



## Wangenheim Middle School

Seminar Program Newsletter  
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## Seminar Parent Night Parents and Students

You are invited to our Seminar Parent Night

**Wednesday, February 6, 2008  
6:30 pm to 8:00 pm  
in the Wangenheim Media Center.**

- Meet the seminar team of teachers.
- Learn about our program for grades 6, 7, and 8.
- Hear testimonials from current seminar students.
- Arrange for a tour with our GATE administrator, Mrs. Sloan.
- J-MUN country and food fair

Fifth grade students and parents, and parents of newly identified seminar students, we recommend that you attend to help you understand the program available in middle school.



Mrs. Reilly, seminar program coordinator, and seventh grade seminar student, Kyungna K., take a closer look at the word that allowed Kyungna to win the 2007-08 school Spelling Bee. Eighth grade seminar student, Kathy H. came in second.

## The Sixth Grade Curriculum by Meg Reilly

Welcome to sixth grade! This year we are exploring a variety of reading and writing genres in both fiction and non-fiction. We started the year with the novel, The View From Saturday, by E.L. Konigsburg. This novel allowed us to study characterization in depth. Our insights helped us to create PowerPoint presentations about the four main characters. We then learned more about societies and societal issues by reading The Outsiders and looking at the decade of the sixties.

Ancient and present-day Egypt was the focus for our first essay, a compare-and-contrast piece. This essay included writing a strong thesis statement, a new step in writing for many students. We are currently writing feature articles on self-selected topics, and will wrap up our nonfiction unit with a persuasive piece.

In social studies, we are learning about the early history of man and the emergence of civilizations. Each historical unit includes science experiments that connect to the time period. For example, as we read about early archaeology and changes in landforms, we studied earth science. Our culminating activity was an edible landform based on research of the landforms and included written and oral reports. The last unit of the year is a models and designs unit, an in-depth look at inventions. We will then participate in the San Diego County Inventor's Showcase. The Showcase is held each year in May at the Scottish Rite Temple in Mission Valley.

We have a special field trip scheduled for March 2008. We will visit the George Page Museum of the La Brea Tar Pits and stop by the Los Angeles Science Center to see "The Secrets of the Pharaohs."



*Gianna H. and David R. show off the Egyptian masks created from their faces. The students used paper mache to make the masks.*



*Donald L., Ian C., Eddie A., and Dan D. match their masks very nicely, don't you think?*

### The Sixth Grade Schedule

Sixth grade students have a unique schedule at the middle school. The first three periods of the day are spent in a humanities core class. Approximately two hours (the first two periods of the day) are for learning reading and writing, and the third hour is social studies in which we learn about ancient civilizations.

Periods 4, 5, and 6 include a math class, a physical education class, and an elective class. Oh...don't forget about lunch!



*Shelby S., Ian C. (hiding behind his comma), Dang Hy C., and Kelsea S. show off sentence strips with FANBOYS, an acronym used in a grammar lesson.*

## Grade Six Math: Pre-algebra & GATE

Mr. Schick's Advanced Pre-Algebra program is underway for the 07-08 academic year at Wangenheim, with a greater value placed on the understanding of algebraic thinking through the use of technology. For instance, most units of study and individual lessons are presented in very visual formats through the use of PowerPoint. What makes this even more exciting to the student learner is that the lessons are projected on a SmartBoard, which means that student can "interact" with the lesson by writing directly on the projected images and...yes, even making corrections to the lesson. The SmartBoard has added many exciting learning opportunities to the classroom and the students are responding.

Mr. Schick is excited about the learning opportunities in the two Advanced Pre-Algebra classes he is currently teaching. Both of these classes are comprised primarily of GATE and seminar students, and these classes present unique challenges. "These students (which include a 6th grade class) really have basic math skills at a very high level. The opportunity now is how best to help them transition to Algebra at the seventh grade level and Geometry at eighth grade," says Schick.

One of the ways to ease the transition is through Carnegie Learning Program, which students access through the mathematics computer lab on campus. Although the program is geared to algebra and might be considered a challenge to the average pre-algebra student, it provides a solid introduction to concepts the students will be more familiar with as they continue their mathematics education at Wangenheim and on to high school.

*Mr. Schick teaches two kinds of advanced math for 6th graders. He teaches a 6th grade cluster math class and, for more advanced students, a sixth grade advanced pre-algebra class. Say "cheese," Mr. Schick!*



*Mr. Schick's sixth grade pre-algebra students present a project for the classroom word wall.*

Something in the technology realm unique to Mr. Schick's classroom, is the use of remote control clickers. One of only two classrooms in the district to use this technology, it is a method to instantly assess student understanding on a topic. It also provides for quick chapter reviews, as well as impromptu quizzes. Above and beyond, simply stated, the students enjoy using the technology. Many say it's like playing a video game, "except we're learning." Fun and learning--you can't very well argue with that combination.



