



"A Tradition of Excellence"

Upper Sandusky Exempted Village Schools

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OUR STUDENTS, OUR SCHOOLS, OUR FUTURE! ELECTION DAY MARCH 2, 2004

February 2004

Upper Sandusky is a great community. The Upper Sandusky Exempted Village Schools is an important contributor to the quality of life in the community. The residents of the school district have always strongly supported the students and activities of the school.

Our school district is experiencing severe losses in funding due to unfunded mandates, state cutbacks, declining resident enrollment and rising property valuation. Simply put, funds are depleted.

To maintain the current level of educational programming in our school system, we need to eliminate the budget deficit now facing our district. This is why the district has placed a 5-year, 1% school income tax levy on the March 2nd ballot. This is a ½% increase from the current ½% the district now collects. Passage of the levy will help to offset the immediate crisis, help ensure a stable financial future and provide a fair solution for all district residents.

An income tax is not new to Upper Sandusky. As stated before, the school district currently collects a ½% income tax, thus making the total income tax of 1% an increase of ½%. A large number of other Ohio school districts currently utilize an income tax of 1% or greater. It is a fair, equitable means to fund schools and is also beneficial to farmers who bear a large share of the property tax burden. Unlike property taxes, a tax on income is substantially less if farm profits fall. School income tax provides a \$50.00 senior citizen credit as well as a \$1,250.00 personal exemption for all taxpayers and dependents. Income that is NOT taxed includes social security benefits, disability and survivor's benefits, railroad retirement, welfare, child support, property received as a gift or inheritance and worker's compensation. School income tax is collected in the same manner as state income tax, through employer withholdings, individual estimated quarterly payments and annual returns.

The district has reached a critical point. **This issue must pass for the Upper Sandusky School District to remain solvent.** We are facing a deficit of \$271,000.00 in 2005, which will continue to rise if we are forced to borrow on an annual basis. Projections indicate that we will be facing a deficit of \$2,200,000.00 by 2006. This is NOT due to new or additional expenses, but simply the cost of compounded borrowing year after year and static revenue.

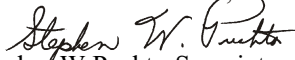
None of us like additional taxes, but until the state funding system is changed, local taxpayers in Ohio must shoulder the responsibility of providing a quality education for our children.

Education is a sound investment for all of us. Property values rise in areas with good school systems. Upper Sandusky is no exception! As a highly respected school system, housing in this district is at a premium. Families want to reside in the Upper Sandusky community and attend school here. Education fosters well-rounded citizens capable of supporting themselves, making solid decisions and participating in a democratic society. Although you may not currently have children in the school district, please remember that someone paid for your education.

Our school district belongs to all of us in the community, thus we must all share in the cost of educating children. These are **Our Students, Our Schools, Our Future!**

As always, please feel free to share your thoughts with me by calling (419) 294-2306, writing me at 390 W. Walker Street, or sending an e-mail to steve_p@treca.org.

In service to our children,


Stephen W. Puchta, Superintendent of Schools

SPECIAL EVENTS

February

- 21 High School Solo and Ensemble Contest
- 24 Union Elementary Spring Pictures

March

- 1-5 9th Grade Proficiency Test
- 4 Athletic Boosters Meeting
- 7 High School Winter Concert - 2:30 p.m.
- 8-19 Kindergarten Registration (See Article Inside)
- 8-12 3rd Grade Proficiency Test
- 8-17 4th and 6th Grade Proficiency Test
- 12-13 Band and Choir Contests
- 13 East Recycling
- 15-19 Ohio Graduation Test

- 15 Middle School Winter Concert - 7:00 p.m.
- 19 High School Student Council Blood Mobile
- 19 End of 3rd Nine Weeks
- 22 Academic Boosters Mtg. - 6:30 p.m. (USHS)
- 22 South Book Fair Begins
- 25 Marseilles Spring Pictures
- 26-28 High School Musical
- 27 Marseilles Recycling

April

- 1 Athletic Boosters Meeting
- 3 ACT (USHS)
- 9-13 **NO SCHOOL - Spring Break**
- 17 Marseilles Elementary - Chicken BBQ

Mission Statement: The mission of the Upper Sandusky Schools is to provide a safe, child-centered and developmentally appropriate environment where learning is a positive, exciting, and dynamic lifelong process.

