

Robious Express

October 2008

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We are right in the middle of one of Robious' biggest Fundraisers of the school year – the Innisbrook wrapping paper and gift sale! Innisbrook has beautiful wrapping papers for all occasions, gift items, Helen Grace chocolates and lots of other exciting items. Everything will be delivered to the school in plenty of time for the holidays so take this opportunity to get a jump start on your shopping.

If you do not wish to pur-

chase items, you may also make a donation to the RES PTA – simply indicate this on your check.

Here are a few tips regarding the sale:

- Make checks payable to RES PTA.
- Do not include any sales tax.
- Return your money and the pink Seller Order Summary form *only!*

The deadline for orders is October 10th.

Friends and family mem-

bers that live out of town can also participate in our sale by visiting www.Innisbrook.com. Enter our school number (105371) so that Robious gets credit for the sale. Shipping is free for orders over \$85.00. Shipping fees apply for all other orders.

Thank you very much for your support. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 379-2954.

Celeste Alcorta

Upcoming Events

- **October 8th**—First Meeting of Weekly Running Club
- **October 10th**—Last day of Fall Fundraiser
- **October 13th** — Three hour early release for Staff Development Day
- **October 17th** —Reflections Contest Deadline
- **October 23rd**—Monster Mash
- **October 28th**—3rd Grade Book & Breakfast
- **October 29th**—4th Grade Book and Breakfast
- **October 31st**—End of First Nine Weeks
- **November 3rd**—School Closed
- **November 4th**—Election Day—Parent Teacher Conferences
- **November 6th**—Barnes & Noble Night & Picture Make-up Day

Library Volunteers still needed!!



It is not too late to volunteer in the library. I have two spots (1 Tuesday, 1 Thursday) left to fill. If you are a parent of a student in Mrs. Williams, Goodrich, Snead, Wohlert, Partridge, Ferguson, George, Mayes, Alspaugh or Ingoe, you can volunteer during your child's library time. Working in the library consists of shelving books, making birthday bags and/or putting labels on new books. Shifts are one hour long. If you are interested, please contact Nicole Lubin at nicolelubin@comcast.net or 622-7915. This is a great opportunity to observe your child with his/her class and to see our wonderful Mrs. Dean teach the kids about the exciting world of books!

Teaching Mathematics as Problem-Solving

A note from Principal Anne O'Toole

As a nation one of our goals in the 21st century is to have more high school students complete mathematics courses beyond what used to be called College Algebra and Trigonometry. The reality is that in many industrialized nations today student achievement in mathematics significantly exceeds that of students in the United States. The problem is that many American students don't have the conceptual foundation needed to succeed in mathematics at higher levels. For them mathematics is a series of rote steps taken in order to find the correct answer to a problem. Because they have had limited experiences in explaining why an answer makes sense or doesn't make sense, many tend to hit a wall of frustration in high school math courses which require them to consider alternative solutions and defend the most logical choice.

At Robious Elementary we approach mathematics as problem solving, beginning in Kindergarten and continuing through grade five. We were very fortunate

three years ago to meet Dr. John Vandewalle, professor emeritus of mathematics education at Virginia Commonwealth University. As the grandparent of one of our students, Dr. Vandewalle volunteered to train our faculty, using his textbook written for elementary teachers, *Teaching Student-Centered Mathematics*.

At Robious Elementary we approach mathematics as problem solving, beginning in Kindergarten and continuing through grade five.

He modeled math lessons weekly in classrooms and gave teachers feedback on their lessons before his untimely death in 2006. Our teachers have continued to use his book as a springboard for designing their math lessons.

This year we are the only Chesterfield elementary school using the *Investigations in Mathematics* program in grades K-5. Like Expeditionary Learning, *Investigations* is inquiry-based. Emphasis is

on understanding concepts, not just memorizing facts. Substantive work with rational numbers, geometry, measurement, data, and early algebra is included at each grade level. Multiple ways of solving problems are encouraged and celebrated. Children are asked to defend their thinking and show how they came up with an answer. Assessment is heavily performance based, and students are required to "show their thinking" as they solve problems.

