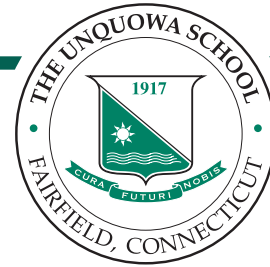


# About U.S.



A Publishing Tradition  
of The Unquowa School

## Message from the Head of School

**Depending on the mail, you may** be receiving this issue of *About U.S.* on the eve of the 2008 presidential election or as part of our nation rejoices and the other part mourns its results. As this article was written, however, we were still in the heat of a very protracted presidential campaign, as well as the beginning of a national financial crisis. As educators, my faculty and I have had to step back from the emotionality and strong opinion of this campaign to ask ourselves, "How are kids seeing this process and what is our role as a school in guiding them through it?"

I have been in the world of Middle School children for almost a quarter of a century and so have seen them respond to five or six presidential elections. These elections offer schools the opportunity to encourage research and debate, to guide students through the exercise of seeing the other side of things and to teach the political process in general.

We realize that as educators it is our responsibility to steer clear of expressing our personal political beliefs and to stick to the academic exercise of argument and the teaching of civics that the practical example of elections provides.

*Weekly Reader* claims that the mock elections it runs every four years have always successfully predicted the outcome of our presidential election because children's voting so closely mirrors the opinions of their parents. Subsequently, it is not surprising to find that the high interest and ardent opinions held by adults about this current election have not escaped our children. While the discussions their interest has sparked have often been a bit tricky, they have opened the window of opportunity for teachers to help students to discern the difference

between informed comments and thoughtless opinion, the difference between factual statements and irresponsible slander.

Recently at an Upper School lunch table, one student was vigorously championing one of the major parties running, as his tablemate defended the other. The teacher who sat at their table and moderated their discussion, which was beginning to run a bit off course, interrupted to ask of one of them, "Can

you tell me the basic difference between the two parties you are discussing?" The student was ready to launch into an answer but suddenly realized that he had to admit, "Well, actually, I don't really know." The teacher's question was simple, but its answer was a revelatory moment for every student at the dining table. How can you say that you're part of a group if you don't know what it stands for?

This is such an

important question for adolescents because it is one that impacts them each day on a personal level. It is also one that they must clearly understand the impact of before they enter high school, where they will sometimes have the dangerous opportunity to become part of a group without thinking of the repercussions. They must be taught to realize and understand the consequences of their beliefs and choices.

Whether it's math, literature, history, science or politics, as we teach children the facts, we must teach them how to thoughtfully analyze and apply them. Not teaching them *what* to think but teaching them *how* to think is our toughest and most crucial task as a school.

**Sharon Lauer**



*Another wonderful Founders' Day! Alums Anne (Hall) Higgins, class of '35, and Noyes Spelman, class of '36 chat with Ms. Lauer. See story on page 6.*

## Farm to Fork Field Experiences

This fall students at Unquowa had the opportunity to visit Patti Popp at Sport Hill Farm and learn first hand where many of the vegetables served at lunch are grown. In September, third and fourth graders picked a mixture of cutting lettuces for the salad bar. First graders were paired with fifth grade buddies in October and dug up 100 pounds of potatoes!

Patti Popp shared with students the responsibilities of running a small farm and the benefits of eating seasonal organic vegetables. She led them on a tour that included walking through fields of beets, Swiss chard, kale, broccoli, brussels sprouts, eggplants, and other fall vegetables. Students visited a greenhouse filled with trays of seedlings and a late crop of tomato plants and walked through raised garden beds of fragrant herbs and flowers. The final



stop was the chicken coop where Patti collected fresh eggs for Unquowa's salad bar.

Field experiences were further extended at school by Chef Dan who reinforced many concepts in nutrition, including the health benefits of eating fresh locally grown produce. Students had the opportunity to assist in the preparation of fresh candy cane beets. They enjoyed sampling and comparing the tastes of grated raw beets and roasted beets and were surprised to learn that sugar can be made from this delicious fall vegetable. Students also separated the beet greens from their veins and Chef Peter sauteed these vitamin-packed leaves with fresh garlic and olive oil for them to try.

