



Hollis Brookline Middle School

KNIGHTLY NEWS

December 10, 2007

From the Administration

“Tis the season...” Traditionally we think of this special season as the time to **give**. This year, as we conclude 2007 and anticipate 2008, we reflect on many of the factors which make us pause and **give** “**thanks.**”

To our **students**... Your respect, politeness, humor, energy and desire to learn is recognized. As administrators, we walk through your classrooms often, witnessing your inquisitive nature, working collaboratively with peers and struggling to understand and apply a concept. You are our primary focus.

To our **parents**... Your support is a significant contributing factor in our success. The value you place on education is most evident: communicating with teachers, reinforcing the need for strong study skills and work completion, providing transportation for extracurricular activities, attending Recognition Assemblies (even the day before Thanksgiving) and, volunteering in a myriad of ways.

To our **support staff**... You are always there, whenever and wherever needed. Greeting our public, maintaining a safe, clean environment, preparing budgets, organizing field trips, securing substitutes and assisting special needs are simply a few examples. Your compassion for our students and staff is beyond compare.

To our **professional staff**... As the proverbial plate overflows, you raise the bar not only for our students but for yourselves as lifelong learners. Our ongoing ICT Literacy Initiative and Curriculum Mapping efforts have taken tremendous time and professional training. There will be more, no doubt. Supporting one another and setting priorities, we will again reach our goals.

To our **School Board**... We appreciate your philosophy and the respectful relationships that have formed. You encourage us to celebrate the achievements and create plans to address our needs. You are thoughtful with your questions and feedback. Together we have made a positive difference.

Thank you, one and all, for your individual gift. Happy Holidays and Happy New Year,

Sincerely,

Patricia Lewis Goyette, Principal
Stephen R. Secor, Asst. Principal

PTSA President's Report

December is upon us, and so is the snow!

It's not too late to support HBMS by doing your holiday shopping online at www.boxtops4education.com. There are over 200 stores to choose from, including Barnes and Noble, LL Bean, Best Buy, FTD and more.

The HBMS PTSA will have a meeting to discuss fundraising ideas for the 2008-2009 school year. If you have any suggestions, please feel free to join us (date will be posted on our website), or contact one of us. We value your ideas.

If you were unable to attend our “Early College Awareness and Discover U” night, you can still visit www.nheaf.org to get more information.

Reflections entries are due on January 4th, in the front office of HBMS. The theme this year is, “I can make a difference by...”. Good luck, and let's get creative over the holiday vacation!

We wish all of you a happy and safe holiday season.

Susan Holroyd
Ruth Kabel

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SPECIAL NOTE:

Due to Primary Voting being held at the Hollis Brookline High School, we will have a delayed start for students. Please make special note:

**January 8, 2008
Delayed Start for Students
School begins at 9:15**

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School and Community News

Rachel's Challenge Update

Rachel's Challenge is alive and thriving at the middle school. We have had several meetings, elected a leadership team and have initiated several AoK's (acts of kindness).

- We surprised our cafeteria ladies with a homemade lunch served by students on real plates with real silverware, tablecloth, flowers, etc. and even had a student violinist play softly in the background while they enjoyed a relaxing lunch.
- We've connected with an army hospital in Virginia that receives wounded soldiers from Iraq and have been making holiday cards for them.
- We held a mini-fundraiser where we offered baked goods and beverages during the intermissions of our fall Drama Club production and raised over \$160!
- We are currently involved in "the button project" which is a school-wide activity designed to start a chain reaction of kindness. Stay tuned for details as the idea slowly catches on...

You can follow our activities and find important information on our Rachel's Challenge link on the HBMS website.

RACHEL'S CHALLENGE MEETING DATES

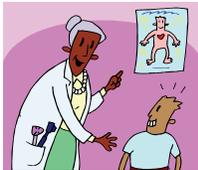
**Mondays from 2:30 - 3:30 PM
unless otherwise announced**

December 10	March 24
December 17	April 7
January 7	April 21
January 28	May 12
February 11	June 2
March 10	June 16

From the Health Office-Mrs. Mandragouras

Now that the cold and flu season is here, we all need to be extra diligent about staying healthy. Not touching our eyes, nose and mouth will decrease the chance of germs entering our bodies. Washing our hands often and coughing and sneezing into our elbows will diminish the germs we can contract and give to others. By getting adequate sleep, 9-10 hours for adolescents, we can optimize the functioning of our immune system. Eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables (5-7 servings a day) and aiming to exercise daily can also help our bodies resist infection.

Screenings for vision and hearing are continuing and after the holiday break height, weight, and scoliosis screenings will begin. Please contact the school nurse (Sheila Mandragouras 465-2223) if you don't want your child to participate in these screenings.



DANCE DATES

Here are the dates for the HBMS dances. As a reminder, doors open for both grades at 7:00pm and end at 9:00pm for the 7th graders and 9:15pm for the 8th graders. Please keep this end in mind when lining up in the front of the building to pick your child up.



