



The Lion's Roar

Vernon Independent School District Newsletter

October 2007

Vernon ISD Calls Bond Election

In May of 2006, the Vernon ISD Board of Trustees adopted a goal to complete a facility study to determine the needs of the district campuses. The goal was to develop a plan to guide the district in their decisions when considering renovations and repairs to district facilities. After touring the facilities and discussing the needs the board decided to explore renovating the elementary campuses and the possibility of reconfiguring the districts PK-5 students into two elementary schools. The campus that was identified as having the most areas of concern and was the driving force in the decision was Central Elementary. The board wanted to get more input into the issue before a decision was made, so in September they decided to form a committee of community members and to hire an architect to assist in the decision. Starting in October of 2006 this committee met and began to evaluate the issue. From the outset the committee had three options to explore:

1. Maintain status quo
2. Upgrade all current elementary facilities
3. Reconfigure educational arrangements – combine facilities

The committee reported back to the Board of Trustees at the March board meeting. They recommended that the board consider the consolidation of the elementary facilities. They did caution the board to keep in mind the quality of the student's education and expressed that 2nd and 3rd grade students should be grouped together. Throughout the remainder of the spring and summer the board continued to work with Rick Sims from the architectural firm of Bundy, Young, Sims

& Potter, Inc. to further explore the options at each campus. Options examined were: moving 2nd and 3rd grade to Shive Elementary, moving 2nd and 3rd grade to McCord Elementary, and renovating all three campuses. After reviewing these options and looking at cost estimates for each option, the Board of Trustees decided that the option of combining Central and McCord would be the best option. They also decided that doing some renovations at Shive Elementary were necessary to address the needs on that campus. During the summer the board also examined the HVAC system at Vernon Middle School and reviewed information from Mr. Sims on possible solutions to correct the problems that have existed since the building was built in 1998. The recommendation presented to the board was to replace the existing chiller / boiler system. As a result of this study and recommendations, on August 29, 2007, the Vernon ISD Board of Trustees voted to call a bond election for November 6, 2007. The district is seeking approval to issue \$15 million in bonded debt. The projected cost for the elementary projects is \$13.7 million. The remaining \$1.3 million is the projected costs for the HVAC work at the middle school.



Central Elementary News

Central Elementary Students of the Month

This is the second year that Central Elementary School has honored students of the week and students of the month. These students are selected by their classroom teachers based on good citizenship including doing well academically. The students of the week are announced every Friday morning and their pictures/names are displayed in the hall beside their classrooms. Students of the month are also announced on the last Friday of the month. The students of the month will have individual pictures taken with a Vernon Lion Cheerleader which will be displayed on the office bulletin board. Students of the month are also invited to have lunch with the principal. Congratulations, September students of the month!



2nd Grade Students of the Month



3rd Grade Students of the Month

Central Fall Fund Raiser

The kick-off for the All American Fund Raiser for Central Elementary will be October 8th. Student

will have a catalog containing a variety of items for sale. All items are \$9.00 or less. Please help out Central. This money will be used specifically for students for rewards, field trips, classroom equipment, etc. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Capturing Kids' Hearts at Central Elementary

All of the Central Elementary faculty and staff have been trained in the philosophy of Capturing Kids' Hearts. We have already seen a positive transformation in our campus. Children are greeted in the mornings with a handshake and a warm welcome from their teachers. Each classroom displays a social contract developed with student input. This social contract contains the expectations necessary for creating a wholesome environment. This contract promotes academic success as well as positive relationships in the school environment. Teachers also end the day with a "launch". Some of the launches being used by Central teachers are a positive saying or chant, a poem, a yell, a Mahalo (a Hawaiian tradition of giving a friend a lei and thanking them for something nice they have done), or a choice of a high five or a hug. We at Central are Capturing Kids' Hearts—what an awesome accomplishment!

Central Elementary Focuses on Character Development

By Nancy Lucas

On October 4th and 5th the Second Grade teachers at Central Elementary school taught their students about Character Development. The students rotated from their classroom to every second grade classroom in the school. Each teacher had developed a short lesson about each character trait. The character traits that were discussed were citizenship, compassion, fairness, honesty, integrity, responsibility, self-discipline and trustworthiness. Character development is a part of the district wide Capturing Kids Hearts philosophy developed this year. Students enjoyed being able to rotate to other teacher's classrooms. Central students now know how to make good character choices.