Thank you Patti Popp, Chef Dan, and Chef Peter for providing students with valuable lessons about the food production cycle and hands-on experiences harvesting and preparing fresh seasonal produce.

*Mary Curran*

## Learning & Snacking

After our visit to the Spot Hill Farm, Chef Dan talked to our class about the harvest we brought back to school. He and Chef Peter prepared sautéed beet greens, among other things, for us to taste. After learning about the nutritional values of these foods, some of our class wandered into the kitchen to watch the pizza being prepared for lunch. Suddenly, the entire fourth grade was kneading small amounts of dough. Without missing a beat, Chefs Peter and Dan helped us assemble individual pizzas, labeled them, and told us to come back in 15 minutes. What a great snack we enjoyed! Thank you Chef Peter and Chef Dan! We appreciate the time you spent with us.

*Mrs. Bruno & the Fourth Grade*





## Family Math Night

What do you use to solve a geometry problem logically? Circular Reasoning, of course! This was just one of the more than 70 activities encountered by fourth, fifth and sixth grade families on Family Math Night, October 16 as they explored how the varied aspects of mathematical thought are represented in the curriculum.

For the 35 families that attended, it was a busy evening full of challenges and discoveries. The excitement of building deductive reasoning skills, recognizing pattern relationships, employing spatial visualization and strengthening number sense filled the room. The Fraction Quilt activity drew lots of attention as each person attempted to add a different combination of triangles to cover three-eighths of a square. Careful consideration enabled fifth grader, Patrick Tennant, to win a prize for the best estimate of the number of Lego bricks in a jar.

Thank you to the student assistants, Andres Ayala, Kamau Burton, Bailey Cooke, Marc Thomas Greenawalt, Charlie Haviland, Max Martone and Erica Meno. They spent the afternoon setting up the activities and then returned in the evening to provide encouragement and hints. Their spirit and enthusiasm is unsurpassed.

The evening would not have been complete without the delicious refreshments provided by Chef Peter and the bright Mylar balloons supplied by alumna parent, Sue Marshall of Party Hardy, Westport. Thanks to Mrs. Lietuvninkas for making sure we would have enough tables. Last but not least, thanks to Bill Haseltine for patiently and precisely fabricating manipulatives in wood and in plastic. It is truly a family math night!



**Mrs. Haseltine**

## Upcoming Math Contests

On Tuesday, November 18, Upper School students will be using their problem-solving skills as they participate in two different math contests. Seventh and eighth graders will be taking on the challenge of the American Mathematics Contest (AMC8). They will have 40 minutes to complete 25 multiple-choice questions. Fifth and sixth grade students will have approximately 25 minutes to complete the five problems that comprise the first contest of the Mathematical Olympiad for Elementary Schools (MOES). The remaining four contests will occur once a month until March.

Both of these contests provide challenging non-routine problems that stretch the abilities of upper elementary students.

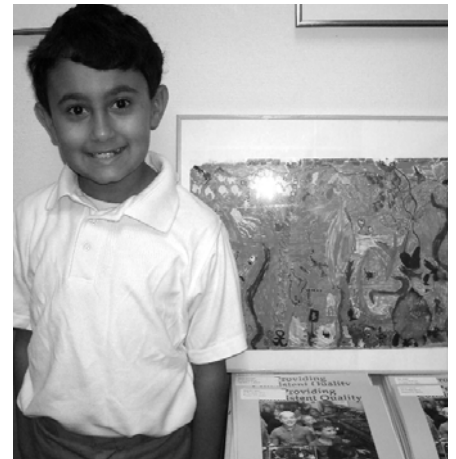
## Flower Arranging 101

Last spring the prek 3 class planted marigolds on the perimeter of the tomato garden. Mrs. Curran told us it would keep the bugs away from the tomato plants. They were so bright and beautiful that this year's class made arrangements for the dining room tables to be enjoyed by all. It was most interesting how colors and height were very important to their little hands. Martha Stewart WATCH OUT!!

