

The RamGram



Award Winning Newsletter of Robinson Secondary PTSA

February 2008

February at a Glance

Detailed information regarding many of these events can be found inside the RamGram ♦ See Robinson's website:
<http://www.fcps.edu/RobinsonSS/> for more information including club event dates.

Saturday, February 2	RBOPO District Band Concert – West Potomac
Monday, February 4	PTA Day at the General Assembly – Richmond General Assembly
Tuesday, February 5	SGA Clash of the Classes
Wednesday, February 6	Fairfax County Public Meeting on Proposed FY 2009 Budget – Jackson Middle School – 6-7:30pm
Thursday, February 7	ESOL Parent Night
Friday, February 8	RBOPO Meeting – HS Band Room – 7pm
Thu-Sat, Feb 7-9	District Chorus (selected students)
Saturday, February 9	SGA Gatorball Tournament
	Crew Tag Day
Tuesday, February 12	PTSA Special Education Committee Meeting – Room 508 (at Robinson) – 7pm
Wednesday, February 13	SGA Teacher/Student of the Quarter Ceremony – 2:30pm
Thursday, February 14	RBOPO Jazz Sweets 'n Swing Concert – Gold Cafeteria – 7pm
Friday, February 15	MS Play <i>Bye, Bye Birdie</i> – Russell Theatre – 7:30pm
Saturday, February 16	MS Play <i>Bye, Bye Birdie</i> – Russell Theatre – 2:30 & 7:30pm
Sunday, February 17	MS Play <i>Bye, Bye Birdie</i> – Russell Theatre – 2:30pm
Monday, February 18	PRESIDENT'S DAY – NO SCHOOL
Saturday, February 23	SGA Hoop-it-Up 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament
	RBOPO All State Auditions – JMU Harrisonburg
Monday, February 25	Rising 7 th Grade Parent Orientation/Electives Expo – 6:30-9pm (Snow Date 3/6/08)
Tuesday, February 26	RBOPO MS/HS Bands Pre-Festival Concert – Russell Theatre – 7:30pm
Wednesday, February 27	RBOPO HS Band Pre-Festival Concert – Russell Theatre – 7:30pm
Thu-Sat, Feb 28-Mar 1	RBOPO HS Band Festival – West Springfield HS
Friday, February 29	TheatreSports Competition – Russell Theatre – 7:30pm
Saturday, March 1	Virginia PTA Scholarships must be postmarked
Tuesday, March 4	Early Dismissal (All Students) – Robinson – 10:25am
	Theatre Production Class <i>Romeo & Juliet</i> – Folger Student Shakespeare Festival – Washington DC
Tue-Wed, Mar 4-5	11 th Grade SOL Writing Tests – During School
Thu-Sat, Mar 6-8	Orchestra Festival – Westfield HS
Monday, March 10	Academic Boosters Meeting – Principal's Conference Room – 7pm
Thursday, April 24	Robinson Art Show
Thu-Sat, May 1-3	HS Spring Musical <i>Les Misérables</i> – Russell Theatre
Thursday, May 8	PTSA Alternatives to Four Year College 3 rd Annual Resource Fair – West Springfield HS
Fri-Sat, May 9-10	HS Spring Musical <i>Les Misérables</i> – Russell Theatre

RamGram PTSA Highlights:

- ❖ The Proposed FY 2009 Fairfax County Budget includes **staff reductions**, **increased class size** and **charging Robinson families fees**
- ❖ Fairfax County's five year CIP program leaves Robinson Secondary out and hopes Woodson's 30 year-old lockers will improve Robinson's locker rooms
- ❖ Robinson PTSA will be at Richmond City Hall on Monday, February 4th talking with our legislators enforcing the importance of adequate funding for public school education especially for secondary schools and advocating for programs that assist teens.
- ❖ The reason the Fairfax County School Board Transportation Task Force is looking at later start times for high schools is because the teen sleep clock differs from the adult clock. Teens need more sleep, about nine hours each night. Also, the teen sleep clock shifts to a later time of day. The hormone responsible for making people sleepy peaks later in teen bodies than in adults or younger children. This hormone makes it difficult for teens to fall asleep much before 11pm or to wake up much before 8am
- ❖ Please consider volunteering for the "Alternatives to College Resource Fair" to tell students how to pursue careers that include, but are not limited to: government, broadcasting, welding, florists, heating/a/c, massage, dog training, tailoring, personal training, sign making, appliance repairs, plumbing, roofing, metal fabrications, solar energy, commercial photography, communication services, claims adjusting, cabinet making, bike repair, glaziers, engraving, furniture repair, event planning, temp agencies, personal training
- ❖ Robinson PTSA and Virginia PTA scholarships
- ❖ Six Robinson students were honored at the Council level of the National PTA Reflections program. All *Outstanding Interpretation* winners advanced to the District level of competition.
- ❖ Join Robinson PTSA today

JOIN PTSA TODAY ♦ February 2008 ♦ Robinson PTSA Newsletter ♦ 1 ♦ **JOIN PTSA TODAY**
James W. Robinson Secondary ♦ 5035 Sideburn Road ♦ Fairfax VA 22030

PTSA News

Proposed FY 2009 School Budget Can Dent Your Wallet and Crowd Robinson's Classrooms

Budget Highlights: If you log onto the FCPS website, <http://www.fcps.edu/index.shtml>, you will read that Superintendent Jack D. Dale proposed a school system budget of \$2.3 billion for FY 2009 that reflects cuts of \$45.6 million and approximately 521 positions throughout FCPS. The budget also included \$52.4 million for a 3.0 percent cost of living increase for employees and \$14.4 million to cover the costs of supporting an estimated 2,549 additional students and to provide advance staffing for two new elementary schools in September 2009. There are many new initiatives being proposed in the FY 2009 budget such as an expansion of foreign language in elementary schools programs (\$2.1 million), further expansion of full-day kindergarten (\$5.7 million) and purchasing a new student information computer system (\$5.7 million).

