

They're back!

By Cheryl Martin

For the second year in a row, the Pentucket Middle School has welcomed some very special friends to take up residence in the courtyard: a mother duck and her twelve ducklings! Some of you may remember that a pair ducks settled down in the courtyard of the middle school in March of last year, and just prior to April vacation, their newly expanded family of eleven emerged from the tall irises. After an extended stay of a little over three weeks, and with the help of Mrs. Wilson, our principal – and several human “duck” mommies (Mrs. Martin, Ms. Clark and Mrs. Vercauteran) – a *Make Way for Ducklings* parade took place in the middle school hallway, as mama and her brood of eleven were led out of the building. The duck and her ducklings waddled down the sidewalk to the pond in front of the high school, where the ducklings had their first grown-up swimming lesson.

As this school year began, teachers and students speculated whether the pair of ducks would once again return to the middle school to raise their little family. Unlike last year, the parents were very elusive about announcing their visit and setting up their household. But, on the first Friday in May, to the surprise all, twelve little ducklings emerged from the grasses.

This year, the clutch of ducklings seems a bit more adventurous than last year's group. One day last week the school was in mourning; two of the ducklings seemed to have disappeared. To the sorrow of many, nature seemed to have taken its course. However, the ever-patient mama duck would not give up, and was finally able to get Ms. Clark's attention and led her to the two wayward ducklings. It seems the ducklings had ventured too close to a storm drain in the back of the courtyard and had fallen in. Mama duck sat patiently beside the grate until her human friends brought help. Thanks to Mr. Kent, the building manager, the two ducklings were rescued and the whole family was reunited in their kiddy pool.

Now, once again, just as the eighth graders are about to begin their journey to the high school, so too are the little ducklings. With a sense of pride and heavy hearts, the staff of Pentucket Middle School bid them both adieu as they embark on the next step of their lives.