

February

2009
FEBRUARY
2009

**President's
Day Recess**
February 16, 2009
No School

Happy Presidents Day!

FESTIVAL FOOTBALL AND VOLLEYBALL DAY!

Saturday,
February 7
8:00 AM-4:00 PM
@ SMHS &
Shea MS

EARLY RELEASE DAY

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2009
12:30 PM

VALENTINE'S DAY DANCE

Thursday, February 12
at 3:35 PM to 5:00 PM
CAFETERIA

SPRING FESTIVAL

Mark your calendar for
Explorer's Spring
Festival on Friday,
March 27 from 3:35 PM
to 6:30 PM in the
school's courtyard,
cafeteria, and
gymnasium. Join the
fun! Donate to the
Silent Auction!



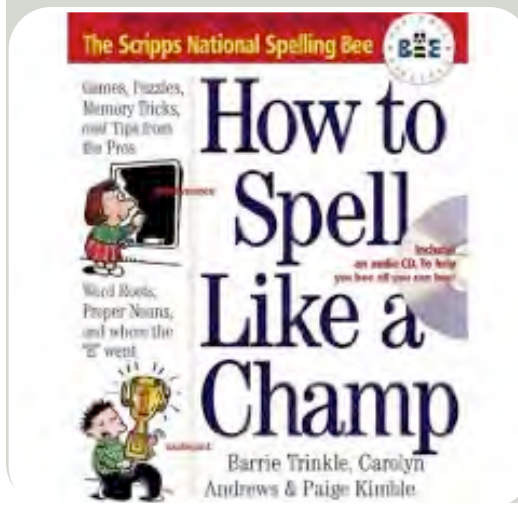
THAI DAO ADVANCES TO REGIONAL SPELLING BEE AND EXPLORER IS CHEERING HIM ALL THE WAY TO STATE

Explorer students heard the announcement over the PA system that eighth grader Thai Dao had won our school Spelling Bee, but what they may not be aware of is that Thai Dao was one of nine district finalists to advance to the Regional Spelling Bee. Thai has certainly surprised himself by his recent success as a great speller, and shared that this was his first time to win a Spelling Bee competition. Spelling words correctly has always come easy for Thai, and he realizes that to advance to the next level, he needs to study and prepare to win.



In addition to his spelling accomplishments, Thai recently won our school National Geographic Bee and is waiting for the results of a written exam that will allow him to advance further through the competition. Thai was also the first student at Explorer to complete 100% of Study Island and will be one of the first students on the list to attend the Olive Garden luncheon in late April.

We want to wish Thai the very best at the Regional Spelling Bee and we have high hopes that he can go all the way to State and then Nationals. Congratulations Thai!



Spotlight on Julia Ryan and Ross Snyder

Seventh graders Julia Ryan and Ross Snyder were both extremely fortunate and excited to attend the historic Presidential Inauguration in Washington, D.C. on January 20. Ross has actually traveled to



Washington, D.C. three times this calendar year and was nominated for the Junior Presidential Youth Inaugural Conference as a 6th grader at Copper Canyon Elementary. He went to Washington, D.C. for the week-long People to People Conference in October. Ross attended a one-week Congressional Youth Leaders Conference last spring and he most recently attended the President Youth Inaugural Conference from January 17-21. It was a thrilling moment for him to hear President Obama's speech while he was standing on the mall by the Washington monument. Even though the crowds prevented him from being able to see the ceremony, he did get to see it all on giant projection screens. Highlights of his trip included listening to Colin Powell and Al Gore speak to America's youth at the University of Maryland. He learned a lot about our environment, global warming, and our new cabinet formed by President Obama.

Ross prefers participating in discussions and issues related to our national government over state government. Ross' travel plans will take him to Europe in 2010 for an international conference.

Julia Ryan just happened to have a favorite aunt who works in Washington, D.C. for a non-profit organization, who just happened to be attending the inaugural festivities. She attended the Inaugural Parade along with her grandparents who live in Delaware. Julia thought it was really cool and amazing to see masses of people who were there to witness a major historic event in our country's history. She had a unique perspective from a balcony view and remembers seeing a sea of hats and flags as far as her eyes could take her. She was most impressed with the presence of the Marines, state troopers, NY police department, and military personnel. She attended the formal Pre-Inaugural People's Ball, and the blue jeans & t-shirts Grass Roots Ball. In addition to the inaugural festivities, Julia went to the Iwo Jima memorial, Lincoln Memorial, Washington Monument, White House, Treasury Building, and the Kennedy Center.



Her family believes she has a future in politics because of her strong opinions. As a young girl, she wished to be the first women president of the United States. Julia loves history, and fossils, and her favorite subject is chemistry. Surprisingly, Julia is a HUGE football fan and has her sights set on attending Princeton or Rutgers. She is very excited that the Steelers won the Super Bowl, in fact, at the time of the interview, Julia was wearing a Steelers shirt, and it just so happened to be Cardinal's Day at Explorer.

ALL-STAR TRAILBLAZERS OF THE MONTH FOR JANUARY: DAKOTA CRANE AND AMANDA PARILLO

Dakota Crane was happy to be selected by his teachers who recommended him for his hard work and the wonderful effort that he has made this past year. Our Trailblazer was pleased to be commended at our last Spirit Assembly, where all our Trailblazers were congratulated.

