



The Spotlight

A Monthly Newsletter from the Stonewall Jackson PTA

The Kindergarten Spring Performance: *Saying Hello to a New Season ~ Saying Goodbye to an Old Friend*

By Abra Garrett



Some people, after thirty seven years of service, are likely to get a gold watch upon their retirement. But a watch seems pretty weak when compared to having a Tony Award-worthy performance dedicated in your honor. Spring has hit Stonewall Jackson and on Thursday, April 28th, our kindergartners saluted the season – and a seasoned teacher as well – with a heartwarming montage of all our favorite springtime songs. The show celebrated the magic of the season and, equally important, celebrated the magic of our very own Kinder-wonder: Mrs. Sue Human.

The auditorium doors flung open and sunlight streamed through, in the metaphorical sense that is, as smiling children, dressed up as shining suns, started down the aisle singing – and signing! – “Here Comes the Sun” by the Beatles. A swarm of kindergarten bees followed next, and where there are kinder bees there are kinder birds, along with kinder flowers, grass and trees. The superbly spring-like costumes the children sported, as well as the beautiful, bucolic set, were the result of many long hours put in by dedicated parents and teachers.



SJ Dancers Win Gold

SJ 5th grade ballroom dancers won gold at the DISD school dance competition and will advance to the finals.

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Shedding some (Spot)light

Are you ready for summer? The Explainer talks about what to expect at the end of the school year.

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Stonewall 5th Graders Win Gold in Ballroom Dancing Contest

On Tuesday, May 3, the Stonewall Jackson 5th grade dance team competed at Molina High School (DISD) and won the gold medal. This means that they advance to the Ballroom Finals on May 24th in Arlington.

The team competed as couples in all of the dances they were taught in ballroom dancing this spring, including tango, swing, waltz, merengue, foxtrot and salsa.

We congratulate all of the dancers for their great performance, including:

Sara King, Jake Patin, Oscar Argote, Jazmine White, Chloe Mabry, Rolando Ellis, Joshua Salmon, Anna Mota, Jaycob Ramos, Madelline McCullough, Hannah Danforth, and Alex Pitre.

The Kindergarten Spring Performance ~ Continued

Upon all ascending the stage, the children then entertained with a rendition of “Spring has Sprung!” Next the audience was delighted as the children performed a traditional Mexican folk dance while singing, in Spanish, “*De Colores*”; a folksong that is an unofficial anthem of spring in Spanish-speaking countries. After that the students performed “Return of the Birds” with beautiful xylophone accompaniment.

Then the place came alive with a jump and jive to “Shuga Bee”, followed by an adorably performed “Big Sunflower”, and a glowingly sang “The Green Grass Grew All Around”. But just when it seemed things

could not get any honey sweeter, it was time to sing goodbye to our dear Mrs. Human.

Ms. Human was ushered on stage and into a throne, looking like the queen of springtime herself, complete with a crown, sash, and a lovely bouquet of flowers. (Also bestowed upon her were some less commonly known indications of royalty, including an apron decorated in Reece’s Peanut Butter Cups and a Willie Nelson CD.) At which point the audience was beyond thrilled to listen to the beautiful voices of Mr. and Mrs. Butler as they led the children in a musical montage tribute to our beloved teacher.

At the end of the performance Mrs. Human took the microphone to offer her thanks and acknowledgement of the

teachers, principal, parents and students that make Stonewall Jackson Elementary school such a special place.

The beautiful evening left concert goers with tears in their eyes and smiles on their faces.....and a serious case of Spring Fever!

Letter from the (PTA) President –

Dear Stonewall Families,

As I write this letter, Stonewall Jackson's Urban Cowboy Auction 2011 is just days away! By the time you receive this issue of the Spotlight, the hard-working auction committee will be able to relax a bit!

I thank all of you who were able to attend this year's auction. And of course, **many, many thanks to Kate Simpson, this year's auction chair**, and all of the volunteers who made this event a success! These parents spent hundreds of hours planning the auction, and all Stonewall students directly benefit from the funds raised that night.

