



PTSA Blazin'

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 1

OCTOBER 2009

Principal Letter

Dear Blazer Parents,

We are off to a strong start this year. We have set our goals, plotted our strategy and are now well on our way. As a new person to Spotswood and RCPS I have to say that everyday is a great day to be a blazer! Our students and staff are excellent. Everyday I am greeted by warm smiles, friendly greetings and a spirit of pride in our hallways.

In addition to full state accreditation and meeting federal guidelines for Annual Yearly Progress (AYP), Spotswood has been named as a recipient of the Virginia Board of Education's VIP award. The award is given for schools that have two consecutive years of significant progress toward Governor Kaine's goals for increased student achievement and expanded educational opportunity.

Our vocational teachers have been recognized by the state for their high standard of instruction in Career and Technical Education. Ms. Simmers, our Science Department Chair and Chemistry teacher has been named a finalist for Teacher of the Year by JMU. We are excited about our outstanding Fine Arts programs as well as other creative and academic clubs open to our students. The administrators have been working with teachers and examining instruction this year and I can confidently say that there is a strong commitment and a PRESS (see below) for excellence at SHS this year.

SHS's strong tradition of excellence in athletics continues this year. Behind the extraordinary play of Freshmen Robbie Failes we have added a League and District Tournament title in golf. Our football team led by Coach Phillips is undefeated at 6-0 and off to our best start since the early 90's. Our fans including the student "Blazer Crew" have been strongly supporting fall sports. We look forward to a strong finish from all of our teams and have great hopes for the coming winter season.

Dr. Muraskin's Vision for Spotswood High School PRESS for Excellence

- P Push to provide students and staff with opportunities to maximize their potential and strengths.
- R Reach out to students/staff/parents/community.
- E Elevate instruction, expectations and accountability.
- S Stretch beyond your comfort level. Take things to the next level.
- S Support through time, encouragement, caring and scaffolding.

At SHS we are here for the students!

Best Wishes,

Seth Muraskin
Principal

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by SHS Desktop
Publishing Student,
Hannah Hensley



**Graduation
will be held on
June 11, 2010**

Senior Class News

The Senior Class held a class meeting during 1st period on October 14th in the Auditorium. A representative from Herff Jones was here to show graduation items such as caps, gowns, announcements, and other accessories to the Seniors. The Seniors were given catalogs and order forms for these items. Orders can be placed during all 4 lunch shifts on October 26th and 27th in the Small Commons.

While all the items are very nice, the only thing that is required to participate in the graduation ceremony is a cap and gown. These items may be borrowed from a sibling or friend who has previously graduated, but you may want to consider buying a 2010 tassel.

Graduation has definitely been set for **June 11, 2010 at 7:00 pm** at the JMU Convocation Center, so that families can begin to make plans for their very special evening.

There will be a meeting for the parents of all Seniors the evening of Parent Teacher Conferences, November 3rd at 6:00 pm in the Lecture Room. The Guidance Department will have scholarship information, Mrs. Becky Lam will have information on Graduation and Ms. Debbie Pugh will answer questions about Yearbook pictures and orders and Senior Tributes.

The Senior Class will be selling class T-Shirts with the school logo on the front and the names of all Seniors listed on the back under the heading "Class of 2010". Cost of the shirts will be \$7.00 for S-XL and \$9.00 for XXL and XXXL for Royal Blue shirts with white letters and \$5.00 for S-XL and \$6.00 for XXL and XXXL for Grey shirts with Royal Blue letters. Orders will be taken beginning November 2nd through Nov. 17th in all Senior English classes. If your Senior does not have English at Spotswood, they may place their orders with Mrs. Betty Davis in the main office. Delivery will be before Christmas and would make a nice gift.

From the Principal's Desk

Interested in ERHS information or how the split will affect Spotswood High School check out Mr. Baylor and Dr. Muraskin's Blog at <http://blogs.rockingham.k12.va.us/shs-erhs/> Get information directly from Dr. Muraskin by going to the SHS website and signing up with your e-mail address. <http://www.rockingham.k12.va.us/SHS/SHS.html>

Have you been checking your child's grades on PowerSchool? We would like to know if you are using this new feature and how you like it. We thank you for your patience as the teachers and counselors switch over to this new system. *We would like to remind you that although access is instantaneous our staff requires a reasonable turn around time to get information updated and posted.*

Participate in a question and answer session with ERHS principal Eric Baylor. The meeting will be held Nov 3 in the SHS auditorium at 7 pm after parent conferences.

