

Somers Newsletter

November 2009



Stephanie Wesolowski
Principal

Please view the Calendar of Events each month!

Kathy Morris
Jerome Petty
Belinda Shatley
Vice Principals

From the Principal

It is hard to believe that November is already upon us and that the first quarter of the 2009-2010 school year has come to a close. Report cards for the marking period will be mailed on November 5th. We hope that the school year has opened well for you and your child(ren) and that the grades reflect hard work and commitment to personal success. If you have concerns about your child's progress, we encourage you to arrange a conference with the teacher(s) through our grade level counselors.

Ms. Dougherty	Grade 6
Mr. Tojek	Grade 7
Ms. Barnes	Grade 8

I would like to thank all of our students and parents who participated in the fall fundraiser. Our school did quite well, and we look forward to using the funds to enhance the instructional programs and campus appearance. We would like to thank the PTO for working with the Great American Opportunities Coordinator to process the orders. The orders will arrive on November 4th. The MEGA party will take place after school on December 10th from 2:00-4:00.

American Education Week

Join us **November 16-20, 2009**, to celebrate American Education Week (AEW). This year's theme, **Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility**, highlights the importance of bringing together educators, school staff, parents, students, and communities in a unified effort to build great public schools. The theme also reflects NEA's vision of calling upon America to provide students with quality public schools so that they can grow, prosper, and achieve in the 21st century. Wednesday, November 18, 2009 is National Invite Parents to School Day. We would like to invite you to join your child for lunch. If you would like to participate, please ask your child to indicate his/her lunch

time on a "B" Day schedule and sign in the main office upon arrival.

PTO News

It's November already! The PTO would like to thank all of the volunteers who helped to make the Back-To-School Dance and the Share Fair such a huge success. Thank you to those parents who volunteered their time to chaperone the Fall Dance.

November brings with it a PTO meeting in the Media Center at Milton Somers on November 10th at 6:30 pm. The PTO and Faculty encourage you to attend and participate.

Have a Happy and Healthy Thanksgiving Holiday.

Monica Knuckles
PTO Secretary



Sixth Grade News

We have just completed the first quarter of your child's sixth grade education and we hope that you are pleased with what your son or daughter has been learning.

As you know, we use the agenda and homework folder to assist in the organizational skills that your child needs to be successful. Students use their agendas daily to record their homework assignments. We ask that you continue to check your child's agenda nightly. It is your key to your child's daily work and a valuable communication tool between home and school. The homework folder is also a valuable tool for keeping homework papers neat, clean, and readily available. Having the necessary supplies is also beneficial. Please check with your students to see if they have adequate

supplies of paper, pens, pencils, folders, etc. Most of these items are available at the school store for a reasonable price.

One of our most important missions this year is to introduce the sixth-graders to strategies that will help them do well in all of their subjects. Students are learning several before, during, and after reading strategies to help them become active readers. Ask your student to demonstrate these strategies for you!

Homework tips:

- Pick the time for homework with care. In some homes, early morning is the best time; in others, it's after supper. TV should be off and the telephone off limits for social calls.
- Do not expect perfection. When children ask you to "look" at their achievements, praise but do not overdo. If you have criticisms, make them, but gently.

As our school year progresses, we continue to share our commitment with you, the parents, to provide the best teaching/learning environment for our students and your children. Your child recently took their first quarter assessments in both reading and math. You will receive the results of your student's performance within the next couple of weeks. This may be a good opportunity to reflect and set goals for the next quarter. If you would like to schedule a conference, please contact our 6th grade counselor, Ms. Dougherty.

Every quarter the sixth grade team selects students who demonstrate overall academic performance, citizenship, effort, and improvement. Our first **Student of the Quarter** assembly will take place on Wednesday, November 18, 2009 during third block at approximately 11:15 a.m. We would like to extend an invitation for you to join us at this time to celebrate our students' accomplishments. If your student is receiving a Team award, or an award in a particular curricular area, you will be notified.

Patty Howard
6th Grade Team Leader



7th Grade News

The first grading period is at an end, and students are well settled into the routines of the seventh grade. We are very proud of our students and the efforts many are making to improve or maintain their grades. We look forward to our first Student of the Quarter assembly on November 18th (which will begin at approximately 7:45) where we will recognize many deserving students.