East, Marseilles, South & Union Elementary News

Elementary Physical Education

Elementary physical education has been filled with fun and excitement. Kindergarten and first grade have been working on large motor skills such as skipping, galloping, hopping, and balancing. They have also been participating in activities allowing them to use their creativity while getting plenty of exercise.

In the fall, the upper elementary students participated in life-long activities such as frisbee, bocce, jump rope, and volleyball. This spring they will participate in the Presidential Physical Fitness Testing. This test consists of running a mile, sit-ups, pull-ups, and testing for quickness and flexibility. We also hope to learn some new dances.

Physical fitness is very important to the youth in our society. It is a known fact that a big part of the children in the United States are overweight. We as parents need to try and help our children by encouraging nutritious snacks and balanced meals. We also need to kick them off the couch and out the door to get some fresh air and exercise. Kids learn by example. Try taking a bike ride or a walk as a family. Odds are, you will all have fun! - Pam Karg

Forecasting a Wintry Mix With Good Taste

Mrs. Naugle's gang at East School had a flurry of a time forecasting some "snowy" language arts projects! Our assignments were to make the best of the cold winter weather with projects having to do with snow. Using our activity time, we brainstormed our ideas and began our tasks.



Blizzard of Good Stampers

Project one was stamping a red sweatshirt to make it winter worthy. We had to choose what stamps we were each going to use, what colors, and then we had to decide the perfect placement for each frozen one!

Each and every shirt was the perfect storm!

Project two was building a snowman. It was quite a delicious event! We held a group discussion and forecasted our plans very carefully. We checked and rechecked and made sure it was in the correct order. We then busied ourselves with the task of constructing our snowy pals. The incredible part was they were edible! Everything we used could be eaten! When all was said and done (and eaten!), it was quite a delicious wintry mix.

Project three was to put our **formula writing** to the test. We again brainstormed, salted, and plowed . . . clearing our roads to finished paragraphs. We came up with a clipper of topic sentences, summary statements, and ideas for our winter writing "**wheels.**" Now came the task of our real finished projects. Could we plow through the icy challenge?? YES, just as we forecasted! We turned our wheels into cool stormy **summary** paragraphs and snowy **retelling** squalls. It was a blustery job, but we finished in a flurry with a wintry mix with good taste! - S. Naugle



Incredible edible snowman with good taste

Movie Makers:

EAST First Grade Biographies

East First Graders are busy working on producing their own movie. There are three parts to creating it. First, each student writes about their family, school interest and favorite activity. Next, they edit their written work. A script for the introduction and closing of their biographies is also written.

Many practice sessions are held to demonstrate good speaking skills before the videotaping can begin. Each student stands in front of a school mural as they are taped.



Third grader Jocelyn Schwilk takes a break from videotaping first grader Alex Logsdon during the filming of "East First Grade Biographies."

Using the i-Mac computer, we can edit our video incorporating digital photos taken throughout the year. Music is also added. The video will be sent home with students to share with their family.

A big thanks to former East fifth graders: Erin Rife, Kaylina Schneider and Kara Schilling for drawing and painting our mural. Also a big thanks to East third grade for their assistance in videotaping.

Learning About Health

The third graders at Marseilles and South Elementary Schools have been learning about health in a new way. This year, Darlene Jury from the Health Department came once a week to Mr. Lortz's and Mrs. Constien's classes for about 45 minutes. She prepared lessons that would benefit the children on the topics of self-esteem, decision-making, smoking, advertising, dealing with stress, communication skills, social skills, and assertiveness. Mrs. Jury taught her lessons from October until December. The students learned more about the hazards of smoking and the many effects that smoking has on the body and the people around you.

The third graders also learned about the many ways to advertise. They were asked to see if different advertisements were promoting good health choices or bad. In one activity the students had to take a smoking ad and make it so it advertised the many negative effects of smoking.

Our students also learned about peer pressure and how to say no in many situations. Another important lesson that the students learned was "being cool or fitting in" does not mean that you have to do what others are doing. The students enjoyed Darlene coming in each week and learned how to make many good choices because of their new found knowledge.

