



About U.S.

Message from the Head of School

On January 20th our school received a simple gift - our technology failed. Careful plans had been made for the entire school to view the presidential inauguration on Smart Boards throughout the school, with younger students joining older and lunches delivered to classroom. The booting up began early so that we could be sure to have "all systems go" by the swearing in of the vice-president at 11:45 a.m., but by 11:15 it was clear that things were not going well. We had not counted on the fact that the millions of people who were not going to Washington for the inauguration might also be logging on to CNN or elsewhere to see the event on their network and so by 11:30 am, we had resigned ourselves to hearing the inauguration. "This is fine," we assured ourselves. "It's just as it would have been to listen to Roosevelt's inauguration on the radio."

But as resignation set in, Mr. Bob saved the day. While the whole school had been scurrying to get online, Bob Kelley was quietly searching the basement for the old rabbit-ear TV antenna that someone had failed to toss out. When he'd attached it to the kindergarten TV, confirmed that it worked, and rolled it as far into the gym as an extension cord would allow, he called the office to suggest that we might want to come watch. A quiet announcement was made throughout the school and faculty

and children of all ages quietly streamed into the gym and sat on bleachers, chairs and the floor to see the snowy sort of image that those of us who lived before cable remember with fondness just in time to hear the swearing in of Vice-President Biden.

What followed was a magical community moment that no one could have

important to say to those of us who are occupied with the business of government, that he would remind us that we were dealing with the life, the hopes and fears of millions of people." And finally, yes, we witnessed and heard the inspiring speech of our new president, Barack Obama, as he acknowledged his understanding of the challenges that lay ahead

for our nation - just as forty-three presidents before him have done - and his confidence in our nation's ability to meet these Herculean challenges.

But beyond the seeing and hearing of the inauguration itself and the unknown significance the memory of it will have for each of us depending on whether we were four or forty at the time we heard



planned. Yes, we all listened to John Williams' beautiful *Airs and Simple Gifts*, played by YoYo Ma, Itzak Perlaman, Anthony McGill and Gabriela Monterro. It was an exquisite example of American music and a loud statement about the importance of its place at such events. Yes, we heard Elizabeth Alexander's quietly powerful poem, *Praise Song for the Day*, and its inclusion by President Obama continued an important tradition begun by John F. Kennedy when he invited Robert Frost to write a poem to be given at his inauguration. President Kennedy said that Frost "had something

it, was the fact that we had experienced it as a school community. We had planned to watch this event in little pods, but because of a technological glitch we ended up watching it as we should have...as a community. I can't help but think that our founding fathers...if not all of them, then at least John Adams, who clearly had a keen understanding of the significance of small coincidence...were smiling from the great beyond on that historic day at the happy accident of failed progress which turned into a simple gift for our community of learners.

Sharon Lauer

What are Whole Grains?

Whole grains are receiving a lot of media and marketing attention in recent years, due their role in improving health and lowering cholesterol. What ARE whole grains and why are they so good for us?

Whole grain is just that; a cereal grain left fully intact after it is harvested. A whole grain is called "whole" because it contains the bran, germ, and endosperm — not just the endosperm, as is the case in refined grains. Examples of refined grains are white flour and white rice, while their whole grain counterparts are whole wheat flour and brown rice. When wheat is harvested, the result is a small kernel a little bigger than a kernel of corn (also a whole grain); that kernel is called a wheat berry. Wheat berries are ground into whole wheat flour. Wheat berries can be cooked and served just like rice or used in a salad.

Millet, oats, brown rice, rye and wheat berries contain many minerals and micro-nutrients that our bodies need for healthy functioning. Beware of tricky marketing practices that label breads as "whole flour" or "wheat flour" as this does not mean the item is made from whole wheat. Try substituting brown rice pasta for traditional pasta. Lower the refined, white flour in your diet to enjoy the long term health that comes from whole grains. I encourage you to do more research and cook with whole grains. And, as always, eat organic whenever possible.

If you are interested in some recipes using wheat berries, click on the "Whole Grain" link on the Dining page of our website.

Enjoy good health!

