



WIZARDS PTA NEWS

Woodlin Elementary Parent Teacher Association Newsletter

May 2010



Inside:

From the Principal	2
Geo Bee Winners	3
Earth Day Pics	3
Spring Fair Pics	4
Shining Stars	7
New PTA Officers	8

Spring Fair a Blast



Woodlin's annual spring fair on May 8 was a huge success! The weather was cool, but it didn't dampen the enthusiasm or fun. While parents and families were serenaded by the melodious sounds of Marcus Johnson, keyboard-

ist, composer and producer extraordinaire, the children played on the inflatables, had their faces painted, created fun arts and crafts, played with friends and former Woodlin students, and ate cotton candy and fresh-popped popcorn.

I would like to offer a special thanks to [Vickie Rocha](#) and [Michael Horowitz](#) for doing a fantastic job on the flower and plant sale and to [Elly Sullivan](#) for organizing the handling of tickets and monies at the fair.



Many also picked up pre-ordered flowers & plants, or bought flowers & plants that day.

And, of course, I would like to thank the staff at Woodlin including front office staff, [Mrs. Garcia](#), [Ms. Bacon](#) and [Mrs. Hale](#). Their assistance was invaluable in making the event an enjoyable and outstanding day!

Cont., page 4.

Book Fair Profits Jump

The Spring Book Fair April 21-23 was a great success this year, with revenues rising more than five percent to just over \$8600!

This came just four months after our very profitable holiday fair, which brought in more than \$5000, compared to about \$3000 in 2009. (Our profit is 25 percent.) Certainly, we're benefiting from better timing as the recession dies down, but we also know our generous volunteer support was a big factor.

Thanks first to [Alexis Ruffin](#), who has been a third

partner and a stellar teacher throughout. We are in awe of her passion and know-how. We also want to extend gratitude to the following: Dynamic Mother-Daughter Duo [Julie Rasicot](#) and [Natalie Daly](#) (Grant-4); Super [Watson Siblings Taylor](#) (Barrish-5) and [Ryann](#) (Wallace-4); Amazing [Olivia Seeman](#) (Grotsky-1); Bibliophile Teachers [Avery Beeson](#), [Deborah Grant](#), [Dara Schrier](#) and [Robert George](#), with critical pre-fair support from [Brenda Athanas](#); Woodlin Class

of 2008 alums [Gabe Schrier](#) and [Alyssa Adams](#) and 2009 alums [Alexandra Seeman](#), [Alexandra](#)

Cont. page 6



Principal's Corner: Summer Brain Drain



Principal Sarah Sirgo

"...while there are many benefits to summer vacations, many children can experience a phenomenon called "Summer Brain Drain."

Many of us look toward summer as a chance to recharge our physical and mental batteries. We hope to slow down our daily pace, get active, and spend more time on hobbies and less time on chores. For schools, summer is a busy time where we review how we have done as a school and use that information to plan for the coming year. Our plans for students are based on what we expect students to retain over the summer and the skills that each grade level assumes children will have mastered.

However, many of our students and families do not take the time to complete the summer reading and math packets we create or believe that summers are a time to "take a break" from all things having to do with school. This type of thinking can do more harm than good as the research has shown that while there are many benefits to summer vacations, many children can experience a phenomenon called "Summer Brain Drain."

The good news is that the loss of learning is preventable. As I began to dig more into this topic I found a complex story that shows that while learning is lost among some groups of students, others gain in knowledge. My hope is that we can look at the characteristics of the group

that gains in learning and replicate those efforts as a community.

According to Valerie Strauss, *Washington Post* education reporter who has written on this topic, researchers from Johns Hopkins University, the University of Tennessee, and the University of Virginia that study learning retention note the following:

- Most students, regardless of family income or background, lose 2 to 2 1/2 months of the math computational skills that they learned during the school year.
- Students from low-income homes lose 2-3 months in reading skills learned in the previous school year.
- Middle-class students make slight gains in reading achievement as measured on standardized tests.

According to Ms. Strauss, "Those findings suggest the obvious: that children lose math ability when they don't use it and that middle-class students read more than those from poor families because they have more books at home." While it might seem that this research suggests that once kids return to school they can just catch up, the reality is not so.