ACES Update from Union School

The ACES program continues to motivate students at Union Elementary to be **A**wesome **C**hildren, **E**xceptional **S**tudents. The focus character trait for this month was *caring*. Mrs. Newell and her second graders created an iMovie for the whole student body. We gathered at our assembly to learn what caring means to the second graders, teachers, and Mr. Puchta. They were all movie stars for a day! Michelle Webster dressed up as ACE for the assembly. She led us in our chant, "Give me an A- A- Awesome! Give me a C- C- Children! Give me an E- E- Exceptional! Give me an S- S- Students! What are we? ACES! Louder! ACES! The second breakfast to honor five ACES from each classroom was January 29th.

South Elementary School



The 4th and 5th grades attended an Energy Fair on the campus of Otterbein College. This fair was provided by The Ohio Energy Project free of charge. Throughout the day student facilitators from various middle and high schools ran hands-on activities.

Our students learned about different types of energy, how energy is created, as well as the pros and cons of its uses. The fair stressed the diminishing natural resources and the importance of conservation and finding alternative energy sources. The morning began with the students learning about energy sources through the use of circuit boards. In the next station, the students harnessed mechanical energy into electrical energy by pedaling a bicycle to power a variety of electrical appliances.

After a lunch break, they used K-nex to learn about types of energy. Finally, as the highlight of the day, Wattson, a life-sized robot, presented information on how children can contribute to the conservation of energy for their future. He also allowed time for the many questions our students had for not only energy, but also for how he was created and had life-like motions and mannerisms. The day made a lasting impression on our students as they gained a wealth of knowledge, had fun with the activities, and for many, it was their first visit to a college campus. They could see that a life-long education extends beyond the classroom

Learning Typing Techniques!

Marseilles fifth graders have been busy typing! The fifth grade students are learning proper typing techniques using the keyboards. This has been a wonderful, but sometimes frustrating experience. Remembering not to peck at the keys with one finger was hard at first, but now all students are accelerating through the program. Some comments from the students about the keyboard program:



Learning a life-long skill!!

Xavier: It helps me learn how to type.

Sarah: I think it is fun.

Katlyn, Kirk, Amber, and Zachery: We think it is challenging.

Rachel: Learning how to use the shift key was hard.

Kelsie: It is fun learning how to type.

Miranda: It will help me type faster.

Nestor: Passing all lessons in level one was awesome.

Ryan: It was hard to learn the shift key.

Harley: I learned new things about keyboards like where home row is.

Lucas: The keyboard is hard but fun to use.

Ravi: It is helping me type faster.

Brandon: I like the keyboards because now I can type without looking.

JD: I learned where my hands are supposed to be when I type.

Derek: I like that there are so many different lessons.

Job Shadowing at Marseilles

During exam week, Marseilles was visited by high school students Ashley Vent, Wendy Vent, Kelly Dishon, Rachel Leonard, and Jennifer Maltsbarger. These students job-shadowed different staff members to gain a better understanding of what it takes to be a teacher and principal. The elementary students enjoyed having these special visitors help with science and writing activities, math facts, reading, word processing, and researching on the internet. The high school students found this positive experience to be fun and challenging, a little hectic, and that it's not so easy being a principal. They were also shown a variety of teaching methods and learned that a lot of preparation goes into teaching.



Kindergarten at Union

The Kindergarten classes at Union have been very busy this winter. We have been learning a letter each week and we are now excellent readers. Parents of kindergarten students have been diligent in reading with their child every night. We thank you for all of your hard work at home! We have been reading all kinds of books in kindergarten - we are even creating our own poetry notebooks of nursery rhymes and poems learned in school. We have celebrated the 100th day of school as well as Ground Hog Day, Valentine's Day, and President's Day. In April, we are looking forward to traveling to the Ritz Theater for a special production of "The Little Engine That Could." We are hoping for warm spring weather to quickly return.

Union School's Fantasy of Lights Display

Union School was proud to create an addition to Upper's Winter Fantasy of Lights this year. It was entitled "Snow Days, Let the Fun Begin!" Many elementary parents and students helped raise money to furnish supplies for the project by buying suckers as a fundraiser. The whole faculty chipped in by contributing Casual Friday money to the fund. A small group of elementary teachers and their spouses, along with two middle school students, helped paint and set-up the display. It was fun to participate and help the community raise money for the EMS. We hope to come up with other fundraiser projects and add to our display in the future.