Chef Dan

Geography Bee

Burdo Edges Out Samowitz

On Thursday, January 15, the Unquowa School had its annual Geography Bee for grades 5-8. Students gathered in the library to watch the classroom bee winners answer difficult questions to see who would come out the overall school winner. Two students from each grade participated including eighth graders Seth Samowitz and Kamau Burton, our second and third place winners respectively. The seventh grade was represented by Mackenzie Murray and Jeremiah Starke. Jeremiah, last year's winner, was not as fortunate this year. The sixth grade contestants were Vikram Chaudhuri and Alex Burdo. Vikram participated last year but it was Alex who came out on top this year, becoming our school winner by answering three out of three questions correctly in the championship round, barely edging out eighth grader Seth Samowitz who answered two correctly. Fifth graders Victoria Clarke and Michael Proto, newcomers to the competition, represented the fifth grade well. While the students were nervous, they did a wonderful job and can be proud of their accomplishment.

Debbie Leidlein



A Historic Day

Although our PreK-3 class didn't watch the inauguration on TV with all of us, Mrs. Shannon made the day memorable for them with a number of activities. Each student made a necklace with Barack Obama's picture and red, white, blue and silver beads, a baton of red, white and blue streamers, and practiced marching in a presidential parade. They read about President Obama and learned that he is the first African American to be elected President. Each student received a framed photo (right) with a description of the day's events — classroom and national — on the reverse. What a great way to mark this historical event!



Grade 8 at Fairfield Museum & History Center

The eighth grade had the honor of developing and curating a special exhibit for the Fairfield Museum and History Center. Working with Christine Jewel of their education department, students spent the month of December delving into their own families' histories and finding objects that best represented their traditions and cultures. Each student brought in a treasured heirloom and photographed it, and then they wrote about the history of the object and why it is special to their families. The photographs and written statements were then combined into a visual memento of their own personal family history. The museum printed, mounted, and displayed the finished works in one of their galleries along with several of the actual objects in glass cases.



On Thursday, January 8, 2009, the eighth graders and their families attended an opening reception of the exhibit where they were able to share with each other and visitors their special and unique heritage. It was truly a remarkable and monumental event for everyone involved, and it showcases the talent, diversity, and insight that our students possess. The exhibit runs from now through February, with a special Family First Sunday event on February 1st.



Krissy Sabol

Mathematics Contest

In November, our seventh and eighth graders participated in the American Mathematics Contest (AMC). Along with students from 2500 other schools, they completed the 25-question, multiple-choice test that gives students an opportunity to solve a variety of non-routine problems.

At the assembly on January 14, Mrs. Haseltine announced the results. Eighth-grader Brandon Hylton is the school winner. He received a pin and a certificate for his first place achievement. Second place was earned by eighth-grader Max Martone. A tie for third place is shared by eighth-grader Mark Watson and seventh-grader Charlie Haviland.

For the first time ever, the sum of the top three student scores is greater than 50, so we qualified for a school certificate of merit - quite an accomplishment! Congratulations to everyone who participated!

Lisa Haseltine



Save the date...

Unquowa's 3rd Annual Golf Tournament

Monday May 4, 2009

Great River Golf Tournament, Milford

The Unquowa Garden



The Unquowa garden has been put to bed for the winter. In November, thanks to Mrs. Faulkner's 5th graders, the last of the summer vegetable plants were removed, vines were pulled from tepees, and the sage was harvested for our annual Thanksgiving feast. Perennial herbs were cut back, cuttings composted, and the soil turned. Mulch was added to lavender beds and a layer of straw to the herbs to provide protection from harsh winter temperatures.

If you had toured our garden in the fall, you would have likely seen students picking fresh vegetables and herbs for Chef Peter and Chef Dan. There were yellow cherry tomatoes, tomato-berries, and a volunteer heirloom tomato surrounded by marigolds and large pots of nasturtium. Marigolds and nasturtium are considered beneficial because they protect many plants from garden pests. There were also raised beds of lettuce, parsley, and Swiss chard, and a tepee of Italian green beans and cucumbers. Our herb garden had many varieties including basil, sage, oregano, thyme, rosemary, and chives. A student favorite was chocolate mint. There was even a large tepee covered with birdhouse gourds, heavenly blue morning glories, and scarlet red runners...a perfect hideaway for reading a book.