Each child has a *Student Handbook* (a great resource for parents, too!), as well as a *Student Activity Book*. Each classroom has a wealth of manipulatives, which students use to practice new concepts they are learning.

We are so excited to be able to add this component to our inquiry-based approach to student learning and look forward to sharing the children's successes in mathematics with you!

Anne O'Toole

Join us for our Monster Mash Thursday October 23

HOT pizza will be available all evening from 6:00pm - 8:00pm in the cafeteria kitchen and the DJ will play in the gym from 6:30 - 8:30. Pizza pre-orders will come home on Friday, October 3rd.

CONTESTS - Keep working on those costumes - prizes will be awarded to one boy and one girl in each grade level for the "Most Creative" costume. Additionally we hope everyone will participate in the "Family Pumpkin Carving Contest" - to enter, just bring a carved pumpkin from home with your name on a card on the bottom (if desired, pumpkin can be lit with a battery operated safety light - **no candles!**).



We will be "Feeding the Monster for the Food Bank" at Monster Mash. We want to see which grade level can feed their monster the most!!! Please help support the Central Virginia Food Bank by bringing non-perishable foods to Monster Mash.

As always - we need lots of help to decorate and assist with this event. Please go to www.respta.org and click on the "Get Involved" link to sign up for a shift and/or send in treats. Any questions? Contact Sandy Zabel at info@respta.org



Pulling Weeds, Picking Up Trash



That's not all you'll do when you get involved with the Landscape Committee at Robious Elementary School. Join us once a month to walk the grounds and spruce things up. Bring your pruners, hand trowels and a

garbage bag and learn what it takes to keep a landscape in top shape from a local landscape designer. Not only will you be helping the school but you may learn a few things you never knew about pruning, edging, weeding and landscaping. Pick my brain while you pull some weeds! We'll meet

the second Friday of every month starting Oct. 10. 10 o'clock in front of the school.

Looking forward to making friends.

Sharon Baum

794-6712

baumhokies@comcast.net

Polar Bearzaar

Are you a crafter or retail business owner? We are looking for vendors for "Polar Bearzaar", a holiday shopping extravaganza for our students, on Friday, December 12 from 6:00 - 8:30. Merchandise must be affordable for our small shoppers - up to \$25 but with an em-



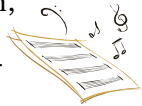
phasis on lower priced items. Please contact Sandy Zabel at info@respta.org for a vendor application. To volunteer to help with this event - set up, clean up, wrapping station or bake sale - go to www.respta.org and click on the "Get Involved" link

Reflections Contest



Wow!! We're already into the second month of school, and the October 17th deadline for the annual PTA Reflections contest is right around the corner!

What gets your child excited? There is a whole world of possibilities out there just waiting to be discovered that can provide the inspiration for your child's entry! And the expression of that inspiration can take almost any form your child chooses -- literature, music composition, photography, visual art, dance choreogra-



phy or film / video production. Students are recognized at a school celebration in the spring, and winners in each category advance to the next level of competition. The goal of the program is to increase community awareness of the importance of the arts in education by recognizing the most original and imaginative interpretation of the theme through the use of any of the approved mediums.



This theme for this year's 40th anniversary of the contest is

"Wow!", so if it makes your child say "Wow!" then it's a great subject for this year's contest. Take some time to find out what really excites your child, and encourage them to use their creative talents to express those feelings to the rest of us! The deadline for submitting entries to the school is October 17th -- for additional information about the contest, as well as entry forms, please go to www.respta.org and go to "Programs/Events", "Reflections". Good luck to everyone!



Wendy Etz

Spotlight on Mrs. Susie Holstein, New Assistant Principal



I love learning! This is the underlying reason that drove me to pursue a career in education. It has been my privilege to teach at Robious Elementary for twenty-six years. Through these years I have had the opportunity to teach the second, third, fourth, and fifth grades. I have chosen to stay at this school because of the Robious family of caring and high-quality teachers, the leadership of visionary administrators, the supportive community of parents, and of course, the inquisitive and wonderful children. It is such an honor now to be the assistant principal of Robious Elementary with its extraordinary community of learners and educators.

