



# The Hemel Hempstead School

## News

1 February 2008

[www.hhs.herts.sch.uk](http://www.hhs.herts.sch.uk)

### HeadLines

One of my favourite films is 'The American President' starring Michael Douglas and Annette Bening. Rather topical again at the moment, it contains some gentle and humorous but telling commentary on the nature of politics and power. One of the most touching scenes is when the widower president tries to enthuse his young daughter about Social Studies lessons at school and how fascinating the constitution can be. She remains unconvinced.

Two experiences in my own week at school come to mind. The first is the start of my interviews with year 11 students following their mock results in which, among other topics, we have been discussing their favourite subjects and what they would wish to study in sixth form next year. I have been struck by how articulately they express their interest in and passion for certain subjects and how focused many students are on the next steps in their school careers and what lies beyond. Of course, the vast majority wish to stay on at this school and are enthused by the idea of taking on more responsibility and being role models for the rest of the school. Our 'Into the Sixth' evening next week will no doubt be very well attended and students will be spoilt for choice in terms of subjects on offer.

The second is the wonderful production of 'Our Town' performed last week on Thursday and Friday in the hall. It was terrific. It is such a challenging piece and one of the greatest American plays. I have always loved the play and Mrs Heale's perfectly directed version with stunning performances from so many youngsters did nothing to change my mind. In fact, it allowed me to see things in Wilder's work that I had not seen before. I wish that more people had seen it regardless of connections with the cast as it may not have been the spectacle that 'Barnum' was but it was a truly brilliant school production. Congratulations to all who were involved with 'Our Town.'

Sandra Samwell, Headteacher

### "Youth Speaks" to great effect

In the District semi-finals of the Rotary "Youth Speaks" competition on Tuesday night, our lower sixth team of Huw Wales, Max Taylor and Jenny Tucker had a testing challenge before them. Nine teams from all around Herts, Beds and Bucks were listed to speak at this event, including representatives from Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School in Aylesbury, Waddesdon Church of England School and Watford Boys Grammar School. Only three teams would progress on to the District Finals on 28<sup>th</sup> February.

The atmosphere in the Hall of Cedars Upper School in Leighton Buzzard was tense as the first team began. What followed was an exhibition of public speaking of the highest calibre from all the teams. The Rotary Chairman described himself as "humbled" and I found myself wishing that my Year 11 class could have been there to watch, as preparation for their speaking and listening exam in March. These teenage speakers, barely glancing at discreet notes, exhorted and entertained the audience on topics as complex and various as the hidden costs of cheap clothing, the problems of caring for an increasingly elderly population and the reasons for, and solutions to, the phenomenon of teenage street violence.

Our team spoke with energy and passion on their chosen topic of "Africa". Their idealism, commitment and sense of responsibility were intensely moving. It was no surprise when they ended up being placed second out of the eight teams who spoke. This means that they move on to the next round, the District finals.

No team from HHS has ever progressed beyond the District semi-finals before, so this is a significant achievement. We congratulate them on what they have achieved so far and wish them well on the 28<sup>th</sup> February.

*Ms N Darby*



## “Our Town”



Catching a tear in my eye at a school play was an unexpected pleasure. Youthful memories of some long dead members of ‘my’ town were being conjured up by the passion and skill of our young players.

Ordinary events fill our lives, but this play urges us to appreciate their true importance and live each seemingly trivial day to the full. Useless old-age regrets should not be left to us when we take our place, along with other ghosts, up on the hill.

Attentive audiences on both nights of this production were enchanted, saddened, amused and informed by the interplay between our ‘ordinary’ reflections on stage. Relationships were developed and explored before our eyes as each part, however small, was inhabited by the school’s actors. Even the stage crew, so often invisible, had their moments on the barely dressed boards, as they skilfully moved the simple scenery to create houses, gardens, a graveyard and a church.

Performances were so evenly good in this ensemble piece that I forgot that they were being given by young pupils at our school. Every scene drew me deeper into the lives of those being tenderly displayed on our notoriously sound absorbing stage. Real concentration is needed to convey deep emotion whilst projecting young voices through the deadness of the curtaining. Few words were lost in this battle, to the very great credit of all.

