

Dear Parents,

You are cordially invited to an Open House on Thursday, February 2 from 9:00 AM until 1:30 PM. You and prospective parents are invited to enjoy refreshments, to tour the school, and to observe in classrooms of your choice. All classrooms will be open and chairs will be available for you to observe instructional activities.



Please sign in at the school office, obtain a visitor's badge, and go to the Spanish room in Carter Hall to look at displays, textbooks, enjoy refreshments, and to get a copy of the floor plan and schedule of classes for that day.

PTO hostesses will be available to show new families around the school.

We look forward to seeing you and hope you will encourage others to join you. As a thank you for bringing a new family to St. Mary's School, if a current family or SMS employee brings a new family to open house, and that family registers by March 1, 2012, the current family or employee and the new family will each receive a \$100 discount on total registration fees.

Blessings to you all.

Marguerite B. Wertz

### Parent Prayer



Parent Prayer continues to meet each week at 8:00 a.m. in Smith Hall, just prior to the school mass. The following families will be prayed for in February:

- 2/1 Adams, Deskovich, Parungao, Waling
- 2/8 Alger, Doherty, Peralta, Vargas
- 2/15 Allison, Donaldson, Peskar, Valdes
- 2/22 Anaclerio, Anaclerio, Donatelli, Przywara
- 2/29 Ardington, Driscoll, Pullan, Ulmer

### HAPPY FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY!

Celebrant	Grade	Date
Ross Bullington	8M	Feb-04
Ms. Elba Quiles		Feb-04
Mrs. Laura Webster		Feb-04
Jordan Kay	5T	Feb-06
Carter Bajoit	4R	Feb-06
Colin Alger	KD	Feb-08
Joey Webster	KD	Feb-10
Nina Adams	6WE	Feb-11
Mrs. Maureen Warner		Feb-11
Ashlee Kay	8M	Feb-12
Susan Bronikowski	4R	Feb-14
Luke Hanna	2C	Feb-19
Dina Carroll	3N	Feb-20
Christopher Teelon	5T	Feb-21
Winston Ingram	KD	Feb-21
Ella Salomone	1N	Feb-22
Elizabeth Paczynski	KD	Feb-22
Lucie Zionkowski	6YO	Feb-25
Lucas Yeh	2D	Feb-27

### Public Service Announcement

A "captain's choice" golf tournament will be held on Friday, March 9 at Houndslake Country Club. There will be a 1:00 shotgun start. Proceeds will benefit the United States Police Canine Association. For more information or to register, please contact Officer Clark Smith at (803) 640-2630 by March 5.

### School Spelling Bee

The following class spelling bee winners competed for the school title on December 6.

#### Fifth Graders

Becca Babineau  
Thomas Carroll  
Dean Coleman  
Christopher Morales

#### Sixth Graders

Jim Driscoll  
Jared Shuler  
Kyle Frei  
Adam Paczynski

#### Seventh Graders

Andrew Nelson  
Colton Benjamin  
Adam Rabin  
Austin Bell

#### Eighth Graders

Ashlee Kay  
Payton Carter  
Reid DeMass  
Annie Schwenker

Congratulations to first place winner Ashlee Kay, second place winner Jim

Driscoll, and third place winner Payton Carter! Many thanks to guest judges, Mrs. Ann Ward and Mrs. Sharon Cagle.

### **Super Spellers**

On January 9, SMS school spelling bee winners competed in the Aiken County semifinal bee held at Byrd Elementary. Ashlee Kay and Jim Driscoll competed with ten other school winners. Though Ashlee and Jim did not prevail as winners of the bee, they both spelled well, with Ashlee outlasting more than half of the spellers. Jim successfully spelled *intellectual* then went out on the word *misinterpret*, after a technicality when Jim misspoke a letter before correctly spelling the word. After successfully spelling *engineer*, *tangential*, *peripheral*, and *abacus*, Ashlee's attempt to win the bee ended with *curmudgeon*.



### **National Geographic Bee**

This year's Geography Bee, sponsored by the National Geographic Society, held preliminary rounds to determine class winners in the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grades. These class winners went on to participate in the school bee held on Thursday, January 5. The grade winners were: Grade 4, Brad Singer and Emilie Doherty; Grade 5, Dean Coleman and Ciera Carter; Grade

6, Jim Driscoll and Simon DeLoache; Grade 7, Josh Brannon and Vincent Ylagen; and Grade 8, Payton Carter and Alexa Luszcz.

