



RENNER ROUND-UP

A Renner PTA Publication

Volume XVI, Issue 5

February 2010

Mission

The mission of Renner Middle School, a shared responsibility of home, school and community, is to provide education which nurtures, inspires and challenges students in their uniqueness, preparing them to be contributing members of society.

Renner Round-Up

is published six times a year by the Renner PTA.

5701 W. Parker
Plano, TX 75093

Principal :
Bill McLaughlin

PTA President :
Carolyn Keeter

Newsletter
Chairman :
Allison Choucair

Distribution
Coordinator :
Justina Cox

GET SMART-er: READ!



Your Assignment, if you chose to accept it:

Get to the Renner Library
for the Scholastic Book Fair
to spy (and buy!) the great books there.

Dates of Operation:

Daily - March 4 - March 11,
8:15am - 4:00pm

6th grade Choir Concert - March 4, 5:45 - 7:45pm
Open House - March 9, 6:30 - 8pm

The Take:

Operatives will have the chance to buy books,
participate in games and contests,
and support the Renner PTA.



We need lots of volunteers for the Book Fair -
please consider volunteering for a shift or two.

It's a lot of fun, and you get to see your kids
and their friends at school! Contact
Debra Copley at debra@dacopley.com
or (972) 403-7807 to help.

March/April 2010 Calendar

MARCH

- 3 Writing TAKS - 7th grade
6th Grade Musical Rehearsal
- 4 Book Fair Begins through March 11th, 8:15am-4pm daily
6th Grade Musical, 6:30pm (Book Fair Open)
- 8 PTA Board Meeting - 9:15am
PTA General Meeting - 10am
- 9 Renner Open House, 6:30 - 8pm (Book Fair Open)
- 11 Book Fair closes after Lunch
- 14 Daylight Savings Begins (clocks move ahead one hour)
- 15-19 Spring-Break - Student/Teacher Holiday
- 23 7th/8th Grade Choir/Orchestra Pre-UIL Concert
- 3/30 - 4/1 7th/8th Grade Choir UIL Contest

APRIL

- 1 PACE Application Packets Due
7th/8th Grade Band Pre-UIL Concert
- 2 Staff/Student Holiday
- 6 Math TAKS - 8th grade
- 7 Reading TAKS - 8th grade
- 9 Student Social
- 12 PTA Board Meeting - 8:30am
Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast, Renner library - 9:30am
- 15 Teacher Treats, end of 5th Six Weeks
- 19-22 PACE Testing
- 23 Report Cards
- 27 Math TAKS - 6th and 7th grades
- 28 Reading TAKS - 6th and 7th grades
- 29 Science TAKS - 8th grade
- 30 Social Studies TAKS - 8th grade



And the winner is...

The American Library Association
announces the 2010 literary award winners:

John Newbery Medal - most outstanding contribution to children's lit.
When You Reach Me - by Rebecca Stead

Newbery Honor Books

Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice - by Phillip Hoose

The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate - by Jacqueline Kelly

Where the Mountain Meets the Moon - by Grace Lin

The Mostly True Adventures of Homer P. Figg - by Rodman Philbrick

Randolph Caldecott Medal - distinguished American picture book
The Lion & the Mouse - illustrated and written by Jerry Pinkney

Caldecott Honor Books

All the World - illustrated by Marla Frazee, written by Liz Garton Scanlon

Red Sings from Treetops: A Year in Colors, -

illustrated by Pamela Zagarenski, written by Joyce Sidman

Michael L. Printz Award - excellence in literature written for young adults
Going Bovine - by Libba Bray

Printz Honor Books

Charles and Emma: The Darwins' Leap of Faith - by Deborah Heiligman

The Monstrumologist - by Rick Yancey

Punkzilla - by Adam Rapp

Tales of the Madman Underground: An Historical Romance, 1973 -
by John Barnes

William C. Morris Award - book by a first-time author for young adults
Flash Burnout - written by L.K. Madigan

Robert F. Sibert Medal - distinguished informational book for children
Almost Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream - by Tanya Lee Stone

Sibert Honor Books

The Day-Glo Brothers: The True Story of Bob and Joe Switzer's Bright
Ideas and Brand-New Colors - written by Chris Barton, illustrated by
Tony Persiani

Moonshot: The Flight of Apollo 11 - written & illustrated by Brian Floca
Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice - by Phillip Hoose

Find these and many more titles at the Renner Library!



The Principal's Column

By Bill McLaughlin, Renner Middle School Principal

Are You Smarter Than an 8th Grader?

When it comes to technology, the answer is probably no

If you haven't seen the TV game show "Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader", the premise is that adults test their knowledge on concepts taught in the 5th grade. As you can imagine, most adults don't remember all of this information because we don't use it everyday like the kids in the classes. Much like the questions on the show, our middle school students are usually a step ahead of the adults when it comes to the topic of technology. Unlike their parents, they have never known a time growing up without computers in their lives. In most cases this is great. Our students can do things on computers and their phones that their parents couldn't come close to matching. Sadly, their expertise can also be incredibly bad in other cases.

