



Salem Salamander News

Newsletter of the Salem Elementary School PTA

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Savon Willard, Principal
Denise Kiser, PTA President

Volume 8, Issue 6
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From Our Principal

Curriculum Audit

Last spring, the Wake County Public School System Board of Education contracted with Phi Delta Kappa International to conduct a curriculum management audit. Dr Burns reported, “that the overarching purpose for the curriculum management audit is to identify barriers and steps the district needs to take to go from ‘good to great.’” The auditors visited 3,989 classrooms on 47 campuses, and interviewed 473 community members including board of education, central services staff, school principals, teachers, parents, students, and the county board of commissioners. The auditors also considered a report generated by eight different focus groups conducted prior to the visit. The auditors produced a comprehensive report and arrived at 22 findings and eight recommendations based on the five audit standards. Below is a summary of the eight recommendations.

- **OPPORTUNITY:** Meet students’ needs equitably, and eliminate the achievement gap
- **CONSISTENCY:** Unite strategic planning – from the school board to the administration to the school to the classroom
- **GOVERNANCE:** Strengthen school board and administrative direction of curriculum management
- **MANAGEMENT:** Actively direct and support the curriculum
- **EVALUATION:** Increase use of data in decision making
- **BUDGETING:** Tie school system resources to the needs of the curriculum
- **INSTRUCTION:** Unify and enhance training and development
- **ORGANIZATION:** Clarify roles and responsibilities and increase effectiveness

Information from the audit will shape the superintendent’s strategic directives and ultimately the School Improvement Plan (SIP) at Salem Elementary. Our own staff is working to rewrite our SIP using our test and assessment data and parent and staff surveys to develop goals to improve academic achievement for all students.

More information about the audit can be found at: <http://www.wcpss.net/curriculum-management>.

Notes From Our President!



It is truly difficult to believe that we are in the midst of the holiday season. I trust that all of our Salem families had an enjoyable Thanksgiving break. Thank you to everyone who participated in the **Fall Harvest Food Drive**. The response was great! Much appreciation goes to Lisa Sanchez for her efforts in coordinating this event. Without her enthusiasm, many needy families would have gone untouched by Salem Elementary's generosity.

We look forward to the **Toys for Tots** service project. It is always rewarding to see our children give to other children less fortunate than themselves. Please watch for more information to come on this great event.

We anxiously await our **Sally Foster** products! Thank you for your orders. I am sure everyone will enjoy using the wonderful products. Thank you again to Stephanie Bagwell for her hard work on this project.

December also brings one of our school's most popular events – the **Math-a-Thon!** Please refer to the instructions on your student's Math-a-Thon packet for details. We encourage every student to participate regardless of sponsorship. *All* participating children will be rewarded for their efforts. The funds that are raised from this year's Math-a-Thon will be used to fulfill technology needs.

I hope everyone enjoyed our Spirit Night at Subway in November. We thank them for being a part of this fun tradition at Salem. We look forward to our next event. Please look for more information in your Friday Folders.

A final thought...with the busy holiday season upon us, please remember that our students still need us at school and at home. Our teachers are equally busy preparing for the holiday season. I am sure they welcome any efforts to help them to continue to provide quality instruction. Please keep in touch with your child's teacher to see what you can do to help during these last few weeks before the holiday break!

Denise Kiser, PTA President





Emergency Operations Plan



Wake County has initiated a new Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) that is designed to protect students and staff during an emergency. Every school site must be prepared to respond to an emergency in an organized and timely manner. Salem Elementary will have a more detailed and “tailored” plan based on our staff personnel and their redefined action steps and responsibilities. In order to provide a safe and secure teaching and learning environment, personnel must be prepared for the management of emergency events that cannot be predicted or prevented. Because it is impossible to foresee every emergency, good judgment and common sense must prevail. This plan is designed to protect students and staff during an emergency.

It is not the intention of this plan to explicitly provide procedures for all situations and circumstances that may be encountered.

In order to provide a safe environment for Salem students, staff, visitors, and volunteers, **HERE ARE SOME WAYS YOU CAN ASSIST:**

- Use the front doors of the building and report to the front office.
- Sign in properly at the office using the computer system. This will generate a visitors log if we need to access it quickly. This way we will know who is in the building.
- Wear ID stickers so they are easily identified.
- Identify yourself.
 - Using your first and last name
 - Listing who you are visiting
 - Listing the location of your visit
 - Listing the purpose of your visit. (parent/teacher conference, lunch with child, etc.)
- Sign out properly stating the time you left the building.
- Follow all bus and carpool safety rules and regulations – they are designed with security and safety in mind.
- Park in visitor lots only.

