



# The Valley Voice

A publication of the USPA developed by parents and staff to provide information of interest and import to US families

## Unveiling Our New Mission! . . . by Mr. Murray

**W**ith warm, spontaneous applause on Founders' Day, students expressed enthusiasm for US' sharper, crisper, more current Mission Statement. The faculty showed similar support last January when they reviewed the final draft, and I sensed strong buy-in from parents when I unveiled the text at all three curriculum nights earlier this month.

The product of a careful process of discussion and debate in the context of the strategic planning process, the Mission expresses in clear, succinct language who we are and what we stand for as an institution.

- Respecting tradition, we recommit to powerful and enduring elements of a US education: rigor of the academic program, pursuit of excellence, and the notion that we seek to create a community where boys are known and loved.

- We also introduce compelling ideas and language. We now say that we seek to develop boys into young men "who aspire to make a difference in the world." We add the notions of creative and moral excellence. And when we refer to US' long-standing value of "community", it is a community where diversity is valued as highly as tradition.

- Finally, the new Mission eliminates several phrases that the faculty and trustees felt were no longer a good fit for US. The idea of preparing boys for the "world they will inherit" felt too entitled, and the implied claim that the Western Tradition contained all of the "best of what humankind has thought and created" seemed to be too narrow a world view.

So, as University School moves forward into the next era of excellence, with the Strategic Plan as our guide, the Mission Statement defines in compelling language our core identity.

### Mission of University School

**The mission of University School is to develop promising and motivated boys into accomplished and independent young men who aspire to make a difference in the world. The school is rigorous. Our programs, led by challenging and supportive faculty, promote intellectual, physical, creative, and moral excellence. We believe these goals are best achieved in a diverse community where tradition is valued and where every boy is known and loved.**

## US Thanksgiving Food Project

**C**arrying on the US tradition of service to the community, the plans for the US Thanksgiving food project are being finalized. As has been the case for many years, US boys are being asked to contribute both their time and their money to help less fortunate families in Cleveland. Specifically, each boy is asked to contribute around \$15 – \$20 to the drive, to eat a spare lunch on November 20 (which is the Tuesday before Thanksgiving), and to spend the rest of the lunch period packing baskets with foodstuffs including turkey, potatoes, rice, canned goods, bread, and similar items. Those items will be purchased by pooling donated funds with funds representing the savings generated by the spare lunch served to the boys on the day that the baskets are assembled.

The goal this year is no less than 250 baskets, all of which will be delivered by US faculty and students to a central location on the day before Thanksgiving. And while the gift of the baskets – both their content and the time taken to assemble them – is primarily that of the boys, US families who wish to join the students in supporting this project are welcome to make a contribution. Checks payable to "US Thanksgiving Project" may be sent to Terry Lipford, Service Advisor.

## Future Dates

### Wednesday, October 24

- All Winter Sports/OHSAA Mandatory Parent Mtg. 7 p.m. (Callow Rm., Lecture Rm., Dining Hall, Rm. 245)

### Monday, October 29

- Faculty Work Day – No Classes

### Saturday, November 3

- SAT I & II ~ 8:30 a.m. (other sites)

### Wednesday, November 7

- USPA General Meeting 7:15 p.m. (Lecture Room) Topic: College Entrance Testing

### Thursday, November 8

- Fall Sports' Dessert 7 p.m. by invitation (Stouffer Dining Hall)

### Friday, November 9

- International Dinner 6:15 p.m. (Stouffer Dining Hall)
- Fall Play "Welcome to the Monkey House," by Kurt Vonnegut 8 p.m. (Gund Auditorium)

### Saturday, November 10

- Fall Play "Welcome to the Monkey House," by Kurt Vonnegut 8 p.m. (Gund Auditorium)

### Thursday, November 15

- Sophomore Parent College Program 7 p.m.