Our garden work continues through the winter with composting. After lunch, students deliver a bucket of food scraps, mostly fruit, vegetables, coffee grounds, and egg shells, to our compost bin. These high nitrogen materials are combined with carbon rich materials such as dry leaves, straw, and cornstalks and transformed into organic matter through the work of microorganisms. Water and oxygen are also important in order for decomposition to take place. Students sprinkle water on the pile as needed and add oxygen by stirring the food scraps in with an aerator. Compost improves the structure of soil, provides nutrients to plants, and encourages the growth of beneficial organisms. It is perfect for amending the soil in the spring and as a fertilizer for vegetables, herbs, and flowers. Composting helps the environment by reducing the amount of

food waste that goes to the landfill. It teaches children personal responsibility and how to be good stewards of the earth. Students at Unquowa are eagerly waiting for leaves, plant clippings, egg shells, and food scraps to transform into rich organic compost.

We look forward to returning to the garden in the spring. Two new raised beds have been assembled and filled with topsoil to provide additional space for teachers and students. Our program emphasizes sustainable practices including composting, mulching, and organic methods of pest control. It provides students with hands-on experiences in planting, nurturing, and harvesting and gives them many opportunities to observe nature's cycles. Gardening is a wonderful way to help children connect to their environment and foster a lifelong love of nature.

Mary Curran



Did you know that of all the seasons in the year; winter is the warmest?
Lauren Stringer,

author of the *"Winter is the Warmest Season"*, was inspired by her six year old son when he mentioned one hot summer day, that in winter we all stay warm by wearing warm clothes, drinking hot chocolate and of course sitting by a nice warm fire. Perhaps reading a good book! After reading her book our younger students shared their ideas of how winter is the warmest season.

Our library has stayed warm this winter with all the visits from upper school students working on their Academic Fair projects. Students used our Follett OPAC software to look up resources from our school library and then continued the process during their visit to Fairfield Woods Public Library. Once there, they met Nicole, the Teen Librarian, who showed them the process for getting a more detailed list of titles available about their topic. We all look forward to having the students share their projects.

We are pleased to announce that our school has been selected as a recipient of Picturing America, an exciting initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities. This program helps teach American history and culture by bringing some of the nation's greatest works of art directly to the classrooms. Look for more information about this program in March when we receive the art work.

Debbie Lietuvninkas

Meet our Board

This month we introduce you to 2 more of our board members:



Stephen Halas was appointed to the Board in January 2004. Born and raised in Chicago, Illinois, he is a graduate of Fairfield University where he met his wife, Marilyn. They live in Easton with their four children: Katherine (Unquowa sixth grader), Elizabeth (Unquowa third grader), Alexandra (Unquowa kindergartener), and George (future Unquowa student). Steve is the owner of a real estate management company.



Samuel (Sandy) Haviland was appointed to the Board in April 2005. Born and raised in Farmington, Connecticut, he received a BA Degree in Philosophy from Yale University and an MBA from the Kellogg School of Management. Sandy's background includes corporate management at United Technologies Corporation followed by more than a decade of middle market investment banking, including running his own middle market firm. Sandy and his wife, Kate, live in Fairfield with their two children, Charlie, a seventh grader at Unquowa, and Grace, a fourth grader at Unquowa.

Unquowa Summer Farm Camp beginning June 22 for 4 weeks!

Have you ever walked between the rows of growing vegetables in the early morning and experienced the fresh smell of produce mingling with the soil it's grown in? Have you ever made your own paint from the stamens of flowers? How about comparing the composition of different soils and performing experiments to find out which ones will provide the best drainage? Well, if you join us at Unquowa's Summer Farm Camp you will do all these things plus much more.

Campers entering 1st-6th grade

In addition to the amazing classes taught right here on our campus, the campers will go on daily field experiences. Four mornings a week campers will go to Sport Hill Farm, and experience first-hand what it is like to work on an organic farm. While planting, irrigating, and harvesting both produce and eggs, campers will learn the importance of organic farming for the planet and the health benefits to themselves.