## Seventh Grade English in Room 605 by Meg Reilly

Seventh grade seminar English blasted off with a look at the Harlem Renaissance and the reading of Nikki Grimes' novel, *Bronx Masquerade*. Then we saw the musical presentation of Fats Waller's *Ain't Misbehavin'* along with the sixth and eighth grade seminar classes at the Lyceum Theater in Horton Plaza.

Currently we are reading classics in book clubs. We are not only reading the classic itself, but delving into the time period in which the authors lived, and asking key questions about their impact or the impact of their novel on our lives today. Our culminating project will be a board game that reflects the book, the author, and the historical time period.

We are planning a field trip to the Museum of Tolerance in February. Holocaust survivor, Livia Krancberg, will be visiting our school again this year. We look forward to hearing her story again before our field trip.

Our year will end with a study of William Shakespeare. A local actor, Ron Auerbacher, will present *Shakespeare Alive* to teach us a bit about acting. Then one class member will write a parody of one of Shakespeare's plays. This student playwright will cast his/her own play and we will perform for a variety of audiences. We hope you can come to see it!

## Junior Model United Nations

by Kathy Huynh and Yvie Tsui

The seventh grade seminar history class and some eighth grade students are taking part in a special program fondly referred to as J-MUN. No, the students are not going to strut down a runway with flashing lights

and blaring music! Model as in imitate! The students are going to debate in different committees about worldwide issues with students from other schools. Though this may not sound exciting, every student who participated in JMUN last year said it was a BLAST! In May, all participating students will attend the two-day conference at the Joan Kroc Center for Peace and Justice on the University of San Diego campus. Students with excellent debating skills and resolutions may win awards! Last year Justin S. won a gavel award for WHO (World Health Organization), the highest honor given in each committee. Way to go, Justin! (see star on picture)

## Seventh Grade History

The seventh grade social studies curriculum covers the history of the middle ages of Rome, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, China and the Americas.

Mrs. Vanderhurst's students began the year by investigating the Fall of Rome and creating political cartoons comparing Rome to America. They also wrote newspaper articles entitled, "The Fall of America."

They are currently examining the status of women in Islam and exploring the contributions of Islam to the world. They will culminate their investigations by taking part in a Socratic Seminar.

Mrs. Vanderhurst uses art, music, and a multitude of primary sources to make history come alive for the students. The students will share their knowledge by participating in a Renaissance Fair, planned for this spring.



*The J-MUN Club*

## Mrs. Vanderhurst's Eighth Grade Seminar U.S. History Class

The eighth grade U.S. History classes will be taking advantage of this year's primary election to learn about our nation's government. After learning about the constitution, the election process, the candidates and issues, the students will vote for a candidate they feel is worthy of leading the country.

Currently, the students are designing their own government based on agreed upon values and the natural state of humans. They are creating a constitution, a motto, a pledge, and an anthem to present to the class.

Mrs. Vanderhurst enjoys making history come alive for students by using a challenging and creative curriculum. The students began the year by investigating the Thirteen Colonies. They incorporated their research and primary source analysis skills to produce creative interactive presentations. Her seminar students participate in simulations, debates, and Socratic Seminars.

Some of the students' favorite projects throughout the year are creating political cartoons, producing a revolutionary magazine, mock trials, and formulating a Congressional bill. The highlight of the year is the Civil War Multimedia Project, which the students present during Open House. You are invited to room 102 at this time to view the projects.

Finally, in the spring, many of the eighth seminar students will participate in Junior Model United Nations at the University of San Diego and will visit the east coast to experience firsthand, the history that was discussed in class.



Christopher Y. (left), along with Jasmine R. and Breanne S. work on vocabulary in English class.

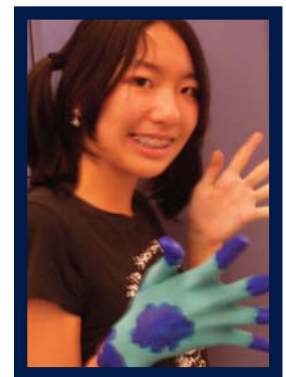
## Seminar English, Grade 8 by Ms. Fehlhaber

The eighth grade English Seminar program provides students with a rigorous curriculum in reading, writing, and public speaking. Students read various novels and discuss them through Socratic Seminars, writing in-depth, analytical literary essays, and creating culminating projects to show what they have learned. Various genres are read and written throughout the year, including poetry, historical fiction, classic literature, and expository texts like editorials.



