



FOREST KNOLLS KNOTES

February 4, 2011

Message from the Principal

We are certainly glad that our students have been in school almost the entire week with just one small bump last Tuesday with a late opening. I want to remind all parents to listen to the radio or television for announcements of school closings or delayed openings. As night activities are cancelled (such as the PTA meeting this week) we will try to keep you updated if school events are cancelled and when they are re-scheduled. On another note I wanted to thank all the families that came to International Night last Saturday night. The turn out was fantastic and greatly enjoyed by all of those who attended. I personally want to thank all the parents on the International Committee for their hard work and efforts in making this a wonderful celebration of the cultural diversity of Forest Knolls.

Additionally, I'd like to inform the community that Mr. Jim Hartley retired from his position as a para-educator and a lunch/recess assistant effective January 31, 2011. We want to thank Mr. Hartley for all his work with our students and wish him well in his retirement. Because of budget constraints, we could not hire someone for the para-educator hours. We were fortunate though to be able to hire Mrs. Gigi Guerrero to fill the lunch and recess assistant hours. We welcome Mrs. Guerrero to our staff and look forward to her working with our students during lunch and recess.

We hope everyone has a safe and happy weekend.



FEBRUARY IS AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

The true facts of the contributions of African Americans to the discovery, pioneering, development, and continuance of America have not properly and adequately been presented in the textbooks, media, and other communication devices in this country. Indeed, for the most part, Blacks have been left out of the written record about America. The fact that some changes have been made in recent years points succinctly to the need for a fuller report about African American contributions. The designation of the month of February each year is an attempt by the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History, Inc. (ASALH) to remedy this neglect and provide for all Americans the information needed for creative and empathetic understanding about African Americans in the nation.

Back in 1926, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, a Harvard Ph. D. who had 11 years earlier founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Inc. initiated Negro History Week. In those early years, the words "Afro" and "Black" were seldom used. It was Dr. Woodson's hope that through this special observance, all Americans would be reminded of their ethnic roots and a togetherness in the United States racial groups would develop out of a mutual respect for backgrounds.

Dr. Woodson, the father of Black History in America, was keenly conscious of symbolism in the America psyche. He wisely chose for Negro History Week, now African American (Black) History Month, the period of February, which contains the birthdays of Frederick Douglas and Abraham Lincoln. From the initiation, the African American History Month observance has been a process that involved many ethnic groups...not only Black Americans.

Mustang of the Month

December: Kindess and Caring

Heather Villatoro, Liam Farahat, Jace Munoz, Cameron Newton, Jose Fernandez, Zeldia Myers

Alex Larenas, Jordan McClung, Daniella DeFritas, Seneca Simon, Vicki Vaughn, Brynn Hansen
Sophia Geiger, Anthony Pierzchala, Lorelei Stumphauzer, Ruben Herrera, Kelly Frank
Bridget Kemper, Jacob Lunsford, Natasha Tagen-Dye, Anthony Martinez, Isabella Farmer
Zoe Kilgore, Cate Lawrence, Lily Berkow, Elixander Ramirez, Jimmy Cabrera-Cruz, Jason Tan
Hannah Smith, Keissy Alfaro



Winter Weather Procedures

Winter weather emergencies, such as snow and ice, may cause disruptions in school operations, including the closure of school, a delayed opening, or an early dismissal. This letter provides information about the procedures used when such disruptions occur. Information also is provided about the weather contingency plan that would add student instructional days to the end of the scheduled school year if schools are closed for more than four days due to excessive weather emergencies.

Closure of School

When schools are closed system-wide, all instructional programs and extracurricular activities in schools are canceled. Private day-care providers in school buildings may elect to stay open if the schools are closed but the administrative offices are open. In extreme conditions, administrative offices also may be closed. If this occurs, private day-care programs located in school buildings are closed as well.

Delayed Opening

A delayed opening means that schools open two hours later than scheduled. All buses operate on the same delayed schedule and, therefore, the pick-up times are two hours later than normal. When elementary schools open on a delayed schedule, the following programs are canceled—Head Start, Pre-kindergarten and other specialized programs or field trips scheduled before 10:30 a.m. However, afternoon sessions of Head Start and Pre-kindergarten begin at the regular time. Parents should continue to check for radio, television, or Web announcements in the event a decision to delay the opening of schools is reconsidered and a decision to close schools for the day is made (by 7:00 a.m.).