Central Elementary Library Spotlight

By Celia Gentry

Central Elementary Library is excited to have a reading incentive program called the Book of the

Month Club. Each month new topics are announced such as back to school, making new friends or baby animals. After a student reads a book on the topic he/she may enter their name into the drawing which is held at the end of each month. This year, thanks to our PTO locating many generous sponsors, we will be able to give away twelve free paperback books each month. Six second and six third graders whose names are drawn will receive a free book to take home. The students will write thank you cards to that month's business sponsor thanking them for their generosity.

McCord Elementary News

Kindergarten News

McCord Kindergarten students started school with a lot of enthusiasm! After getting acquainted with each other and learning our way around our new school, we settled into our daily routine. Our students have started the Saxon Math and Phonics programs in their classrooms along with learning nursery rhymes and fairy tales. We are especially excited about utilizing the Waterford Computer Lab and Outdoor Learning Lab.

First Grade News

The first graders at McCord Elementary are growing smarter with every day. While on the path to growing smarter, they have been learning about plants and how they grow. They have learned all about the parts of the plants and the functions of each part. Many exciting and informative experiments have been conducted in order to better understand exactly how plants grow. Our first graders have also been taking the TPRI (Texas Primary Reading Inventory) test so that they can show the state of Texas how brilliant our McCord first graders truly are. Our minds are soaking in more and more with each passing day and we are well on our way to excellence.

Shive Elementary News

Health News

According to the Department of State Health Services, all children who have an underlying, long term illness should get a flu shot. The flu is more severe in younger children and children of any age who have an underlying, long term illness such as asthma, diabetes, kidney

diseases, blood disorders, or a weakened immune system.



Vernon Middle School News

Vernon Middle School Library

By M. Castleberry, Librarian

We have many new books from *Junior Library Guild* to kick off the new school year! One of the books is entitled *Beowulf: A Hero's Tale Retold* by James Rumford. This a great read-aloud book for teachers and parents, and is written for all ages, strong-hearted and up. *Beowulf: A Hero's Tale Retold*, is based on the tale of Beowulf using only Anglo-Saxon words still present in our language. "The iron-strong words recall the boldness of the original poem and echo the sounds of the ancient language for today's readers."

Hot items in our Vernon Middle School Library include J.K. Rowling's latest book, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*." We have three copies of the book, and a waiting list to check them out. One may notice a revival of interest in reading Harry's earlier books, and several students are beginning to read the entire series (all may be checked out in paperback from our library) that starts with *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*.

STUDENT LIBRARY ASSISTANT HIGHLIGHT features Ky Wrinkle. Ky is an eighth grader who can help students with information needs that include recommending books to read, locating items and materials, or circulating books in and out of the library. Ky has quite a bit of experience in the library, since he assisted his mother, Tammie Wrinkle, who previously worked at the Shive Elementary Library. Ky also plays on the eighth grade VMS football team, enjoys reading, and 4-wheeler racing.

Middle School Yearbook

By Susan Kenner, VMS Yearbook/
Journalism sponsor

Commercials to pre-sell the VMS yearbook, The Growl, will air over Channel One at middle school in October. Students have worked to create, film, edit, and produce their commercials. The middle school yearbook may be pre-ordered at the cost of \$15.00. The school DVD may be pre-ordered for \$10.00. Students pre-ordering their yearbook by December 20th will have their name put in a drawing for a digital camera giveaway.

Commercials created by the Journalism classes to sell the school newspaper, **The Squeak**, will air over Channel One the last week of each six weeks. The paper will be sold at the end of every six weeks during all three lunch periods at a cost of 50¢.

Students in the Yearbook and Journalism classes are learning about digital photography and video editing. They are developing digital portfolios of all of their work. Samples of the students' work will be displayed at middle school. The students are also writing their autobiography and will publish their story using Microsoft Publisher.