After an exciting Final Round, Jim Driscoll was declared the first runner up and Payton Carter the first place school winner. Simon DeLoache was named alternate.

We wish to congratulate all the participants for a job well done.

The next step is for Payton to take the written exam to see if he will qualify to participate in the State Bee held in Columbia. Good luck, Payton!

### **Summer STEM Program**

Rising seventh and eighth graders are eligible to apply for the Summer Stem Program (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics). This program is held at the Naval Academy. If selected, students are responsible only for travel costs to the Baltimore-Washington International Airport. For more information, go to [www.usna.edu/admissions/stem](http://www.usna.edu/admissions/stem).

### **News from the Classroom**

#### Keeping Up with 4K

January was a fun-filled month. The 4K children were hoping and wishing for snow. Even though the snow didn't come, the class still enjoyed many wintry activities. Birds were one of the special topics of the month. The children created fat little penguins and Cheerios bird feeders to help feed the birds during the cold winter months. The Cheerios were strung on a long piece of twine with a bell tied on the end. Whenever the birds fed on the Cheerios, the bells would ring!

On 4K's Pajama Day, the class will come to school all dressed for bed. We will read bedtime stories and have fun creating shadows with flashlights in preparation for Groundhog Day.

The 100th Day of school is on January 27. How smart are the 4K students? Every child knows his/her address including their zip codes. Wow!

### First Grade Fun

January and the new year bring some changes to 1N. First we are so happy to welcome Lila Gazzo to Aiken, to St. Mary's School, and to 1N. South Carolina is quite a change from Colorado. We have finished the social studies curriculum and are digging into science. We are learning ways that living things are different from nonliving things. Next we will study different habitats. Fact families are once again the focus in math. In Superkids, some of the kids actually called our beloved Golly a "pest." Luckily, the whole situation got resolved and all are friends again. We will visit Mrs. Dearing's shop and go to a Spingle Spangle Talent Show. After that we say good-bye to Adventures of the Superkids and embark on More Adventures of the Superkids. Of course it's winter, so SNOW is our daily hope.

### Second Grade Spice

The second graders performed the Superkids' play "We Need Trees!" to enthusiastic audiences on Thursday, January 19 and on Friday, January 20 on the stage in St. Angela's Hall. The three acts emphasized the importance of recycling, highlighted the fact that trees give us many gifts, and stressed that trees are a natural resource for many products used in our daily lives. The children wrapped up the educational and entertaining play with an animated rap song.

### Third Grade Thoughts

We have begun our annual postcard project! We are learning to write personal letters and are sending letters to different friends and relatives asking

for them to send us a postcard in return. We will display the postcards received on a big map in the hall and learn about geography along the way! We are plowing through division in math, but are still trying to master the multiplication facts. In social studies, we have turned our focus to South Carolina history and will be learning all about the beautiful state we live in.

### Fourth Grade Forays

Fourth graders enjoyed a break from their regular reading series while reading Mr. Popper's Penguins. After spending two weeks reading the books and participating in various activities they were able to view the movie which they found quite different from the book. Venn diagrams were created to easily view the similarities and differences.

How to Make a Peanut butter and Jelly Sandwich, How to Feed the Dog, How to Dribble a Soccer ball - these are a few of the topics we are writing and learning about in class. We each followed Mrs. Bajoit's and Mrs. Rains' writing examples and made our own marshmallow snowman snack. Then we came up with our own topic. Next we will present them to our classmates.

Is it "one nation under God" or "one nation, (pause) under God" said with a pause where the comma is written. This is a question being asked of Senator Greg Ryberg. We have seen it written with the comma and feel that the meaning changes when there is a pause. After a lot of discussion and Internet, searching we cannot find an answer. We are writing letters to Senator Ryberg to get his opinion and we can't wait to hear his response.

Social studies class has us leaving the Northeast region and moving into the Midwest region of the United States. We are still learning our states and capitals and doing a great job!

In science we have been studying about different types of fuels. Everything from nonrenewable fossil fuels to solar energy is being discussed. We are learning about the reasons for energy conservation and how the misuse of natural resources affects the quality of life for all species. Finally, we are also reading about and experimenting with alternative energy sources. One such experiment, decaying matter producing gasses we were able to trap, had some surprising effects!