Early Dismissal

An early dismissal means that schools will close 2.5 hours earlier than scheduled. All buses operate on that same early schedule and, therefore, drop-off times are 2.5 hours earlier than normal. When elementary schools close early, afternoon Head Start, pre-kindergarten, and other early childhood programs are canceled, as well as any special programs or field trips scheduled after 10:30 a.m. Morning pre-kindergarten and morning half-day Head Start students will be dismissed at 10:30 a.m. Full day Head Start classes will dismiss with regular kindergarten through Grade 5 students.



Public Announcements

Information about school operations is announced publicly as soon as possible on area radio and television stations, Montgomery County Cable Channel 6 or Cable Channel 34—MCPS TV, on the Internet at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org, and on a taped telephone message service at 301-279-3673. Emergency e-mail announcements are available by signing up for MCPS Quick Notes on the school system's home page. If schools are closed or delayed, the announcement is made no later than 6:00 a.m. (or the night before if possible). If schools are closing early, the announcement is made by 11:00 a.m.

Weather Conditions and Decisions

The school system uses a variety of sources of information to determine whether to close schools, delay the opening of schools, or dismiss schools early. These sources include actual physical inspection of road and school conditions by transportation officials and other staff at areas throughout the county, and an analysis of independent reports from the National Weather Service, Ace-Weather, and the news media. The most severe weather conditions within the county are used as the basis for

decision-making. Consistent procedures are maintained in order to respond quickly to emergency weather conditions and protect the safety and well being of students.

All public schools within Montgomery County adhere to the same schedule concerning emergency weather conditions. The decision to change school operations is made by the superintendent of schools or his designee and affects all schools within the school system.

1. If schools are closed for five days, the school year will be extended by one day to June 17, 2011.
2. If schools are closed for six days, the school year will be extended by two days to June 17 and June 20, 2011.
3. If schools are closed seven days, the school year will be extended by three days to June 17, June 20, and June 21, 2011.
4. If schools are closed for eight days, the school year will be extended by four days to June 17, June 20, June 21, and June 22, 2011.
5. If schools are closed nine days, the school year will be extended by five days to June 17, June 18, June 20, June 21, June 22, and June 23, 2010.

Valentine's Day Parties



Valentine's Day parties will be held on Friday, February 11, 2011. Parties will start at approximately 2:00 pm. More information will be sent home by individual classroom teachers.

February 11 is an instructional school day, and all children are expected to be at school. Valentine's Day activities will only be held from 2:00 pm – 2:50 pm. Some of our Forest Knolls families do not celebrate Valentine's Day. An alternative activity will be available in the media center for those students. Please send a note to your child's teacher if you would like him or her to be included in the alternative activity.

Second grade students will celebrate Valentine's Day at an alternative time on February 11, 2011. Second grade teachers will notify parents with the correct time for their individual parties.

FKES KNOTES - PTA CORNER, FEBRUARY 2011

- 1. HELP YOUR FKES PTA ADVOCATE FOR A STRONG FOREST KNOLLS...THE LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN IS UNDERWAY!!!** On December 15, 2010, Superintendent Weast presented his recommended Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2011- 12. In that budget, he recommends that the Montgomery County Council provide funding to public schools at Maintenance-of-Effort ("MOE") levels. Maryland state law mandates this MOE level of funding to ensure a minimum County investment in public education.

The County Council has indicated that it will not provide funds at the MOE level due to poor fiscal conditions in our county. If the Council maintains its position, it is possible Forest Knolls will see increased class sizes, a decrease in one-on-one instruction for struggling or accelerated students, and fewer staff positions dedicated to Special Education and ESOL students, among others.

To address these concerns, your PTA has begun a letter writing campaign to advocate on behalf of our teachers and children. Many of you have already signed these letters, and those letters have been sent!! But we need all parents to make this crucial investment by letting your voices be heard. There are three separate letters available for your signature at www.FKESPTA.org and in the school's office. After you have completed and signed each letter, either mail each directly to the addressee or return them via backpack to Renée Hutchins, PTA Vice President (c/o Ms. Burnett/Jay Hutchins), and we will immediately mail them to the Board of Education members for you.