There are also many budget reductions. Among the budget reductions that will have serious impacts to secondary and high schools are increasing the size of general education classes by .5 students (\$11 million, 158 positions eliminated), reducing the number of instructional assistants (\$3.6 million, 111 positions eliminated), and reducing student transportation (\$1.7 million). Staff reductions will be accomplished through attrition. Additionally, the school system is proposing to obtain revenue from charging every student who wishes to participate in an extra-curricular activity a student activity fee of \$50 per activity and charging student fees for PSAT, Advanced Placement (AP), and International Baccalaureate (IB) testing.

Reactions: Principals, teachers and parents are against an increase of class size and thereby a reduction in some of the school's class offerings. If the .5 student increase is improved, about 12 sections (classes) will be eliminated at Robinson and others classes such as sciences or languages stand a strong possibility of being formed as split classes. IB students may find it even more difficult in 2008-2009 to get the classes they need to graduate. Additionally, class sizes may very well continue to rise in FY 2010 to an increase of 1 student per class. By increasing class size, teachers are overburdened and students do not get the attention they need. The overall effectiveness and quality of instruction diminishes. It is the PTSA's position that increasing the size of our classrooms is not the answer to FCPS's budget problems.

Also, impacting our student and parent's pocketbook is the proposed \$50 activity fee for extra-curricular activities. Passage of this would require that each student who wishes to participate in ANY sport, or club would have to pay \$50 to the county to help the county balance its budget. As proposed, the school would have to collect this fee from each student and then hand over the entire amount collected to the school system to be placed in their general operating fund. No part of the collected money would be retained by the school to off-set any administration, facility or extra-curricular need. This proposal would have an impact on many families especially

larger families where in many cases, parents and children will have to make some serious decisions on the student's activities. Let's look at an example of a family with two children in high school. Student 1 is involved in a fall and winter sport and two clubs (\$200); Student two is involved in a winter and spring sport and three clubs (\$250). Annual fee this family has to pay the county just to have their children participate in these activities \$450.00. Additionally, once established this fee may easily be raised in the proposed FY 2010 budget to \$100 or more per activity. This would mean that the same family who paid \$450 in the 2008 school year would be paying \$900 in the 2010 school year to the county to offset other county initiatives. The County Response to inquiries, "Pursuant to the Virginia Administrative Code (8VAC20-370-10) fees may be charged for voluntary student activities. The fee will not be charged for co-curricular activities. The County sees this fee, a total of \$2.7 million in FY2009, as found money for their new initiatives!

Additionally, all students taking AP or IB examinations would be required to pay for all their exams. Exam fees on top of activity fees can crush some families. Once again, fees proposed in FY 2009, a total of \$2.5 million would be established to offset other county school board initiatives.

Action: Robinson PTSA is present at all school board budget work sessions and speaking at all public budget forums. However, we need your help. At the January 28th school board work session, one of the school board members was vocal that he did not see how class size could affect high school students. Please note: Our county school board will support what the superintendent is presenting if no one expresses any concerns otherwise. Remember the "squeaky wheel gets the grease."

On February 6th, there will be a public hearing on the proposed school budget for FY 2009. Currently, we have three students who will be speaking on behalf of the SGA or a school sport and three parents who will speak on behalf of Robinson. Additional student and parent speakers are needed. Please volunteer to speak out on February 6th against the increase of class size or the creation of a student activity fee or AP/IB test fee. You may sign up online at the school board website:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=2fb1FtG_2bZ3eG14UokAW5anw_3d_3d. Once you receive your speaker confirmation with your speaker number, please advise Terry Matlaga Bell at tmatlaga@yahoo.com when you will be speaking so Robinson parents and students can be present to support all Robinson speakers.

Student and parent support is especially needed when our Robinson students are speaking that day. Please come out and stand up in support of these students as they speak. They will be speaking on February 6th sometime between 6 PM and 7/7:30 PM at Jackson Middle School, 3020 Gallows Road, Falls Church, VA.

Can't attend but wish to make a difference? Please share your displeasure with the above proposed budget reduction or fees

by submitting written testimony to the School Board Office, 8115 Gatehouse Road, Suite 5400, Falls Church, VA 22042, or e-mail the School Board at SchoolBoardMembers@fcps.edu. (Please provide your full name, home address, and home and work telephone numbers as applicable.) Robinson needs your help. The Robinson PTSA hopes we can count on your support. For additional information, contact Terry Matlaga Bell at tmatlaga@yahoo.com or Kevin Bell at kbell@yahoo.com or (703) 802-1496. – Terry Matlaga Bell, 1st VP

Robinson SS Not Included In 2008-2012 Fairfax County Comprehensive Improvement Program

Background: Each year, Fairfax County Public Schools develops a five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to address future facility needs. The CIP assesses requirements for new facilities, renewals of existing facilities, infrastructure management and other facility-related needs.