Afternoons are comprised of an art class, with a focus on art in nature, a science class centered round the theme of sustainability and the environment, and a cooking class conducted by our school's chef. All classes are taught by teachers who are part of the Unquowa faculty.

One day a week the campers will go on an all-day field experience to a different location. From a trip to learn about the history of farming, visiting a bee keeper or even learning about how food is harvested from Long Island Sound, campers are given an opportunity to further learn what their impact is on the world.



is our responsibility to live sustainable lifestyles and to realize that our behaviors and choices affect our planet. Our goal is to instill this philosophy through education, which we believe will cultivate a feeling of respect, and a natural passion to protect all things in nature. This desire can be nurtured through the authentic exposure our program offers.

Camp brochures and application forms will be available on our website and in the Main Office. Hope to see you this summer!

Sweet Peas entering PreK-4 & K

Our youngest campers will enjoy a half day here at our campus, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Taught by our own early childhood staff, these campers will get to experience everything our older campers do, excluding field trips. They will work in our own raised beds, experience nature through science and art, and enjoy cooking classes with our school's chef. They will end their day with a time for free play.

Throughout this experience, we hope to instill in your child our school's sustainability philosophy. We are all stewards of this Earth and it

Mary Faulkner, Camp Director

Go Gators! Go for 100%

- * Click on "Annual Fund" on our website: www.unquowa.org to donate via PayPal
- * Donations are tax deductible and may be matched by your company's matching gift program.
- * Pledges are due June 30, 2009

Thank you to all of those listed below who have so generously donated to this year's fund.

Bob Sires, Annual Fund Chair

PreK-3 33%

Gina & Stephen Jones
Julie & Imran Mughal
Joan & Steve Panagos

PreK-4 61%

Mary & Al Faulkner
Deborah & Josh Garskof
Genevieve & Stephen Halloran
Kristin & Carl Horton
Gina & Steven Jones
Milia & Youssef Makhras
Blake & Luke Schnirring
Christine & Don Siegel
Mary & Terrance Sullivan
Alla & Serge Vash
Ciara & Joel Whidden

Kindergarten 59%

Irene & Timothy Brennan
Lynne & Geoff Chapin
Marilynn & Stephen Halas
Donna & Kristopher Hansen
Milia & Youssef Makhras
Julie & Imran Mughal
Joan & Steve Panagos
Kimberly & Michael Proto
Lisa & Forrest Rubenstein
Laura Baytos & Val Stalowir

First 63%

Lilly & Ralph Giacobbe
Genevieve & Stephen Halloran
Sally & Patrick McNeela
Joan & Steve Panagos
Nancy & Allan Vare

Second 79%

Irene & Timothy Brennan
Susan & Steven Calzone
Lynne & Geoff Chapin
Kristin & Carl Horton
Maria & Randall Hughes
Andrea & Paul Pinto
Ann & Mike Riffice
Mary Jean Basileo & Dan Solaz
Julie & Paul Spodnick

Third 60%

Kimberly Stevens & Thomas Abate
Robert Baer
Sally & Peter Cadoux
Marilynn Halas & Stephen Halas
Monica & Michael Murray
Kimberly & Michael Proto
Tara & Robert Sires
Laura Baytos & Val Stalowir
Maureen Doyle Stuhlman & Gerard Stuhlman

Fourth 56%

Irene & Michael Brennan
Lynne & Geoff Chapin
Lilly & Ralph Giacobbe
Kate & Sandy Haviland
Lisa & Fred Knopf
Monica & Michael Murray
Joann & Ade Omisore
Andrea & Paul Pinto
Mary Jean Basileo & Dan Solaz

Fifth 25%

Krystyna & Dan Leszczynski
Milia & Youssef Makhras
Kimberly & Michael Proto

Sixth 60%

Gabrielle & Gerry Burdo
Sara & Mark Greenawalt
Marilynn & Stephen Halas
Donna & Kristopher Hansen
Maria & Randall Hughes
Marcie Lapido & Alton Kremer
Krystyna & Dan Leszczynski
Ruth Sommers
Julie & Paul Spodnick
Laura Baytos & Val Stalowir
Maria & Kevin Taylor
Anne & David Tetenbaum
Ann & Sidney Weiner
Elin & Scott Weiss
Joan & Alpheus Winter