January 25th

April 4th

May 16th

7th Grade HBMS Chorus Winter Concert
7:00 pm High School Auditorium
Tuesday, December 18, 2007

8th Grade HBMS Chorus Winter Concert
7:00 pm High School Auditorium
Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Calendar of Events

(see inside newsletter for details)

Dec. 14	8th Gr. Generations Day
Dec. 17	Rachel's Challenge meeting
Dec. 18	7th Gr. Chorus Winter Concert
Dec. 19	8th Gr. Chorus Winter Concert
Dec. 24-	Holiday Break-NO SCHOOL
Jan. 2	
Jan. 7	Rachel's Challenge meeting
Jan. 8	Delayed Opening - 9:15am
Jan. 16	"Who is Influencing My Child?"
	PTSA Workshop
Jan. 25	School dance-7:00pm

School and Community News

****Calling All Creative Students****

You're invited to show off your artistic talents in the 2007-2008 Reflections Program!! Reflections is a national PTA-sponsored arts program for grades preK-12. There are 6 areas in which one may enter:

- *Literature**
- *Musical Composition**
- *Photography**
- *Visual Arts**
- *Dance Choreography**
- *Film/Video Production**

This year's theme is, **"I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY..."**. Students are invited to submit an original piece related to this year's theme. Entry forms/rules may be downloaded at www.nhptal.org, and they will also be available at the HBMS office beginning November 1st. For more information on the Reflections program, please contact Marianne Graves at 465-9747.

"Who is Influencing my Child?"

Friends, family, peers, teachers, activity leaders, and media all have a role in who our children are and who they will become. How can we help keep our children away from the negative influences that are out there applying pressure? As parents, we would like to maintain a positive environment, build a strong foundation, and aid our children in reaching their full potential. How do we help them navigate through the many influences that they will face? With the help of Robert Bryant, Program Director of Second Growth, we can begin to understand the influences, both positive and negative, that are out there, and how we can help our children through this developmental time.

The Hollis-Brookline PTSA S-Team will sponsor this entertaining and educational workshop, free and open to anyone in the community, on **Wednesday, January 16th**, at 7 p.m., at the Hollis Brookline High School. A snow date has been set for January 23rd. For more information you may contact Pat Marquette at 673-1957



Seasons Greetings

"Self-Advocacy"

HBMS & HBHS Special Education Department

In the school setting, self-advocacy refers to taking action on one's own behalf. Self-advocacy has been known to be an important factor which contributes to positive outcomes for students. It is particularly important for students with disabilities to learn how to effectively self-advocate for themselves. Students with disabilities need to recognize, understand and accept their disability. Starting self-advocacy strategies early in a student's career will most likely lead to more positive outcomes in college and adulthood.

Students with disabilities may not always self-advocate for themselves. Many times they lack knowledge of themselves as learners, not knowing how to clearly describe their disabilities. Some students may lack the ability to articulate their personal strengths and needs appropriately, or simply lack the confidence in their abilities. Therefore, students with disabilities need to learn strategies and have frequent opportunities to practice them. The following strategies may prove helpful in the development of self-advocacy in adolescents:

- **Involve students in making decisions about their education.** Involve them in the planning of their IEP and have them participate in team meetings.
- **Help students understand their learning strengths and weaknesses.** Parents and teachers should work with their students to ensure better understanding of their disability and which accommodations or needs best fit their learning style and how to best utilize supports.
- **Model and teach appropriate self-advocacy skills.** Many students learn the skills by first watching teachers, parents and others advocate on their behalf. Even by just listening they are learning how to collaborate and problem-solve effectively.
- **Help students with goal setting, making sure it is realistic and appropriate for their learning.** They should always be involved in the process, making sure goals are tangible, realistic and timely. Self-monitoring and evaluation are also important for setting realistic goals.

Overall, educators hope that by teaching adolescents self-advocacy skills, we will help in the development of their knowledge as learners and what best fits their needs, how to communicate that effectively, and actively set realistic goals for their learning, ultimately leading to more post-secondary placements and success in the workplace

Seventh Grade News

Team McAuliffe Math---Ms. Fordin

Building on previous concepts, 7th grade math continues with a study of the Real number system. Do you know the differences between natural and whole numbers, or between rational and irrational numbers? Is zero a counting number? Is zero real? What makes a number rational? Do you know how to model integer manipulation? Ask your child. You will be impressed with what they have learned.

During this holiday season, as things get crazy and chaotic, we've decided to streamline our shopping. To that end, students will be creating advertisements and promotional items supporting the sale of mathematical concepts. We are looking forward to our cross-team advertisements and promotions. Who knows what is for sale? Perhaps it will be a cup of GREMDAS soup, a pattern animation, a live musical performance, or even a piece of exponential jewelry. Keep your eyes out for some great deals on wonderful products!

Team McAuliffe History-Mrs. Connelly

On Team McAuliffe, we have finished our study of the fall of the Roman Empire. We are learning about the beginning of Christianity, the new religion, including where it originated, what the beliefs were/are included, and most importantly the effect it had on the Roman Empire. While learning about the Fall of Rome, we discovered that the empire split in two, one section falling to the barbaric invaders and the other becoming the great eastern empire of Byzantium.

One of our favorite parts of the last unit was the creation of a Roman Theater Mask and Wax Museum which is on-line for your viewing pleasure. The students worked with a partner to create a mask to represent that person and wrote a report on that person's life. The masks ranged from Julius Caesar to Cleopatra to Neptune and many other famous people or gods of the period. The results are fantastic! Check out the pictures on my webpage link 'Student Work'.

