

## From Our PTA President, Anna Hughes



# MATOAKA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Bird's Eye View

Dear Matoaka Families,

I hope everyone had a fun and safe holiday break. The PTA is back and in full swing. Please continue to send in those box tops. We just received a check for \$2500. Wow, great job!

Thank you to everyone who came out and showed their cardinal spirit at the William & Mary Basketball game. It was fun to see everyone there to cheer on the Tribe. Also, awesome job to our Matoaka chorus singing the National Anthem. Thank you to Robin Bennett and Wilma Allen for chairing this event.

We also have had many Mystery Reader Dads in the classrooms. Dads, if you are interested in coming in and

reading a story to your child's class please contact Dan Fitzpatrick at [dcfitz@gmail.com](mailto:dcfitz@gmail.com) or Braz Brandt at [braz.brandt@gmail.com](mailto:braz.brandt@gmail.com).

If you are interested in getting involved, we love to have your help. There are lots of exciting things happening in the Spring and we could always use volunteers. Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

Anna Hughes  
PTA President

## Calendar of Events

February		
19	Tuesday	PTA Meeting 6:30—7:30 p.m.
21	Thursday	Cultural Arts Program
27	Wednesday	Science, Math, Technology Wellness Day

# Cardinal Carnival!



## Cardinal Carnival Naming Contest Winners

Congratulations to:

Whit Coggin  
Jackson Hughes  
Drake Johnson  
Daniel Robles  
Emmie Squire  
and  
Jared Williams

These students will  
each receive 20 free  
carnival tickets.

Matoaka's annual Harvest Festival has become the Cardinal Carnival! The Cardinal Carnival will be held April 20th, 3-6 p.m. at Matoaka. The Carnival will include games, inflatables, crafts, cake & book walks, a silent auction, karaoke, a petting zoo, fire trucks, police cars and more! New this year will be the "pitch burst"—a chance for you to soak your favorite principal! Also new this year will be the "pit stop." The Cardinal Café will be open again and include some sweet new surprises. Presale tickets will be available at a reduced price and also be available to purchase on the day of the carnival.

Cardinal Carnival t-shirts will be available to order—watch for fliers coming home in backpacks. The PTA will be awarding unlimited game/ride passes to one student per grade level. This will be organized by the School Administration and winning students will be announced closer to the carnival date.

As in previous years, families are asked to donate various items to support this enterprise, such as water, baked goods & cakes, trinkets, prizes and books.

Watch your child's backpack, the PTA newsletter and website for more information and volunteer opportunities. Or, contact Erin Otis at [otisfam@verizon.net](mailto:otisfam@verizon.net).

A big thank you to the following parents who helped us with the book fair this year. We made over \$13000.00.

Karen Talley, Christy Grubbs, Lane McCann, Stacey Coopriider, Heather Power, Linda Niedzwick, Loralee Clark, Kelly Parrish, Adrienne Tropilo, Nancy Forziati, Susan Gwaltney, Beverly Walker, Jeannine Colarossi, Becky Carvajal, Heather Oman, Fran Eaton, Stacey Harris, Bertha Guann, Kim Squire, Sherry Dunn, Donna Grosfeld, Mary Asby, Beth Robles, Jeanne Ann Gordon, Christian Reeves, Erin McMahan, Allison Williams, Debbie Wright, Tonja Pegram, Amy Williams, Amy Harris, Sharon Covaney, Karen Quinlan, and Christian Dunn.



We could not have made it through without their hard work.

Matoaka received a check for \$2535 from Box Tops in December-the biggest check we have ever received! Keep up the great work collecting, and don't forget that our next collection deadline for the trophy contest is **Friday, Feb 15**.

This due date is for both Box Tops and Labels for Education.



Q: What'd the stamp say to the envelope on Valentine's Day?



A: I'm stuck on you!

Q: What do farmers give their wives on Valentine's Day?



A: Hogs and kisses!

Q: What kind of flowers do you never give on Valentine's Day?



A: Cauliflower!