Each year we hear about things that involve students making incredibly poor choices when it comes to posting on the internet and sending text messages on their phone. Most of this occurs outside of the school day and when we call parents they are many times shocked to learn about what their child has done. In one instance, when I called a parent about something their child had on their facebook page, they told me "That's impossible we don't let our kids have a facebook page." The next day the parent called back to say that they had no idea their child had been able to do all of this without their knowledge.

By nature, middle school students make mistakes. They always have and they always will. It is part of where they are at in their own personal development. My concern for our kids is that they make mistakes that are now a part of internet history, or send text messages that can't be taken back. These mistakes can have lasting impact on their lives. With that in mind I have included some tips about catching up to your middle school child's technology use. There are many resources, articles, and computer programs that allow you to keep your child out of harms way.

Keep our Kids Safe

- **Set Boundaries:** Have a conversation with your child about your expectations for their technology use. Set boundaries regarding when it is used, who they can contact, what they can send via text or email, and what websites are appropriate. Even our students that paid for their own phone still rely on their parents to pay for monthly service. If they abuse the privilege don't be afraid to take the phone or computer away.

The Principal's Column, continued

By Bill McLaughlin, Renner Middle School Principal



- **Communicate Your Concerns:** The concerns might include:
 - Posting personal information such as: their age, address, what school they attend, activities they are involved in, and their daily schedule.
 - Cyberbullying is the latest way for kids to be mean to one another. Talk to your child not only about not engaging in negative posting, but also that they need to play a part in stopping cyberbullying of another student. Much of this activity occurs outside of the school day and limits what we can do, so we rely on students and their families to prevent this harmful activity. Many times a witness or student near to this occurring is the best person to stop the cyberbullying. Peer pressure in a good way.
 - Sending inappropriate messages or pictures (sexting). Your child needs to realize that once you send something you never know who else will read or see a picture. Unless they are comfortable with their parents seeing the text or email, don't send.
 - Research Safety: Educate yourself as a parent about what students are doing and look into ways to check on your kids. There are many products on the market to give parents the upper hand when it comes to safety. Tell your child that you will be checking on their use of the phone and internet.
- **"What Happens on the Internet, Stays on the Internet":** Mistakes kids make today when they join social groups, post online, or send pictures might not only embarrass them later, it might also cost them a job. According to a careerbuilder.com survey, 45% of employers used social networking sites to research applicants. The survey found that 35% of the time employers found something that caused them to not hire a candidate.

Recent advances in technology have served many great purposes and these topics are not meant to alarm anyone or pretend to cover every topic. The best thing you can do as a parent is educate yourself, talk to your child, set boundaries, and follow through when they don't live up to the expectations. You may not currently be smarter than an 8th grader when it comes to technology, but with a little work, you might at least make it a fair game.

Bill McLaughlin, Principal



The President's Column

By Carolyn Keeter, 2009-2010 Renner PTA President

Renner Staff and Teachers have been busy teaching and students have been busy learning and getting ready to take the yearly TAKS tests. I hope you will have a chance to come to **Open House on Tuesday, March 9th from 6:30 - 8:00pm** to see how much has already been accomplished this year and to have a chance to visit the Renner Book Fair. Chairman **Holly Blais**, and her assistant chairman, **Debra Copley**, and many volunteers will be waiting to assist you in choosing books for your student or for a teacher. The Book Fair will be open each day from 8:15am - 4:00pm March 4 - 11th. The Book Fair will also be open during the 6th grade Choir Concert on March 4th from 5:45 - 7:45pm as well as during Open House on March 9th from 6:30 - 8:00pm. The Book Fair continues to promote the joy of reading, provides books for the school library, and helps the PTA fund its many worthwhile activities. And we always look forward to finding out what Mr. McLaughlin will do if the Book Fair meets its sales goals!

Thank you to **Jenny Wood** for coordinating the second annual Renner Round Table on **Feb. 24th at 6:30 p.m.** This event features Mr. McLaughlin and other staff members as well as current Renner 8th grade students who participate in a variety of classes and activities just talking candidly about life at Renner. This evening gives future Renner students and their families a chance to see inside the Renner family. There is a time for questions to ask both the staff and specific students.

The 5th grade information night was a huge success. Thank you to **Kim Brown** for selling spirit wear to very eager parents ready to show Renner Mustang Pride. **Jenny Wood** and **Karen Dibble** came to the rescue that night also as things got busy.

Spring Break is around the corner and I hope each of you has a wonderful break and comes back refreshed and ready for a great last couple of months of this school year. There are many events coming up that I hope you will be a part of. The next day for Teacher Treats is **April 15th**. To donate a food item for the teachers that day, just contact **Jenny Craig** or **Becky Tanoury** at treats@rennerpta.org. If you would like to help with any of the activities that occur for our teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week **May 3rd - 7th**, please contact **MaryKay Drury** at appreciation@rennerpta.org. **Katherine Sigrist** will also be coordinating casseroles for each teacher during one of those days that

The President's Column, continued

By Carolyn Keeter, 2009-2010 Renner PTA President



week, so contact her if you can make a casserole at casserole@rennerpta.org.