Since then students made amazing maps of the Roman Empire at the peak, and we have been working to integrate technology into our History work. You know about the email assignment where students wrote others to find out why it's important to study ancient famous people. Now students are making amazing vocabulary collages and we will do more in the coming weeks with various projects. Be sure to ask your son or daughter what is going on to make History!

During this quarter, we will make Celtic illuminations and plan to write our names in Cyrillic which is named after St. Cyril, a missionary from Byzantium. It was invented during the 10th century AD and has been adapted to write over 50 different languages.

All of the students' works will be on display in the room or hallway. As we continue to learn about the changes that occurred to Byzantium with the influence of Islam and Mohammad, we will see how everything connects as we move on to the Middle Ages and the crusades in the New Year. We hope to see you soon and I wish you and your family a happy holiday season.

Team McAuliffe Science-Mrs. Evans

Parents, thank you very much for donating "dissection"

money so we can continue teaching science through a hands-on approach. We have collected enough money so that we can purchase lamb hearts and lamb lungs from Blood Farm in Groton, Massachusetts. Our next dissection will be in February.

Our most recent focus (no pun intended) is a unit on the eye. I hope the parents enjoyed dissecting the eyeball "model" that students made. They were very diligent and precise when making their eye model and were eager and excited about doing an "eye dissection" with their parents. Many of the students did not let on to their parents that the dissection was an eye "model" and some parents were quite stressed in anticipation of doing a dissection while others were thrilled. The next day, the students were very eager to share feedback. Here are a few comments from the parents:

--"I loved the fact that my son made me think it was a real eye! He even put it in the refrigerator."

--"I enjoyed doing this dissection with my daughter. She got me good! (Thinking I would be using a real eye)."

--"It was very enjoyable to work with my son and refresh some buried knowledge."

--"We were a little nervous a real eye was coming home."

--"Learning about the eye this way was interesting. Looking forward to more dissections."

--"I really believed him that I had to dissect a real eye."

--"It was cool! Next time a real eyeball would be fun!!"

--"I was lead to believe it was a real cow's eyeball. I'm glad it wasn't."

--"It was fun working with my daughter. The eye was amazing---very life-like."

--"What an eye opener!!"

During this unit, the students also had an opportunity to test their peripheral vision, determine their dominant eye, test for an astigmatism, note the differences between a near and farsighted eyeball, and view cataract surgery. In addition, they compared the size of their right eye blind spot to that of their left eye. In this lab, titled "Mapping Your Blind Field and Blind Spot", the students used trigonometry to determine the size of these blind spots after they tested their blind field (blind field is the area on paper where a person is blind from a distance of 300mm). Students then followed the six steps of the scientific method and wrote their first lab report.

Team McAuliffe English-Ms. Rasmussen

Team McAuliffe students have been busy researching and writing about Charles Dickens and the Victorian period. We have begun reading *A Christmas Carol* and the students seem to be enjoying it. We have two field trips coming up. On Friday the 14th of December we will be going to The North Shore Music Theatre to see a production of *A Christmas Carol*. This yearly tradition is a favorite among teachers and students. Also, on December 19th we will be ice skating at The Conway Arena in Nashua. Ice skating was a favorite pastime during the Victorian period and the students really enjoy lacing up the skates and skating with their teachers. I hope you all have an enjoyable holiday season and get ready for January when we will be reading and writing biographies.

Seventh Grade News

Team Jordan Mathematics- Mrs. Hall

Building on previous concepts, 7th grade math continues with a study of the Real number system. Do you know the differences between natural and whole numbers, or between rational and irrational numbers? Is zero a counting number? Is zero real? What makes a number rational? Do you know how to model integer manipulation? Ask your child. You will be impressed with what they have learned.

During this holiday season, as things get crazy and chaotic, we've decided to streamline our shopping. To that end, students will be creating advertisements and promotional items supporting the sale of mathematical concepts. We are looking forward to our cross-team advertisements and promotions. Who knows what is for sale? Perhaps it will be a cup of GREM-DAS soup, a pattern animation, a live musical performance, or even a piece of exponential jewelry. Keep your eyes out for some great deals on wonderful products!

Team Jordan History--Mr. Capraro

In 7th grade History on Team Jordan, we are coming to the end of our study of the Byzantine Empire. We started the unit with a look at what caused an empire as great as Rome to slowly weaken and fall. Ask your child about the cycle the Romans found themselves in that caused a definite downward spiral! We looked at how the empire basically split in half—the West going through a difficult period of unrest and the East organizing itself as the Byzantine Empire. There are three main points I wanted to cover. First is what brought Rome down and what happened to the empire after the fall in 476 AD. Second is how Byzantium was like Rome but also how they learned from Rome's mistakes and changed some things. Third is a brief introduction to the "new" religion of the Byzantines: Islam. We will be finishing this chapter soon; the chapter test and notebook will be due in the coming weeks. After our study of the Byzantines, we can dive right into the Holy Roman Empire and feudal Europe.

I continue to include the art of the people and time we are studying into our lessons. Mosaics are the art form that have become most closely associated with the Byzantines. Did you see your student designing and creating their own mosaics? Some were truly outstanding! All the mosaics will join the Celtic illuminations on the class wall. My classroom continues to evolve to reflect what we have learned; stop by for a look sometime or check out my website!

