



# Salem Salamander News

Newsletter of the Salem Elementary School PTA

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Savon Willard, Principal  
Denise Kiser, PTA President

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## **From our Principal:**

### **Reading is Fundamental**

Wake County established benchmarks for K-5 students in the area of Language Arts. These are expected points of growth for the students at the end of each quarter. At Salem Elementary, we use this benchmarks data to help us make decisions about student's needs.

Texts that correspond with objectives are numbers (i.e. 3-4, 9-10) along with the objectives at each quarter that the students should have mastered. These numbers indicate the level of complexity of the text children are decoding and comprehending. Oftentimes, parents get concerned about the level NUMBER of the text that their child is working on as opposed to the behaviors that the children should be exhibiting while reading. The text level is not always as important as what the student is doing to become a better reader.

When making promotion or retention decisions, we are assessing not only what level the child is reading, but what objectives have been mastered and what good reading behaviors the child is demonstrating.

Readers use specific strategies before, during, and after reading. Our teachers work very hard to model and guide students in their reading strategies at all of these points. Good readers improve their reading strategies and fluency by rereading familiar books. A familiar book may seem "too easy" for the child, but it is very important that the student feels comfortable with the text. Don't be surprised if a book comes home that may be a lower level than what you think your child should be reading. It is good practice and helps with good reading behaviors.

Be sure that when reading with your child, you are checking to make sure they are not only decoding, but are understanding what they are reading. This applies to students K-5. If you need any more information, please contact the literacy teachers Stacy Bigham or Laurie Ann Harvey. They conduct information sessions for parents four times throughout the school year. These sessions are packed with information for parents about reading. The literacy teachers are an excellent resource available to you at Salem Elementary.



## Notes from Our President

It is hard to believe that we have only three months left in this school year! Each month has fun and exciting things to offer.

Our Cultural Arts chairpersons, Stacy Ingham and Sherri Leeder, are continuously planning and arranging programs for our students. I know everyone has enjoyed all the Cultural Arts events so far. We look forward to the events scheduled for the spring.

Thursday, March 15th is Family Language Arts Night at Salem Elementary. I hope that everyone can come out to see what wonderful things your children are doing in the Language Arts program. During the evening, the PTA Nominating Committee will announce Officer candidates for next year's Executive Board. I hope to see you all at Family Language Arts Night!

Tuesday, March 20th is our Track Out Fair. Our PTA along with the PTAs at Salem Middle School and Baucom Elementary are teaming up to provide you with all the best options for your children for track out camps. The event will be held at the Salem Middle School Gym and will run from 6:30-8:30pm. We hope to have many vendors there to answer any questions you may have about track out camps and you will be able to sign up for them as you go along. We will be sending more information home on this event soon. Please watch your Friday Folders.

Last but not least, our Spring Event is scheduled for Friday, May 18th. This year's theme is "The Amazing Race" and is sure to be a lot of fun. It will include the famous "raffle/auction" of the classroom baskets, restaurant gift certificates, and many more great items. We are very pleased to announce that dinner will be served by Outback Steak House of Cary. Mark your calendars now and DO NOT miss this event. A huge thank you goes out to Laura Linton and Nicole Ridout for planning and organizing this event. I would also like to thank their great committee for stepping up to the plate and helping with this wonderful event.

As always, thank you for your continued support of Salem Elementary School. None of our activities would be possible without the support of you, our Salem families!

Denise Kiser, PTA President



**Salem students chosen by their classmates  
who demonstrate  
SELF-DISCIPLINE:**

Kindergarten: Maria Zambrana, Betzaida Espinoza Miguel, Aathira Balu, Carlos Hilario Lagunes, Joel Hoffler, Owen Livernois

1<sup>st</sup> Grade: Simran Patel, Lauren Key, Cameron Ingram, Jacob Aponte, Christine Byrne, Natalie Bowers, Bailey Schafran, Maya Aizhulova

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade: Gracie Donovan, Alex Rockafellow, Alex Ramsey, Angad Singh, Melina Spencer, Kelsey Carmichael

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade: Zachary Taft, Olivia Chiarolanzio, Alicia Monforti, Emily Calarco, Kelly Kennedy, Holly Ren

4<sup>th</sup> Grade: Julia Sacco, Samantha Patrick, Kaitlyn Barbour, Fumi Agboola, Jose Valenzuela

5<sup>th</sup> Grade: Annie DiSano, John Watkins, Mariane Ghazaleh, Tyler Sanderson, Amber Blanton

Skip-its: Kaitlyn Sullivan



**CHARACTER CORNER:**

**PERSEVERANCE:**

**Perseverance** is the Character Trait selected by Wake County Public School System for focus during the month of March. The definition of **Perseverance** taken from the Character Education Informational Handbook & Guide produced by the Public Schools of North Carolina, is “being persistent in the pursuit of worthy objectives in spite of difficulty, opposition, or discouragement; and exhibiting patience and having the fortitude to try again when confronted with delays, mistakes, or failures.” *Phew!* That’s a big job.