The PTA Nominating Committee has also been hard at work and has selected an exceptional group of dedicated volunteers for next year's PTA Board. The committee helped fill almost 40 board positions. Give a big thanks to Melissa Brewer, Helene Honeybone, Diane Hooper, Trisha Grimsley, and Katie Lambert for their efforts. PTA members had the opportunity to vote on the 2011-2012 PTA Executive Board at the April 28 General PTA Program/Kindergarten performance. The following people were voted on for positions for next year:

President	Elizabeth Greenwood
Vice President	Melissa Brewer
Treasurer	Amy May
Secretary	Toni Collins
Historian	Donna Maddux
Parliamentarian	Lisa Williams

There are just a few weeks of school left, but I know they are busy ones! Thank you all for everything you do for Stonewall Jackson!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Greenwood, PTA President



KEY DATES TO REMEMBER:

May 31	- 5th grade awards ceremony
June 1	- Final report cards go home
June 2	- LAST DAY OF SCHOOL! (Flag ceremony at 2:15, front lawn of Stonewall)
June 23	- School office closes
June 24-July 31	- School office closed
August 15	- School office reopens
August 15	- Teachers return to campus for meetings
August 22	- First day of school

The PTA

About the PTA

The Stonewall Jackson PTA consists of parents, teachers and community members who are dedicated to making Stonewall a great place for students to be nurtured and to learn. Throughout the year the PTA organizes volunteers and holds fundraisers to provide student and family programs, help the teachers in the classroom and enhance the school.

PTA Board meetings and general meetings are held monthly. The Board meetings are open to all parents and are held on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m. in the school library.

PTA Board

Pres.: Elizabeth Greenwood
emgreenwood@sbcglobal.net

VP: Melissa Brewer
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Treasurer: Amy May
amymay218@yahoo.com

Secretary: Toni Collins
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Historian: Kathleen Patranella
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Parliamentarian: Kelly Newman
newmank@swbell.net

Stonewall Jackson Main:
972-749-7200

In the Dark? The “Explainer” Sheds Some (Spot)light



Ever feel like you are in the dark about something at Stonewall or just that you wish someone would explain how it all works?

Each month the “Explainer” will attempt to answer your questions about what’s going on in, around and at Stonewall. Do you have something you’d like explained? Email us at StonewallSpotlight@gmail.com.

This month we ask (and answer):

With summer vacation around the corner, what happens at Stonewall to close out the year?

By Kate Cromwell

Seems like just a short time ago, we were loading those new backpacks for the start of school. Yet here we are, ready to move on to those summer days – school’s almost out! Lots goes on at Stonewall for the end of the year. Whether you are new to the school or just can’t really remember all the details from last year, here is a crash course in closing out the school year at Stonewall.

Q. When is the last day of school, and what happens that day?

This year, school ends on **Thursday, June 2nd**. Students arrive as usual at 8:00 am and have a fun, social day in their classrooms. At 2:15 pm, the whole Stonewall community (students, teachers and staff, and parents) gather on the school’s front lawn for the **flag ceremony**. There will be some short speeches, as well as music performed by Stonewall students. Then the flags are lowered for the last time for the year. Mrs. Henderson dismisses the students, the crowd cheers, and summer vacation has officially begun! This ceremony lasts about 30 minutes, and it is worth attending if at all possible. It is a great tradition that lets us all close out the school year and cheer in summer vacation together.

Q. When do kids really finish the academic work, including homework? When do we get final report cards?

Classes are definitely in “wrap up mode” in May, but school does go on! The last day of the grading period concludes at the end of May, and final report cards go home on Wednesday, June 1st in that last Wednesday envelope. Most teachers do not assign homework during the final week of school, but most classes have homework through May.

Q. Are there parties to end the year?

Yes, every grade has an end-of-year picnic at Stonewall sometime in May (look for information from your room parents). These picnics are open to parents, siblings, grandparents, etc. to join (you bring your own lunch) and are a lot of fun – a casual way to hang out with your kids, friends, and enjoy the spring weather. Whether or not family members are able to attend these picnics, the students enjoy some relaxing time outside, playing games and socializing.