Got IEP? The Wake County Special Education PTA will be having three concurrent sessions at their January general meeting on different aspects of IEPs: for beginners and those early in the IEP process, there is “Writing an IEP”; for the more experienced, there will be a discussion on how to insure the implementation of the IEP; and for those with older children, a discussion about helping your child develop self-advocacy skills. The meeting will be at 7pm on January 24 at the Nationwide Insurance Building at 4401 Creedmoor Road in Raleigh. Visit the SEPTA Web site at www.WakeSEPTA.org.

Leigh Menconi
President-Elect
Wake County Special Education PTA
PO Box 19472
Raleigh, NC 27619
919/788-2500
www.WakeSEPTA.org

Attention Grade 3 Parents:

The CogAt (Cognitive Abilities Test) will be administered to Tracks 1, 2, and 3 the week of Jan.7-11 and Track 4 the week of Jan.28-Feb.1. Please try to schedule appointments after 12:00 on designated testing days.

Salem Elementary PTA "No Nonsense" Fundraiser

The 2007 tax year will soon be coming to an end and so far we have collected more than \$3,000. If you would like to make a tax deductible donation to the No-Nonsense Fundraiser there is still time. Just fill out the form at the bottom of this flyer and send it in by **December 15**. **Any amount is welcome**. Our thanks to those of you who have already participated in this fundraiser we are truly amazed at the generosity of our Salem families!

PTA "No Nonsense" *All donations are confidential*

Donation amount enclosed: \$ _____

Parent(s) name: _____

Name of Salem Student(s): _____

Teacher / Grade: _____

Matching Company Name: _____

Retain this portion for tax receipt. Salem Elementary School

2007/2008 "No Nonsense" Fundraiser

Donation amount enclosed: \$ _____ Check # _____

Volunteer of the Month



Congratulations to our December '07 volunteer of the month, **Dee Deanhardt!** Dee is new to our school this year, joining us from Turner Creek. She has been very active in helping in her children's classrooms – Darian is in Mr. Robertson's grade 4 class and Ally is in grade 2 with Mrs. Gallagher. In addition, Dee can be found stuffing Friday folders, timing students for First in Fitness, serving up breakfast for the grandparents, shelving books in the media center, and most recently, making copies for the Math-a-thon. She also coaches for OM, helps with the Scrabble Club, and has started our school's Chess Club! When she is not busy helping at our school, Dee enjoys exercising, especially riding her bike while Sammi the dog runs with her. Her family also enjoys gardening together and they can't wait until the spring when they can help plant some new flowers here at Salem. We thank Dee for her tremendous efforts in helping Salem Elementary be the best it can be!

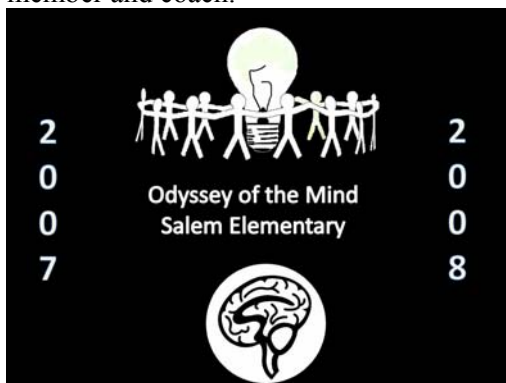
Do you know of a Special Salem Volunteer? We'd like to highlight someone new each month. Let us know who **you** recommend!

Karin DellaMaestra at dmaestra@mindspring.com

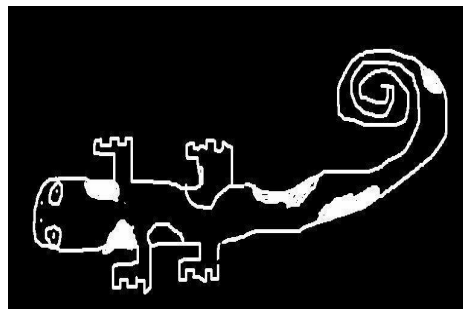
Karyn Knoke at Karknoke@aol.com

Salem Elementary Odyssey of the Mind 2007 – 2008 T-Shirt Winners

This year, every Division I student was required to turn in a T-shirt design. The following students all turned in designs that truly exemplified the OM Spirit: Grade 5: Rachel Grotheer, Colin Rudd, and Nikhil Shirsekar; Grade 4: Abigail Bagwell, Elizabeth Lowe, Sapna Ramakrishnan, and Zachary Taft. These team members met a few times with Sujata Shirsekar, and created the following design, which will be worn by every Salem Elementary OM team member and coach.



