



THE GATOR GAZETTE

2004/2005 Issue One
October 2004

A Publication of the TGG PTO, Principal & Staff • Making the Connection Between School and Home

Calendar

Oct. 18 HVRSD School Board. 7:30.
Timberlane Middle School.
Oct. 19-21. TGG Scholastic Book Fair.
Music Room Hallway.
Oct. 21. TGG Family Night. Fur Ball
6:45-8:30.
Oct. 22. TGG Parent Council.
Oct. 28. Principal's Summer
Readers' Breakfast. Gr. 1-3 participants.
Oct. 29. Principal's Summer
Readers' Breakfast. Gr. 4-5 participants.
Nov. 1-4. Early dismissal, grades 1-
5. Parent-Teacher Conferences.
Nov. 4-5 Schools closed. NJEA.
Nov. 11 "Authors in Residence"
Assembly; End of Marking Period.
Nov. 15. HVRSD School Board. 7:30pm.
HoVal Central High School.
Nov. 17. TGG Parent Council.
Nov. 22-23. TASK Pie-a-Thon.
Nov. 22-23. Early dismissal, Gr 6-12.
Full day, K-5.
Nov. 24. Early dismissal, K-12.
Nov. 25-26. Schools closed.
Nov. 30. TGG PTO. 7pm.
Dec. 2. TGG Family Night.
Dec. 7. TGG Holiday Concert.
Dec. 17. TGG Parent Council.
Dec. 20. HVRSD School Board.
7:30. Hopewell Elementary.
Dec. 23. Early dismissal, K-12.
Dec. 24-31 Schools closed. Winter
break.

It passed!

What next for TGG and the Referendum?

The September 28 school funding referendum, while primarily slated to expand and renovate Timberlane Middle School, also contained benefits for Toll Gate.

Among those are a partial roof replacement and significant work to improve exterior drainage. Both projects should relieve leaking and seepage problems that have long plagued TGG. Toll Gate's gym floor also will be

replaced. The existing gym floor is most likely the original floor installed in the 1920s.

So when is work slated to begin? Ms. Bugbee reports that Superintendent Nick Lorenzetti is currently developing a plan for the approved work district-wide. This plan will determine the projects' start dates. She promises to keep us posted as further information becomes available.

Welcome to the 04-05 TGG PTO!

You've never attended a PTO meeting? In fact, you don't know how to spell PTO? You are still a member of the Toll Gate PTO, an organization of all TGG parents and guardians!

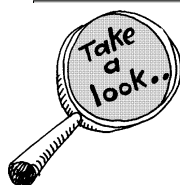
According to the organization's Mission Statement, the PTO's purpose is "to enrich and enhance the elementary school experience of the children at Toll Gate Grammar School. This shall be accomplished by the volunteering of time, talent, and energy; by maintaining a constructive working relationship among parents, teachers, and administrators; and by concern for policy affecting our school."

In practice, the PTO does things like develop and fund most special assemblies your children attend; offer annual mini-grants of up to \$150 to each staff member for special projects or supplies; fund an annual TGG Wish

List of major purchases (See related story, page 3.); sponsor numerous community service projects that reach throughout and beyond Pennington; and organize parent volunteers who act as room parents, beautify the school, run enrichment programs, and contribute to Toll Gate in a hundred different ways.

This year the Toll Gate PTO is led by President Pam Taylor, Vice President Victoria Myer, Treasurer Kim Liu and Secretary Sandee Steinberg. The Executive Board can be e-mailed at tgpto@hvrds.k12.nj.us.

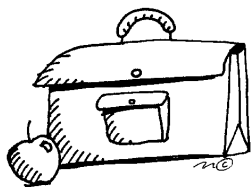
Meetings are held throughout the year and are scheduled in the AM and PM so that all may attend. Come to the meetings to participate in decision-making, engage in lively discussion and learn about what's going on at Toll Gate and throughout the District.



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Message from the TGG PTO President

Dear Toll Gate Families,

I would like to welcome all Tollgate Families back to school! After what seemed to be a very short summer break, both parents and children are settling back into the routines that the school year brings.