We also will be saying goodbye to my student teacher, Mr. Smith. He has been a wonderful addition to the team during his time here and will be missed by both the students and the teachers. HBMS wishes him well in his future career as a history teacher!

Team Jordan Science-Ms. Ellerin

Team Jordan students began the nervous system unit with the essential question of what makes you, you? To jump start this discussion, students were given the following scenario to unlock their ideas: *"Suppose for a minute that brain transplants were possible, as in a science fiction movie. If you had a brain transplant, would you be you, or would you be the person who donated the brain? Why?"*

We began the exploration of what makes you you by determining who in the class was right, left or whole brained thinkers. Using paintings, a shifty eye activity and a written brain

dominance test, students were able to determine their own brain dominance.

A unit on the nervous system must include the basic unit of the system- the neuron. Students designed and constructed a model of a typical neuron using diverse materials such as clay, aluminum foil, pipe cleaners, toothpicks and plastic wrap. Students then went on to make a live-action model of a nerve impulse that traveled through the nervous system.

Team Jordan Science students also completed their first dissection of the year. The lab was buzzing with excitement as these young scientists donned their safety equipment and gathered their dissection instruments. The respect, courtesy and care they all showed during the dissection was impressive to see. Depth of grey and white brain matter was measured; the corpus colosum was identified and measured; the strength of the dura matter was tested; and regions of the brain were carefully cut and separated. Many students were surprised at the fragility of the brain.

Students then went on to the very spatial activity of constructing a brain map cap. This cap can be converted between a two-dimensional and three-dimensional representation of the brain parts including the four lobes, sensory cortex and motor cortex.

With the coming of the first snowfall of the season, students participated in a "snowball fight" review game to conclude this unit of study. Team Jordan is already preparing for the next dissection that will happen in a few weeks. Students will be dissecting a cow's eye. I'd like to send a special thank you to all families that have donated to the dissection fund. The money raised through donations will allow our team to purchase heart and lungs for dissection during our circulatory and respiratory systems respectively.

Team Jordan English-Mrs. DiZazzo

Team Jordan English students are continuing to work diligently! Our short story unit came to a close with impressive and thorough literary elements, PowerPoint projects, utilizing and furthering the students' technological skills in creating informative, entertaining, and comprehensive presentations.

Of course, we continue to work on writing, as well as reading quality pieces of literature. Students are given the opportunity for daily writing in the classroom, as well as the chance to read a variety of genres both in class and through the Free Choice Reading Program.

Recently, we have embarked upon our Victorian unit, which will take us through the end of December. This unit began with an introduction to Charles Dickens and also the Victorian Era, which provided the students with background knowledge and a sense of setting as they began to read the classic novel. Students are currently busy reading and exploring the themes of generosity/selflessness, charity, and what it means to be a benevolent person. The unit culminates with a team-wide, week-long celebration of the Victorian time period, including a trip to the North Shore Music Theatre to see a stage production of the classic novel, an ice skating adventure, and a Victorian tea party.

After the New Year, students can look forward to beefing up their writing skills in daily writing workshops, resulting in a multitude of writing pieces, ranging from informative to imaginative.

Eighth Grade News

Team Hypatia English—Mrs. Gruppiso

English students on Team Hypatia have finished reading their historical novels and are now writing pieces for their broadsides which are one-page newspapers. The pieces will include a letter to the editor, an obituary, a news article, a political cartoon which was completed in history class, and a commemorative poem. In preparation, students read “Paul Revere’s Ride,” “Concord Hymn,” and a first person account of the Battle of Lexington. Using these and an obituary as models, they talked about the characteristics of traditional poetry, letters to the editor (another essay), news articles and obituaries.

In addition to the broadside, students are finalizing Letters about Literature and short stories. Some will be invited to submit their letters to The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress and other pieces to The Alliance for Young Artists and Writers.

As we move toward winter break, students will talk more and more about elements of style which will be the focus of the Mystery, Suspense, and Tension Unit. This is the study that ultimately leads to the original radio plays.

Students have been working hard. In all core classes the Team has emphasized quality of work and the characteristics of a good student. With the activities / jobs assigned in connection with the historical fiction read for class, I have seen growth. We will continue to hone study skills as we finish up the pieces of writing and move into the next unit.

Team Hypatia U.S. History—Ms. Lawler

Students have just completed the DAR contest on the American Revolution. This essay gave them some great background information and will make our class learning more interesting and in-depth. Also, it was a fun way for students to develop their writing skills.

Students have been focusing on finding evidence. We have done several activities that forced them to research topics such as the Iroquois Confederacy and the Ohio River Valley. Both assignments gave them a chance to be creative and gain more knowledge about the causes of the French and Indian War.