When it comes to any type of academic skill, kids

make progress when they practice. Often the level of ability kids leave with in June is more than what they return to us with in August. When we profile the types of students who come back in August with the same level or more knowledge than before, those students typically have read books daily, practiced their math skills by completing the summer packet, and had varied life experiences that help to build vocabulary, background knowledge, and comprehension skills. These are not things that require money or materials, just time and emphasis.

While the carefree parent may want to give their kids a "break" in the summer, the harsh reality is that a total break from academics will likely result in kids falling behind when school starts. While in some cases we can fill in the gaps with instruction, there are other cases where the gap widens and contributes to disproportionate results among groups of students. "If we can eliminate the summer gap, we can close the longstanding achievement gap between richer and poorer kids," said Richard Allington, a professor of education at the University of Tennessee and past president of the International Reading Association.

Cont., page 6

Geography Bee Winners Advance

Congratulations to the students who cleared the Preliminary Bee held on April 14 and will go on to represent their classes at the ...

9th Annual Woodlin Geography Bee:

The 4th Grade Geo Bee will take place Tuesday, May 18th at 2pm. 4th Grade contestants are:

Ms. Beeson	Mrs. Grant	Mrs. Wallace
Benjamin Abramson Elaine Adams Cullen Yankey Victor Chupka	Joseph Curtin Nathaniel Alton Ellis Maclean Jenny Witt Alternates: Justin Anderson Graciela Martinez	Daniel Monge Max Niles Max Webster Elvis Campos Alternates: Camryn Cross Callie Radecki

The 3rd Grade Geo Bee will take place on Wednesday, May 19th at 2pm. 3rd grade contestants are:

Mrs. Bradshaw	Ms. Carter	Mrs. Sage
Kelly Anderson Martha Huson Daniel Ellis Chris Yancey Alternates: Tessa Eisen Kyle Whitlock	Justin Sharp Amanda Rutledge Maddie Rohde Julia Williamson Alternates: Luisa DaSilva Emily Bisk	Jared Richie Stephanie Lichtenstein Megan McWright Rohan Kurup Alternates: Andy Bisk Riley Lewis-Jones

Both Bees take place in the Woodlin All-Purpose Room. Parents are welcome to attend.

Let's wish them the best and cheer them on at the Bee.

Alice Witt
Geo Bee Coordinator



Earth Day 2010





Spring Fair, cont.

Also a special thanks to the maintenance crew headed at the fair by Mr. Huntley, who helped everything run smoothly. Of course, we also thank Ms. Sirgo and Mr. Clarke for their continual support.

Thank you to all the volunteers: Karen Sharp, Diana Arrington, Lena Browne, Aisha Burgess, Keisha Harris, Yvonne Moore, Yvette Moore-Harris, the Moore and Harris families and children, Rodeny Keller, Ramesh Kurup, Julie Kaplan, Jane Curtin, Deanna Browne, Danielle Browne, Sydney Sharp, Taylor Duckett, Hunter Duckett, Pat Price, Sabrina Thomas, and all the



other volunteers who assisted before the Spring Fair and after it had ended.

And, of course, a special thank you to the PTA Board and all the parents, families, and friends who supported the spring fair!

Shelly Duckett
Spring Fair Coordinator



Spring Spirit Wear is Here!

Show your Wizard pride and order some fantastic spirit wear for your whole family! We've brought back the popular rainbow tie-dye tee shirt, and also have four brand new items: a blue and white tie-dye tee, a hot pink tee, a gray tee,

and cool black sports shorts! All feature the awesome Woodlin logo. Check out the items on the PTA website or dig out order forms that came home in your child's backpack the week of May 3!



Marcus Johnson,
Keyboardist,
Composer, and
Producer

President's Message

Thank you to the entire Woodlin community for a wonderful year! There remains just a month of school left, and this is the final newsletter of the year. Summer does not bring an end to the PTA's work, though. We will be planning and budgeting for the 2010-2011 school year, and reaching out to you for ways you can help in the coming year.

Over the four years our family has been at Woodlin, I have been struck by how much this community embodies the values of another group of which we are members. Noelle and I met in college, where we were both members of Alpha Phi Omega, a co-ed service fraternity (she was actually my "little sibling" – how scandalous!)

The Greek Letters Alpha Phi Omega stand for words that themselves represent the core values of the

fraternity. Translated, they are Leadership, Friendship and Service. These are values that are exemplified by Woodlin's families, faculty and staff, and passed along to our children every day.