In looking at the growth of a child from birth through preschool, one could say that unconscious perseverance defines their approach to life. Rolling over to crawling to standing and walking alone was a result of perseverance. Learning letters and numbers, writing their name, using forks and spoons and cups properly are other examples. Biologically, we persevere. Still, we must also raise consciousness in our children as to its importance and relevance throughout their life. The pride and self-esteem that comes from accomplishing a challenging task or goal justifies perseverance as a valuable ability. This world of many unexpected detours and pitfalls *requires* it.

**PERSEVERANCE IN THE HOME  
INCLUDES:**

- Parents modeling perseverance to their children and showing them determination and hard work in pursuing a goal.
- Parents not giving their children everything, but teaching them patience in working and saving towards a desired item.
- Students keeping up with school and turning in homework and projects on time.
- Children doing their best with their chores and taking pride in their work.
- Children sticking with a commitment to a sports team or music lessons and putting in the time required for practice.
- Parents continuing to listen to a child’s thoughts even though they conflict with their opinions, and using "soft answers" instead of "harsh words."

**“Great works are performed not by strength, but by perseverance.” - Samuel Johnson**

## FABLE OF THE MONTH

### THE CROW AND THE PITCHER



No rain had fallen for many weeks. All the small streams and the ponds were dried up.

An old crow had been looking for water all the morning. At last he found some in a pitcher in a garden. He flew down to it and thrust in his bill; but he could not reach the water.

He walked around to the other side and tried again; but he could not get a drink. Oh, how very thirsty he was! It seemed as if he should faint.

"I must have that water. I will have it," he said.

Again he stretched his neck into the pitcher. No, he could not reach it.

He stopped a second and seemed to be thinking; then he said, "I will break the pitcher. My bill is strong and hard." So he gave the pitcher a hard thump. It did not break. He "thumped! thumped! thumped!" first here, then there. What a strong pitcher that was! It did not even crack.

"This will not do," he said. "I must try some other plan. I am big and strong. I will tip the pitcher over."

With that he pushed against it with his breast. It did not move. It seemed as if he must give up the attempt to get the water, but he did not once think of doing that.

Near by in the path lay some pebbles. The crow picked up one in his bill and let it fall into the pitcher. He dropped one after another into it. He could see the water rising a little. Now he worked harder than ever.

Before very long the water had risen so high that he could reach it with his bill. How refreshing it was! He drank as much as he wished, then flew away.



## ODYSSEY OF THE MIND



Thank you to the following staff members for attending Judges Training on Saturday, February third, in preparation for the March 3rd Eastern Region Odyssey of the Mind Competition. Without their support, our teams could not participate:

**Katie Anderson, Beth Chappell, Stephanie Hall, Gerald Harvey, Sarah Malone, Laura Marshburn, Donna Murphy, Faith Perkins, Lisa Shankle, Sandra Wagner**

*A special THANK YOU goes to Donna Murphy for filling in at the last minute!*

We also thank the following Parent Volunteers for supporting the Salem Odyssey of the Mind program, by working at the competition. The Eastern Region could not operation such a huge event without the support of these individuals.

**Jayalatha Beulah, Sara Carmichael, Patti Fiette, Maggie Ingram, Veeraraghavan Iyengar  
Kavita Nanda, Aurea Oliveira, Sophie Wang, Naomi Proforsky, Nadine Sapp**

As you can see, participating in OM really is a TEAM EFFORT! Thanks for your support and setting a wonderful example for our OM-ers.

The Salem OM Team strives to teach each participant some basic brainstorming techniques. Below is a “quick reference” to some of the techniques we have reviewed this year during Spontaneous Practice.

### Brainstorming Techniques

***Brainstorming:*** *Generating as many ideas as you possibly can. Ideas may be logical, illogical, outrageous, common, and crazy. Anything goes! Because no idea is bad. Remember to listen to other team members, and be respectful. Do not laugh at ideas, or you may discourage creative thinking!*

**Piggy backing:**

Taking one idea and copy it.

