Welcome to: 
A Walk in the Woods

Welcome to a Walk in the Woods! This new publication is the innovation of the School Leadership Team and the Home School Committee.

By working collaboratively, our goal is to create a more comprehensive publication that includes insights and perspectives from a broad segment of the entire Green Woods Community.

In this first issue, we have articles and photographs from students, parents, and staff on a range of topics that we hope you find useful, informative, and fun.

In fact, this issue features articles by two alumni—Vicky Monahan (’05) and Zach Nichols (’07) who have graciously taken the time to share what the Green Woods experience has meant to them.

A Walk in the Woods newsletter will not replace the former Words from the Woods, written by Jean Wallace but, instead, will help provide another way for our community to hear all of the wonderful things that are happening throughout the entire Green Woods community.

We welcome ideas and written submissions for articles for the next issue, which will come out sometime in the Spring.

The next edition will be coordinated by the Home and School Committee, so feel free to send your thoughts and ideas to Laura Schwingel at: lauraschwingel@verizon.net

Happy Reading!

Green Woods in the News!

If you haven’t heard already, GWCS is featured in the November/December issue of Scholastic’s magazine, Scholastic Instructor, as a national model of how getting students and teachers outdoors not only raises environmental awareness, but test scores too!

The article is entitled “How Green Classrooms Are Reconnecting Kids with Nature” and it can be viewed at http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3748233 on line.

What a wonderful affirmation of the great work being done here—congratulations to our staff and our partners at the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education!
In 7th grade, when Fun Friday started, I was really interested in signing up for the movie-watching club. However, my mom convinced me (read made me) to sign up for running club. The two sponsors were Mrs. Pescatore and Mrs. Lewullis. They are avid runners themselves. During those Fridays, I discovered that I enjoyed running. I continued with running club through 8th grade.

During my 7th and 8th grade years I participated in my first race, including a five mile run to raise money for cystic fibrosis.

GWCS made quite an impact on me. While I was a student there I did not realize what a unique place it is. I thought of it as school and nothing else.

But now as I look back on it, and compare it to my school years prior to it, I am blown away that I was able to be a part of it.

I was a student there from fifth through eighth grade. Those are the years when you begin to think about what you want to pursue in the future. That is exactly what Green Woods helped me decide. I believe the school’s focus on science, especially environmental science, made me want to continue to explore the field of science.

Every hike we went on was new. It may have been the same trail, but every time there was something different to see. Perhaps it was a flower or a bird’s nest. These simple things fascinated me. Just being able to go on regular hikes alone is pretty revolutionary.

To me it was like going on constant field trips. Also, since Green Woods is affiliated with the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, we were able to collaborate and work with their tools.

For example, we would use their microscopes to examine tiny organisms, studying the different influences they had on the environment.

To put it simply, Green Woods helped spark my interest in science by exposing me to things that are still unknown, and my natural curiosity made me want to solve these puzzles.

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Home/School Partnership Off to a Great Start!

No surprise that GWCS had quite a busy and fun-filled Fall! We want to take a moment to celebrate all the wonderful events enjoyed by our community during the first months of school.

Back to School Bar-b-que: GWCS’ Home and School Committee (HSC) hosted our first ever BBQ event on the school grounds. Nearly 300 people attended and brought delicious dishes to share, including families (and extended families!), staff, and board members. We hope this will be the start of a great new tradition at school!

Fall Festival: Each October, GWCS celebrates Autumn with our annual Fall Festival. Students made fall crafts with their teachers (and many parent volunteers on hand!), took hayrides around the grounds of SCEE, selected pumpkins, and enjoyed a delicious water ice provided by Scott Thomas, parent of Kindergarten student Alana Murphy and owner of Nevaeh Water Ice.

Math Night: In mid-October, GWCS invited Conrad Follmer, a national math expert and former Math specialist in the Haverford School District, to talk to parents about our Everyday Math Program. Gail Craighead, parent of Jessica (2nd), was wowed by the presentation, saying, “He was so amazing! It was great to see how fun math can be. This workshop helped me feel less intimidated and more able to help my daughter with her math.”

