

O HOUSE PARENT BULLETIN

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2008

Notes from the Principal

Ned Acker is the featured O House teacher for this parent bulletin. Upon graduating from Samohi, Nathaniel (Ned) Muñoz Acker moved to Spain where he attended the Universities of Salamanca and Granada. He came home and graduated from UCLA with a BA, an MA, and a good part of a doctoral program. Now Ned is in his 13th year of teaching (7th at Samohi). He spends his days teaching U.S. History for eleventh graders, including one section taught in Spanish for students who choose the Immersion Program, as well as a section of World History Immersion. When you don't find him in the classroom, you might find him reading, surfing, traveling, golfing, wine tasting, or playing with his two children Zoe (4.5) and Rafael (2.5), their black lab named Jakey-boy aka Bubba, or his wife Erica.

When asked what he loves about teaching, Mr. Acker replied, "I enjoy teaching the U.S. Constitution and the politics around it more than anything else. The Constitution, which as the bedrock of our country, is under constant attack and has also expanded tremendously over more than two centuries. I think our kids need to understand how the flexibility provided by our Founders both expands our rights but may also be attacked by certain nefarious forces within our own society. Ultimately, I love teaching that our country is capable of and has done remarkable things and yet we as its citizenry must remain eternally vigilant from those corrupting people and movements from within."

If you walk into Mr. Acker's classroom, you might find students engrossed in their Great Depression comic book project, wherein students narrate the causes, consequences, challenges, heroes, villains, tragedies, and triumphs using characters of their own invention. Ned Acker's recommended reading: Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*.

What's Happening in O House?

O House student advisory committee

Our O House student advisory committee is planning a "capture the flag" contest at lunch versus I House. Students are excited about playing side by side with their teachers and building school spirit. In fact, O House students have developed the rules for this contest and have taken it upon themselves to coordinate it. All students interested in playing will be given an opportunity to play. We plan to provide snacks and drinks. If you are interested in donating snacks or drinks please contact our teacher leader Amy Beeman-Solano at beemansolano@mail.smmusd.org

#108;.smmusd.org> or our parent activity coordinator, Lynn Sturgis at lasturgis58@earthlink.net

O House T-Shirt Day

The O House student advisory committee is jazzed about proclaiming Friday, February 15 as O House T-Shirt day! We will sale O House T-Shirts all week in our office and during lunch in front of Barnum Hall. Students have taken it upon themselves to coordinate this event. What a fun way to demonstrate school and House spirit! All O House staff also plan to wear their T-Shirts Friday. If your son or daughter does not yet have a T-Shirt, please try to show your support for O House through this important fundraiser. We have purchased ONE SHIRT PER STUDENT and are counting on 100% participation. Is yours waiting to find its way home? Just \$10 (\$5 with free/reduced lunch card) cash or check to O House.

Seeking Donations

Do you have unused postcards? Teachers are looking for blank notecards or postcards with artistic or travel decorations to use to communicate positive messages about students.

O House Teacher Luncheon

We would like to treat our O House teachers and staff to a lunch of healthy, homemade foods to show them how much we appreciate all their hard work. This teacher appreciation lunch for approximately 30 staff members will be on Friday, March 7th at 12:30pm. Email our volunteer parent coordinator Lynn Sturgis at lasturgis58@earthlink.net if you can help with food, paper goods and/or utensils, small gift donations for a teacher raffle (always a hit!) or help that day. Thanks Lynn!

College Tips

Financial Aid

Is your son or daughter in 12th grade? If so, do not forget to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Information is available at: www.fafsa.ed.gov or pin.ed.gov. Hard copies of the FAFSA application are not mailed to Samohi but are available upon request by calling 1-800-4FEDAID. Your FAFSA application will be reviewed much faster if completed on line. To apply online you must apply for a personal identification number (PIN) at www.pin.ed.gov <http://www.pin.ed.gov> . Your PIN acts like an electronic signature and allows students/parents to update information and check on the status of their FAFSA application. The filing period for the FAFSA ends on March 2. Please keep in mind that financial aid packages/offers arrive before students are required to submit their "letter of intent" to enroll in specific

school. This timeline is important because it allows you and your teenager to review various financial aid packages/offers before selecting a college.

Samohi scholarships

If your teenager is a 12th grader, do not forget to apply for local scholarships given to Samohi students only. Applications are due by February, 29. Students may apply online at www.smmusd.org/samohi/Future/app.pdf.

Delians Registration

Delians is the Samohi scholastic Honor Society organization and provides students with an opportunity to engage in service to the Samohi community and to be recognized for strong academic achievement. A former Harvard University admission officer recently informed me that many southern California applicants to competitive universities have a relatively insufficient quantity of community service experience in comparison to their counterparts from across the country. It is never too late for a student to begin participating in extracurricular activities. Delians Registration dates are as follows:

Seniors: Tuesday, February 19th and Wednesday, February 20th.

Juniors: Thursday, February 21st and Friday, February 22nd.

Freshmen and Junior dates will be announced soon.

Applications are available online. Make up day is Friday, February 29th. 2/8.

AP Registration

Registration to for AP tests will begin Tuesday, February 19th through Friday, February 29th, 2008 in T211. Students may register before school, lunch and after school. Each AP exam is \$84.00. Make check payable to Santa Monica High, or bring exact dollar amount. Please know that waivers are available if necessary.

Miscellaneous

Message from Judith Meister, PTSA President

Our PTSA president, Judith Meister, encourages us to take a moment and consider the educational progress your teenager has made this year. PTSA is has not met its established goals for contributions this year and is requesting **donations. Only 10% of our 3000 families have contributed. It's not too late!** We need your contribution now so that we may continue support Samohi and not have to eliminate any program funding for the last semester. All donations, regardless of size, are important and will make a difference. PTSA has challenged each House to generate full participation of their families. The House that has the highest level of participation (*not donation amount*) will receive a special lunch time treat this semester. Please send in your contribution in an envelope or go to the Samohi website <http://>

www.samohi.smmusd.org/PTSA/donation.htm to make a secure online donation. All donations are tax deductible and will be acknowledged by letter.

Important Events/Dates

High School Graduation/College Entrance Workshop

Please join us in our student cafeteria on Saturday, February 23 beginning at 8 am for a presentation regarding the basics of high school graduation, college entrance, and post-graduate opportunities. This presentation is part of a two-step plan to focus on your teenager's college preparedness. Parents are asked to schedule individual meetings with your teenager's advisor subsequent to this presentation to prepare a 3 year education plan.

Drop course deadline

Students who wish to drop a course must speak with their advisors before the end of Friday, February 14.

Best,

Jose F. Iniguez
O-House Principal
Santa Monica High School
Phone: (310) 395-3204, ext.299