**Janice Shannon**



## Congratulations



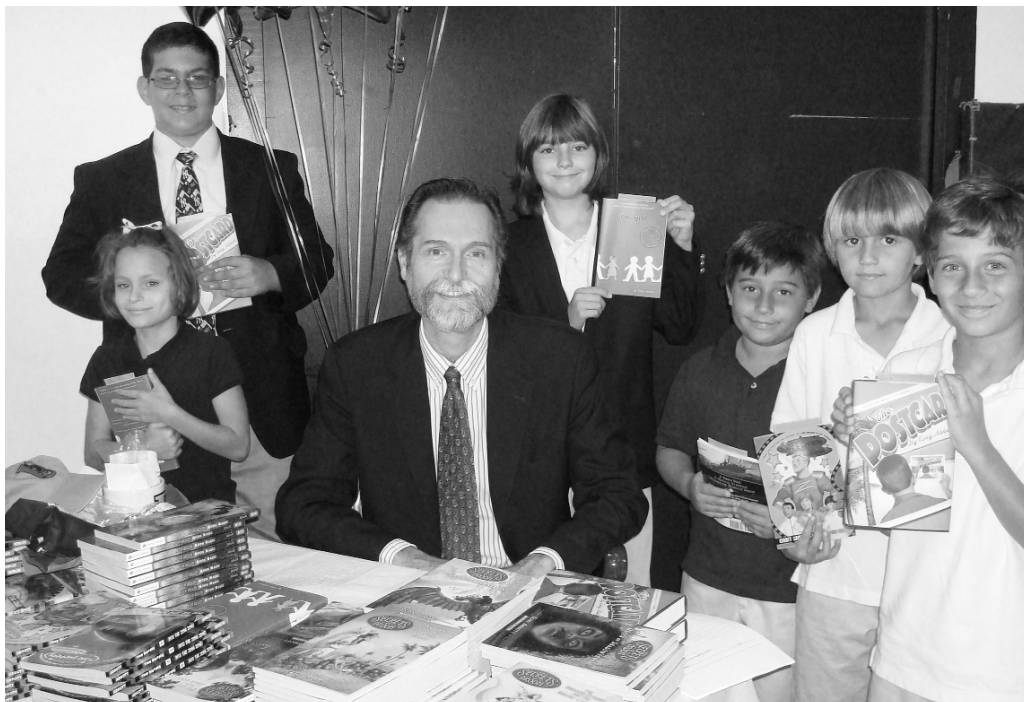
Second grader, Adam, won 4th place in the Coastal America Ocean Contest at the Mystic Aquarium. He brought his painting of the ocean in to school. Great job, Adam!

## Authors' Day

On Wednesday, October 15, author Tony Abbott visited with grades 2-8. He is the author of the well-known series *The Secret of Droon*, *Time Surfers* and the novels *Krinkle*, *Firegirl* and *The Postcard*.

A new book, *The Haunting of Derek Stone*, will be released next year. Students got a glimpse into Mr. Abbott's life as an author through his many personal accounts and humorous slide show. They also contributed ideas for their own fantasy story.

His visit was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Thank you to the UPA for providing the event! We are all looking forward to more enrichment programs!



## Fourth Grade Knitters

The fourth grade is once again learning to knit hats and scarves on circular looms. Whenever they have free time you'll find them knitting — even on vacation!

If you knit or crochet, we would welcome additions to our own growing collection of knitwear. We will donate these items to our Appalachian drive later in the school year.

A big giant THANK YOU to the Haviland and Pinto families for their very generous donation of yarn.

**Mrs. Bruno**



## Have you heard?

Unquowa was the host to Chamber Music Central this summer. Sixty-nine young musicians participated in duos, trios, quartets, pizza parties, master classes, games, solo and chamber music performance. They learned a lot and had great fun doing it.

Are you a piano, string or woodwind student who would enjoy playing in a small chamber group? CMC offers fall and spring semesters as well. Coaching sessions with CMC's outstanding faculty take place after school and/or week-ends. Please call Millette Alexander (203-227-4374) for more details or visit their website: [www.chambermusiccentral.org](http://www.chambermusiccentral.org)

## Welcome Caitlyn



Hello, my name is Caitlyn Blanshan and I am extremely excited to be interning at Unquowa as a teacher's assistant for the Pre-K as well as Kindergarten classes. I am currently a senior at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, and although I am a Psychology major, I am in the Education Program at Sacred Heart as well. I loved the energy at Unquowa from the second I walked in; everyone seemed to be like one big happy family. I am thrilled to be interning here, because this is exactly the type of school I dream of working in when I become a teacher not so far down the road. I come from a close-knit family of five in Merrick, New York, and they are always inspiring me to chase my dreams of becoming a teacher. I have had many experiences with children, from babysitting to doing service learning in numerous classrooms in Long Island and Connecticut. In my free time I love travel, go to the beach, draw, and keep active.