Dakota loves to read and comic books are his favorite. Outside of school he likes racing and his play station.

P.E. is Dakota's favorite subject, making Mr. Vogensen his favorite teacher. Dakota likes to run on the track, and while he is not the fastest runner, he likes to see the improvement that he makes each time. Dakota knows how to measure his progress, which is a wonderful way to gauge student success. He likes to watch ESPN and his favorite sport is hockey. Of course, he roots for the Phoenix Coyotes.

Dakota is not sure where he will be going to high school, but he knows he will miss his friends and Mr. Vogensen. He is looking forward to meeting new friends and experiencing the challenges of life after middle school.

Dakota's advice to Explorer students: Learn hard and do the best you can.

Good luck to you, Trailblazer!



Congrats to Amanda Parillo, Trailblazer of the Month! It was a huge surprise to Amanda that her team had selected her. She states that she is fairly quiet in class, and prefers to listen and observe. Obviously, Amanda, your teachers have observed your great behavior and outstanding effort.

Amanda's favorite teacher is Ms. Gaydosz, who teaches English. Ms. Gaydosz understands an adolescent's need to work in a group and with partners to support student learning. Amanda particularly appreciates being able to collaborate with her colleagues. Amanda loves reading and her favorite book is Love You Forever, by Robert Munsch.

Outside of school Amanda likes to go to Desert Ridge with her friends, where she visits her favorite store. She also enjoys photography, and is always snapping photos of her friends, because that is a way she can make a memory last forever. She also is entertained by going to the movies.

Amanda comes from a large family and likes to spend time with her parents, brothers, and sisters. Amanda's advise to Explorer students: Keep learning and have fun. Congrats, Amanda!



WE SAID "NEVER AGAIN". WE LIED.

Written by Eighth Grader
Molly Gilbert

What?

Darfur is located in the western region of Sudan. This region is experiencing a war, in some opinions they are reenacting one of the many previous genocides.

The malevolent side of this conflict is made up mainly of the Sudanese military and the Janjaweed. The Janjaweed are a militia group recruited mostly from the Arab Abbala tribes. These tribes are located in the northern Rizeigat. They are camel herding nomads.

Repeatedly, the Sudanese government has denied any connection with the Janjaweed, even though the government has been supplying the Janjaweed with money and assistance. They have also participated in joint attacks targeting the civilians of Darfur.

When?

This genocide began in the month of February in 2003. This war has not ended; it has only been forgotten by many. The United Nations has estimated a death toll of around 500,000 Darfur citizens, who died from violence and/or disease. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum approximated a death rate consisting of 100,000 deaths per year from

government attacks alone. As of October 2006 there have been as many as 2.5 million people displaced.

How?

The government of Sudan has been accused of crimes including suppressing information by jailing and killing witnesses since 2004. They have also been accused of tampering with evidence such as mass graves to eliminate their value to forensic science.

The United States Government has declared the happenings in Darfur as genocide. What have we been doing to end this tragedy? The answer is most easily supported with another question. How many of you have even heard of Darfur?

When the United Nations decided to take action in helping a solution, the Sudan government strongly objected and told the UN they would see their entrance into the region as a foreign invasion.

Who?

At the International Criminal Court, on the 14th of July in 2008, ten charges of war crimes against Sudan's President, Omar Al Bashir were prosecuted. Three counts of genocide, five of crimes against humanity and two of murder. Al-Bashir has been titled by Prosecutors as "Masterminding and implementing a plan to destroy substantial..." parts of three tribal groups in Darfur because of ethnicity.

Why?

Confusion is a main point for the characterization of the conflict taking

place in Darfur. This conflict is split between the 'Arab' and 'African' populations. Over a period of centuries, Arab immigration into Sudan, intermarriage among Nubians and Arabs, and also the Arabic language is responsible for the transformation into the Sudanese Arab of today. What is the point for this argument? That remains utterly unanswered compared to the fact that Sudan was once fully connected.

You?

Many people are becoming aware of our surrounding problem in Darfur. Citizens walking among you and even people in your favorite movies such as; George Clooney, Ryan Gosling, Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, Don Cheadle, Emile Hirsch and much more are aware and taking a stand. Organizations are being created and groups are coming together. Before now you had the excuse of ignorance, now the facts are known and I hope the choice is clear.

Never again...Again.



Cell Phones Pose Threat to Child Pedestrians, Study Says

BY [PETER MYCHALCEWYCZ](#), POSTED JAN 26TH 2009 AT 10:04AM



Next time you find yourself behind the wheel, watch out. There are slow reacting children out there, and they may just wander right in front of your car. According to a Reuters report, they are [preoccupied with their cell phones](#) and not paying attention to your 2000-pound monstrosity, so please, uh, look out for them.

A recent study found that children using cell phones are 43-percent more likely to be hit by a vehicle while crossing the street than are children who are not using cell phones. The study, conducted by the University of Alabama at Birmingham, focused on 77 children, ages 10 to 11. The children were asked to cross a virtual road six times while speaking on a cell phone, and then six more times without doing so. Partially explaining the heightened risk, the children, while talking on their phones, forgot to look both ways 20 percent of the time.

We know that you probably pay attention while you are driving. We're just asking that you not expect the same level of concentration from pedestrians. [From: [Reuters.com](#)]