My appreciation for all PTO Officers who came before me grows everyday for I have been left with a very well-oiled machine that, thanks to this wonderfully giving community, keeps ticking along without many glitches. I stepped into this job out of necessity, but I must tell you all that so far the rewards and fulfillment far outweigh the time and energy put in to it.

This year we have an amazing number of volunteers offering their time to our fundraising and service committees. **THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR SUPPORT.** This year we face so many deep district-wide budget cuts, that our fundraising efforts will be more important than ever. So, before you roll your eyes back because we're asking for you to put your hand in your pocket again... remember it's all about our kids and the quality of their time at school.

We had a great turnout to our first PTO meeting. If you couldn't make it, you missed a lively discussion on the Wishlist and Budget proposals. With many valid comments, concerns and useful ideas, a resourceful and balanced conclusion was reached. The second PTO meeting was held Thurs. October 7th. This was a morning meeting (9:30) to allow those of you who cannot get out in the evening to be a part of our process. At this meeting we formally voted to accept the new Budget and Wishlist. Our speaker was Ms. Carol Chalela who discussed the shift from the Spectrum Program to the new Gifted and Talented Program here at Toll Gate. Our next meeting will be November 30 at 7pm in the Media Center. Join us!

As With All Things, Participation Is The Key To Success.

Thank You All

Pam Taylor



PTO Revamps, Expands Communications

The overhaul to PTO communications, begun last year, has continued. The result for TGG families should be better, more timely information – and more convenient access to that information when you need it.

Still not getting GatorGrams? Two years ago, the PTO introduced it's wildly popular e-mailed updates that remind of upcoming events and deadlines and disseminate critical news immediately. If you have not received numerous GatorGrams already this year, you are not on the list! Please send an e-mail to tgpto@hvrds.k12.nj.us to immediately be added. Kudos to Carol Meyer for getting GatorGrams off to a great start this year!

Information Easy to Find on New PTO Website. This year, the PTO website has moved from the HVRSD server to a new address to allow more timely updating of information.

Link to the new site from the Toll Gate website (Click "PTO News" in the left hand column.) or go directly to www.tollgatepto.org.

Already, visitors will find an up-to-date calendar; forms and flyers (Handy when you've thrown out one too many papers!); minutes from PTO and all Parent Council meetings; PTO budgets; and lots more. PTO WebMaster Sandee Steinberg will be working hard to keep the site up to date. If you have something to be added to the site, please e-mail her at sssteinbe@princeton.edu.

Contact the PTO Executive Board through one easy e-mail to tgpto@hvrds.k12.nj.us. E-mails will be forwarded to all Board members automatically.

The old standby still works! E-mail is great but nothing beats a conversation in the hallway or a phone call. If you have an idea, an issue or feedback, don't hesitate to talk to a PTO Officer. Better yet, come to a PTO meeting! This is a strong community with terrific ideas and thoughtful perspectives. We want to hear from you!

Bodacious Book Fair Blasts In!

Mark your calendars! The Toll Gate PTO will once again hold a fall Scholastic Bookfair from October 19-21. Come on down to the music room hallway and browse through hundreds of great books, software, and small gift and craft items. Plan on doing your holiday shopping at the fair. All major credit cards are welcome.

Once again, we are offering morn-

ing, afternoon and evening hours and we will be open during the FurBall Family Night on October 21. This will be a FUNdraiser that everyone enjoys!

Hours are:

Tuesday, Oct. 19 9:00 - 4:30

Wednesday, Oct. 20 2:30 - 6:30

Thursday, Oct. 21 2:30 - 9:00

(during the Family Night)

PTO Funds \$6,000 TGG Wish List

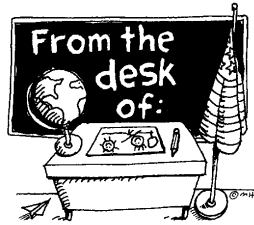
After a spirited discussion at its September meeting, the TGG PTO voted formally on October 7 to fund the TGG staff's Wish List of equipment and supplies.