Family Hike: One of our favorite traditions is the Thanksgiving Family Hike, when family and friends are invited to enjoy Green Woods’ stunning natural settings by hiking the trails of the Schuylkill Center grounds with our students and staff. This special day brings our entire community together, showcasing the tall canopy of brilliant fall colors of red and gold, while everyone breathes in the fresh air and tastes yummy home-baked treats.

Yule Log: Our annual Yule log night was held on a beautiful, crisp winter evening. This night is a salute to winter and the coming longer days. Students wrote their wishes on paper and attached them to the Yule log, songs were sung and a potluck of family-shared treats & warm drinks were served by the HSC.

Upcoming Events!

OPEN HOUSE ENROLLMENT NIGHTS: We are looking for parent volunteers to help with our two Open House Enrollment Nights scheduled for January 29th and 30th. Because of the huge turnout of prospective parents last year, the administration made the decision to host two separate evening events this year.

Parents of prospective K-2 students will be joining us on Tuesday, January 29th at 7PM. Parents of prospective 3-6 grade students will be joining us on Wednesday, January 30th at 7PM.

Please contact Kim Birkmire to learn more about helping out at this event.

REPORT CARDS AND REPORT CARD CONFERENCES:

The end of the first semester is quickly coming upon us! Look for report cards to come home on Friday, January 25th. Report card conferences are scheduled for Friday, February 1st when school will be closed for the day to allow teachers to spend quality time meeting with our parents.

JR SLT TRAINING: On January 17, 2008, the members of the Jr. SLT will be taking part in a one-day professional training on conflict resolution and peer mediation here at Green Woods Charter School. Their classroom teachers have willingly given this time to them for this important training. This training will be delivered by an expert from Project PEACE who will be teaching our Jr. SLT members valuable skills in problem solving and peer mediation.

While the students, themselves, will gain valuable leadership and communication skills these newfound skills are bound to carryover to the school climate as a whole. Through this valuable training our students will learn that adult supervision and intervention are not always necessary when it comes to solving disputes.

Board Profile: Tom Schrand—Philadelphia University

Tom Schrand is a History Professor and Associate Dean of the School of Liberal Arts at Philadelphia University, where he is leading the development of a new major in Environmental Sustainability.

Tom is married and the father of two young daughters who are attending Henry Elementary School in Mt. Airy. His interests include running and biking, jazz saxophone, and southern-style barbecuing in his backyard.

What is the role of the Board of Trustees?

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of Green Woods Charter School. The Board is charged with all areas of oversight of Green Woods including, but not limited to: budget, curriculum, employment of personnel, facilities, etc. Our Board is made up of volunteers who donate their time and talents to help us realize our vision as well as ensure that Green Woods remains in compliance with federal, state, and charter school law.
Here's a fun Sudoku puzzle for you to solve. For those of you who aren’t familiar with this puzzle, the rules of Sudoku are simple. Enter digits from 1 to 9 into the blank spaces of the board. Every row, column and 3x3 box subsection (outlined) of the grid must contain one and only one of each of these numbers.

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**“Notes from the Nurse”**

by: Mimi Wainwright

When Mrs. Wallace offered me the opportunity to write on a health topic to our Green Woods community, I gave my topic of interest much thought. The Neti Pot, or Neti as it is called, has been a health intervention that I have suggested to our faculty, parents and students that has made a significant difference in their health…...Hands Down!

Your nasal passages are lined with a thin layer of mucus that traps dirt, germs, pollutants, and other foreign matter. Our nasal passages help to keep foreign things from entering our bodies. The Neti keeps the nasal lining moist, clean, and healthy. It washes out excess mucous along with the dirt, germs, allergens (some folks use it after doing garden work), pollutants, and other foreign particles that provide an ideal breeding ground for illness, infection, and disease.

The Neti is an ancient yogic nasal-cleansing practice that imparts amazing benefits and has been practiced in India for thousands of years. It is gradually becoming more popular in Western nations. Surprisingly easy and comfortable to use, the Neti can decrease the frequency and severity of: colds and flu, allergy attacks, sinus infections and chronic congestion.