

NEWSLETTER

MAY/JUNE 2009

UPATTINAS

SCHOOL & RESOURCE CENTER

"OWN YOUR EDUCATION!" NCACS CONFERENCE A SUCCESS!

The last weekend of April saw the gathering of many of the most dedicated people of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools. Students, teachers, and parents came from all over this country and from Japan to share experiences, new research in the fields, and many exciting activities.

Among the varied workshops was a well-attended tour of the local CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) where attendees were given great information on a better way to grow food. **Sam Cantrell**, the proprietor of Maysie's Farm, said, "If you eat food, you're involved in agriculture." He added, "We have millions of new people here who need to eat. What we don't have is new farmers. In Pennsylvania, they do not come from farming families. Rather, the majority come from mid-life career change individuals and they're mostly female." He went on to say that we need to make a difference in the system by voting wisely. The problems currently include degraded soils which lower the nutrition of foods and a decline of life for beneficial organisms. This also exacerbates poverty in third world countries.

"We're trying to educate and inform people that if we don't demand high quality food, we'll get junk food. We must actively advocate for better food." Supporting your local CSA is one way to do that.

Other excellent and informative workshops included Chester County



PHOTO BY NANCY STILES

Sam Cantrell discusses CSAs with workshop attendees on the first day of the conference.

defense attorney **Tim Trott's** "Youth Civil Rights in America" in which much discussion was centered on the Savanna Redding case. She was the 13-year-old girl who was searched because of suspicion of having extra-strength ibuprofen in school. (The group was horrified by the action taken by the administration of her school.) Tim said it may be summer time before a decision is made by the Supreme Court. The school appealed the Ninth Circuit Court's decision that it had been wrong. Tim mused on



PHOTO BY NANCY STILES

Tim Trott leads workshop on youth civil rights in America.

whether the conservative judges would rule in Savanna's favor if they could relate the incident to their own families.

Tim explained how police treat adults and children differently. Adults usually say, "I want a lawyer." Police go much further with a minor. He also said that it's a myth that juvenile records get sealed or expunged. It is, furthermore, his opinion that the privatizing of detention facilities has corrupted the system. In the five counties where Tim practices law, many of the local rules are not even written down.

A lady from California said more juveniles are serving life sentences now, often in private facilities in California.

Lower School teacher Justin Colella asked if the Supreme Court finds in favor of the school, will districts be able to strip-search 13 year olds? The answer was an emphatic "Yes."

A really moving workshop was
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NCACS CONFERENCE

(Continued from page 1)

Pat Montgomery's "Play Is the Work of the Child." The group saw the documentary film *Where Do the Children Play?* It portrayed the plight of today's children who don't play outside in an unstructured way. The children of Beaver Island, 60 miles from Michigan, play outside often. They seemed happy. As one boy said, "If you have good food to eat and a nice warm bed, then you can be happy."

So many of America's children no longer have access to nature. Kids used to be left largely on their own to make up any kind of play they wanted to. Now, kids play inside or in a regimented program such as suburban soccer teams.

In the discussion that followed the film, Karen Whitescarver of the



PHOTO BY NANCY STILES

Rose Bonjo hoops on the lawn.

Highland School, near Ohio and West Virginia, commented, "A big component of play is doing it without adults to monitor the activity."

Pat Montgomery, founder of Clonlara School in Ann Arbor, Mich., said, "You have to trust children's instincts. Get rid of parents. They say, 'Watch your footing' when a child is climbing a tree. She got that high because she was watching her footing!"

There were many excellent workshops but perhaps one of the best events was the visually stunning Power Point slide show presented by alumnus



PHOTO BY ANNA KNAPP

Left to right: Lily Dudek, Nate Preiss, Josh Bonjo, and Alex Knapp play doubles.

Jeff Silverman of portraits of people he met in his travels in 49 countries. As the photos were shown, melodic and rhythmic African music provided accompaniment.

Once a Peace Corps volunteer, Jeff now works for Oxfam Great Britain in Southern Sudan. There is no tarmac road there and no electricity. He returns there on Saturday, May 2, from his brief visit to the States. He should again come home in September.

He manages a group working in emergency preparedness, response, and development. His portraits, taken in several countries, were stunning. He said he noticed that no matter what the conditions, the children always smile, except in Southern Sudan. Perhaps the conditions are so dire there that the children can't smile.