Another fun event coming soon is the Renner spring social which is just around the corner on **April 9th**. 6th grade will be from 6:00 - 7:00pm, 7th grade from 7:15 - 8:15pm, and 8th grade from 8:30 - 9:30pm. Tickets are available during lunch that week and at the door. The social is a great chance for your student to have fun with their friends in a safe environment. To make the social a success, we need two things; students to attend and parents to volunteer to provide snacks and to chaperone the evening. Encourage your students to attend. Then please contact **Holly Castora** at socials@rennerpta.org if you would be willing to provide snacks, sell tickets during lunch, or chaperone the night of the social. It will be a very fun night with loud music, lots of snacks, and time to socialize with friends.

The nominating committee will present the slate of officers for the Renner PTA 2010-2011 Board at the General PTA Meeting on Monday, **March 8th** at 10:00am. After that election, the officers will meet to begin filling the other positions on the board. If you would like to serve on next year's Renner PTA Board, go to the Renner Website (www.rennerpta.org) to find a board interest form. If you have questions about any positions, please contact Laura Morris at parliamentarian@rennerpta.org or me at president@rennerpta.org. Please pass this information along to any parents who will have a 6th grader at Renner for the first time. This is a great way to meet people and one more way to be connected at Renner. I look forward to hearing from you.

Spring is around the corner so as the weather gets warmer, please find time to volunteer at Renner or just attend an event. As always please do not hesitate to contact me if you have an idea or a question.

Carolyn Keeter
Renner PTA President
president@rennerpta.org



Sunday, March 14th!

Volunteer Opportunities at Renner...

Spring Social!

The Spring Social will be held on Friday, April 9th, 2010.

If you would like to volunteer to help or donate a food item, please contact Holly Castora at socials@rennerpta.org.



Home-cooked Meals for the Staff



Wouldn't it be nice to have a home-cooked meal at the end of a long day? Don't miss the opportunity to prepare a casserole for your child's favorite teachers! We present each teacher and staff member a casserole during Teacher Appreciation Week May 3rd - May 7th. Just call or email Katherine Sigrist, Casserole Coordinator, at (972) 378-4061 or casserole@rennerpta.org. Help show our Renner faculty and staff how appreciated they really are!!

ORDER YOUR RENNER SPIRIT WEAR!

Get your Renner Spirit Wear today! Stop by the school store and check out our selection of t-shirts, gym shorts, drawstring duffel bags, and sweatshirts! The School Store is open during lunch (11am-1pm) on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays this semester. All prices already include sales tax.



- T-shirts.....\$12
- Pullover Hoodie.....\$25
- Zip-up Hoodie.....\$28
- Girls shorts.....\$12
- Boys shorts.....\$17
- Gym bags.....\$ 9

If paying by check, please make check payable to Renner PTA and include your drivers license information on the front of your check.

For more information, please email Kim Brown, Spirit Wear coordinator, at shirts@rennerpta.org.

PTA

2010 - 2011 Shepton HS (PTSA) Parent Teacher Student Association Board Interest Form

If you are interested in serving on the **Shepton PTSA Board** next year, please complete this form and return it to Jamie Hanna, President Shepton PTSA, at jamiehanna@verizon.net or drop it in the PTSA box in the office at Shepton. If you have any questions, please contact Jamie Hanna at (972) 378-9593.

Name _____ Phone _____

Email _____ Current MS _____

Previous PTA or Volunteer Experience _____

Please check any board position(s) you would be interested in holding. If there is more than one, please number in order of preference:

_____ Arts in Education Chairman Coordinates the National PTA reflections Program.

_____ Attendance Office Chairman Coordinates volunteers to work in the attendance office throughout the school year.

_____ Calendar Chairman Produces a calendar with Shepton and PISD information.

_____ Copy Room Chairman Schedules volunteers to assist with copying requirements in the main office.

_____ Diversity and Inclusiveness Chairman Coordinates committee of students who embody the diversity represented at SHS; publicizes diversity and inclusiveness programs offered locally.

_____ E-Communications Chairman Coordinates information to be distributed through online channels and enlists families to go paperless for school information.

____ Hospitality Chairman Coordinates the back to school breakfast and luncheon, winter and end of year luncheons, and staff sundae day.

____ Newsletter Chairman Collects articles, formats, and mails newsletters six times per year.

____ PISD Legislative Representative Attends school board meetings and communicates details at association board meetings, reports on legislative issues.

____ PTA Council Delegate Attends the monthly PISD Council meetings (daytime) and reports the information back to the PTSA.

____ Pre-Paks Chairman Coordinates the ordering, packaging, pricing and distribution of school supplies sold at Schedule Pick-Up.

____ Publicity Chairman Maintains the marquee and promotes information in the community.

____ Special and Gifted Education (SAGE) Coordinates awareness in the community about upcoming events particularly suited to special and gifted students.

____ School Supplies Chairman Works with Pre-Pak Chairman and Shepton staff to coordinate the ordering, pricing, and stocking of supplies, materials, and reading books as needed by the students.

____ School to Life Chairman Promotes life-long learning to parents and students by publicizing employment needs and develops working relationship with the business community on behalf of SHS students.