Mrs. Hinesman's Third Grade

The third graders in my class are very excited to become contestants in Reading Rainbow's Young Writers and Illustrators Contest. They are working very hard as authors and illustrators of their very own stories. I have very creative students in my class who will create terrific stories and illustrations. Each child who participates will be receiving a certificate of achievement signed by LaVar Burton. Each third grader will be using a brand new Franklin Speaking Homework Wiz (courtesy of a mini-grant and a technology grant that I was awarded from the district - THANKS!) that will help him/her to be an "Excellent Editor" all on his/her own. They love using these devices to check spelling, hear an unknown word, check on correct homophone usage, and look up definitions. Be sure to watch in the next newsletter, maybe I'll have a winner to announce. You just never know!

Another exciting happening in the third grade is singing telegrams. Mrs. Barrett, Mrs. Mangus, and I have decided to help our students sell Valentine singing telegrams. The kids will go from room to room in the elementary during the week of Valentine's Day to deliver the singing telegrams. We'll be using the money we earn to help pay for supplies to add to the Union Elementary Fantasy of Lights display.

My class will also be going to Fairhaven to sing our Valentine songs to the residents. It's always a fun and rewarding experience.

Wintertime Activities

"Sno" fooling, Marseilles students have raced through January by celebrating many silly and special days. From practicing writing their names in their best handwriting for National Handwriting Day to learning a new song on a kazoo, both students and staff have been very busy.

In early January, preschoolers learned that some baby lambs like to be born during the coldest weather. Mr. Roszman visited their classroom with one of his babies.

The kindergarteners and their teacher have been preparing for a pet show. The students have designed their own pet from materials found at home. Pets can return home when their owner recites their own address and telephone number. What a fun way to learn!

After studying a calendar picture, first graders have been writing and publishing their own paragraphs on the computer. They are proud of the skills they have acquired from using their new phonics program.

If you are a second grader, you are now working very hard to learn cursive writing. The switch from manuscript to cursive is an exciting challenge.

As part of their year long study of Wyandot County, third graders are continuing to learn more about their community as well as about its government. Council woman, Mrs. Leeth, who has much knowledge about the history of the village of Marseilles, has been a visitor to the class. Visits by a township trustee and a county commissioner are also scheduled.

Fourth graders have just completed a written assignment and oral demonstrations on how-to projects. From making favorite snack foods to building a playdough snowman and creating an interesting picture frame, students will enjoy seeing themselves on video. Seeing themselves in action will be helpful for future demonstrations.

Developing keyboarding skills for use with the computer is on the agenda of fifth graders for a number of weeks. Some students find themselves moving rapidly through the program lessons while others are finding this transition to correct fingering more of a challenge.

Oh, where did January go? Marseilles students continue with the learning process during what is sometimes considered the dreary winter months. - Bonnie Castanien, 4th grade teacher

Fast ForWord

Fast ForWord training has begun for 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade students at Union School. Our continuation grant from Ohio Reads allowed us to upgrade our programs to the new Gateway edition. *Fast ForWord* programs help teachers provide intense, prescriptive, computer-based instruction for reading skill acquisition. Teachers received in-service from a Scientific Learning Corporation trainer in December. Sessions for students began in January.

Students using the language program spend 75 minutes each day playing computer games to improve their phonological awareness, listening accuracy, working memory and language structures. Student use Language to Reading spend 50 minutes daily working to improve organization and focus, word analysis, listening comprehension, and English language conventions. Students using Reading 3 work to build essential reading skills required to pass proficiency tests.

Neuroscience research confirms the importance of frequency and intensity of activity to build and strengthen new skills. *Fast ForWord* products help Union School teachers use technology to provide an optimum learning environment for our students.

If you would like to volunteer to help us, please contact Jim Wheeler or Joyce King.

Kindergarten Registration!

March 8-19, 2004

**Call Barb Roberts at
(419) 294-2304
to Schedule Your
Appointment**



Preschoolers petting a lamb!

Middle School Happenings

Middle School Student Council

Middle School Student Council has had a busy year. During the holiday season, they sponsored a Hat and Mitten Tree that was located outside the office. Anyone who donated hats or mittens were able to take a candy cane off the tree. Hats and mittens were then given to Union Elementary for students who needed them.

