

Thoreau Matters

Thoreau Matters is published every two weeks by the PTA and the Thoreau administrative staff to inform parents of important information about school life at Thoreau Middle School.

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Thoreau Web Page: www.fcps.edu/ThoreauMS

PTA Web Page: www.ThoreauPTA.org

March 9, 2010

- 1. At its March 4 meeting, the School Board voted to re-affirm the approved 2009-2010 school calendar and designate June 25, 2010, as the last day of school.**
 - This action was taken to address the number of lost instructional days due to this winter's inclement weather.
 - If additional makeup days are required, they will be added to the end of the school year and would begin on June 28.
 - Since February 15 could not be used as a makeup day due to inclement weather, the first makeup day will be April 12. Remaining makeup days will be June 23, 24, and 25.
 - In addition, the School Board directed the Superintendent to request a waiver for three of the required makeup days and any additional days missed for the remainder of the year. Stay tuned for the outcome of that request.
- 2. Due to the number of instructional days lost to snow this year, the social studies department has decided to cancel this year's Out to Work Day for 8th grade civics students.**
 - In past years, all 8th grade students spent a day at a work location of their choice experiencing a day of work. This year's Out to Work Day was scheduled to be April 22. April 22 will now be a regular school day for all students.
 - In addition, Thoreau typically closed 2 hours early on Out to Work Day to provide time for professional development activities for the Thoreau staff. This year, April 22 will be a full day of school, not an early closing as advertised on earlier school calendars.
 - Civics teachers will provide in-class lesson related to the world of work and careers as a part of the regular civics curriculum.
- 3. Every year Virginia experiences the effects of tornado damage. While not common, fatalities and injuries have occurred. To ensure a rapid and effective response to the threat from a tornado, every Fairfax County Public School is required to practice a tornado drill during the month of March.**
 - Families are encouraged to visit the "Ready Virginia" web site to learn more about tornado preparedness and safety tips at www.vaemergency.com/threats/tornado/index.cfm.
 - At this site, you will learn about tornado warning signs, the difference between tornado watches and warnings, how to prepare your home tornado plan, and what to do in the event of a tornado emergency.
- 4. The Thoreau Letter Award recognizes students for outstanding academic achievement, participation in extracurricular activities, and service to the community.**
 - Thoreau letters will be awarded to seventh and eighth grade students who earn a sufficient number of points by receiving academic recognition, participating in a variety of extracurricular activities and serving the community.
 - Seventh grade students earning 100 points will receive a small Thoreau Letter and eighth grade students earning 200 points will receive a large Thoreau Letter.
 - The types of activities and recognition for which students may receive points can be found at the [Thoreau Letter](#) link on the Parent/Student Resources page of Thoreau's web site.
 - Students will need to apply for their letter using a Thoreau Letter application form that will be available in the main office near the end of the year. Letters will be awarded to students at the end of the year award ceremonies.
- 5. The Marshall High School Activities Boosters is selling shredded hardwood mulch for \$4.50 a bag.**
 - Place your order by March 13 to guarantee home delivery of 20 bags or more. Pick up dates are March 20 and 21.
 - More information and an order form can be found at the GCM Boosters site at <http://gcmhsboosters.org/index.php>

6. **The PTA Landscape Committee will hold its first landscape day of the year on March 13 from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m.**
 - This will be our first opportunity to clean up the grounds around the building after the harsh winter experienced this year. Bring your garden tools (especially rakes and wheelbarrows), work gloves, and enthusiasm.
 - Students in need of community service hours can use this event to fulfill that requirement. Please contact Maureen Alonzo for more information at 703-255-5024.

7. **Included with this issue of *Thoreau Matters* is a flyer with information about this year's spring picture day.**
 - Eighth grade pictures will be taken on Wednesday, March 24 and seventh grade pictures will be taken on Thursday, March 25. All students will be photographed.
 - In three to four weeks each student photographed will receive a picture package to bring home for approval. You may purchase the entire package or any part of the package.
 - Payment and unwanted pictures will be returned to 1st period classes. There is no obligation to purchase any pictures.
 - If you read *Thoreau Matters* online, additional flyers will be available in the main office.

8. **The 5th annual Special Education Conference for parents and educators of special education students will be held Saturday, March 20 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Lee High School.**
 - Parents can register online at www.fcps.edu/dss/conference/index.htm or by calling 703-204-3941.
 - This year's keynote speaker will be Jonathan Mooney, author of *The Short Bus*, *What the Silence Says*, and *Learning to Live Outside the Lines*.
 - A complete list of conference sessions can be found at www.fcps.edu/dss/conference/sessions.pdf.

9. **There will be an orientation to the International Baccalaureate program at Marshall High School on Wednesday, March 17, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. in the Marshall Auditorium.**
 - The IB program is an internationally recognized program of studies that is offered at selected high schools in Fairfax County. Marshall High School is the IB location for students in this community.
 - The orientation program is for parents and students in grades 7 to 10 and will feature an overview of the IB program by Marshall's IB coordinator along with presentations by current and graduated Marshall IB students and parents.
 - Additional information about the IB program may be found at Marshall High School's website: www.fcps.edu/marshallhs/academics/ib

10. **The Capitol Steps, Washington's renowned political comedy troupe, will appear live at Madison High School on Sunday, March 21st at 4:00 p.m.**
 - Tickets are \$25 (\$30 at the door). Proceeds will support the Madison High School All Night Graduation (substance-free) Celebration. There will also be a raffle for some wonderful prizes.
 - This will be a fun afternoon of political satire and irreverent humor. Information about the Capitol Steps can be found at www.capsteps.com.
 - Ticket information can be found at the "Capitol Steps" link under Selected Calendar Items on James Madison's website, www.fcps.edu/MadisonHS or call Amy Feather at 703-938-4279.

11. **The Thoreau PTA is still looking for parents to serve on the PTA board for next year.**
 - You can review the various open board positions at the PTA Board link on the Thoreau PTA website.
 - If you are interested in serving or just have questions, please contact Jill Hecht at JHecht3765@aol.com.
 - The next PTA meeting is scheduled to be April 19, at 9:00 a.m. in the Lecture Hall.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, March 13	PTA Landscape Day – 9:00 to 11:30 a.m.
Tuesday, March 16	Rising 7 th Grade Parent Orientation – 7:00 in Gym 2
Wednesday, March 24	8 th Grade Spring Pictures
Thursday, March 25	7 th Grade Spring Pictures
Monday, March 29	Spring Break Begins
Friday, April 9	End of the 3 rd Grading Period
Saturday, April 10	PTA Landscape Day – 9:00 to 11:30 a.m.
Monday, April 12	Snow Makeup Day – Regular Day of School
Thursday, April 15	Student of the Quarter Celebration – 2:45 in the Lecture Hall
Monday, April 19	PTA Meeting – 9:00 a.m. in the Lecture Hall