____ Snack Sales Chairman Purchases and stocks the consumable snacks sold in the Stallion Shop.

____ Staff Recognition Chairman Coordinates the back to school caserole event and special recognition weeks, acknowledges birthdays.

____ Student Directory Chairman Updates all information included in the student directory, coordinates printing/distribution of directories.

____ Student Organizations Liaison Assembles list of student organizations for the directory and newsletter, publicizes organizations.

____ Teacher Appreciation Week Chairman Plans, organizes, and implements Teacher Appreciation Week, usually in March.

____ West Cluster Schools Liaison Communicates, distributes, and publishes information from the West Cluster secondary schools.

Community Partners

Earn \$\$\$ to support Renner Programs every time you shop with our Partners!

The following is a way you can help support Renner Middle School while you shop for your family:

One Cause

One Cause is an online shopping service with hundreds of stores to choose from such as Nordstrom, GAP, Pottery Barn, LL Bean, Lands End, JC Penney, Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble, Office Depot, Apple, and many, many more. Renner can receive from 2% to 4% of your online purchases. Simply go to www.onecause.com and type in Renner Middle School under "Find a Cause or School" and follow the easy instructions to get started. Just think, whenever you shop at your favorite stores, Renner can benefit!

Tom Thumb

Tom Thumb's Good Neighbor program links your reward card to Renner Middle School. Stop by their Customer Service desk and pick up a registration form. Renner's number is 6266.

Target

Apply for a Visa card at Target and designate Renner Middle School as your school. To get a card, or if you already have a card, stop by their customer service counter and add Renner's number - 100524.

Renner has a number of programs provided by our PTA. By joining together to support our Community Partners each of us can raise \$\$\$ for Renner on our shopping trips. These rebated dollars help pay for carpool police officers, agendas for students, the newsletter, parent programs, and numerous other valuable PTA programs. Let's go shopping with our Community Partners!

Please contact Sylvia Crosby at partnerships@rennerpta.org or (972) 378-5712 if you have any questions.





Box Tops for Education

One thousand fourteen dollars! \$1,014.00! This is how much Renner has earned this year with your help! To me it is the easiest fund raiser ever. You don't have to buy expensive products that you don't really need. You just clip the little rectangle and drop them off in the pink box near the office. They add up quickly. Please continue to send them in.

Thanks for all of your support!

Cheryl Lange, 6th grade Penguin Team Leader

Technology Recycling

**Help Renner Recycle
Cell Phones Laptops, PDAs
& HP Cartridges for \$\$\$!**



Thank you to everyone who has sent used cell phones, PDAs and HP ink jet cartridges to Renner for recycling! We will continue to recycle these items throughout the school year. So keep Renner in mind when you replace or upgrade your technology.

HP Ink and Laser Jet Cartridges

Send your empty HP ink and laser jet cartridges placed in a plastic bag/baggie. Your student can put them in the designated container in the CTA Office (by the rotunda). For each empty HP inkjet cartridge we recycle, Renner receives **\$\$\$**. (Laserjet prices vary).

Cell Phones, Laptops and PDAs

We are also asking you to recycle your used cell phone, laptop and PDA through the school. When you upgrade, send your old item in a plastic bag to school. Renner will make money for everything we recycle. Visit <http://cartridgesforkids.com/pricesframe.html> to see what your item is worth in this recycle program!

Questions? Contact Tom Pittman, Renner CTA, at (469) 752-5806.

Renner Science Fair Results

These students placed 1st or 2nd in the Renner Science Fair and will go on to compete in the Plano District Science Fair and the Dallas Regional Science and Engineering Fair.

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Lisa Michaels | 1st Prize, Grand Prize |
| Elizabeth Klingler | 1st Prize |
| Kimberly Thomas | 1st Prize |
| Andrew Friedman | 1st Prize |
| Narahari Bharadwaj | 1st Prize |
| Brianna Perkins | 1st Prize |
| Daniel McKnight | 2nd Prize |
| Abe Mansour | 2nd Prize |
| Annelise Mason | 2nd Prize |
| Ria Chhabra | 2nd Prize |
| Rebecca Miles | 2nd Prize |
| Daniel Bacic | 2nd Prize |

Congratulations and thanks to all who participated!



Front row: l-r, Daniel McKnight, Narahari Bharadwaj, Kimmie Thomas, Brianna Perkins, Abe Mansour, Andrew Friedman

Back row: l-r, Ria Chhabra, Rebecca Miles, Annelise Mason, Lisa Michaels, Daniel Bacic, Elizabeth Klingler

2009-2010 Renner Directory Advertisers!!

WOW - We have Terrific Support from our Renner Families/Businesses!

These are businesses that have made a tremendous contribution to your school! Want more info? Go to the Directory Sponsor Section of your Student Directory.

