Dear Parents,

Wondering what to do the afternoon of a snow day? Try snuggling up with a great book! Nothing is more satisfying than a great read. If you are looking for new titles, leads on exciting authors and suggestions to match the reading level of your child, don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher or Jill Woodall, our librarian for suggestions. Consider the gift of a book for Valentine's Day.

Book ownership characterizes the more successful readers. Research documents that in families with children who have been successful in learning to read and who enjoy reading, children own some books and have a place to keep them. The books don’t have to be fancy or new, and the place to keep them can be a cardboard box. Easy access to other literacy tools, magazines, newspapers, markers, tape, blank sheets of paper stapled together encourage young authors. Reading and writing are closely connected skills. When one is strong, it helps the other.

As you read to your child, remember to take time to explore the pictures. When readers connect pictures with what they’re reading, it helps them understand. Ask your child questions such as:

- What is the picture showing?
- What does the picture have to do with what you’re reading?
- Why has the author included the picture?
- What does the picture tell that the words don’t?

Encourage children to use the clues from the pictures to make a guess when they are having trouble with a word. Struggling too much can take the fun out of reading. I urge you to give help when words don’t come easily. You can tell your child to skip over the word or ask him what word would make sense in its place. Don’t hesitate to supply the word and keep reading to keep up the momentum. Some children are naturally good phonetic readers; they have the greatest success when asked to “sound out” the word. Most importantly ask you child what good readers do when they come to a word they don’t know; they should be able to tell you.

Parents can nurture their child’s reading and writing growth by following the same path that led their child to be successful with learning to talk…take the time, appreciate your child’s efforts and trust your instincts.

I close this by sharing some important news to our learning community. Mary Tam has accepted a transfer to Westbriar Elementary in Vienna. Her last day at Island Creek will be February 13. We will greatly miss Ms. Tam, who has shared a wealth of skills, commitment and caring with all of us. This is however a wonderful opportunity for her; one she cannot turn down as her continuation next year at Island Creek is in question. At this time, due to staffing changes resulting from the budget situation, Island Creek will not qualify for the second assistant principal position. We send our best wishes with her and know she will remain a Croc in her heart!

Thank you for being our partner in education.

Susan Z. Owner
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7pm PTA Mtg.</td>
<td></td>
<td>SCA Spirit Day (Backwards Day)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4:15-4:00 GEMS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3:05-4:05 Chess Group, Cafe</td>
<td></td>
<td>7:30-8:15 Writers Block</td>
<td></td>
<td>Happy Valentines Day!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11:15-1:00 Chess Group, Cafe</td>
<td></td>
<td>9-10am 6th Grade Parent Coffee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12:00-1:00 Chess Group, Cafe</td>
<td>2:00-2:45 pm Distinguished Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3:15-4:00 GEMS</td>
<td>7:30-8:15 Writers Block</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7:30-8:15 Writers Block</td>
<td>PTA Basket Bingo Doors open 6pm First game 7pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7:30-8:15 Writers Block</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7:30-8:15 Writers Block</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1:30-3:00pm Challenge 24 Rm. 241</td>
<td></td>
<td>3:05-4:05 Chess Group, Cafe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25:15-4:15 Helping Hands, Theater</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH**
Mike Knudson, author of the new RAYMOND and GRAHAM series about 4th graders, will be visiting our school on February 11th to speak to 4th and 5th students about the writing process.

January Library Happenings
It has been a busy and fun time in the library this month. Here are just a few of the highlights:

- Primary classes have used a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the ant stories written by Joshua Prince. Comparing and contrasting information helps students to synthesize information and integrate the new information into their background knowledge.
- After listening to the poetry book about dogs, “Once I Ate a Pie,” classes wrote two-word poems about pets. The poems are very funny and will be on display in the library in April.
- After listening to a nonfiction book about dust, “Stars Beneath Your Bed,” some classes wrote an acrostic poem about what they learned. Did you know that dust stays around for centuries? These poems will also be on display in the library in April.
- All fifth grade classes continue working on the Global Awareness & Technology research project. We are using the Big6 research model. Students have had lessons on the online databases, note taking, and on how to cite works for their bibliography. Research begins in February.

Stay tuned for more library happenings!

6th Grade Book Club
The next meeting of the 6th Grade Book Club will be February 19th at 7:30AM in the library. The title of the book we are reading is The Westing Game by Linda Ellen Raskin. New members are encouraged to attend. See you there!!

Library Catalog
You can access the Island Creek library catalog from home: http://libcat.fcps.edu/prehbin/cgiisirs/i/s/0/0/57/49?user_id=429WEB
Counselor’s Corner
Cooperation

Together we can do great things……cooperation,… cooperation. These are the lyrics to a great song and represent a positive way to look at our lives.

