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Calendar

- Apr 7 Council General Meeting, 11:00 am, Admin Bldg. Board Room
- May 2 Run for the Arts, 8:00 am
- May 5 Council General Meeting, 11:30 am, Altharetta Yeargin Art Museum
- May 6 Council Awards Night, 6:30 pm, Admin Bldg. Board Room

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Mary Kemick, Council President

I can't believe we are now counting down towards the end of the school year. Our next General meeting is tomorrow, April 7, at 11am in the Board Room of the Administration building. Please plan on attending as we will need a quorum to vote on the slate of officers for next year.

Our nominating committee has been working the last few weeks finalizing our Executive Board for next year. We will still be looking for chairman to fill key positions, so if you have a heart for volunteering in the community please consider volunteering for the Council next year. Our speakers at tomorrow's meeting are Rebecca Fuchs and Dr. Jennifer Blaine. Both will speak on topics of great interest to the local PTA campuses. Camille Tarics will provide another great lunch for us.

Our meeting in May is scheduled for May 5th. The new officers will be installed at the May meeting. We also have our Awards night coming up May 6th. This is a wonderful evening honoring many of our students. More on this will come later by email blasts and our May newsletter.

2009 Mayor's Volunteer Houston Awards

The City of Houston's Mayor's Volunteer Houston Awards promote volunteerism by recognizing local citizens for acts of uncommon volunteer service. Names come from across Houston through a grassroots nomination effort. Nominations are judged by a community panel comprised of outstanding individuals who reflect Houston's diversity and are committed to volunteerism.

Our very own PTA Council board member, Iris Story, will be one of this year's recipients of this prestigious award. She was nominated for creating, teaching and maintaining a 3rd-5th grade band at Terrace Elementary for the past 8 years. Iris is also the Chair for our Odyssey of the Mind program. Read about our awesome Odyssey teams she coaches on pages 2 and 3.

Congratulations Iris!

ODYSSEY OF THE MIND TO COMPETE AT WORLD FINALS

On Saturday, March 28, 2009, 141 teams from across the state of Texas competed in the Texas State Tournament held at Spring Forest Middle School and Meadow Wood Elementary Odyssey of the Mind Tournament. Ten (10) teams from Spring Branch ISD qualified to advance the World Finals May 27-31, 2009 at Iowa State University.

Odyssey of the Mind is an international educational program that provides creative problem-solving opportunities for students from kindergarten through college. Kids apply their creativity to solve problems that range from building mechanical devices to presenting their own interpretation of literary classics. They then bring their solutions to competition on the local, state, and World level. Thousands of teams from throughout the U.S. and from about 25 other countries participate in the program.

The Problems synopses for this year are:

Problem 1: Earth Trek - This problem requires teams to design and build a small vehicle that will visit four locations. The locations will be different places within one or more team-determined environments. Each time the vehicle leaves a location it will look different in appearance, and after leaving one of the locations it will appear to be a group of vehicles that are traveling together. The team's performance will incorporate the visits to the locations, the environments, and the changes in appearance of the vehicle. Sponsored by NASA.

Problem 2: Teach Yer Creature - Teams will create a humorous performance about a mechanical creature that acts like a real mammal or bird and learns lessons. The creature will act like the real animal by performing tasks the way it would, including traveling, eating, and turning its head. It will be taught two lessons by a Creature Teacher and will "accidentally" learn a behavior by observing others. During the performance the creature will surprise the audience by demonstrating the "accidental" behavior it learned.

Problem 3: The Lost Labor of Heracles - Teams will create and present an original performance about the ancient Greek hero Heracles. In Greek Mythology, King Eurytheus ordered Heracles to perform 12 labors. The team will reenact Heracles performing one of the 12 labors, as well as a Lost Labor--a team-created thirteenth labor forgotten in history. The performance will also include a god or goddess from Greek Mythology, an original mythological creature that plays a role in the Lost Labor, and the team's version of why the Lost Labor was forgotten in history.

Problem 4: Shock Waves - The problem is to design and build a structure out of balsa wood and glue that will balance and support as much weight as possible while absorbing shockwaves. The team will test its structure by placing weights onto it. During specific intervals the team will place one or two spacers on the top weight and will then place a weight on them. The team will remove the spacers so the top weight falls onto the stack causing a shockwave. The team will add weight until its structure breaks or time ends. The team will also create and use an original method to place its structure onto the tester and will incorporate the testing of the structure into a performance.

Problem 5: Superstition - The problem is to create and present a performance that includes two documented superstitions, an original superstition created by the team, and the events that caused the original superstition to come to be. The performance will also include a funny narrator, a costume that is worn by two or more team members at the same time, and a stage set. During the performance the same stage set items will be used to change from one setting to another.