## Meet our Board of Governors

Each month we will introduce you to some of the members of our governing board. This month we are featuring the Executive Board:



Kevin A. Taylor - Kevin is the President of the Board of Governors and Chairman of the Executive Committee. He sits on all board committees and has served on our Board since 1999. Kevin is a general dentist who has been in private practice for 22 years. He was born in Bridgeport and grew up in Trumbull. Kevin attended Trumbull High School, Fairfield University, where he obtained a BS in Chemistry, and Boston University Dental School, where he received his D.M.D. Kevin and his wife, Maria, live in Easton with their two sons, Ryan, a junior at St. Joseph's High School (2006 Unquowa graduate), and Christopher, a sixth grader at Unquowa.



Mark Greenawalt - Mark was first appointed to the Board in January of 2004 and was elected to the position of Vice President in 2007. Mark is President of Mohican Valley Corporation, a family owned Ready Mix Concrete Producer that has been servicing the Fairfield County area since 1958. He is also President of Birch Hill Construction Corp., a residential and commercial real estate development company. Mark is a lifelong Fairfield resident whose great-grandparents moved to Fairfield in 1913 and settled on the one hundred plus acres of land which is now known as Lake Mohegan Park. Mark and his wife, Sara, currently live overlooking Lake Mohegan with their two children, Marc Thomas, a seventh grader at Unquowa, and Danielle, a sixth grader at Unquowa. In addition to serving as VP, Mark chairs the Building and Grounds Committee.



Debra A. Meno - Debbie was first appointed to the Board in the spring of 2004 and serves as Secretary of the Board. Debbie graduated from Sacred Heart University in Fairfield with a BS Degree in Business Management and an MBA in Finance. Her business experience has focused on financial planning and analysis for several area corporations. She has also held the position of Recording Secretary for the UPA. Debbie and her husband, Gary, have lived in Easton for the past 19 years and have one daughter, Erica, who is a seventh grader at Unquowa. Debbie is the Secretary of the Board and sits on both the Finance and Trusteeship Committees.



Karl J. Martone - Karl was elected to the Board in 2000 after serving on the Board during the 1999-2000 school year by virtue of being Co-President of the UPA. He is Treasurer of the Board and Chair of the Finance and Trusteeship Committees. Karl is the Managing Partner of Martone & Martone LLC, a reinsurance consulting and project management firm. Prior to founding Martone & Martone LLC in 2004, Karl served as Vice President of Business Planning and Market Development of AXA Re Life and was previously an officer of Life Re and General Re. He received his BS from Providence College and his CLU/ChFC from the American College. Karl and his wife, Lynn, have one son, Max, who is in the eighth grade at Unquowa.

## Sports Update

Because of our large number of participants in The Unquowa soccer program we have fielded an all boys varsity squad and an all girls varsity squad for the first time.

The girls lost their first game 2-1 in a hard fought game against GFA. In the rematch against GFA they were down 2-0 at the half but came back to tie the game 2-2. We were led by the strong defense of Mackenzie Murray, the scoring of Rachel McDermott and the goaltending of Bailey Cooke.

The boys came away with a 6-0 win at KLHT. Josh Knopf and Seth Samowitz scored and Andrew Godfrey was in goal for the shutout.

The JV and Green squads remain undefeated. The defense is strong with Justin Blanchette and Danny Leszczynski, while Sisso Makhraz leads the team in scoring.

Our field hockey team is a spirited and determined group that has been in many hard fought games this year. They have a strong defense that is led by Kai Burton and Taylor Lopez-Balboa. Our goaltending has been as strong as ever, as Katherine Halas has taken over the reigns. Marissa Leggiadro and Chelsea Byrd have developed into a strong offensive duo and are our leading scorers. We would like to thank our fans for all the support and we look forward to continue seeing you at all of the games.