Something new this year was the NOL Student Council Exchange. Upper Sandusky traveled to Shelby Middle School to spend the morning with their student council members. They were given a tour of their school and learned about the different things they are involved in. Shelby then traveled to Union for a morning to do the same. Other activities student council members have participated in include: volunteering their time at two middle school wrestling matches, sponsored a fall dance, volunteered their time at Parent/Teacher Conferences, sponsored Christmas Door Decorating Contest, Halloween Costume Contest, Spirit Week and Pep Rally, and will be selling Valentine Candy Grams. Middle School Student Council members are 8th graders - Clare Aubry, Ben Baaske, Danielle Bachtell, Lacy Daughenbaugh, Chelsea Jury, Hannah Reid, and John Searfoss. 7th graders - David Biller, Vincent D'Ettorre, Kelsey Gibson, Zach Scofield, and Abby Warfel. 6th graders - Jevon Cheney, Courtney Collins, Emily England, and Jakob Searfoss.

American History

Eighth graders have been researching their family trees for a special project in American history. The family tree project assignment was given before Thanksgiving and was then due January 14th. Special guest Jean Moon spoke to classes in December about genealogy. Students had nearly two months and two major holidays to interview their relatives. Their final presentations were very impressive! A minimum requirement was to fill out an ancestor chart through their great-grandparents. Extra credit was given for family artifacts, stories handed down, and any other audio-visuals. It's great to see 8th graders getting excited about their roots. And after all, their family's history is American history!

-Carol Minehart

Middle School Incentive Trip

Wow! It's the end of the 2nd nine weeks and first semester already. On January 27th, we had an awards assembly and our incentive trip to Sportman Lane's in Findlay, Ohio.

The next incentive trip is tentatively planned for Friday, April 2. We will be heading to Marion or Findlay to enjoy an afternoon of roller/in-line skating and food. The criteria for attending the next incentive are:

- No F's on grade card
- No F homework average
- No major discipline problem
- Completed 12 hours of community service

Remember, to be invited to the community service dance in May, students must complete 15 hours of community service by May 1st. So, if you're not finished, get busy!

Proficiency tests are rapidly approaching. Each classroom is busy preparing for the tests by covering necessary concepts. On March 4th and 5th, the sixth graders and teachers will head off campus to practice for the test. Then on March 8th, proficiency tests begin. More information will be sent home as the tests get closer.

7th Grade Criteria for Attending the THIRD Nine Weeks Reward Activity . . . Fun Day!

During the 3rd nine weeks:

- Student may not be suspended.
- Student may not have more than 2 tardies.
- Student may not be assigned ISS.
- Student may not be assigned to Alternative School.
- Student may have NO discipline cards or gum cards.
- Student may have NO 7th Grade Team discipline conferences.
- Student must have 12 or more hours of community service completed by March 12, 2004.

7th Grade Proficiency Tests will be given the week of March 1-5, 2004.

Work and Family Life Class

The 8th grade Work and Family Life class recently tied up their semester with a two-day long coordinated effort which resulted in the School Board Appreciation Dinner. The first day of their work involved rearranging and decorating the classroom, washing down counters and window sills, covering tables and putting together bulletin boards. On the day of the dinner, each class prepared a portion of the meal. First period made cornbread and a cauliflower-broccoli salad. Second period made a gingerbread cookie dough, which fifth period then shaped into picture cookies. Seventh period made two kinds of sweet potato casseroles and eighth period made the mulled cider, set-up the arrangement for the buffet tables and set the dining tables. They did a great job of showing how a team effort combined with cooking skills and problem solving skills can result in a beautifully executed project.

The new second semester group is currently studying the concept of teamwork and what makes a good team member. From here they will, like the first semester group, integrate teamwork into all other topics - problem solving and related topics, food labs and of course the cookie company. Some have already implemented these skills while organizing and running the concessions for the middle school girls' basketball games. Their first in-school cookie sales, however, should begin by the second week of February.

Community Service

As USMS once again approaches the second semester, we are diligently tracking all students' community service projects. We are happy to report that the number of students participating has risen in recent years, due in part to the changes we made in the program and various incentives attached to the completion of hours. This year, we are holding fast to our rule that students must get prior approval before receiving credit for the hours. We have also granted exam exemptions for students who complete the hours by semester break. Grade levels have also implemented community service hours on their incentive programs. Sixth grade students went bowling on January 26 as a reward for both grades and service. Eighth grade students spent a day at the YMCA for the same reasons.

Our 8th grade students have approximately 55% of their hours complete, with another large percentage with at least half complete. The numbers are similar in 6th and 7th grade. All students who complete the hours are invited to a luau on May 21st in the Union Gymnasium.

