SCHOOL of the WOODS

WOODS LOWER SCHOOL

WOODS MIDDLE SCHOOL

WOODS HIGH SCHOOL

May 2015

INSIDE THE WOODS

Can't beat this for fun!

Texas's own *Whataburger* brand has opened a spanking new facility in Spring Branch and invited School of the Woods to send a repre-sentative to act as the official ribbon-cutter.

Barbara Bends of the Advancement Office got the nod and did the job just right. The ceremony was performed on Tuesday, March 31. The new location is 1110 Silber Rd. near I-10.

Loverly bluebonnets, our Texas State Flower, and right here on our campus, too.

Another school year coming to an end . . .

School of the Woods wishes you a great summer and we'll be happy to see you next Fall.

In this issue . . .

Edited by Eloise Rochelle

Great News about a new tree

One of our new trees planted on January 31, a Mexican Plum.

And a few weeks later . .

And a few more weeks later . .

And then, on March 31.

A Child's Sense of Wonder

The following is an excerpt from the book, *A Sense of Wonder*, published In 1965 by scientist Rachel Carson, a Marine Biologist

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A child's world is fresh and new and beautiful, free for wonder and excitement. It is our misfortune that for most of us that clear-eyed vision, that true instinct for what is beautiful and awe inspiring, is dimmed and even lost before we reach adulthood.

If I had influence with a good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children, I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder, so indestructible that it would last throughout life, as an unfailing antidote against the boredom and disenchantments of later years, the sterile preoccupation with things that are artificial, the alienation from the sources of our strength.

If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder without any such gift from the fairies, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.

Parents often have a sense of inadequacy when confronted first hand with a world of complex physical nature, inhabited by a life so various and unfamiliar that it seems hopeless to reduce it to order and knowledge.

In a mood of self-defeat, they exclaim, "How can I possibly teach my child about nature – why, I don't even know one bird from another!"

I sincerely believe that for the child, and for the parent seeking to guide him, it is not half so important to KNOW as to FEEL.

If facts are the seeds that later produce knowledge and wisdom, then the emotions and impressions of the senses are the fertile soil.

Once the emotions have been aroused – a sense of the beautiful, the excitement of the new and the unknown, a feeling of sympathy, pity, admiration or love – then we wish for knowledge about the object of our emotional response.

Once found, it has lasting meaning. It is more important to pave the way for the child to want to know than to put him on a diet of facts he is not ready to assimilate.

Exploring nature with your child is largely a matter of becoming receptive to what lies all around you. It is learning again to use your eyes, ears, nostrils and finger tips, opening up the disused channels of sensory impression.

For most of us, knowledge of our world comes largely through sight, yet we look about with such unseeing eyes that we are partially blind.

One way to open your eyes to unnoticed beauty is to ask yourself, "What if I had never seen this before? What if I knew I would never see it again?"

And then there is the world of little things, seen all too seldom. Many children, perhaps because they themselves are small and closer to

the ground than we, notice and delight in the small and inconspicuous.

With this beginning, it is easy to share with them the beauties we usually miss because we look hastily, seeing the whole and not its parts. Some of nature's most exquisite handiwork is on a miniature scale, as anyone knows who has applied a magnifying glass to a snowflake.

What is the value of preserving and strengthening this sense of awe and wonder, this recognition of something beyond the boundaries of human existence? Is the exploration of the natural world just a pleasant way to pass the golden hours of childhood or is there something deeper?

I am sure there is something much deeper, something lasting and significant. Those who dwell as scientists or laymen among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life.

Whatever the vexations or concerns of their personal lives, their thoughts can find paths that lead to inner contentment and to renewed excitement in living. Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.

There is symbolic as well as actual beauty in the migration of the birds, the ebb and flow of the tides, the folded but ready for the spring.

There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature – the assurance that day comes after night and spring after the winter.

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Robert Frost

Out and about in the Museum District

The Health Museum debuts the DeBakey Cell Lab

The Health Museum how has a permanent exhibit, the DeBakey Cell Lab. It is bilingual and features seven authentic biology-based science experiments for ages 7 to adult. Visitors are given lab coats, gloves and goggles and perform experi- equipment ments with lab. It is a free-form exhibit consisting of seven activity benches, each taking up to 30 minutes. The bench labs concern cellular biology of cheek cells, blood, antimicrobials, DNA extraction, giant chromosomes, enzymes in saliva, and mystery microbes.

