

HOMEPAGES

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE POCANTICO HILLS SCHOOL

LATEWINTER 2008



Achievement It's something we admire and take great pride in whether it's scholastic or athletic recognition or a personal goal met. Our students, parents, and teachers are motivated in big and small ways to make each day a success. This winter issue highlights these highpoints and congratulates all those who set out to be the best they can be. 🏠

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LETTERS HOME

HEARING FROM OUR COMMUNITY LEADERS

FROM OUR SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT

As we all look toward the coming of Spring, I would like to update you on Board activities and add a few thoughts.

The search for our new Superintendent is in high gear and the Board is on track to have our new leader in place by July.

By vote, the community has approved the bond referendum which is designed to address our most important infrastructure issues. The approval is a statement that the “Jewel” of a building which is our school should receive needed and important care.

On February 15 the Administration and School Board filed an application for our school to be designated a “Blue Ribbon” school by the U.S. Department of Education. This designation is designed to recognize schools which make significant progress in closing the achievement gap or whose students achieve at very high levels. Let’s hope for success in this endeavor.

Enjoy your late winter and I and your entire Board hope that your children are challenged and happy.

Come to a Board of Education meeting—you are always most welcome.

Regards.

Robert W. Balog

President, Board of Education

FROM OUR PTA

Dear Friends and Families,

The PTA has had a great winter. We have successfully hosted the Senior Citizens’ Luncheon, and Student Concert in December. The fantastic efforts of our “hospitality chairs” during this busy month do not go unappreciated. Theresa Greto, Geri Spina, and Kelly Owen did a wonderful job organizing three very nice receptions after the Winter Concerts. The PTA meeting in January was very informative. Dr. Vin Beni of School Leadership was a guest speaker and answered many questions about the search for a new Superintendent. The Book Fair was the main attraction for February. Adele Tomasetti and her crew: Norma DeSousa, Marcia Finsmith, Debra Goldstein, and Leslie Simonides have done a supreme job. “Jump Rope for Heart,” a fundraiser, which raises money for the American Heart Association, was a fun and rambunctious event. Thanks to Ginger Curran, Shannon Keenan, and Bobbi McCann, our children have learned about their health as well as helping others.

The most exciting news the PTA has to share are the plans for the Spring Fair and Carnival which is now scheduled for Saturday, May 31. The later date and spring theme are sure to bring great fun to a beautiful time of the year. We hope the whole community will attend. The day promises to have something for *(continued on page 4)*

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FROM DR. ELLIOTT

Dear Families,

Our late winter edition of **Homepages** features the theme of “achievement”. It’s a fitting topic for our school for several reasons.

In January, all district residents received a copy of our annual report detailing New York State Assessment results, as well as the multiple measures of what constitutes a high quality educational program. We encourage you to review and keep in mind those aspects of our instructional program that make Pocantico Hills a unique and rewarding place to learn and grow.

On January 23, residents voted in favor of a capital improvement project for our school that will result in:

- The security of a new roof over our heads.
- Moderate (and controllable) temperatures in our classrooms.
- Back up telephone and electrical service in the event of an emergency.

- Access for students, staff and community members who may be temporarily or permanently disabled.
- New locker rooms for student and community use.
- Pool repairs or replacement.
- Air cooled common areas (auditorium, cafeteria, and library).

Our Board of Education has been proactive in addressing the needs of our school and through this referendum achieved their goal of improving conditions for teaching and learning. We are grateful to the community for its support.

On February 15 we submitted our application for status as a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. Pocantico Hills is one of 19 school districts in the state nominated for this honor. The designation is a tribute to our hard working students dedicated staff and supportive families.

Achievement, one of our hallmarks, is evident in our work and our results and is made possible by our caring school community.

Best regards,

Tom Elliott

Superintendent/Principal

FROM OUR FOUNDATION

Dear Friends and Families,

The Foundation would like to acknowledge the tremendous generosity and community spirit of those who donated their gifts of time, creativity and resources to make our recent Monte Carlo Night such a success. Much fun was had by all who attended, as folks played casino games, danced the night away, caught up with old friends or made new ones. Most importantly, all who attended accomplished the goal of helping to raise money for the children of Pocantico Hills.