#### Fifth Grade Spotlight

In fifth grade, we've been doing fun social studies and science projects. For social studies, we're creating bumper stickers as if we were in the Revolutionary War. In science, we've been learning the steps of a research project and also get to make a drawing or 3D model of our chosen ecosystem.

In English we just wrote our first business letters and in math we've been learning a bit of algebra by doing some equations. We also just read a story about a woman with a seeing impairment and her guide dog.

Soon, we will be going to the Battle of Aiken with the French students in February. We are really looking forward to that field trip! We are also looking forward to Catholic Schools Week next week!

Written by  
Jordan Kay and Hayden Thomas

#### Sixth Grade Field Trip

The sixth grade field trip was an exciting adventure. We arrived on Isle of Palms in Charleston, then boarded a pontoon boat and headed to Capers Island. Along the way, we were excited to observe various marine life including many dolphins. Our captain was quick to point out interesting sites as well as

telling us his "sea stories." His stories were both informative and entertaining.

Once on Capers Island, we toured the beach and discovered many interesting "finds." The highlight of our tour included a barbecue on the beach and a dip in the marsh.

We reluctantly left the beach and headed to Sticky Fingers Restaurant. This completed our amazing and fun experience.

#### Seventh Grade Field Trip

The sun was shining and the sky was a brilliant Carolina blue as the seventh graders arrived in Charleston for their field trip. The first stop was the Charleston Museum where the students began their tour by learning about Native Americans and a number of the tools that they used. The tour guide explained the purpose of each tool and demonstrated their use. Many civil war artifacts were displayed, including the most popular exhibit enjoyed by many of the students, the gun collection. The wildlife exhibit included a stuffed polar bear donated to the museum as well as the skeleton of an 18 foot long crocodile.



After our tour of the museum the students took a ferry ride to Fort Sumter. The students heard a brief history of Fort Sumter upon their arrival and then had the opportunity to explore the grounds. A visit to the museum on the grounds gave the students the opportunity to learn more about this historic fort which

is remembered for being the place where the Civil War began. The boat ride back into Charleston was exciting as there were many dolphins that kept everyone entertained.

The carriage ride was the last adventure for the day. The students enjoyed a ride through downtown Charleston where they heard lots of information on the history of Charleston, learned about the architecture of the homes, and even had the opportunity to be driven by the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, our very own cathedral for the Diocese of Charleston. All in all, it was a great day that was enjoyed by both students and their chaperones.

### Seventh Grade Life Science

What's in your yogurt? Seventh grade scientists studied the bacteria in yogurt using microscopes and special blue dye. While some bacteria can be harmful to humans, some bacteria can aid in digestion, help decompose dead organisms, and even assist in cleaning up oil spills! Students are completing a look at bacteria and viruses. Next week will bring the study of protists and an examination of all of the wonderful creatures in a drop of pond water!

Science Fair experimentation is coming to completion, and it is time to carefully and thoroughly communicate the findings. The dates for the final project parts are February 7 for the conclusions in the logbook, February 16 for the rough draft of the formal report, and March 1 for the display of the complete project at the Science Fair. Students will also be presenting their work orally to their fellow students the week after the Science Fair.

### Eighth Grade Physical Science

The eighth grade physical science students have begun an exploration of work, power, and simple machines. Lab

partners will be creating and carrying out a plan to construct a lever that can lift Mrs. Martin, an ever-increasing challenge! Students will soon be employing their Algebra skills to compute the Mechanical Advantage of the various simple machines they are using.

Students should now be concluding the last stages of their Science Fair experiments, and completing the accompanying Logbook entries discussing results and conclusions.

### Eighth Grade Field Trip

It was a beautiful, sunny day in Charleston when the eighth grade arrived at the site of the submarine Hunley. Students were given a tour and saw the small area in which the men sat.

After a delicious lunch in the park, and a short walk to the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, the eighth graders took a guided tour and learned about all the symbolism that is built into the church.

The Gibbes Museum provided interesting art and sculpture for viewing by the eighth grade. Bubba Gump Shrimp Company was the dinner venue, where several of the students won prizes for Bubba Gump trivia. The students arrived at St. Angela Hall after a day of learning and fun.

### Vocation Clubs Update

Tuesday, January 3, was our first day back from Christmas break and it found members of the Sts. Cecilia and Maximilian Kolbe Vocation Clubs enjoying a dress day as well as a Christmas celebration. The combined meeting included a lively Christmas Bingo game that was enjoyed by all. The club members enjoyed not only the club t-shirt dress day but Christmas snacks as well.

