

Union Mill Messenger

Volume 26, Issue 4

The Newsletter of the Union Mill PTA

January 2012

Bear Pause...

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a joyful and wonderful time over the break. It is hard to believe we are already at the end of the first week of 2012. As we make resolutions for the year 2012, many of our teachers have been talking about goal setting with our students. You may want to take this time to talk with your child about their goals for school and perhaps set some for home, too. Some of those home goals might be to start doing a specific household task and/or helping around the house, taking more responsibility for a pet, or being more responsible about getting that instrument to and from school on band or strings day. Another goal may be to get involved in giving back to the community on a regular basis. January 16 is a National Day of Service and that might be a good time to start working on that goal. Whatever the goal is, be sure to talk about why the goal is important and brainstorm ways to make the goal a habit. Remember, if the goal is something that can be accomplished easily, it was probably not much of a stretch to get to the goal.

Our students are happy to be back at school and our visits to the classrooms have shown children actively engaged in learning. You can read and see more about what is going on at Union Mill by reading the weekly Family Newsletter that comes out each Friday. You can access the newsletter by going to the Union Mill website at <http://www.fcps.edu/UnionMillES>. We think we have a great school and we thank you for all you do to make it that way.

The year 2012 is here and we are ready for a fabulous year!

Kathleen Case
Principal

Holly Walker
Assistant Principal



Principals' Coffee



You are invited to join Mrs. Case and Ms. Walker for the next Principalsq Coffee. The topic that will be discussed is assessment overview. This is a great opportunity to meet with Union Mill administrators in a small group setting.

We hope to see you there!

Tuesday, February 14th
9:00 - 10:00am
Union Mill Cafeteria

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PTA Upgrades Website!

Stay current with all the PTA happenings by going to our new and improved website:
<http://www.unionmillpta.org>.

PTA Family Night



Ledo Pizza

11725 Lee Highway (Rt. 29)

Fairfax, VA 22030

703-359-4747

www.LedoPizza.com

Wednesday, February 29, 2012
4-9PM

Dine in and carry out

A percentage of sales go to
UMES PTA.

Support your School - Go Bears!

Any questions please contact:
PTA Business Partnerships
Co-Chairs

Martha Evers
(eversmartha@hotmail.com) &
Christy Skule
(Skule1@verizon.net)

From the PTA President...

Dana Hubchen

Welcome back to school everyone! I hope you all had a nice winter break with your family and friends.

I want to thank Amanda Charters and Heather Silman, chairs of the Community Outreach Committee, for organizing the coat drive that benefited Wesley Housing. Thanks to your generosity, we were able to collect 73 coats and 136 winter accessories for very needy people in our area. They have some other things planned for the rest of the year, so be on the lookout for their Valentines Day project soon.

We are currently looking for volunteers to be on the Nominating Committee for the PTA board for next school year. The nominating committee is one of the most important committees in the PTA. It is helpful if the members of the nominating committee include experienced members as well as newer members for the committee. The nominating committee members have the responsibility of bringing forward the name of the most eligible person for each elected position. All positions on the PTA executive board are up for re-election every year. Each person currently serving in an executive PTA position may run for an additional second year if they desire.

Who is eligible to serve on the Nominating Committee?

Any member who has paid current membership dues in the local unit is eligible to serve on the nominating committee.

What skills should Nominating Committee members possess?

- Fair, ethical and impartial judgment when evaluating people or situations
- Ability to listen and ask penetrating questions
- Ability to keep confidential information
- Understanding of PTA Mission, purposes, and plans

Please let me know if you would be interested in joining this committee to help slate next year's PTA Executive Board.

We have a few upcoming restaurant dinners planned, like the one at Guapo's last night, where the restaurant gives the PTA a percentage of their sales that night. Please try to attend one of these in the next few months. The kids love going to dinner and seeing their friends, and maybe a few teachers, too.

Mary Ellen Bowman has been hard at work re-vamping the PTA website. If you have not visited it in a while, please take a look. We are going to try to cut down on the amount of paper sent home and will instead, be posting things to the website. If you have any suggestions of things you would like to see on there, please fill out the "contact us" form and let us know. We would appreciate the input.