The past few weeks we have been talking about the seeds of Revolution. In English, students are reading historical fiction novels about the Revolution. These novels give the students a better understanding about personal beliefs and conflicts during the Revolution. Within the next week we will watch an edited version of The Patriot, which will help them to more fully understand topics covered in class. <http://www.hbms.k12.nh.us/lawlerl>

Team Hypatia Math—Mrs. Rossetti

Team Hypatia Algebra class is continuing their investigation into slope, y-intercept and the equations of lines. Students had a guest teacher, Mr. Secor, who turned the classroom floor into a large Cartesian graph where students worked on a visual and kinesthetic approach to slope. Pre-Algebra continues with data analysis and probability. Once the students mastered the concept, the graphing calculator was used to graph lines, histograms and box/whisker plots. The class will continue their focus on probability with the Fundamental Counting Principle, combinations and permuta-

tions. Gateways students are finishing up their work on probability and are learning about the Fundamental Counting Principle, combinations and permutations. They will delve into data analysis and the properties of Algebra.

Team Hypatia Earth Science—Mrs. Smith

We have just completed rocket testing! Our junior scientists have mastered balloon rocket design. After discussing Newton’s Laws of Motion, pairs of students were given an assignment to design, build, and fly a balloon rocket at least 40 feet. They were given a list of materials: balloon, straw, string, cone, 3 fins, propelled by air, and a body all used with a purpose to aid in the most aerodynamic rocket. Each pair of students had to complete at least 6 trials before they could give the “final fly” with me. Most students were very nervous when it came time to fly because some of the rockets were not always consistent in their trials.

The record to beat was a 96 foot run which took place two years ago. I had one team of students who took on this challenge! The team of Will Hildreth and BZ Batte pulled off what I believed was going to be a very hard record to beat. They tested and tested until they were happy with their consistent trials, flying a whopping 109 feet! BZ and Will started their run out in the parking lot where it traveled in the rain and down the hallway to its rest at 109 feet, almost to the window of Ms. White! Students next year will have a difficult time beating this record! Let’s see who can do it.

A written lab report will be finalized in the computer lab to complete this module before Christmas.

In January, a module in Plate Tectonics and Volcanoes will occur. Stay tuned for some uplifting events in this series of learning units. Please have a safe and enjoyable holiday season! See you in the New Year.

Team Prescott Math—Mrs. Mezzocchi

In the regular Math classroom (Passport), the students will be finishing up the term learning about data and statistics. They will be using the TI-84 graphing calculator to produce “Box-N-Whisker” plots and they will be learning how to organize their data with “Stem-N-Leaf” plots. The students always enjoy using these sophisticated tools. Following the statistics unit, the students will study equation solving and integers.

In the Algebra classroom, the students are learning how to identify linear equations and inequalities. They are in the process of learning how to find the slope and intercepts along with the “Real Life” meanings to these parts of the equation. Students will have to demonstrate their mastery by being able to write equations in all forms and distinguish between slopes and intercepts of various lines. Following this unit, we will learn about systems of equations.

In the Gateways classroom, after finishing up the formulas unit and mastering the Pythagorean Theorem, we will begin a Statistics unit. Throughout the year we will be using both the computers in the lab and the TI-84 graphing calculators as tools to enhance the learning of mathematics.

At this time of the year, all math classrooms will embrace the art of Origami. The students will learn to make colorful decorations for the Holiday Season. The origami unit emphasizes the connection with geometry and will build the students’ knowledge of mathematics and its connection throughout their world.

Eighth Grade News

Team Prescott History—Mr. Lyle

The colonists had been taxed heavily for too many years. They would begin to arm secretly out in the countryside in case something went horribly wrong with the King's troops. This, of course would end with Lexington and Concord. Once corralled, the 6500 British soldiers and roughly 1,000 loyalists would remain bottled up until the following March 17th! That's almost a year! This is the kind of thing we're now studying. We've been watching the new fledgling Congress dream up a new Continental Army and dispatch George Washington to lead it. We've made up charts on how both sides stacked up at the outset of the war. We will continue with all aspects of the Revolution for a while yet. Students have put together various charts and timelines on the subject.

The courageous students of Team Prescott have just finished writing creative stories for the D.A.R Contest on Espionage in the American Revolution. These will also translate into grades for U.S. History and English as well. Students have been studying the first year of the War for Independence. They've been busy making maps of the period and timelines on the good General's efforts in the fall of 1776. It's not pretty!

Soon we'll be studying the War as it turns South to the Southern colonies and how we bring it to a successful conclusion at Yorktown, VA. Once the British disembark, students will turn their attention to the politics of the period.

We'll be studying our first national government, known as the Articles of Confederation. It's very restrictive and therefore considered inadequate by many. It will be scrapped for a better, larger document known as the Constitution. It becomes the law of the land and we study all aspects of the new blueprint to better understand how the whole thing was intended to work. The Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches are all covered in detail in January.

Team Prescott English—Mrs. Coutu

Team Prescott English is in the midst of a writing storm. We have finished both formal essays and creative pieces that have been submitted to several contests. We also have short story drafts that we periodically visit for revision activities. Students are beginning to accept that we will be writing daily and that writing is a pulse of the course. We are slowly working through the writing process, from draft to draft, to see improvements in our writing.