The final Wish List as funded totalled approximately \$6,000. The PTO had originally budgeted \$4,000 to fund the Wish List but opted to raise that amount to \$6,000 during its September meeting. Principal Bugbee had originally proposed a Wish List totalling \$9,600, but had trimmed that request to \$4,800. The September discussion mainly revolved around reinstating items that Ms. Bugbee had stricken from her list and assisting her in finding alternative sources for the unfunded equipment and supplies.

The final Wish List funds the following items:

- **Books by Ted and Betsy Lewin,** to support the Author in Residency Program. \$303.
- **Orff Instruments.** Four soprano xylophones; four alto xylophones. \$2097.
- **Books for Principal's Birthday Book Rack.** \$325.
- **Educational software.** \$500.
- **Portable CD player with remote.** \$150.
- **Art supplies and storage rack.** \$200.
- **Gr. 1 Chick Hatching Project.** Funding 50 % of cost. Other half to come from school budget. \$225.
- **Paint, supplies for mural in Learning Center (computer) Lab.** \$200.
- **Two Motorola Walkie-Talkies** for communication within TGG and with police department. \$790.
- **Gr. 1 & 2 Classroom Area Rugs (3).** \$1238.

For additional detail, go to the TGG PTO website and click on *Wish List*.



Ms. Bugbee, TGG Principal
New school year, new goals and challenges but parents remain key.

Dear Parents:

I wish to thank all of you who were able to attend Back-to School Night on September 23. It was wonderful to see so many of you joining us for the general session and completely filling every classroom as you eagerly learned what to expect in this important year of your child's educational journey. Your attitude toward school is critical to the success of your child and, by your attendance at Back-to-School Night, you have helped to begin a connection, a home/school partnership that will have far reaching positive effects on your child's success.

Many things come together to lay the foundation for school success. This new year presents a new opportunity for us to structure the learning experience for all children to succeed. Our Toll Gate staff is dedicated to **optimizing the learning opportunities** for your children. Our classrooms have a warm and nurturing atmosphere where your children can take risks and experience success on a daily basis. Creating a strong foundation for learning requires not only instruction in academic areas but also fostering a love of learning and developing skills that enable everyone to get along well with others, in other words, developing **life skills** that will serve our children well after they leave this special place, called Toll Gate Grammar School. Each day we will make every effort to create an environment which stimulates your child's natural joy of learning.

You are also a key player on the educational team and each year you know how important it is for you to send your child to school with adequate rest and nutrition, encouragement, and support. At home you are challenged to find a place for studying, time for completing homework, and presenting the attitude that "education is important." It is also a time for you to renew your commitment as a partner in your child's educational experience. As we embark on a new year together I ask you to read the following and consider what each statement means to you and your family:

- P Participate** in your children's education by talking with them about school and supervising homework.
- A Admire** and accept your children as they are. Identify and nurture their strengths and help to improve their weaknesses.
- R Read, read, read** with your children every day. Read street signs, billboards, grocery lists, maps, books, magazines, cartoons, and books.
- E Encourage** hobbies and interests such as sports, music, pets, pen pals, service to others, or crafts.
- N Never** let a day go by without telling your children that you love them. Praise their good work, deeds, efforts, and kindness towards others.
- T Talk** about school, interests, friends, places you go together, and things you do as a family. Encourage your child to ask questions and answer those questions patiently.
- S Support** your child. Stress the need to learn to read for information and pleasure.

Continued on page 4.



Principal's Letter (contd. from page 3.)

Our school and district goals will become the focus of many classroom and school-wide activities. You will be informed of these activities throughout the year. There will be many opportunities for you to become actively involved in helping us implement them, as well. Our 2004-2005 goals will include the following topics:

- **Developing a Culture of Respect** through character development
- **Reading**, at the heart of which are our district's Language Arts Initiative, guided reading, differentiated instruction, and using data to drive instruction
- Revision of our **G & T Program**
- Focus on **Service Learning**, not just charitable work
- Continuing the development of our **Outdoor Learning Center**
- **Satisfaction Surveys** as we work toward continuous improvement.

Together we can make this the best year ever. My hope and dream is for you to enjoy this school year and work with us as partners in creating the most optimal learning environment for each of your children. The year will surely pass too quickly.

