



The FOMS News Flash

Grade Level and departmental
quarterly updates

Volume 13, Number 3

April 2008

Published by the FOMS PTA

Selected Important Dates

FOMS EARTH DAY and SPRING CLEAN UP: Saturday April 19, 8 AM

SPRING BOOK FAIR: May 2-7 at FOMS

National PTA Staff Appreciation Week: May 4-10. Send our staff notes of appreciation!

Keeping In Touch

www.fomspta.org

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FOMSPTA/>

www.mcps.k12.md.us/schools/forestoakms

www.edline.net

School Phone: 301-670-8242



The school cleanup will take place on **Saturday, April 19 at FOMS, starting at 8:00 AM** Please come to help the PTA spread mulch, plant and beautify the grounds as we prepare for Spring. Students can earn service learning credits.

We need of tools (rakes, trowels, shovels, wheelbarrows) and one or two parents with pickup trucks to help bring the mulch and plantings to the school.

Jeanne-Marie Duval Pierrelouis (Telephone: 301-996-7978; e-mail duvaljm82@yahoo.com)

Please let Jeanne-Marie Duval Pierrelouis via e-mail (see above) the following:

1. Your name and the students you will be supervising
2. Which garden tools you can bring for the day
3. If your are available to on Friday 4/18 to transport plants and mulch
4. Your contact information.



FROM OUR PTA PRESIDENT...

...Gail Gilpin

The Gaithersburg Cluster of PTA Presidents has been invited to address the Board of Education on May 8th at Gaithersburg High School. I was asked by the PTA Cluster Coordinator to identify the strengths and weaknesses of our school's PTA and share these with the Board. I won't do it. I won't identify our weaknesses because I am not a whiner. I don't even want to put effort into coming up with this list - why would I? Why would anyone?

I will, however, talk their ears off about our strengths. I'll tell them about our fundraising successes, thanks to the parents at Forest Oak. I'll tell them about how excited middle school students still get when you hold a Book Fair, thanks to the parents at Forest Oak. I'll tell them about how the teachers and other staff members look forward to all of the appreciation efforts extended to them, thanks to the parents at Forest Oak.... They'll hear about the smiles on the kids faces when the PTA provides them with donuts for honor roll, or snacks during testing, thanks to the parents at Forest Oak. I know they'll be thrilled to hear about our Latino parents meetings, thanks to the parents at Forest Oak.

And I'll tell them about all of you who have not had a chance to join in on these and many other activities this past year. I'll tell them about you by telling them about myself. Prior to this year, I never went to a PTA meeting. It just wasn't my thing. I did, however, go to my children's elementary schools...let's see, let's do the math...at least once a week, every of the 40 or so weeks of school for 10 years (I have two kids) - THAT'S 400 DAYS SPENT VOLUNTEERING IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. Like you, when my kids reached middle school, I was tired and looking for a break. I was done with PTA...or so I thought!!

This year, I dug back in doing all of the things I mentioned above. Instead of getting tired, I have been juiced up by this renewed activity. I can't figure it out, but there is something very rejuvenating about getting together with other parents to help our kids' school. And the weirdest thing is that my kid really likes it! Go figure.

Please consider joining us for one of the remaining activities this year. We are not done!! We have our Earth Day Clean up on April 19th, there is a Spring Book fair the first week in May, and there are all of the end of year activities that celebrate each grade level's achievements. We need you and welcome you to any and all of our meetings and activities. I think if you come, like me, you will feel differently about being involved with our PTA. I think it will energize you just as much as it has me!! Come on, give it a try...what do you have to lose?



FROM OUR PRINCIPAL . . .

... John M. Burley, Principal

Happy Spring, everyone! We are well into the fourth and final Grading Period of the 2007-08 school year, and we're excited about the next few months! Please encourage a strong effort for this final quarter of the year. As I've said in my Blue Letters to you, and to our students many times individually and collectively, they need to finish this year very successfully in order to be ready for next year. Please help us to help your sons/daughters to make a strong finish during these next several weeks. Thank you!