Back of T-Shirt



Congratulations go out these OM-ers! What a thrill it will be for them to see their design on over 100 people on competition day!



Back Row: Zachary Taft, Sapna Ramakrishnan, Abigail Bagwell, Nikhil Shirsekar
Front Row: Elizabeth Lowe, Rachel Grotheer
Pictured Separately: Colin Rudd





Media Matters **STORYTELLING Part II**

By Sandra Wagner

Last month I recounted my experiences at the storytelling festival and encouraged you all to share family stories with your children. In our global society, in which families move across states, countries, and continent, one way to continue family history is the sharing of family stories. I believed that when students learn stories and begin to share them that the process would be educationally beneficial for them.

How can storytelling be beneficial to your child?

Students can learn a wide variety of skills by becoming a storyteller. Firstly, a beginning teller has to learn the difference between learning a story and memorizing one. The teller begins to understand which method of learning a story works for them by creating a story map.

Visualizing a story with the help of the story map helps students to see the sequence of a story. As students ourselves, we have heard this saying, "Put it in your own words." As students practice their storytelling they will begin to understand the process of making the story their own. Sometimes the reactions of the audience will encourage one to adlib parts of their story. In Martha Hamilton and Mitch Weiss's book *Children Tell Stories*, they point out that children's language art skills will improve and children will learn how to speak clearly, vary the speed of their voices, use nonverbal communication, and learn the art of pacing one's story.

Throughout your children's education they are introduced to all types of literature. Can you imagine coming to Salem to watch our students engaged in the art of sharing a story? I can.

BOARD ADVISORY COUNCIL (BAC)

Dear Parents:

As your Board Advisory Council (BAC) member, I would like to share a few things with you about the council and upcoming events. Each district and Board of Education (BOE) Member has an advisory council, which is comprised of one parent representative and one administrator from each school in the district. As Salem's parent representative, I serve on the BAC for district 8, which is Ron Margiotta's district. The council meets the second Monday of every month to discuss issues that pertain to Wake County Public School System, and Mr. Margiotta takes our input into consideration when representing our district and meeting with the BOE. These meetings are open to the public, and anyone can attend. The schedule for the rest of the year is: Jan. 14 at Salem Middle School, topics are athletic teams, field trip/classes option, and Healthy Living curriculum; Feb. 11 at Salem Elementary, topics are legislative agenda and AG funding; March 10 at Holly Springs High School, topic is the high school project; and April 14 at Davis Drive Middle School, topics are uniforms, transportation, and transfer tax/funding. All meetings start at 5:30PM.

There will also be important reassignment information forthcoming in the next few months. A first draft reassignment plan for 2008-2009 will be released in early December and posted on www.wcpss.net. This is the first phase of the process, controlled by Growth Management (GM). It is possible that some Salem neighborhoods could be affected with the opening of Laurel Park Elementary School next year, and you will be able to check the Web site to determine if your family could be affected. The News and Observer typically posts the plan on their Web site: www.newsobserver.com. You will be able to post comments online regarding the plan before GM presents a second draft, their recommendation, to the BOE. This is usually done in late December/early January. Then the second phase of the process, controlled by the BOE, begins. They will hold several public hearings in January, should you have concerns you would like to voice. The dates are yet to be determined, but they will be posted on www.wcpss.net as soon as they are known. You will also have another opportunity to enter comments on-line. At the conclusion of both phases, the BOE and GM collaborate to adopt a final plan, which should be approved some time in February.

If you have any questions or concerns you would like me to take to the BAC meetings, please feel free to e-mail me at bectiller@earthlink.net. Please put "BAC comments/questions" in the subject line so that I can ensure your e-mail receives the appropriate attention.

Happy Holidays,
Carla Tiller



Box Top Tidbits

There is a lot of good news to share at Salem about Box Tops for the month of October! Our overall Box Top total is **\$1,467.80** - we are over 80% of the way to achieving our goal of \$1756! Our monthly total was \$225.30, which is down a bit for the Salamanders.

The top collectors for the month of October in each grade were:

- Grade K Miss Monza's class - 185 Box Tops
- Grade 1 Mrs. Bidwell's class - 231 Box Tops
- Grade 2 Miss Howard's class - 246 Box Tops
- Grade 3 Mr. Copperwheat's class - 162 Box Tops
- Grade 4 Ms. Ortiz's class - 96 Box Tops
- Grade 5 Mrs. Soriano-Lillis' class - 141 Box Tops

We would like to thank the families who took the time to register at the Box Tops for Education Web site before our September deadline. Approximately 100 families registered earning an extra **\$50** for Salem!