Sincere gratitude goes out to the Foundation Board of Directors who worked throughout the year to make Monte Carlo Night a reality. Our thanks go to Event/Silent Auction Chairperson, Kate Phillips and her committee: Patty Butter, Chrissy Conrad, Ruth DiLorenzo, Therese de Chaves, Alyssa Jacobs, Amy Macca, Susanne Aberbach-Marolda, Bobbi Minerva, Jennifer Poux, Linda Ruotolo and Dan Tomasetti. Also, we are grateful to the many other volunteers who donated their professional services to this undertaking—Kitty Thorne, for creating our beautiful promotional materials, Tim Grajek for the incredible illustrations that illuminated those materials, Gwen Knoff-Jones for helping us to find the right words, Spencer Disher for so capably handling all of the financial matters, Mary McIntyre, Olive Clarke and Gina Downes for their gracious help all year, Dr. Thomas Elliott and Jay Scotto-Friedman for their administrative guidance. Finally, we thank all the school staff, teachers and parents who so generously support the work of this organization. We thank you again for your generous support!

Best wishes,

Shelly Marchese

President, PHS Foundation

PTA *(continued from page 2)*

all ages with inflatable rides, kids' crafts, activities, fun food, bake sale, and raffle baskets. The fair will be held rain or shine so please mark your calendars!

My sincere thanks go out to all the parents, and community members who volunteer to make our PTA stronger and more productive. I could not do it without you.

As the PTA President, I also want to express our many thanks, and hats off to our teachers who always help and volunteer endless hours of their time helping our students, and the PTA.

Sincerely,

Rachel P. Gumina

President, PTA

2008-2009 BUDGET DATES

Please mark your calendar for the important dates in this year's presentation and discussion of the Pocantico Hills 2008-2009 Proposed Budget. All Board of Education meetings take place at 8:00pm in the school library. The Board of Education encourages you to attend and become a part of the budget process.

PTA Budget Forum: Wednesday, March 19; 8:00pm school cafeteria

Board of Education Budget Work Sessions: 8:00pm school library
Tuesday, March 25 and Monday, April 7

Budget Adoption: Monday, April 7; 8:00pm school library

PTA Budget Forum: Wednesday, April 9; 8:00pm school cafeteria

Final Date for filing petitions for Nomination of Candidates:
Monday, April 21; Petitions are due in the District Clerk's office by 5:00pm

PTA Meet the Candidates Night:
Thursday, May 8; 8:00pm school library

Public hearing on proposed budget:
Monday, May 12; 8:00pm school library

Applications for Absentee Ballots may be applied for at:

The Office of the School District Clerk, 599 Bedford Road, Sleepy Hollow, NY; or by calling: 914-631-2440 ext. 103.

Completed applications for absentee ballots must be received by the School District Clerk on or prior to 5:00pm on May 13, 2008 if the ballot is to be mailed; by May 19, 2008 if picked up in person.

Absentee ballots must be received by the District Clerk no later than 5:00pm on the day of the vote—May 20, 2008.

Last day to register to vote: Friday, May 16. Voters may register at the District Office Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 4:00pm

School Budget Vote and School Board Election: Tuesday, May 20; voting at Pocantico Hills School Library 7:00am to 9:00pm

Academic Triathlon Champs

“And the 1st place team for today’s meet is... Pocantico Hills!”

Those were the words that Pocantico Hills students heard for the third time in as many months. Students in the ELO program in 7th and 8th grades enrolled in this year’s competition entitled “Academic Triathlon”. The Academic Triathlon is a competition, held four times throughout the year, where students meet with schools from Westchester County to challenge themselves in a variety of situations. Teams of five students must use cooperation to accomplish the tasks, and employ a considerable amount of creativity to solve problems, and perform a play.

Each competition begins with a list of questions ranging from current events, to English literature, to Algebra, to world geography that each group tries to solve. As a group, they literally, put their heads together to answer as many questions as possible within ten minutes.

Next, they compete in three separate “Mind Sprints” where they have to think fast to solve or build or design a solution to a problem within a limited time frame. Mind Sprints include many tasks including composing a poem, building paper airplanes that have to knock down or land at a designated area.