*Mr P Stanbridge*

Last Thursday and Friday saw the wonderful production of “Our Town”. Set in the small community of Grover’s Corners, the play depicts the day-to-day lives of the community. The play is split into three acts, “Daily Life”, “Love and Marriage” and “Life and Death” and in the words of Thornton Wilder, “It is an attempt to find a value above all price for the smallest events in our daily life”.

The performance from the students here at The Hemel Hempstead School certainly achieved this through some excellent acting, providing an extremely thought provoking and entertaining evening for all those who attended. A special thank you is justly extended to Mrs Heale for doing such an impressive job in directing the play and also to all those who took part on and off stage.

*Peter Boysons (Year 12)*

## Sport



### RESULTS

#### Basketball

Year 7 Girls v Cavendish, won 24-6  
 v Bridgewater, draw 12-12  
 v Astley Cooper, won 18-8  
 v Tring, won 22-2  
 v Kings Langley, won 12-0

Year 10 Boys v Ashlyns, won 74-26

U16 v Mildenhall, lost 42-71  
 v Cavendish, won 41-39

#### Football

Year 8 Boys v Tring, lost 1-4

### FIXTURES

#### Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> February

Football v Parmiters  
 County Cross Country, St Albans

#### Monday 4<sup>th</sup> February

U16 Boys District football v Egerton Rothsay (H)  
 2pm

U13 Boys C/L Basketball v St Georges (H)

#### Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> February

U14 Girls Hockey v Cavendish (A)

U16 Boys Basketball v SCC (A)

Tour Girls Hockey v Astley Cooper (H)

The last few weeks have seen yet more fixtures for a variety of squads across the age groups, with many successes.

This week has seen the start of the ‘House Sports’ week. Year 7 House netball and football teams have been competing furiously against one another over the past week, gaining valuable points for their houses. This event has been run by our very capable Sports Ambassadors and so far, we have had many Year 7 students involved. I would like to wish the Year 7 teams the very best of luck for the remainder of the competition and hope that the Year 8 competition runs as smoothly next week.

In addition to this, look out for all the informal lunchtime activities going on over the next few weeks. Sessions of dodgeball and skittles have been very popular so far – look out for the posters around school.

*Miss E Bevan, PE Department*

## Yoga with Santoshni



Available for Years 12, 13 and staff.  
Every Wednesday from 3.45pm – 4.45pm.  
First Free sessions on February 27<sup>th</sup>  
and March 5<sup>th</sup> thereafter  
£3 for students, £5 for staff, per class.

Book your place with  
Miss Dayton or Mrs Ramnarine

## Year 7 and 8 Lunchtime Activity for Chinese New Year



Chinese New Year, the year of the rat, will be celebrated on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> February. As part of this celebration 'The Dacorum Chinese School' will be visiting and providing a lunchtime activity in Calligraphy.

The above workshop is available for Year 7 and 8 students. However, we can only take a maximum of 25 students, so places will be allocated on a first-come first-served basis. It is advisable that successful students bring in a packed lunch.

The canteen will be serving sweet and sour vegetables, chicken in black bean sauce, noodles and rice as an optional extra.

Happy Chinese New Year

## Gold Letters issued recently:

**Letter 111** Voluntary Contribution

**Letter 112** Rock Challenge

## Headteacher's Commendations

### *For excellent Contribution to the school play:*

Zachary Farrell 8C, Jesse Toms 8L, Oliver Price 8C, James Price 8A.

### *For an excellent performance in 'Our Town':*

Toby Smith 12Fb, Adam Beer 12 Cb, Kenny Mitchell 10A, Louis Bransgrove 12Ng, Coral Baker 12Lb, Georgie Javins 13C, Max Farrelly 10N, Brad Sarginson 13N, Paige Baah 7F, Jack Howe 7L, Polly Taylor 10P, Daniella Serrano 12Pg, Matt Bailey 12Pg, Daniel Mahony 12Ng, Alex Dobby 10N, Ryan Bellman Jeffreys 11C, Sarah Nicholls 10N, Toby Gilden 12Fg, Sam Flowerdew 9N, Dylan Bransgrove 8F, Nicholas Mower 7F, Michael Deane 11P, Kris Banks 12Fg.

*For excellent work in Geography:* Olivia Bauldrey 8N, Andrew Coe 8P, Jack Eykelbosch 8P.

