

Homeschool Herald

The Newsletter Created By and For Homeschoolers

The place to share your creative creations.

Happy New Year! We hope you are having a terrific 2008...we look forward to hearing all about it in your future *Homeschool Herald* submissions!

The *Herald* has been published monthly (or almost monthly - with a few double issues mixed in) since March 2005. It has been wonderful to have the opportunity to offer homeschooled students the a venue where they can receive recognition for their creative creations, and we look forward to continuing to provide this service for many more years to come. However, for the time being, we are shifting the *Herald* from being a monthly publication to a quarterly schedule. The primary reason for this is that we have just gotten way too busy here at Homeschool Excursions. We are working on developing several large projects, all of which are extremely time consuming.

It has been a goal of ours to secure additional computers for the *Herald* and to establish a program teaching the students how to publish a newsletter, but first we need to build the space in which the kids can work. Once the Green Building Adventure is completed and additional office space

is available, we will again move to a monthly schedule. If all goes as planned, this will happen during the 2008 school year, so thank you for your understanding and patience as we slim back on some programs and initiatives so we can continue to expand others.

Homeschool Excursions is always looking for ways to serve the homeschool community, and we welcome your suggestions and ideas. The *Homeschool Herald* has been successful as a monthly publication for three years, and we expect to continue to serve as an important creative outlet for you as a quarterly newsletter. And we really look forward to expanding the *Herald* in the future to provide students with a unique hands-on experience incorporating layout, graphic design, writing skills, and more. There is lots of potential for the kids to play an integral part in growing this publication and to improve it's accessibility as a valuable resource for you.

Of course, we are always looking for submissions for future issues, so don't hesitate to send them our way!

Welcome!

Homeschool Excursions hopes you enjoy the Winter 2007-08 issue of the *Homeschool Herald*.

Homeschool Excursions operates under Educational Excursions' umbrella. This is 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established to provide a valuable resource to students in Georgia. The *Homeschool Herald* is our newsletter, which provides a creative outlet for homeschoolers.

Our homeschoolers possess a wealth of skills and talents! All contributions are welcome including pictures, stories, articles, and more. We invite everyone to share ideas, suggestions, and submissions. Share with us!!

*-Vered Kleinberger
Program Coordinator*

The next issue will be available in May, so start working on your next project for the *Herald*!

We look forward to seeing what you have to share! Send us your creative creations! Thanks!

Submissions may also be sent via e-mail or snail mail. Please contact us with any questions, comments, ideas, or suggestions.

SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW EVERYTHING?

- Montpelier, Vermont is the only U.S. state capital without a McDonalds.
- In ratio of cows to people, Vermont has the greatest number of dairy cows in the country.

SU DOKU

The numbers 1-9 must be in every column, row and box

3		7	6		4		9	
9			5	8		7		3
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F.I.R.S.T.

F.I.R.S.T. (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) is an organization founded by inventor Dean Kamen in 1989 to encourage children ages 6 – High School to discover their interest in science and technology. Mr. Kamen joined up with Lego International to create a competition called First Lego League (FLL), which is a robotics competition for Middle and High School students.

Coached and mentored by community professionals, FLL students build and program robots to perform challenges for competition. These challenges require strategy, skill, and teamwork. In addition to programming the robot, the team has to do research on an assigned topic each year. This year’s topic is renewable energy. The team also has to decide how to present their research to a team of judges.

This year our team, megaHERtz, will be competing in Warner Robbins for our Regional Qualifier. Since

September 5th when the Lego robotics 2007-2008 season began, we have been working on the robot, research project, handouts about renewable energy, and a presentation board.

All the teams this year are also required to do an energy audit on a building and make recommendations on how to make the building more energy efficient. Our teams choose to audit the Pregnancy Care Center in Morrow, Georgia.

The building was already in the process of being remodeled, which gave us the opportunity to make many recommendations. Our team found it could use more insulation, weather stripping, and the heating and cooling system needed replacing. We also found they could change their incandescent light bulbs to fluorescent light bulbs, which would save cost and energy. We then received a donation of energy-efficient light bulbs for their building.