Vernon High School News

Vernon High School Principal News

By Clay Tarpley

We have gotten off to a great start at Vernon High School. While the issues of the new dress code and new parking policy have gotten most of the press, there are several other things we are doing that seem to be flying under the radar. As the new principal of Vernon High School I have looked at ways that we can increase campus pride and improve student achievement. I have started a Principal's Action Committee, or PAC, to allow students to bring their ideas on how to enhance the operations of VHS. The PAC meets every Thursday morning at 7:30 in the VHS library. Every student is encouraged to attend. At the meetings, students discuss campus issues, develop solutions and present these ideas to me. Several students have taken advantage of this forum and some great ideas have already been implemented. If your son or daughter has come home and told you that there

is no math book for class - this is true. VHS is using a new math curriculum that does not involve the traditional textbook. Instead, each student builds their own as they progress through the units in a 3-ring binder. This curriculum has seen tremendous success in hundreds of districts across the state. Finally, I would like to encourage you to be involved in the VHS PTO. There will be a membership drive for our new Parent / Teacher Organization beginning October 16. Look for more information from your VHS student. We are approaching 70 members already. So, don't be left behind.

Vernon High School Library

By Donna Prince, VHS Librarian

Research is going on now in the Vernon High School Library. Remember, students, that you can access the school's research databases from home. The usernames and passwords are available in the library.

The VHS Library is open for research and homework help on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

We have a brand new digital head-end unit for recording and playing the Channel One News broadcast every day at the end of 2nd period.

Some new books which have been added to the VHS Library collection since the start of school are:

The Book Thief by genius writer Markus Zusak – this story is about a little German girl who treasures books; it is narrated by Death.

Ludie's Life by Cynthia Rylant is a narrative in poetry form following poor girl Ludie's life from childhood through old age.

Rucker Park Setup by Paul Valponi is about a basketball player whose best friend is murdered on the court and his feelings about telling parents and police what he knows about the murder.

Campus Crime Stoppers

The Vernon High School Campus Crime Stoppers is now starting its 10th year at VHS. As the members state, "Fighting Crime for 10 years from the inside". If you have information to report on a crime, the number to call is (940)552-5011 or tips may be given online at <http://www.crimestoppersweb.com/vernon/index.aspx>.

VHS PALS

VHS PALS will be sponsoring a blood drive, Oct. 16th. This will be sponsored with the Texas Blood Institute. Giving blood is an important element of life. Giving the gift of life is a precious gift. PALS hope to instill the need for blood and how simple it is to share.

PALS will then be sponsoring the annual Red Ribbon Week Oct. 29- Nov. 2. They will sponsor a "red wagon and tricycle parade" at high school. Each day students will be asked to bring awareness to saying "no" against drugs by dressing up.

Monday: Mess up drugs - come inside out and all messed up.

Tuesday: "Grease out" drugs - dress 50's

Wednesday: Spook out drugs - dress in Halloween costumes

Thursday: Sadie Hawkins day - "whoop out drugs" - dress like hillbillies

Friday: : Celebrate Lions at the Mardi Gras - where maroon & white with Mardi Gras additions

A Sucker a Day Keeps the Bulldogs Away!

By Sarah Lehman

Life Skill students helped hand out suckers on September 25 to the students at Vernon High School. The theme 'A Sucker a Day Keeps the Bulldogs Away' coincided with the week of Homecoming. These students enjoyed the opportunity to interact with their peers, and I'll even say that the suckers were enjoyed!

UIL to Start Steroid Testing Program

The University Scholastic League (UIL) is finalizing the details for a steroid testing policy for Texas High School Athletes. This program is a result of Senate Bill 8 passed by the 80th Legislature. The UIL is expecting to have the final plan for testing in place by the end of October. Once implemented the program will be the largest steroid testing program in the world with approximately 25,000 students being tested over the next two years. Approximately 400 schools out of the 1,246 public high schools will be chosen to participate for this school year. The UIL received bids from fourteen companies to implement the program and are evaluating three to four of the bids. The budget for this program set aside by Legislative planners is \$6 million.

New Graduation Requirements

The freshmen class of 2007-2008 is the first class that is required to complete the curriculum requirements for the Recommended or Distinguished Graduation Plans. These plans require 4 credits of math and science.