### **Student testimonials:**

- "We read life-changing books that are really impacting on us. Not Dr. Seuss, but actual adult-type novels"
- "You get to read interesting books like Bronx Masquerade and Fahrenheit 451"
- "I like the discussions that we have"
- "This year we have done many presentations, forcing us to be confident and to refine our vocabulary"
- "The social conformity project taught us the positive and negative"
- "Presenting in front of the class builds self-esteem. You feel all nervous and when you're done, you're glad you did it."
- "Bronx Masquerade taught us that looks can be deceiving and there really shouldn't be any prejudice because everyone is their own person."



Here is Yvie T. 'being her own person.'



## Geography Bee

The 2007-08 Schoolwide Geography Bee was held in the school auditorium on Wednesday, January 11, 2008. Mrs. Vanderhurst was the Bee emcee, with Mrs. Sloan, school vice principal, as our judge. Thirty students from grades six, seven, and eight participated. Eighth grade seminar student, Jeremy Schonberg, has been in the final round of the Bee for sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. He is pictured above, left, as he ponders a question. He went on to take second place. Here he is pictured with Mrs. Vanderhurst and the Bee winner (right).

## The 2007-08 S-p-e-l-l-i-n-g Bee

This year's Spelling Bee was held on Friday, January 19, 2008. Seminar students held on again, as our first place winner was seventh grade student, Kyungna K. Eighth grader, Kathy H., who was also a finalist last year came in second. Ms. Fehlhaber, eighth grade seminar English teacher, was the Bee emcee. The winning word? Procrastinate; something our seminar students *never* do! See a picture of Kyungna with her English teacher, Mrs. Reilly, on page one.

### *Challenge yourself!*

Here are a couple of Jeremy's questions:

1. Where is the city of Gettysburg located?
2. Which of these three countries that border China is *not* landlocked? Is it Nepal, Bhutan, or Thailand?

Answers are on page 8

## Gate District Office Information

### WANGENHEIM MIDDLE SCHOOL STAFF

<i>Principal</i>	Robert Grano
<i>Vice Principals</i>	Elizabeth Sloan Robert Gallardo
<i>Counselors</i>	Catherine Holm Le Ha Jessica Morena
<i>Grade 6</i>	
English/history	Meg Reilly
Adv. Pre-Algebra	David Schick
GATE Cl. Math 6	Karen Bush
<i>Grade 7</i>	
English	Meg Reilly
History	Dianna Vanderhurst
Adv. Pre-Algebra	Dawn Douglas, Dave Schick, Ron Tsui
Adv. Algebra	Genevieve Esmende, Glenn Mendoza, Ron Tsui
<i>Grade 8</i>	
English	Martina Fehlhaber
History	Dianna Vanderhurst
Adv. Algebra	Genevieve Esmende, Glenn Mendoza, Ron Tsui
Adv. Geometry	Genevieve Esmende

#### Location:

Gifted and Talented Education,  
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(858) 573-5998 FAX (858) 637-6214

Contact us at: [giftedandtalentedGATE@sandi.net](mailto:giftedandtalentedGATE@sandi.net)

#### Key contacts:

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Program Specialist, Secondary/Middle or Junior High



*Rachel S. designed edible wetlands for her sixth grade landform project. Yum!*

### School Tours

Due to changes implemented by the school board and district offices, an application is no longer required for seminar. Students will have access to a Seminar program in their geographic area. Students may still attend schools outside of their attendance area through a variety of enrollment programs, including Choice and VEEP.

Wangenheim Middle School's Seminar Program wants you! Please arrange to visit our school to see if our program meets your needs. Contact Ms. Sloan at [lsloan@sandi.net](mailto:lsloan@sandi.net) or Meg Reilly at [preilly@sandi.net](mailto:preilly@sandi.net) to arrange a time.

Don't delay! Applications for Choice and VEEP are due by January 31, 2008.

### Distinguished Lecture Series

for Parents of Seminar and GATE  
Cluster Students  
7:00-8:30 p.m.

February 13, 2008 Dr. Sally Reis  
"Encouraging Success"

May 14, 2008 Dr. Debbie Hazelton  
"What to Look for in a GATE Class"

All events are held in the Eugene Brucker Education Center, 4100 Normal Street, in University Heights.

Directions: Take 163 to Washington Blvd. East, to the top of the hill, turn left on to Normal Street. Parking regulations are suspended in the evening hours.

For more information, call the GATE office at (858) 573-5998.



Geography Bee answers:

- 1. Pennsylvania
- 2. Thailand



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