Dear Friends,

Season’s Greetings from the Spotsylvania County Schools Office of Transportation Services! We would like to take this end of year opportunity to simply and sincerely say “thanks” for all you do for our department...our bus drivers and bus attendants are the best, and we feel privileged to have you as part of our Transportation family! We wish you a joyous season filled with good food, better company and our best wishes for a New Year filled with peace and prosperity.

Happy Holidays,

Kermit Shaffer & the Transportation Gang

This will be the last newsletter for 2012. We hope you have enjoyed our monthly publication!

Please e-mail your thoughts, comments and suggestions for future articles to Heather at hhandsch@scs.k12.va.us

Inside this issue:

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- Safety With a Beat
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Upcoming Calendar Events

Saturday, December 1—Holiday Parade @ Marshall Center/Spotsylvania MS 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 12—Holiday Party @ Golden Corral 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 18—Dessert Open House @ SFTF 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 20—SECA Toy Delivery 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Monday, January 14 to Wednesday, January 16—Early Release High School

Thursday, January 15—Early Release K-12

Friday, January 18—No School; Teacher Workday

Monday, January 21—No School; Holiday for Teachers & Students
Standing behind Carroll at the lunch-break line were classmates Cody Longwell, James Bent and Quinn Madsen.

“He’s awesome,” all three said in unison.

Smith has become a hit with students, thanks in part to a song he performs on the bus to tell them what to do in case of an emergency. Smith wrote the song to keep children interested while he gave his safety talk.

“My wife sent me a video of a Southwest Airlines steward named David Holmes, and he did it for the airline passengers,” Smith said. “When I watched it, it was funny and it was cute, but what struck me was, when the camera panned down to the aisle, everyone was paying attention.”

That’s not normally the case with safety drills, in a school bus loaded with children wearing headphones and iPods. Smith, a onetime glazer and book salesman, wrote the lyrics to a song of his own, OK’d it with his supervisor, and then showed it to the children.

“They loved it,” he said of his first performance, almost two years ago. “It was just me a capella, no music, no nothing.”

The children loved the song so much that Smith had to do the song twice a day for the next two weeks, until he told them he was getting tired of it. Smith then searched online for a royalty-free rap beat. Step two was mixing the beat with a recording of his voice. Step three was laying the complete track and a track with just the music onto a CD.

“What I did that, the kids loved it even more because it had music,” he said.

Step four was taking the song to the stage, at a talent show at the school. Step five was adapting the song to the different ages of children he drives. The song changes when he drives children from elementary or high schools.

When he’s not getting in touch with his inner Jay-Z, Smith has another child-friendly gig: he plays Santa. And he’s so good at it, some of the children in his route have sat on his lap and talked toys with him on Saturday and not recognized him on the bus the next Monday.

“Once you’re in a suit and you’re in costume, you take on a whole different aura,” he said.

His Santa job has taken him to places like Safeway and Encompass. Not bad for a guy who still describes himself as shy and whose only regret seems to be he did not start driving a bus sooner than five years ago.

“This is the best job that I’ve ever had in my life,” he said.
By now you have established a daily routine. *But are you following your route sheet?* A concern we hear quite often is that drivers are not stopping at the location listed on the route sheets, causing confusion when subs are covering a run, or when parents call us with questions. Although you may be making an unauthorized house stop to “be naughty or nice” or dropping off before an intersection instead of after it, you may not realize that the stops were designed with SAFETY in mind. Please take a few moments to review your route sheet, and make adjustments if you are not following what you see.

Also, remind your students to always walk in front of the bus, never behind it or down its side, and to take at least 10 giant steps away from the bus before they cross the road, looking both ways first.

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**Flu Season, that is!**

Confirmed cases of Spotsylvania County School students with influenza are already being reported. For Transportation, the need to stay healthy is twice as important since so many people depend on you and your bus, but it’s also twice as challenging since so many people depend on you and your bus! Help keep both healthy this winter by following a few steps:

Cleaning and disinfecting are part of a broad approach to preventing infectious diseases in schools. To help slow the spread of influenza (flu), the first line of defense is getting vaccinated. Other measures include covering coughs and sneezes, washing hands, and keeping sick people away from others. Keep reading for tips on how to slow the spread of flu specifically through cleaning and disinfecting.

1. Know the difference between cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing.
   - **Cleaning** removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces or objects.
   - **Disinfecting** kills germs on surfaces or objects.
   - **Sanitizing** lowers the number of germs on surfaces or objects to a safe level, as judged by public health standards or requirements.

2. Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are touched often.
3. Simply do routine cleaning and disinfecting.
4. Clean and disinfect correctly.
5. Use products safely.
6. Handle waste properly.

**Questions?** Contact Health Services at extension 1838 or visit [www.cdc.gov/flu/school](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/school)

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**HOLIDAY SUDUKO**

Fill in the missing letters so that every row, column and section contains the letters that spell the word “WREATH”. Have fun!
Join our Team!
Our department will be participating in a RELAY FOR LIFE event for the American Cancer Society at Spotsylvania High School on Friday, April 19, 2013 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 20, 2013.

Please sign up to join us or to make a contribution at:

www.relayforlife.org
Keyword: Transportation Troopers box.

WHO IS YOUR LEAD DRIVER?

Lead Drivers are assigned to you by the FIRST SCHOOL VISITED each morning.

CHS/SMS/BMS— Tammy E. ext. 1815
RHS/NRMS— Becky H. ext. 1814
CHHS/CMS/FMS— Joanna J. ext. 1813
MHS/TMS— Berniece S. ext. 1828
SHS/POMS/JJW— Jeannie S. ext. 1812

8VAC20-70-40 SEATING.

The number of pupils who may ride a school bus shall be determined by the total number who can be seated on the seat cushion facing forward, safely seated within the seating compartment, and shall not exceed the manufacturer's capacity. Pupils may not be permitted to stand, except under unforeseen temporary emergency conditions and for short distances as identified in policy by the local school board.

To view a complete list of the regulations, visit www.doe.virginia.gov/support/transportation/regulations

According to several online sources, Santa has 31 hours of Christmas to work with, thanks to the different time zones and the rotation of the earth, assuming he travels east to west (which seems logical). This works out to 822.6 visits per second. For each household with good children, Santa has 1/1000th of a second to park, hop out of the sleigh, jump down the chimney, fill the stockings, distribute the remaining presents under the tree, eat whatever snacks have been left, get back up the chimney, get back into the sleigh and move on to the next house. Assuming that each of these 91.8 million stops are evenly distributed around the earth (which, of course, we know they are not but for the purposes of our calculations we will accept), we are now talking about 0.78 miles per household, a total trip of 71.604 million miles, not counting stops to do what most of us must do at least once every 31 hours, plus feeding etc. This means that Santa's sleigh is moving at 650 miles per second, 3,000 times the speed of sound. For purposes of comparison, the fastest man-made vehicle on earth, the Ulysses space probe, moves at a poky 27.4 miles per second - a conventional reindeer can run, tops, 15 miles per hour.

Could time and money be saved if Santa Claus stopped going into cul-de-sacs, only dropped off at intersections, and looked for other ways to maximize his run? Yes! Could his elves tweak his route schedule, save reindeer food (fuel) and increase his efficiency like we do in Spotsylvania County? Yes! While we hope Santa never has to make these cutbacks, our staff is always looking for ways to safely increase efficiency for the 22,000 students we transport each day. Do you have a suggestion for improving your route? If so, please contact your Lead Driver. Ho, ho, ho!