Our current writing tasks parallel the historical fiction unit. I timed this unit to coincide with Mr. Lyle's history lessons on the American Revolutionary War. Students were asked to select, with guidance, from the following novels: My Brother Sam is Dead, Johnny Tremain, April Morning, and A Tale of Two Cities. While reading, students have been keeping track of the literary elements such as plot, imagery, and historical data presented through the setting. We have also had literature circle discussions which allow the students to discuss these elements. Students have rotated jobs throughout the process and have enjoyed the time to discuss the characters' internal struggles while growing up, as well as external struggles in which the war periods present. For writing, students have completed the D.A.R. essay assignment about being a spy during the war time and are currently preparing pieces that will be used to create a Broadside (a newspaper from revolutionary times). The Broadside assignment

is an I.C.T project requiring the students to fine-tune their technology skills. With both the Broadside and the D.A.R. essay, students worked on creating works cited and paraphrasing. These are skills essential to the research process.

Up until the holiday break, students will continue to study historical fiction. Mrs. Jahns, our librarian, came to our class a few weeks ago to advertise novels for students to read once they are done with the novels of the Revolution. Our next reading log is due via e-mail on 12/21. Over the holiday break, I will encourage the students to continue to read. They may choose from either adventure or mystery for genres as we will be starting our Mystery, Suspense and Tension unit in January. I would like to thank parents and students who have embraced the outside reading that Mrs. Grupposo and I expect from our students. While attending a conference this past week, I was told repeatedly that the amount students read is a significant predictor to success at the post-secondary level. We live in a media-driven world where it is difficult to unplug and pull away to read. Thank you for continuing to help your child create healthy reading habits.

Team Prescott Science—Mr. Bond

8th Graders Learn What Happens...When the Ground Begins to Move

Mt. St. Helens continues to puff steam twenty-seven years after its catastrophic eruption in 1980. Last week, a strong earthquake occurred in the Windward Islands area of the eastern Caribbean near the island of Martinique. News of glaciers melting around Mt. Everest as a possible result of global warming has scientists and environmental policy-makers scurrying. The earth continues to provide a showcase of natural events as students in Mr. Bond's science classes have been exploring the phenomena of two of the planet's most extraordinary spectacles...volcanoes and earthquakes.

In the weeks to come, students will be experiencing firsthand what it takes to design and build a skyscraper that remains standing when the earth beneath it begins to move. Playing the roles of architects, engineers and contractors, Earth Science students will be brainstorming, sketching, drafting and building scale balsawood models of 150-foot skyscrapers, then subjecting them to a simulated earthquake. The quakes will be generated by a machine designed to simulate the seismic waves that result during an earth-shaking event. As the buildings are "put to the test," they will be videotaped, and the videos will be played back so that each student can evaluate the stress points in their building, as well as pinpoint the section of the building that failed first. Last year, our best-engineered building withstood a 9.0 magnitude quake for a period of 15 seconds. While many buildings withstood a minimum 5.0 quake, by the conclusion of the project, we had accumulated a pretty big pile of broken balsa sticks! We'll see how this year's buildings do!

P.S. To get a better idea of some of the topics your student is exploring this year in Earth Science class, in addition to homework, study guides and some of the activities they will participate in, check our Earth Science Department web site at <http://www.hbms.k12.nh.us/bondd>. You can even check out "Are You A Super Sleuth?" or get an up-to-minute weather report from our weather station!

Seventh and Eighth Grade News

Technology Bytes with Mr. Gruce

It is great to hear that students are being proactive in making sure that their electronic folders and files here at the middle school are neat and tidy. (Are their rooms the same?) Our concern is that students should not be deleting any completed / final copies of ICT assignments from these folders. The aim of the ICT initiative is to allow students to acquire valuable technology skills through application in their subject area classes. A final electronic portfolio is then created by each student as a representative sample of their work with technology and is evaluated by teacher teams. Accordingly, all final ICT projects from seventh and eighth grade need to be available for the student to select from when they are ready to place selected works into their portfolio folder for evaluation. They will also at this time be asked to answer a few reflective questions about how each piece of work enhanced their learning of that subject and / or that particular piece of software. If your son or daughter has questions or concerns on what they should or should not keep, please have them stop by and see me.



General Music--Mrs. Spencer/Mr. DePine

Mr. DePine's 7th grade general music students have been working on their individual guitar techniques. Areas covered include string names, chord reading, simple melodic patterns and strumming practice.

Mr. DePine's 8th grade general music students have continued to work on developing guitar skills from last year. Areas covered include the 15 basic chords using a variety of strumming techniques. Melodies now include use of the first 3 strings and the development of ensembles for performance.

Mrs. Spencer's group has been working on the music program, Music Lessons. Areas covered include note values, treble and bass staff note names and ledger lines. We are currently creating sound effects stories in small groups using the synthesizer. Guitars will begin before the winter break.



Chorus --Mrs. Spencer

Eighth grade and seventh grade chorus students are currently learning our winter concert songs. They include: "Jubilate Canon" by Donald Moore, "A Winter Wish" by Dave and Jean Perry, "Let's Take A Sleigh Ride" by Mark Weston and "The Reindeer Rap" by Sally Albrecht for 7th grade; "Cantate Deo" by G.F. Handel/Becki Mayo, "You're A Mean One, Mr. Grinch" by Jeff Funk, "Jingle All The Way" by Sally Albrecht and "Yuletide Rhythm" by Greg Gilpin for 8th grade.

A notice has been sent home with all concert details including our dress code for the evening.

