



Paw Prints

The Monthly PTSA Newsletter of Washington Middle School

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

DECEMBER 2007

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Greetings from Your PTSA

With just a few weeks remaining before the winter holiday break I find myself realizing how fortunate we are as parents to have such a terrific Middle School alternative for our children. When I think of my own experience at this tender age in two rough NYC schools I can scarcely believe it is the same time of life. Washington Middle School teachers, staff, principal and parents have managed to create a nurturing, discipline-building and academically aggressive environment for all the students that attend. It is amazing to read the students' writing and watch our own kids in this period of rapid discovery.

Since the press date for the November column, your PTSA held its first of three General Meetings where you approved the board appointment of **Jackie Smalley** as Co-President. Thank you, Jackie, for volunteering, and thanks to the membership for approving her. Jackie is new to Washington and you read her first *PawPrints* column right here, last month.

During the general meeting, the membership also approved a revised 2007–2008 Budget reflecting the final fundraising and expense numbers from the 2006–2007 school year. The good news is that we were able to bolster spending on Washington students by \$27,000 this fall. An ad hoc Finance Committee focused on putting more PTSA funds to work in classrooms and safety as follows:

- * Increased departmental grants by 20% and created grants for departments not currently served (Language Arts, Math, Social Studies)
- * Increased Opportunity Grants to historic high level
- * Increased Substitute Grants to better support field trips
- * Added new funding for Writer's Workshop consumables

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Tours for Prospective WMS Families

The WMS tour dates are now set. An *Open House* will take place on the evening of January 10, from 6:30 to 8 PM.

Tours of WMS will be held on January 17, January 31, February 7 and February 14. Tour programs start at 8 am in the lunchroom and should conclude by around 10 am. For more information, please contact the WMS Main Office at 252-2600.

Jon Halfaker, Principal

Wrapping Up 2007



A year ago, I made the mistake of thanking PTSA for supporting another successful round of parent conferences. In glowing terms I thanked individuals for the food they prepared for staff, the volunteers who helped with setting up the gym, and the individual parents who staffed a PTSA table passing out information, water, and cookies. From the initial read, it was a wonderful and productive event for all. *Wrong!* Not only did the conferences not take place, but also the rescheduled conferences, scheduled for January, suffered the same miserable fate of being cancelled at the last minute (we did get one of the two days in). Snow, rain, wind, hail (heck, fire and brimstone probably were lurking in the wings) all managed to strike at the most inopportune times last year causing a scheduling mess for our students, families, and staff, along with mounds of frustration for all our volunteers. Just one of the many notable moments that stood out over the past year of school at Washington Middle School.

As the year draws to a close I'd like to make note of some of the more pleasant events and achievements that took place over the past twelve months. A starting point has to be the work of our students. Not only have they moved into some "rare air" with their combined WASL scores in the 80/80/70 range (writing/reading/math), but they also continue to demonstrate growing mastery in their learning on other assessment platforms as well. Student writing is peppering the walls of Washington documenting the growth our students are making for all to read. Our young scientists produced fantastic results at the annual science fair. Their current work is visible in the halls and classrooms, as displays demonstrating "claim, evidence, and reasoning" document their scientific inquiry and learning. Our "math-letes" once again staked claim as one of the dominant math programs in the state, in some instances knocking off high school teams with their overpowering individual and team play. Our student artists continue to create piece after piece that dazzles our senses. Our musicians repeatedly travel and return with hardware symbolic of their effort, preparation, and commitment to creating wonderful music. As athletes, the

(continued on page 2)

Greetings from Your PTSA, *continued from page 1*

* Added new funding to renew and update disaster preparedness supplies

* Corrected minor errors and clarified previously-approved budget line items

* Increased Principal Fund, replacing discretionary funds that were cut in the last two budget cycles and aligning with estimated actual costs

* Added two new line items: Transition to High School event and Simple Majority contribution

One thing I would like to note is that our school was under-enrolled this fall (for a change) and under-enrollment means reduced funding from the School District. Being cautious, your finance team chose to retain \$19,000 to be available to address the effects of the shortfall. It is likely that your Board will ask you to approve a second revision in January. Directly after the General Meeting, your PTSA also hosted a Group Health Forum that informed parents about the myriad of changes our pre/early teen kids are experiencing and motivated a lively exchange of strategies and experiences. About 50 parents attended. We hope to make it an annual event. *Special thanks* to our **Nurse Practitioner Gorecki** and **Ms. Horton** from Group Health for making the Forum a reality at Washington.