Children bring me joy and my three children, Brandy, Janey, and Zachary are the heart of my world. Our family has begun to expand as Janey and Brandy have married, so I am enjoying the addition of two new sons, Taylor and Jason. Zach is a senior in college and ready to launch his career in journalism. With two of my three children finished with college, it was my turn to pursue my goal. I graduated last summer with a Master's degree in educational administration and supervision. This had been a dream of mine for a very long time!

Reading, gardening, and practicing yoga are my relaxing pastimes. Meeting people and traveling to new and old places are two of my favorite things to do. Surround me with children, dogs, a little chocolate, and the beauty of nature and I am happy and contented. Teaching and learning are my passions, and I hope to continue to fill all my days with both!

Spotlight on Mrs. Allison Ferguson, New Fifth Grade Teacher



After spending four years at home with my two children, I am thrilled to be back at Robious! I began my career as a fifth grade teacher in 2001 after receiving my teaching license from the University of Richmond. When my daughter, Brooke, was born in 2004 I decided to stay at home with her. She is now 4 1/2 and my son, Connor, is 2 1/2. My husband Kevin and I have been married for 7 years, and we live in Midlothian along with our two black labs. When my family isn't keeping me busy, I enjoy scrapbooking, reading, and running. Being able to stay at home with my children was truly a blessing, and now that I'm back in the workforce there is nowhere I would rather be than Robious. The faculty, staff, students, and parents are all so special, and I look forward to many happy years ahead.

Green Team News

So, I have to admit that on back-to-school night, I was caught by another parent sticking my head into the trash dumpster beside the school... just to make sure that nobody was throwing recyclables away. I was most impressed by what I saw – evidence that everyone at Robious Elementary is doing a great job getting recyclables out of the trash. And that's a great thing. Did you know that recycling 1 ton of paper saves 17 trees from being cut, prevents 7,000 gallons of water and 463 gallons of oil from being used in the paper manufacturing process, and keeps 3 cubic yards of paper waste out of the landfill? Those are some amazing stats, and our

young eco-heroes at Robious Elementary are doing their part this year to save those trees, water, and oil from being unnecessarily used! As you read about last month, the PTA has purchased recycle bins for every classroom at RES and has contracted with TFC to haul our recycling to their Material Recovery Facility in Chester, VA. Beginning in October, the students will start weighing the recycling coming out of their classrooms each week... and will continue the weekly weigh-ins until the end of May. This data collection will provide many educational opportunities throughout the school year, and combined with the totals from Bettie Weaver ES and JB Wat-

kins ES, may even provide incentive for more schools in Chesterfield County to start their own recycling programs! If you have any ideas about other ways to green Robious Elementary, or if you have time to volunteer on the Green Team, please sign up through PTO manager (found at www.respta.org) or email me at brynadunn@comcast.net. If you and your kids want to see what happens to our recycling after it's picked up from the school, you can take a virtual tour of TFC's Material Recovery Facility at <http://www.tfcerecycling.com/tour.htm>.

Bryna Dunn

Whistlestart Sponsors Needed!



Get off your caboose and sponsor the best ever Whistlestart 5k and Fun Run this spring.

We are looking for sponsors to support this Robious PTA event in March. Think about the benefits you will reap from

sponsoring an event that gets kids and their parents involved in a healthy, fun experience. The Whistlestart 5k Race is also a great way to jump start your training for the races that follow in the spring.

The Fun Run is all about kids and

letting them experience the joys of running for the first time.

Contact Sharon Baum at baumhokies@comcast.net or by phone 794-6712 and get your company involved in THE spring event.

PTA Membership

Welcome back to another great year at Robious Elementary! We are fortunate to be part of such an outstanding school community.

Our PTA is very dynamic and active. We have many volunteers who have contributed to the success of the PTA. Additionally, we have consistently achieved over 100% membership.

Your support is needed and we encourage all parents to join the

Robious Elementary PTA. It is through your support that we can continue to help make Robious a special place for all of our children to grow and learn.