To help our students continue to be successful, we have the following suggestions: check their agendas nightly; make sure homework is being completed as well as turned in on time; occasionally check their notebooks and backpacks (this can be very revealing as to the

quality of work teachers are receiving as well as helping to keep your child organized); help ensure they are prepared and remind them of the importance of bringing all necessary materials to class (agenda, homework, paper, pen/pencils, and textbooks). Your support of the teacher's classroom efforts is vital to student success.

Since we receive several emails a day, it would be very helpful if you could please include the student name in the subject heading when contacting teachers through e-mail. This will help teachers to sort, recognize, and address our parents in a more timely manner.

The continued success of our students requires open communication and cooperation between home and school. Thank you again for your support and cooperation!

Ms. Stephanie Harris
7th Grade Team Leader



8th Grade News

Our school year is progressing at a rapid speed. Eighth graders are actively involved in their classes, as exemplified by many projects, reports, and daily instruction.

Students in all grades completed the Charles County Assessments in Reading and Math on October 13 and 14. All students will continue to take part in these assessments at the conclusion of each quarter. MSA Math and Reading testing is scheduled for March.

Our social studies field trip to Mount Vernon, Virginia will take place on Friday November 13th. The students will visit the Donald W. Reynolds Museum and Education Center, George Washington's mansion, a slave memorial, Washington's tomb, and a working pioneer farm. Thank you to all the parents who volunteered to chaperone. Chaperones need to arrive at school no later than 8:00 am. We are hoping to have another social studies related trip for our 8th graders in the spring.

Career Day, October 28th, was a huge success as our 8th graders met and interacted with presenters representing a variety of careers. We are very grateful to our guidance counselor, Ms. Denise Barnes, for her hard work and preparation for this exciting event. Many thanks also to all involved in the rewarding and enriching day. We want to especially thank those parents who took time from their schedules to participate in a very educational experience for our students!

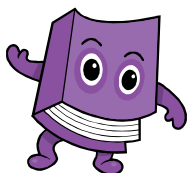
Our first Student of the Quarter assembly will be held on Wednesday, November 18th at 9:00 am. During the assembly students will be recognized for outstanding academic achievement, academic progress, and

exemplary citizenship. If your child is going to be recognized, you parents will be invited to attend.

Your child's agenda is an effective way to communicate between home and school. Continue to check the agenda to review assignments and perhaps messages, etc. that teachers may send home. We are finding that many eighth grade students are not bringing their agendas to class or using them to record assignments on a regular basis. Just a reminder: if your child has lost the agenda, he or she needs to purchase a new one at the school store, which is open every morning during the beginning of homebase. The purchase price is \$5.00.

As our school year progresses, we continue to share our commitment to you, the parents, to provide the best teaching/learning environment for our students and your children.

Mr. Allen Hopkins
8th Grade Team Leader
ghopkins@ccboe.com



Media Center News

There are so many things to be thankful for this year in the media center. Here are just a few:

#1 – Improved information seeking skills

Our young researchers are to be commended. They have been incredibly focused and diligently working on their historical investigations. With each visit, I built in mini-lessons to increase their information seeking skills. 6th grade researchers should now be able to tell you some of the key differences between primary and secondary sources. A big focus with the 7th and 8th graders was on using Boolean operators to improve internet searches. Ask your son and daughter to demonstrate their new skills for you at home.

#2 – Students making use of Web 2.0 tools

Our online book club is up and running. More and more students are participating, and their comments are getting stronger and more thoughtful with each new post. Proofreading before submitting comments is still a work in progress, but participants are making some headway in that area. Discussing books in an online forum is a bit different than doing it in a classroom, so an adjustment period is not unexpected. Due to unyielding demands from our participants, discussions on the books Twilight and New Moon will be opened up.

#3 – Supportive community members

Many of our fines this past month were due to damaged materials (paperbacks with ruined covers, hard-covers with loose bindings, water damage to pages, etc). Students are responsible for returning materials in the

same condition they were checked out in- please remind your child to be careful with magazines and paperbacks. Gentle reminders about this from home should help get our readers back on track, encourage your child to be responsible about taking care of and returning their materials. I thank you in advance for your support on this matter. Also, please keep those Box Tops for Education coming! We will continue to collect them all year. And, if you happen to shop at McKay's, please register your card at www.mycommunityrewards.com.