The PTSA *Annual Fund* is off to a great start and I'd like to once again encourage everyone to participate. Let your child know you did. It's their future.

Your Auction Chairs have been hard at work gathering some amazing things, including use of a house in France!

It's hard to believe the holidays are nearly upon us and shortly after there will be an open house and tours. If you would like to be a tour guide or help out in any of the million or so ways your PTSA needs you, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, **Lisa Coughlin** (Lisac@cycl.com), and she will put you right in the mix. Thank you again for sending your student(s) to Washington and supporting your PTSA.

*John Eickelberg, PTSA Co-President, eibhlis@msn.com
Father of 6th Grade Brendan*

Parent Conferences 2007

The PTSA sponsored parent conferences will be held the first week of December 2007. Teachers will gather in the WMS gymnasium for two two-hour conference sessions. Parent/guardians will be able to meet with their student's teachers for five-minute mini-conferences, moving from teacher to teacher. If additional conference time is needed with individual teachers, WMS grade-level counselors will be available to help schedule them. The conference dates and times are:

December 5th, from 3:30–5:30pm

December 6th, from 6–8pm

We hope to see you there!

Jon Halfaker, Principal

Wrapping up 2007, *continued from page 1*

"Dawgs" of Washington brought home two more championship banners to hang amongst the many that make up a growing purple wall of pride.

With our staff, it was also a very memorable year. In the year past, our staff welcomed home at least six new family members (congratulations to the moms, dads and, yes, grandparents). We thrilled at the safe return of one family member and former Washington student, who completed a long tour of duty in Iraq. We celebrated the completion of Masters Degrees, Administrative Credentials and, as of just last week, three National Board Certifications (congratulations to **Ms. Olson**, **Mr. Forsythe**, and **Ms. Hoffacker**). We welcomed 11 new staff members to the classrooms and offices of WMS while wishing a number of veteran colleagues all the best as they moved on to new schools, new districts, or in the case of **Mr. Hollingshead**, a well deserved "retirement" (he's just as busy as ever).

In the building, we celebrated the arrival of the data cameras. In all honesty, the data cameras and the accompanying digital projectors have probably been the most widely- and well-used piece of technology to enter the classroom in many years. Changes in instructional practice were evident from the moment they arrived. Not only was it a tool for the teachers to use, but student use has skyrocketed in part because of their comfort with all things technological. This week, the staff is receiving training in pod-casting, movie making, and other advanced skills that they can use to enhance their instruction and curriculum.

Finally, as a district we have had a very eventful year. Of biggest note was the arrival of **Dr. Goodloe-Johnson**, the new Superintendent of Seattle Schools. I am regularly asked about my initial impressions of Dr. Goodloe-Johnson. My first impressions have been positive. She has high expectations for all, is extremely thoughtful and deliberate, absolutely wants the truth (good or bad), and doesn't or won't lose. Beyond impressions, I have found her to be an excellent listener, someone who obviously cares about what is being said and by whom it is being said. I also believe that her background in education is serving all of our students at the highest level.

2007 was an eventful and wonderful year. Your continued faith in Washington and in public education is inspiring. Next year, I will join your ranks as a middle school parent. While it will be a new experience in our household, I am confident that the knowledge and wisdom that all of you have shared with me, along with the constant level of pride and professionalism demonstrated by our staff, will make our experience at Washington just as successful as it has been for all of you. Enjoy the final days of the year, have a restful Winter Break, hug your family members, and as always, please let us know how we can improve as a school and community. And, yes, thank you to the PTSA for wonderful Parent Conferences 2007!

Jon Halfaker, Principal

• Legislative Report •

As of this writing, the 4204/Simple Majority campaign has moved ahead in the statewide tally by over 16,000 votes, with less than 13,000 late absentee remaining to count—success! King County turned out strongly in favor of Simple Majority, which will make it easier for districts around the state to provide operating funds for their schools.

This is a significant victory for a long time priority issue for PTA. Around the state, more than 6,700 local volunteers made 350,000 phone calls to voters urging them to Approve 4204. The financial support and extremely hard work to get out the vote among pro-education supporters helped achieve these amazing results since Election Day.