## Video Games: Do You Know What Your Child Is Playing?

By John M. Garruto, NCSP  
www.teachersandfamilies.com

Imagine it's 4:00 p.m. on a Sunday. You are picking up your eight-year-old child who has just spent the weekend at a friend's house. You are in the car and you ask your child what he did over the weekend. He tells you that he carjacked eleven cars (which is nowhere near your son's friend's record of twenty), ran over prostitutes, eluded the cops that he didn't run over with his car, and participated in a drug heist. You might think he has a vivid imagination, or you wonder what he's hearing from the other kids at school, or perhaps even from his friend.

But your child might be reporting more accurately than you want to believe. Incidents such as these are frequent in several video games that have been deemed inappropriate for children. You might think that, because you do not allow such games at your house or do not condone them, your child will escape exposure to this type of "entertainment."

In fact, exposure to violent and otherwise inappropriate video games is increasingly prevalent, even among children as young as five. Exposure is not limited to children in troubled families or who lack adult supervision. Many children who become involved in such games come from stable homes with very caring parents. Studies of video games have found over 70% of teenage boys reported played the carjacking game mentioned at the beginning of this article; 80% of minors who tried to buy mature-rated games were able to do so and 90% of teens reported that their parents never check the ratings before allowing them to rent or buy video games. Studies have shown that playing violent video games is related to aggression.

Video games have changed dramatically over the past decades. If you grew up in the 1980s, they were likely a part of your own childhood. Not all games were nonviolent back in the 1980s. Some

games recreated warlike situations or involved "Al Capone" gangster plots. Fortunately, most of them tended to have innocent themes. Even those that had more violent plots most often had the player on the side of the "good guys." However, to assume that today's games are still the same as twenty years ago would be a mistake.

Most parents are familiar with the debates about pros and cons of video games for children. Proponents claim that video games build hand-eye coordination and even help with problem solving skills, as the player must figure out the solutions to various puzzles. Those opposed to video games point to potential harm to children who cannot distinguish fantasy from reality. They argue that the overuse of games contributes to childhood obesity or deters children from important responsibilities, such as homework or helping around the house.

Regardless of the merits of these arguments, parents need to be aware of the content of today's video games. Unlike days past, technological advances mean that newer video games may contain subject matter similar to what might be seen in R-rated movies. Here are some examples of the content of some currently available games:

- Combat martial arts games that reward the player for learning combinations to carry out lethal moves on your opponent, including decapitation, impalement, and other scenes of intense violence.
- The main character bullies other students after being bullied himself.
- A killer pursues the main player with a lethal set of weapons that the player can hear as the killer nears.

### Protecting Your Children

Being aware of the nature and availability of today's video games is important for parents in advocating for the safety and well-being of their children. Here are some tips that can limit your child's exposure to inappropriate games:

- Find out what games are available, and learn all you can about the nature of these games. You might find reviews online (use a search engine) or in magazines. Some parent organizations also provide recommendations.
- Ask your child what games are popular among classmates and peers. Remember that “popular” does not mean “appropriate.” Research these games to learn about the content and maturity rating.
- Prepare a list of games you consider off limits for your children and inform your relatives, neighbors, and parents of your child’s friends what games are on this list. (Remember to update the list frequently!)
- When your children ask for games for a birthday or holiday gift, research the game. Check the maturity rating—any game with an “M” for “mature” should be off limits.
- If you’re still not sure about allowing your child to play a specific game, try renting it and try it out yourself. Regardless of your skill, just playing for a few minutes should give you enough information to determine if it’s appropriate or not.
- Make sure that there are no children observing or nearby if you wish to play an “inappropriate” game yourself. Play in a separate room with the door closed, and be sure your children do not have access to it when you are not around
- Consider restricting access to the game machine at home, just as you regulate TV viewing.

For appropriate users, many video games are fun and enjoyable, just as some rated R movies can be quite entertaining. However, that does not mean all games or all films are suitable for children. Unfortunately, it is much too easy for youngsters to access these games. Parents can keep children safe and happy by vigilant supervision of their video-game activities.