If you are looking for a big way to help support the library, you might consider volunteering. We have a book fair coming up in early December, and we could certainly use your help. There are many ways that you can pitch in: working the book fair, making snacks for the teacher sneak preview and volunteers, donating to One for Books, or stopping by to do a little shopping. The book fair will begin with a teacher sneak preview on 12/02/09 and then run until 12/11/09. Look for more information about our winter book fair in the coming weeks. Be sure to check out our book fair homepage for more information and a preview of the titles that will be available for purchase:

<http://bookfairs.scholastic.com/homepage/somers>.

#4 – Melvil Dewey!

Who is Melvil Dewey? He's the librarian who created the Dewey Decimal system of cataloging books. It is thanks to him that libraries are so organized. This month, students will be increasing their knowledge of the Dewey Decimal Classification system with a few focused mini-lessons. By the end of the month, we hope to see our patrons utilizing their knowledge of Dewey to locate materials with confidence and more readers enjoying nonfiction books. Thank you Dewey for making it easier for readers to find good books! ☺

Ms. Van Gelder and Mrs. Bragg



NJHS News

With the season of giving rapidly approaching, it is time for the Annual Thanksgiving Food Drive sponsored by the Milton Somers Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society. The Food Drive will begin on Monday October 26th and go throughout the month of November. The last day we will be accepting food item donations will be Friday, November 20th. All donations will go directly to helping families in the Somers community. Families in need are provided baskets of food plus a Thanksgiving turkey. Any surplus donations will be given to local food banks and other organizations.

Donations can be brought in and placed in the donation box in your child's homebase. At the end of each week, the number of donations for each homebase will be tallied up and announced during afternoon

announcements. The homebase that collects the most at the end of the drive will receive a special prize courtesy of the National Junior Honor Society.

If you are interested in donating food items please note the following:

- All donated items must be nonperishable (canned goods, packaged items, etc.)
- Please check the expiration date on your items
- No monetary donations may be accepted

Last year we were able to collect nearly 3,000 food items and help over 30 families from the Somers community have a happier holiday. With your help, perhaps we can exceed last year's outstanding results. If you have any questions regarding the Thanksgiving Food Drive, please contact Mr. Hopkins or Ms. Christiansen, co-sponsors of the National Junior Honor Society.

We will be meeting on Thursday, November 19th to finalize our food drive collection and discuss the importance of community service. Remaining meeting dates are as follows (all Thursdays):

- December 19th
- January 21st
- February 25th
- March 18th
- April 15th
- June 3rd

Rise Lesson Information for Parents

Every few months, our students participate in a school-wide lesson to promote RISE (Respect for Individuals, Self and Others). During the month of October, our lesson focused on School Bus Safety- "Follow The Rules...Get Safely To School". While many regard school bus transportation as one of the safest forms of transportation, accidents do happen. Children are typically not under the supervision of teachers or parents when riding the school bus. Such unstructured situations often lead to misbehavior and episodes of poor judgment on the part of some students. Disruptive behavior may distract the driver or may encourage a student to take unnecessary risks, such as waving an arm out a school bus window. This lesson emphasized the importance of following the safety guidelines for boarding and riding the school bus, treating others with respect by acting responsibly, being responsible for our own behavior and taking steps to make responsible and safe decisions. The 6th grade students watched a video entitled "Tears on the Highway" which presents a "what if" scenario. "What if" children were being so disrespectful to the driver and fellow peers, by engaging in misbehavior and bullying, that it would directly contribute to a driver losing control of the bus? Please take time to reinforce the importance of responsible behavior on the bus to ensure the safety of all. Thank you for working with us to help teach your child about the value of responsibility. 7th and 8th grade students focused on "growing respect on the bus" and honing in on the

message that "Bullying is not acceptable". Through class discussion, role-playing, creative writing, and artistic design, students reflected on ways we can maintain safe behaviors on the bus.

Physical Education Department

Archery try-outs for 6-8 grade girls and boys who are interested in trying out for the school archery team will begin on Monday, November 2nd to December 7th. Archery teams are made up of two girls and two boys from each grade 6-8. Students who are interested in trying out will be given a schedule sheet with days, dates and times during their lunch shift. The archery tournament is on Thursday, December 10th here in Somers' gym. All parents of students making the team are welcome to attend the tournament.