Attendance is mandatory at all concerts since absences greatly affect the performance of the group. An excused absence from a concert is defined as sickness, family emergency or bereavement.



Math with Mr. Jahns....

Seventh Grade Math has been working on basic operations with decimals. We are now working on the concepts and calculations of perimeter and area. We are about to begin a project that brings these two skills together as we remodel your home! Next we'll be moving on to all things fractional: GCFs, LCMs, Reducing, Comparing, Adding, Subtracting, Multiplying, Dividing, etc.

Eighth Grade Math has been working on the concepts and calculations of fraction/decimal/percent problems. We are nearly done with our Recycling Survey project in which we surveyed the entire student body and staff to estimate recycling potentials here at HBMS. From here we will revisit Integer Math before plunging into Algebra concepts.

Algebra I is on track and making good progress. We have been studying Linear Equations and Inequalities. Students were exposed to some non-linear equations, such as those involving absolute value. We've also worked with functions and function notation. Soon, we will be doing a little Statistics, including Measures of Central Tendency, Stem and Leaf graphs and Box-n-Whisker plots. Then we are off to Linear Systems, or as some of us old timers might call them, "Simultaneous Equations."

Geometry has most recently been exploring the properties of parallel lines and now triangles. We have been making extensive use of our compass/straight-edge, patty paper and Geometry Sketchpad (software) as discovery tools. With each discovery comes a new conjecture to add to our list of "known facts." We are also looking at and doing occasional "proofs".



7th Grade HBMS Chorus Winter Concert

**7:00 pm High School Auditorium
Tuesday, December 18, 2007**

8th Grade HBMS Chorus Winter Concert

**7:00 pm High School Auditorium
Wednesday, December 19, 2007**

Band -- Mr. Depine

7th and 8th grade band students are currently rehearsing music for our winter concerts. The 7th grade will be performing a varied program of music including Windsor Overture, Rockin' La Bamba, Christmas Fun and Copper Creek March. The 8th grade will perform Holiday Fantasy, Christmas Bits and Pieces, March Onward and God Bless America. **The program dates are Tuesday, December 18th for 7th grade and Wednesday, December 19th for 8th grade. Please note that this is a change from our original date.** Band students should report to the high school band room by 7:15 in preparation for the concert. See you at the concerts.

INTEGRATED SPECIALS

French--Mme. Cloutier



Au revoir! Madame Cloutier
Bonjour tout le monde! The **seventh grade** French classes are now working in the chapter with family members, possessive adjectives and the verb avoir. This gives them great opportunities for conversations, questions for other students and many great writing choices. They will also learn words for the rooms of a house and related vocabulary in the second part of the chapter. In the lab next week they will design a family tree for their first ICT project.

We recently finished the chapter with “er” verbs and can now use these verbs with many situations. As we discussed, it opens up many more ways to speak in French and makes the students feel confident about describing their day and routine. The book progresses nicely with the material that a student first needs to know.

Many students are doing a great job connecting the information from each chapter and are able to remember and use the material in their spoken and written language.

The **eighth grade** classes just put on a fabulous fashion show and gave a preview of outfits that might be seen around town in the coming months! They were responsible for describing their outfit and writing it up for a partner to read, and for a small part that each model said about his/her own clothing choice. We presented to the two Spanish classes next door and other French students. Even the shy ones rose to the occasion and we all had an exciting project come to life. We received many compliments from our guests who attended. Formidable!

The students are now getting a good look at reflexive verbs and their conjugations. They can be a little confusing at first but after we work with them for a while, they become easier, of course. This chapter will be followed by driving and travel, then winter and other popular sports.

We are also reading from a small French book from Glencoe/McGraw which has a story about Marc et Julie, a French boy and an American student studying in France and the interesting conversations that they have about the differences in language. They are presented in a sometimes funny and always interesting way for the middle school students and the kids take part and read as a dialogue. It has been a great chance to learn new vocabulary and see sentence construction and typical phrases that the French use.

Bon travail!

El Español—Senora Banks & Senora Lash



Congratulations to our 7th grade students who will soon learn the first conjugation of verbs. Exciting stuff! Through this skill they will expand their vocabulary and greatly enhance their ability to communicate. We are proud at how quickly students have caught on to the concepts leading up to this critical skill. It reflects very well on their effort and work habits. Ask your son or daughter to share with you how we study verbs in Spanish class. It is probably not what you think!

Our 8th grade students have just completed an important unit on the verbs Ser and Estar. We combined these two big verbs with our unit on health. Your student can now describe physical symptoms and communicate with a doctor and a pharmacist! We now are moving on to Preterit Tense and Direct Object.

Please keep checking our websites for homework and other activities.

Hasta la proxima vez.

Art News - Mrs. Papadeas



Team 4 has been producing some very creative art. Students have just completed a tree picture in art. They were asked to illustrate or draw a tree with added objects such as a swing or fence. Students could shade with charcoal, add different design patterns to the negative spaces of a dormant tree or do some kind of collage. Art students were able to make choices which allow them to really think about what was the best way for them to illustrate a tree. Students were pleased to be able to make a media decision and some were able to stretch their abilities by trying something new. The results were very dynamic and were very pleasing to look at. These images are now on display.