Every lead volunteer, every room parent, demonstrates the quality of leadership, by organizing class parties such as at Halloween, planning events like the Winter Festival and Spring Fair, and generally being the parents on whom we rely daily to make Woodlin special.

Likewise, a hallmark of the Woodlin experience is the friendship shown from one family to another. Too often, a family with children at Woodlin will suffer a tragic loss or setback. However, time and again other families come forward, offering comfort and aid as needed.

Finally, we see nearly every week service to the school,

and to the community at large, through activities such as Green Kids and Earth Day, Teacher Appreciation events, and volunteers serving in classrooms.

The efforts put forth by parent after parent, family after family, teacher after teacher, are seen and absorbed by our children. They themselves have served to plant greenery, raise funds for UNICEF and through activities such as Jump Rope for Heart, and help each other when necessary. Credit for the lessons and values they have learned and put into action go to every adult they encounter at Woodlin.

Thank you again, for being the leaders, friends, and service-givers we wish our children to become.



Chris Rutledge



Chris Rutledge
PTA President

"A hallmark of the Woodlin experience is the friendship shown from one family to another."

Teacher & Staff Appreciation Week

Thanks to the help of dozens of parents, Woodlin's Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week in early May was a great success.

Parents helped with flower distribution, donating their time and money, and made all sorts of culinary delights for this year's lunch and breakfast. The students of

Woodlin also participated by bringing flowers and writing letters of thanks to their teachers and the staff on Monday and Friday.

Thank you to everyone who made this week of events possible. Because of your generosity the teachers and staff of Woodlin feel truly appreciated.

We would also like to thank [Snider's Super Foods](#) and [Urban Bar-B-Que Company](#) for providing us food for the lunch at a discounted price.

Jeannette O'Connor,
Eve Zimmerman, and
Monica Kerns



Book Fair, cont.

Melinchok, Schuyler Cross and their helpful friends David Sangwa and Anders Alilio, from Eastern Middle; the Beeson Geo Bee Team: Ben Abramson, Elaine Adams, Cullen Yankey, Victor Chupka, Briana Thomas, Miles Johnson; the Family Event's indomitable cashiers Marti Teitelbaum; Cheryl Klein; Jane Curtin; Martha Melinchok, Evita Smedley and Mary O'Driscoll; floor workers Laurie McWright, Lisa Tenley and Lisa Alton; volunteer reader Asst. Principal Troy Clarke and Principal Sarah Sirgo for their overall support.

We realize there was a little confusion in the cashier lines at the beginning of

the night, and already have solutions for speeding it along. If anyone else has suggestions for improvement -- or wants to be on the early volunteer list for next year! -- please email

sydney.trent@gmail.com or bruce.seeman@ahra.hhs.gov



Summer Brain Drain, cont.

"Basically, even poor kids grow reading skills at about the same rate as middle-class kids, when they are in school. Two-thirds of the achievement gap occurs during the summers, not during the school year."

...

Two-thirds of the achievement gap occurs during the summers, not during the school year.

...

As Ms. Strauss writes, "So for those parents who tell themselves that kids don't

need to do anything academic during summer because, after all, they didn't themselves when they were young, and they turned out just fine, experts have this reply: Think again." We will send home summer packets with all students in June and ask for all of our families support in making sure students do the following:

- Read every day for at least 20 minutes. If your child is not yet a reader or is interested in a book that is above their independent reading level, read to them.

Experience with text builds vocabulary, language, and comprehension skills.

- Practice basic math facts. Have your children work on the summer math packet for their grade level. Make sure that students do not rush to complete the packet in a week or a few days. The important thing is to practice on a regular basis over the summer break, not to get the packet done. If you need additional work or ideas of what to do, call the school and we can provide resources.

- Have your children keep a writing journal. Ask them a question of the day or have them be a reporter who describes the adventures your family explores. If they are not yet a writer, ask them to draw pictures and describe to you what the picture shows.

Thank you for your support in our fight against summer brain drain!



Woodlin Shining Stars

Shining Stars is a Woodlin program to encourage students to recognize daily positive behaviors by other students. Kids are asked to write down when they see a peer do something positive or helpful. The following is a list of students recognized in April for helping others and/or doing something positive for the Woodlin community. You can visit the Shining Stars bulletin board near the front office of the school.

