

Come Together

* BURR SCHOOL PTO NEWSLETTER APRIL 5, 2000

weaving by Diane Saffrich

"We all have a different twinkle. Diversity gives us light." ...from an unknown schoolchild

NEWS ...

• **METCO Directors' Conference – March 24**

Eight Burr staff members attended the sixteenth annual METCO conference. The keynote speaker was Dr. James Banks, the widely published educator who has described the theories of transforming the curriculum to make it an authentic representation of all cultures' perspectives. Attendees also studied in two workshop sessions, including "Motivating Students," "Pride in Self, Appreciation for Others," "Kids Talk About Race: Facilitating the Conversation," "Popular Culture and Academic Standards," "From Snow White to Star Wars," and "The Challenges for Minority Youth with Disabilities."

• **GLSEN Conference – March 25**

Three Burr staff members (along with numerous other Newton staff) participated in the tenth annual Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education (GLSEN) Conference, titled "Teach Out: Practical Tools to Build Inclusive Communities," at Tufts University. The mission of GLSEN is to make all schools safe and respectful places for everyone "regardless of sexual orientation or the perception thereof." Several Newton staff were presenters or helped to plan and organize the conference. The day featured a keynote address by one of the founders of GLSEN and a series of workshops.

• **Burr Respect for Human Differences Committee**

ARTICLE: The article "White Privilege: Unpacking the Knapsack," was recently sent to every Burr household. Look for news about how a discussion of the article will take place. The article was intended to give each member of the Burr community information, to provide common experience and language, and to advance the thinking and discussion about race and racism.

BUS TOUR: The staffs of Burr School and Mason-Rice School will take part in a tour of Boston neighborhoods on the afternoon of Tuesday, April 11. We will see the places that are important to many of our students who live in Boston, but may be unfamiliar to students, families and teachers who don't.

REMINDERS ...

Freedom March 2000 – Saturday, April 8

An anti-slavery march through historic Concord, Saturday, April 8. The walk benefits four indigenous **anti-slavery organizations** in India, Thailand, Mauritania, and the Sudan. For pledge sheets or to sponsor a teacher who is walking (make a check to "American Anti-

Slavery Group") please get in touch with Sonja Robinson At Burr. Check the Freedom March homepage at <http://www.anti-slavery.com/march> or call 617-426-8161 for more info.

Book Club – Tuesday, April 4, 3:15pm, Burr Library

Discussing *Lies My Teacher Told Me* by James Loewen

To think about...

Active anti-racists:

- Recognize that everyone is influenced by phobias & prejudice
- Are willing to be challenged about their own beliefs and behaviors
- Acknowledge that unlearning prejudices and phobias is a life-long journey

(from EMI course materials)

"The same hammer that shatters the glass forges the steel." *Marcus Garvey*

"We must nurture our children with confidence. They can't make it if they are constantly told that they won't."

George Clements

Suggestions or comments? Please contact Kathie Carpenter at Burr.

METCO Event

The Burr PTO is sponsoring a table at "**Dancing Across the Decades**" – an evening of dining and dancing on **Friday, May 5, 7–11pm** at Our Ladies of the Annunciation, 7 VFW Parkway, West Roxbury. If you are interested in a donated ticket to this enjoyable and entertaining evening, please contact Susan Nichols at 558-9374.