Aside from these picnics, many classes have in-class parties, especially the last week. In addition, there is an awards ceremony for “graduating” 5th graders on May 21st for those students and their families. Details will come from your room parent(s).

Q. We have sent a lot to the school (notebooks, markers, etc.) -- is there a plan for getting all the students’ stuff back home? Should we send a suitcase?

No suitcase necessary, as teachers beginning sending home student belongings and projects in the final weeks of school rather than all at once. On a related note you’ll want to keep up with the Wednesday envelopes, as the school will send home a number of summer activity ideas and special offers (including those reader awards – Six Flag tickets!)

The Explainer – Continued from p. 5

Q. What do I need to do for next year before summer vacation starts? For example, do I need to re-enroll my child in Stonewall for next year? What about teacher placements?

No, you do not need to re-enroll, though the school administration always appreciates being notified about students who do not plan to return so they can plan accordingly. In forming the next year's classes, the school assumes all students will return unless otherwise informed. **Remember: enrollment at Stonewall requires current proof of residency in the school's enrollment zone.** Returning students will need to show that proof at the beginning of the year students return; look for details in the fall enrollment packet. We all have to wait until the very end of summer vacation to find out who our kids' teachers will be for next year. New class lists will be posted outside the cafeteria on Friday, August 19, just before school begins on August 22 (and not before!).

Q. Are the school office and building closed until school starts in August?

Teachers are officially done as soon as school gets out, but some come back in June to finish closing out their rooms. The office and administration are on site through June 23, usually from 8 am to about 4:30 pm. The office is closed for all of July and will reopen on August 15. Teachers may be on campus in early August getting their classrooms ready, with an official start the week before school starts for staff meetings. School starts next year on August 22. Whew! August is a long way off. Let's think about school starting, as Scarlett said, tomorrow. In the meantime, may we all enjoy our summer!!

Further questions?

Look for more information from your teachers, room parents, the PTA email, and Mrs. Henderson's Parent Newsletter (distributed in the Wednesday envelope).

STONEWALL FAMILIES!

Join us for an End Of School Party at



5500 Greenville Avenue in Old Town

Tuesday, May 31st

Come have dinner between 5:00 and 9:00 and Texadelphia will generously donate **70%** of all sales to Stonewall families directly back to our school!

That's AMAZING!!!!

Kids will also have a chance to buy a raffle ticket to win the NAMING RIGHTS to the Texadelphia Kids' Meal for the next YEAR! Totally fun!

Texadelphia has awesome cheesesteaks, of course, as well as salads, burgers, and sandwiches. They have a GREAT kids' meal too, so bring the family and enjoy a great meal for a great cause!



Counselor's Corner by Craig Keith

Each month, our school counselor, Craig Keith, addresses topics that may be of interest to you, in the hopes that what you read could help you discover answers to issues that might affect your family now or in the future.

Dear Counselor – How can I help my kids make healthy choices, e.g., eating the right thing and exercising?

Barclay, my wife and I love to take walks throughout the Stonewall attendance area. The wonderful diversity of our neighborhood is reflected both in the students *and* homes. However, something we rarely see are Stonewall Stars!

We wonder aloud if it's either because they're busy with soccer practice or other organized activities, or if they're playing video games. Hopefully it's mainly the former reason, not the latter. I'm optimistic that society will survive the onslaught of video games/texting/social networking, etc., like we survived the invention of television. Maybe. Anyway, I feel old when I don't see many kids outside burning calories in some way, like back in "my day."

Sometimes we all need to be reminded of things we already know. With me it's "remember to floss your teeth" every time I visit the dentist. So, excuse me for this reminder: kids usually do what's modeled for them. Of course, that includes diet and exercise.

Sadly, there are no guarantees that your children will follow your lead, at least now. But it is amazing that, like it or not, we usually grow up to become our parents. By leading an active lifestyle and eating nutritious food, you

might be planting a seed that takes a while to germinate. 'Nough said---I don't want to be a nag. (Except to say that *parents* buy the groceries, not the kids.)

My child hesitates to do things for himself. How can I address that?