Action: At the PTSA Annual Candidates Forum in October, the PTSA made known to the School Board Candidates present that one section of our building was never renovated in the 1994-6 Robinson Renovation. These areas included not only the gym, but all the adjacent classrooms, hallways, girls and boys' bathrooms, all the high school and middle school boys and girls' locker rooms, weight rooms, training rooms, and athletic administrative spaces.

The PTSA also informed the School Board Candidates of our renovation needs in November at the PTSA Legislative Forum. And in January, at the CIP Public Hearing, three different members of the Robinson School Community (a student, the Athletic Booster President and the VP for Robinson PTSA) testified. Each member focused obtaining funding on the section of the Robinson main facility that was not renovated in the 1994-6 renovation in particular the redesign of the locker rooms.

Result: Unfortunately, though our administrators and the cluster administrators called our locker rooms "deplorable", the county school system decided to just give Robinson the old lockers from Woodson. Apparently, they are in much better condition than ours. We asked our Braddock School Board Member, Tessie Wilson, if Robinson's concerns were addressed at the next Board Meeting, a CIP work session. The following is a reprint of the correspondence sent to the PTSA.

There was no discussion of the Robinson locker bays at the CIP work session. The discussion centered primary on the schools which are in much worse shape, including West Springfield where there are sewer back-ups,

multiple cases of roof leaks and an infrastructure that is failing.

And West Springfield is not the only school where we have serious problems. There are approximately 5 or 6 other high schools with similar problems.

In addition, we have several schools which are extremely overcrowded. We need to provide some relief to those schools with either modular units or building new additions and schools.

As you may know, our capital improvement budget does not keep up with our needs.

I have checked with staff, and in order to re-configure the locker room, the entire concrete floor would have to be removed, as the locker bases are actually embedded in the concrete. At this point, there just is not the money to do that.

However, staff believes that they have found lockers which are newer and in much better shape than the ones at Robinson, and I am hopeful that the lockers themselves can be replaced in the near future.

Robinson will be receiving lockers from Woodson that are over 30 years old but are in much better condition. The good news is that we will be getting better lockers; the bad news is that there are many facility issues at Robinson that need to be addressed. In order to get any renovations completed to our facility, Robinson must be in the FCPS's next CIP. Please join us next year, to once again raise the School Board's awareness of Robinson's facilities needs. – Terry Matlaga Bell, 1st VP

Visit Richmond: February 4th is PTA Day at the General Assembly

Robinson PTSA will be in Richmond on Monday, February 4th talking with our legislators enforcing the importance of adequate funding for public school education especially for secondary schools and advocating for programs that assist teens. The PTSA invites parents and students to join us on PTA Day at the General Assembly, Monday, February 4, 2008, Richmond City Hall, 900 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219. If you are interested in attending, please contact Terry Matlaga Bell, tmatlaga@yahoo.com so the PTSA can register you for this event. The agenda for the day is as follows:

- ❖ **8:30 AM** Registration and Coffee
- ❖ **9:00 AM** PTA Day Information, Guest Speakers, Talking Points
- ❖ **10:45 AM** Depart for General Assembly visits
- ❖ **11:00 -12:00PM** Northern Virginia District PTSA Forum with Northern Virginia Delegates and Senators
- ❖ **12:30-1:30PM** VA PTS and the Virginia Education Association: An assemblage with several keynote speakers to include Governor Tim Kaine and Virginia Superintendent of Education, Dr. Billy Cannady.

– Terry Matlaga Bell, 1st VP

SLEEP UPDATE



The Transportation Task Force (TTF), appointed by our Fairfax County School Board, has been working hard and has made some preliminary recommendations in terms of how long bus rides should be, limits on children waiting for buses in the dark, etc.

The TTF Charter from the School Board requires that the group consider recommendations to FCPS on reengineering of the school system's bus service as well as to advise the School Board with regard to the best option or options for achieving later high school start times.

The reason the TTF is looking at later start times for high schools is because the teen sleep clock differs from the adult clock. Teens need more sleep, about 9 hours each night. Also, the teen sleep clock shifts to a later time of day. The hormone responsible for making people sleepy peaks later in teen bodies than in adults or younger children. This hormone makes it difficult for teens to fall asleep much before 11 p.m. or to wake up much before 8 a.m.

Current high school start times have buses picking students up before 6 a.m. and interrupting their sleep cycle in the midst of some of the best and deepest sleep of the night.

Various committees are looking at potential impacts of five bell schedule options that would provide later start times for high school students.

Please send feedback on the bell schedule alternatives to SLEEP2005@aol.com. When looking at the bell options or making other proposals, please keep in mind these basic factors:

- ❖ Schools need to be on three "tiers" so buses can be used three times in the AM and PM for efficiency's sake (having fewer tiers would cost 10s of millions of dollars, so is not a viable option)
- ❖ Tiers must be at least 45 minutes apart (or longer, to keep costs down) for the buses to make deliveries and get to their next runs
- ❖ This means the earliest bell and the latest bell need to be about 1.5 to 2 hours apart.
- ❖ Elementary schools now start anywhere from 7:50 am to 9:25 am and must be in more than one tier.
- ❖ The big XXXXs on the charts indicate that staff would make an effort to put as many of the schools on these tiers as possible. The little xxxxs show that there is flexibility for the transportation staff to put some schools on another tier.