Seventh 63%

Robert Baer
LaVern & Chris Burton
Sally & Peter Cadoux
Deborah & Donald Cooke
Donna Cope
Sara & Mark Greenawalt
Kate & Sandy Haviland
Debra & Gary Meno
Monica & Michael Murray
Rita & Paul Schietinger
Maureen & Scott Watson
Ann & Sidney Weiner

Eighth 75%

Kenee & Rashid Brown
LaVern & Chris Burton
Elena & Charles Cameron-Sheffield
Grace Derek
Lisa & Fred Knopf
Leslie Miller & Barry Kresch
Patrice & David Leggiadro
Milia & Youssef Makhras
Lynn & Karl Martone
Sally & Bruce McDermott
Sally & Patrick McNeela
Cameron & Tom Thornton

Alumni

Christopher Anderhaggen '70
Brooks Barrett '47
Robin Beach '61
Karen Block-Nichols '93
Jonathan Brew '72
Jennifer Cain '02
Shannon Cain '00
Helene R. Epifano '67
Edith Walker Filliettaz '40

Kristin Lucas '00
Samuel Perez '02
Kenneth S. Savin '64
Linda & William Shelton '55
Keirsten Sires '06
Noyes Spelman '36
Ryan Taylor '06
Jilliana Marie Zikaras '03

Past Families & Friends

Gina & Andrew Arnold
Lisa Baytos
Joan & Richard Brew
Janet & Christopher Brogan
Karen & Scott Brownlow
Camp-Younts Foundation
Deborah & Robert Colantuoni
MaryLou DeRosa
Mary & Frode Foss-Skiftesvik

Jennifer Giannino & Marty Gibson
Joyce & Robert Hobbie
Karen & Robert Lucas
Sharon & Brian Miles
Linda & Louis Novitzky
Ruth Powell
Peternelly Speer

Grandparents (In Honor Of)

Ruth & Frank Abate (Claire Abate)
Millette Alexander (Charlie McGlinsky)
Patricia & Bryan Barry (Morgan & William Hansen)
Anne & Samuel Badger (Douglas Brown)
Carol Baytos (Stalowir children)
Judith & Martin Cohen (Jack Weiss)
Daphne Cope (Peta-Gay Clayton)
Marjorie Hackett (Abigail Winter)
Suellen & William Hansen (Morgan & Will Hansen)
Phyllis & Arthur Kresch (Matthew Kresch)
Lori Liptak (Max Martone)

Nancy & Enrique Lopez-Balboa (Taylor & Colby Lopez-Balboa)
Angelina & Michael Martone, Jr. (Max Martone)
Mona Mulvey (Katherine Viteretto)
Ruth Munson (Blake & Walter Erenhouse)
Josephine Osso (Michael, Marissa & Julia Proto)
Nancy Schwartz (Rachel McDermott)
Jacqueline & Richard Solaz (Carson & Spencer Solaz)
Shirley Stevens (Claire Abate)
Nancy Weiss (Jack Weiss)
Marion Winter (Abigail Winter)
Miriam & Thadeus Zalenski (Chloe Lyn Zalenski)

In Memory of S. Sheffield Eaton, '34

Jean Carpenter Winton, '34
Noyes Spelman, '36

Mary Helen & Arthur Williams
The Country Club of Fairfield

From the UPA

It is always amazing how quickly the first half of the year rushes by. There were so many memorable events. We have to thank our fabulous school community and parents for their time and commitment in helping us bring everything together and helping to enrich the lives of our children and the people around us.

Our annual production of "Winterfest" was a spectacle that delighted children and adults alike. Our children will cherish the memories of the event and their participation forever. Winterfest would not be possible if not for the hard work and dedication of our faculty, staff and parents. We would like to especially thank our Hospitality Committee who helped bring everything together for our celebratory feast - a tradition that lets us all come together for one last time before the holidays. Special thanks to Andrea Pinto and her team!