Dana

Dana Hubchen
President, Union Mill PTA

2011-2012 Union Mill Elementary

PTA Meeting Schedule

February 7	General Membership Meeting *School Board member Kathy Smith will be in attendance	7pm	Library
March 6	General Membership Meeting	7pm	Library
April 10	General Membership Meeting	7 pm	Library
May 1	General Membership Meeting	7pm	Library

If you want to become more involved in the PTA or just want to stay informed on what is happening at Union Mill, we encourage you to attend the monthly PTA meetings. Please check the PTA bulletin board, school newsletter or website to confirm these dates throughout the year.

BYLAWS COMMITTEE NEEDS MEMBERS

The PTA needs volunteers to review the current bylaws. Virginia PTA requires that bylaws are updated and submitted for review every five years. The new bylaws will be voted on at the PTA meeting in May.

If you're interested in this short-term commitment, please email Dana Hubchen at president@unionmillpta.org.

Fairfax County School Board Public Hearings on Proposed FY2013 Budget

January 30-31 , 2012 at 6:00pm
Jackson Middle School
3020 Gallows Road
Falls Church, VA

All speakers must sign up in advance. For more information and to reserve a space on the speakers list, go to:

<http://www.fcps.edu/schlbld/meetings/requestspeak.shtml>

Help the PTA Spend Surplus Funds!

Volunteers are needed to serve on the new Surplus Spending Committee. The PTA has an excess of money that needs to be used before the end of the school year. Members will work with other volunteers and UM staff to determine how the PTA can use this money to help UM staff with their current needs.

If you would like to serve on this short-term committee, please email Dana Hubchen at president@unionmillpta.org.

Referrals for Full-Time Advanced Academic Placement Level IV (Grades 2-7)

Parents or guardians of students not in the second grade screening pool may initiate the full-time AAP (Level IV) screening process by completing and submitting an ***AAP Level IV Referral Form to the local school principal no later than February 3, 2012.***

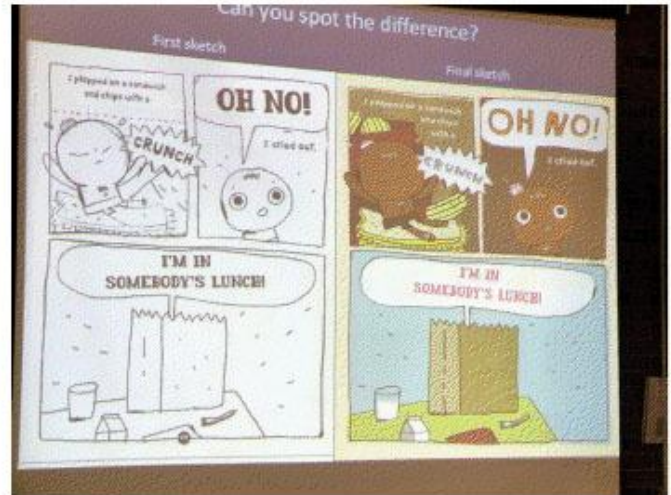
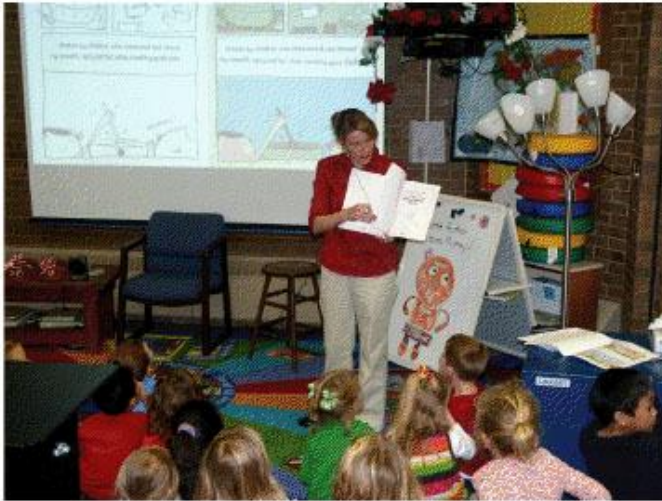
(<http://www.fcps.edu/is/aap/timeline.shtml>) No late referrals will be accepted. Second graders **not** in the pool and **all** third through seventh graders are screened only by referral. Forms are available on the AAP website (<http://www.fcps.edu/is/aap/forms.shtml>) and in the *Parent Information Packet* available at the local school. (Please note: Parents or guardians of students who are in the 2nd grade pool will be notified by the school. Students who are not in the 2nd grade pool will not receive notification. The benchmark score used to create the 2nd grade pool will be published on the Advanced Academic Programs website mid-January.)