As we continue to experience the changes in our economy and the effects to our everyday lives, it becomes more important than ever to work together as a team, a community and a nation. No matter what are our belief systems or values, working together is possible for all people.

Cooperation, like charity starts at home.

Show your children how to work together in harmony with others.

Point out people who are cooperating with each other.

When you stop in traffic to let another car go, explain your act of kindness in cooperating with the other drivers.

Encourage siblings to partner play with each other, and with their peers.

Talk to your children and list 5 ways you can all have better cooperation in the home:

For example. If two people work on a chore it gets done faster leaving time for other things you want to do but would not have enough time; such as clearing the dinner dishes in anticipation of reading, playing outside or media-related activities.

Help someone who is ill and cannot easily do their everyday chores.

Ensure children do not expect something in return for cooperation or kindness; a feeling of giving should be sufficient.

Model cooperative behaviors for your children and they will begin mimicking your actions.

Try to make cooperative behaviors a part of everyday activities. The more you demonstrate and talk to your children the easier it will be for them to be better team-players which will benefit them the rest of their lives.

Yours partners in Character Education
Virginia Hulke
Stefanie Shelesky
School Counselors
The SCA will be selling **Kindness Candy Grams**

February 3-11 from
8:05-8:20 in the lobby
COST 25¢ each for a note
and a piece of candy
(candy is peanut-free but is “packaged on equipment that also packages products that contain peanuts, tree nuts, and eggs.”)

These will be delivered on February 13th.

Proceeds will be put in the SCA fund to be used school beautification and/or special projects.

The Beginning Band and Strings Concert will be held on Thursday, February 19, 2009 at 7:00 PM.
The students are excited to bring you an evening of their musical accomplishments.
We look forward to seeing you.

Girls on the Run update: Ms. Beaman and Ms. Garrett are back and ready to run for the spring season.

Look for the sign-up forms in your Thursday Folder.

We look forward to another great season!

Cooperation Paintings

Through the month of January the Island Creek Croc Creed Committee has been accepting preliminary drawings for window painting. This year’s theme was cooperation. Students were asked how they cooperate with the community and people in their lives. One student per grade will be chosen to paint their design on the upstairs windows. Painting will start February 9th and will be able to be viewed through March, come and check out the students beautiful art work!
Proposed Changes for School Start and Dismissal Times

Based on a report from its Transportation Task Force, the School Board is considering the possibility of changing school start and dismissal times, beginning with the 2009-10 school year. In addition to new start and dismissal times, the Transportation Task Force report offers recommendations that would also improve the overall effectiveness of FCPS’ transportation system. The changes would affect elementary, middle, and high school students. Because changing school start and dismissal times could affect work schedules, child care arrangements, and after-school activities—including athletics—the School Board wants to hear from the public about the pros and cons of the changes.

Seven community dialogue meetings will be held during the last week in February for families and community members to share their thoughts about the proposed changes. Citizens are encouraged to attend one of the meetings.

Tuesday, February 24, 7 to 9 p.m.
- Annandale High School, 4700 Medford Drive, Annandale (Map)
- Longfellow Middle School, 2000 Westmoreland Street, Falls Church (Map)
- Oak View Elementary School, 5004 Sideburn Road, Fairfax (Map)

Wednesday, February 25, 7 to 9 p.m.
- Herndon High School, 700 Bennett Street, Herndon (Map)
- Rocky Run Middle School, 4400 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly (Map)

Thursday, February 26, 7 to 9 p.m.
- Providence Elementary School, 3616 Jermantown Road, Fairfax (Map)
- Whitman Middle School, 2500 Parkers Lane, Alexandria (Map)

In the event of inclement weather, a makeup dialogue session will be held on Tuesday, March 3, from 7 to 9 p.m. at Jackson Middle School, 3020 Gallows Road in the Falls Church area of Fairfax County. (Map)

Citizens are also encouraged to complete an online survey, available beginning Monday, February 9, at www.fcps.edu, to share their opinions about school start and dismissal times. The proposed bell schedule is shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Current School Hours (a.m. - p.m.)</th>
<th>Proposed School Hours (a.m. - p.m.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Hayfield SEC</td>
<td>7:20-2:05</td>
<td>8:35-3:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Island Creek</td>
<td>8:25-3:05</td>
<td>7:50-2:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Island Creek ES ps/pac</td>
<td>9:15-3:40</td>
<td>9:40-4:20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School Highlights and Happenings …February 2009

From Brad Center, Lee District School Board Member

With appropriate recognition to those who brought you Sesame Street videos, your School Board representative brings you the letter “B”. It’s the common thread among five significant issues the School Board is addressing -- issues that could change the school system as we know it. What are they? Budget, buildings, boundaries, bell schedule, and grading scale (there’s a “B” in there).

