



The Valley Voice

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

New Website

With the Strategic Plan as our guide, as US moves forward into the next era of excellence, so does the way we present ourselves. (Please see the relatively short but comprehensive communication about the Strategic Plan in the Annual Giving Report which was mailed in December.) One component of our image is the US website and many, exciting changes are taking place. The most significant change is that we will no longer have 3 sites: the internet site, the Shaker intranet site, and the Hunting Valley intranet site. All access will take place through the current internet site www.us.edu. Not only will students and faculty have access to private content, but parents and alumni – indeed, the whole US community – will be given their own log-in information. As a result, this will enable the school to have an ability as never before to regulate private vs. public content.

The website project cross-functional team has US representatives from IT, marketing, advancement, administration, and academics. WhippleHill Communications of Bedford, New Hampshire is working with US to develop the new website. WhippleHill has designed and implemented websites for top-notch independent schools throughout the country and has won numerous awards for doing so. The newly-designed website will present many opportunities for communication among members of the US community that do not exist currently, and will provide the community with information that is credible, current, comprehensive, and will reduce email traffic and the need for print materials. There will be more opportunities for teachers to communicate directly with parents than ever before. In addition, WhippleHill's own learning management system called "Podium" will allow teachers to publish their syllabi, publish assignments, and see testing schedules of other teachers for conflicts and overlaps. Beyond our current US community, the website will be more welcoming and inviting to prospective students and their parents.

With regard to parent access, an initial parent "portal" will be set up showing the information thought to be important and useful to parents. (A portal is a page on the website that serves as a main entry point or "cyber door" to US with specific, personalized content consolidated in one place. It has services such as search engines, email, downloads, and links to other related pages.) Parents will be able to customize their calendar view to see only that information they want to see, for example, athletic schedules or events relevant only to the HV campus. And one of the best parts is—get ready—the customized calendar can be exported to Outlook!!

The plan is to phase in the launch of the new website as follows: First, we will "go live" with the public side of the site (what's currently on www.us.edu) in early February. Plans are to phase in the launch of the private side of the site in a manner which will give the faculty a chance to be comfortable with using it as it is intended. This will alleviate parents logging on to one of their son's classes and finding nothing to view! The intention is to roll out the complete site by spring break. According to WhippleHill and other schools that have redesigned their websites, it will take the entire school community time to get used to it. In reality, most of us will probably "grow into it" over the next year.

Look for more exciting "cyber news" in the coming issues of *The Valley Voice*.

Future Dates

Monday, January 28

Racial Awareness Cultural Education Day
Reverend Robert Tompson, Chaplain at Phillips Exeter Academy

Tuesday, February 5

- Junior Parent College Meeting 7 p.m. **Note date change**

Wednesday, February 6

- USPA General Meeting 7:15 p.m. (Lecture Room) International Travel Opportunities for US Students (Steve Murray)

Friday – Monday February 15 – 18

- Mid-Winter Break - No Classes

Tuesday, February 26

- Sherman Prize Speaking Contest (Assembly)
- All Spring Sports/OHSAA Mandatory Parent Meeting, 7 p.m. (Auditorium, Lecture Rm., Dining Hall, Rm. 245)

Friday, March 7

- Faculty Work Day - No Classes - End of Interim III

Monday, March 10

- Grades and Comments Due 8 a.m.

Wednesday, March 12

- Winter Sports Dessert 7 p.m. (Stouffer Dining Hall)

Friday, March 14

- Spring Break Begins After Last Class

Monday, March 31

- Professional Development Day (HV) - No Classes

Tuesday, April 1

- Classes Resume

Thursday, April 3

- Freshman & Sophomore Parents Curriculum Preview Meeting 7 p.m. (Wean Library)

Some Fall Semester News:

University School was the #1 school for fundraising for the Suicide Prevention Education Alliance. The school received a trophy and was featured in the local news. Sam Cregar, J. Mentrek and Jerry Grisko were the student leaders. Ms. Hodson, Director of the University School's Faculty and Staff Wellness Program, and Mr. David Wright were invited by the Oswald Companies to present their program at the 2007 Annual Healthy Ohio Worksite Health Promotion Conference in Columbus, OH. Ms. Hodson is now working on initiating a Student Wellness Program.

Mr. Cate and the Mock Trial Team have been practicing all fall for their competition in February.