Library Corner

Ami Schroder



Thank you to the PTA for funding a wonderful author visit for the kindergarten classes! In December, our kindergartners were treated to a wonderful presentation by Laura Murray, author of The Gingerbread Man Loose in the School. This presentation fit in perfectly with their gingerbread unit and we all enjoyed the yummy tale of a gingerbread man who goes on the hunt for his class in school! Then we got to see the process a book goes through as it gets published. At the end of the presentation, students participated in a Sweet Treats Quiz Show to see who learned the most information about Mrs. Murray and her book.



The library is currently undergoing the inventory process. This generally occurs every three years. Luckily, we are able to stay open during the process and students can continue to checkout library books. However, we are unable to hold books overnight or do Next Day Holds for students while we are undergoing inventory.

Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers who continue to support our library each week. With their help, we have circulated over 15,000 books so far this year! Please feel free to contact Alice Jagtiani, coordinator of library volunteers if you would like to help out in the library. Her email is alice.jagtiani@jagtiani.com.



The 7th Annual Special Education Conference
Saturday, March 24
Lake Braddock Secondary School
Rick Lavoie - Keynote Speaker
Registration begins February 8, 2012

For more information, go to:

<http://www.fcps.edu/cco/prc/documents/2012SavetheDate.pdf>

Lego Robotics Class is Coming to Union Mill!!

Two new classes are coming to Union Mill as part of our after school programs. We will be starting a winter session for Lego fans from a local company, Ideaventions. This after school program starts Wednesday, January 25, 2012. The program will run in two groups for students in Grades 1-3 and Grades 4-6. The class will meet once a week every Wednesday from 3:30 to 4:30pm for 8 weeks and will cost \$120 total (since they are bringing laptops and all supplies and materials). We are limited to only 12 students per class, therefore, the classes will be on a first come, first served basis depending on your online registration, which opens on Monday, January 16th. For further information, email Rachel DiBartolo at rachel@dibartolofamily.com.



Union Mill ES - WeDo Robotics: Amazing Mech (1st-3rd Grade)

Invent robotic LEGO creations that come alive in this introductory robotics class! Join a team of engineers to explore and learn robotics using LEGO WEDO technology. Imagine and build unique animated creations that respond to the environment using sensors, motors, programming blocks and LEGOs. *WeDo Robotics: Amazing Mechanisms is a prerequisite for WeDo Robotics themed labs (e.g. Star Wars, Harry Potter). Register online at: <http://ideaventionsllc.com/Union-Mill-ES-WeDo-Robotics-Amazing-Mech-1st-3rd-Grade-UMES-JRAM.htm>

Union Mill ES - Robotics: Tomb Explorers (4th-6th Grade)

The setting is an archaeological dig in an ancient Egyptian pyramid. Does the pyramid hold the secrets of the Pharaoh? Explore tunnels and chambers, recover archaeological treasures, use remote imaging technology, and hopefully discover the treasure-filled tomb. Integrating science, technology, and engineering into an action-packed storyline, we become elite robotics engineers that invent unique robots using LEGO Mindstorms technology to solve the world's toughest challenges. Register online at:

<http://ideaventionsllc.com/Union-Mill-ES-Robotics-Tomb-Explorers-4th-6th-Grade-UMES-CC.htm>

Families Reading Together



Read aloud tips from teachers:

- Stop occasionally during the story and ask your child to predict what will happen next.
- When finished reading a book, ask your child how he/she might have changed the ending.
- When reading a poem, stop and ask your child what the next rhyme might be.

Federation of Galaxy Explorers



Our UMES Federation of Galaxy Explorers Mission Teams launched their programs last night (January 12th) at a kickoff meeting. We worked with common things that we have because of space travel- Velcro, drink pouches, and more. Next Friday night, Ms. Bardenhagen has us partnering with her colleague, Mrs. Mary Blessing, a stratosphere traveler and HS Sciences teacher in Herndon. They both presented at the VA Association of Science Teachers conference on sparking interest in space for both students and teachers. On Friday evening, January 20th, UMES families (not just in FOGE) can meet at Observatory Park in Great Falls for skywatching with telescopes provided! See page 7 in this newsletter if you are interested in attending.