*For excellent work in Maths:* Gemma Cowley 11L

*For outstanding private study and achievement in test:* Ben Johnson 7P

*For excellent work in Science:* Abigail Harrington 8C, Katy Ferguson 8L, Ross Hawkins 8A

*For excellent work in English:* Emma D'Amery 7L, Elinor Pinnock 8C

*For excellent attitude to Learning:* Jessica Sear, Ross Taylor 8A, Zach Farrell, Chelsea Gray, Ivo Murrell, Elinor Pinnock, Cale Tilford 8C, Shona Berloth, Thomas Cullinan, Alex Eykelbosch, Charles Monk, Glen Taylor, Alice Todd 8F, Nimisha Chundavadra, Chloe Conroy, Lauren Dempsey, Stephanie Foster, Courtney Worrell 8L, Olivia Bauldrey, Jack Benedetti-Smith, Louise Donovan, Aaron Lloyd, Lois Moore, Nicholas Thomas 8N, Andrew Coe, Lamorna Hooker, Amelie Lecoeuche, Matthew Prowse 8P

## School answerphone for sickness and absence



Please will all parents contact us **daily** if your child is sick, going to be late in due to a medical appointment, or is absent for any other reason. Please call our school answerphone on **01442 390103 by 9am if possible.**

**Modern Foreign Languages  
Star of the Month**



This month the MFL department is proud to award its very first 'Stars of the Month' for all the great work our students are doing. If you are not on the list this time, perhaps it will be your chance next month !

Here are January's MFL Stars :

Year 7 – Nicola Kennett, Sonia Odedra, Lorenzo Bellini, Callie Waters, Kirsty Javins, Adam Nayler

Year 8 – Amelie Lecoeuche, Anthony Power, Siobhan Elliott, Anthony Power, Jack Benedetti-Smith, Jess Sear, Ivo Murrell, Paige Young, Alice Todd, Ryan Howe

Year 9 – Rebecca Tyne, Keith Johnson, Tom Durrant, Adam King, Jasmine Bond, Katie Mogan

Year 10 – Jamie Allen, Amber Bartlett, Kelly Egerton, Charlotte Bateman

Year 11 – Natalie Blow, Charles Wood, Michael Deane, Sophie Richardson, Josh Crosswell

Year 13 – Lauren Eames



**Please note that the  
Summer Concert has  
been brought forward to  
TUESDAY 18<sup>th</sup> MARCH.**

**It will now officially be a  
Spring Concert !**

**Hope to see you all there.**

*Mrs D Bailey*



# PTA News

**Summer Fair – 14<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

Plans are underway for this year's Summer Fair with lots of activities set to take place. If you received any unwanted Christmas gifts we can and will make very good use of them on the tombola stall. Please send or bring them in to Student Services. If you would like to run a stall at the Fair, please contact the numbers below.

Next meeting is Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2008 at 7pm in the Library.

Judith Stallworthy, Chair HSA (01442 393266 or mobile 07749 727350),  
email: [s.stallworthy@sky.com](mailto:s.stallworthy@sky.com)



## Dates for Your Diary

**\*\*\*Gold Week\*\*\***

### February

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Mon 4 <sup>th</sup>   | Year 12 Biology visit to Whipsnade Zoo          |
| Tues 5 <sup>th</sup>  | Year 11 'Into the Sixth' Evening                |
| Thurs 7 <sup>th</sup> | Years 9, 10 and 11 Intermediate Maths Challenge |
| Fri 8 <sup>th</sup>   | <b>INSET Day (School closed to Students)</b>    |

## Half Term – 11<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> February

**\*\*\*Blue Week\*\*\***

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 18 <sup>th</sup> – 22 <sup>nd</sup> | Year 9 Mock SATs  |
| 19 <sup>th</sup>                    | Sports Tour Information Evening, Sixth Form Study Room 7pm                    |
| 20 <sup>th</sup>                    | Parent Information Evening – Year 10 German Exchange 7pm                      |
| 23 <sup>rd</sup>                    | Year 13 Performance of Godspell at Kings Langley Community Centre             |
| 24 <sup>th</sup>                    | A Level dance Set Study Day<br>DofE Gold Training Day – Sixth Form Study Area |