To join, please fill out the PTA membership and class party form that was sent home with your child on the first day of school or you can print the form at www.respta.org. Send in \$5 per adult or \$10 per family and make

checks payable to Robious Elementary PTA. If you have more than one child at Robious, you need to only join once. Please include each child's name and teacher on the form.

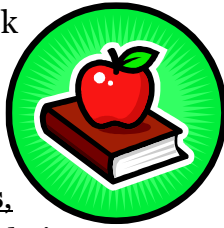
Thank you in advance for your support and please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Jenny Puccinelli

PTA Membership Chairman
jenpooch@comcast.net

Book & Breakfast for October

The third and fourth grade Book & Breakfast series is off to a great start! Over 60 third graders will be reading **Phineas L. MacGuire...Erupts**,



by Frances O’Roark Dowell. Their book discussion will take place on Tuesday, October 28th, at 8:30 a.m. In addition, more than 50 fourth graders will be reading **Loser**, by Jerry Spinelli. They will meet on Wednesday, October 29th, at 8:30 a.m. Looking forward to seeing everyone there!

Silent Auction

We are busy planning Robious Elementary School’s first adult function, a Live and Silent Auction with Heavy Hors D’ oeuvres and Beverages. The event will be held Saturday, February 7, 2009 at the Salisbury Country Club from 6:00PM until 11:00PM. Mark your calendar and reserve someone to stay with the kids. This will be an evening that you won’t want to miss! Be on the lookout for more information in upcoming Friday Folders.

We look forward to seeing you there!



Robin Hogge
Lorene Whitehouse
Auction Chairmen

Wellness & Fitness



ATTENTION all energetic, young runners, joggers, walkers, and sport-enthusiasts!! The return of our weekly **Robious Elementary Running Club** is right around the corner, starting the morn-

ing of **October 8th** from **8:30am-9:10am!** We hope to see everyone back from last year and many new faces for another fun and successful year of lap-counting, game-playing, prizes and individual pride. There is no cost, no obligation, and **NO EXCUSE** not to come out and start your Wednesdays off with a boost. Games will include capture-the-

flag, frisbee, tag, relay-races, soccer, flag football, and others. All family members are welcome. Emphasis will be on fitness, fun, and personal achievements for our Robious students.

Come join us for our first club meeting on October 8th at 8:30am by the Robious Athletic Complex track.

Sonja Wilkey

Parent Coffee

The first Parent Coffee will be held on Wednesday, 10/29 from 9:30-10:30 in the Teacher’s Lounge. The topic is **Body Image/Self Esteem**. Melissa Ackley a Parent Prevention Consultant, will discuss how peer pressure, family pressure, and societal pressure can alter how children think about themselves and their bodies.

Also, please mark your calendar for the December Coffee. It will be on 12/10, the topic will be, "Sibling Rivalry".



Hope to see you all there!!
Marigrace Wilkes
School Counselor

Study Buddies Needed!

You can be one! “Studies Buddies” is a volunteer tutoring program that gives 1:1 time with students who need a little extra help for only thirty minutes a week. If you are interested, please sign up on the PTA website, or contact Mary Copeland at 323-0231 or at MaryC169@aol.com. We will have a quick meeting on Wednesday, October 8 in the teacher’s lounge at 9:30 am to pass out information and to get things started. If you cannot make it, I will contact you and get the information to you.



Thank you!
Mary Copeland

Yearbook News

It's time to announce the winner of the 5th grade yearbook cover contest!

Honorable mentions go to **Mehdi Abed** (in Mrs. Pfeifer's class) and **Danya Felland** (in Mrs. Ferguson's class). 3rd place goes to **Courtney Rowe** (in Mrs. Pfeifer's class). 2nd place goes to **Kiana Golding** (in Mrs. Carwile's class). And finally...Congratulations to **Nick Burns** (in Mrs. Jones' class)! His drawing will be the cover of our 2008-2009 yearbook!

Thank you to all 38 students who submitted an entry. Thank you also to Mr. Woodward for helping with this project and for being our judge.

Remember that we need pictures, pictures, and more pictures!

While we cannot guarantee that all submissions can be used in the yearbook, our photographers cannot be everywhere. Please help us get as many photos as possible to create a terrific book that everyone will want to have.