We're now in the process reflecting on the current year and planning for next year --- you have been represented at recent meetings very well by a few of our parents who have given staff useful feedback and excellent ideas. I am very pleased with our progress in 2007-08, and our MSA (MD School Assessments) Testing was excellent. Thank you for encouraging your sons/daughters and sending them in ready for Testing. Please share with me your views regarding the 2007-08 school year --- send me e-mails, letters, notes and/or call me to offer your thoughts and ideas --- we all want FOMS to be the best, so please get involved in this mission!

As we approach the end of the year, important exams will be administered --- students in French, Spanish, Algebra, Geometry, and Investigations in Mathematics (IM) take system-wide end-of-course Exams. In addition, High School Assessments (HSAs) will be administered in Algebra and Geometry. Of course, all teachers will give their end-of-unit tests/assessments as they complete units of study in their classes. In addition, our 8th grade students will take the Science MSA. Please remind your sons/daughters to work hard! Check my Blue Letter for details.

Again, I wish you a happy spring, and look forward to seeing you frequently as we approach the end of another successful school year here at FOMS. I'll see you at the picnics, parties, awards ceremonies, 8th Grade Dance, and other events --- where we can congratulate your sons/daughters, and each other, on a job well done!

FROM OUR ASSTISTANT PRINCIPAL . . .

... William Gordon III

As we ever so slowly glide into the spring season our 6th, 7th and 8th graders are fully engaged in the Statewide MSA testing. Our Testing Committee, led by Ms. Jean Bone (Math Dept. Chairperson) has crafted a very special schedule for two consecutive weeks of testing, This is a huge and very time consuming job for all middle schools. I am extremely proud of the professional commitment and competence demonstrated by Ms. Bone and the Testing Committee. Their effort during evenings, nights and even weekends has resulted in a smooth day to day operation from April 1st through April 11th. A third week of MSA testing is also required to allow absent students to make-up any tests missed during the two week window. My point is this, the hours and hours of unpacking, preparing, sorting, scanning, counting, recording, bagging and repacking every test book, answer sheet and testing manual is an awesome task. At our school we are most fortunate to have such a competent and committed group of teachers dedicated to the success of our Forest Oak Students.

As I stated earlier it is spring and we are just beginning the last quarter of the school year. We continue to work closely with Gaithersburg HS to facilitate the transition for our 8th graders to high school. Our 6th and 7th graders are about to move up and our counseling department continues to visit and work with our elementary feeder schools' 5th grade classes. Meanwhile I am pleased to report that quality instruction with rigor continues to be delivered by our teachers each and every day in our classroom. Obviously our school house is a very busy place yet, we are looking forward to the warm sunny days of spring. Our boys and girls soccer teams should be excellent. We have many talented and experienced student-athletes and we all look forward to seeing them perform. Our county wide track challenge is open to all grades and offers another opportunity for our students to demonstrate their athletic skills. Please encourage your son or daughter to be involved in some healthy physical activity that promotes personal fitness and a healthy lifestyle. We live in a wonderful community that has so many opportunities for kids to be involved in learning as well as competitive movement activities. In the greater Gaithersburg area our kids are involved in golf, tennis, track, baseball, basketball, football, soccer, cross country, wrestling, gymnastics, swimming, lacrosse, field hockey and equestrian sports. Our community and our schools are second to none!

FROM OUR ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL . . .
... Candace Ross

Hello Forest Oak Middle School community,

We have just finished the Maryland State Assessment's and experienced a wonderfully positive and productive testing period. MSA's are high stakes assessments required of all schools in Maryland and test proficiency levels in reading and math. Students were present and focused and gave every ounce of their attention to the demands of the tests. We thank all parents for ensuring that students were in school on time and ready to go every day of the testing. We also thank them for providing snacks for every student as well. The snack is important because it helps energy levels and concentration during the test. We also have to thank our testing coordinator and testing committee for their hard work in organizing the materials and preparing everything so teachers had to focus only on the test. I know our hard work will pay off when the school receives the results this summer.