If you have any questions in regard to community service, please contact the Union office at (419) 294-5721.

Encore Team Decorates U.S.M.S. Courtyard

The Encore Team has decorated the inner courtyard of the Upper Sandusky Middle School for the past two years. The team



chose the month of December to decorate the courtyard to get everyone into the holiday spirit. The team consisted of the Art Dept. (Mrs. Cameron and Mr. Fett), Music Department, (Mrs. Coakley, Mr. Headings, Mrs. Spoons and Mrs. Stull), and the Phys. Ed. and Special Ed. Departments (Mrs.

Bair, Mr. Miller and Mrs. Eley).

The theme this year was "Christmas Toys." Snowflakes and ornaments were hung in the trees. Various Christmas characters were placed in the courtyard (singers, toy soldiers, snowmen, deer, etc.). Presents were wrapped and placed in several areas of the courtyard and around an inflatable polar bear. Four inflatable balloon characters were used to decorate (polar bear, snowman, Santa and a Christmas tree). The Art Department painted the window facing the courtyard from the first and second floor hallways. Also, a four-car train, made out of styrofoam insulation measuring twenty-five feet long, decorated the west end of the courtyard. Christmas lights decorated the bushes.

During the elementary Christmas program and the middle school Christmas concert, the lights were turned on so people at the concert could stop down and see the display at night. A lot of hard work went into the project in hopes that everyone would get into the Christmas spirit. There were a lot of nice comments made about the courtyard. The students and staff really enjoyed the display. If you did not see it this year, maybe you can stop in and see it next year. Here are a few photos of the display taken by Mr. Zeigler.

-Mr. Fett



MathCounts

MathCounts is a national competition we have been involved with for about 15 years. The students take a school test in January to qualify for the team or be an alternate. The four team members and four alternates then compete in Findlay at the Blanchard Valley Chapter competition sponsored by the Hancock County Society of Engineers. The top team and top four individuals advance to the state competition held in Columbus in March.

At USMS we have been preparing for the school test and competition during home base. Seventh and eighth grade students volunteer to come to practices and then are selected to continue according to grades, homework habits and teacher

recommendations. They just started January 22 taking the school test. Four team members and four alternates will be chosen from the top test scores. Tests consist of three rounds. There is a Sprint round of 30 questions with 40 minutes to complete. The Target round of 4 sets of two questions each will take about 6 minutes for each set. The team round of 10 questions needs to be completed in 20 minutes.

The Chapter competition in Findlay will be held February 28th. It is a great experience for our students to compete and get excited about solving math problems! The first time our school attended, one of our girls commented that she felt like she was in a room full of math nerds. We must be some of the best math nerds because there has only been one year we haven't sent either at least one individual or the team on to state! By the next newsletter we will be able to report our outcome this year. Good luck to the team and alternates competing. Their coach is Sharon Calvin, 8th grade math teacher.

Union School Library

Upon entering the Union library this winter, a visitor might see any or all of the following activities going on:

- Middle school students researching for class assignments, or just browsing for good books or magazines to read for fun.
- Elementary classes attending their weekly story time with Mrs. Aldridge-Ritchey, and checking out new books to take home with them.
- Second and third grade students and their mentors relaxing and talking with one another.
- Seventh grade reading students taking their Reading Counts computer quizzes to test their knowledge of the books they read for class.
- Mrs. Aldridge-Ritchey inventorying books and updating cards, in preparation for the conversion to automation that the library will undergo in the near future.
- Mrs. Kinser creating new labels and cards for all the new books and videos added to the library's collection each month.

The Union Library is open from 7:40 a.m. to 3:15 p.m., and middle school students can use it during periods one through eight. Mrs. A is always happy to help students and teachers locate books or find resources on the internet, and her goal is that everyone will be able to enjoy "one-stop shopping" for information at the Union Library.

Come visit, and witness both elementary and middle school students in action, as they build reading and researching skills they'll use their whole lives.

Young Astronauts

The Union Elementary Chapter of the Young Astronauts Council has had a busy year. Young Astronauts is an after school club for 5th grade students who want to learn more about space exploration. Under the guidance of Angela Miller, 5th grade teacher at Union, over thirty students stay after school one day a month and participate in fun activities that teach a concept related to the space program. Students had a paper airplane contest to learn about aerodynamics. In December, they competed in a Lunar Olympics. Students took their earthly measurement in the long jump, high jump, and stuffed animal throw. These measurements were then calculated to discover what the distances and heights would be on the moon, where gravity is 1/6 of that on Earth. This month, students will be learning more about Mars as the Mars Rover explores the Red Planet.

