

Polyglot

Editors: Nancy Engelman and Jan Kucerik

Pinellas County Schools

December, 2008 Volume XXIII, Issue 2

Congratulations, Pamela G. Benton, Outstanding Educator Semi-finalist, Creativity and Innovation Category

Pam Benton, Spanish teacher at Boca Ciega, was selected as one of five semi-finalists in the category of *Creativity and Innovation* in the district's Outstanding Educator selection process. We are so pleased to have Pam represent the many talented Pinellas teachers of world languages in this process and wish her well. This is first of several high honors for Pam, who serves as secretary for the World Languages Teachers' Association of Pinellas (WLTA) as well as parliamentarian for the Florida Foreign Language Association (FFLA). Pam was also recently named the **2009 FFLA Teacher of the Year** and will represent the state of Florida in the regional Teacher of the Year recognition program at the Southern Conference on the Teaching of Languages (SCOLT). Pam was also recently named the new president of the Florida Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (FATSP). We are so proud!

Success Story

The ESOL Parent Advisory Board for secondary level schools is off to a great start this school year. The plan is set for 14 parent workshops at different school locations, as well as at some community partners' locations. Workshop topics include FCAT, Graduation Requirements, Scholarship Information and Community Resources. The network of the group with ESOL parents, students, bilingual assistants, teachers, school administrators and community programs

was the key for last year's success and for this year, as well. Also a vital part of the success is the leadership of **Radmila Spiric**, ESOL Family Outreach Coordinator. The most recent event took place November 18, from 7:00-8:00 pm in the Clearwater HS cafeteria. The topic was "Community Resources". To learn more about ESOL Family Outreach, visit www.pcsb.org/esol or call Radmila Spiric at 588-6543.

Awaiting Butterflies

Jeanette Chavez and Aida Matallana, Northeast High School, join teachers and students from many schools throughout Canada and the U.S. participating in the Monarch Butterfly Migration Project. Their students have worked hard to produce paper butterflies for the project.

They decorated one side and wrote messages in Spanish on the other side. The butterflies were then mailed to students in Mexico City, Mexico. While the monarch winters in Mexico, Mexican students will do many projects related to the monarch, including receiving and reading the NEHS butterflies and displaying them. In the spring, when the monarch butterfly migrates back to the U.S. and Canada, the Mexican children will make paper butterflies with messages to be sent to the Northeast HS students. They will be anxiously awaiting their Mexican butterflies. For more information, please contact Jeanette or Aida.



WLTA Report

Submitted by Renee Belvis, president

The WLTA Board would like to take this opportunity to thank the approximately 35 WLTA members who attended the Oktoberfest social. We are grateful as well to those members who made a donation to our scholarship fund even though they were unable to attend. We successfully raised half of the money we need for this year's *Carmine Zinn Senior Achievement Award*. The remainder of the money needed is expected to come from membership dues. We currently have 82 members and need to reach 100 members again this year in order to generate the funds needed. Special thanks to the WLTA Board for their hard work preparing for the social, most notably to Geri Craven, who shopped for the food. The Board would also like to thank Sarita Stevens for providing the German dance lessons, which made the evening so enjoyable. We now look forward to our annual banquet planned for **May 22, 2009**, and Feather Sound Country Club.

We would like to extend a special welcome back to [Jim Anderson](#), French teacher at Northeast HS. Jim returns to us for a 2nd time after retiring from a successful career in the Washington, DC area. His first Pinellas assignment was Dixie Hollins HS. We are delighted to welcome Jim back.