We are into the fourth quarter with much hard work behind us as well as in front of us. It is important for parents to help students make this last push productive and maintain good grades and behavior. There will be many end of the year activities and celebrations and we would like everyone to be able to participate and enjoy the close of a fantastic year.



We are finally into the 4th quarter! The counseling department is working hard to prepare students for next year. Counselors have met with students in classrooms to discuss registration procedures and have stressed the importance of maintaining a strong work ethic for the rest of the year. We encourage all students to try their best!

We have also just completed the Bullying Program at the 8th grade level. This was a big success, and the students really enjoyed Officer Marshall's visit. The counseling department has been working on combating bullying among students at all grade levels. We strongly encourage students to use the strategies they learned from Officer Marshall, and make sure to tell an adult if they become a victim!

For the next couple of months, counselors will continue to meet with students regularly, and will also be working on finalizing student recommendations for the upcoming year. Please encourage your child to visit the counseling office if they have a concern or question. Let's make the rest of the year positive and successful!!

STUDENT SERVICE LEARNING (SSL) INFORMATION

1. Now is a good time to think about earning SSL hours over the summer. Be sure the organization and the opportunity are both tagged as "MCPS SSL Approved at the Web site www.mcpsssl.org or that MCPS Form 560-50, *Application for Student Service Learning Special Activity* has been approved **in advance** of any service.
2. Students are encouraged to find service-learning opportunities that are in their community or that are of interest elsewhere. The service-learning requirement is an opportunity to find a meaningful activity where a real difference can be made.
3. Get all necessary SSL forms from the school SSL coordinator and keep copies of all SSL documents for back up.
4. Earn 1 SSL hours for every hour of service outside of the instructional day. There is a maximum of 8 hours that can be earned within a 24 hour period.
5. Documentation of service performed during the second semester is due to the SSL coordinator by May 23, 2008. The deadline is May 30.

GRADE-LEVEL REPORTS

6th GRADE NEWS

Reading 6 During the third marking period sixth grade reading students researched a person that has triumphed. The third marking period ended with students making presentations of the autobiography or

biography they read. In the fourth quarter students will be studying the newspaper. During the unit students will be on learning how to find the main idea and supporting details in a variety of articles. Students will be using the 5 W's and H in a newspaper article to help them find the main idea and supporting details. Also, students will be looking at a variety of sources from within the newspaper and making inferences, as well as determining the author's

purpose. Students will also read a variety of articles and discuss the issues from the articles.

English 6 Since the start of this semester your sixth grade student has broken through barriers and experienced how to get through challenges in English. In our fourth unit they will face "choices." They will be reading short stories and novels, strengthening their writing skills, and producing great projects. It is our hope that you support them as they make the right "choices."

Math 6 The 6th graders have been working on geometry, as well as reviewing overall math skills for the MSA test. In the geometry unit, students have been finding the area and perimeter of quadrilaterals, as well as the area and circumference of circles. Students have identified types of angles and triangles, and have measured angles using a protractor. They have also plotted points on coordinate graphs, and performed transformations (reflections, translations, and rotations) on a coordinate grid. In the 4th quarter we will work on algebraic equations and end the year with probability.

World Studies 6 In the fourth marking period we will be finishing our unit on Rome. Students will be completing this unit with an exam. Then we will be moving into our unit on economics. Students will learn the basic functions of market and command economies. We will also touch on the connections between political and economic systems. This unit should last about 4-5 weeks. Then we will be learning about Ancient China. The China unit will include an in-depth research project on one of seven Chinese Dynasties.

Science 6 The sixth-grade science students are continuing the unit on physics. We have completed

investigations about forces, speed, and velocity. Students timed walking animals during a lab on constant velocity. We will next tackle acceleration by completing labs, text reading and activities using our Promethean Board. After investigating Newton's Three Laws of Motion through a variety of hands-on activities, we will be ready to design our own roller coasters using the physics concepts that we have studied. Students will be submitting designs and proposals for their roller coasters after Internet research.