Locally, we elected four new school board members, all by substantial margins. They are:

Peter Mailer, District 1
Sherry L. Carr, District 2
Harium Martin-Morris, District 3
Steve Sundquist, District 6

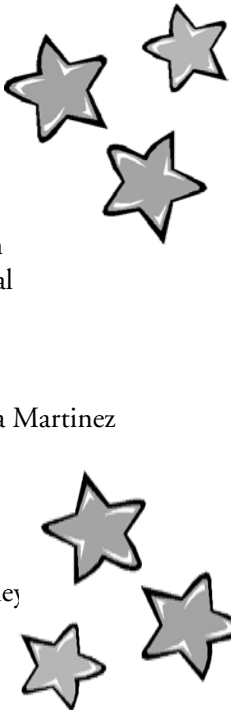
Mark your calendars for **PTA Focus Day, February 13** in Olympia.

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

8th Grade STARS

October

CyCy Okoro
Ben Baker
Elisha Angeles
Ruben Lesnick
Emily Cuevas
Alyssa Eldridge
Grant Bronsdon
Addison Carvajal
Andy Tran
Jendy Edgerton
William Yip
Brenda Mancilla Martinez
Andrew Guy
Jean S. Ku, Jr.
Allison Turner
John Lee
Jennifer Charmley
James Phillips
Natalie Gray
Hank Droege
Emma Giles
RJ Sera
Jenny Lin
Rafael Perez Castillo



Adiza Ameh
Hannah Collins
May-Lannie Lozano

November

Rachel DeCordoba
Anna Fillippo-Griffith
Jean Currie
Tia Fogle
Will Hunt
Sara Cullen:
Anita Luong
Lynna Tran
Ellie Lightfoot
Tommy Foy
Emily Proulx
Maria Gray
Stephanie Cerezo
Will Luna
Evan Floyd
Rochelle Peterson
Bennie Parker
Jasmine Beverly
Brandon Tran
Belequsa Tamaami
Liam McFeely

Donate Auction Items by Feb. 14

Do you speak French? You could give five hours of tutoring. *Does your best friend own a restaurant?* How about asking for a gift certificate. *Do you have a vacation home in the San Juan Islands?* Consider donating a weekend. *Do you commute to work by bike?* You could mentor a beginning bike commuter. We need items like these—and much more—for the spring auction.

The theme is **Go Green: Recycle, Educate, Celebrate!** Donate items related to the theme, or something else entirely. Just print the donor form from the Washington Middle School Web site and mail it in. Or, e-mail WMSauction2008@hotmail.com, and we'll send you a pdf that you can fill out and mail. The deadline to donate items is February 14!

Want to donate your time before, during or after the auction? Whatever your talent, we have a role for you. Volunteers create table decorations, help prepare the food and greet people at the door. *Are you a whiz at eBay?* Let us know. We may end up auctioning some of our items on-line this year.

The money raised is vital to helping teachers pay for classroom supplies and helping to fund the *Saturday School* where students can get extra help with their homework. Auction proceeds enable the PTSA to give grants to departments such as music, art, science and reading.

The auction is set for **Saturday, March 15, 2008**, and the PTSA and *Friends of Washington Music (FOWM)* are gathering fabulous items for the auction and planning a wonderful evening of music and a gourmet dinner prepared by **Thierry Rautureau** of *Rover's* and **John Platt** of *St. Cloud's*.

We hope to raise \$135,000 this year, and we need your help procuring items, organizing and helping with the live auction, silent auction, set up, decorations and working the day of the event.

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



2007–2008 Entertainment Books On Sale until Dec. 16

The 2007–2008 *Entertainment Book* is loaded with savings for local stores, restaurants, entertainment sites, and travel opportunities. The savings from using one or two of the coupons alone will cover the price of just one book. Don't miss your chance this year! Pick one up in the Main Office between 7am and 4pm by December 16. Books are only \$20 this year, with all profits going to the *WMS Associated Student Body Fund*.

Crossing Jackson Street

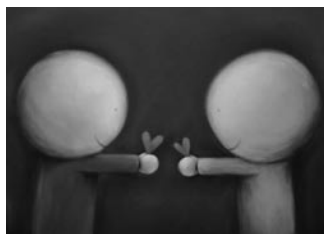
We all know that there are challenges to deal with in Middle School for children and parents. It would be nice if we could wipe one of those challenges off the list. If you have witnessed the gauntlet called Jackson Street in the early morning or late afternoon hours, perhaps you will consider making a phone call on behalf of all of the children at Washington Middle School. Our children worry about enough things in school every day, but how to make it into the building safely should not be one of them.