So, if you'd like to watch some great soccer or field hockey, throw your Gator cap on and come out and root us on!

**Coach B.**



## Founders' Day

For the past few years, our school has been blessed with magnificent weather for Founders' Day, and this year was certainly no exception. The sky was blue, the air was crisp and just the perfect number of leaves had turned and were blowing gently through the air.

Little ones were bouncing non-stop in both the large and small bounce houses, kindly provided by our eighth grade parents and run by our eighth graders, while their classmates painted



the faces and nails of every child they could entice to sit still. Adults could purchase the many baked goods baked and sold by our eighth grade, and the class came away with a hefty sum towards their class trip. Of course, our Farm to Fork barbeque was as delicious as ever, and the smell of the wood fire that

cooked the burgers and hot dogs added to the perfect fall atmosphere.

Of course, Founders' Day is far more than a picnic. It is the day when alumni return to the school, and waiting to see which alums show up is half the fun! This year's turn-out was great - from our most recent

grads to alumni who were at Unquowa in the early 1920's, we had representatives across the decades. They reunited with friends, played soccer with our current Upper Schoolers, and reconnected with our school. This year was one of some wonderful coincidences

for alumni. Chris Nedermeyer, who attended kindergarten at Unquowa, and Jean Carpenter Winton, class of '34, met and found that they had grown up in the same house on Toilsome Hill Road. Anne Hall Higgins, class of '35, whose mother was the music teacher when she went to Unquowa, grew up on Senior Place, where our current Upper School music teacher, Anna Pelletier, now resides.

By Sunday, the tents were down, the hay bales were

moved for use by P.E. and the pumpkins were all moved to the front courtyard to also be recycled for Halloween, but the memory of Founders' Day lingers in the air. It was a perfect day.



## Alumni News



Julia (Melko) Kecko, class of 1990, and her husband, Mark, are the proud parents of Brandon Michael born on July 20. The Keckos reside in

Oxford. Julia works just down the street from Unquowa at GE Corporate, and Mark works for Mediapost Communications in Manhattan.

## Annual Fund - Pledge Now!

***Our goal is 100% participation!***

Pledging is a great way to be counted, and you can spread your payments over a number of months. We will even send you friendly reminders! Participation percentages are very important and you can give at your economic comfort level.

Your Board of Governors and your faculty and staff are at 100% participation!

### **Remember:**

- Online giving via [www.unquowa.org/donate](http://www.unquowa.org/donate)
- Corporate matching gift program
- Pledges are due June 30, 2009
- Donations are tax deductible

***Thank you to all who have given or made their pledge!***

## A note from the UPA ...

The new school year is into full swing and the summer vacation is just a pleasant memory now. The UPA is hard at work planning interesting and fun events for your children and for parents.

Renowned author Tony Abbott visited Unquowa on October 15 to read and discuss many of his most popular books. A great time was had by all who attended - thank you to Mrs. Lietuvninkas, Maureen Stuhlman and Gaby Burdo for organizing this terrific event. On October 22, children were treated to a history of Hip Hop from the Rennie Harris Pure Movement Group, moderated by Duane Holland. His company of four dancers helped to demonstrate the origins of Hip Hop, discuss the personalities that shaped it and re-create the techniques that have propelled this dance movement to its position in modern pop culture. Thank you to Blake Schnirring and Jen Morse for pulling together this fun experience for our children.

This October's book fair featured a new company offering a broad range of titles for every grade. Thank you to all the parents who donated their time and bought books for their children and their teachers. Thank you to Mrs. Lietuvninkas, Mindee Blanco and Andrea Pinto for making this a great sale.

Our 4th & 5th grade social on October 23 was a fun and festive event in the gym with a "survivor theme" that left kids and teacher chaperones alike exhausted and smiling. Thanks go out to Gen Halloran, Mary Jean Basileo, and Jessica Ryan. The upper school held their social off site this year at Bounce U in Stratford on October 24. After a few hours and a couple of mild cases of vertigo, everyone left having had a great time and enjoyed letting off a little steam. Thanks to Deb Cooke and Sally Cadoux for all your organization on this.