Use this link to see options that the TTF is now considering: <http://www.fcps.edu/fts/taskforce07/documents/tfbellshchedules.pdf> To learn more about teen sleep needs, visit www.sleepinfairfax.org

- SUPPORTS LATER START TIMES:
FCCPTA's (Fairfax County Council of PTA's)
League of Women Voters (Fairfax County Chapter)



Help Needed for Resource Fair – Share Your Career Experience

The 3rd annual PTSA Alternatives to Four Year College Resource Fair will be held on May 8, at West Springfield High School. If you work in any of the following fields, or have contacts that can help out, please consider volunteering to tell students how to pursue the following careers:

Government, broadcasting, welding, florists, heating/air conditioning, massage, dog training, tailoring, personal training, sign making, appliance repairs, plumbing, roofing, metal fabrications, solar energy, commercial photography, communication services, claims adjusting, cabinet making, bike repair, glaziers, engraving, furniture repair, event planning, temp agencies, personal training – or anything else you can think of!

If you can help, contact Margaret Fisher (703) 968-2071 jrosenthal2@cox.net. – Margaret Fisher, PTSA SPEC

Scholarships

Virginia PTA: The Virginia PTA Scholarship Program is offering two \$1,200 scholarships as well as an unspecified number of \$1,000 scholarships. This scholarship program is open to high school seniors who are residents of Virginia and who attend a Virginia high school and are planning to attend a Virginia college or university. Applicants must be planning to pursue a career in teaching or qualifying for service with a youth-serving agency in Virginia. The scholarship requires a 2.5 GPA and is based on financial need and academic achievement. All applications must be postmarked by March 1, 2008. Additional information and applications are available in the Career Center.

Robinson PTSA: The Robinson PTSA Executive Board voted at its December meeting to increase the amount of both the Elaine Heenan and "Friends" Scholarships from \$500 to \$1,000. Further information on the Robinson PTSA scholarships will appear in the March RamGram.

– Bonnie Roffenbender, PTSA Scholarship Chair

Reflections Participants Honored: Robinson Students Place in District and Council Competitions



The National PTA believes all children deserve a quality arts education and encourages students to pursue artistic expression through participation in its annual Reflections Program. The program offers students the opportunity to create works of art for fun and recognition. Students in preschool through grade 12 are encouraged to submit works of art in six areas: literature, musical composition, photography, film/video editing, dance choreography, and the visual arts (which include art forms such as drawing, painting, print making, and

collage). In its more than 30-year history, the program has encouraged millions of students across the nation and in American schools overseas to explore their artistic talents.

Each year, the Reflections Program challenges students to create art that supports a specific theme. Themes are selected from thousands of ideas submitted by students to National PTA's Reflections Program Theme Search. This year's theme was "I Can Make A Difference By..."

Professionals working in literature, musical composition, photography, dance choreography, film/video editing, and visual arts fields volunteer to judge student entries. Entries are first judged at the school level, where selected works are chosen to represent the PTA at each subsequent level—council, district, state, and then national. The top students receive the following awards: 1st Place Outstanding Interpretation, 2nd Place Award of Excellence, or 3rd Place Award of Merit. The Outstanding Interpretation award winners advance to the next level of competition.

Danny Jun, a junior, placed 2nd- The Award of Excellence in the District level of competition for Music Composition. Danny's composition competed against the top winners from Alexandria City Council, Arlington County Council, Fairfax City, Fairfax County Council and Falls Church City.

Six Robinson students were honored at the Council level. The Council level competes with eight school clusters. All Outstanding Interpretation winners advanced to the District level of competition. Congratulations to all!

- ❖ **Danny Jun**, Senior Division, Music Composition: Outstanding Interpretation
- ❖ **Dae Yong Jang**, Senior Division, Visual Arts: Outstanding Interpretation
- ❖ **Jeremy Day**, Junior Division, Music Composition: Award of Excellence
- ❖ **Lindsey Hardenbergh**, Senior Division, Literature: Award of Merit
- ❖ **Larissa Staszak**, Senior Division, Photography: Award of Merit
- ❖ **Ariana Grundvig**, Junior Division, Literature: Award of Merit

– Stacy Russell, PTSA Reflections Chair

It's Not Too Late! Join Robinson PTSA Today!

While the acronym "PTA" is commonly used to describe any parent group, not all parent groups are the same! Here are some ways the Parent Teacher Association stands out:

- ❖ Founded in 1897, PTA is the nation's original and premier parent


involvement/child advocacy group in schools.

- ❖ Local PTA's are supported by a national and state structure that provides valuable information, programs, resources, and training. This structure offers a network of support while leaving local units free to select the priorities, programs, and activities that address the needs of their schools.
- ❖ PTA believes parents are more than fundraisers.
- ❖ PTA works with parents to advocate for proper funding, leadership and instruction for all schools and school districts.
- ❖ PTA is a united national voice for children.

Not all decisions affecting a child's school happen at the local level. The mission of PTA is to address the educational and social needs of all children. For more than a century PTA has been a driving force in national education policies and programs. Today PTA continues to champion the importance of family involvement; safe, healthy and nurturing environments; and proper funding, curriculum, and leadership in our public schools.

Please join the Robinson Secondary School PTSA today and support the only organization that represents every student, family, teacher and staff member here at Robinson! An adult membership is \$12 per person while students, teachers and staff members can join for \$5. A small portion of your membership dues supports the activities of the Virginia and National PTA's so that they can advocate for our children at the state and national levels. You can find a membership form on our PTSA website: www.robinsonptsa.org. Let your voice be heard – join today!