## Religious Reflections – Grades 4, 5, 6, 7

To kick off National Vocation Awareness week, students in fourth through seventh grade participated in discussions on different types of vocations. Key words relative to vocations were identified and explained. The students were also able to understand that we receive our mission for our vocation at Baptism and that it is through prayer and an open heart that we are able to hear that special call from God as to his plans for us.

Fourth graders have spent time discussing the importance of good qualities in role models. Students identified role models in their lives and specific acts those role models have demonstrated to show that they are following in the footsteps of Jesus. The students have also learned that the Paschal Mystery is the greatest way Jesus could show God's deep love for each of us and that Jesus showed obedience to his father by giving the ultimate sacrifice – his life for us.

Religion classes in fifth grade have found the students listing different groups they belong to and the purposes of those groups. The children have read from Scripture the story of the baptism of Christ in the Jordan River and have learned why Jesus felt that it was necessary to be baptized. Our studies have also included the story of Nicodemus who learned the importance of being "born from above with water and the Holy Spirit."

Old Testament studies in sixth grade have introduced us to Moses and his adventures at the burning bush. The students have heard God reveal himself as "I AM" to Moses and the importance of that revelation. The story of the plagues was a big hit with the students and they are happy to be leaving Egypt and crossing the Red Sea with the Israelites.

Seventh graders have wrapped up their studies of the Old Testament with the stories of Esther and Judith. The students have been quite impressed with the bravery and loyalty of these two women and their impact on salvation history. The observance of Yom Kippur and the celebration of Hanukkah were presented to the students to help them understand and remember some of the events in the lives of the Jewish nation.

## Artistic Adventures

Circles, Rectangles, Triangles...oh my! First graders went on a shape hunt and identified the three categories of shapes by drawing examples from the playground. They will take this new knowledge and put it into use for their next project which will have a golfing flavor.

Second grade artists worked on art terms while creating penguin prints from potatoes! Ask them how they did it! Third graders began a look at variation by painting hearts with a Jim Dine inspiration. For paint brushes they had everything from pompoms to wooden spools! Their pieces are colorful explosions of texture!

Snowmen were the topic of inspiration for artists in fourth through sixth grades. After discussing variation and theme, students set out to create a unique, close up view of a snowman based on their theme of choice. There was everything from diamond clad, high fashion snowwomen to football-playing snowmen. Some of these cool winter creations will go on display at the New Moon Café downtown later this month.

The seventh grade is off to a great start. After reading Ten Black Dots by Donald Crews and discussing art careers, students received a mystery envelope with a surprise number of black squares. They were challenged to create a colored pencil drawing that incorporated all of the

squares. Seventh graders can be pretty creative! They are also working on their sketchbooks and have begun a look at symmetry.

And, keep your eye on the ceiling in the Cafeteria! The eighth grade class is finishing their tiles, and the tiles will soon go on display! Inspiration was found with such artists as Green, Britto, Dali, and more!

### Computer Bytes

4-K - Students are showing independence throughout their learning activities and completing their lessons with good accuracy. When lessons are completed, all the children really enjoy being able to go to favorites and choosing an activity to work on independently! Printing dinosaur papers are a favorite activity!

Kindergarten - Students completed their balloon pictures using MS Paint with lots of colors; they are “floating” on the walls in Boyd Hall and look beautiful; students are very proud of their work! Students typed their winter word list (which was saved on their desktops) and for several weeks students have been learning how to make changes to their typed word list: making font size larger, bold font, number words, copying/pasting an image etc. The students have been excited to see the changes they can make on the computers! Soon they will print their words!



1st Grade - Students had fun using Word Art to create a document describing

snowflakes and learning how to add a border make their document look even more complete. They did a great job! Students are learning MS Word toolbar functions quickly and are beginning MS Paint next!

2nd Grade - Students have completed their winter animal research using the animal dictionary link on Mrs. Guy's website. Now they are typing their reports and copying/pasting an image of their animals. The children have been working hard on this assignment and have done a great job; they continue to show independence and good listening skills!

3rd Grade - Students are completing the second part of their winter weather project! For the first part, students created a descriptive PowerPoint slide about what winter weather is to them. This involved learning how to copy/paste image(s) into the slide. The second part involves using MS Paint. Students create a winter picture then copy/paste their image into another PPT slide and describe their picture! The students have done a great job saving their work weekly till completed! Nice job!