A Gang Awareness presentation for parents of children in the eastern part of the county will be at SHS on January 6th. This presentation will be done by the County Gang Task Force. All parents are encouraged to attend this informative and important forum.

PTSA Letter

Hello from your PTSA Officers!

We had our first meeting Wednesday, September 16. Our meetings are combined with Dr. Muraskin's PAC (Parent Advisory Committee) meeting and ALL are welcome and encouraged to attend. We keep the PTSA portion brief and you are welcome to bring concerns and comments to share with our principal, or just sit back and listen. Meetings are the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 5:30pm in the library. Feel free to come and join us.

We are still below our membership goal for the year. We would like to have as many members as last year (220), but we have not even reached 200. Please consider supporting the PTSA by joining. Just send \$5 to the office in an envelope marked PTSA. Please include your name, address, phone and email address. Your dues help with the following programs:

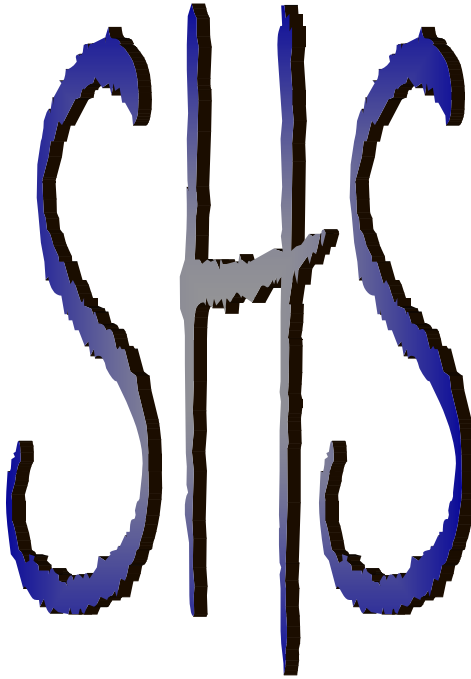
Blazer Bash – the after prom, drug and alcohol free celebration at JMU's UREC facility

Reflections – a PTA sponsored art competition (includes photography, choreography, video, literature, visual arts and musical composition)

Senior scholarships – each year, 1-2 \$500 scholarships are awarded to community minded seniors

Teacher Appreciation – dinners, breakfasts and lunches provided throughout the year

School projects – we donate funds to various school projects



Martin's A Plus Program

Martin's Grocery Store will donate 1% of all purchases to our school if you sign up and designate SHS as your school of choice. It's easy to do! Either take your bonus card to the front desk, or log onto martinsaplus.com (the computer method is faster!). If you email your number to one of us, we'll do it for you! The money we earn goes into the general school fund for school projects. This is not limited to SHS parents...friends, neighbors, and family members can participate too! Hurry...the promotion runs from October until March.

Reflections:

Zizi Sipe is our PTSA coordinator for this arts program sponsored by the national PTA organization. This year's theme is "Beauty is....". Entry forms and rules are available in the office. If you have any questions, please contact Zizi Sipe at 433-3905 or any of the officers listed below. Students can create entries in the categories of literature, photography, visual arts, choreography, dance choreography, and video. The deadline for entry is October 23. Cash prizes are awarded in each category!!

Teacher Dinner:

We will be supplying our teachers and staff with dinner on November 3. This is parent/teacher conference day and contributions must be at SHS by 4:30 pm that day. If you are interested in contributing food or other items for this dinner, please contact one of us listed below.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 21 at 5:30 in the SHS library. We welcome suggestions and volunteers! Please feel free to let us know what ideas you have and if you can help!

2009-2010 Officers:

Eliot Westwood	cekdw@aol.com	289-6383
Tricia Hunter	d-thunter86@comcast.net	434-7177
Anne Hutt	huttae@jmu.edu	432-9284
Kristi Pascarella	pascarka@jmu.edu	433-0933



Asbestos

In accordance with AHERA (Asbestos Hazard Emergency Act) in conjunction with the EPA (Environmental Protecting Agency) we are making our yearly notification that your school building may contain asbestos containing material (see list below). An operation and management plan was developed in 1988, and all 3-year follow-up inspections have been conducted to help us manage the materials in a manner that eases the safety of our students, employees and vendors. You may examine the O & M plans located in the school office and division maintenance office during normal hours, or you may contact the division Asbestos Coordinator at (540) 434-4434.