Robinson Secondary School



Parent Teacher Student Association
 2007 - 2008 Membership Drive
Join Now!!!
(Please see back for list of activities sponsored/supported by your PTSA)

*****MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM*****

Yes, I want to join Robinson's PTSA which includes membership in Fairfax County and National PTA

Adult/Parent Membership(s) _____	at \$12.00 each	\$ _____
Student (Grade 9-12 only) Membership _____	at \$ 5.00 each	\$ _____
Faculty/Staff Membership _____	at \$ 5.00 each	\$ _____
100% tax deductible donation to the Scholarship Fund** (See back for additional tax information)		
TOTAL	Check # _____	\$ _____

Make checks payable to: Robinson Secondary PTSA

Please print

Adult Member(s): _____
 Address: _____
 City, Zip Code _____
 Phone: _____ Email: _____

My student(s) is/are in the following grade(s): Circle 7 8 9 10 11 12

Student Member(s): _____
 Address: _____
 City, Zip Code _____
 Grade(s): _____
 Phone: _____ Email: _____

Faculty/Staff Member: _____
 School: _____ Sub school Mailbox Location _____
 Position: _____
 Phone: _____ Email: _____ @fcps.edu

Return Membership Form: 1) Locker Distribution Days, 2) Back-to-School Nights or
 3) Mail to:
 Robinson Secondary PTSA, 5035 Sideburn Road, Fairfax, VA 22032

** Donations to Scholarship Fund are 100% tax deductible; \$9.75 of Adult membership fee is tax deductible and \$2.75 of Student and/or Faculty membership fees are tax deductible.

Robinson Secondary General News

March 4, 2008 Early Dismissal

Tuesday, March 4, 2008 is an Early Dismissal Day for ALL Robinson students:

- ❖ All students will be **dismissed at 10:25AM** on 3/4 for an afternoon teacher in-service.
- ❖ Students will attend regular blue day classes on an abbreviated schedule, with the exception of **periods 3 & 7** which will **not** meet.
- ❖ **Lunch will** be served to middle school students **only**. Because of the 10:25AM dismissal, there is not enough time for high school students to eat lunch.

– Rick Mondloch, Associate Principal, Robinson SS

teacher in any subschool office, and teachers are already sending in their nominations!

February will certainly be a busy month, and we would like to invite you to attend any of our three events in February. We have "Clash of the Classes," an inter-class competition inspired by "Family Feud," on February 5, and we look forward to the display of athletic prowess at the annual Gatorball Tournament (February 9) and at the annual 3-on-3 basketball tournament, Hoop-it-Up (February 23).

For any questions please contact the Robinson SGA (703.426.2182 or Eileen.noonan@fcps.edu or Geoffrey.noto@fcps.edu).

– Eileen Noonan, SGA Representative, Robinson SS

Its Academic

On January 5, the Robinson "It's Academic" team won its second consecutive VHSL Scholastic Bowl Concorde District championship and finished third in the Northern Region playoffs-- also for the second consecutive year! Participating students were seniors: Richard Kitterman & Stephanie D'Souza; juniors: Philip "P.J." Roth, Josh Lansford, & Marco Segura; and sophomores: Eric Anderson & Omar Abu-Realh. Congratulations to these fine students!

– Michael Campana, Staff Robinson SS

SGA Events

December and January were busy months for the Student Government Association. During the holiday season we sponsored several service projects. We started to sell "Robinson Wears Red" t-shirts to show support for the troops in Iraq, and all proceeds go to make care packages to send over to the troops. We also held a stocking drive that collected winter clothing items and toiletries for the Bailey's Crossroads Homeless Shelter. Throughout December and January we collected T-shirts and summer clothing to be delivered to children in Rwanda.

Our service projects kept us involved in the community for the past few months, and we also sponsored some school events. The first annual Ping Pong Tournament enjoyed great success, resulting in Seth Goldman as the winner and Willy Wang as our runner-up. The annual "Win-A-Date with a Senior Gentlemen" competition was held at the end of the month, giving ten lucky students a chance to have a dinner at a Great American restaurant. We plan to promote a "Tardy Awareness" campaign to promote timely attendance from February 4-8. We also had student exchanges with other Student Governments from Oakton and Herndon to gather ideas about other school events, and will sponsor a student exchange with Centreville High School in February. We will also honor students and teachers at the "Teacher/Student of the Quarter" ceremony on Wednesday, February 13 (2:30pm). Students can nominate a

THANK YOU!



Middle School and High School News

Classes of 2012 & 2013: The View from the Middle School

Second Semester Reminders



We are into the second semester and we want to share a few reminders with our middle school families:

- ❖ Students and parents should carefully consider the types of personal property brought to school. Fairfax County Public Schools does not assume responsibility for personal property that is lost or stolen. We continue to see a number of expensive **electronic devices** being brought to school. MP3 players, Ipods, handheld games, and digital cameras should not be brought to school. They are easily stolen or broken. Students found using these items may have them confiscated to be returned only to a parent.
- ❖ Students are allowed to possess **cell phones** at school, but they are to be turned off and "out of sight," thus not used for any purpose during the school day. The best place for a cell phone is inside your student's backpack or locker. In addition, cell phones are not to be used while riding school buses because the signals can interfere with the communication system used by the bus drivers. Students found using cell phones during the school day will have them confiscated to be returned only to a parent.
- ❖ Congratulations to **Devon Shircliff, Michael Popovich, Amanda Bray, Billy DiSilvio, and Ciarra Rice**. They participated as a team in the Stock Market Game in Mrs. Gressle's civics class and were named the New Facilitator winners in the Northern Virginia region for fall 2007. They have been invited to the 2006-2007 Economics Awards Reception at George Mason University in May. Great job Devon, Michael, Amanda, Billy and Ciarra!
- ❖ The Lasers team wants to recognize two of their students for their accomplishments in athletics. **Sara McMillan** is a proud member of the VSA Heat Blue, which is a U13 Girls Travel Soccer Team and the 2007 US Youth Soccer Region 1 U12 champions, the 2007 Virginia U12 state champions, 2007 WAGS Spring U12 Division 1 Champions and Number Three in the country. **Baris Safoglu** participated, by invitation, in the National Soccer Coaches Association of America's (NSCAA) annual convention, the world's largest gathering of coaches which covers every level of coaching from youth through the international professional. Baris participated as a demonstration player in several sessions and his goal is to play professional soccer.

– Keith Hall, MS Principal, Robinson SS

Comets Team "Student of the Quarter" Winners: Congratulations!

The Comets Team of Robinson Middle School chooses about a dozen students each quarter as "Student of the Quarter" honorees. The award is based on the core teachers considering each student's passing grades, classroom behavior, meeting the Comets Team expectations, and overall Ram pride! The vote must be unanimous among the teachers, and each student may win only once during the year. They receive an invitation to a fantastic breakfast party during school hours, and a certificate commemorating the occasion makes a great keepsake from their middle school years. Please join us in congratulating these outstanding Robinson seventh-graders **2nd Quarter Winners**:

Ellie Borkowski

Jason Focarino

Lauren Mason

Jessica Sykioco

Talisa Caldwell

Megan Fuller

Michael Pham

Karina Tait

Alexander Diamond

Bohyun Kim

Alyssa Randell

Sean Tkacik

– Karen Gilbert, MS Secretary SS7, Robinson SS

Bye Bye Birdie/RMS Drama News

Get your tickets NOW for this year's musical, Bye Bye Birdie! Tickets can be purchased online at www.robinsondrama.org or by using a ticket order sheet that you can pick up from your sub-school office. Remember that the shows ALWAYS sell out! Get your tickets before they are gone! Tickets are \$8 presale and \$10 at the door and online. See Ms. Hard in D106 for questions and more information. Shows are at 7pm Friday, February 15th and Saturday, February 16th- with 2pm performances Saturday, February 16th and Sunday, February 17th.

– Amy Hard, MS Drama, Robinson SS

...Con't: Classes of 2012 & 2013: The View from the Middle School

Middle School Guidance News

Scheduling Process: Counselors will meet individually with seventh and eighth grade students during February to discuss recommended courses and choices of electives. Your students should bring home a Course Offering Booklet, a Course Selection Sheet, and a Recommendation sheet. Please consider a challenging but not overwhelming schedule of classes for your student. Teachers and counselors make recommendations for each student based on grades, test scores, study habits and motivation. Sign and return the course selection sheet within a week. If you have questions or concerns about classes for next year, please call or email your student's counselor.

Benchmarks: To be promoted, students in grades 7 and 8 must pass English, mathematics, social studies and science. Student grades are determined by a variety of classroom assessments that measure progress toward achievement of the Virginia Standards of Learning. A student who is earning a D or F in one of these core subjects is in danger of failing that subject and must demonstrate mastery of a specific set of promotion benchmarks in order to be passed to the next grade level. The student's report card (in the comment section) will indicate if your child is not mastering benchmarks in a particular subject.

March SOL Testing: On March 4th and 5th, all students in grade eight in the Fairfax County Public Schools will be taking the Standards of Learning (SOL) Writing Tests. The multiple-choice portion of the Writing test will be administered on March 4th, and the direct writing portion of the Writing test will be administered on March 5th. It will be very helpful if you can avoid appointments that may take your child out of school during this time period.

Additional 7th and 8th grade SOL testing will be from May 27 – June 2. Please mark your calendars. At that time, all 8th grade students will take a SOL test for each of their academic classes; 7th grade students will take SOL tests for English, history and math, and a practice test in science. Please do not make doctor's appointments or other commitments for those days.



Second quarter report cards will be mailed on February 1. Third quarter interims will be mailed on February 28.

– MS Guidance Department, Robinson SS

After School Program Update

All students and parents are encouraged to access after school activity information on 24-7/Blackboard. Club and activity descriptions, schedules, announcements, and late bus routes are posted for your reference. Please use this resource to help plan and monitor your child's after school time. New activities will also be announced on Mondays in the Middle, our student produced news program, as well as during lunch. Don't miss out on learning about new academic, service-learning, and fitness opportunities being offered throughout the school year. Stay connected and encourage your student to get involved!

The majority of our activities take place on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, our designated late bus days. The program ends at 3:30 on Mondays and 4:00 on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Limited opportunities are available on Tuesday and Friday and do require a separate sign-up with Mrs. Aunon, indicating how your student will be transported home.

All students participating in after school activities must have a program registration form on file in the middle school. This registration form is available on the Robinson web site as well as in each subschool office. Please contact Mary Aunon, After School Program Specialist, by calling 703-426-2339 or via email Mary.Aunon@fcps.edu with questions or concerns.