The fall sports teams wrapped up very successful seasons. The football team (6-4), coached by Mr. Stevens, announced that McConnell Smith '08 was the MVP for the '07 season. Captains have not been announced for the Fall '08 season. The soccer team (11-6-1), coached by Dr. Keefe, announced that Brandon Pichanick '08, Fitz Stueber '08, and John Wargo '08 were the MVP's for the '07 season. The team clinched the sectional division. Next season's captains are Willie Miller-Little, Matt Rothfusz and Alex Weber. The cross country team's MVP was Andrew Gorman '08. The '08 Cross Country team will be captained by Greg Jantzen and Sam Turben. The team won the Avon Invitational, placed 3rd at Districts, and 8th at Regionals. The golf team, coached by Dr. O'Neil, had a spectacular season. They were the U.S. Invitational Champions, the Medina Invitational Champions, the OHSAA Sectional, Regional, and State Champions. The MVP's were Mac McLaughlin '09 and Andrew Haines '08. Mac McLaughlin will be the captain for the '08 season.

No Rest for After-Prom Elves

Santa's elves may be enjoying their January vacation, but there is no vacation for the ever-energetic After-Prom team. Moreover, while Ellen Rothfusz and Meg Norchi, ably assisted by Noha Ryder and Betsy Stovsky, outworked those elves with their devoted service to the now-concluded Tree and Wreath Sale, other After-Prom projects are going forward at this time.

According to co-chair Marianne Crosley, After-Prom is busy collecting prizes for that special evening, and US parents can help by making sure to pick up some extra college apparel/trinkets while on college visits and to solicit prizes from businesses that they patronize. Whether the result is gift cards or movie passes, sporting event tickets or tickets to concerts or attractions, all donations are welcome and can be left with Mrs. Kalman at the reception desk. Questions should be directed to Gail Bowen (440-893-9110), who also invites other interested parents to assist her in planning and executing this very special part of After Prom.

Parents and family members are also reminded to register their Giant Eagle cards by visiting www.gianteagle.com where they need to navigate to "Community Events" and click on "Educational Support." Registration requires use of the school code, which is 5216.

Teacher Tributes

An important part of US's Strategic Plan is to "build and nurture an outstanding, dynamic faculty." In keeping with that initiative, this year's Annual Fund "theme" is "Because we value our teachers". This article could be aptly titled "We value our teachers because..." Here are just a few of the accomplishments of our wonderful faculty; look for additional accolades in coming issues of *The Valley Voice*:

Art teacher, Mr. Chris Davis, will have a one-person art show at the Ross Museum of Art at Ohio Wesleyan University. The show will run from February 13 through March 6 and is the result of Mr. Davis being named Alumni Artist of the Year at Ohio Wesleyan. Mr. Davis is the first artist to receive the newly-endowed honor. He will also give a public talk on March 4 at OWU.

James Garrett, Head of the English Department, had his poetry chapbook entitled *At the Five-and-Dime, Lavallette, New Jersey* recently published by Finishing Line Press. The book received some very good reviews: "Jim Garrett's *At the Five-and-Dime, Lavallette, New Jersey* should strike a chord in the heart of anyone whose growing up included summer days at the beach." -- Leonard M. Trawick, CSU Professor Emeritus of English, and "Like waves on the New Jersey beach, these poems cast up the seashells of one bright, lovely revelation after another" --George Bilgere, JCU Associate Professor of English. Mr. Garrett gave poetry readings on December 13 at the Hunting Valley campus and January 9 at Mac's Backs Paperbacks on Coventry in Cleveland Heights. Copies of the book are available at www.finishinglinepress.com.

Football Coach James Stephens received the coveted award for sportsmanship, ethics, and integrity from The Ohio High School Football Coaches Association. He was selected for the award by fellow head coaches in Region 3, which is Cuyahoga County. Mr. Stephens is also the McKinley Chairholder in Teaching Excellence.

ANNUAL "FUND" FACTS

The average gift from parents to the Annual Fund last year was over \$630.

Every single gift, regardless of size, is crucial to the success of the Annual Fund.
The only gift amount that is too small is no gift at all!

Your gift truly counts. That's why we're counting on you!
100% parent participation is our goal.
To date, 37% of US families have given a gift to the Annual Fund.

If you've already given a donation, thank you!
If not, please consider making a gift today by one of the following means:

Online - go to www.us.edu and click on the "Giving to US" link
By phone - call Teresa Bell at 216-831-1984 x7316
By mail - US Annual Fund 2785 SOM Center Rd.,
Hunting Valley OH 44022

Because we value our teachers...

About the Sherman Prize Speaking Contest

University School, at all levels of its K-12 curriculum and since its founding in 1890, has taught and celebrated the importance of organized, lucid oral expression. From presentations at primary school theme sharings, to the eighth grade speaking unit, to the requirement for senior speeches, to the Sherman Prize Contest, the school affirms this important skill.

