

Paw Prints

The Monthly PTSA Newsletter of Washington Middle School

<http://www.seattleschools.org/schools/washingtonms>

MARCH 2008

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From Your PTSA

Hello fellow parents of WMS students. We've all had the thrill and agony of mid-year grades and our students are refreshed from their break and now we find ourselves in a crushing count down to the PTSA Auction, just days away. Congratulations and deepest thanks to the folks that have worked so hard to get us this far, especially Co-Chairs **Elizabeth Lowry** and **Su Chase**. This event generates more than half the funds that we place in classrooms for our students, so I hope everyone who wants to come has a seat and a paddle to raise. It will be a terrific event at **St Demetrious Church on Boyer, Friday March 14, 6pm** with dinner prepared by the Chefs of Rover's and St. Clouds; mmmm... mmm. It will be delicious and the variety of interesting things you can come away with is flat out astonishing.

The news from your PTSA is mostly good. The Annual Fund has exceeded its goal and the team (led by **Meg Watson**, **Kathy Feldman** and **Audrey Sheffield**) has decided to forgo the spring appeal. Heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed and the team for their leadership. To date, individual teachers and all departments are using their PTSA grants to enrich their classes with materials and experiences that would otherwise not be available to our students. The substitute grant money is about half consumed as classes take in some great field trips. Seven opportunity grants have been approved so far this year

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Volunteer for the WMS Auction and Dinner Celebrate Life!

Friday, March 14 at 6pm

St. Demetrios Church, Montlake

The auction is fast approaching, and while the catalogs are at the printer and the deadline for RSVPs has passed, we can still use volunteers. We need people to help with the raffle, check-in and check-out, set up and tear down.

Come ready to support Washington Middle School. Special features include a video for the Raise the Paddle appeal during the live auction, produced by WMS parents **Mark Linsey** and **Janis Traven**. You also can help pay for new equipment for the science labs, in addition to bidding on incredible items such as vacation homes, restaurant gift certificates and fine wines.

To find out how you can help, contact auction co-chairs **Su Chase** (722-1103) or **Elizabeth Lowry** (725-0288) at WMSauction2008@hotmail.com.

Keeping WMS Safe

This month's article was prompted by parent questions raised during the tours held in January and February (thank you again to **Stephanie Bower** and the PTSA guides). "How do you secure the building if something happens in the neighborhood?" "Does every student share a locker?" "What happens if there's a problem at the bus stop?" In responding to their questions, our goal is to let everyone know that while academics are what we are known for, safety is always on our minds.

With any building's safety plans, preparation comes first. At Washington, the Safety Committee meets monthly to review the safety plan; review drills conducted; advocate for equipment needs; and discuss issues raised by students, parents, and staff. During the summer, their input helped revamp the Safety Handbook issued in prior years, streamlining it to a level that allowed us to incorporate it into the Staff Handbook as a section rather than a separate manual. Along with the Safety Committee's monthly meetings, the Administrative Team meets weekly, with safety and incident reviews receiving a good portion of the dedicated meeting time. These meetings give us a chance to review our building coverage plans, security needs for upcoming events, evening activities, and any specific incidents/issues that are bubbling to the surface. In January, the topic of community safety and its impact on our students demanded further attention with the tragic deaths of the two students from Cleveland High, the restaurant owner on 23rd and Union, and the young lady on Capitol Hill. In response to these concerns, Washington hosted a summit in early February, attended by administrative and security staff from Washington, Meany, Madrona, Leschi, Seattle Girls School, the Giddens School, and members of the SPD East Precinct Community Police Team, including **Captain McDonagh**. Not only did the summit address specific safety concerns, but it also enabled us to form a communication network between our schools that will improve our ability to better share critical information as we keep our students safe.

While planning and preparation are significant portions of our safety program at Washington, they still don't tell the full story. During the tours, parents asked about fights, theft, bullying, and other issues driven by their own middle school experience or the "urban legends" that grow and morph with each passing year. Our response is one built around honesty and reality. Yes, there are things that happen at Washington.

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From Your PTSA, *continued from page 1*

for everything from shared magazine subscriptions to Brazilian drummer performances to stone carving materials, leaving 54% of the funds still available.

During the February Board meeting your board agreed on language for policies regarding both the substitute grants and the opportunity grants and this language will be added to our standing rules to be approved this month. These policies make it more clear that the PTSA seeks to fund direct benefits for students and cannot fund indirect benefits such as voluntary trip absences or professional development costs.

Also, your Nominating Committee, led by **Stephanie Bower** has begun the search for next year's PTSA Board and this year's Board is about to begin trying to fill the Chair positions for all of the PTSA committees next year too. You can contact any board member for information about openings. Please, please consider taking a leadership role next year either on the Board or of a committee. You are the key to a successful PTSA every year.