### Saturday, November 17

- Parent/Sponsor Conferences 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

### Wednesday, November 21

- Thanksgiving Recess Begins

### Monday, November 26

- Classes Resume

### Saturday, December 1

- USPA After-Prom Tree and Wreath Sale 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Smythe Pavilion)

### Saturday, December 8

- USPA After-Prom Tree and Wreath Sale 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Smythe Pavilion)

### Sunday, December 9

- USPA After-Prom Tree and Wreath Sale Noon – 4 p.m. (Smythe Pavilion)

## US Center for Excellence Distinguished Speaker Series...

**O**n November 28, The US Center for Excellence will host the second of four of the 2007-2008 Distinguished Speaker Series focused on the lives of boys and how they can become better men. The second program features John Badalament, Harvard-trained educator and leading expert in the field of fatherhood. Mr. Badalament's work focuses on the issues of modern dads -- their pressures and their desire to be good fathers -- and provides a practical approach to help men strengthen relationships with their children, partners, and family. "Most dads did not grow up learning the necessary skills to build intimacy in any of their relationships, much less with their kids," Mr. Badalament explains. "And those who did had to contend with a larger culture that taught them to de-value those very skills."

Two presentations will be conducted by Mr. Badalament. There will be a morning event from 8:30 to 10 a.m. geared to mothers, entitled "How Men's Lives Are Changing and Why it Matters to All Mothers." This presentation will offer practical tips on how women can support and challenge men to be great fathers in a variety of family structures. The evening event entitled "Today's Modern Dad: Exploring the Relationship Between Fathers and Sons" is tailored to fathers. It will begin at 7:30 p.m. and will feature the four practices of being a modern dad: creating your legacy, showing up physically, connecting emotionally, and modeling healthy relationships at home. The impact fathers make on the lives of their sons will be explored and practical take-away tips will be offered. Parents and caregivers of all ages are welcome at both events.

All Distinguished Speaker Series events will be held in the Conway Hall auditorium on the Shaker campus and are free and open to the public. To reserve a space call 216-831-1984, extension 7392.

## International Dinner and Fall Play

**T**he International Dinner (see flyer) is always followed by a top notch production by the US Drama Department. This fall's production, "Welcome to the Monkey House," is based on short stories by Kurt Vonnegut. This is the story of an amateur theater group rehearsing their season from the story "Who am I this Time?" We see the group work on two science fiction plays from two of Vonnegut's most interesting looks at the future: "Harrison Bergeron" and "The Euphio Question." The final short play they produce is from the story "The Kid Nobody Could Handle."

Production dates are November 9 and 10, at 8:00 p.m.

## Clothes for Cleveland Schools

**T**he US community is initiating a clothing collection for Cleveland city high school and middle school students. These schools have a new uniform requirement which incorporates the items we require our students wear at the Hunting Valley campus. Please consider donating your gently-used shirts and khakis. A collection bin will be located near the reception area.

## Christmas Tree Sale

**W**hen the early 20th century American poet Joyce Kilmer wrote "I think that I shall never see/A poem as lovely as a tree..." he must have been thinking about the beautiful Frasier Firs, Douglas Firs, Scotch Pines, and Blue Spruces that will be available for purchase at the Annual USPA Christmas Tree Sale, which benefits US After-Prom. US families will be able to buy a wide variety of trees, plain and decorated wreaths, and pine roping at Smythe Pavilion on Saturday, December 1 and Saturday, December 8 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Hours for the last day of the sale, which is Sunday, December 9, are noon to 4 p.m.

The Tree Sale Committee is eager to hear from additional volunteers who can trim trees, sell trees, and help the buyers secure the trees to their vehicles. Volunteer shifts on December 1 and 8 are 8:30 – 11:30 a.m., 11 a.m. – 2 p.m., and 1:30 – 4:30 p.m. Volunteer shifts on December 9 are 11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. and 2 – 4:30 p.m. Volunteers are also needed to help unload trees on Wednesday, November 28 during school hours. Please contact either Meg Norchi ([Meg@norchilaw.com](mailto:Meg@norchilaw.com)) or Ellen Rothfus ([Main491mrs@ameritech.net](mailto:Main491mrs@ameritech.net)).