The contest is open to all juniors. In recent years the junior English teachers have made this speech a regular assignment in the classroom. Students, therefore, will have already worked hard on their speeches and given them in their English classes prior to the contest. Students take the assignment seriously, they benefit from suggestions of their classmates to revise and polish their speeches before entering the first round of competition. Entering the contest is not required; however, a large percentage of the class enters the first round of competition.

The first round in the 2008 competition will be held on February 19, 20, and 21, when three faculty members will hear all of the speeches and select six finalists. The six finalists will then be heard in the final round on February 26 at morning assembly and judged by three prominent individuals from outside the University School community.

Students are allowed six to eight minutes for their speeches and are free to choose any topic and approach as long as the content is suitable to both a student and adult audience. The speeches are not categorized by subject, but are judged simply in terms of excellence of content and delivery.

Six prizes are awarded. The top three students receive money awards, while the three runners-up receive a book.

American Mathematics Competition

On February 12, 2008, the American Mathematics Competition Examination sponsored by the American Mathematical Association will be given nationwide. The University School Mathematics Department is providing all students in honors level mathematics classes the opportunity to participate in this competition at US. The competition's main purpose is to spur interest in mathematics and to develop talent through the excitement of solving challenging problems in a timed, multiple-choice format. The problems range from the very easy to the extremely difficult.

The competition is not an end in itself. Outstanding performance on it is neither necessary nor sufficient for becoming an outstanding mathematician. The ability to gain insights and do computations quickly is a wonderful talent, but many eminent mathematicians are not quick in this way. Moreover, the multiple-choice format (necessary for the prompt scoring of over 300,000 examinations) may reward test-takers who are adept at eliminating wrong answers and guessing, but such aptitude does not necessarily translate into achievement as a mathematician.

Finally, according to Mrs. Peggy Wielenberg-Ajagu, Chair of the Mathematics Department, students who do not receive nationally recognized scores should not shrink from pursuing mathematics further while students who receive high scores should not assume they have forever proven their mathematical merit. That is because the examination, like all mathematics-related competitions, is but one means for furthering mathematical development.

Junior Section

Monday, January 28

- Boys dinner with college counselor (see mailing)

Tuesday, February 5

- Junior Parent College Meeting 7 p.m.
Note date change
- Junior Parent Dinner at 6 p.m. (see mailing)

Sophomore Section

March 10-14, Monday-Friday

- Ohio Graduation Testing for Sophomores

Freshmen Section

Thanks to the parents who helped to host the doughnut and cider event that was held in December – it was very much appreciated by the boys!

TBA: Family Sledding Event in January – details will be distributed via email as soon as they are finalized; but if you can help, please contact Kris Sinnenberg, 216-464-8124

Valley Voice Survey

The purpose of *The Valley Voice* is stated on the first page of every issue: to provide information of interest and import to US families. While that is a commendable goal, the only way to determine whether that goal actually is being met is to ask the US community to react to and comment on the publication as it currently exists. This will truly help the editors to produce a publication that is timely, informative, and reflective of the many voices and perspectives of the members of the US community.

On page 4 of this issue is a simple, one-page survey that seeks the reactions of US families to some of the elements of *The Valley Voice*. Please fill it out and return it in the enclosed envelope. You are invited to add comments on any subject related to *The Valley Voice* including your ideas for stories, for regular features, for editorial expansion, for guest columnists. If you prefer, send your comments to the *The Valley Voice* at valleyvoice@us.edu. In either case, the deadline for replies is February 15, 2008. We hope to hear from you.

1. How often do you read *The Valley Voice*?

- Always/regularly
- Most of the time
- Occasionally
- Rarely or almost never

2. How useful do you find *The Valley Voice* to be in filling you in on events that have already occurred at US or have affected US boys?

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not useful
- I skip those articles

3. How useful do you find *The Valley Voice* to be in informing you of future activities at US such as performances, contests, lectures, and other events and opportunities?

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not useful
- I skip those articles

4. What subjects should *The Valley Voice* cover? (check as many as you wish)

- Academics: news about individual and group achievements and upcoming events
- Sports: news about individual and group achievements and upcoming events
- Faculty: news and editorial items from/about individual faculty members
- Administration: news and editorial items from/about deans, directors and other management leaders
- Infrastructure: news and editorial items from/about the USPA, the US Development Office, US alumni, and members of the greater US community
- Extracurricular: news about recent and upcoming events such as After-Prom
- Other: _____

5. What (if any) is currently your primary source for information about the HV campus? (Check as many as you wish)

- My son(s)
- Other parents
- USPA meetings
- The US website
- The Valley Voice
- Other US publications (please specify which):

6. Would you prefer to receive *The Valley Voice* by email only?

- Yes
- No
- Would not make any difference to me or change my reading habits

The Valley Voice

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