1st grade: Addie Robertson, and Andres Lara Flores.



2nd grade: Sachi Sakaniwa and Lillie Gonzalez

3rd grade: Meagan McWright and Ella Savage

4th grade: Mikala Jones, Natalie Daly, Ori Zwerdling, Hasani Thomas, Graciela Martinez, Jacob Douglas, Armando Galvez, Morocco Parker, Risha Ahmed, Camryn Cross, Callie Radecki

5th grade: Selam Tsegaye, Anastasiya Mack, Taylor Watson, Edwin Cespedes, Ruben Layug

Reminder From PTA Treasurer

\$\$\$

It has been wonderful working for you all as the Treasurer for the PTA this year. As a reminder, school will be ending soon and the books for the PTA will be closing next month, so if anyone needs reimbursements, please hand them in as soon as possible and no later than June 11. Thanks.

Michael Horowitz

Readers' Lunch Bunches

April Book Suggestions

The following kids book suggestions come from Shannon Parkin, a Woodlin mom who spends time at the school each week reading to students of different grades and who has a lot of knowledge about children's books:

1st Grade Favorites

Clam – I – Am All about the Beach by Tish Rabe
The Water Hole by Graeme Base

Enjoyed by both 1st Grade and Third Grade

The Magic School Bus on the Ocean Floor By Joanna Cole and Bruce Deegan

How Could You? Kids Talk about Trust by Nancy Loewen

Treat Me Right Kids Talk about Respect by Nancy Loewen

Mrs. Gorski, I think I have the Wiggle Fidgets by Barbara Esham

Third Grade Favorite

Investigating Machu Picchu: An Isabel Soto Archaeology Adventure (Graphic Library. Graphic Expeditions) by Emily Sohn, Cynthia Martin, and Barbara Schulz

Fourth Grade Favorites

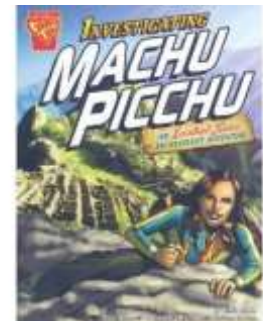
Since January, I have been reading a series of Greek myths to a group of 4th

grade students. These are all students who had read some of all of Rick Riordan's Percy Jackson and the Olympians series.

We have read D'aulaires' *Book of Greek Myths*, *Hercules the Twelve Labors* and *Trojan Horse the fall of Troy*.

The 4th graders are preparing for a Greek quiz show, Hestia's Answer, on May 20. The winning team will all receive copies of Rick Rirdan's new book, *The Red Pyramid*.

Compiled by Shannon Parkin (mother of Heather (grade 3) and Carl (Kinderaarten))



Woodlin PTA
c/o Woodlin Elementary
 2101 Luzerne Avenue
 Silver Spring, MD 20910

President: Chris Rutledge
 crnkar@yahoo.com

Vice President: Diana
 Arrington

Secretary: Evita Smedley

Treasurer: Michael
 Horowitz

The Wizards PTA News is
 published 9 times per year.
 Newsletter Editor:
 Mary Boyle; Layout: April
 Osajima; Photos: Melita
 Flannery.

www.woodlinpta.org



Dates to Remember

21 Dining with Dads
 21 Fun Friday
 23 Blood Drive
 23 Kindergarten Playdate
 27 Field Day for grades 3-5
 28 Field Day for grades K-2
 31 No School—Memorial Day



Dates to Remember

1 PTA Meeting
 16 Last Day of School—early dismissal

Sniders Receipts Reminder



Don't forget to turn in your
 Sniders' receipts before the
 end of the school year.

Send them in via backpack
 mail in an envelope

marked "Sniders Receipts"
 or bring them to the
 mailroom and put them in
 the Snider's Receipt box.

Saving your receipts is an
 easy, painless way to help
 fund the Woodlin PTA's
 wonderful activities on
 behalf of our kids.

Congratulations to the newly elected Woodlin PTA Officers for 2010-2011,
 elected by voice vote at the May 4, 2010 PTA Meeting:

- President - Chris Rutledge
- Vice President - Diana Arrington
- Secretary - Evita Smedley
- Treasurer - Liz Gayaldo

And thank you to outgoing treasurer Michael Horowitz and the entire
 2009-2010 PTA leadership team.

Have a great summer!