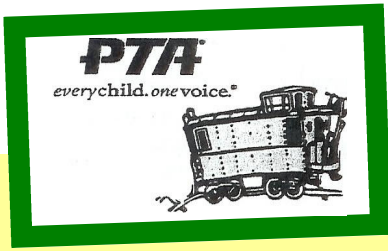
Here is how you can submit photos online:

- Go to: <https://images.jostens.com>
- If it does not automatically log you into the site, enter username:1205178 and password:robious
- Browse to select the photo(s) you wish to upload
- Enter information about the photo and provide contact information in case the staff needs additional information
- Click 'Save Details'

Want to see the runner-up covers? Take a peek at the last page of the newsletter!!

Remember that only photos of Robious Elementary students will be used - no relatives or friends, please. If you have any questions, need help submitting photos, or would love to volunteer - please contact Holly Strom at 897-4710, Dawn Delano at 794-9270, or robiousyearbook@hotmail.com.

Congratulations Nick Burns!!
The 2008—2009 Robious Yearbook Cover will remain a closely guarded secret until yearbooks are distributed!



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Midlothian, VA 23113

Phone: 804-378-2500
E-mail: info@respta.org

Visit us on the web
at www.respta.org

*We are crew, not
passengers!*

Staff Appreciation Comes Early

Drive past Robious Elementary about lunch time on a beautiful fall day and you might just see a few teachers sitting outside. Two picnic tables were presented to the Robious Elementary School teachers and staff as their Staff Appreciation Week gift. The gift was given early so the teachers and staff could enjoy this lovely weather.

Brooke Shepard

In Case of Inclement Weather

At the beginning of each school year, families should make emergency closing child-care arrangements so that students know what to do and where to go if schools close early.

If it becomes necessary to close schools because of bad weather or for any other reason, such as power failure, announcements will be carried on the school system's web site (chesterfield.k12.va.us), made on Comcast Channel 96, submitted to local radio and TV stations or communicated via ParentLink.

Chesterfield schools use ParentLink to communicate with parents via phone or e-mail. So that this communication tool can work effectively, parents need to make sure their school has their correct phone numbers (home, work and cell) and e-mail addresses. In addition to emergency closing information, ParentLink is used to notify parents about children's absences and to share information about upcoming school events.

The Chesterfield County public school system does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, age, religion, disabilities or national origin in employment or in its educational programs and activities.

More info:

http://www.chesterfield.k12.va.us/CCPS/About_CCPS/compliance_guidelines.htm

Scan your Kroger Card for Robious!

The next time you shop at Kroger, remember to ask the cashier to scan your Kroger Plus card and this bar code for Robious Elementary. Our school participates in the Kroger Plus Card for Education Program. The way it works is that every time you scan your Kroger Plus Card, Robious Elementary earns FREE educational award points. At the end of the school year, we can use our accumulated points to redeem items in the awards catalog.

Thank you for your support of the program last year. We were able to redeem our Kroger points for many items for our school including: electric pencil sharpeners for each classroom, books, art supplies, transparency paper, and much more.

This is a very easy way that your grocery shopping can directly benefit Robious. It only takes a minute, so remember to print this bar code and bring it with you the next time you shop at Kroger.

Celeste Alcorta



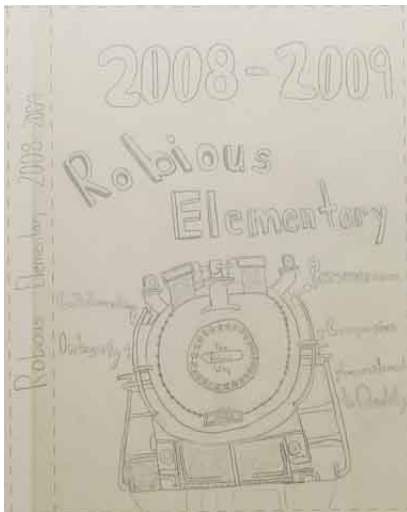
Yearbook Cover Runner-ups



Second Place
Kiana Golding



Third Place
Courtney Rowe



Honorable Mention
Mehdi Abed



Honorable Mention
Danya Felland