Now for the not-so-good news. Our Co-President, **Jackie Smalley**, had to resign from the board a few weeks ago due to emergent family and health concerns and we desperately need to fill her role. Our middle school struggles to keep a well oiled PTSA running even though many of our parents are only here for three years at a time. One way we do this successfully is by having two-year Co-Prez terms that are offset by a year. I am finishing my stint in June and will happily accelerate the training I was providing Jackie for a new volunteer. The job takes between 15 and 30 hours a month and we've done a good job of process improvement recently, which helps keep it manageable. If you care how well this is done, this year and next, please contact me to find out more.

Thanks to all for their participation and enthusiasm, helping the brilliant Students of Washington Middle School get the best from their three years here.

*John Eickelberg, PTSA Co-President
father of 7th grade Brendan*

SPS Advanced Learning Mgr. Speaks

On Tuesday, March 11 from 7–8:30pm in the Lowell Elementary lunchroom, the APP Advisory Committee presents *An Evening with Dr. Robert Vaughan*, the new Advanced Learning Manager for Seattle Schools. Dr. Vaughan will speak on APP concerns followed by an open question & answer session in which parents/guardians can ask any range of questions relating to the program or gifted education in general.

This is a great opportunity to get to know our esteemed program manager, learn about Dr. Vaughan's vision for APP and advanced learning programs, as well as tap into his vast knowledge and ask some of those burning questions about your child's education—curriculum, AP courses, college entrance, assessments...? All elementary, middle, and high school APP parents/guardians are encouraged to attend.

Advertise in the WMS Yearbook

Please spread the word! Businesses have a choice of either listing their name on a "Sponsors" page at the end of the yearbook or businesses may choose to sponsor a specific page (listing their name only near the page number). The price range is from \$20–50. Thank you for your support.

*Jennifer Matter, Technology and Yearbook Teacher
Room 120, 252-2600, jematter@seattleschools.org*

Keeping WMS Safe, *continued from page 1*

Yes, we have had fights this year. Yes, we have had thefts this year. Yes, bullying is something that we are actively dealing with. With adolescent students going through this difficult and significant transitional period, we know that "stuff" will happen. However, the reality of the numbers and the types of incidents that Washington deals with speak directly to the planning, preparation, and implementation of our safety plans. Fights within the building this year can be counted on one hand. When they have happened, the staff's response to the incident has been quick, professional, and built around restoring student safety immediately. Theft in the building is usually limited to electronic items; items we specifically request students not bring to school. As to the shared lockers which have been blamed for much of the "access" to these items; if all goes as planned, by the end of this summer they will be replaced with individual lockers for all students. Bullying is more difficult to detail, primarily because it is up to the victim to report it. To attack that communication gap, our counseling, administrative, and instructional staff has developed what we consider to be one of the strongest protocols in middle school. Not only is it designed to provide specific support to the victim, but it also streamlines the response process that administration and security use.

In the end, we are not naïve to the reality that things can happen in schools, regardless of all the proactive planning that takes place. For parents, we ask only that you continue to talk with your children. You know them much better than we ever will. If something doesn't feel right or sound right, trust your inner instinct and give us a call. On our end, we will continue to plan, practice, and respond to issues, all with the express goal of keeping students safe and keeping the focus at Washington on learning and instruction.

Jon Halfaker, Principal

All the News That Fits We Print

Paw Prints is always looking for articles and ideas from the entire school. Submissions can be emailed to elizanders@yahoo.com. Deadline is the 15th of each month. Feel free to call me at 324-0222 with questions and/or ideas.

Elizabeth Sanders, Editor

• Legislative Report • Legislative Report • Legislative Report •

The following bills were moved out of committee by the Feb. 8th cutoff for this session. The last bill's Senate companion bill (military recruiting) has been pushed and influenced by our very own **Jayn Foy** and yours truly + Garfield PTSA:

Education Funding

SB 6879 McAuliffe Sets December 1, 2008 as the due date for the final report of the Basic Education Finance Task Force report. A recent addendum also adds that the task force shall specifically consider issues related to equalizing school employee salary allocations among school districts. *Rules*

Math and Science

SHB 2809 Sullivan Provides by September 15, 2008, the professional educator standards board shall submit a report with recommendations for strengthening the state's corps of K-12 math and sciences teachers.

SHB 2598 Sullivan Requires OSPI to develop a mathematics curriculum that is aligned with Washington's standards and that would be made available online. (The intent is for use mainly by teachers.) *Appropriations*

Quality Teaching

HB 2775 Barlow This would add an additional bonus for Nationally Board certified teachers who teach in high poverty areas. *Appropriations*

Student Support Services

SHB 2773 Barlow Funds sufficient for school districts to provide an additional one-half full-time equivalent counselor or librarian at any school and at any grade level. *Appropriations*

Assessment System

SHB 3166 Sullivan I will list just the first two components of this bill. Effective in 2009, SPI must redesign the reading, math and science WASL in all grades except high school by shortening test administration and reducing short answer and extended response questions. SPI must also develop end of course assessments for several math courses by 2009-10. See bill for complete details. *Appropriations*

SSB 6503 McDermott This bill would approve the segmented math assessment as an alternative assessment to the WASL. *Rules*

Recess and PE

SSB 6042 Franklin Requiring OSPI to survey elementary schools regarding the availability of recess, and report the results to the legislature. *Rules*

HB 1188 McCoy Requiring schools to provide opportunities for students to engage in physical activity each school day.