Jeff spoke to a large crowd in the Big Room and answered several questions. It was a moving experience. Some viewers came away awed by the work Jeff is doing. He keeps a sense of humor and perspective when dealing with cultures so different from our own and with people who are suffering.

This serious presentation was followed by music teacher and cool performer Jeff Domenick and his band, the Fraction. During a rendition of "Mustang Sally," teacher Jeremy Collins sang with the band while lots of kids danced in the back of the gym.

There were many superior workshops, too numerous to mention here, lots of ping pong and other games.

NCACS business was done. And over 200 people were fed sumptuously by Upatinas Kitchen Goddess Schuyler Vance. All the staff pulled together to help event planner Darling Bonjo achieve a warm, community-building event.



PHOTO BY NANCY STILES

Darling Bonjo and Sam Brams

ANNUAL ALL-COMMUNITY MEETING HELD APRIL 15TH



PHOTO BY ANNA KNAPP

Alden Bull, Janice King, Sandy Hurst, and Nancy Collins discuss the new budget.

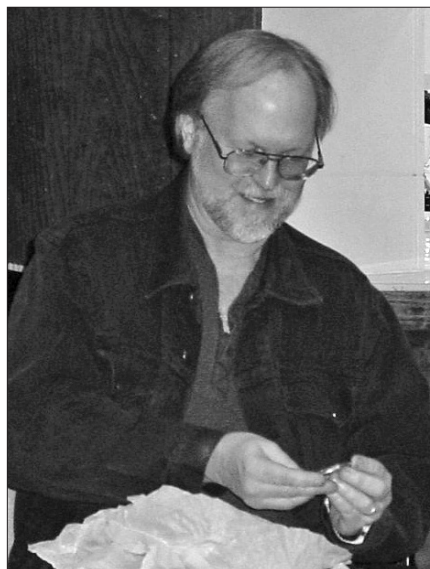


PHOTO BY ANNA KNAPP

Out-going board member, Bob Sybesma receives gift from Sandy Hurst.

BULLETIN BOARD

Congratulations, Jacob Cordery! He was accepted at the University of Delaware, Drew University in N. J., and Hartford College in Hartford, Conn. Jacob has not yet decided where he will attend.

Cool! Conor McAlarney was accepted at both Temple University in Philadelphia and at Kutztown University in Kutztown, Pa.

Graduation 2009 will be held on the lawn (or in the gym if the weather is bad) on Friday, June 5, at 4:30 p.m., so as many guests may be invited as desired. Please bring a dish to serve 15 people.

Final Conferences are coming! Please call Donna in the office to schedule your final conference Monday to Friday, June 1-4, from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m.

Don't Forget! Coming in May:

May 8 & 11:
Friday and Monday, Testing for 3rd, 5th, and 8th grades, 9:30-12:30, Big Room. Day schoolers will be tested in their classrooms this year. Homeschoolers should call for reservations. Non-registered families pay \$35 per child.

May 13: Wednesday
Graduating Seniors Meeting, 1 p.m. in Big Room. Know how you want your name to appear on diploma. Seniors should have received a letter discussing this meeting. Parents need not be present. This is just for seniors.

May 15: Friday
Evening of the Arts, 7 -10 p.m., Gym.

May 20: Wednesday
Lower, Middle, and TEP Graduations, 11:30 a.m., Big Room.

May 23: Saturday
High School Prom, 8 p.m.-midnight.

May 25: Monday
Memorial Day, No School

May 27: Wednesday
Field Day

May 29: Friday
Last Day of Classes

May 30: Saturday
Work Party, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Pay it in advance.
You can pay for your child's lunch ahead of time with a check. Lunch is \$25 per week (\$5 per day) and you can pay for as many weeks or days as you like. No IOUs will be extended after May 15th.

SCIENCE FEST A HIT WITH MIDDLE AND LOWER SCHOOLERS

An exciting array of projects adorned the Big Room on March 25 as part of science teacher **Sherri Hamilton's** annual Science Fest. There were interesting dioramas of habitats with an information sheet on each child's favorite animal from the Lower School. "At this level," Sherri said, "The emphasis is on exploring the natural world."

The Middle School did actual research to test a hypothesis. "We do more with the scientific method with this group," Sherri continued. "The kids create a hypothesis to test and do research for background information." There were many surveys: Do you like cake or pie or both? Do you like Coke or Pepsi better and could you tell the difference?