Our next unit focuses on Energy and Magnetism. We will investigate the forms of energy and describe how these forms of energy are transformed in order for systems to operate. We will research and identify how electrical energy can be produced from a variety of energy sources such as wind, solar, water, and fossil fuels. We will investigate conductors and insulators and describe the energy transformations that occur within simple electric circuits. We will also identify and describe magnetic fields and their relationship to electric currents.

In addition, students will practice their research and reading skills that they learned in reading class last quarter. All students will conduct research on a scientist. We are looking forward to an exciting last quarter in science.

THANK YOU 6TH GRADE TEAMS FOR WELCOMING OUR STUDENTS TO FOMS, FOR HELPING THEM ADJUST TO MIDDLE SCHOOL AND GETTING THEM READY FOR 7TH GRADE! – The PTA



7TH GRADE NEWS

English 7 – Unit 3: Voices from the Past

Why study the past, those things which have already occurred and which we cannot change? Learning about the past illuminates our understanding of the present. With this in mind, 7th graders read poems, short stories, articles, and novels about life in the 1940's and the triumph of the human spirit in the face of hatred, prejudice, and even death during WWII. Students had the opportunity to read one of the following books: *Daniel's Story*, *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, *Escape From Warsaw*, *Goodnight, Mr. Tom*, and *Friedrich*. In addition, students continued to refine their vocabulary and writing skills.

"When they next wake, all this derision
Shall seem a dream . . ."
- *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 3.2.385-386

English- Unit 4: Imagination

7th grade students may indeed feel as if they have "awakened from a dream" as they travel from the 1940's that they read about in the 3rd quarter back to the Elizabethan period. Hopefully, their fourth quarter "dream" will be a positive one filled with the rich poetry of William Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Students will read, view, and act out this Shakespeare comedy. In addition, students are expected to continue to read outside of class as they strive to finish 25 titles by the end of the quarter.

World Studies 7

In world studies students are learning that the ancient African Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai, along with the Latin American Aztec, Mayan, and Incan societies had thriving,

sophisticated civilizations due to the interaction of their people with their environment. These great cultures were severely impacted and subsequently destroyed by the negative social, political, and economic cultural diffusion that took place when the Europeans explored Africa and the New World. They will learn that colonization spurred the move from traditional market economies to the mixed economies we have today. By the end of the school year, students should understand that we now live in an economically interdependent world, where the standard of living has improved for some, but not all peoples. In understanding the triangle trade and the rise of mercantilism during the 15th and 16th centuries, our seventh graders will be well prepared for U.S. history next year.

Math B We have just finished Unit 3, Geometric Relationships. Students have learned how to recognize geometric properties of figures and identify relationships among those properties. These properties include, parallel, perpendicular, intersecting and skew lines and congruent and supplementary angles relationships in geometric figures. Using a straightedge, compass, and protractor, students constructed basic elements of geometric figures. Students also defined and identified the angles formed by two lines cut by a transversal and the angles formed by two parallel lines cut by a transversal. Students then applied congruent and supplementary relationships among these angles to determine angle measures.

The students have just started Unit 4 which will cover proportional reasoning. Students will use ratios and proportions to create scale drawings and models that support the idea that mathematics is a tool used to solve problems in everyday life. Students will apply various strategies to solve

problems involving proportional reasoning.

IM

The last quarter of IM will deal with Unit 6 Finite number systems and Unit 7 Probability. Among other skills, in Unit 6 students will deal with modular arithmetic and how it is used, other bases, and converting our number system base ten to other bases, such as base 5. Students will analyze these bases with regard to the properties of math studied earlier in the year. In Unit 7 students will explore probability including independent and dependent probability, compound probability, complementary events, permutations and combinations.

Science 7 In the third quarter, students will learn about the systems of the body. As a culminating activity, students will dissect a frog and compare its anatomy to the human anatomy. In the fourth quarter we will begin our study of astronomy. Some topics that will be covered in this unit include the seasons, tides, lunar and solar eclipses, and the solar system.