Back Cover: ROYAL EXPRESS CAR WASH (The Perkins Family)

Inside Covers: SAVVY AND CHIC (The Kevin Family)

LONE STAR AUTO GROUP (The Craig Family)

| <u>Category</u> | <u>Sponsor Name</u> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Adult Dentistry | David Stock, DDS |
| Automobile Sales/Service | Lone Star Auto Group |
| Café and Bakery | Chocolate Angel Too |
| Car Wash | Royal Express Car Wash |
| Counseling Services | CITY House Family Center |
| Country Club | Gleneagles Country Club |
| Design/Remodeling | AshLake Design & Remodeling |
| Etiq/Pers Enrich. Wkshops | Savvy and Chic |
| Family Medicine | Family Medicine at Willow Bend |
| Financial Planning | Abe P. Mansour, CFP |
| Flooring | Karndean International |
| Fossil | Fossil |
| Gen. & Cosmetic Dentistry | Star Ranch Dental |
| Graphic Design | Jan Jenkins Poston |
| Insurance | Larry D. Sandlin, State Farm |
| Interior Design | Room Service Redesign |
| Jewelry, Custom | Olschwanger Designs |
| Martial Arts | Shaolin Wu-Yi Institute |
| Mary Kay | Eunice Armstrong |
| Medical-Legal Consultants | Rodenbaugh and Associates, LLC |
| OB/GYN | Personalized Women's Healthcare |
| Orthodontics | George Q. Adams, Orthodontics |
| Orthodontics | Genecov Orthodontics |
| Party Planning | A Little Help Party Planning |
| Printing Services | Allegra Print and Imaging |
| Real Estate | Lynda K. Fisher, Bob Reuther |
| Real Estate | Nancy Markham |
| Real Estate | Cindy O'Gorman |
| Real Estate | Ann O'Blenes |
| Recreation Sports | Plano Sports Authority |
| Remodeling | Regenesis Remodeling |
| Tutoring Center | Plano SAT Master |
| Women, Healthcare | Plano Healthcare for Women |

Renner National Junior Honor Society

Congratulations!!...to the following eighth graders who received an invitation to participate as a candidate in the Renner chapter of NJHS. Some of the requirements of students who will be inducted in May are: the need to maintain a 3.8 grade point GPA, obtain 12 service hours, and maintain a citizenship grade no less than a "S".

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Abbas, Adam | Dibble, Susannah |
| Abebefee, Zoya | Disbrow, Mitchell |
| Abuzaid, Carmel | Do, Ai-Duyen |
| Alforo, Andrea | Donaldson, Paige |
| Allen, Amy | Exum, Cassidy |
| Anderson, Rachel | Finley, Morgan |
| Anjarwala, Qasim | Fleming, Sheridan |
| Arledge, Cody Paine | Forbes, Kathryn |
| Armstrong, Megan Brooke | Frager, Courtney |
| Bacic, Daniel Christopher | Freyman, Thomas |
| Bakhashab, Mariam M. | Gabriel, Evan |
| Banko, Stephen Emmanuel | Garner, Deangelo |
| Barnes, Riley A. | Getto, Isaac |
| Barri, Faroug Yousri | Gilbert, Moriah |
| Baumli, Kate Alexandra | Gilvar, Malcolm |
| Beck, Margo J. | Glasby, Lauren |
| Bennett, Kelly Michele | Glover, Allyson |
| Bershad, Jessica Hannah | Gordon, Natalie |
| Billman, Sarah Rose | Goss, Lindsey |
| Black, Lucas Kolf | Greenfield, Hanna-Mae |
| Brown, Paige | Gregory, Bradley |
| Buvanendiran, Aishwarya | Gu, Leon |
| Casten, Nicholas | Gullo, Alyssa |
| Chaiken, Samantha | Gutschenritter, Annelise |
| Che, James | Haidet, Caroline |
| Chenoweth, Morgan | Hairadin, Fami |
| Chi, Albert | Hairston, Ryan |
| Chun, Crystal | Hayden, Wyatt |
| Chung, Sarah | Healy, Patrick |
| Cloward, Ansley | Hwang, Tiffanie |
| Cole, Emily | Jiang, Tony |
| Constable, Tess | Kattumenu, Shruthi |
| Cott Jr., Jeffrey | Kendig, John |
| Craig, Nicole | Khuong, Genevieve |
| Crouch, Claire | Kieschnick, David |
| Dacanay, Danielle | Kim, Jenny |
| Deville, Luke | Kim, Karen (Sung) |

