



From the Headmaster:
Tom Needham

April Showers Brings May Flowers ?

For those of us who don't suffer from air borne allergies, Spring is often a long awaited season with a burst of colorful flowers, warmer weather, bright green buds on the trees and that first robin. The NCAA Basketball Tournament, the Philadelphia Flower Show, the start of baseball season can all help to signal the end of the winter season the arrival of Spring.

But for the students at Hill Top and their families, spring also brings many other changes that require physical and emotional adjustments. On March 8th we experienced the change to Daylight Savings Time which means we all rise an hour earlier when it is still dark out and for our students it can be a very hard adjustment to make. Our students complain of not getting to sleep as easily and have trouble getting out of bed in the morning. Therefore, they can be over tired and less patient/tolerant of themselves or others.

Warmer temperatures and multiple gray and rainy days can bring a new level of lethargy during the school day. Energy to attend to school work, to follow directions, or to control impulsive thoughts or comments is often lacking when spring first arrives. All kinds of allergies blossom with the arrival of the new grass and flowers. Mrs. Osborne, our school nurse reports that the number of students in sick call more than doubled on Friday, March 20th than on any day in that week. I write this on Monday, March 23rd and the number of students in the infirmary is already above Friday's count!!

Our bright and talented students who struggle with organizational problems often find that the heavy jacket they wore on the cold morning commute to school is not needed in the afternoon on the way home and therefore ends up being left behind with the often misplaced, lunch bag, laptop, or book bag. And let's not forget the seasonal arguments each spring about what we will wear to school because our students are anxious to get into shorts, short sleeved shirts, and sandals but we as parents feel it may be too cold yet.

But all is not lost. In addition to the items listed above, we at Hill Top have many more positive things to look forward to such as Spring Break, Parent Conferences, Evening of the Arts, Tennis, Golf and Commencement. Take heart. we may struggle with what starts the arrival of Spring but for those of us at Hill Top spring finishes in June with some positive opportunities and very special events.

Chronicals of Admissions:
Meredith Fitzpatrick

We have had very successful Open Houses this month. Dr. Denise Faust presented at our Professional Open House, February 27th. We had a very successful Open House for perspective families on March 18th. It was attended by 15 perspective families. Special thanks to our student ambassadors, Andrew Bowens, Chris Colliers, Charlie Haas, Matt Lake, Erin Main, Mary McCabe, and Zach Wilson providing tours to our guests. We have also had several Hill Top students serve as Shadow Guides in the month of March – special thanks to Matt O'Leary, Matt Malloy, Joe Cort, Will Feldan, and Natasha Hubbard-Blatt. I also want to thank our entire Faculty for opening your classrooms to our perspective students. Thank you for your ongoing support of the Office of Admission.



April Calendar

- 4/1 - Spring Break, No School, Offices closed**
- 4/2 - Spring Break, No School, Offices closed**
- 4/3 - Spring Break, No School, Offices closed**
- 4/6 - Testing/Conferences, Early Dismissal**
- 4/7 - Testing/Conferences, Early Dismissal**
- 4/8 - Testing/Conferences, Early Dismissal**
- 4/9 - Testing/Conferences, Early Dismissal**
- 4/10 - Professional Open House Luncheon - Testing/Conference, Early Dismissal**
- 4/13 - Holiday, No School, Offices Closed**
- 4/14 - Classes resume**
- 4/15 - Upper School trip to NYC - 8th Grade: Community service at MANNA on Main St.**
- 4/17 - 8th Grade Community service at MANNA on Main St.**
- 4/22 - Admissions Open House - NHS Students to read to preschool students**



The Upper School Scoop:

Liz McGowen

It's difficult to believe that we are already entering the final marking period of the 2008-2009 school year. During this time, Upper School classes will be wrapping up course content and preparing for final exams. To accomplish these goals, the study skills and seminar classes have notable plans. The tenth grade study skills classes will be creating a final exam study pamphlet that compiles the strategies that they learned this year to prepare for tests and exams. When the pamphlet is complete, they will distribute it to other Upper School students. In Junior Seminar, students will be culminating the course by completing the final chapters of the textbook and engaging in a career exploration unit. The unit will begin with each junior taking the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator personality profile test and the Strong Interest Inventory. The results of these tests will offer students insight into possible future college and career choices. The juniors will then pen their final research paper of the year on a career that they wish to further explore. The seniors will also be engaging in culminating activities for their Senior Seminar class. In April seniors will place the final touches on their senior project presentations and then rehearse for their presentations, which will occur in May. Overall, Upper School students should anticipate an interesting time of discovery and reflection in each class as the school year draws to a close.



Musings from the Middle:

Mike Cohen

After many of our Middle Schoolers have worked so hard on their research papers during the 3rd marking period, I am sure that they will use Spring Break to relax and recharge. During the month of March, our students have done some great work in and out of the classrooms. Using licorice, marshmallows and other delicious candy, each of the 6th graders made a DNA strand that allowed them to see how nucleotides formed. They were great (and tasty)! Speaking of science, the 8th graders went to the Franklin Institute where they performed some hands-on activities with fulcrums, levers, and friction. Max Denbin, Mike Brown, and David Stehman worked as a team to build a K'Nex flag raising contraption that had to have two gears and a pulley. Great work guys! They must have used the teamwork skills they are learning in Group. Another grade using teamwork were the 9th graders. Over the past few weeks, the 9th grade has been getting to know Shakespeare and his most famous couple, Romeo and Juliet. To prepare for this unit, they planned and prepared a terrific Renaissance Fair that included food, fashion, games, music, and topical conversations from this time period. Every student had a part in this project and it came together well due to their hard work. Finally, after learning about the ancient Spartan way of life, the 8th graders participated in a spirited debate about the merits of the military draft in modern times. The students in the Middle School have really come a long way this year. Have a great Spring Break!