– Mary Aunon, MS After School Program Specialist, Robinson SS



Class of 2009

SOL Testing

On March 4th and 5th all students in an eleventh grade English class in Fairfax County Public Schools will be taking the Standards of Learning (SOL) Writing Tests. The multiple-choice portion of the Writing test will be administered on March 4th and the direct writing portion of the Writing Test will be administered on March 5th. The test will be administered during an extended first block each day. It will be very helpful if you can avoid appointments that may take your child out of school during this time period. Also, it will help your child perform his or her best if he or she has a good night's rest, a healthy breakfast and comes to school with a positive attitude.

– Sheri Masich, Staff, Robinson SS

Class of 2008

ANGP Thank You!



The Robinson Secondary 2008 ANGP Co-Chairs would like to shout out a heart-felt “**THANK YOU**” to all the committee chairs and volunteers who have been dedicated to making sure the 2008 graduation celebration is a huge success. You all have been wonderful to work with and we appreciate all your time and energy!

Secretary

Leigh Ann Kurz

Art Auction

Denise Powers
Deb Bush
Lezlie Taguding
Peggi Miller

CPA

Shari Bedker

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Rachel Mooney
Barb LaFalce

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Movie Nights

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Mary Aunon

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Matt Miller
Cynthia Hajjar
Deborah Lesser
Carol Z. Schneier

Logistics/Set-Up

Cindy Sbrocco
Barb Shaffer
Mike Rolince

Prizes/Raffles

Vickie Christopher
Raine Bradley
Deb Bush
Cheryl Litman
Lezlie Taguding

Volunteer Coordinator

Kris Harris
Kay Goodwin

– Jewell Mikula and Shelley Draheim



Boosters, Clubs & Departments News

Family and Consumer Sciences

Do not send your child off to college “unprepared.” The Family and Consumer Sciences’ Department’s mission is to prepare our students to thrive in modern society; it is not your mothers’ Home Economics. The Family Consumer Science electives in Robinson provide the foundational skills required for independent living. These electives educate the complete person and provide students with skills required for life, and for personal and professional success. The Robinson Family and Consumer Sciences Department offers the following Courses:

- ❖ **FACS 7:** Intro to Family and Consumer Sciences
- ❖ **FACS 8:** Intro to Family and Consumer Sciences
- ❖ **Fitness and Food:** Choosing foods that promote wellness and good health – you can eat more than Mac & Cheese
- ❖ **Gourmet Foods/International Foods:** Life outside of the Microwave
- ❖ **Introduction to Interior and Fashion Design:** Explore career development and careers related to design
- ❖ **Child Development:** Preparation for the future and careers
- ❖ **Early Childhood Careers:** Prepare for careers involving children and the responsibility of making daily decisions that affect children
- ❖ **Teacher Cadet:** You too can make a difference in a life of a child! Career Possibilities, Leadership, Management, Communication Skills

For further questions about courses please contact your child’s counselor or the FACS Department 703 426-2355. – *Ave Maria Collins, ECC/Teacher Cadet Instructor, Robinson SS*

Robinson Art Show

The Robinson Art Show is an annual celebration of our student's art work, and has been a Robinson tradition for over 20 years. It is eagerly awaited by the Robinson community, and this year's show promises to be better than ever. Every Robinson Art student is invited to participate at some level, and family and community members will be invited to attend. This year's show will take place on April 24th and we are currently getting ready to review portfolios of our high school students interested in having a booth to exhibit their work. Volunteers needed, please contact Jennifer Staples if interested (jennifer.staples@fcpsedu).

A quick reminder to all High School students enrolled in art classes this year and interested in pursuing a one man show only: Portfolio review will take place on February 27th (rain date Feb. 28th) in the Gold Cafeteria. All work must be exhibited by 3:00pm and you must return by 6:30pm to retrieve it to be considered for the art show. Please see your art teachers for specifics and an information packet. – *Jennifer Staples, Staff, Robinson SS*

Upcoming Dates for Robinson Theatre

Bye, Bye Birdie Feb. 15-16-17: Robinson Middle School performs this popular musical comedy.

TheatreSports Competition Feb 29: High School’s county-wide speed skit competition based on audience suggestions, at 7:30 in Russell Theatre

Romeo and Juliet March 4: The Theatre Production class will perform “Romeo and Juliet” at the Folger Student Shakespeare Festival in Washington DC, starring Alex Alferov and Madison Auch. The show is edited and directed by student Meagan Krause.

Les Misérables May 1-2-3-9-10: Robinson High School’s Spring Musical. Though just written in the 1980’s, “Les Mis” has become one of the most popular musicals of all time. Les Misérables is based on the 1862 Victor Hugo novel.

Drama Updates are available on FCPS's [Keep in Touch](#) e-mail system. Update your Keep In Touch (KIT) profile to include Drama! As always, information on Robinson Theatre can be found on our website: www.RobinsonDrama.org. – *Mariana Vervena, Drama Boosters Publicity Chair, Robinson SS*



ROBINSON CREW

www.robinsoncrew.com



On Saturday, February 9th, crew will be

having their annual TAG DAY fundraiser. Although the Robinson crew team has the full support of the Robinson administration, we receive no financial support from Fairfax County Schools or the State of Virginia. We must look to individual contributions and fundraising efforts to cover our expenditures. When visited, please make a contribution. ANY donation is greatly appreciated. Visit our website to learn more about Robinson Crew. – *Mary Smith, Crew Boosters, RSS*



Robinson Academic Booster’s 1/21/08

Thanks so much to the 108 families that have joined Academic Boosters for 2007-08! If you would like to join, we accept members all year-you can find the membership form on our website at <http://www.fcps.edu/RobinsonSS/boosters/abc>. A large portion of our support for this year’s activities has come not from Robinson families, but from local pediatricians Drs. Laurence Murphy and Stacey Staats-THANK YOU so much!