The Gator Gift Shop has kicked off another great year with Unquowa "hoodie" sweatshirts, baseball hats, car magnets and totes. Please see the website ([www.unquowa.org](http://www.unquowa.org)) for details on sizes, prices and ordering. We will have the gift shop kiosk set up at key events throughout the month for your convenience. We are again offering Gator Coffee - all organic, fair trade and shade grown! A great idea for the holidays! Gym uniforms will be available throughout the year should you

need a different size or a replacement item for your child. Remember, wearing a Gator sweatshirt or hat is a great way to show your team spirit and support the school name throughout Connecticut! Thanks to Tami-Lyn Morse and Lynne Chapin for helping sell our wares!

Thanks to everyone who helped pull together very respectable results in our Fall Jeanine Wrapping Paper and Gifts Fundraiser. In light of the economy, we were able to raise enough money to contribute a substantial amount to this year's Winterfest production. Big thanks to Jessica Ryan for championing this and getting everyone to participate.

The front entrance continues to both surprise and delight students and all who enter our doors. Thank you to Kim Proto and Julia Spodnick for all their creative talents!

**SAVE THE DATE!** To help take our minds off all the news and have a great time mingling with our Unquowa community, the UPA is hosting a Wine Tasting on Saturday, November 15 at the Connecticut Audubon on Burr Street from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. All parents, alumni (of drinking age only, sorry), grandparents and friends are encouraged to attend this fabulous event. There will be a wonderful assortment of wines from around the world, delicious and plentiful hot and cold hors d'oeuvres and musical entertainment. Come sample the many varietals which will also be available for purchase. All proceeds will go to the UPA and benefit activities for your children throughout the year. We look forward to seeing all of you there. Special thanks to our committee - Jessica Ryan, Mary Jean Basileo, Mindee Blanco, Tami-Lyn Morse, Gina and Steve Jones, and David Dworski for pulling this together.

Our next UPA meeting is on Wednesday, November 5, following Assembly. We encourage all parents to stop in for a few minutes, grab a cup of coffee and listen in on what is coming up in the next few months!

Sorry for the omission in last month's *About U.S.* - thank you to Kate Haviland for all her help with the Fall FUNraiser, it was much appreciated.

**Joan Panagos and Marcie Lapido**  
**UPA Co-Presidents**

## Shop and Support Unquowa!

The UPA has entered a new partnership with Amazon, the largest web retailer. The school will receive funds equaling 5-10% of all purchases made on Amazon, depending on the price and number of items sold per month. This includes not only Amazon's vast selection, but also all of their web partners, including Target and Toys R'Us.

**In order for the school to receive credit, you must enter through the Unquowa website.** Click on the link at the top of the page for "UPA Partnerships." You will see more information about the partnership and the link to Amazon. There is no school code required; however, the school will only receive credit when you enter the Amazon site through this link.

And if your children are already starting outgrow their school clothes, don't forget about our other partnership with Lands' End. You can either use the link provided on the Unquowa page, or enter through your web browser. Simply click on "School Uniforms" at the bottom of their webpage. Please make sure to enter the school's id code 900028366.

Please pass this information on to friends and family. With the holidays coming up this will add up to significant funds for more excellent Unquowa programs.





## November

**Sunday, November 2**

Daylight Savings Time ends

**Tuesday, November 4**

Election Day

**Wednesday, November 5**

Assembly, 8:45 a.m.

UPA Meeting after Assembly

**Thursday, November 6**

Ladies Volleyball, 7:00 p.m.

**Sunday, November 9**

Ugandan Children's Music Troupe,  
3:00 - 4:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, November 11**

Veterans' Day

**Wednesday, November 12**

Assembly, 8:45 a.m.

**Friday, November 14**

Grandparents Day, 10:00 a.m.

Noon Dismissal

Athletic Dinner, 6:00 p.m.

**Wednesday, November 19**

Assembly, 8:45 a.m.

**Friday, November 21**

Casual Day

Teacher Appreciation Breakfast

**Tuesday, November 25**

Thanksgiving Banquet

Food Drive Delivery

**Wednesday, November 26 -****Sunday, November 30**

School Holiday -Thanksgiving



*See Page 6 for more photos of our  
Founders' Day celebration!*

*Check our website calendar for everything — from  
what's for lunch to what's happening each day!*