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Kleinerman, Sebastian | Rajani, Ricky |
| Klingler, Elizabeth | Ramilo, Jonathan |
| Kolstad, Kendall | Rao, Naina |
| Komenda, Trevor | Ray, Taylor |
| Koo, Noah (Bon-Young) | Reeves, Austin |
| Kumar, Nikita | Reynolds, Margaret |
| Learmont, Adam | Rezene, Sabrina |
| Lee, Debra | Richard, Blake |
| Lee, Eric | Risinger, Lauren |
| Lee, Jordan | Rogers, Rachel |
| Lee, Yoona | Salinas, Maria |
| Liddell, Erica | Sandene, Rachel |
| Liu, Alan | Schmidt, Robert |
| Liu, Dee-Ya Chris | Scruggs, Caroline |
| Loomis, Brianna | Setayesh, Jassem |
| MacGilvary, Morgan | Shao, Sarah |
| Malviya, Shameek | Siebert, Miranda |
| Martin, Christina | Simon, Paulina |
| Mason, Annelise | Simon, Rachel |
| McCabe, Juli | Sojdie, Audriana |
| Megura, Drew | Sung, David |
| Mendelsohn, Michael | Sunshine, Emily |
| Michaels, Lisa | Sweet, Madison |
| Miles, Rebecca | Teiber, Halle |
| Mitchell, Abigail | Tejani, Danish |
| Mojiri, Niekie | Thomas, Kimberly |
| Moore, Courtney | Ticzon, Lauren |
| Moore, Davis | Tieu, My-Lan |
| Morales, Sarah | Tong, (Melody) Yixuan |
| Morris, Chandler | Trosper, Madelyn |
| Murphy, Alexandra | Valesano, Michael |
| Murphy, Morgan | Van Mater, Elyse (Morgan) |
| Newman, Lucas | Varni, Kyle |
| Noorani, Shanil | Webb, Matthew |
| Nguyen, Davina | Wen, Zichen |
| Obenshain, Andrew | Wey, Arnold |
| Oluwole, Michael | Winslett, Trey |
| Park, Samuel | Wood, Georgia |
| Peccarelli, Alexander | Yap, Samantha |
| Piazza, Caroline | Yap, Stephanie |
| Piel, Shane | You, (Kevin) Donghyeon |
| Pollock, Cassandra | Young, Jennifer |
| Prakash, Seema | Yu, Edward |
| Pruneau, Madeline | Zagorski, Emily |
| | Zalatoris, William |

Counselor Notes:

8th Grade Academic Conferences

The counselors are enjoying meeting with the parents and students during the *8th grade academic conferences*. Conferences will continue until the end of March. **Parent attendance is strongly encouraged.** Please take this opportunity to plan the next four academic years with your child. Your support with guiding your child through Shepton HS and Plano West SHS will help ensure their success.

Helpful Websites for Parents

Information regarding movies, magazines, and other media and how it impacts children

<http://www.common sense media.org/about-us/our-mission>

U.S. Department of Education

<http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/succeed/part8.html>

Texas Education Agency

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/>

SPRING TAKS TESTING

The Spring 2010 TAKS testing schedule is below.

Please make a note of the dates and tests that apply to your child:

| Date | TAKS/TAKS M Test | Grade |
|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| March 3 | Writing | 7 |
| April 6 | Math | 8 |
| April 7 | Reading | 8 |
| April 27 | Math | 6 & 7 |
| April 28 | Reading | 6 & 7 |
| April 29 | Science | 8 |
| April 30 | Social Studies | 8 |

6th Grade Dolphins



Our next **Language Arts** unit of study is Exploring Text Structure. The novel, *A View from Saturday*, will be read. Suggestion: Read the novel along with your child as it is quite challenging but does offer a lot for discussion. We will also continue to learn characterization by the reading of *Seedfolks*, and write our own final chapter to this collection of short stories. Please continue to have your child read a minimum of 20 minutes at home daily. Tutorials are Monday at 7:45am and Tuesday after school.

In **PACE** language arts, our next six weeks will focus on three novels. *Seedfolks*, by Paul Fleischman, will be used to explore an author's point of view. *Stargirl*, by Jerry Spinelli, and *The Giver*, by Lois Lowry, will give students the opportunity to discuss the role of the individual in society and the concept of utopian societies. During the reading of *The Giver*, the students will be researching related social issues and sharing their findings with the class.

6th grade **Math** has completed our unit on tax, tips, and discounts. We will complete a short review on area and perimeter of shapes. Then, our new book will be Variables and Patterns. This unit is an introduction to Algebraic concepts. Students will make many tables, graphs, and equations. They will also learn how to solve expressions and equations.

In **Science**, the Dolphins are still studying the Voyage of the Mimi. We will begin the culminating assessment project for our unit on Interactions within Ocean Systems. The students will be researching an ocean creature and creating a portfolio. Your child may need to go to the public library and check out books or use the computer at home to conduct some of their research. Thank you for your help! Our year concludes with our study of Relationships among Objects in Space where we learn about Newton's laws, research the planets in our solar system, and design and test water rockets. We're having fun learning science vocabularies, riddles, and puzzles.

In **Social Studies**, the Cultures in Transition unit looks at two cultural regions, Africa and Latin America, where economies are in the process of developing. These regions have also been characterized by political instability. Both the political instability and slower economic development can be attributed, in large part, to European imperialism and colonialism. In the 20th century, a growing nationalism across these two continents resulted in the removal of imperialistic powers. However, these developing nations are confronted with a variety of problems since their removal, including environmental and human rights issues.



6th Grade Penguins

The Penguin **Science** students are still sailing with *The Mimi*. They are making great progress in our oceanography unit. We just completed a study on ocean zones – limiting factors of each, such as light, temperature, population density, and adaptations of ocean creatures. In the next few weeks, we'll cover hypothermia, water cycle, food webs, and how ecosystems are affected when man upsets the natural balance of predator and prey. Later, we will begin our culminating activity which will include researching and creating a portfolio of an ocean creature. Then, it's off to outer space!