THANK YOU 7TH GRADE TEAMS FOR CONTINUING TO CHALLENGE OUR STUDENTS WITH INTERESTING LESSONS AND HIGH EXPECTATIONS! OUR STUDENTS ARE READY FOR 8TH GRADE! -The PTA

8TH GRADE NEWS

U.S. History covers the major issues leading up to the Civil War in the 4th quarter. Approximately 1850-1877. The effect of the war on economic, cultural and political systems, and the expansion of rights to African Americans through

the amendment process. Finally we get to the goals, results and individual impact of Reconstruction.

Science 8 is finishing their Introduction to Chemistry unit with Conservation of Matter. We will soon begin the 3rd unit - Earth's Structure. We will investigate the Earth's internal structure, determine the difference between physical and chemical weathering, and explain how major geologic events such as earthquakes and volcanoes are a result of crustal movement.

English 8 We are working hard in eighth grade. Students have finished the third marking period with a strong understanding of personal and social responsibility. We had had an opportunity to read several works of literature that explored common themes. Students also researched the 1920's and 1930's and created interpretive poems, narratives, and works of art to demonstrate their understanding of the time period. In addition, students prepared for the MSA and worked diligently to show their skills on the reading section of the assessment. Students who were making great progress on meeting their reading goals received a certificate and treat.

We look forward to an equally busy and fun fourth marking period. The last quarter focuses on the concept of discovery. Students will understand that we grow from the discoveries we make during our journeys, literature helps us make discoveries about ourselves, and writers help us discover the power and beauty of language.

Eighth grade classes will read William Shakespeare's *As You Like It* and will demonstrate their comprehension by presenting scenes from the play. In addition, they will read several supplementary short stories and poems. To reflect on the past year, students will write letters to their ninth grade English teachers. Eighth graders

will also work to achieve their goal of reading 25 independent novels over the course of the year.

We look forward to the upcoming marking period as we are confident that students will learn a great deal as the end of their last year in middle school draws to a close.

Pre Algebra: Students will determine whether relations are functions; create function tables on graphing calculators; solve linear equations in two variables; graph linear equations using ordered pairs and intercepts; calculate slope, rate of change, and direct variation; they will be introduced to $y = mx + b$; and make predictions about data using best-fit lines. In Unit 4, students will explore geometric figures and measurement. They will construct triangles and rectangles and investigate transformations of plane figures; similarity and congruence; the effect of changing linear dimensions in a plane or solid figures and how that changes area and volume. The emphasis in Pre Algebra is in solving problems and working with irregular figures.

Algebra: Students will apply the laws of exponents to operations with polynomials. Students factor polynomials and solve equations using factoring. In Unit 7, students investigate numeric, algebraic, and graphic representations of quadratic and exponential functions. They will compare and contrast properties of linear, quadratic, exponential, absolute value, and piecewise functions. Students will learn multiple methods for solving quadratic equations and investigate the connection between the solutions of a quadratic equation and the graph of a quadratic function. They will model completing the square for a quadratic expression and a method to derive the quadratic formula. Students use the vertex form of

a quadratic equation to investigate transformations of functions; non-linear graphs of relationships between two variable quantities and make conclusions and predictions from these graphs.

Honors Geometry Students are completing work in the similarity unit. In this unit, students formalize their understanding of similarity, which was informally studied prior to geometry. Students will also be exploring properties circles and trigonometry in the final marking period.

THANK YOU 8TH GRADE TEAMS FOR CONTINUING THE HIGH LEVEL OF TEACHING AND CHALLENGING PROGRAM AT FOMS! OUR STUDENTS ARE WELL PREPARED FOR HIGH SCHOOL! – The PTA

CO-ACADEMICS



Foreign Languages

SPANISH 1A/B Buenos días from Sra. Milford's Spanish classes! My 1A/B students can be interior decorators now that they have become experts on all the rooms of a house and the furnishings in each one. Reading articles from their text helped them understand why many homes in Spanish speaking countries look very different from their own. They will finish up the year by putting on a fashion show using all their new clothing vocabulary.