In January, Ilyse Gart hosted an Academic Booster breakfast for the 21 freshman who earned all A’s for the first quarter-Great Job Freshman! We also do this for 2nd and 3rd quarter so there’s something for you to work towards.☺!

Seniors-scholarship opportunities will be available in April! Be on the lookout for the Genovese Scholarship Information in the Career Center. There are two different types of scholarships, one is for Academic Excellence and the other is for Academic Improvement. In 2007, we gave out five \$1,000 scholarships to

deserving Robinson students-it could be your turn this time! We especially hope that if you started your high school career a little slowly but then were able to bring up your grades by your senior year that you will apply for the Academic Improvement Scholarship-there is NO minimum GPA to apply for this scholarship.

Please join us at our next scheduled meeting on Monday, March 10, 7pm in the Principal's Conference Room to hear what we do or what volunteer opportunities might fit your schedule. Please don't hesitate to contact Shari Bedker, sharimomcpa@cox.net on how you can get involved or if you have any questions. – *Shari Bedker, President Academic Boosters, RSS*

Robinson Band and Orchestra Parents Organization (RBOPO)



Sweets 'n Swing 2008 Press Release: The Music Department of Robinson Secondary School will present its annual "Sweets 'n Swing" concert on Thursday, February 14 at 7:00 pm in Robinson's Gold Cafeteria. The audience is invited to enjoy a variety of refreshments while listening to

the music of George Gershwin, Sonny Rollins, Charlie Parker, John Coltrane and more performed by our Robinson Jazz Students. Featured ensembles will be the Robinson High School Stage Band, the High School Jazz Band, the High School Jazz Combo, and the Middle School Jazz Band. Admission is free with donations accepted. Make plans now to attend this exciting event.

The Music Department of Robinson Secondary School Presents...

Sweets 'n Swing 2008 A Night of Jazz



Where:	Robinson Secondary School Gold Cafeteria
When:	Thursday February 14, 2008
Time:	7:00 PM
Cost:	FREE with Donations Accepted

Come enjoy a selection of sweet treats and listen to the Jazz sounds George Gershwin, Sonny Rollins, Charlie Parker, John Coltrane and more, performed by the Jazz Students of Robinson Secondary School. Mark your calendars!



Orlando-Here We Go: Preparations for the Band & Orchestra spring trip to Orlando in April are in full swing! Pertinent details, itinerary updates, and payment information may be found on our website at www.robinsband.org.

All student account balances are now due! We encourage travelers to take advantage of our secure on-line Paypal link, or

checks may be made to RBOPO and sent to our P.O. Box or through the band/orchestra rooms via your students. Please include student name and ID # with all payments. All trip forms are due no later than Friday, February 15th, and optional activities signups are due no later than Friday, February 22nd. (All forms are accessible from our website.) Look for hotel signups soon! Questions? rbopovp@aol.com.

Orchestra Highlights:

Thank you to our wonderful audience at the December Winter Concert! Our students thoroughly enjoyed performing for such a large and wonderful crowd. See you back soon on March 4th!



- ❖ Congratulations to the 15 Robinson MS/HS Orchestra students who participated in the District XI Junior District Orchestra on January 4-5 at Lake Braddock Secondary School. The wonderful concert was conducted by Ms. Susan Kervick and our Robinson students represented our school well!
- ❖ Orchestra Festival is quickly approaching! Our Pre-Festival concert will take place on Tuesday, March 4, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. featuring all Robinson Orchestras (both MS and HS.) Festival days (specific times to be announced) are: Middle School Concert Orchestra - Thursday, March 6. Middle School Sinfonietta, High School Concert Orchestra and Robinson Philharmonic will perform on Saturday, March 8. Hope to see you there!



District Band Auditions: Congratulations to the 44 Robinson student musicians whose auditions qualified them for the upcoming District 11 Symphonic and Concert Band Concerts at West Potomac High School on February 2nd at 2 pm. Please visit www.robinsband.org to see the entire list. Way to go Rams! Thanks also from the RBOPO to all of the directors and student and parent volunteers who pitched in to help Robinson again host a successful Saturday full of District 11 Band auditions in early January. – *Barry Sharp, RBOPO Correspondence Secretary, RSS*

Festival Time: February and March are filled with exciting concerts and festivals. We look forward to seeing you at these upcoming events that are all listed on page 1 of the RamGram.

Please attend our next RBOPO Meeting at 7pm., February 8 in the HS Band Room. See you there or at any number of the exciting musical events happening around Robinson. Go Rams. – *Rich Kurz, RBOPO President, Robinson SS*

Thank You

The Robinson Secondary 2008 All Night Grad Party would like to thank the following businesses for their generous contributions:

Gold Donor:

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The Robinson ANGP is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization and falls under the guidelines developed by project Virginia Operation Prom/Graduation (OP/G). In response to a 1987 Virginia Dept. of Motor Vehicles request, the Virginia Dept. of Education developed the OP/G program to address the serious issues of youth drinking, drug use, and driving behavior during high-risk social events such as graduation. Funding relies heavily on donations. For more information contact Rachel Mooney at Rachel.Mooney@inova.com.

– Rachel Mooney, ANGP Donations Chair, Robinson SS

Robinson Secondary School

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