The final task involved is called “Party in a Box.” Students are provided with a story theme which they must prepare, create and perform for an audience, including background, props, dialogue, and usually humor. These plays are judged according to strict criteria, and evaluated by at least three judges. Points are awarded for creativity, task accomplishment, development of characters, and how well they presented a satisfactory outcome to the situation.

Congratulations to **Brianna C., Patrick D., Chetan K., Casandra S.,** and **Rebecca W.,** for their first place finish involving some tough competition from Carmel, Somers, North Salem, and Mahopac. Additionally, congratulations go out to the 7th grade team of **Daniella C., Rachel C., Nick F., Nick G., Jean K., Charlie K., Emmi M., Alex M., Gabrielle M., Chelsea R.,** and **Jennifer V.** for a strong showing.

Survivor: The Pocantico Hills Edition

What would you do if you found yourself lost in the woods? How long could you survive? What is the first thing that you would do to protect yourself? How many survival techniques would you be able to employ to ensure your own survival?

These questions and many more like it were posed to the students in the Middle School ELO program to develop a base line for their knowledge regarding survival. As a result of their responses, it became clear that the vast majority would not survive for more than a day on their own! Students then embarked on a quest to find out all they could about survival in the wild.

From watching videos, to researching the internet, to examining recent situations where individuals were lost, students examined techniques of survival. Each student chose a topic to research such as water procurement or building and maintaining shelter, then produced a report or power point presentation to demonstrate all that they had discovered about survival within their particular area. Later, they were asked to build a physical representation of one component of their topic, and then present it to their classmates.

Students completed some very interesting and unusual models: water still, traps for snaring particular animals, examples of edible and poisonous plants, and, of course, shelters. Although many students agreed that a compass and a thermos of water would be valuable, their number one priority would be the building of shelter to ensure their survival. Interested in learning more about their research? Log on to our class web page, **Middle School ELO Mr. Brigham’s class,** and look for the link to our reports.

POCANTICOPRIDE

GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS AND NEWS FROM STUDENTS, ALUMNI, AND TEACHERS

Best wishes go to our students representing Pocantico Hills at this year's Westchester County School Music Association's choral and orchestral concerts to be held on Saturday, March 15 at 11:00 am at SUNY Purchase. The students joining the chorus will be: **Andrea C., Reynelson D., Cindy D., Lisa G., Rachel H., Alex M., Bianca M., Miranda O., Lila W., and Rebecca W.** The instrumental students will be: **Nick F. and Rachel H.**

On Friday, January 25th, eighth grade students **Reynelson D., Chetan K., Michael L., Matthew P., Deja S., Aisha T. and Malayshia T.** joined Dr. Elliott and Felicia Peterson at the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. breakfast held at Pace University in honor of Black History Month (see cover photo.)

Last month, **Pocantico Hills** submitted an application for status as a **National Blue Ribbon School** to the Department of Education. This submission represents two months of data collection and descriptive writing addressing the required elements of the application. The Blue Ribbon Schools Program is a United States government program created to honor schools and is considered to be the highest honor that an American school can achieve.

Following the review of all proposals, awards will be announced next September.

BRIARCLIFF HIGH SCHOOL

Congratulations to senior, **Christian C.**, who has been selected as a Scholar by the 2007-2008 National Hispanic Recognition Program. Christian is one of four thousand students selected from a pool of 196,000 who took the 2006 PSAT/NMSQT/PAA and identified themselves as Hispanic.

Athletes of the Week: **Chris N.** (Varsity Football), **Clara D.** (Varsity Girls Swimming), **Michael R.** (Varsity Boys Soccer) and **Alice H.** (Varsity Girls Volleyball).

Brian S. (Briarcliff) 9-12 passing, 120 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT, 10 carries, 76 yards rushing, 1 TD accounting for all 3 touchdowns that clinched a playoff berth for the Bears.

PLEASANTVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

Lloyd B. was named Freshman Student of the Month for December.

Danny C. was voted Student Government President and achieved High Honor Roll.

Anel D. was named as Senior Student of the Month for October.

Danielle M., Christopher M., and Max F. were named Science Students of the 2nd Quarter.

Max F. and Matt M. have been named Students of the Month for February.

Mike P. was named to the All League Cross Country Team.