SPANISH 1A Students in Spanish 1A hear stomachs growling during class, as they continue learning about food groups and food preferences, and they are designing their own food book using all their new vocabulary words. The

structure of the language is becoming more advanced. After conquering regular verbs, they are now learning that there are hundreds of irregular verbs! ¡Olé!

SPANISH 1B Students just wrapped up our unit on 'La Ropa' (Clothes) through their fashion show projects and oral exams and are now able to describe clothing worn for different occasions and seasons, how much it cost, and where they purchased certain items from. They did an excellent job in presenting their partners for the fashion show where they not only wrote but also audibly described what their classmates wore for a certain season and even mentioned an activity they liked to do. Upon returning from spring break, they are starting a new unit on travel where they will review some of the grammatical structures they have learned for the year and prepare for their final exam.

SPANISH 2A/B Students wrapped up their unit on "Cuando Era Joven" (When I was young) with oral exams and projects where they described what they used to be like when they were little (and even included baby picture(s). Before spring break they wrapped up their unit on 'Los Desastres y las Emergencias' (Disasters & Emergencies) and concluded with a creative project where they had various options of how they wanted to present their own scenario of a disaster/emergency with none other than them as the hero/heroine. After break they will continue with 'Las Heridas' (Injuries) and conclude with an oral exam. Next they will move on to a food unit where they will wrap up with a restaurant critique before ending with a travel unit where they will review most of the structures learned for the year.

SSS2: Students have been focusing on Human Rights and Civic Responsibilities. They were broken

down into groups where they spent different class sessions researching on the Guatemalan Civil War, the Salvadorean Civil War, and the present situation in Bolivia and Colombia (with FARC). Students presented information to their classmates and continue to read about human rights through literature on Latin America ,or in some cases even about Anne Frank in Spanish. They will continue learning other grammatical structures to incorporate into their writing, in addition to 'pluscuamperfecto subjuntivo & indicativo'.

French 1B We have concluded our units on family and the community. We continue to work on the food unit which students always find interesting. There is a possibility that I will be taking up a collection to buy some chocolate croissants for the students. I'm still working on the logistics of it. Stay tuned. After finishing the food unit, students will learn clothing vocabulary as well as the final 2 regular verb conjugations -re verbs and -ir verbs. We will finish with the travel unit where students will learn to read schedules using the 24 hr. clock.

French 2B We have finished the school unit where we compared and contrasted the French educational systems (including higher education) with the American system. We then moved on to the house unit where students learned rooms, furniture and chores. Reflexive verbs were also an important part of that unit. We are currently working on the clothing unit. At some point, I will ask students to bring in a picture of an outfit, so if you have any magazines or catalogs at home please save them. We will conclude with the travel unit.

The ESOL department is getting ready for the last marking period of the school year! In ESOL 1, students are almost finished learning about early American

settlers. In the final theme, "Reflections," they will read two more short novels: Hannah and the Hurricane and Black Beauty. In Academic Language, students will continue to work on math concepts and vocabulary as they practice their addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication skills. Students in ESOL 2 are wrapping up the third theme, "Discoveries," by reading Frankenstein. In the final theme, they will learn about changes and challenges and read the novel Sarah Plain and Tall. Students in ESOL 3 have just finished the unit on text structure and will begin work on the poetry unit. They will learn about various types of poems, practice writing their own poems, and read the book Love That Dog.



Music (Band, Orchestra and Choir!)

The FOMS Music Department has been spending the last few months getting ready for the spring concert activities. The spring Band concert will be held on May 28th at 7:00 here at FOMS. The spring Orchestra and Chorus concert will be held here at FOMS on May 29th at 7:00. We all sincerely hope to see you there! On May 30th, for the second year in a row, the FOMS 8th grade band, orchestra, chorus and showchoir will be traveling to Hershey Park to participate in the Music in the Parks festival! In March, the chorus participated in the Montgomery County District II Middle School Chorus Festival and received a superior rating! Congratulations to Dr. Lively and the chorus for qualifying for the state chorus festival!