## After-Prom Committee

**W**hile the attention of many in the US community has turned to the changing foliage, the Preppers' season, and the Thanksgiving break, the 2008 After-Prom Committee has its attention firmly fixed on spring. Or, to be exact, Saturday, May 3, 2008. And it's not as far away as you may think. The Committee is not only getting ready for the Tree and Wreath Sale co-chaired by Meg Norchi and Ellen Rothfus (see separate article) but is continuing to find ways to involve all US families and friends in its activities during the intervening months.

Though the next regular Committee meeting is Tuesday, October 30 at 7 p.m. in the Callow Room (where all are welcome!), activities that are underway right now include:

- Campaign to collect gift cards and college gear from college visitations, to be used as prizes at After-Prom.
- Giant Eagle "Apples for the Students" program registration drive for the program beginning October 28. Sign up online using the school code #5216. And remember, registration is not limited to US parents – ask your family and friends to register too!

The Committee stresses that volunteers are warmly welcomed and very essential to the success of After-Prom. Because active After-Prom volunteers naturally will have first shot at volunteer slots for the actual event, why not get involved right now and avoid the last-minute rush? Contact Betsy Stovsky at [stovskb@ccf.org](mailto:stovskb@ccf.org) for more information.

## Do You Feel Lucky?

**E**ven if you don't, it is a sure thing that your mood will improve the minute you buy your After-Prom raffle tickets because you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that you are supporting After-Prom. Tickets are \$10 each or three for \$25 and can be purchased by check (made out to US After-Prom) or cash. The raffle mirrors the Ohio Lottery Nightly Pick Three drawings throughout December 2007 and winning tickets pay \$100. Get yours by calling Kathleen Visconsi at 440-338-6147 or Marge Hopkins at 440-338-3007.

## Calling All Ideas

**U**SPA has budgeted \$4,000 for a gift to the school and would like your ideas about how the money should be spent. The gift is intended to benefit faculty, boys, and parents and address an issue of importance for the entire US community. For example, the funds could sponsor a workshop or speaker. USPA is also seeking parent volunteers for an ad hoc committee to collect and vet the comments received. The committee will develop a set of choices to present to the school administration. Please contact Terry Stoller ([terrystoller@sbcglobal.net](mailto:terrystoller@sbcglobal.net)) with your ideas and if you are interested in volunteering for the committee.

## Heard in the Valley... by Mr. Obel-Omia

One of the joys and challenges of an independent school is its willingness and ability to add more programs and opportunities for its students. Unfortunately, more time cannot be added to a day or to a week, so schools rightfully choose to make choices. With some decisions, schools inadvertently tread on traditions, conflict with time-honored family customs, and demand more from its students, families, faculty, and staff. There may have been a quaint time in University School's history when the doors closed in the evening and on the weekend. Now, the school is open nearly 24 hours a day, seven days a week with activities, meetings, preparatory sessions, auditions, rehearsals, and other kinds of gatherings. For many, University School is at the center of their academic, athletic, artistic, and social lives. University School is proud of its prominent place in our boys (and our families') lives, but we also recognize with our increasingly diverse student body, we occasionally conflict with responsibilities and obligations that families have outside our sphere.

Please know that University School respects all families and their traditions and customs. When scheduling tests, exams, athletic events, or artistic performances, we seek to find times that are respectful, but we sometimes are not masters of our own schedule. With sports, for instance, we are at the mercy of the OHSAA and must respond to many of their requests or risk losing opportunities for our athletes; something no one wants. In addition, as a member of the Cleveland Council of Independent Schools, we attempt to respect other schools' events, which makes it challenging for us to schedule our events. In light of this explanation, please be understanding of our scheduling challenges. If you have a question, ask, but know that a great deal of thought has gone into the decision. This topic is one that is ripe for discussion, so please call if you would like to speak with me.