Seventh and eighth grade girls and boys volleyball try-outs will start December 9th and 10th. A schedule sheet with days, dates, and times will be given out to all students who are interested in trying out the school volleyball team during their lunch shift.

Hoops for Heart

Hoops for Heart fundraiser for the American Heart Association will kick off on November 23rd to December 11th. Students will be given a letter explaining the fundraiser and pledge envelope to bring home to their parents. The Physical Education Department will be holding our Hoops for Heart events to raise funds for the American Heart Association. Students and teachers are asked to participate in helping with this event.

YEARBOOKS!

Get your yearbook!! Forms will be distributed to students through homebase the first week in November to purchase a yearbook for cash or check. Money will be collected **November 9th** thru **November 20th** in homebase. This is the only time that cash/checks will be accepted for a yearbook. Yearbooks cost **\$32.00**. This year you can also order extras like an autograph section or icons for your book cover for an additional cost. Books can also be purchased online at www.jostensyearbooks.com. If you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Chewning at mchewning@ccboe.com.

See the Possibilities in You - We Do!

Taken from the National Association of School Psychologists

School Psychology Awareness Week is November 9 - 13, 2009. This year's theme is See the Possibilities in You - We do! Do you know who the school psychologist is for your child's school? Do you know what a school psychologist does?

A school psychologist works with parents, teachers, administrators and students to help children

meet success in school academically, socially and emotionally. A school psychologist has completed a post-Master's degree program in school psychology that includes an internship in a school setting. A school psychologist is also certified and/or licensed by the state of Maryland and can be nationally certified by the National School Psychology Certification Board.

School psychologists are trained to provide the following services:

- Consult with parents, teachers, administrators and students to help students be successful in class,
- Collaborate with outside agencies to facilitate communication with the school,
- Conduct evaluations for special education services, and
- Assist in the development and implementation of interventions for students.
- Member of various school-based teams including PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support).

Catherine Bostwick
School Psychologist

SECAC

The Charles County Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee (SECAC) is for all parents and guardians of children with special education needs who have IEPs (Individualized Education Programs). This group enables the Director of Special Education to seek meaningful input from parents, community partners, service providers, and school administrators on local issues relative to the provision of a free appropriate public education and the achievement of students with disabilities.

Our SECAC Meeting Schedule for this school year is as follows:

December 2, 2009
January 20, 2010
March 17, 2010
May 19, 2010

SECAC meetings will be held in the Board Room at the Starkey Administration Building at 6:30 P.M.

The 5th Annual SECAC Teacher and Staff Award Ceremony will be held Wednesday, April 28, 2010 at 7:00 P.M. at the Waldorf Jaycees Hall.

Debbie Gilley and Kim Busch
Resource Coordinators
301-934-7456

Regional Art Show

Congratulations to the following art students:
CAROLINE DINH, KATIE PHOENIX, KARISSA COATES,

MEAGAN NIELSEN, AHNIYAH ALI, KATIE BURROUGHS, RAYNA WALLACE, AUSTIN BARNHART, CARSON PAINTER, AND VICKY POWERS. Their art work was selected by Mr. Ivanac and Ms. Wanzer to represent the art program at Somers for the first regional art exposition. Pieces sent to the show include amulets, contour drawings, seed mosaics and a pencil still life. The art show will be on display at the Starkey Building in La Plata from November 4, 2009 to February 25, 2010. Our students and their parents will be recognized and honored at a reception held for them on Thursday, November 19 at 5 p.m. at the central office. The exhibit is free and open to the public from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Lion's Club Peace Poster Contest

Each year our art students participate in an international middle school art contest. The posters, without using any words or numbers have to communicate or sell an idea that has been selected by the Lion's Club. This year's theme is "THE POWER OF PEACE". The school winner (selected by the Lion's club) wins a cash award from the La Plata Lion's Club and starts on the journey toward being an international winner. The international winner receives an all expense paid trip to New York City, \$2500 and a plaque that is awarded at the United Nations. Good luck to our three finalists: MEAGAN NIELSEN, AHNIYAH ALI, AND RAYNA WALLACE.

All County Chorus/Band/Orchestra

Congratulations to the following students who auditioned and were selected for **All-County Choir**: 6th graders, **Hannah Gilley** and **Naomi Hoglund**, 7th graders, **Faith Hawkins**, **Joshua Hilson**, **Haley Roddy**, and **Chloe Zattau**, and 8th graders, **Desiree Borges**, **Cassidy McCloy**, and **Blake Ross**. A special thanks to **Ms. Nodianos** for continuing success while Ms. Liston is out.