Parents can support requests made by **Mr. Halfaker** and **Mr. Powell** to the City Council and the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) by making a short and simple phone call. Please contact **Jim Curtain** at 684-5124 to share a story, receive an update on the current studies of the crossing, or to voice your concerns. Apparently this process takes three weeks, but Washington Middle School staff have been trying to resolve this problem for a few years. Your call may make a difference in resolving this serious safety issue more quickly. Thank you for your support.



Share the Season's Joy

'Tis the time of the year to join the Washington Middle School community to help make sure that all of our WMS students and families have a joyous holiday season.



The holidays are quickly approaching and your assistance is needed. Because of the growing needs of our community, the holiday giving program begins before Thanksgiving and continues through the New Year. You can help by donating gift cards or cash. Clean, gently used cold weather items can also be donated. Donations of any amount are greatly appreciated.

We would like to receive donations by December 14th. Someone will be available to take your donations at the *Winter Concert* if you haven't had a chance to send in your contribution before then. On behalf of the Student Intervention Team, thank you!

Deborah Isgur, Counselor (252-2614)

Please tear off and return with your donation to the Main Office by December 14, 2007. Checks should be made payable to *WMS PTSA/Holiday Giving*.

Donated by _____

Is it okay if we include your name on a list of donors to be published in *Paw Prints*? Yes No

Notes from the Librarian

Reading Marathon

WILL READ FOR PIZZA: Join your classmates at the *Reading Marathon* on Saturday, December 1. Read between 11am and 5pm at Seattle Public Library and compete against students from Mercer, Meany, and Aki Kurose for most time spent reading. The *Reading Marathon* takes place at Beacon Hill, NewHolly, Columbia, and Douglass-Truth branch libraries. All WMS students are welcome—this is a great time to read toward your Million Word goal!



Read a Million Words

We want all Seattle students to *Read a Million Words* this year. Visit the *Read a Million Words* website (<http://www.seattleschools.org/area/readamillion/>) to get more information and sign up for an Online Reading Log. How many Washington MS students will *Read a Million Words*? Record your reading and earn some fun prizes when you *Read a Million Words*.

Barnes & Noble Book Drive

Barnes & Noble at Northgate is sponsoring Seattle Public Schools for its *2007 Holiday Book Drive*. Visit B&N between now and December 31 to purchase books on wish lists from schools throughout the district. All the books donated will be given to school libraries in January.

Laurie Amster-Burton, Librarian and ET

WMS PTSA Annual Fund: Support YOUR Child's Education!

The *WMS Annual Fund* provides funding to the school's teachers and programs to supplement the inadequate amount provided by state and district funding.

We don't ask our students to participate in fundraising such as car washes, gift wrap, or pizza sales. Instead, as our children focus on learning, the adult WMS community joins together to raise money to support them. Each department and teacher receives money to supplement their budget. There is also a grant program which allows teachers to request addition funding for field trips, books, supplies and programs.

In 2007-08 we hope to raise \$80,000 and to inspire every family in the school to participate.

Please! Make a donation to the *WMS Annual Fund*! We accept checks, credit cards, stock donations and employer matching funds. For more information email Meg.Watson@comcast.net.

Please mail your donation to *WMS Annual Fund*, P. O. Box 22296, Seattle, WA 98122.

Thanks for your support!

Kathy Feldman, Audrey Sheffield and Meg Watson
Annual Fund Committee Chairs



Upcoming Events

December 6 Holiday Fundraiser, Senior Band, Senior Jazz Band, Rainier Beach High School Performing Arts Center. There will be a bake sale with sandwiches and pizza. \$10 advance, \$12 at the door. Ticket forms will be sent out.

December 17 Winter Recital for Beginning Strings and Beginning Orchestra, 7pm in the orchestra room.

December 18 Winter Concert at 7pm in the WMS Gym. Beginning Band, Junior Band, Junior Orchestra, Senior Band, Senior Orchestra, Senior Jazz Band and Choir. Concert attire includes black pants/skirt, black shoes, white tux shirt, tie and cummerbund. Please have your student at school by 6pm for warm-up. Come hungry, and eat dinner while supporting our music program! Our bake sale will offer pizza, Vietnamese sandwiches, baked goods and drinks.