The Museum of Health and Medical Science was founded in 1961 by Houston's renowned Dr. John McGovern. The DeBakey Cell Lab honors Dr. Michael E. DeBakey. See the Museum's website for admission information or call 713.227.8451.

China's Lost Civilization at HMNS

Houston Museum of Natural Science now has on view a treasure trove from two ancient archeological sites in China. One was discovered in 1929 and a newer one found in 2001. Both are considered to be among the greatest finds ever. Dating from around 1200 BC. The exhibit features over 120 of the most important artifacts. Closes September 7. Call 713.639.4629 or hmns.org.

The Museum of Fine Arts has fine exhibit now showing: *Arts of Islamic Lands: Selections from The al-Sabah Collection, Kuwait*, showcases some 250 works from the renowned al-Sabah Collection. It includes objects from the 8th to 18th centuries—made in North Africa, the Middle East, Turkey, India, the Iberian Peninsula, and Central Asia. The jewel shown was made in late 1600s India from gold, rubies, emeralds, diamonds, and rock crystals. The exhibit closes January 30, 2016.

Final meeting for Lower School parents covers an important subject

Head of School Sherry Herron's final meeting with parents was held on April 8. The thrust of the meeting was the importance of establishing and holding family meetings.

Ms. Herron cited the published insights of nationally-known family counselors – Barry Goldsmith, PhD, and Don Dinkmeyer, Jr., PhD.

According to Dr. Goldsmith, strengthening the family bond is challenging for any dedicated parents, but a weekly family meeting is considered to be one of the most effective tools for this goal.

Those goals are to help everyone communicate better, create greater harmony, experience more depth, and connect with the people you love.

If you live with in-laws or other relatives, they are all part of the family and as such, need to be part of the meeting. Be sure that everyone involved has a chance to speak.

Here are some meeting guidelines suggested by Dr. Dinkmeyer:

- Meet at a regular time for at least 20 minutes;
- Write a list of topics;
- Plan a firm time for each item
- Take notes
- Have everyone take part and let the younger ones speak first to help them feel responsible; limit complaining; cooperate to choose chores
- Do what you agree to do; and make it a fun time, such as making home-made pizza afterward.

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Source: steppublishers.com/articles/guidelines-family-meetings

Maren E. Schmidt in Kidstalknews.com discusses her

Family Meetings

As parent leaders, we have many tools we can learn to help us create an atmosphere of trust in our families.

One tool is using family meetings. Family meetings can help our families learn how to problem solve together, as well as learn important communication tools, cooperation, creativity, respect, appropriate expression of emotions, and how to have fun as a family. Children as young as three-years-old can participate.

"You want us to have family meetings with our three-year-olds?" you might ask. Can a weekly meeting with children under the age of six be productive? My experience tells me, "yes."

The first step is to establish a predictable time each week to have the meetings. Get rid of all the distractions-television and phone calls. The first meeting of course should be short, ten to fifteen minutes.

At family meetings there are two alternating leadership roles, chairperson and secretary. The chairperson makes sure the meeting runs smoothly and that everyone is heard. The secretary takes the minutes and reads them at the next meeting.

The meeting agenda consists of a compliment time, reading of minutes, old business, finances, new business, and then ends with a treat. The treat can be a snack, an outing or a game.

Compliment time involves a few basic rules. First, the compliment must be truthful and kind regarding someone's actions. No silly faces. The compliment may not be about personal appearance or clothes. You must look the person directly in the eye while giving a compliment.

Here's how our first family meeting went:

We didn't have any minutes to read or old business to discuss at the first meeting. For finances we decided to discuss how we were saving for a summer trip. How much can you discuss with a four and five-year-old?

On our first agenda, we discussed bedtime routine, how to treat guests in the house, and how to include or not include your sister if a friend came over. This took ten minutes. Then we were off to the Farmer's Market, which became our routine for a couple of years.

By the third meeting, our almost six-year-old wanted to have a turn as chairperson and run the meeting. Much to my surprise, she did an admirable job. We kept our weekly agenda on our refrigerator and kept minutes in a spiral notebook. Minutes of the meetings can be very simple, for example:

FAMILY MEETING:
January 6, 1995
Chair: Dana
Secretary: Maren
Decisions made:

1. Plan family vacation.
2. Save money for ski trip.
3. Remember to ask permission to use other people's things.

In the beginning our meetings felt a little stiff and formal. In a few weeks they became more natural and relaxed.