I am with the kindergarten students almost every day for lunch. It has been very interesting to watch them become more self-reliant this year! I am opening far fewer items than at the beginning of the year.

I love it when a student proudly shows me that she opened something for herself that I used to do for her. I try to help make the transition from "doing for" to "doing for oneself" by often saying, "Let's see if we can do it together." This sends a message that the children are partly responsible for a successful outcome, and helps them feel empowered to do it for themselves after a few times. This helps children make the transition from feeling valued if someone does something for them to feeling valued for doing it for themselves.

Another related idea is that an allowance is earned by doing specific chores, which helps teach self-reliance. Along with this, I also think it's helpful to vary the chores somewhat from week to week to show your child you have faith in his ability to get the job done, and so that chores never become too dull. Chores not only send the message that your child is a valuable member of the family, but capable as well. There is a big difference between encouraging and nagging. Set a deadline for a task to be done, and quickly follow-up your child's decision to do it (or not) with the appropriate consequence.

If you have a question for Mr. Keith and/or Barclay? Send an email to StonewallSpotlight@gmail.com.

“Earth Day” week at Stonewall Jackson

By Meredith Gentner

Thanks to all the students and families who participated in Earth Day week!

We recycled a lot of E- waste and spruced up the school grounds! So many families also enjoyed the nice weather and walked or biked to school.

After judging around 75 great entries, the winner of the art contests were:

Claire Vinson, 4th grade - Portable Art
Zachary Padrick, Kinder - Greenhouse Design



Students and the Green Team cleared trash from the back fields and streets with Mr. Painter



Earth day bike riders: Father and daughter (left), Collins family (middle) and Linder and Gentner families (right)



1st grade girls smiling as they arrive at school on their bikes



Claire Vinson in 4th grade won the art contest to be displayed on Mr. Painter’s portable

My Heroes Have Always Been Cowboys....

By Abra Garrett

Our heroes really have always been cowboys, and on April 16th, it was easy to see why. The white-hat wearing team of good guys that constituted our auction committee pulled off a humdinger of an event, *The Urban Cowboy Auction*, raising over \$64,500 for our fair school! As with all tales about the Wild West, there was adventure, camaraderie, and laughter - and even a few moments of nail-biting suspense when the computers went down. But true to form, the night had a happy ending for one and all.



The evening took place at a country-cool venue: Eddie Deen's Ranch, where party goers enjoyed a delicious BBQ dinner and a DJ playing country classics. The delectable desserts that followed the meal were generously donated by Nothing Bundt Cakes. And speaking of generous donations...cheers to our beer benefactor Mr. Brian Bishop! Equally important, a heartfelt "Thank ya ma'am" to Mrs. Maryann Howard (WR Starkey Mortgage) for providing the wine! The amazing live music of Southbound Lane - led by Stonewall dad, Dave Smith - came to us courtesy of David Bollman's company, S & W Foundation. As any attendee who dared the awesome mechanical bull can attest to, it would

have been a crying shame not to have that moment preserved for posterity, so thank yous also go out to Carey and David Thornton for bringing us bull-riding, complete with pictures.

Big money makers for the evening included: The live auction, emceed by Mr. Rob McCollum, that raised \$16,750! Dallasopoly returned from last year and a new addition to the evening was Alma Matter Madness, where people had a chance to make donations in the name of their alma matter to support Stonewall. The priceless items donated by teachers raised over \$3,500. The student art made over \$3,800, thanks to the fabulous Mrs. Flynn who guided the creations in her classroom; and Diane Hooper and Laura Pate who compiled and put together the works. The raffle, led by Shelly Aldinger and Trisha Grimsley, brought in a rockin' \$7,100 plus!



Gratitude goes to our lead Corporate Sponsor Comerica and our other sponsors, Kathleen Crowe and Richard Wank, The Ben Jones Group at Allie Beth Allman, Monticello Liquor, The Republic Group, Slalom Consulting, Woodfire Kirby's, Mr. and Mrs. Roger Clark, and Skechers USA.

At evening's end, everyone climbed back in the saddle again and hit their happy trails to return home on the range - it was another Stonewall success.