**Example:** Digi-mon piggy backed off of Pokemon.

**Adding on:**

Taking an idea and adding another idea and add on more to it.

**Example:** Bey-Blades took the common top idea, and added a rip cord

**Example:** Bratz Dolls piggy backed off Barbie dolls, but then added in the huge eyes.

**Combining:**

Taking two ideas and putting them together for one idea.

**Example:** To come up with the design for a tree, the girls wanted a tall box, and the boys wanted a short box. They combined the 2 ideas to make a tall bush sitting next to a small bush.

*Walt Disney always asked his “imagineers” to  
**PLUS UP!***

# WE HAVE A WINNER!



Announcing the winner of the *Campbell's Labels for Education* and the *Box Tops for Education* Grade Level competition. With a total of 5,570 points, 1<sup>st</sup> grade has won the first semester race! Way to go first grade! Congratulations to all of our grade levels it is still a very close race and a final prize will be awarded for end of the year final totals. The grade level with the most total points for the year will be awarded the points and will get to choose how to spend them! The current point totals are listed below.

Kindergarten.....	4629
1st Grade.....	5570
2nd Grade.....	4848
3rd Grade.....	4691
4th Grade.....	5262
5th Grade.....	4884

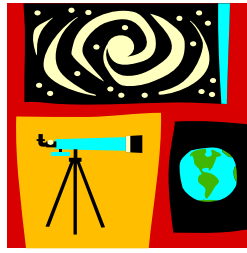
So far this year we have earned over 29,800 points and we are only half way through! Keep those labels coming! This collection competition will run through the last week in April, 2007. Please send in your **Box Tops for Education** and your *Campbell's* UPC code labels and lids marked with your Childs grade, not teacher. The kids will deposit their labels during their scheduled Town Meeting times. Parents are also encouraged to go on line and sign up on the Campbell's and Box Tops websites at:

[www.labelsforeducation.com](http://www.labelsforeducation.com)

and

[www.boxtops4education.com](http://www.boxtops4education.com)

Campbell's has a contest for 1 million bonus points currently running for families who register on-line. You are allowed one entry per email and it is very quick and easy, plus you get free recipes, money saving coupons, sweepstakes entries for additional labels and great prizes.



## SALEM STUDENT WINS AT REGIONAL SCIENCE FAIR

Salem Elementary 5<sup>th</sup> grade student, Desmond Byrd, was a winner at the Regional Science Fair at Wakefield Middle School on February 24. Desmond's project entitled "Birds of a Feather Eat Together" was awarded a top prize in the Elementary Division. She will now move on to compete at the North Carolina State Science Fair at Meredith College on March 24. Congratulations Desmond!

Information on the State Science Fair can be found at [www.ncsta.org/sciencefair](http://www.ncsta.org/sciencefair)



## All County Honors Chorus

Each year Wake County hosts a county wide honors chorus for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students who excel in choral music. Students are selected by their music teachers to participate in the 2 day festival. This year's clinician is Dr. Lisa Fredenburgh, the head of choral studies at Meredith College. The All County Honors Chorus concert will be held March 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 at Athens Drive High School. The following students will represent Salem this year as members of the All County Honors Chorus:

Courtney S. (5 <sup>th</sup> grade)	Amanda A. (4 <sup>th</sup> grade)
Katherine R. (4 <sup>th</sup> grade)	Chris Y. (5 <sup>th</sup> grade)
Christie K. (5 <sup>th</sup> grade)	Brooke B. (5 <sup>th</sup> grade)
Nate K. (5 <sup>th</sup> grade)	Hannah M. (4 <sup>th</sup> grade)
Megan B. (4 <sup>th</sup> grade)	

**Congratulations! We know you will make Salem proud!**

"Perseverance is a great element of success. If you only knock long enough and loud enough at the gate, you are sure to wake up somebody." - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807 - 1882)



**Spring Event**  
**The Amazing Race, Salamander Style**  
**Friday, May 18, 2007**

The core committee has met with Spring Event Volunteers to begin preparations for the year's largest event. Keep a close eye on Friday Folders as information will soon be coming home about the event including information on classroom basket collections, ticket sales, and dinner reservations.

Right now, our committee is concentrating on collecting prizes for the auction/raffle. Our auction/raffle prizes are combinations of gift items, classroom theme baskets, gift certificates, and all kinds of other "large" surprises.