If you’re interested in renewable energy or have questions about robotics for the team, please email us at robotics@HomeEducationResources.org. If you would like to see a FIRST competition, you can observe any of the many regional qualifiers around the metro Atlanta area, or come to the State competition at Georgia Tech on February 9, 2008, or the International competition at the World Congress Center on April 17-19, 2008. We hope to see you there!

Written by Mattie Bryant, 7th Grade



WHAT ARE THOSE BEANBAGLIKE PACKS FOUND INSIDE ELECTRONIC BOXES THAT WARN “DO NOT EAT”?

We’ve always thought that instead of having “DO NOT EAT” plastered on them, a little self-disclosure would help. Why not identify what is inside? (Come to think of it, what is inside regular beanbags?) Most of us don’t go around eating beanbags, after all.

It didn’t take much digging around to find out that inside those packets is silica gel. Silica is the dioxide of silicon. (Did you know that there is more silicon in nature than



any other element except oxygen? You do now.) The “gel” part of the equation is a little more puzzling, since the stuff inside the bag is actually in the form of crystals, but heck, we’re not purists.

The sole purpose of the silica gel packet is to absorb moisture (silica gel’s most common industrial use is as a drying agent in air conditioning equipment) and to help keep your electronic gear in top shape. So that it can fall apart, dependently, the day your warranty runs out.

Randy Acorcey, of Diversified Electronics Corporation, told *Imponderables* that silica gel isn’t used much by American manufacturers. Most often, you will find them inside boxes of goods manufactured in the Far East, because the merchandise is shipped by boat, where it can be exposed to high humidity (and in some cases, water) for weeks.

*Submitted by Megan Boynes of Richmond Virginia.
Thanks also to Mary Warneka of Perry, Ohio*

Feldman, David. When Did Wild Poodles Roam the Earth?. New York: HarperCollins, 1992. page 201.

Index of images:
<http://www.robotroom.com/Humidity/SilicaGelPacket.jpg>

WINTER WONDERLAND

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There are nine words hidden in the puzzle above. They can be found up, down, across, diagonal, and backwards.

Word List:

- | | | |
|--------|-----------|-----------|
| Skiing | Fireplace | Snowman |
| Sled | Frostbite | Snowboard |
| Ice | Blizzard | Flakes |
| Igloo | Icicles | Penguin |



WEEDS? WHAT WEEDS?

In this issue's plant article, I am not going to discuss what weeds you should maintain in your yard, mostly because there isn't much growing right now. However, it is the perfect time of year to begin starting plants for your edible garden. There are many delicious plants you could plant now, as seeds, in your home. Then, when Spring rolls around, your seeds will have already grown into small plants...ready to go into the ground.

If you start your seeds early, they'll produce food sooner. It isn't difficult. All you need is a bright room with lots of natural light. And you'll need some seeds, soil, pots, and patience. This is the perfect opportunity for an exciting hands-on learning adventure!

Here's what you need to do to get started:

- Think about which plants you want to grow. What kinds of vegetables do you like? It's important to grow edible foods that you like to eat. There's not much point in growing something that won't be used.
- Do you want to grow flowers too? There are many types of flowers that can help prevent certain bugs, and others that can help add nutrients to your soil that will help other plants grow. And of course, flowers are always pretty to look at...
- Before you can plant anything, you need to find your seeds. There are many sources for seeds including your local nursery, many health food stores, and various online vendors.
- Next, think about the space required to grow the plants you've selected. Keep in mind that these plants will be growing for almost two months, and some of them can get fairly large. Once you've taken an inventory of what you plan on growing and what sort of space you'll need, it's time to find the pots you'll use. There are lots of sources for free or affordable containers. Many landscapers are more than happy to give you their empty plastics once they've completed a job. Nurseries are also a good place to ask. And thrift stores are always fun places to explore. You can start seeds in any container that has proper drainage, so make sure



whatever you choose has holes in it, or can have holes punched in it.