#### Resources

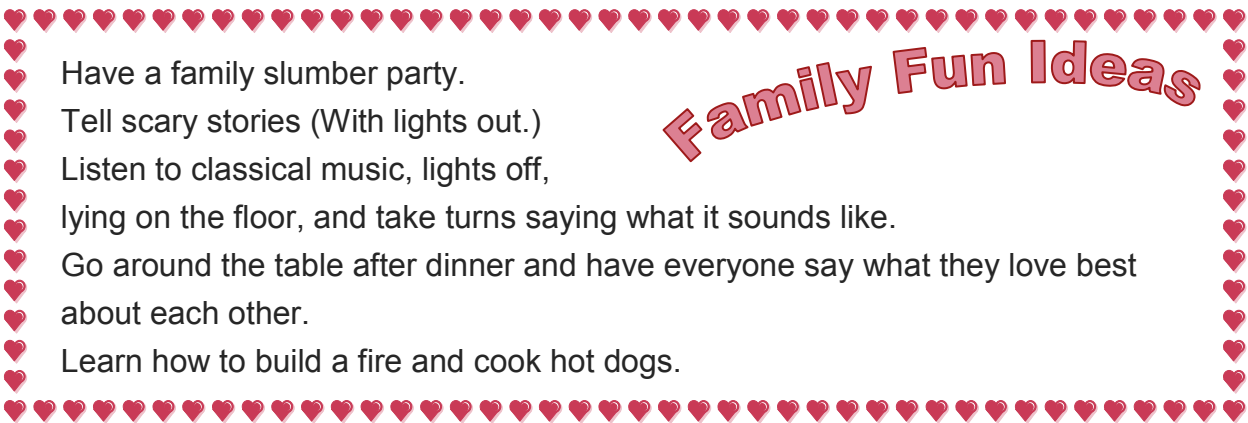
[http://www.lionlamb.org/media\\_violence\\_video\\_games.htm](http://www.lionlamb.org/media_violence_video_games.htm)

This website provides statistics regarding the number of youths who play violent video games.

<http://www.parentstv.org/ptc/videogames/main.asp>  
A website just for parents that keeps you up-to-date about games that are not appropriate for kids (as well as games thought to be okay for kids)

<http://www.mediafamily.org/kidscore/chart.asp?MediaType=games&place=0>  
A multitude of games are reviewed here by Mediafamily, as well as by outside raters.

—some content edited to fit within newsletter



## Family Fun Ideas



# Crafty Kids



Don't forget about our feathered and bushy-tailed friends out there braving the cold winter winds! Cut some cardboard, punch a hole or two in it for hanging, and slather it with peanut butter or suet and then birdseed. Hang it up outside where grateful birds and squirrels will find it.

## What if your Valentine was the envelope?



Don't forget to be on the lookout for valentines from deer!

Want to make a garland? A necklace? An ornament? You can! Simply mix 1 c flour, 1/2 c salt and 1 c lukewarm water. It'll be sticky, hard work but worth it! Once it is clay-like, use a cookie cutter or mold and make a lot of little hearts. Make sure to poke a hole through each heart before baking them in a 200 degree oven. The time you will need to leave them in to dry will vary depending on the size and thickness of your hearts—anywhere from 45 minutes to 2 hours.



# Earth Corner: One Small Change

START

## NO GARBAGE LUNCHES

### WHY ACT?

If your throwaway habits are like those of most kids, the garbage you send to a landfill every year takes up a space big enough to park a small car in! Much of this comes from your school lunch, picnic trash, or snacks at a friend's house. Plastic wrappers you throw "away" may stay in a landfill for 70 years. A glass bottle will not melt until it reaches a temperature of 2,000° F. Melting glass wastes a lot of energy even if you recycle it! The paper bag you use could have been replaced by a reusable one made of cotton or cloth. This Earth Action will help you to reduce the amount of garbage you send to the landfill.

### EARTH ACTION

- Package your food and drink in materials that are designed for more than one use (airtight plastic containers with lids for sandwiches, salads, and snacks, and a thermos for your drink).
- Use your backpack, a reusable bag, or a cloth bag to carry your lunch.

### MATERIALS

- Cloth bag or backpack, plastic containers, and a thermos.

### TIME

- About 15 minutes to search through cupboards.

### RESOURCE SAVINGS

You save landfill space, resources, and energy! This action needs repeating. For committing to a new habit for the Earth, you deserve a pat on the back!



# Happy Groundhog Day!



## Woodchuck

Woodchucks are sometimes called groundhogs. Woodchucks live in holes they dig in the ground called burrows. They can be seen along roads or standing in farm fields. They eat grass, clover, leaves and fruit.