If your business (service or retail), or home based business, is in a position to donate an item, or gift certificate for items or services, please contact one of the event chairs below. We have previously enjoyed donations from Salem Families who have home hobbies such as jewelry making, beading, wood working, photography, painting, etc. We have also had Salem Families donate gift certificates from their places of employment for oil changes, hair cuts, photography services, decorating services, home maintenance services, scrap booking, etc. Please let us know if you would be interested in helping with this endeavor. All donations are well recognized as the contributing businesses are presented in print three times and viewed by the 400+ Salem Families and their guests.

It is the generosity and enthusiasm that has made this event so successful. Thank you in advance for supporting our school!

**Laura Linton**  
**303-9003**  
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**Nicole Ridout**  
**303-5892**  
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**Mark Your Calendars!**



# LIFE STORIES



## LifeStories In March

In March, the *LifeStories* curriculum will continue. Teachers at Salem are developing innovative ways to integrate *LifeStories* and the skills it teaches into daily classroom activities. Integrating character education into all aspects of children’s lives (for example, school, home, and peer relations) will promote the integration of these skills into children’s everyday decision making.

### What can you do?

There are many ways that families can help reinforce character education at home, most of which you may already be doing. A few examples are:

**Ask your child to tell you the story he or she learned this week, then discuss the story and apply it to everyday life**

**Compliment and reward your child for character-related acts such as taking responsibility for watching a younger sibling**

**Read stories at home about characters who work hard to make the “right” choices**

**Point out and model character-based acts for your children**



## LifeStories for K-2

In March, K-2 students at Salem will watch and discuss these *LifeStories for Kids* stories:

**Look What You’ve Done** (Week of 3/5 for 2nd grade only) *Look What You’ve Done* is a tale made up by Rocky the Raccoon that teaches the character trait *Good Judgment*.

**Wolf Under the Bed** (Week of 3/5 for K & 1st and week of 3/12 for 2nd)  
*Wolf Under the Bed* is a story about how Willy Claffin became a storyteller. It illustrates the life skill of *Togetherness*.

**The King’s New Suit** (Week of 3/12 for K & 1st and week of 3/19 for 2nd)  
*The King’s New Suit* is an old tale that teaches the life skill of *Courage*.

**Lion & Mousie** (Week of 3/19 for K & 1st and week of 3/26 for 2nd)  
*Lion & Mousie* is a story that teaches the life skill of *Respect*.



## LifeStories for 3-5

In March, 3-5 students at Salem will watch and discuss these *LifeStories for Kids* stories:

**Debate in Sign Language** (Week of 3/5)  
*Debate in Sign Language* is a story about the misreading of non-verbal communications that teaches the life skill of understanding the influence of *Assumptions*.

**The Ghost House** (Week of 3/12)  
*The Ghost House* is a tale from the childhood of storyteller Olga Loya that teaches the life skill of *Check-It-Out*.

**Bully Goat Grim** (Week of 3/19)  
*Bully Goat Grim* is a twist on the tale Three Billy Goats Gruff that teaches the life skill of understanding and handling *Bullying*.

## Dates to Remember

Thursday, March 1 <sup>st</sup>	6:30 PM	PTA Board Meeting
Saturday, March 3 <sup>rd</sup>		Odyssey of the Mind Tournament
Thursday, March 15 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 PM	General PTA Meeting, Language Arts
Tuesday, March 20 <sup>th</sup>		Golden Corral Spirit Night
Tuesday, March 20 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 PM - 8:30 PM	Track Out Fair - Salem Middle School Gym
Friday, March 23 <sup>rd</sup>		Quarter Ends
Saturday, March 24 <sup>th</sup>		North Carolina State Science Fair
Saturday, March 24 <sup>th</sup>		All County Honors Chorus concert
Monday, March 26 <sup>th</sup>		No School – Teacher Workday
Monday, April 2 <sup>nd</sup> thru Friday, April 6 <sup>th</sup>		No School - SPRING BREAK
Thursday, April 12 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 PM	PTA Board Meeting
Wednesday, April 18 <sup>th</sup>		Chik-Fil-A Spirit Night



## YEAR ROUND SCHOOL TRACK OUT FAIR

Tuesday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007

6:30PM – 8:30PM

Salem Middle School Gymnasium

**Come check out your options for Track Out Camps**

Sponsored by Salem Elementary, Salem Middle and Baucom Elementary PTAs