"I gave the students very little guidance," Sherri said. "I wanted them to see that science is all around them, that they're using the scientific method every time they test an idea." The Fest was non-competitive.

THANKS FOR THE CHAIRS!

Middle School parent **Barbara Berger** facilitated the donation of over 100 chairs from Eagleville Hospital, where she works. The hospital no longer needed them and Upattinas did. Her thoughtfulness saved a lot of money in rentals for both the recent conference and for graduation.



UPATTINAS BOARD TO REMAIN SIMILAR TO THIS YEAR

Upattinas is the only known school in this area where students are not only allowed to be on the board but also are permitted to vote. High school representatives on a board of 15 are: **Sara Agnew** and **Dylan Trott**. Alternates are **Max Pillsbury** and **Mike Stauffer**. Middle School representatives are **Daniel Berger** and **Hannah Sanders**.

MAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8 <i>Testing 3rd, 5th, and 8th Grades 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.</i>	9
10	11 <i>Testing 3rd, 5th, and 8th Grades 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.</i>	12	13 <i>Graduating Seniors Meeting 1:00 p.m. Big Room</i>	14	15 <i>Evening of the Arts 7:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m.</i> 	16
17	18	19	20 <i>Lower Sch., Middle Sch., & TEP Graduations 11:30 a.m. Big Room</i>	21	22	23 <i>High School Prom 8:00 p.m.-Midnight</i> 
24	25 <i>Memorial Day No School</i> 	26	27 <i>Field Day</i> 	28	29 <i>Last Day of Classes</i>	30 <i>Work Party 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.</i> 
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JUN

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 <i>Family Conferences Parent & Student Must Attend</i>	2 <i>Family Conferences Parent & Student Must Attend</i>	3 <i>Family Conferences Parent & Student Must Attend</i>	4 <i>Family Conferences Parent & Student Must Attend</i>	5 <i>Graduation 4:30 p.m. Last Day of School</i> 	6
7	8 <i>Staff Days</i>	9 <i>Staff Days</i>	10 <i>Staff Days</i>	11 <i>Staff Days</i>	12 <i>Staff Days</i>	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

UPATTINAS SCHOOL CALENDAR 2009

May 8 & 11 (F-M)

Testing 3rd, 5th, and 8th Grades
9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

May 13 (W)

Graduating Seniors Meeting
1:00 p.m. – Big Room

May 15 (F)

Evening of the Arts
7:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m.

May 20 (W)

Lower Sch., Middle Sch.,
& TEP Graduations
11:30 a.m. – Big Room

May 23 (Sat)

High School Prom
8:00 p.m.-Midnight

May 25 (M)

Memorial Day
No School

May 27 (W)

Field Day

May 29 (F)

Last Day of Classes

May 30 (Sat)

Work Party
9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

June 1-4 (M-Th)

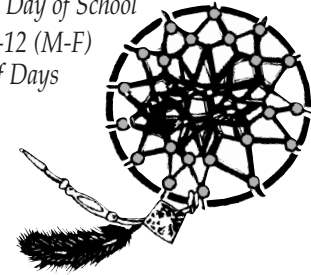
Family Conferences
Parent & Student Must Attend

June 5 (F)

Graduation 4:30 p.m.
Last Day of School

June 8-12 (M-F)

Staff Days



**REGULARLY
SCHEDULED MEETINGS:**

The **Staff** meets every Thursday from 4:15 to 6:30 p.m.

The **Board** meets the third Wednesday of each month from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

The **Finance Committee** meets the Thursday before the Wednesday Board Meeting from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS:

If Downingtown area schools are closed, we will be closed.

If Downingtown area schools are delayed, we will be delayed. The van will also follow the Downingtown area School District's schedule for closings and delays.

On bad weather days, families should be guided by their home school district bus schedules. Listen for these on your radio or local TV station. If the van is not running to the station, van riders will receive a call.

Weather patterns in this area vary greatly. If you are an inexperienced driver, please do not drive in bad weather. Please do not send your children to school if you think the roads are dangerous.

School Closing Numbers:

Phoenixville: 856 • Owen J. Roberts: 857
Downingtown: 876 • West Chester: 851
Great Valley: 855 • Coatesville: 852
Twin Valley has no school closing number



UPATTINAS SCHOOL
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**NCACS
Conference**