In math all students must have Algebra I, Algebra II and Geometry. Students may choose the 4th year of math can be any of the following: Mathematical Models (must be completed prior to Algebra II); Pre-calculus; Calculus; or Concurrent Enrollment Courses.

In science all students must have one credit of Biology; one credit of Chemistry and one credit of Physics or Principles of Technology I. The fourth credit of science can be any of the following: Astronomy; Environmental Systems; Integrated Physics and Chemistry "IPC" (must be taken prior to the senior year, this course will phase out after the 2011-2012 school year); Anatomy and Physiology, AP Biology; Earth and Space Science; AP Chemistry; AP Physics; or Concurrent Enrollment Courses.

To prepare for this change, Vernon High School enrolled all freshmen students in Biology this year. In the past the freshmen were enrolled in IPC. Mr. Tarpley, Mrs. Leasure and a team of VHS teachers and counselors will be working together to plan for the implementation of new courses to give our students a variety of options in fulfilling this requirement. They will be attending a 4X4 Summit on October 21-22 to begin this process.



NTSH-AFP Campus News



“Freedom’s not free!” The words still ring out in truth and power—even from our young people confined in the NTSH-AFP Campus. Through poetry, music, historical insights, and inspirational speeches, the theme of Freedom Week cascaded through the voices of our students. The highlight of our first six weeks, undergirded by Ms. Cheryl Pittman and Ms. Amanda Harris, shot forward with “Ragged Old Flag” by Johnny Cash as he sketches the history of our country through the eyes of an old man. Students could see why our flag is “ragged.” Powder-burned the night Francis Scott Key penned “Oh, Say Can You See....” A bad rip in New Orleans. Almost falling at the Alamo beside the Texas flag. Cut with a sword at Shiloh Hill. A big hole on Flanders Field in WWI. Blood red in WWII. Limp and low in Korea and Vietnam. Students heard no matter how much our flag has been burned, dishonored, denied, and refused—she still stands.

It was all too obvious to those looking on that the indefinable spirit of pride in our country was not only awakened but illuminated through the eyes and words expressed by the students themselves. But then who could resist leaning into Red Skelton’s explanation of “The Pledge of Allegiance”?

Jerry Fulford, AFP Director, turned a corner for us to *individual* freedom for living daily life in America. Fulford tells how Lani Helm, a 14-year-old, gives this advice: “Don’t underestimate your life, because with all your freedom and rights, you can make something out of it, and that is the best freedom of all.”

Freedom was brought home as students sang “Letter from Home” along with John Michael Montgomery for some of the students have brothers in Iraq.

As students performed “Hero” by artist Mariah Carey, they were challenged to hold onto their dreams, lay their fears aside, and realize that “a hero lies in *you*.”

AFP Vice Principal Joe Hennessee spoke of his personal knowledge of heroes who have died for

our country. He shared with students how he, too, fought for Old Glory and how special that flag is to him.

As if they were looking into a prism, AFP students could savor the shades of freedom resounding throughout our country’s colorful history. They had an opportunity to see that Freedom is a gift to be cherished. Freedom is not free.

Vernon High School PTO Haunted House

The VHS PTO will be sponsoring a haunted house to help raise funds for a school marquee. The haunted house will be located on Wilbarger Street in the old Chip Shot Building. It will be open from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on October 28th, 29th and 30th. Please support this fund-raising effort to benefit our students.

***From the desk of Marilyn Leasure,
Assistant Superintendent for
Curriculum and Instruction:***

Homework Help Sessions

Homework Help Sessions are held for students grades K-12 at the Vernon High School Library on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday nights from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Students will need to bring books and materials to work on homework assignments and certified teachers are available to help.

Family PLUS

Vernon ISD is co-sponsoring parent meetings with the Boys and Girls Club of Vernon, Texas, Cooperative Extension, and Catholic Family Services for parents of students of all ages. The meetings are held monthly with activities planned for the children and a light meal is served at the end of the meeting for everyone attending. The next meeting is Monday, October 22nd, from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m., and is entitled the “ABC’s of Parenting”. David Gordon of Wichita Falls will be the presenter. We extend an invitation to all parents to participate in the events. Meetings are held at the Boys and Girls Club on Yamparika Street.