We would like to thank our room representatives for helping to communicate and organize class events. Keeping parents in touch with their children's activities takes a lot of work and we appreciate their time. It is especially welcoming to new families at the school to have people that help to make them feel a part of the Unquowa community. Thank you to Mindee Blanco and Irene Brennan for your hard work, enthusiasm and guidance.

Unquowa School has always been associated with giving back to the community and this year was no exception. The rough economy and downturn in the job market have made the need for assistance to children and families in our area greater than ever. During the holidays, we sponsored six local families in need through Fairfield Family Services. We provided them not only with essentials such as grocery cards and clothing, but also with cards for fun activities such as going to the movies. We joined forces with AMR (American Medical Response) to provide toys to children in our community. It was a wonderful sight to see all the students filling the ambulance to the top with their gifts. Lastly, we held a gently used coat and mitten drive for Mercy Learning Center. Again, the response of the Unquowa families was remarkable. A special thank you to Cathy Leitner and Steve Morse for all of their work and creativity in managing these heartfelt events. We would be remiss if we didn't mention something that continually brings a smile to everyone's face and brightens their day, which is the ever changing - ever beautiful displays in the entry hall. Thank you to Kim Proto and her team for their amazing creativity and skills with flowers, glitter and glue.

As we start 2009, please make a note of the following dates and events: Our annual Bingo Night is Friday, January 30th and is open to all grades. It is great fun for kids and parents alike! Most importantly - mark your calendars for our Annual Spring Fundraiser. The 2009 Fundraiser will take place from April 15th - 24th and will be an online auction accessible from your personal computer via a link from the school's website. During the week of the event we will have a computer terminal in the hallway that will allow people to use the system and have assistance if needed. Our online auction is comparable to placing a bid on eBay. Each person is able to set up a user name and password. Payment for the winning bid is secured by credit card. During the event we will be placing certain items online on different days of the week. We greatly encourage parents to invite relatives and friends to participate, as the event is open to everyone. Soon, the UPA will be soliciting for item donations. Generally, tickets for sporting events, live theater and TV show tapings make excellent auction items. Gift certificates from local dining establishments and electronics are always sought after. As always, we will offer the eagerly anticipated teacher's experiences as part of the online auction.

Thank you again for continued support and we look forward to a rewarding 2009. Go Gators!

Joan Panagos & Marcie Lapido, UPA Co-Presidents

Alumni News

Lauren Baratz-Logsted, Class of 1976, has just had the first two volumes in her *The Sisters Eight* series published. She wrote the books — *Annie's Adventures* and *Durinda's Dangers* — with her husband and daughter.

The books, written for 6-10 year-olds, have received glowing reviews including comparisons to Snicket, Dahl and Gorey. They are also the main selections of the Junior Library Guild. Read more about the series at www.sisterseight.com.

Congratulations to Lauren and her family. She will be visiting us on April 8 for an Authors' Day.

New Arrivals!

Blake and Walter Erenhouse, grades PreK-3 and 2, have a new baby brother! William was born right after Christmas.

Lucia Schnirring, PreK-3, has a new baby sister! Eliza was born in January.

Congratulations to the Erenhouse and Schnirring Families.



The 'Gator, 2009

Our eighth graders have started working on The 'Gator, our school yearbook! Each year our graduating class creates the yearbook which is given at no cost to every Unquowa student.

Since producing and printing the yearbook requires substantial funds, we sell ad space to our Unquowa families and local businesses to help defray the costs.

If you are interested in reserving space for your business, your child or a graduating eighth grader, please contact Chriss Gombos at 203-336-3801 or email cgombos@unquowa.org for information and cost. Thank you in advance for your support!

981 Stratfield Road, Fairfield, CT 06825-1697

THE UNQUOWA SCHOOL



February

Check our online calendar for the complete and constantly updated schedule, but dates to note in February include:

Presidents' Weekend

Friday, February 13 & Monday, February 16

School will be closed for the holiday

Science Fair

Wednesday, February 11 at 7:00 p.m.

Come see projects by students in grades 4 and 5

**Go to www.unquowa.org
and click on "Calendar"**



Whether it be donating used Halloween costumes to a local charity, creating science projects with soda bottles or decorating holiday cookies, Unquowa Girl Scout Brownie Troop 33177 does it all!