Let’s begin with the budget. The Superintendent described it as grim but, in keeping with our theme, I will call it bleak. Despite cutting 10-15% from every department - including central offices - increasing class size ratios, freezing employee salaries and cost of living increases, reducing services, and curtailing new programs or expansions, we still face a significant shortfall. Making a bad situation worse, student population is projected to grow by 5,000 (the equivalent of 2 ½ high schools.) It will cost $39.8 million to educate these additional students, and it is an “unplanned” expense. After voting on the Superintendent’s proposed budget, we will need to wait for a signal from the Board of Supervisors on the total county budget and transfer amount to FCPS, including any revenue enhancements (also known as real estate taxes) they are planning to make. Additional information: http://www.fcps.edu/news/fy2010.htm.

Our older school buildings are showing the problems of age and use; many need to be renovated. While we allocated renovation funds in the CIP, we had to redirect this money to address capacity needs from increased enrollment. If growth continues at this pace, nearly 50 schools could be overcrowded by 10%, or more within the next 4 years. On a positive note, two new elementary schools will open in September 2009, for students in the western part of the county. The resulting boundary adjustments will alleviate crowding in the existing area schools.

The Board continues to explore the possibility of revising the bell schedule to allow later start times for high school students. At our January work session, transportation staff presented Iteration #3, as a blueprint of what a revised schedule could look like. We have not made any decisions on the proposal and won’t until the community and staff have a chance to comment. While I support the science behind later start times, I realize this issue is complex and concerns exist. However, I believe we create a false dichotomy if we try to frame the discussion as a choice between accepting the bell schedule or accepting a trade-off. We should try to resolve or mitigate the problems; if that’s not possible, then a trade off determination would be made …but, we are a long way from this step. I encourage you to attend one of the community meetings that will take place during the last week in February and to share your opinion on the proposed schedule. If you cannot attend, please complete the online survey that will be available beginning February 9th at www.fcps.edu. Details of the meetings and a link to the survey are available as well under the heading: Proposed Changes for School Start and Dismissal Times.

Fairgrade, a community group advocating a 10 point grading scale, worked with staff over the past several months to evaluate this proposal. At its January 22, 2009, meeting the School Board voted to change Fairfax County Public Schools' grading scale by increasing the grade point weight for Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, select dual enrollment college, and honors courses. The Board also directed Superintendent Jack Dale to recommend "variants on a basic ten-point grading scale with pluses and minuses" for implementation at the beginning of the 2009-10 school year.

This is a “brief” look at the major issues we are facing. Additional details are available at www.fcps.edu encourage you to stay informed and to keep me informed! I do my job the best, when I work with you!
Dear Parent,

It’s yearbook time once again at Island Creek Elementary School... and now is the time to order a copy of the 2008-2009 edition of The Island Creek Yearbook. Make sure your student gets the 2008-2009 yearbook that’s packed with pictures of all the school year’s highlights.

The 2008-2009 edition of The Island Creek Yearbook is just $17.00, and ordering the book is quick, simple and secure! Log onto www.ybpay.com and place your order using a debit or credit card and automatically be eligible to win an IPOD TOUCH! You can also use the attached form to order by mail.

The yearbook staff is already hard at work on this year’s edition. It’s sure to be one of the best we have ever published. In addition to the vivid pictures and articles, autographs from friends and faculty will make it a unique keepsake from the 2008-2009 school year. There’s no doubt that this year’s yearbook will provide many wonderful memories for years to come.

Payment is due by 01/15/09 to guarantee a yearbook for your student. The yearbooks will be delivered to the school in the spring, but order now before it’s too late! On behalf of the Island Creek Elementary School yearbook staff and all of the students, thank you for your support of the 2008-2009 yearbook!

Sincerely,

Yearbook Staff
Yearbook Staff

P.S. Be sure to order by 01/15/09 so your student doesn’t miss out on the 2008-2009 yearbook! Order now! Prices will increase.

Order Online at www.ybpay.com to be registered to WIN* an iPod touch!

Visit www.ybpay.com, enter your Customer Number:

1123413

Just fill out the bottom portion of this letter and mail with payment in the enclosed envelope.
(check, money order or credit/debit card)

Checking your order status is as easy as 1-2-3!

1 Go to www.ybpay.com
2 Enter Customer #
3 View & print your order

To order by phone, call 1-800-875-7088
Para ordenar en espanol
llama 1-800-875-7088

* No yearbook order or purchase of any kind is necessary to enter or win. Visit vbsaz.com, click on Itouch giveaway for official rules. Entry deadlines 01/10/09 & 05/01/09

YOUR YEARBOOK, YOUR WAY!
Capture the spirit and personality of your school!