Schools containing ACM's

- Spotswood High School
- Elkton Middle School
- J. Frank Hillyard Middle School
- Montevideo Middle School
- Wilbur S. Pence Middle School
- Elkton Elementary School
- Fulks Run Elementary School
- Linville-Edom Elementary School
- McGaheysville Elementary School
- John C. Myers Elementary School
- Ottobine Elementary School
- Plains Elementary School
- Pleasant Valley Elementary School
- John Wayland Elementary School

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Do your Christmas shopping Blazer style!!

Blazer apparel makes wonderful Christmas gifts. You can purchase apparel at any home sporting event or see Wanda Hinkle, the athletic secretary, to purchase items. Items are on display in the case outside the guidance office. You may order online at www.hometeamlogo.com.

The online orders are shipped to the school. If you are going to order online, please be aware that there will be a deadline in order to get the merchandise shipped to the school before December 18th.

Spotswood Bricks for the wall at the stadium are unique holiday gifts for a current student or alumni to honor their participation in a club or sport or just to recognize their attendance at SHS. You can personalize your brick for your sport or year. Bricks are \$50 each. If you are interested in purchasing a brick, contact Debbie Caricofe at debcaricofe@msn.com or 421-0945.

Thanks for supporting your Blazers!!

Counseling News

CHECK OUT THE SHS HOMEPAGE: <http://www.rockingham.k12.va.us/SHS/SHS.htm>

Teacher email directory, there's a variety of general guidance information including: college, career, and scholarship information.

SCHOLARSHIPS:

Check the SHS Guidance website or pick up a listing of available scholarships from the Counseling Office. Mrs. Cumberland will assist you with getting the applications that you need. It is the responsibility of the student to check on scholarships. **Students should be careful to follow the SHS deadlines.**

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES:

A great opportunity to talk with teachers. Call 289-3100 to schedule an appointment for November 3rd from 12:00 – 7:00 p.m.

SENIOR PARENT INFORMATION SESSION:

November 3rd @ 6:00 p.m. in the Lecture Room. Important information of interest to seniors & their parents will be presented by Mrs. Becky Lam, Senior Advisor and Ms. Helen Harman, Counselor.

FINANCIAL AID WORKSHOP:

A Financial Aid Workshop will be held on Tuesday, January 12th at 7:00 p.m. in the SHS Lecture Room. (Alternate date will be Jan. 19) Ms. Betsy Jarrels, from the Financial Aid Office at Bridgewater College, will direct the workshop. College bound seniors and parents are encouraged to attend. The workshop is designed to help you complete the FAFSA required by colleges and other institutions of higher learning to determine if you qualify for financial aid. FAFSA forms will be available in January.

SAT I

<u>Test Dates</u>	<u>Registration Deadlines</u>		<u>Place</u>
	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Late</u>	
October 10	September 9	September 23	HHS
November 7	October 1	October 15	HHS
December 5	October 30	November 12	HHS
January 23	December 15	December 30	HHS
March 13	February 4	February 18	HHS
May 1	March 25	April 8	HHS
June 5	April 29	May 13	HHS

Register on-line at www.collegeboard.com

School Code: 471-715

AMERICAN COLLEGE TEST (ACT) – The ACT assessment is comparable to the SAT and is preferred or required by some colleges. The ACT is given in our area several times during the year at Skyline Middle School. If SAT scores are low you may want to take this test also.

<u>Test Dates</u>	<u>Registration Deadlines</u>		<u>Place</u>
	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Late</u>	
September 12	August 7	August 8-21	Skyline Middle
October 24	September 18	Sept. 19-Oct. 2	Skyline Middle
December 12	November 6	November 7-20	Skyline Middle
February 6	January 5	January 6-15	Skyline Middle
April 10	March 5	March 6-19	Skyline Middle
June 12	May 7	May 8-21	Skyline Middle

MTC FIELDTRIP:

Scheduled for 9th and 10th graders on October 27th. Permission forms must have met the October 9th deadline in order for students to attend.

CLASSROOM PRESENTATIONS:

School counselors have visited 9th – 12th grade English classes for informative presentations which included a review of a newsletter prepared for each grade level. These newsletters can be viewed on the SHS guidance website: <http://webfc.rockingham.k12.va.us/~tlcumberland/S020114D8>

SENIOR CONFERENCES:

During the 2nd six week period, counselors will be meeting with each senior for an individual conference. Reviewing credits, SOL's, and discussing plans after high school will be a part of this conference.