4th Grade - Now that many toolbar functions are understood, students are beginning their first BIG PowerPoint presentation! Students are using Mrs. Guy's website to research facts about the rainforest and when completed they will transfer their information into eight slides one of which will be an MS Paint slide of what they imagine the rainforest looks like! The students are very excited about working on this project!

5th Grade - Students have mastered a higher level of toolbar usage and are currently creating a PowerPoint slide presentation from a completed school AR

book. Using clips online, students are adding images and text on slides, putting color on slides and adding their own effects, using transitions, etc. Students are enjoying this project! Students will present their slideshows in computer lab.

Junior High - Students have been busy working on their spreadsheets, keyboarding skills, typing tests, graphs and charts, Internet researching, typing papers, MLA format, curricular-based work, curricular PowerPoint presentations, etc. The eighth grade students have been introduced to web-based slideshow presentation instruction, HTML web-page understanding, and other projects preparing them for high school.

#### French News

The French classes have been working on some fun winter and snowman vocabulary, stories and songs. The children love to dress up to a song about a snowman who is at first "froid" (cold) and then "chaud" (hot) as they learn clothing vocabulary. Oh La La! The seventh and eighth graders reviewed for their midterm exams and now have started new material. Eighth grade will be learning about Paris, while the French are here. It will be great to get the real French experience. February promises to be fun with the French students here to celebrate Valentine's Day as well as "Mardi Gras!"

#### French Visitors

They French are coming! Yes, they will be arriving here in Aiken on Friday, February 10 and should be in school the following Monday. This year we have 10 students and their chaperone visiting SMS. Please welcome them and make them feel at home by talking to them when you see them on campus. Remember to speak slowly and clearly so they can understand you! Say "bonjour"

(hello) or "bienvenue" (welcome) and be sure to ask them about their country and home town. Also learn a few new French words while the students are here!

#### **Student Council**

Student Council had a successful response to "Sundaes on Wednesday" on January 18. The students enjoyed delicious sundaes made by our Student Council officers and class representatives. The most popular toppings were crushed Oreo cookies and Gummi Bears. \$190 was raised from the sale of the sundaes. Part of the proceeds will be donated to the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Many thanks to Mrs. Carter and Mrs. Serkiz for spending the day with us to help serve the sundaes. Our next "Sundaes on Wednesdays" will be Wednesday, February 15.

The Student Council will also be having a "pink" (or red) dress day on Tuesday, February 14. (Please see the flier included in this newsletter.) Students may pay \$1.00 and wear something pink or they may purchase a pink ribbon from a Student Council officer or class representative for \$1.00. The money raised from this effort will be donated to the National Breast Cancer Foundation.

#### **"Club" MATHCOUNTS**

MATHCOUNTS is a national organization with the mission of increasing enthusiasm for and enhancing achievement in middle school mathematics. This year, at St. Mary's, "Club" MATHCOUNTS is a group of about 25 students who met weekly for several months to enjoy, have fun with, and be challenged in math.

As the competitive season approaches, "Club" meetings have been suspended and only potential team

members have been meeting two mornings a week to practice. Congratulations to the following Club MATHCOUNTS students who have been selected to represent St. Mary's School at the Regional MATHCOUNTS Competition at Aiken Technical College on Saturday, February 11:

Austin Bell	Reid DeMass
Jared DeMass	Hagan Dyches
Adam Rabin	Ashlee Kay
Vincent Ylagen	Liana Nguyen
Ross Bullington	Max Serkiz
Payton Carter	

Good luck and have fun!

### **Summer Trip to France**

Before you know it, we will be boarding the plane for our fabulous trip to France! There is still time to join this exciting adventure, which leaves South Carolina on June 13. After two weeks in Loches visiting some beautiful Chateaux, we will be visiting Normandy and Brittany to see the D-Day beaches, the American Cemetery, Mt. Saint Michel and so much more. Be sure not to miss this fabulous opportunity by calling Mrs. Trezza today at 649-3596.

### **LEGO Team News**

The LEGO Team, the "Cocoa Locos," will be heading to regional competition on Friday, January 27 at the Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College. The team will compete in the areas of robot design, robot performance, program presentation, and teamwork. If they qualify at regionals, they will then head to state competition in Columbia on February 25. Best of luck, Cocoa Locos!!