Art:

We have much to accomplish in art during this final quarter. All grade levels will sharpen their literacy skills in our Artful

Thinking routines. If you want to know more about Artful Thinking, you may visit

<http://www.pz.harvard.edu/Research/ArtThink.htm>

Each day, students are presented with a visual work, and a set of questions to answer, discuss, and present to their classmates. We incorporate critical thinking in all our lessons: description, analysis, Interpretation, and evaluation.

We continue to work on Drawing, Painting, Sculpture, Graphic Design, and Printmaking, using a variety of media. Students keep their art work in a portfolio, and their written work in an art journal, both of which they make in class. They are also expected to keep a daily log, recording what they learned and accomplished each art class.

Art is graded using several criteria, with a rubric, and students are asked to write an artist's statement with several assignments. FOMS students are doing some beautiful work. We will have a few representative pieces at the White Flint Art Show, April 23 to 27. There is never enough room to show all the great art work our students have produced, but it is a great show. Please try to see it!

On Wednesdays, after school we hold Open Art Studio for students in all grades who would like a time and place to explore their own art interests. Drawing, painting, illustration, and cartooning are a few of the avenues artists are choosing to pursue. If your artist is interested, we will need a signed permission slip, or a note from parents or guardians.



Bay Studies

During the 3rd marking period, Bay Studies students examined how local streams and rivers connect to the Chesapeake Bay. Students studied maps that link Maryland streams & rivers to the bay and discussed how all upstream bodies of water can affect waters downstream. We also studied the importance of Riparian Forest Buffers and how they serve to help keep streams clean and healthy. We concluded the marking period by studying Invasive Species introduced to the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Students chose a species of plant, animal, fungus, insect or bacteria that has been introduced to our watershed. They researched and created a PowerPoint on their species that was then presented to their classmates. Lot's of great work. Entering the last marking period of the school year, bay studies classes will be spending some time outdoors working on gardens around the school and ushering in springtime. Don't forget on April 19, F.O.M.S. will have a school clean-up day to celebrate Earth Day. Any and all hands are welcome. Happy Spring!



FACS (Family and

Consumer Science) classes are gearing up for a busy last quarter! Students in all grades will learn and practice skills in the kitchen, including recipe reading, measuring, and problem identification and solutions (i.e. "our cake looks like a pancake—what happened?!—we forgot the baking powder!"). Mistakes are welcome in FACS class. Students then have opportunities to think through some of life's problems and use critical

thinking skills to solve them. Encourage your child to cook at home, and their culinary success and misfortune experiences will turn them into great chefs someday!

Other units will include babysitting, money management, energy conservation in the home, sewing, and textiles. We will have a visit from a sheep farmer on Tuesday, April 15th, who will demonstrate sheep shearing on a lamb in the school parking lot and then spin the wool into yarn! Now that's something to baaaa about!



Tech. Ed.

8th graders started off the semester with a unit on architectural drawing.

Students had to design a scaled floor plan of their "dream house". There were many requirements/restrictions for the design. The class then created a hypothetical neighborhood in which each student chose a particular lot to develop. Scaled plot plans were then drawn up showing their house on the lot. Lots of creative and exciting features were added to their yards. Students are currently finishing up their "model house". A scaled down 3-D model of the house they originally designed on paper. 4th quarter will begin with a unit on "electronics" followed by a unit on "aerodynamics".

6th grade students were busy during the 3rd quarter. For their first activity students played the role of a civil engineer. They had to design and construct a wooden tower that was more efficient than any of their classmates. At the conclusion of the activity students competed against each other for an efficiency rating. (Eff. = Amount of weight the tower can hold/weight of the tower itself. Winners included: Rhea Martinez/Zandile Ncube (667 lbs) and Mikhial McKenzie/Diego Avila (891 lbs).

