

2008 Tech Fest to Showcase Creativity, Curriculum, and Skills

By Pat Tomasovic, Media Specialist at Pocomoke High School



Worcester County Public Schools' annual Tech Fest, organized by our school system's library media specialists, serves to help our students develop and expand their technological skills. In its 34th year, the Tech Fest has evolved from its beginnings as a film festival to its current format encompassing photography, multimedia productions, online/interactive creations, and design. Many Tech Fest entries are generated as part of the curriculum, demonstrating the infusion of technology into instruction and showcasing students' creativity and skills.

Today, over 400 students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 participate by submitting Tech Fest entries in four varied categories. Entries are judged by a group of experts that include professional photographers, representatives from local television stations and newspapers, retired teachers, school system technology coaches, computer programmers, and graphic design artists. Each year, entries from each of our 14 schools are showcased at our county-wide awards ceremony.

The 2008 Tech Fest Awards Presentation will be held on February 21, 2008 at Snow Hill Middle School, beginning at 5:30 p.m. Attendees are invited to view all entries for the first hour. At 6:30 p.m., awards for winning entries will be presented. The Awards Presentation is open to the public and is free of charge.

Tech Fest entries can be submitted in four different categories. These categories include *Through the Lens*, *On Screen*, *On Line*, and *On Paper*. *Through the Lens* provides students with the opportunity to enter their photographs into the Worcester County Tech Fest. These photographic entries are divided into three subject categories: portraits, stills, and scenic. The *portrait* category includes photographs of animals and people; *still* photographs are pictures of

plants and non-living objects; and the *scenic* category includes photographs of the great outdoors and architectural elements. Photographic entries can be submitted in color, monochrome, or in an experimental format.

Photography classes are offered at each of our three high schools. During these classes, students develop their picture taking talents and their processing skills. At some of our schools, photography is available as an offering during an After-School Academy. In addition, students in the elementary and middle schools are often given opportunities to take photographs in their art class or as part of a class project. Students who generate photographs from these sources, as well as at home, are encouraged to enter them into our Tech Fest's *Through the Lens* category.

The *On Screen* category includes multimedia productions. The entries in this category give students the opportunity to create a PowerPoint, videotape, animation, or a combination of media to produce a program that can be displayed on a screen. All of the *On Screen* productions are grouped into either informational or entertainment categories, and they can be submitted in several formats.

At Snow Hill Middle School, for example, Grade 7 Foreign Language students produced informational PowerPoints describing countries they have researched. Informational PowerPoints were also created in history and science classes at many schools including Berlin Intermediate School, Stephen Decatur Middle School, Pocomoke High School, and Stephen Decatur High School. Subjects incorporated into these PowerPoints include the Civil War, the French Revolution, World War II, Zoology, and Service Learning. In addition, students from Stephen Decatur High School's Technology Applications classes created electronic portfolios. All of these school-generated projects have been entered in the Tech Fest within the *On Screen* category.

The third category in which students may enter Tech Fest productions is *On Line*. In this category, students and classes are challenged to create a Web site, Web quest, a PowerPoint with hyperlinks, or interactive worksheets. All entries in this category must be interactive or "online." Many classes in our schools create entries in this category as part of a content unit or lesson.

The last Tech Fest category is *On Paper*. In this category, students are asked to design a two-dimensional poster, sign, or banner or a three-dimensional brochure, pamphlet, or card. Projects must be completely designed and put together on the computer. At Snow Hill Middle School, students in Grades 6 and 8 created brochures and posters as part of their Integrated

Language Arts curriculum. As part of a literature unit at Ocean City Elementary School, students in Tracey Drocella's enrichment classes produced three-dimensional book jackets for the book, The Cay by Theodore Taylor.

Worcester County Public Schools' library media specialists, as well as our entire school system, are looking forward to another successful Tech Fest and Awards Presentation. We encourage you to join us on February 21 at Snow Hill Middle School, beginning at 5:30 p.m. We think you will be amazed by the creativity, knowledge, and technological skills of our students!

If you have any questions about our Tech Fest, or the 2008 Tech Fest Awards Presentation, you may call me at Pocomoke High School at 410-632-5180.