At the Texas State Tournament, 4 Spring Branch teams were awarded the highest award, Ranatra Fusca. The Ranatra Fusca represents the essence of Odyssey of the Mind. It is presented to teams or individuals who exhibit exceptional creativity, either through some aspect of their problem solution or an extraordinary idea beyond the problem solution. This award is a way to acknowledge and encourage creative thinking and risk taking.

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TEXAS LEGISLATURE PASSES MIDPOINT

Stay tuned!

The 2009 session of the Texas Legislature reached its midpoint Monday, March 23, 2009. More than 7000 bills have been filed. The session ends June 1 so things should begin to move quickly.

Some of the main items facing the Legislature are the budget, the president's stimulus package and continuing to pay for damage caused by Hurricane Ike.

Education is also a hot topic. 406 bills that have been referred to the House Committee on Public Education and 195 to the House Committee on Higher Education. The Senate Committee on Education has 170 bills and 108 have been referred to the Senate Committee on Higher Education.

Here are a few that might be of interest:

- * **HB3 and SB3 – Accountability:** Addresses accountability system with goal to shift the focus from a single test to overall post-secondary readiness, proposes two-tier system for recognizing performance, proposes changes to graduation (diploma) plans
- * **HB1555 and SB982 – School Funding**
- * **HB130 and SB21 – Pre K**
- * **SB 175 – Top 10% Rule**
- * **SB 1831 – Private school participation in UIL**

For more information, visit

Texas Legislature Online - lookup a particular bill, sign up to receive updates on particular bills

Texas PTA website www.txpta.org (under News) – sign up for updates

SBISD website www.springbranchisd.com - check homepage and Policy Administration/
Governmental Engagement Dept page

To obtain more information about National PTA's advocacy activities at the federal level, visit www.pta.org and select Take Action tab.

SBISD Board of Trustees election scheduled for May 9

The next election for two positions on the Spring Branch ISD Board of Trustees is scheduled for Saturday, May 9.

The Trustee positions for the upcoming election are Position 3, which is currently held by incumbent Theresa Kosmoski, and Position 4, which is held by incumbent Susan Kellner. Katherine "Kate" Given filed as a write-in candidate for Position 4 while Position 3 is unopposed. As a write-in candidate, Given's name will not be on the ballot but can be written in.

Both positions are for three-year terms. All registered voters who reside in SBISD may vote for these trustee positions.

You are invited to the

Spring Branch Independent School District
Council of PTAs
Awards Night

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Elementary

8:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Secondary

Board Room, SBISD Administration Building
955 Campbell Road

Please join us for this evening celebrating the accomplishments of SBISD students, teachers and local unit PTAs.

We will be recognizing our:

2008-2009 Reflections Contest Winners
2008-2009 Council Scholarship Winners
2008-2009 Odyssey of the Mind Winners
&
2008-2009 Council Award Winners

Light refreshments will be served and families are welcome

Council of PTAs Calendar of Events 2009

Date	Time	Location	Program
Tuesday April 7, 2009	11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	Board Room Admin. Bldg.	General Meeting; Lunch will be provided by Council
Saturday May 2, 2009	8:00 a.m.	Memorial City Mall	Run for the Arts 5K Walk/Run
Tuesday May 5, 2009	11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	Altharetta Yeargin Art Museum	General Meeting; Lunch will be provided by Council
Wednesday May 6, 2009	6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.	Board Room Admin. Bldg.	Council Awards Night 6:30 – 7:30 pm Elementary 8:00 – 9:00 pm Secondary
Tuesday May 12, 2009	11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	Board Room Admin. Bldg.	Executive Meeting; Council Officers/New President's Orientation and Luncheon

Council of PTAs Executive Board 2008-2009

Officer	Name	Email
President	Mark Kemick	mkemick@comcast.net
1 st VP Programs	Camille Tarics	cnt4456@aol.com
2 nd VP Leadership	Lindy Tennet	ltennet@yahoo.com
3 rd VP Membership	Laura Casanover	lcasanover@yahoo.com
Secretary	Kay Kurisky	kkurisky@sbcglobal.net
Treasurer	Mike Story	storytunes@aol.com

HELPFUL WEBSITES

SBISD PTA Council Website - www.springbranchisd.com/partners/pta/pta.htm

Check out the Council website – it has been updated and includes more information about Council and PTA in general. One of the additions provides links to resources about PTA and parenting in Spanish. Check it out.

Texas PTA Web site - www.txpta.org

Be sure to visit the members' site – you will need the user name and password from the back of your membership card. Find officer and chairman guides, membership information and more.

National PTA website - www.pta.org

Check out the "PTA Great Idea Bank" under Leadership Resources – Local Leaders (you will need username and password here as well)

Spring Branch ISD - www.springbranchisd.com

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The newsletters are published about the 1st of every month. Copies of published newsletters along with upcoming deadlines, can be found at www.springbranchisd.com/partners/pta/newsletter.htm.

PTAs – feel free to send articles on your campus events. We welcome your information. Email your articles to pam@txreynolds.com. Thank you.