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CIC NEWS
The Community Involvement Cub is off to a great start for 2009-2010. Despite our small size we have big plans. We will supply volunteers to assist with the funnel cake booth during Elkton Autumn Days October 17th and 18th. We also plan to ring bells for the Salvation Army at Michaels Crafts on Saturday, Nov. 21st. Stop by and make a contribution to help the Salvation Army holiday drive.

Counseling News

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PSAT:

The PSAT is given each fall as a practice for the SAT. This test was offered to Spotswood students on October 14th.

COLLEGE NIGHT:

Students who attended College Night on October 1st reported that this was a very successful event! Approximately 100 colleges were represented and shared valuable information with our students. This yearly event occurs every fall.

A REMINDER ABOUT CLASS SCHEDULES:

The drop/add window is the first ten days of school. Beyond this date students are expected to commit to their schedule!

POWERSCHOOL:

Login and Passwords are available in the Main Office. This is a wonderful way for you and your child to keep up to date on grades!



Student Assistance Counselor

Teens and Drug Use: Parents' Rx for Prevention

A Back-to-School Chat with Dr. Drew and the Nation's Drug Czar

On Wednesday, September 16, 2009, reporters and bloggers were invited to join a live chat with Office of National Drug Control Policy Director Kerlikowske and Dr. Drew Pinsky. The following is an excerpt from the transcript.

Which prescription drugs are the most commonly abused by teens?

Dr. Drew: There are three that you need to be aware of: opioid pain medication, benzodiazepines, and psychostimulants. The opioid pain medications include Vicodin and OxyContin. Benzodiazepines include Valium, Xanax, and sleeping medications. Psychostimulants are drugs such as Ritalin and Concerta. These are all medications that commonly get prescribed. Some of them you may find sitting in your medicine cabinet. Because these are such commonly used medications, teens tend not to have a sense that these medications are dangerous or addictive; 2,500 12- to 17-year-olds will use opioids and prescription medicines for the first time today, and every day.

Director Kerlikowske: Quite often we find that kids will look in their parents' medicine

cabinets and take a variety of pills, even if they're not sure what the pills are. They think they're safe because they are prescriptions, even though they may, in fact, be deadly.

Parents are now accustomed to having the "don't smoke pot" and "don't drink" conversations. How do they broach the "don't take pills" conversation?

Dr. Drew: First of all, get the pills out of your medicine cabinet. Make sure that substances such as pharmaceuticals are treated in your household with the care and safe guarding that reflects your understanding as a parent of just how dangerous these substances are. Include your children in the information on why you're doing this. They shouldn't be able to open the medicine cabinet and see Vicodin left over from your wisdom tooth extraction or sleeping pills from your airplane trip. The medicine should be under lock and key, or out of your house.

DRG: Where are kids getting all of these prescription drugs we keep hearing about? Most parents I know don't have a stash of OxyContin around.

Director Kerlikowske: So, there's an awful lot of talk about drugs running across the border in the United States, but the prescription drug abuse problem we have is something that's preventable and

controllable. The pills come out of parents' medicine cabinets. They may come from an extended care facility, or from the home of an elderly person who is being prescribed these drugs. That's where we see a lot of the availability.

What if parents find pills in their kids' rooms or backpacks? How do they address the situation with their kids?

Dr. Drew: I am of the opinion that if you are actually finding substances – illicit or prescription – on your child or their belongings, you have a very serious problem on your hands that needs professional intervention. It has been my experience that if the child is getting so casual with their substances that you are finding them, this is the tip of a very large iceberg. If you have no access to resources, a school will usually help and is equipped with professionals trained in dealing with your child. The school is your asset, not your enemy.

For the complete transcript, go to:
<http://www.theantidrug.com/advice/expert-advice/general-parenting/dr-drew-chat.aspx>

“The College Process...help getting through the maze”



**Presenters: JMU College Admission Personnel, Guidance counselor,
college freshman (SHS graduate), parent of a college freshman, and
Secondary Gifted Coordinator**

**Challenge Parent Meeting
Thursday, November 12, 2009
7:00pm – 9:00pm
Spotswood High School
Library**

Open To All

**Additional Information Contact: Louise Liddle, Gifted Education; Spotswood HS;
Phone: (540) 289-3100 or email: lliddle@rockingham.k12.va.us**