### True or False????

**T** rue... Mr. Beard is the new "enforcer" of the dress code, demerits have been and will be issued for any non conformance to dress code. He is an equal opportunity enforcer.

True... demerits of any kind are reported to Mrs. Kalman who will in turn notify the boy's sponsor, the boy, Mrs. Mason, and Mr. Obel-Omia (via the school e-mail system)

False....Boys may not sign themselves out for doctor's appointments without prior email, note or call from a parent to Mrs. Kalman

True.... The front door to the school is locked at 6 p.m.

True.... Hawley House won the day on Founder's Day

### What's New in the College Counseling Department??

**T** he US College Counseling Office has undergone many changes since last year. In order to extend a more personal approach to this very important process, we now have four college counselors who work together as a team to advise the students and communicate with college and university representatives. This team is led by Jenny Rifken, Director of College Counseling. Ms. Rifken spent eleven years on the admissions committees of three different schools. Specifically, she worked for two years at the University of Michigan, seven years at Harvard College, and most recently was the Director of Recruitment and Associate Director of Admissions at MIT. Ms. Rifken is joined by Patrick Gallagher, an English teacher at US, Michael Obel-Omia, the Head of the Upper School, and Jean-Pierre Jacquet, a new member of the US community. In addition to Mr. Jacquet's college counseling responsibilities, he is one of the coaches for lacrosse and wrestling. The team would not be complete without our College Coordinator, Eileen Perkins. Some of her very important duties include processing all of the boys' applications, scheduling the nearly 90 college visits and organizing the entire office.

The new college counseling team has made a number of changes to the college counseling office and process. Some of those changes include:

- Created new college counseling workspace with two computers for the boys to use during their free blocks and before and after school
- Implement and train seniors on the Naviance program. (Naviance is a comprehensive computer program which aids in the college process and allows students to look at past US admissions data, conduct sophisticated college searches, and communicate with their college counselors)
- Develop a robust college counseling curriculum
- Meet regularly as a college counseling team to share information
- Spend a significant amount of time educating visiting college representatives on the values of a US education while learning as much as possible about the various colleges and universities

## Sophomore Section

### Thursday, October 18

• Ladies' Night Out 6-9 p.m. (Smythe Pavilion)  
If you missed this fun-filled night last year, don't miss it this year! The senior and junior moms host the sophomore and freshman moms. This is your last chance to just relax and enjoy--next year we'll be the hosts!

### Tuesday, October 30

• In case you are worried your little goblin won't get his share of treats because he's too old to trick-or-treat, never fear. The 10th grade class parents are providing donuts, cider and Halloween treats during morning break.

### Thursday, November 15

• Sophomore Parent College Program 7 p.m.  
Don't panic...there's still plenty of time. However, the US College Counseling Office would like you to be informed about the process. They will host an informal night to introduce sophomore parents to the college process and to them. They will talk about what we can expect over the next three years and give us a timeline, including what our sons should be doing now.

## Freshman Section

### Friday, October 26

• Fall Parents Get-Together/Cleveland Racquet Club, 29825 Chagrin Boulevard, Pepper Pike 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. - \$20.00 per person.  
If you haven't RSVP'd yet, contact Lisa Wiant as soon as possible at [Lwiant11@aol.com](mailto:Lwiant11@aol.com) or 216 514-0885.

### Monday, October 29

• Faculty Work Day – No Classes

### Wednesday, October 31

• Halloween Snack 'n Cider  
If you can donate cider or doughnuts, please contact Ramona Match at [ramona\\_match@choicehotels.com](mailto:ramona_match@choicehotels.com) or 440 543-6462.