District Highlights

Proficiency Seminars

On March 4th and 5th, students in Union 4th grade and USMS will be participating in a proficiency retreat. Fourth graders will be at Trinity UCC and 6th graders will be at Trinity Evangelical.

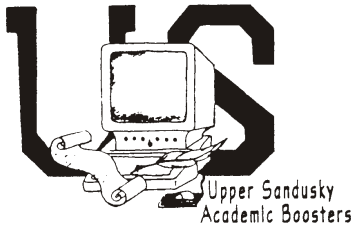
Each year, 4th and 6th grade students attend these seminars to hone their skills for the upcoming tests. Students participate in a variety of activities, including:

- Memory and concentration games designed to help students remember concepts;
- A study skills refresher course;
- Tips and hints for successful test completion; and
- A review of important information.

FEA students from Upper Sandusky High School assist teachers in the seminars. If you would like to assist or if you are willing to donate snacks, please contact the Union office at (419) 294-5721.

Upper Sandusky Academic Boosters

(See enclosed Membership Application)



The Upper Sandusky Academic Boosters Organization was formed in 1998 to act as a support group to the Upper Sandusky School District, at all grade levels, by recognizing and encouraging academic achievement and effort. Our membership consists of any

person interested in enhancing the academic program of the Upper Sandusky Exempted Village Schools.

Each year, our organization has provided funding for various activities and events related to academics. Following is an example of how our funds have been used:

- Each year we buy the chenille academic letters that are awarded to high school students at the Honor's Program for maintaining a 3.5 or better GPA for 3 nine weeks.
- We provide funds to purchase awards for the middle school and elementary Honor's Program.
- We provide breakfast for students during proficiency test weeks.
- We pay the entry fee for the Quiz Bowl Team to enter tournaments.
- We provide a day at a Mud Hens baseball game to award students for achieving various academic goals.

Our funds are acquired almost entirely through our yearly membership drive. Your continued support is greatly needed and appreciated!

The Academic Boosters Organization meets on the fourth Monday of each month, from September through April, excluding December. We meet at 6:30 p.m. in the high school library, and the meetings are usually very brief, consisting basically of discussion of fund disbursement. In order for our organization to remain strong, we are in need of new active members. Please consider becoming involved! Suggestions and new ideas are always welcome. Thank you for your support!

Nettrekker Comes to USMS & USHS

Nettrekker (www.nettrekker.com), the trusted search engine for education, is now available to all staff and students at Union Middle School and Upper Sandusky High School. Through special funding, the district has been able to purchase site licenses for these schools.

Nettrekker saves educators and students time by providing access to more than 180,000 high quality, pre-screened, and educationally relevant K-12 online resources. These online resources also align with Ohio's individual standards and benchmarks and can be used in the classroom to stimulate instruction and learning. Nettrekker fuses technology, state standards, curriculum, and the Internet into one unique online solution.

Nettrekker increases teacher productivity and effectiveness by providing fast, easy access to online resources, including more than 18,000 lesson plans and learning exercises, that link directly to Ohio's state standards and benchmarks. Nettrekker is a great timesaver for teachers who need to integrate standards and technology into instruction.

Unlike ordinary search engines, Nettrekker only contains educator-selected websites that have been evaluated for academic integrity and age appropriateness. Only the most relevant, high quality sites are included in Nettrekker. An inappropriate content and dead link checker also continuously scrutinizes Nettrekker content and alerts the Nettrekker staff to potential problems with a website, which are addressed promptly. Using Nettrekker, students can safely access relevant, reliable information every time they use the Internet.