We can not be successful with out YOUR help. Please join us in this very important effort!

- 2. CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH WITH THE DC BOYS CHOIR!** On Friday, February 11, 2011, at 7:00 p.m., the DC Boys Choir (<http://dcboyschoir.org>) will come to Forest Knolls to perform songs that highlight the contributions and history of the African-American experience. Selections will span a number of historic periods including slavery, Reconstruction, and the Civil Rights Movement. Other selections will borrow from traditions of the black church. A reception will follow the concert.

3. CONSERVATION LANDSCAPING REPORT: GETTING READY FOR SPRING!

The Conservation Landscaping Committee is busy preparing for spring activities. We have submitted a grant request to the Maryland Urban and Community Forestry Committee. The funds from the grant, if awarded, will support the planting of additional trees and shrubs in April. With support from committee member Nancy Baranek, we anticipate that we will further beautify the kindergarten corridor and add a couple of additional trees to our nature trail area. Teachers - if you want to get your classes involved, we'd love to work with you.

Speaking of the nature trail, we look forward to working with FKES alum Andrew Hickey and his scout troop to install the trail in March. Three great volunteer student-writers have volunteered to help us work toward the trail opening by finishing our nature trail signs: Kelsey Murray, Adrianna Quaide and Anna Vidergar. The topics covered in the signs support the MCPS science curriculum. We look forward to our teachers using the trail to advance their science learning objectives.

Finally, the recent storms brought many tree limbs down around the school yard. (Fortunately, they missed our baby trees!) We need to find a tree care or landscaping company that is willing to contribute to our cause by better maintaining our old trees - if you have suggestions or want more information on getting involved, contact Committee Chair Clare Nielsen Neal at clarenienesen@gmail.com.

4. FKES 2011 SILENT AUCTION: GARDEN OF DELIGHTS - FRIDAY, MARCH 18TH, 6:30-9:30pm. STAFF & FAMILY DONATIONS STILL NEEDED!!

The Silent Auction Committee is still collecting donations from FKES families and staff for this annual fundraising event, now in its sixth year. **Due to weather-related delays, the February 4th donation submission deadline is being extended to February 11, 2011.** Donation forms, as well as a handout of ideas for auction items, can be downloaded from the PTA website at <http://fkespta.org>.

The Forest Knolls PTA invites everyone to the Garden in the Gym for an evening of good-natured competition for a good cause! Enjoy music, food and drink as you browse and bid on a wide selection of products and services, all generously donated by local and greater Washington metro area businesses, as well as by Forest Knolls families and staff. To date we've received nearly 100 donations and they're still coming in! For a sneak peak at the list of donors, visit the PTA site online.

To donate an item to the auction, or for more information on how you can help, please contact Silent Auction Co-chairs Susan Heney, susan@heney.net, and Michelle Alonso, michellec.alonso@gmail.com. Staff donations should be directed to Joni Jacobs, Silent Auction Committee Staff Liaison, at jjacobs20901@gmail.com. Look for more auction information in the coming weeks.

5. AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES (ASA)

Thank you, Mr. Persic and Ms. Sibrian for performing at last Saturday's International Night! It was a delight to see our children engaged and excited to show us all they have learned. THANK YOU!

Due to recent inclement weather situations and subsequent school closings, we are unfortunately not on schedule with our After School Activities agenda...Although we are happy to announce the following extended dates (as of this week):

Tuesdays:

Round House Theater, Hands On Science, Club Africa, Homework: March 8

Wednesdays:

Young Rembrandts, Read It- Eat It, LEGO (3-5), Latin Dance: March 2

Thursdays:

LEGO (K-2), Scrabble:
Creative Adventures:

March 3
February 17

All updated info regarding ASA clubs is available on our PTA website www.fkespta.org. Please visit the site frequently as it is a great source of information about our school community.

We are also inviting parents to sign up on the MCPS website to receive instant notices for unexpected school closings via cell phone other communication devices. Please visit: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/emergency/sources.aspx>
Please continue to send a healthy snack with your child on ASA days. For any inquiries, please contact Astrid Ingenlath-Diaz at moo.diaz@verizon.net

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, February 11 Valentine's Day Parties, 2 pm
Monday, February 21 No School: Presidents' Day