Affectionately,
Myra J. Bugbee
Principal

Special Thought:
"A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step."
—Chinese Proverb



Clip those coupons! Shop! Shop! Shop!

Corporate Rewards Programs Mean Easy Money for PTO

Box Tops for Education deadline approaches. October 31st is not only Halloween. It's our first submission deadline for clipped Box Tops labels! Please send in all those summer Box Tops that have been cluttering your kitchens by October 15th and continue to clip new labels all year long! The Box Tops collection bin is in the main office, but feel free to send your Box Tops to school with your child, and we'll see that they get deposited in the collection bin.

Online Shopping through Box Tops Marketplace

Earns \$\$. Shopping online for the upcoming holidays? Don't forget to shop all your favorite stores through the Box Tops Marketplace at www.bboxtops4education.com. Toll Gate earns cash from each qualifying purchase when you designate Toll Gate as your favorite school. Please visit the Marketplace for a full list of participating online merchants.



And don't forget to use your Box Tops or Target charge cards! TGG earns benefits if you have designated our school as a beneficiary!



Use Verizon long distance (or know someone who does)? Call 1-877-X CREDIT to sign up for Extra Credit for Schools and designate Toll Gate as your favorite school to receive 5 % cash back from all long distance spending. Don't have Verizon long distance? Call 1-888-223-2051 to get it and to designate Toll Gate as your favorite school.



Know of any other corporate rewards programs? Please call Linda Hilliard at (609) 737-0172 with any questions about Toll Gate's Corporate Rewards programs or to recommend new programs. Thank you!

Nurse Notes

Flu vaccine shortage makes hygiene critical

by Alicia Smith, School Nurse and Tracy Meyer

"Handwashing is the single most important means of preventing the spread of infection." (www.cdc.gov)

Last week's CDC announcement that the flu vaccine will generally not be available to healthy adults and children makes the approaching cold and flu season more ominous. Some people, especially those with chronic illnesses (like asthma and diabetes), may still consider getting a flu shot. Consult your physician or check the Centers for

Disease Control website for updated information about flu vaccines.

The rest of us will have to take common sense steps to stay healthy.

Please urge your children to:

Wash hands frequently.

Get plenty of rest.

Eat well.

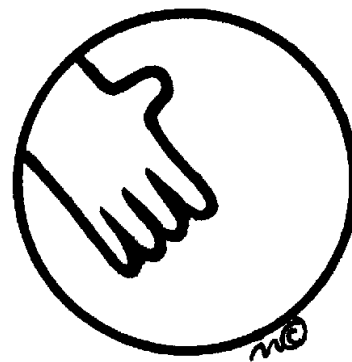
Exercise

News from the C.A.T.

The PTO Community Action Team was organized last year to serve as coordinator for most TGG community outreach activities.

Welcome back to school! In an effort to save trees and not drive everyone crazy with fliers all year long (although there will probably be a few more), we have compiled the calendar for the entire year. Please check the Gator Gram and the school's website for updated information. All participation and donations are voluntary. Please feel free to call us with your questions and ideas. Thanks!

*Maude Tatar 818-0711 or thetatars@yahoo.com and
Elizabeth Haines 730-4887 or ebhaines@elizabethbdesign.com*



Are you new to TGG? Read here!

It's Time to Gear Up for TASK Again!

For many years, Toll Gate Grammar has led the Pennington community in a tremendous effort to provide a full Thanksgiving dinner to the more than 1000 clients of the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen. Traditionally held on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, this dinner involves parent volunteers, TGG students, area Scout and civic organizations, and area churches and preschools. Our own Toll Gate students will bake all 300 of the sweet potato pies! The many weeks of preparation culminate in the delivery of dinner, with decorations, by a selected Third Grade class accompanied by TGG staff and parent volunteers.

In coming weeks, watch for backpack flyers from the CAT as they take on this awesome challenge once again. There will be plenty of ways for any TGG family who wishes to participate to do so, through food donation or hands-on help. If you'd like to help organize this humbling project, contact: Maude Tatar (818-0711; thetatars@yahoo.com) or Elizabeth Haines (730-4887; ebhaines@elizabethbdesign.com). It is a wonderful way to begin your own family's celebration of the holidays.