In addition to monthly team meetings in February, we will celebrate John Glenn's 50th anniversary of his 3 orbits of the earth AND his return to space aboard the space shuttle in 1998. We also have a star party in March, family field trip to the Air & Space Museum and/or the 2012 USA Science & Engineering Festival in DC in April, rocket building in May with launches in June.

Help Out at the Library!!

The Union Mill library is a great resource that every one of our students makes use of. Over 15,000 books were shelved in September, October and November! We have a wonderful group of volunteers, but as you can see, we can always use more help!!

Volunteers are welcome to come in during their child's library time to help students locate and select books and to assist them with the on-line catalog. For the younger kids, it is such a bright spot in their week to see Mom or Dad (or grandparent!) during their library time. Even though 4th and 5th graders are generally only in the library for 15 minutes to check out books, the kids still love seeing their parents! It is extremely helpful when parents can stay before or after their child's library time to help organize and shelve books.

We also need volunteers to help out in between classes – there are always plenty of books to shelve, books to be set in order, and special projects to help with.

Volunteering in the library is easy - we only ask that first-time volunteers come in for a 'mini-orientation' a few minutes prior to their first time volunteering.

As for our current volunteers – thank you, thank you!! You are all doing a wonderful job helping the library run smoothly. In addition to all that you do on an ongoing basis, the time you gave during the holidays is so very appreciated, as is the time you have spent helping with all the various special projects.

For more information on volunteering in the library, please contact Alice Jagtiani at alice@jagtiani.com or 703-222-9299.



Ecology Club

Our UMES Ecology Club will begin meeting as the Wednesday Rs Team (January 25th) and the Friday Rs Team (January 27th). Our first project will include making suncatcher ornaments to go along with the valentines that the PTA is collecting for the residents of an assisted living facility in Fairfax. We are planning to work on joint projects with Scout troops for Earth Day and other events. Members will be receiving their calendar and schedules in today's Friday envelope, January 13th.

Family Night at Observatory Park

GALAXY EXPLORERS

DATE: FRIDAY, JANUARY 20, 2012
WEATHER DEPENDENT

TIME: 7:00 P.M. UNTIL - ?

WHERE: OBSERVATORY PARK
925 SPRINGVALE RD
GREAT FALLS, VA
(BETWEEN GEORGETOWN PIKE AND ROUTE 7)

WHAT: SKY TOURS - LEARN HOW TO USE A SKY MAP,
IDENTIFY CONSTELLATIONS LOOK THROUGH
TELESCOPES AT GALAXIES, NEBULA, STARS,
PLANETS AND MORE!

SIGN UP: TELL MS. BARDENHAGEN THE NUMBER OF
FAMILY MEMBERS ATTENDING BY TUESDAY, 1/17

- **DRIVE INTO THE PARK WITH PARKING LIGHTS ON. DRIVE STRAIGHT BACK TO LOT AND WALK BACK TO TELESCOPES.**
- **GET A SKYMAP FROM SKYMAPS.COM**
- **BRING A FLASHLIGHT COVERED WITH RED CELLOPHANE**
- **DRESS WARMLY AND HAVE FUN!**

January/February Calendar of Events

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Sat / Sun

16 MLK, Jr. Holiday No School	17 Band Concert	18	19 Strings Concert	20	21
					22
23	24	25	26	27	28
					29
30 Teacher Workday (No school)	31 Teacher Workday (No school)	1 Feb	2	3	4
					5
6	7 PTA Meeting	8	9	10	11
					12
13	14 Principal's Coffee	15	16	17	18
					19

Coming Up!

February 20	Presidents' Day (No School)
February 29	Ledo Pizza Family Night
March 6	PTA Meeting

Union Mill Elementary School
 13611 Springstone Drive
 Clifton, VA 20124
 Office: 703 - 322 - 8500
 Attendance: 703 - 322 - 8585

*www.fcps.edu/UnionMillES/
 www.UnionMillPTA.org*