World Language

SHB 2523 Hudgins Creating the position of world language supervisor at OSPI. *Rules*

SSB 6466 Roach Creating a task force to study teaching world languages in public schools, current and recommendations for future. *Ways & Means*

Education Reform

SHB 2808 Sullivan Providing additional opportunities to assist students who have completed other high school graduation requirements but have not passed the WASL. *Appropriations*

HB 2810 Sullivan Enhancing resources and assistance in school districts with concentrations of English language learners. *Appropriations*

SSB 6673 McAuliffe Creating extended learning opportunities and instructional support for English language learners, low-income students, and students with learning disabilities. *Ways & Means*

Foster Kids

HB 2679 Roberts Creating programs to improve educational outcomes for students in foster care. *Appropriations*

Release of Student Information

HB 2026 Santos Requiring school districts that allow military recruiters to have access to student records to allow the same access to representatives of the Job Corps, Peace Corp and AmeriCorps. The original version passed the House on Jan. 31, 2008. Now it will need to work its way through the Senate. (There is a Senate version which adds the requirement that school districts provide parents with a list of recruiters and offer parents the option of not providing information to any particular category.)

*Janis Traven, WMS Legislative Chair
285-7375, janistraven@comcast.net*



WMS Music News



Upcoming Events

March 5 University of Washington orchestra invitational event. An adjudicated event, but not a competition; attending will be high schools plus Eckstein and Washington middle schools.

March 6 Seattle School District Middle School Jazz Festival. 7pm at Eckstein Middle School. The evening will feature middle school bands from throughout Seattle Public Schools.

March 14 WMS PTSA Spring Fling. 6 to 10pm at St. Demetrios Church. Senior Jazz Band and a Senior Orchestra quartet will be performing. Support our school and our music program by attending this fabulously fun event. Don't forget to bid high!

March 14 Northwest Orchestra Festival, Gresham, Oregon

March 15 Solo and Ensemble Competition, Eckstein Middle School

March 25 Middle School Band Festival. 7pm at WMS Gym. The evening will feature middle school concert bands from the south end of Seattle Public Schools.

April 18 Gypsy Jazz. 7pm at Town Hall. Senior Orchestra will perform with Grammy-nominated violinist **Darol Anger** and maverick multi-instrumentalist **Joel Craven**. Volunteers are needed to serve food and help with advertising sales. For information contact **Suzanne Thompson**, suzannadanna1958@yahoo.com.



Attend a Friends of Washington Music Meeting

All parents are welcome to attend *FOWM* board meeting on Wednesday, March 5 at 7:00pm in the band room (room 8). Your participation can help make this a great year!



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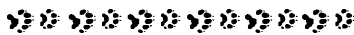
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Jeff Storz

Next Pawprints Deadline
MARCH 15TH, 2008

2nd Sem. Academic Saturday School

Applications are now available in the main office, counseling offices, and with **Mrs. Jones** in room/office 4. The two dates for March are: March 1st and March 15th, all students from Washington are welcome to attend. We offer tutoring services, access to the computers, internet access and educational support. All students are expected to: enter the building through the front doors (by flag pole), come to the LRC to sign in, remain until 12 noon (lunch is served), come prepared with their notebook, textbooks, school supplies, and assignments, and have a positive attitude and be ready to work. If you have questions/concerns please contact **Ms. Tolson**, Saturday School Coordinator (252-2600).



8th Grade Mountain Trip

This year's trip, on March 13, will cost between \$24 and \$63, depending on selected activity. Cost includes round-trip transportation by a commercial bus to Snoqualmie and back to WMS.

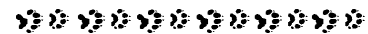


Detailed information along with registration deadline will be post in the daily bulletin.

Mrs. Cooper, 8th Grade Team Leader

Are You a Morning Person?

Most middle schoolers aren't either, but some do need tutoring during the first 3 periods of the day (from 7:45–10:40) in Math, Reading, Science, Social Studies, or Language Arts! Bring your own coffee, and contact Susan Huntley (252-2644, sjbuntley@seattleschools.org).



Math Club Success

WMS 6th Graders took 3rd Place at the Mount Rainier Math Invitational at Mt. Rainier HS on Friday, Feb 1st.

March Calendar

- Mar 5 EARLY RELEASE, 12:15pm
- Mar 5 *Friends of Wash. Music (FOWM)* Board Mtg, 7pm
- Mar 11 Evening with Dr. Robert Vaughan, 7–8:30pm, Lowell Elementaary Lunchroom
- Mar 12 PTSA Board Meeting 7pm
- Mar 13 8th Grade Mountain Trip
- Mar 14 **WMS AUCTION**, 6pm, St. Demetrios Church
- Mar 21 NO SCHOOL—Professional Development.
- Mar 31-April 4 NO SCHOOL—Spring Break