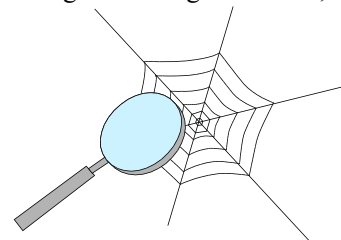
Some recent awards that Nettrekker has earned:

- 2003 Technology & Learning Award of Excellence
- 2003 AEP Distinguished Achievement Award Finalist
- 2003 CODIE Award
- 2002 Media & Methods Magazine Curriculum Website Winner
- 2002 District Administration Magazine Curriculum Website Award
- 2002 EDDIE Award

All students and staff members **who currently attend Union Middle School and/or Upper Sandusky High School** can register to become a Nettrekker user by following these directions:

1. Go to www.nettrekker.com
2. Click on the "Register" button.
3. Create a user account, filling in needed information.
4. Choose Ohio, and then enter either Upper Sandusky Middle School or Upper Sandusky High School and then select it in the list.
5. Click Done.
6. You are now a registered user of Nettrekker and take full advantage of all areas available.

We hope you enjoy this new resource that will be a great asset to our middle and high school-aged students, staff and parents!



District Staff To Attend Ohio SchoolNet State Technology Conference

Each year since 2001, the Ohio SchoolNet Commission has sponsored the Ohio SchoolNet State Technology Conference. This year's theme is entitled, "Communities of Practice: Connecting and Inspiring Learners with Technology." It will take place at the Columbus Convention Center, March 1-3.

This year special strands have been designed to help attendees get the most out of their experience: Tech Coordinators, Teachers, and Administrators. The Convention Center exhibit hall will be filled with vendors from all technology areas, such as software and hardware companies, professional development providers, and exhibits from Ohio schools.

Upper Sandusky Schools will have ten district staff members attending this year. Representing our district will be: Scott Barnett, Keith Miller, Tim Pohlman, Penny Case, Julie Herring, Nancy Sauer, Sue Kitzler, Janine McMillan, Kathy Bruynis, and Jim Frye.

Proficiency Testing

We are making plans for the Ohio Proficiency Tests to be given to all fourth and sixth grade students, March 8-17, 2004. Five areas will be tested in the following order:

- Monday, March 8 - Writing
- Wednesday, March 10 - Reading
- Friday, March 12 - Math

- Monday, March 15 - Citizenship
- Wednesday, March 17 - Science

Tenth grade students will be taking the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT) on the following days:

- Monday, March 15 - Reading
- Tuesday, March 16 - Math
- Wednesday, March 17 - Social Studies

10th, 11th, and 12th grade students who still have areas of the 9th Grade Proficiency Test will test the week of March 1-5, 2004.

Students in grades 3, 5, 7, 8, and 9 will take Off-Grade Proficiency Tests during the testing weeks in March listed below. These tests are formatted after the Ohio Proficiency Tests and will give the students practice in the types of questions and format found on the Ohio Proficiency Tests given at the fourth, sixth and tenth grade levels. The March testing schedule is as follows:

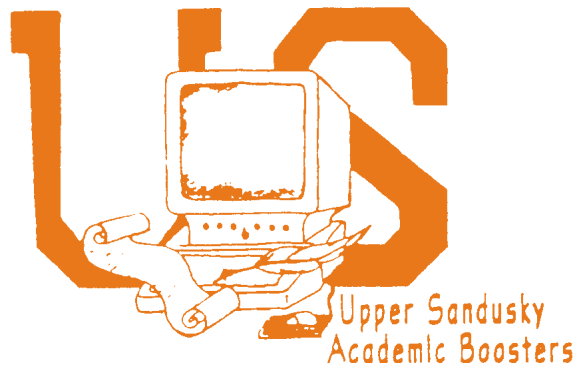
- March 1-5 -- Off-Grade Proficiency Test given to grades 7, 8, and 9
- March 8-17 -- Ohio Fourth Grade Proficiency Test, 4th graders
Ohio Sixth Grade Proficiency Test given to Grade 6
Off-Grade Proficiency Test Grades 3 and 5

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Become a Member of the Upper Sandusky Academic Boosters

2003-2004

Membership Categories

\$10.00	Orange
\$25.00	Black
\$50.00	Silver
\$100.00	Gold
\$500 or more	Platinum

You can help support this organization by joining the Upper Sandusky Academic Boosters.

Please complete and return the form below along with your donation.

Yes, I would like to become a member of the Upper Sandusky Boosters Organization.

Name _____

Address _____

*Please make checks payable to: **Upper Sandusky Academic Boosters***

Mail to:

US Academic Boosters
Upper Sandusky High School
800 N. Sandusky, Ave.
Upper Sandusky, OH 43351

Yes, I would like to serve as a committee member.