"Variables & Patterns" is the current unit of study for Penguin **Math** students. This unit develops students' ability to identify and recognize variables in situations, describe patterns of change shown in words, tables, and graphs of data, and also construct tables and graphs to display relations among variables. "Variables & Patterns" also focuses on using algebraic symbols to write rules and equations relating variables and using tables, graphs, and equations to solve problems.

We are beginning TAKS tutorials after school to focus on areas in need of improvement as we prepare for the upcoming TAKS test in April. Don't forget that green practice sheets are assigned every Friday and due the following Friday. They count as a double daily grade!! Parents can sign the practice sheet for 5 bonus points!

Language Arts and PACE News: This nine-week unit of study in Language Arts focuses on decision-making, analyzing and classifying details. The Lone-Star selection, *Seedfolks* by Paul Fleischman, will serve as an engaging focus for our students as we delve into a study of cooperation among diverse groups. Characters will be analyzed through their views on environmental, social, and cultural issues. Characterization will also be a focus of study through the novel, *The View from Saturday* by E. L. Konigsburg. As part of these novel studies, students will work to understand how the characters' relationships are strengthened through both their common bonds and their diversity. In addition to the *Seedfolks* unit, PACE students will explore fantasy by reading J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*.

In **Social Studies**, students are beginning the third unit which is called *Cultures in Transition*. The students are studying the circumstances and effects of European colonialism in Latin America and Africa. They are learning basic economic and demographic terms and how to analyze data in order to understand the impact of history, governments, environment, and geography on the present conditions of these nations. Students are becoming aware of how and why some nations develop economically more quickly than others.

6th Grade Sea Otters



The **History** classes are journeying through Latin America and Africa in the unit “Cultures in Transition”. Students are studying historical factors and demographic data that have impacted these developing world regions. The unit will culminate with a study of an individual country from one of the two regions.

The Sea Otters are having a whale of a time in **Science** class. They are busy graphing the migratory routes of humpbacks as well as charting the topography of the ocean floor. Ask your favorite sixth grade oceanographer the difference between a mysticete and an odontocete.

The current unit of study in **Language Arts** focuses on comparing and contrasting as critical thinking skills in reading, writing, and viewing. It is called **Imagining Other Worlds**. The students will be reading historical fiction or science fiction novels in literature circles. By the end of the unit, students will know that both historical fiction and science fiction depend on an author’s ability to create a believable world. They will also know that historical fiction authors reflect on the past; science fiction authors speculate about the future.

In **Math**, we wrapped up "Bits & Pieces III" in mid-February. We will squeeze in a Geometry mini unit before we begin our first book of 7th grade pre-algebra, Variables and Patterns. In this unit, we will explore three ways of representing a changing situation: in a narrative (story format), with data organized in a table, and in a coordinate graph. We will compare the three formats throughout the unit to determine the strengths and weaknesses of each. We will identify the independent variable vs. the dependent variable and place them correctly in a table and coordinate graph. We will use mathematical judgment, describing an event from studying a graph, determining the proper scale to use in a coordinate graph, etc. We will wrap up the unit with some work in solving one-operation and two-operation equations with focus on keeping the equation balanced. We will also write equations from a given situation.



7th Grade Cougars, Jaguars and Tigers



7th Grade Language Arts:

March 3rd, 2010 is the date of the state TAKS writing test. The 7th grade students have been working hard to train for the big event. As their parents, you can support and help them in the following ways:

1. Make sure they are here at school and on time.
2. Encourage them to take the test seriously.
3. Tell them you are “cheering” for them all day long as they test.
4. Pack them a sack lunch with a healthy drink. We will all eat in our rooms that day.
5. Fill them up with a good, **healthy breakfast** of champions Tuesday morning. (Eggs are brain food.)
6. Please see that they get plenty of rest that night and are ready to focus.
7. Try not to upset them before they leave for school. ☺
8. For testing strategies, review the “TAKS Tips” handouts with them.
9. Finally, let them know you love them and care about their performance.

Students in regular classes will begin reading the novel *Walk Two Moons* by Sharon Creech. The story deals with emotional issues of family love, courage, and personal losses. Creech’s characters embark on a cross-country journey across the United States in search of answers to some of life’s complexities. As they travel from state to state, visiting famous landmarks, they face challenging situations while exploring personal and interpersonal relationships.

Honors classes will read the novel *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien. As students study the novel, they will engage in reader response journal entries which will encourage them to interact with the text and to think critically as they read. Students will also focus on novel elements and how personal viewpoints reflect our perceptions of the world.

7th Grade Cougars, Jaguars and Tigers—continued

7th Grade Texas History: Unit: Republic to Reconstruction

Texas History is working on the Republic to Reconstruction Unit. It focuses on the events from independence and statehood through the Civil War and Reconstruction. We also learn that democracy is an evolving process that is both responsible and responsive to its citizens. Additionally, we'll discuss that the cultural identity of Texas was shaped by its unique history.

Right before the winter break, the 7th graders finished the College Education workbooks that the counselors covered with the students. Parents should have received a short workbook that serves as a guide for you to use in conversation and follow up to what the students have been learning at school. Some students are already taking language classes that count towards their high school GPA. It's not too early to start the continuing education conversation.