Here are some recommended ground rules for your family meetings:

1. Every person has an equal voice.

Let everyone's opinions be heard.

2. Everyone may share what he or she thinks and feels about each issue.

Ask quiet children for their opinions and avoid expressing disapproval if children share unpleasant feelings.

3. Decisions are made by consensus.

Votes are not taken and majority doesn't rule. Matters are discussed until all are in agreement.

4. All decisions are adhered to until the next meeting.
Any complaints about a decision should receive the comment, "Put in on the agenda for the next meeting."

5. Some decision are reserved for parents.

Not everything is up for discussion and a decision. Parents have decisions to make that are theirs alone, for example a job change or move. Family meetings can help the family express thoughts, concerns and feelings about changes made by parents' decisions.

Over the years our family meetings grew less frequent and formal as we learned, as a family, how to handle our problems effectively.

Bunny Ears

April 2, 2015

Easter bonnets

Hidden eggs

YUMMY EATS

Photos by Barbara Bends

Two Woods High School finalists in the National Merit Scholarship program

Seniors Allison Keys and Charlotte Brannon have been named as finalists in the National Merit Scholarship competition.

Both Charlotte and Allison will be graduates of Woods High School this month, both with 4.0 grade point averages.

Allison has been a student at School of the Woods since 2008. She has been involved in many school activities, including participation in the Montessori Model United Nations programs, and in November 2014 was selected, along with two other WHS graduates, to serve as leaders in the first-ever MMUN International Conference in Zhengzhou, China. In April, she was "Elle" in the high school's performance of "Legally Blonde."

Charlotte has also been involved with MMUN and ballet, and edits and writes the Woods High School newspaper, *The Woodnote*. She was "Vivienne" in the musical "Legally Blonde," in April. She entered School of the Woods in 2001, and it has been her entire school life. Both students also lead the school's Yearbook team.

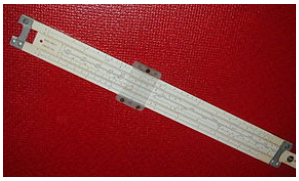
These awards as finalists are very impressive, as only 8,000 National Merit award designations are given nationwide. Those 8,000 are selected from about 16,000 semifinalists, out of approximately 1.5 million students who entered the scholarship program.

Allison Keys, left, and Charlotte Brannon, with their award certificates.

NMSC will issue local area news releases in May. The scholarships are designated on a state representational basis, in proportion to each state's percentage of the national total of graduating high school seniors.

What do you know about the Slide Rule?

The slide rule is a device that once was essential to higher-level math but is now largely forgotten. It's a powerful mechanical computing device, rectangular and often no larger than a 12-inch ruler, marked with numbers. It is comprised of three sections.



Each section has numbers and line marks for calculations. The top and bottom are fixed in place, but the middle section slides back and forth for rapid multiplication, division, and more intricate functions

This device is almost 400 years old. The original was built by William Oughtred, a cleric teaching math in England in the 1600s. It was based on John Napier's discovery of logarithms. For generations of engineers, technicians and scientists, the slide rule was an essential part of their daily lives.

In 1972, the first handheld electronic calculator was introduced. In a flash, the slide rule fell out of favor. And yet, despite the calculating power these days in even your handheld phone, the slide rule isn't quite dead. There are teachers and others who still use and teach how to use this instrument. Here some of them:

A nun in Massachusetts teaches a computer programming course to homeschooled high school students. And when she covers the history of the computer, she teaches students how to use the slide rule along with it. A math teacher in Iowa teaches her junior pre-calculus class how to do intricate calculations without a calculator. Another says that "even though the slide rule isn't as precise as a calculator, students can understand the idea of what it's doing. It really makes one engaged with the process." A teacher in Indiana has his students build a classroom slide rule to learn how it operates.

There's even a freshman seminar about the slide rule at the University of California, San Diego that began in 2003. The instructor says, "Now, the computer does all the work. When you're using a slide rule you have to be thinking about math."

NASA engineers used slide rules to build the rockets and plan the mission that landed Apollo 11 on the moon. It is said that during Apollo 11, Buzz Aldrin needed his pocket slide rule for last minute calculations before landing.

Sources: NPR, *All Things Considered*, "The Slide Rule: A computing Device that put a man on the Moon," Elissa Nadworny, 10/22/14; the Oughtred Society, a group of slide rule collectors (Oughtred.org).