With the holiday season quickly approaching we would like to, once again, encourage our Salem families to please consider using the Marketplace at Box Tops for Education for your online purchases. Many of the participating retailers are offering special holiday deals in addition to the contribution made to Salem through your purchases. You can access the site by logging on to www.boxtops4education.com, signing in, and clicking the "Marketplace" tab.

While doing your special holiday cooking and baking please continue to collect your Box Tops! **I would like to challenge all Salamanders and see if we could achieve our goal of \$1,756 before everyone tracks out at the end of December!**

We thank everyone for their continued support and wish to extend the warmest holiday wishes to all of our Salem Families!

The Box Top Committee
Susan McMorris, Laura Brockman, & Maryellen Kist



Campbell's Corner

The Campbell's Contest deadline is quickly approaching! You have until Friday December 21, 2007, to submit your Campbell's labels. The class submitting the most labels will be awarded a "Super Snack Party" after returning from the holiday break.

As you prepare special meals and treats for the holidays, remember to save the UPC codes from participating Campbell products. Participating items include Campbell soups/soup products, Pepperidge Farm Products, Franco American Products, Prego Pasta Sauces, and many more. For a complete list, you may log on to www.labelsforeducation.com.

Please keep in mind that Campbell's no longer accepts label fronts for submission. We need the **UPC code** from the label in order to receive credit.

We would like to extend warm holiday wishes to all of our Salem families!

The Campbell's Label Committee,
Dawn Worthington & Maryellen Kist



YEARBOOK SHUTTERBUGS WANTED!

Do you have a great shot of your child or their classmates enjoying a special class event, field trip, etc? Upload your digital photos to our yearbook Web site and your photos may appear in the 2008 yearbook.

Please include the teacher's name and the event in your photo description. Here is how to do it:

Log on to <https://portal.jostens.com/login.asp>

User ID: 1137277
Password: salamander

Follow the upload instructions and include your photo description. Questions or problems? Contact Marley Braun at marley@nc.tr.com or 342-7184.



FALL HARVEST THANK YOU!

Western Wake Crises Ministries and Chris Hill from the Ronald McDonald House in Durham would like to express their deepest thanks to our Salem families who participated in this year's annual Fall Harvest. We were able to collect much needed items and made our fall tree overflow with colorful leaves! Thank you again to all of our Salem families who have been so generous!

Lisa Sanchez
V.P. Service Projects

Salem Elementary Holiday Giving Program



The holiday season is here and Salem Elementary will once again be able to show their Salamander pride with our annual *Salem Elementary Holiday Giving Program*. This year there will be two opportunities for giving to those in need, both at Salem and in the surrounding community.

TOY DRIVE

Families can participate in a Toy Drive which will benefit The Ronald McDonald House of Durham and children from our own school family. Simply bring any *new unwrapped* toy or game to the collection boxes located in the front lobby of the school. Items can be for children ages birth through teens but please no violent or war-related items. This year in order to accommodate all tracks, the Toy Drive will run from Monday November 26 through Friday December 14.

SHARE & CARE WALL

Salamanders can also show their generosity by sponsoring one of our own Salem families in need from the Care & Share Wall. Take the joy of giving one step further by sponsoring an entire family from our Care & Share Wall. This program allows participants to provide specific items specially requested by individual family members. The Care & Share Wall will be located in the front office and will run from November 26 through Wednesday December 12.

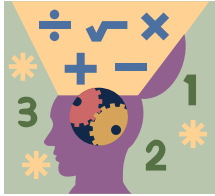
We are also taking donations for holiday wrapping paper! If you have any questions, or if you would like to help out with these wonderful programs, please contact Lisa Sanchez, V.P. Service Projects at Lisabug@nc.rr.com. The more the merrier!





Reflections

JUST A REMINDER: All Reflections entries are due on either December 20 or January 3. Packets are still available in the staff work area. Thanks for your interest in our program.



Math-a-thon coming soon!

It's Math-a-thon time! In the past, Salem students have really enjoyed the mathematical challenge the Math-a-thon provides along with its recognition and awards by the PTA. *We challenge all students to participate in this year's Math-a-thon.*

Last week's Friday folder contained your child's Math-a-thon packet, slip of intent, and sponsor sheet. The Math-a-thon program was developed to practice math during this holiday season, and with the help of friends and family, the children can raise money for our school. Each attempted math problem will help fund the purchase of new hardware, software, and other related items for our children to use. All packets will be accepted and recognized with or without sponsorship.