7th Grade Science:

Students will be exploring the microscopic world as they learn how to use the compound microscope. We will be investigating the differences between plant and animal cells. The students will then be delving into the complexities of photosynthesis. Ask your student to name some carbon dioxide producers and discuss their relationship to global warming.



8th Grade Comets, Stars & Suns



Math

Math 8 students are beginning a review of probability and percents. Then, we will begin reviewing for the TAKS test. Students will take a practice TAKS test and the results will be sent home to parents.

Honors Algebra I students are beginning Chapter 8 where students will learn how to factor polynomials. Our next unit in Honors Math covers Thinking With Mathematical Models (TWMM) and Filling and Wrapping (FW). TWMM works through investigations to enhance the students skills in recognizing linear relationships. They will be conducting experiments, analyzing data, writing equations, and making predications about values beyond and between the data they collect. In FW, they will be reviewing surface area, volume, and scaling using compost boxes to help them understand what happens when dimensions are changed.

History

In this unit of *An Expanding Nation*, the content focus is threefold: analyzing westward expansion and its effect on the political, economic, and social development of the nation, analyzing how political, economic and social factors led to the growth of sectionalism and the Civil War, and identifying the impact of science and technology on the development of the U.S. This era with its expansion into the West and the economic transformation that changed the ways Americans worked and where they lived, while simultaneously creating new opportunities and new social problems, requires students to grasp the interrelationships among the expansion and industrialization period of our nation's history.

8th Grade Comets, Stars & Suns, continued



Science

The students will continue their studies of the dynamic Earth by exploring the connections between Earth's geology and the use and conservation of natural resources. Students will learn how to test and classify minerals and rocks based on physical properties, as well as learn about the effects of both chemical and physical weathering on rocks: mountains *can* be made into mole hills!

English

English classes are reading the historical novel *Forbidden City* by William Bell which is set in Beijing, China, during the student protests that ended in what is now referred to as the Tiananmen Square massacre. The honors students have completed that novel and are currently reading Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, a famous science fiction novel. From those novels, we will segue into the study of Anne Frank's diary, the biography Parallel Journeys, poems from I Never Saw Another Butterfly, the films The Wave and Escape from Sobibor, the play The Diary of Anne Frank, and many other related writings. This unit will emphasize two very important concepts, one academic and one emotional: using voice in writing and taking a stand for what is right. We will round out this study by writing about real-life heroes like some of those we will read about in this unit. Some background on the Holocaust will be studied so that the students understand what is happening in the pieces they read. We encourage you parents to talk to your teens about what they are studying and learning and to add your own perspective to this topic. (Grandparents can be a big help in this, too.) For all the years we have been studying this unit, it is by far the favorite of our eighth graders. They will remember it for a long time. And that makes it all worthwhile for us teachers.

7th & 8th Grade Pace - by Jayne Polly

7th Grade PACE

Writing is a major focus for seventh graders who will take the TAKS writing test. Improving their focus, technique, word choice, sentence fluency, and use of the language remain goals for seventh graders. Seventh graders also will study Greek and Roman mythology and then connect it to Agatha Christie's *The Labors of Hercules*. They will enjoy reading mysteries that are also analogies of Hercules' twelve tasks. Using their imaginations to create their own mythology projects, students will write original stories that encompass the writing techniques they perfect, write poems about the myths, or create analogies to the myths they have learned.

8th Grade PACE

Reading and responding to Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables* constitute the focus for eighth grade PACE students. Identifying significant quotations and vocabulary words daily and writing journal responses weekly, the students are creating individual dialectical journals related to the book. Following this book, they will work on better understanding themselves since they will be making choices about high school and their futures during the spring semester.

PACE Testing

Students who are not currently in PACE but would like to be considered for the program should download a packet from the PISD website or go by room 921 to pick up a packet of materials which must be filled out and returned to Mrs. Polly by April 1, 2010. Testing for PACE will commence during the week of April 19-22.

Destination Imagination

Renner will send two teams of students to compete in the regional Destination Imagination tournament February 27, 2010. One team consists of sixth graders Siwei Mao, Aakriti Gaur, Sohan Date, Randy Fan, Robert Qin, and Ayo Adeptian. Their team manager is Xiaohong Luo. The second team of sixth graders, managed by Swati Namburi, consists of Shalini Nair, Eric Lee, Erte Bablu, Jay Arnand, Rohan Banerjee, and Kasim Khan. Wish these students good luck!

Choir



Congratulations to the following **Choir Students** who were selected as members of the All Region Choir. They are...

Zoya Abebefe
Adam Abbas
Bradley Gregory
Emily Delkus
Cora Pruitt
Ansley Cloward
Miranda Garcia
Megan Fass

We are really proud of all of you!

Upcoming Choir Events:

March 3rd - 6th grade Musical Rehearsal

March 4th - 6th grade Musical

March 23rd - 7th/8th grade Pre-UIL Concert

March 30th, 31st, and April 1st - 7th/8th grade UIL Contest

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