Student Life Update:
Dave Van Dyke

You've got to love the month of March! When else can you start the month skiing and end it on the golf course? As advertised, the upper school ski trip to Stowe, Vermont was incredible! From our accommodations at the rustic RoundHearth Inn, to skiing and riding one of the East's best mountains, the trip was a huge success. Visit the Hill Top website for a link to some pictures from the trip (they speak volumes). Goodbye winter, hello spring! The golf and tennis teams, as well as Outdoorsmanship club are well under way. Once again, we have excellent turnouts for our teams and look forward to exciting seasons. The golf team is very pleased that Radnor Valley Country Club will be serving as our "home" course this year.



Spring Break is upon us and on the other side is a short, but busy month. On Wednesday, April 15th, grades 9-12 will be spending the day in New York City. We will all visit Ellis Island-The Gateway to America, before dividing into two groups; one to see the 2008 Tony Award winning In The Heights, the other to take a tour of the NBC studios and Observation Deck at Rockefeller Center. Please remember that we are leaving Hill Top at 7am sharp and will be returning at 8pm.



Creative Copy:
Marion Kassab

Students in the Art Major Program went to the Philadelphia Museum of Art to participate in a workshop called Artist and Society. The students looked very closely, almost dissecting, great works of art including paintings and tapestries. They learned how artists created visually, works that reflect and respond to social and political issues of their time. This will lead students into their next project, a self portrait study

Finally, we'd like to express our sincere thanks to Suzanne Barton, Marnie Bowen, Margaret Cort, Laura Quick and Carole Weintraub who have been helping out with the lunch program. Their generosity is most appreciated by the students who, according to the parent volunteers, have been exceedingly gracious and well mannered. Ladies, thanks for helping to make the new lunch program so successful!



The Book Shelf:
Amy Gillespie

April is a librarian's favorite month. They've packed a few things into April to get librarians' hearts all a-twitter.

The week of April 12th through 18th is National Library Week. This week is set aside each year by the American Library Association to recognize the contributions that libraries have made in their communities. To celebrate, we are working on a special "Faculty and Staff Recommend" display in the library. When everyone returns from spring break and testing week, there will be a whole new "door décor" for the library, and special book recommendations from the Hill Top faculty and staff.



April is also National Poetry month. To celebrate this occasion, several students and faculty and staff members will be sharing poems with the Hill Top community during Morning Meeting each day. The poems will be taken from the Poetry 180 collection put together by former Poet Laureate Billy Collins. His idea was that by reading poems out loud in schools, poetry would seem more approachable. If you would like to see the most recent collection of Poetry 180 poems, check out www.loc.gov/poetry/180/.



Support Report:
Denise Faust
Support Report

The month of March has seemed to quickly pass us by as we complete the 3rd marking period and prepare for conference reports. Many of our topics in group are well timed as we discuss the theme of collaboration, a subject that not only highlights much of our focus as a school, but also one of the goals of our conferences. Skills such as listening, working as a team, being a community member, leadership, and working with others having diverse opinions and backgrounds are topics that permeate our students experience at Hill Top. These subjects have been explored in the context of group, being a student, friend, family member, and will soon apply to the conference experience.

In addition to focusing on collaboration in group, Mr. Matthews had the opportunity to take some of the 8th graders who won last months all school activity to Cusi for lunch. There was also a potluck for other middle school winners who demonstrated good teamwork and participation.

Below is an interesting article about giving praise to students. It is geared to parents and makes some valuable insights and suggestions. A recommended read.

How Not to Talk to Your Kids

The inverse power of praise.
By Po Bronson - <http://nymag.com/news/features/27840/>

What do we make of a boy like Thomas?

Thomas (his middle name) is a fifth-grader at the highly competitive P.S. 334, the Anderson School on West 84th. Slim as they get, Thomas recently had his long sandy-blond hair cut short to look like the new James Bond (he took a photo of Daniel Craig to the barber). Unlike Bond, he prefers a uniform of cargo pants and a T-shirt emblazoned with a photo of one of his heroes: Frank Zappa. Thomas hangs out with five friends from the Anderson School. They are "the smart kids." Thomas's one of them, and he likes belonging.

Since Thomas could walk, he has heard constantly that he's smart. Not just from his parents but from any adult who has come in contact with this precocious child. When he applied to Anderson for kindergarten, his intelligence was statistically confirmed. The school is reserved for the top one percent of all applicants, and an IQ test is required. Thomas didn't just score in the top one percent. He scored in the top one percent of the top one percent.

But as Thomas has progressed through school, this self-awareness that he's smart hasn't always translated into fearless confidence when attacking his schoolwork. In fact, Thomas's father noticed just the opposite. "Thomas didn't want to try things he wouldn't be successful at," his father says. "Some things came very quickly to him, but when they didn't, he gave up almost immediately, concluding, 'I'm not good at this.'" With no more than a glance, Thomas was dividing the world into two—things he was naturally good at and things he wasn't. ... For more of this article you can go to:

<http://nymag.com/news/features/27840/>