Volunteers

We need volunteers to help with our music events. Can you come early and help set up? Can you sell tickets or pass out programs? Can you prepare a delicious nut-free baked treat? Then we need your help. It's a great way to get involved and meet other families in the music program. If you can help, please contact **Laurie de Koch** (Ldekoch@comcast.net, 719-3726).

Uniforms

If you ordered a tux shirt or choir uniform for your child, it should have come home recently. If you have an outgrown tux shirt or choir uniform, please send it to school with your child.

Merchandise for the Holidays

Get hip and stay warm in one of our hip new **Music Sweatshirts**. Even if you missed our October preorder, there will be limited styles and colors available at our December concerts.

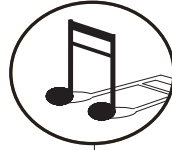
The **2006-07 Spring Concert CD** and the **2006-07 Senior Jazz CDs** will be available for purchase at our December concerts. If you pre-ordered either CD, we will get these to you before the holidays.

Worried about how you are going to concentrate on listening to your child's fabulous music while sitting on the world's most uncomfortable bleachers? We've found a solution! With our new **Washington Music Seat Cushions**, you'll enjoy the concert in comfort and support FOWM while you're at it. Seat cushions will be available at the Concert for \$10.

Auction Help Needed

We are getting some wonderfully generous donations from FOWM members for our March 15 auction. We thank you and encourage much more of this kind of thing! We customarily

donate a *Dessert of the Month*, *CD of the Month* and *Flowers of the Month*, and any other procurements we can get. We also provide the entertainment. FOWM needs someone to help lay out the silent auction items, making them attractive. Also needed is someone to coordinate the wait staff, preferably a parent who knows Senior Band, because they will be the waiters. Please contact **Nancy Smith** for more information, (923-0973, nasmith@stewart.com). Thanks!



Washington Middle School

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Attend a Friends of Washington Music Meeting

All parents are welcome to attend our next **FOWM board meeting on Wednesday, December 5** or **Wednesday, February 6 at 7:00 pm** in the band room (rm 8). Your participation can help make this a great year!

University of Washington Transition School

On December 12, 2007 there will be an informational meeting regarding the *Transition School* at 7pm in room A 102 in the Physics/Astronomy Building on the University campus.

The *Transition School* is an accelerated program offered at the University of Washington Robinson Center for students 14 years of age and younger. Parents, students, and teachers are invited to attend.

For additional information, contact the Robinson Center (<http://depts.washington.edu/cscyl/programs/wsyl/i>, 543-4160).

Math Team Success

The Math Team has been busy lately. We competed in a High School contest last Saturday in Federal Way at Thomas Jefferson High School. We finished 7th in the Freshman/Sophomore Division (beating some high schools!) Team members and places were: **Gabe Lesnick** (24th), **Grant Bronsdon** (30th), **Ben Ng** (34th) and **Diana Li** (55th).



This Saturday, 15 brave souls will venture to Bishop Blanchet High School for their annual contest. I'm scared, but we won last year, so it'll be okay.

Next Tuesday afternoon, we'll be doing the *AMC-8 National Math Contest* after school with all teams and all grades. We do pretty darn well in this, too!

More news later . . .

Gary Pounder, Benevolent Dictator and Noted Educator



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Next Pawprints Deadline
JANUARY 15TH, 2007

Academic Saturday School

Academic Saturday School will start on Saturday November 17th from 9am–12noon in the LRC. *Academic Saturday School* is available to all students and provides educational support to complete missed and/or late assignments. Students may also use *Academic Saturday School* as a tool to maintain or advance in their classes through staff encouragement, organizational tips and tutoring. Here are the remaining dates for first semester:

December 1, 8 and 15, January 12

Applications are available in the main office, counseling office and downstairs with **Mrs. Jones**.

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 elizabethsanders@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

December/January Calendar

- Dec 5 Friends of Wash. Music (FOWM) Board Mtg, 7pm
- Dec 5 Parent Conferences 3:30–5:30pm
- Dec 6 Parent Conferences 6–8pm
- Dec 12 PTSA Board Meeting 7pm
- Dec 24–Jan 4 NO SCHOOL—Winter Break
- Jan 10 WMS Open House 6:30–8pm
- Jan 16 PTSA Board Meeting 7pm
- Jan 17 WMS School Tours 8–10am
- Jan 21 NO SCHOOL—Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Jan 23 PTSA General Meeting 7pm
- Jan 28 NO SCHOOL—Day Between Semesters
- Jan 31 WMS School Tours 8–10am