Upcoming Community Action Team Events Mark Your Calendars!!!

Monday, October 18-Friday October 22. Collection of Gently- Used Halloween Costumes for HomeFront children. Box will be across from main office.

Thursday, October 21. FUR BALL Collection. In conjunction with the Family Night, CAT will be collecting dog and cat food, old blankets and towels for the Ewing Animal Shelter.

Late October. Keep an eye out for the TASK Thanksgiving Dinner flyer in backpacks. This flyer will include many opportunities for everyone to get involved in this wonderful, huge undertaking.

Monday, November 1- Friday, November 12. Halloween Candy Collection. Drop off your leftover and unwanted Halloween candy and we'll get it to Homefront for inclusion in bagged lunches. There will be yet another box in front of the main office.

Monday and Tuesday, November 22 & 23. Pie-A-Thon. Sweet Potato pie baking with our own Toll Gators!!! This is a fun event. We make approximately 300 pies for the TASK meal. Bring your apron: it gets very sticky!

Tuesday, November 23. Turkey Carve-a-Thon. Toll Gate cafeteria, 6:30 'til whenever the last turkey has been carved. Bring your own carving equipment. Also, once again, sharp Ned Fletcher will be putting a keen edge on any knives you want sharpened and raising \$\$ for PTO. Watch for more info!

Wednesday, November 24. TASK Dinner Delivery. Help deliver this wonderful food to TASK in Trenton. This is the finale of our hard work and it's great to be there.

Sunday, December 19 at 5:00 pm. Womanspace Luminary Lighting. Meet in front of Toll Gate with your already-purchased Womanspace luminary kits. We'll light them together to show our support for Womanspace's work against domestic violence. Luminary kits may be purchased at many locations in town. Check local papers.

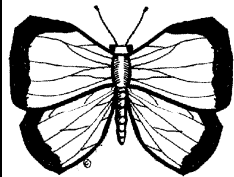
Ongoing calendar collection. Drop off the extras you get in the mail in the main office and they will be distributed to TASK and Homefront.

Stay tuned for the 2005 CAT activities. Thanks for all you do!

News from the Media Center

by Chris Morgan, TGG Media Specialist

"The Monarchs are here! The Monarchs are here at Toll Gate Media Center!"



That's what we were

saying when these itty-bitsy "critters" arrived at the Media Center as three

day old caterpillars that measured less than one inch long. With a constant supply of Milkweed harvested by parent Lisa Foster, each caterpillar soon matured and pupated into its chrysalis. Every person who entered the Media Center admired the light green chrysalides with their gold bands and flecks. It is not hard to see that these "critters" are pure examples of nature's exquisite work. Under the ever watchful gaze of Library Paraprofessional Carol Meyer,

many of us (teachers, faculty and parents) have been fortunate to witness the last part of this "miracle" of nature with the emergence of the butterfly.

Adding to our group of butterfly helpers is G&T Teacher Carol Chalela who has aided in hand-feeding our new butterfly friends. On Tuesday, October 5, we gathered outside Toll Gate and chanted encouragement to our Monarchs as they winged their way to their winter home in Mexico. Be sure to ask your children about their butterfly friends!

LATE BREAKING NEWS! Pictures of your kids and the butterfly release are now posted to the TGG website.

Did you know that parents of Toll Gate students can borrow books at the Media Center? It's true. Just stop by the circulation desk and let us en-

ter your name into the system. In just a couple of minutes, you will be able to borrow books from our children's collection as well as our new parenting section. Be sure to also check out our magazines and books-on-tape sections. We hope you will enjoy the convenience of picking up your children and enjoying the library. Hope to see you soon!

Carol Meyer and I want to extend a heartfelt welcome to all the library parent volunteers. Your commitment to helping the library run smoothly is magnificent. We know we couldn't



Gator Bites

Hottest Book in Town Now Out! You should have received your TGG directory by now. NOTE: Please review your family's listing and contact Mary Griffin (737-0748, mbeaug@aol.com) with changes.