- The next step is to buy your soil. There are different soil options available for different plants. Some soils are formulated for flowering plants (which most of your seeds will be...if they produce a fruit or vegetable). And I like to blend soils. Some are more dense than others, and it's important to insure proper drainage, so it's not a bad idea to mix peat or hummus with your soil.
- Make sure you've provided enough space for your plants in a sunny location before you begin planting anything. If you don't have a sunny window, you can help your plants with grow lights. There are many options, so visit your local hardware store and ask the sales clerk for help finding a light that will provide the proper spectrum for the plants you are going to be growing.
- And now, it's time to begin! The preparations are complete; you're ready to plant your seeds!
- Mix your soil and fill your containers almost to the top...leaving 3/4 to 1 inch of room from the lip. You should not press your soil; leave it loose. This will insure proper drainage and adequate air. Remember, your seeds are alive and need air to live and grow.
- Once your containers have soil in them, you can add your seeds. If you are putting more than one seed in a container, make sure you're leaving enough room between them. Remember, these seeds will sprout and grow, so give them their space! If you're not sure how much space to leave, read your seed packet. It will tell you.
- After you've placed your seeds, cover them with a thin layer of soil. Don't add too much, but also make sure they're covered adequately...roughly 1/4 to 1/2 inch.



- Put your containers in your sunny spot, make sure each container has a plate or bowl under it to catch any water that may run through, and then add water to your seeds. Don't flood them...just make sure they're evenly wet.
- The key to sprouting your seeds are to make sure they stay watered (but not overly watered...too much of a good thing isn't always helpful) and that they have enough light.
- You should see your first sprouts within a week! Every plant has a different schedule, so read your seed packets for details.
- Some people continue to grow their vegetables in containers throughout the year rather than transplanting them into the yard come Spring. This may be an option for you, but be sure to research fertilization and other methods for successfully cultivating a container garden.
- And most importantly, make sure you take care of your new plants! They're depending on you!

There are many resources available to help you grow plants from seeds. Visit your library, bookstore, or nursery for additional reference materials. Good Luck, and Have Fun!

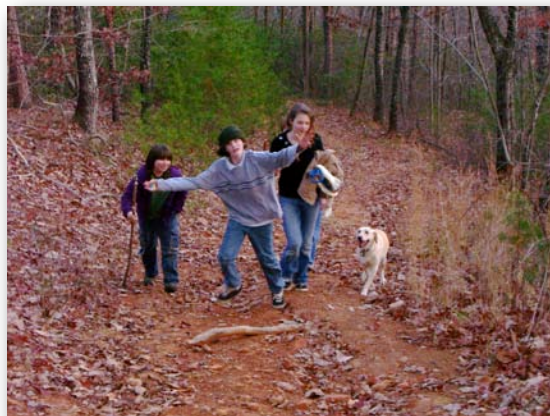
Index of images and information:

http://archives.zinester.com/90798/76033/107750_sprout.jpg

<http://desertification.files.wordpress.com/2007/03/p1000812.jpg>

<http://www.veggiegardeningtips.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/06/Spring-Vegetable-Plants.jpg>

Compiled by Plant Enthusiast, Vered Kleinberger



HOMESCHOOL EXCURSIONS UPCOMING EVENTS

Our Spring calendars have been posted on the website, and they're FULL of exciting adventures! Also, remember that new programs are currently being added, so be sure to check our Calendar of Events for updates. Here's a list of some of what you can look forward to:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| February 22 | Suessical the Musical at the Alliance (with a back stage tour!) |
| March 6 | Aesop's Fables at the Center For Puppetry Arts (with a puppet making workshop!) |
| March 20 | Intro to African Song & Rhythm using drums and various hand-held instruments with Steven 'Snowbear' Taylor |
| April 4 | Juan Bobo at the Center for Puppetry Arts (with a puppet making workshop!) |
| April 7 | Bamboo cups with Buck |
| April 9 | Cinderella Della Circus at the Center for Puppetry Arts (& a puppet workshop!) |
| May 7 | Spring on Burnt Mountain with Steven 'Snowbear' Taylor |

We look forward to seeing you and your family soon!