Students then learned about “magnetic levitation”, a futuristic means of mass transportation. They work cooperatively in groups to design and construct small “maglev” vehicles capable of traveling a 16’ guide way. The goal was to construct the fastest vehicle.



Scholastic Book Fairs

May 2-7, FOMS TV Studio

We will have a large selection of required grade level summer reading books! Find out what’s on the list and pick up books for SUMMER READING!



We still collect Box Tops! Clip them off your packages at home and send them in to the office. This is an easy way to help our school!



Parents and students: send a note of thanks to your teachers! They work VERY hard on your behalf and need our complements. Of course, you can always send notes of thanks, but they are particularly appreciated during Staff Appreciation Week (May 4-10) and at the end of the school year.

Physical Education:



Wow! The weather is just magnificent this time of year. All of our PE classes will be heading back outside just after spring break, to take part in our school-wide Track & Field unit. Each student will have the opportunity to learn each of the 6 events, (50M, 400M, 4x100M relay, long jump, high jump, and shot put) have a chance to practice them, and them be assessed at the 3 they choose. We are looking for students to show correct form and technique and are not focusing on their score in these events. We will conclude the unit with a track meet where each teacher’s class will earn points, trying to out score the other classes. Prior to the track & field unit we finished many indoor activities including badminton, bowling, wt. training, volleyball, table tennis, rhythms & dance, and wrestling. Our Forest Oak MS, wrestling championships took place March 20th and were a huge success! We had 30 student matches that were truly magnificent, competitive, and highly spirited! As always, we are continuously selling PE clothing. This time of year, if you or your student needs shorts and t-shirts (as well as sweatshirts & sweatpants) we have a solid inventory of larger sizes and will be restocking over the summer months. Lastly, don’t forget to ask if your son/daughter needs to replace their deodorant.

Viewpoint of a graduating student's parents: Why should you get involved?

By: Sujay and Rakesh Pandey

It does not seem like close to five years that we have been associated with FOMS, however, when we realize that when the younger of our two children will be finishing middle school in June and will move on to high school, we will no longer be associated with the FOMS PTA. This has been a rich and rewarding experience for us, being able to contribute something to the school and the community and getting a lot back. Since we got involved with the school, we saw the increased level of confidence in our children and their performance in the school improved. We learned several things that we could do to help them with their studies. We truly feel that what you contribute by your involvement with the school, you get a whole lot back, not only in the form of help with your child's education, but also in making friends within the community, by getting a chance to work with other like minded parents and the teachers, who all want to contribute to the community in a positive way.

I still wonder why we do not see more people come forward to help and get involved; although I am sure they all care about their child's education. It could be the fear of unknown, thinking that you do not know how you could help or if you could help. One could help by taking up some position in the PTA, but that is not necessary. I am sure one can contribute a lot just by coming to the PTA meetings and trying to find out if there was anything they could do to help. We have known some people who have had things to say about the school or expressed their concerns regarding what is going on at FOMS, but you never see them at

anytime when they can pitch in and help in making things better.

We used to attend PTA meetings occasionally and used to volunteer whenever we could. But, when we got involved with the FOMS student directory, maintaining FOMS PTA webpage and managing the listserv, all of these were things that we had never done before. But we took the challenge and learned how to do these things with help from others and managed just fine. It was not a huge burden on our time, just a few hours here and there. We feel good that we were able to give something back to the community and the school and got a lot more back. We are sure there are lots of parents out there who can help. All those fence sitters out there please get involved as you can contribute in a positive way to the school and your child's education. Whether you decide to come forward and take a role with the PTA, agree to maintain the webpage or manage the listserv, or manage one of the several committees that need volunteers, please rest assured that you can contribute to your child's education just by showing them that you care by getting involved with the school, by just attending the PTA meetings. You will get back a lot more for your time and effort that is for sure.



Be a FOMS Hero and take your turn at volunteering for the PTA. Each family should find a way to help in a meaningful way! Contact Gail Gilpin at Gail_P_Gilpin@mcpsmd.org to find out how your talents and time can be put to good use!