

UUAA 2.2.20

Up Up And Away - Notes from the Upper School Director

February 2, 2020

“A man, a plan, a canal, Panama!”

Happy Super Bowl Day, Groundhog’s Day, and Palindrome Day (02.02.2020), the first full palindrome date in nearly a millennium. (You might celebrate it by taking your tacocat in a racecar to see the Panama Canal...)

To those as entertained by numbers and statistics as I admittedly am, your time has come--for it is Science Fair Week! Beyond the special events bookending the week (see below), this occasion marks the completion of Science Fair projects in fourth, sixth, and eighth grades. Students have investigated an incredible diversity of topics, either individually or in pairs, and submitted their data to statistical analysis to test their initial hypotheses.

The projects, which do take significant time and often some outside assistance from parents, offer powerful first-hand exposure to the scientific method, the essential underpinning of empirical knowledge. I hope you all will find time to peruse the boards on display this week in the Student Center or chat with students by their boards on STEM Night.

Science Fair further represents a broad philosophy of learning, often referred to as the inquiry approach, under which students are encouraged to formulate their own questions about a given subject and work to find answers either independently or collaboratively. Teachers serve as facilitators rather than lecturers. Research has bolstered this theory by showing that learners are much more likely to retain information if they have taught it to someone else rather than simply heard it passively. (So ask your kids questions!!)

That said, I believe there still is a place for “teacher-directed” learning and lecture in preparing students for success in high school and college. As always we strive to strike the right BALANCE, incorporating both battle-tested and innovative strategies to excite and instruct our charges.

Events This Week:

● Our **Science Fair** week, February 3-7, kicks off in grand fashion with the annual **Edible Car Race** on Monday, February 3. Registration forms had to be turned in by last Friday in order for teams to participate. If your child or children are registered, please make sure they bring their cars along with completed information sheets to the Student Center by 7:45 a.m. Monday, February 3. The event itself will begin shortly after 8:05 a.m. It is quite an amusing spectacle--all are invited. I'd also like to thank Sean Pollard, our director of maintenance, in advance for his work constructing our NASCAR-worthy track.

Science Fair Week concludes with our dynamic **STEM Night** on Friday, February 7, from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. There will be a uniform exchange and Eighth Grade graduation meeting for parents that same evening. (The uniform exchange will take place again the next morning, Saturday, February 8.) MJ's Hotdogs and Silver Scoops (Thrifty Ice Cream) will be at STEM Night, too!

● The deadline to order **hot lunches** for February is TODAY - Sunday, February 2. Orders can be placed at mymealorder.com. If there are any questions about the hot lunch program, please contact Kelly Dewey at kdewey@stmichael.net.

● Eighth Grade Community Service **Team Six** will spend the morning of Tuesday, February 4, at Casa Maria preparing for a meal service. (We still need drivers.) **Team Three** is up next after them; they will travel to the Community Food Bank on the morning of Thursday, February 13.

● Congratulations to our **Coed Soccer team** for their fantastic season, which ended in a close loss to Pusch Ridge in the championship match Friday. We're launching soon into the spring season, which includes Boys' and Girls' Basketball. Contact Coach Greene (kgreene@stmichael.net) with any questions about intramurals or middle school sports.

Events Beyond This Week:

● The **Seventh Grade** is going off campus to enjoy group-building games at Playformance on the morning of Tuesday, February 11. They will be back at school around lunchtime.

● This year's **Math-a-thon** is now under way. Collection packets with results went home last week. The deadline to turn in donations is Wednesday, February 12. This year, students are aiming to raise \$18,000 or more in support of St. Michael's comprehensive STEAM program – Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math – the foundation of equipping our students with 21st-Century skills. Prizes will be awarded to the top three students as well as the top classrooms in both Upper and Lower Schools. If total pledges exceed \$14,000, the entire school will celebrate with Free Dress for a day, and prizes will compound with every \$2,000 beyond that mark.

● As the second trimester winds down, students will be learning about and then selecting their choices for third-trimester **electives** in the next two weeks.

● Students can participate in the next \$2 “**Fee Dress**” Day on Wednesday, February 12, followed soon by our next **Relaxed (Free) Dress Day** on Valentine's Day, February 14.

● Parent information nights for the 6th grade **Crow Canyon** trip and 7th grade **Catalina Island** trip are both scheduled for the evening of Wednesday, February 12, from 5:30 - 6:15 p.m.

● **8th grade families** - there's a lot you have to coordinate these days! First of all, 8th grade students brought home a packet of forms for the **Washington, D.C. trip** this past Wednesday. These forms are due back by Wednesday, February 12. See the email from Ms. Divijak for details, and email or call her with any D.C.-related questions.

Secondly, 8th grade families are asked to submit images and text for the dedication pages of this year's **Yearbook**. Every 8th grader will receive space, but parents must furnish the materials to use by February 14th at the latest. Full page tributes are \$100.00, half pages are \$50.00, and quarter pages are complimentary. Please see the separate email from Ms. Southern and me for further details and for the link to our online Yearbook portal.

Lastly, 8th grade families need to look for baby and grade-school photos of their children for use in the Graduation Dinner Dance **slideshow**. Please email the pictures in JPEG form to adivijak@stmichael.net. by **Wednesday, March 11**.

● And just in case you missed it, there's no school for our **Rodeo Break** the week of February 17-21, which also marks the end of the second trimester. The year is flying by!

That's all for now...

Best wishes,

Alex Hawes
Upper School Division Director
ahawes@stmichael.net / 722-8478 ext. 223

Links of Note:

[Main School Website](#)
[School Facebook page](#)
[School Instagram page](#)
[St. Michael and All Angels Church](#)

[PlusPortals \(online grades\)](#)
[Eagle Express Blog](#)
[Google Classroom](#)
[McGraw-Hill ConnectEd Textbook Login](#)

[School Uniforms](#)
[Hot Lunch Ordering](#)
[Student-Parent Handbook](#)
[SMA Volunteer Page](#)

[Main School Calendar](#)
[5th Grade Test Calendar](#)
[6th Grade Test Calendar](#)
[7th Grade Test Calendar](#)
[8th Grade Test Calendar](#)