, but we've also discovered that there is something for everyone on each hike.

Thank You!

By Jane Krecji, Director

Our thanks to “Grandma J.” for a much needed vacuum cleaner. It will help to keep the sand out of our newly cleaned carpet. Grandma J.’s grandchildren, Andrew and Allison Coscarelli, are in the Friday 2s. ■

My Two Favorite New Books

By Jane Krecji, Director

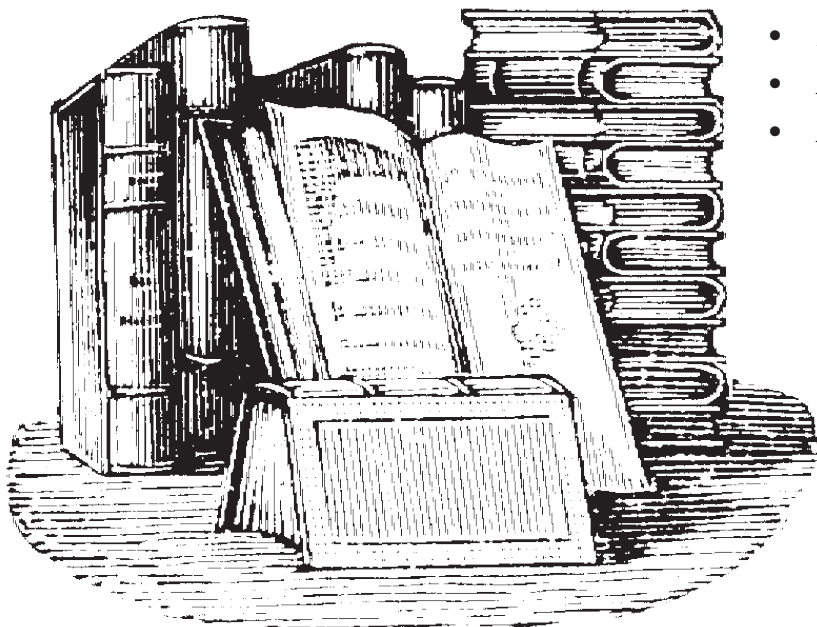
(I bought the first from Hicklebees; the second from the Wooden Horse in order to support independent retailers.)

ONE by Kathryn Otoshi

This is really a book about bullying and standing up for one’s self and others. It cleverly and subtly uses colors and numbers to convey the messages of standing strong and of inclusion. Staff at Hicklebees chose this as their “Book of the Year.” I understand why. I have read it to elementary school students, as well as preschoolers.

MY NAME IS NOT ISABELLA by Jennifer Fosberry

This book is a dialogue between a mother and daughter. Isabella imagines and dreams that she is alternately Sally, Rosa, Marie, Elizabeth, Annie, and mom. These characters are also historical figures. Can you guess who they are? Their biographical information is at the back of the book. This book is not just for girls - boys ask to hear it again and again too! ■



Editor’s Notes

by Annette Rau,
Newsletter Editor & Publisher, 2008/09



Thank you for your patience waiting for this third issue. We were off to a slow start this new year, with many article ideas but little time for actual writing.

Start thinking now for anything you’d like to share in Issue Four.. As always, your **ideas, articles, thoughts, poems, recipes, events, and news items** would be greatly appreciated.

The **deadline** for the next issue of the newsletter is **March 4, 2009**. Please send me your submission, in the body of your email or as a Word doc attachment, via email at: annette.rau@hotmail.com with “NEWSLETTER” as the subject heading.

Enjoy reading! ■

Mark your Calendars!

- **Feb 9** Postmark deadline for Fall 09 Priority Registration (application at lgsons.org)
- **Feb 16-21** Winter Break
- **Mar 1** Workday (12-4pm)
- **Feb 28** Saturday Class Photos
- **Mar 4,5,6** Class Photos
- **Mar 14** Mt. School Fundraising Auction
- **Mar 18** General Meeting: Alfie Kohn
- **Apr 6-11** Spring Break
- **Apr 26** Spring Picnic

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