Ever wonder what a Principal does all day? Let the kids show you! Ms. Bugbee reports Toll Gators have illustrated a terrific website about her day. Watch for a link soon from the TGG website to this new Principal's website.

"Author in Residence" Assemblies Set for November 11. Betsy and Ted Lewin, authors and illustrators of such well-known books as *Duck for President*, *Click Clack Moo* and *Girl on the High Diving Horse*, will share the wonder of creating books with our kids during two assemblies geared at K-2 and 3-5. You should already have re-

ceived a flyer to pre-order books personalized by the Lewins. (Contact: Tara Russell, 818-1961)

Principal sets Summer Readers' Breakfasts. Summer readers in Gr. 1-3 will feast October 28 and Gr. 4-5 participants will gather October 29. More info coming...

PTO Committee Chairs and TGG staff: Next newsletter deadline is Monday, 11/22, before Thanksgiving! Please submit your info and digital photos to Tracy Meyer at junegirl08534@yahoo.com.

The Gator Gazette
is a publication of the
TGG PTO, Principal & Staff.
Newsletter Committee
Linda Hilliard (737-0172)
Tracy Meyer (737-6733)

2004-2005

PTO Executive Board

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Toll Gate Principal

E-Mail:

tgpto@hvrds.k12.nj.us
Website: www.tollgatepto.org

Parent Councils Represent You.

Toll Gate Parent Council and District Parent Council. Who are they and what do they do?

The Toll Gate Parent Council meets monthly to discuss various school issues and is comprised of a parent representative from each grade, the TGG Principal and a TGG PTO representative. This year's members are:

PreK	Lucia VanCleaf
K	Suzanne Fleming
1st Grade	Sally Simonian
2nd Grade	Lee Hermann
3rd Grade	Maureen McWhirter
4th Grade	Reba Holley
5th Grade	Kathy Frederich
2nd-5th, Alt.	Terry Foster
PTO Rep.	Pam Taylor
Principal	Myra Bugbee

If you have a topic you would like discussed, please contact any of the above representatives. The first meeting of the TGG Parent Council will be held October 22.

The District Parent Council consists of representatives from PTO boards of all schools in the district. The Council meets monthly to share information and discuss districtwide issues of concern to parents. This year's Toll Gate representatives are TGG PTO President Pam Taylor, PTO Vice President Victoria Myer, and 2003-2004 PTO Co-Presidents Ned Fletcher and Randee Tenghi.

Minutes and/or agendas from the Toll Gate Parent Council and District Parent Council meetings are posted on the TGG PTO web site.



**Are you new to TGG?
Read here!**

Halloween and Parent-Teacher Conferences are coming up!

Halloween Parade is a TGG Family Tradition!

Halloween will be celebrated on Friday, October 29 with the traditional 2:00pm Toll Gate Halloween Parade! Family and friends are invited to come and admire our ghouls, goblins and princesses as they parade around the TGG circle, accompanied by the Hopewell Valley High School Marching Band (as well as the costumed TGG staff!). Bring your camera for this one!



Parties: Watch for information from your child's teacher regarding his or her class party. Each grade has its own special way of celebrating this spooky and fun holiday on the day of the parade.

Costumes: Also look for backpack information from Ms. Bugbee regarding appropriate costumes.

Think November!

*Parent-Teacher Conferences,
Half Days and
Two Long Weekends
dominate traditional
New Jersey school calendar.*

HVRSD elementary school Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled for Monday, November 1-Wednesday, November 3. By now, you probably have scheduled a time to meet with your child's teacher. If you have not, please contact the teacher directly to make arrangements. **Toll Gate will be dismissed early at 12:45 on all three conference days.** Lunch will not be served. Kindergarten classes will follow their normal schedules.

All HVRSD schools will be closed on Thursday and Friday of that week, November 4 and 5. Generally, all New Jersey public schools are closed on these days to allow teachers to attend the New Jersey Education Association Annual Convention.

Please note that schools are also closed November 25 and 26 for Thanksgiving.



UPDATE!

Deadline for Gifted & Talented Program Extended.

The deadline for nominations of children for this year's G&T Program has been extended. Nominations are now due on October 29. For more info, please go to www.hvrsl.k12.nj.us.