## New Recycling Program at US

The school has hired a new company called Landmark Disposal. They pick-up many recyclable items produced at school and recycle them at their Medina plant. All we have to do is place the recyclables in the BLUE BINS; it's not that hard. At athletic events look for the BLUE BINS, in school look for the BLUE BINS, wherever you are, look for the BLUE BINS!! When you find a BLUE BIN, this is what you can put in it:

- Cardboard
- Paper of any and all types -- white, newspaper, ledger, junk mail
- Phonebooks
- Plastic bottles and jugs
- Metals -- both ferrous and non ferrous: aluminum cans, steel cans, metal parts and scrap, metal shelving
- Clean, dimensional lumber (no plywood, treated, or painted lumber)
- Pizza boxes

## CCIS Parent Group Replaces PACT

In the October issue of The Valley Voice, we reported that PACT was in the process of restructuring. While that process is currently still underway, much progress has been made. A group of parents from the CCIS schools have recently met and, among other things, formed three "teams": a mission/bylaws team, a community service team, and a speaker series team. Once the organization is fully operational, parent representatives will act as liaisons between CCIS and the individual school administrations. In addition, community service projects and a speaker series will be planned. If you have an idea about a community service project, contact US representative Ann Sords ([annsords@aol.com](mailto:annsords@aol.com)). If you have an idea about a speaker, or topic, contact US representative Karen Hess ([khesspr@aol.com](mailto:khesspr@aol.com)). If you would like to get involved with the group, contact either Ann or Karen.

### ANNUAL "FUNd" FACTS

#### Did You Know?

Gifts to the Annual Fund will help US achieve the initiatives set out in the school's new Strategic Plan.

Dollars donated today can be spent tomorrow to make those plans a reality.

An important part of the Strategic Plan is to "build and nurture an outstanding, dynamic faculty."

Please consider making a gift to the 2007-2008 Annual Fund now.

Because we value our teachers...  
Thank you!

## Show Your Team Pride

The Prep Shop is receiving orders for varsity letter jackets. If you know your son will letter in a fall sport, it is a good idea to preorder his jacket. After the fall sports banquet, you need only drop off the letter and number. By preordering you will ensure you son receives his jacket in a timely manner. If your son already has a letter, you might wish to order now rather than during the post-banquet rush. The Prep Shop hours are Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Tuesday, Thursday 3 to 4:15 p.m.

## Registering for Selective Service

**D**ID YOU KNOW that your son has to register with the Selective Service when he turns 18? Most every male U.S. citizen is required to register. There are several ways to register, including online at <https://www.sss.gov/RegVer/wfRegistration.aspx> and at your local post office, where an "SSS Form 1M(UPO)" should be available. You (and he) can learn more at [www.sss.gov](http://www.sss.gov), by calling 847 688-6888, or by writing to the Selective Service System Registration Information Office, P.O. Box 94638, Palatine, IL 60094-4638.

## Scholars are US....

This year there are 14 National Merit Scholars amongst the 16,000 nationwide. Proudly they are:

- 1) Jonathan S. Danzig
- 2) Charles F. Goss
- 3) Jared F. Jones
- 4) Toby R. Manders
- 5) David W. Martin
- 6) Matthew J. Pokorny
- 7) Timothy H. Scanlon
- 8) James D. Schmitt
- 9) Nakul Singh
- 10) McConnell O. Smith
- 11) Sam P. Star
- 12) Andrew M. Vekstein
- 13) Justin T. Wedell
- 14) Edmond W. Zaia

And 10 commended student scholars in the 2008 National Merit Scholarship group:

- 1) Michael A. Chilcote
- 2) Juan J. Fernandez
- 3) Benjamin J. Finnell
- 4) Matthew J. Gherlein
- 5) James Kasten
- 6) Michael K. Perloff
- 7) John C. Ryder
- 8) Steven T. Shin
- 9) Andrew Swank
- 10) Reid W. Tymcio

**Sad News:** Our beloved Clarence Shaffer who has driven all teams – both scholastic and athletic – to their meets, debates, and matches has had a debilitating stroke. Please keep him in your thoughts, and perhaps send him a note or card: Mr. Clarence Schaffer c/o University School, 2785 SOM Center Road, Hunting Valley, OH 44022

### The Valley Voice

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