REMEMBER!!

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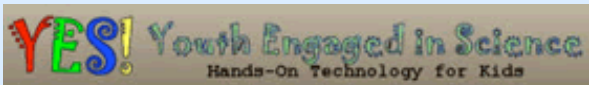
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EDITOR'S NOTE

This newsletter was created to provide a space for students to express their creativity and receive recognition for their accomplishments. All students are invited to share with us!

A SPECIAL THANKS TO...

- All the homeschoolers who contributed to the production of each issue. This couldn't have been done without you!
- YES! (Youth Engaged in Science) for their support and collaboration in providing quality programs for students in Georgia.
- Our advertisers for their help in making the newsletter possible.
- And a very special thank you to the Board of Directors for your hard work and dedication.

IMAGES AND WORKS CITED:

[HTTP://WWW.QUOTE GARDEN.COM](http://www.quoteGarden.com)
[HTTP://WWW.FUN-FACTS.COM/](http://www.fun-facts.com/)

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Receive a COLOR copy of the Homeschool Herald in your mailbox for the low rate of \$15.00 a year. Help support the *Homeschool Herald*; subscription fees assist in covering printing costs. Send payment payable to Homeschool Excursions.

Homeschool Excursions, PO Box 1283, Jasper, GA 30143
(770) 605-2451 info@homeschoolexcursions.org

The Homeschool Herald is printed on recycled paper. Help preserve our environment through the use of recycled products and by reducing waste.

Homeschool Excursions Membership Form

Yes! I want to help Homeschool Excursions grow!
I join at the following membership level:

- _____ Seed: \$25-34.00
- _____ Sprout: \$35-49.00
- _____ Shoot: \$50-99.00
- _____ Sapling: \$100-149.00
- _____ Tree: \$150-199.00
- _____ Forest: \$200.00 and above

Enclosed is my payment for: _____

Visit the Membership page on the
Homeschool Excursions website for
member benefits and additional information.

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Phone Number: _____

E-mail: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Number of homeschoolers in your household: _____

**Thank you for your support!
We're looking forward to a fantastic year!!**

Mail form to: Homeschool Excursions
PO Box 1283, Jasper, GA 30143

The Winter Issue

We hope that you have been enjoying your Winter! It's been exciting to see snow several times already! And it's also wonderful to be finally receiving some precipitation!

A new year has begun, and we hope you are having a wonderful 2008. Our wish for you is that every day is a good day, because today is your life. *Carpe Diem!* Seize the Day! Live for today, and take advantage of every exciting opportunity that comes your way! Keep learning, seeing, doing, growing, and expanding your horizons!

It's always exciting to begin a new year. We hope your school year is going well, and that you've had a

terrific holiday season. It's a great time to reflect on how lucky we are, and to think of how we wish to grow in the coming year. Be sure to thank your parents for being so supportive. They are working hard to make sure you get a quality education, so make sure you let them know how much you appreciate it.

So, our wish to you is that you have the best year ever! Enjoy every day, and be sure to learn or try something new whenever the opportunity presents itself.

Happy New Year! Have an excellent 2008! And we look forward to seeing many new creative creations from you in future *Herald* issues!

What's Inside?

F.I.R.S.T.

Mattie Bryant tells us all about the hard work involved with preparing for a F.I.R.S.T. competition. This year the focus is renewable energy, so they conducted an energy audit of a building and designed a robot to complete certain tasks. Read all about it!

Weeds? What weeds?

Well, there aren't many weeds growing right now, so in this issue we walk you through the steps required to start seeds indoors. If you plant and care for them now, you'll have nice sized plants to move outside when spring comes. So think about what you want to grow in your garden, and it's time to get started!

Burnt Mountain Adventure with Steven 'Snowbear' Taylor

Photos of our exciting adventure on Burnt Mountain are scattered throughout the issue. The group learned how to increase their awareness in the forest, as well as learned about plants, tracks, and more! Enjoy the pics!

Homeschool Excursions
 PO Box 1283
 Jasper, GA 30143