Angelica S. has been selected with two other Pleasantville students to be a part of the 2008 Watson Honors Mathematics and Science Program. Students will given the opportunity to tour the lab facilities at the Watson IBM Research Center, attend presentations made by the staff and many other opportunities exclusive to the program. Lectures will include science and technology programs in progress at IBM as well as computer science studies regrading integrated circuits, chip design and manufacturing. She has also been chosen to represent Pleasantville High School at the Hugh O'Brien Leadership Conference.

SLEEPY HOLLOW HIGH SCHOOL

Gordon G. a student at Sleepy Hollow High School was accepted to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) and awarded a \$60,000 scholarship.

Clare Z. attending Sleepy Hollow High School was accepted to Colgate University; she is President of the National Honor Society; voted "Most Likely to Succeed" by her classmates in the yearbook; and received The Rotary International Scholarship for community service.

Erin C. made the Dean's List at the University of Delaware. She is a sophomore and is majoring in biology.

FACULTY

Bobbie McCann was recognized by the South Eastern Zone of the New York State AHPERD and the American Heart Association for her leadership in and dedication to our Jump Rope for Heart event for the past 27 years.

Patty Polombo has been selected as an EDCompass SMART Exemplary Educator for one of her SmartBoard lessons.

Eileen Vail was recognized by the Westchester Foundation for Autism at their Annual Gala on November 4th.



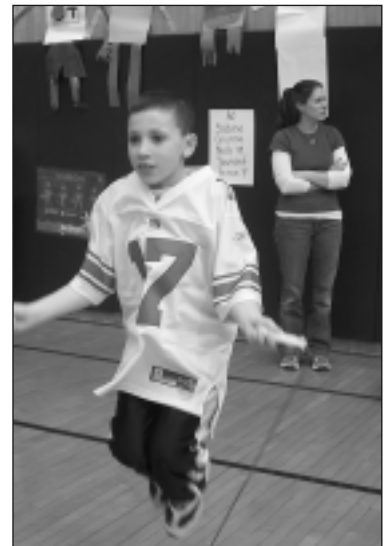
ALL COUNTY-STATE BAND



ALL COUNTY-STATE CHORUS



JUMP ROPE FOR HEART



Second graders get down to basics



Mrs. Doane, Ms. Stanton and members of Student Government at the launch of the Pocantico Hills Food Drive

upcoming dates

MARCH

- 17 ST. PATRICK'S DAY
- 19 PTA General Meeting:
7:30pm; Cafeteria
- 19 PTA Budget Forum:
8:00pm; Cafeteria
- 20 SPRING begins
- 20 No 9th Period
- 20 Snow Give Back Day
- 21 GOOD FRIDAY
- 21, 24 EASTER RECESS: No School
- 25 School Board Meeting: 8:00pm;
Library (Discussion Meeting)

APRIL

- 3, 4 School Play: *Willy Wonka, Jr.*; 7:30pm
- 3 Foundation Meeting: 8:00pm;
Teachers' Room
- 4 3rd Marking Period ends
- 7 School Board Meeting: 8:00pm;
Library (Business Meeting)
- 9 PTA "Budget Forum":
8:00pm; Cafeteria
- 11 Report Cards home
- 12 ACT Test
- 14-18 PTA "TV Turn Off Week"
- 17 No 9th Period
- 17 School Foundation's "Evening of Music"
- 18 11:30am Dismissal
- 18 Pre-K-8th Grade Parent-Teacher
Conferences: Noon-3:00pm
- 21 School Board Petitions due
- 21-25 SPRING RECESS: No School
- 22 EARTH DAY
- 29 School Board Meeting: 8:00pm;
Library (Discussion Meeting)
- 30 National Junior Honor Society Induction:
1:30pm

changes to the district calendar

Monday, March 31: SCHOOL IN SESSION

Thursday, April 3 and Friday, April 4
• Middle School Play *Willy Wonka, Jr.*
7:30pm - Auditorium

Saturday, May 31 (rain or shine)
• PTA Spring Fair and Carnival
11:00am - 3:00pm

POCANTICO HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL
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LEARNING

ACHIEVEMENT



GROWTH

DIRECTION

For more information please visit our website: www.pocanticohills.org