Pinellas Teachers “Open Minds” at National Conference

Forty-five Pinellas teachers of world languages joined more than 5,000 participants for the 2008 ACTFL Convention and World Languages Expo held November 20-24 at the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin in Orlando in celebration of the theme, “*Opening Minds to the World Through Languages*”. This annual international event for world language educators, K-16, was hosted this year by the Florida Foreign Language Association, Inc. (FFLA). The conference was successful largely due to the talents, commitment and efforts of the “local committee” of Pinellas educators who have worked for over a year with ACTFL to organize the event. Special recognition is extended to Pinellas members of the local committee: **Sylvia Amaya** (chair), **Pam Benton**, **Danny Boulrieris**, **Alan Blessing**, **Diana Cano**, **Mary Devore**, **Esther González-Wright**, **Linda Santiago**, **Livia Wein**, **Maria Wyatt** and to **Nancy Engelman**, secretary, Office of World Languages, for her invaluable assistance with multiple projects.

Pinellas Sessions Acclaimed in National Setting; Teacher Presenters Receive High Praise

Congratulations as well to the following teachers who were among the esteemed list of conference presenters: **Geri Craven** was asked once again to share her wildly popular classroom activities in her session entitled, “Better than Coffee”. **Yee-chen Robson**’s, “Successful Methods for Delivering Content in a Chinese Classroom” provided valuable information for prospective Chinese teachers. Members of the Pinellas County FLES Team, including **Sylvia Amaya**, **Nilsa Gómez**, **Lilly Lewis**, **Cynthia McGill**, **Elizabeth Rodríguez**, **Sandra Rosado**, **Diane VanDeilen**, **Kelli Whitley**, and **Maria Wyatt** presented their very popular “Música, Maestros” in which they demonstrated engaging lessons based on their original Spanish songs.

Teachers From Pinellas Among Those Receiving State Honors

Pinellas teachers were among professionals honored at an awards breakfast that took place at the conference Friday morning, November 22. We are so proud of **Yadira Vega**, High Point Elementary, who was honored as the “Early Language Teacher of the Year”. Two “Teachers of Promise” from Region 6 were honored this year, both from Pinellas. They are **Ashleigh Smith**, Ridgecrest Elementary, and **Betty Rioux**, Bay Point Middle School. Pinellas teachers included in FFLA’s “Most Valuable Teachers” list included: **Pam Benton**, **Diana Cano**, **Geri Craven**, **Esther González-Wright**, **Sandy Hammond**, **Lillian Lewis**, **Gloria Muñoz**, **Sandra Rosado**, **Aixa Ruch**, **Linda Santiago**, **Kelli Whitley**, and **Maria Wyatt**.

News From the Schools

John Hopkins MS celebrates Sra. González-Wright’s Honors Class, who were treated with traditional *puerco asado*, *arroz y frijoles colorados* for their hard work this semester. The Advanced class will have a taste of *arroz* and *mole*.

Oak Grove MS is proud of its Spanish Club and the many activities it has planned for this year. Their community commitment lies with Florida First Start, which includes a diaper drive in December and book drive in the spring. Sponsor, **Joy Segovia**, plans to invite one speaker each month to address issues related to Latino heritage.

Dunedin HS’s *Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica* has been busy with several projects, including a canned goods collection along with NJROTC, a crepe-eating contest and a trip to the Dalí Museum. They also participated with NHS and Interact in a car wash to benefit a family in need.

East Lake HS hosted Mr. Koichi Imai, English teacher from Nagano, Japan, who enjoyed interacting with more than 60 students in ELHS’s new Japanese program. The

school also boasts a record 120 students enrolled in Spanish 4 this year.

Pinellas Park HS is proud of Annette Collier, whose French Club converted the Mall area of the school into downtown Paris in celebration of French Week.

Osceola HS announces the district’s first Italian Club. Faculty sponsor, Evelyn Bennett, guides this group of 35 students, whose goals include spreading Italian culture throughout the community and school, learning more Italian language in fun and exciting ways, and encouraging students to travel abroad. They plan to visit authentic restaurants, explore Italian fashion, cinema and technology. Helping members “get to the heart of Italian culture” this year will be officers Natalie Guarino, president; Alexandra Acuna, secretary; and Samantha Scholl, parliamentarian.

Seminole HS congratulates Michael Eby and Seminole’s Principal’s Multicultural Club on the organization of the schools first district conference for PMAC’s.