Dates to remember:

Slip of Intent due: Tracks 2, 3, & 4: Monday Dec. 17
Track 1: Monday Jan. 7

The slip of intent can be found on the bottom portion of the front cover of the Math-a-thon packet. It allows us to recognize all students who participate.

Math-a-thon Packet and Sponsor Sheet due:

Tracks 1 & 3: Friday Jan. 18

Tracks 2 & 4: Friday Jan. 25

Math-a-thon Recognition Night: Thursday Feb. 21, 6:30PM, PTA General Meeting. Please plan to attend for a fun evening of recognition and awards for all students who participate in the Math-a-thon!

Happy computing!

Anna Johnson and Jennifer Mauney
Math-a-thon Co-Chairs
annajohnson@nc.rr.com or 303-6579
jennifer_mauney@yahoo.com or 367-2549
annajohnson@nc.rr.com or
jennifer_mauney@yahoo.com



SALEM SCIENCE FAIR

It is time to get started on those projects! There are only a few weeks left until the Second Annual Science Fair. Need an idea? Want to find out more? Take a look at the Science Fair Page on the Salem Web site.

Registration forms can be found on the Web site and are due in the office not later than January 7, 2008. The Science Fair will be held on Thursday January 24, 2007.

Don't miss out on the fun!

For questions, please contact Caroline Rockafellow at salemscience@mindspring.com.



Congratulations to the following students who were chosen by their classmates as demonstrating RESPECT:

Kindergarten: Joshua Cheng, Colin Tiller, Scott Kennedy, Keegan Merck, Blake Poole

First Grade: Hannah Levin, Carter Boulia, Cecilia Boudwin, Amanda Marrott, TJ Moffitt, Lindsey Isaacs

Second Grade: Anya Chintapalli, Maren Kennedy, Emily Wittig, Matthew Jaynes, Kiran Ruff, Peter Ballentine, Elizabeth Graff, Gracie Carter

Third Grade: David Ghazaleh, Melina Spencer, Marifer Benitez, Luke Samuels, Stephen Colbert, Drew Davies

Forth Grade: Conner Monroe, Daisy Gonzalez, Ashley DeNardo, Kirk Cunningham, Amy Bounds

Fifth Grade: Katie Beekman, Leanna Smith, Michelle Gunsheski, Syllas Miller, Sammy Camut, Anna Eaton

SALEM ELEMENTARY TEACHER OF THE YEAR – MS. STEPHANIE HALL



“I am extremely honored to be Salem’s Teacher of the Year. Salem has such an incredible staff to work with, and everyone at this school goes above and beyond to honor and educate all of our students. I have been teaching for almost 13 years now, and have been at Salem since we opened our doors in August 2000. I learn something new every day, and working with the students makes all the time and effort spent, well worth it.”

SALEM ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT TEACHER OF THE YEAR – MS. ANGELA BLANTON



“My family and I have been a part of Salem for many years. My daughter Amber currently attends Salem Middle as a sixth grader, and my daughter Lauren is in Ms. Hall's third grade class. I truly love and enjoy being a Teacher Assistant. I get so much joy being with the children every day. It is very rewarding for me to do what I do. The staff at Salem is so awesome! I am very fortunate to be a part of the Salem family. This is my fourth year at Salem and I look forward to many more fun years to come! Thank you so much!”

DATES TO REMEMBER		
Tuesday December 4	11:30AM – 12:30PM	Staff Lunch
Tuesday December 4		Chorus and Skip-Its Performance
Thursday December 6	6:30PM	PTA Board Meeting
Friday December 7	By 3:45PM in Office	Science Fair Registration Forms Due
Wednesday December 12		Last day of Care & Share Wall
Monday December 17		Math-A-Thon Slip of Intent Due – Track 2, 3, 4
Friday December 21		Last day to turn in Campbell’s Labels
Monday December 24 – Tuesday January 1		WINTER BREAK – No School
Thursday January 3	6:30PM	PTA Board Meeting
Monday January 7		Math-A-Thon Slip of Intent Due – Track 1
Monday January 7 – Friday January 11		Grade 3 CogAt – Track 1, 2, 3
Friday, January 18		Math-A-Thon Packets and Sponsor Sheet Due – Track 1 & 3
Thursday, January 24		Science Fair
Friday, January 25		Math-A-Thon Packets and Sponsor Sheet Due – Track 2 & 4
Monday, January 21		Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday No School
Monday, January 28 – Friday, February 4		Grade 3 CogAt – Track 4