Congratulations are also in order for the following students who were selected for **All-County Orchestra**: 7th graders, **Shannon Haley**, **Shelby Harold**, **Jessica Lee**, **Olivia Litten**, **Ashley Luton**, **Hailey Price**, and **Demisha White**, and 8th graders, **Kirsten Greenwaldt** and **Emili Kober**. Thank you Ms. Mickey for preparing these students.

The following students successfully auditioned for the 2009-2010 **All-County Band**: 7th graders, **Jackson Brawner**, **Catie O'Donnell**, and **Nicholas Wiegand**, and 8th graders, **Jeremiah Dent**, **Jared Toney**, and **Katelyn Turner**. We are very proud of all of you!



Fall Chess Tournament

Congratulations to 6th grader, **Franklin Olmsted**, who placed first in the Fall Chess Tournament for grades

5-6 and 8th grader, **Kevin Kreilick**, who placed 3rd in the 7-8 grade division.

2009 Seasonal Flu Vaccination Clinics

Get your family immunized at the Charles County Department of Health. No appointments necessary, walk-ins welcome. Prevention and control of Influenza for good family and community health.

Public Family Walk In Clinic
(Ages 6 mos. & Older)

Wednesday, November 18, 2009, 9:00am-6:00 pm
Wednesday, December 16, 2009, 9:00 am-6:00pm

For more information: (301)609-6900 ext. 6025/6011 or visit www.charlescountyhealth.org or www.flu.gov

Main Lobby Reception Area
4545 Crain Hwy
(off Theodore Green Blvd)
White Plains, MD 20695

SADD Walk-A-Thon

To promote "Safe and Drug Free Schools," Ms. Geiger, Ms. Hopkins and members of the SADD club participated in a Walk-A-Thon at St. Charles Towne Center. They also sold bracelets during Red Ribbon Week.

Parks and Recreation: After School Activities Program

Parents, do you need an after school program for your child? Sign your child up for the Parks and Recreation After-school program. The program runs 2:15 - 6:00pm. Students get a snack, homework help, and then stay busy with crafts, games and much more. Fee is \$25 per week. Call Parks and Recreation at 301-932-6679 for more information.

Important Information about E-Mails

When corresponding with school staff via email, please include your child's name in the subject area of any email. Due to the great deal of Spam mail staff members receive, we have been instructed to delete emails without opening them if we are uncertain as to their origin. Your child's name in the subject area will help the staff from accidentally deleting your email.

Emergency Cards

Please notify the front office **in writing** with any phone number changes. The front office has a form for address changes. **It is very important that the emergency cards have current information.**

Work Requests

Parents, please keep in mind our policy on work requests for students who are out sick. A student must be out 3 days **before** we can gather the work. Teachers are allowed 24 hours to get the work ready. It is inconvenient to gather the work if the student will return the next day. In this case, the student may get the make up work when returning to classes.



Bus Passes

Due to our enrollment, **we can only issue bus passes for emergency situations.**

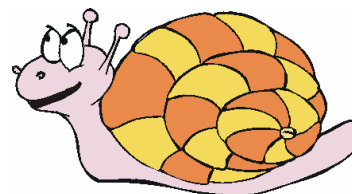
School Security is a Priority!

The key to our success is a shared responsibility – we need your help! It is essential that every visitor sign in on the computer in the front office and wear a visitor/volunteer badge during the time they are in the school. We also ask that you designate the activity, etc., when signing in. Before leaving, please take a moment to "check out" on the computer. We also ask that you only enter through the front doors of the school. Together we can continue to make our school a safe learning environment for everyone. Thank you for your support!

Classroom Interruptions

If it is necessary to drop off items (lunches, homework, instruments, permission slips, keys, notes, etc.) for your child, please give the item to the office staff before your child's lunch shift. We will call students down during their lunch shifts so that we are not interrupting an entire class.

Character Education



Sydney the Snail, Steady and in Control

Self-Discipline

Patience – The ability to endure a difficult situation with calmness; to be tolerant and understanding; ability to calmly await an out come.

Self Control – The ability to exercise authority over one's self; the act of restraining one's self.