Students on Team 4 will begin a painting unit on impressionism after the holidays. Students have been interested in the artist Claude Monet who was one of the first artists to take a serious look at how shapes and colors change according to light. Monet realized that there is a giant step between what you see and what our mind tells us what we see. Monet made it very popular for artists to sketch outdoors and to set up easels and paint what is in front of them. Students will be experiencing painting on canvas board with acrylic paint. For many, painting on canvas is a first-time experience and is quite difficult. We are currently practicing Van Gogh's line techniques which are dots, dashes, swirls, and cross-hatching. When we begin painting on canvas board, students will be trying to paint in the style of the impressionistic artists. They can work from master artist paintings, photographs, and pictures. I will be encouraging them to stick with landscapes and to omit black from their paint palettes. This was very common when painting in the impressionistic style. Instead, artists from this era mixed blues, greens, and violets to create their dark colors. I am very excited for Team 4 to experience the fun of painting

Integrated Specials—Cont'd

Reading - Mrs. Lucas

Seventh Grade Reading

Holiday Gift Suggestions

Searching for a holiday gift for your child? Try sharing these reviews from other middle school readers. A little positive peer pressure can help hook older kids on chapter books. (Source: Reading Connection, 2007 Resources for Educators, Oct. 2007)

Star Girl by Jerry Spinelli

Susan was home-schooled until tenth grade. She has utter disregard for convention by the time she enters Mica High. Her hugely embarrassing behavior, such as playing the ukulele and singing "Happy Birthday" in the lunchroom appalls Leo, a junior. He is both attracted and repelled by this young woman who calls herself Star Girl. The novel, which Leo tells in the first person, unfolds. Slowly Leo and the reader come to know the girl's behavior is based in kindness. *Star Girl* is a unique love story and humorous tragedy.

The Giver by Lois Lowry

In the future, there is no pain, unhappiness, sickness, or death. Jonas believes in this world until the Giver shares the truth with him.

Author Lois Lowry encourages readers to think about what is beautiful in the world.

The House of the Scorpions by Nancy Farmer

Matt is a clone, livestock and no better than an animal. Generally, human clones have their brains destroyed at birth, but for some reason, Matt's patron has left his mind intact. What would he want from him? [This book continues to be a favorite.](#)

The Watsons Go to Birmingham - 1963 by Christopher Paul Curtis

This is a wonderful middle school novel narrated by 9-year-old Kenny about his middle-class black family, the Weird Watsons of Flint, Michigan. When Kenny's 13-year old brother, Bryan, gets to be too much trouble, they head south to Birmingham to visit Grandma, the one person who can shape him up. They happen to be in Birmingham when Grandma's church is blown up.

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key by Jack Gantos

In this rollercoaster of a ride, ingenuously and breathlessly narrated by Joey himself, readers are treated to an up close introduction to life with attention deficit disorder - or being wired, as Joey puts it. Readers of this compelling tragicomedy will know almost from the start that Joey's not just a good kid - he's a great kid.

Some websites for finding great books:

ALA Resources for Parents, Teens and Kids (Young Adult Library Services Assoc.) <<http://www.ala.org/ala/valsa/valsa/htm>>

The Book Bag <www.teenreads.com>

Teen Hoopla <www.ala.org/teenhoopla>

PSLA Book Reviews:

www.psla.org/association/mediaselectionandreview/toptorty.php3>

Reading - Mrs. Dufresne

Eighth Grade Reading

Grade eight reading students continue their quest to become better readers. Still on the hunt for typos, misspellings and a misplaced punctuation mark has made them a little edgy this holiday season. My advice, make sure you edit any note



you leave them which would include those notes to Santa.

November has brought us to the genre of historical fiction novels. In cooperation with their English classes, we have taken up the gauntlet to learn a little history while enjoying a good story. The students are either reading *Kiss the Dust* by Elizabeth Laird or *I Am David* by Anne Holm. Both novels focus on the plight of individuals in search of freedom. In *Kiss the Dust*, the conflict between the Arabs and the Kurds in the 1980's is explored as a young girl escapes from Iraq to England. In *I Am David*, the Cold War Era of the Gulag system of work camps is exposed in a story of a young boy's escape out of Eastern Europe to Denmark.

With the help of Mrs. Cicciu, our technology guru, we are honing our skills in the computer lab and of course providing detailed works cited documents for all our writing and internet sources. We had to draw the line when Mrs. Cicciu made us provide a work cited from the attendance sheet we referred to the other day. Whew, it is important to be sure we have given credit where credit is due on all our work! She has helped us create web pages for our historical fiction novels. We are going to practice writing skills, organization of information and presentation on our individual websites. We will provide a history of the Iran-Iraq conflict and internment of many Kurdish citizens as well as the Gulag camps during the Cold War in the 1950's.

Please remember to check the reading website for homework and assignment information. Happy Holidays.

Library Media Center--Mrs. Jahns

Adventure and History at the LMC

December has been a bustling month for students in the library. Usage varies from a quiet place to read or work to finding an interesting book or working on the computers. Seventh grade students have been reading **adventure** books; favorites are the Alex Rider series by Anthony Horowitz and various titles by Will Hobbs. Eighth grade students have been concentrating on **historical fiction**, often requesting books that were "book talked" in classes by Mrs. Jahns or their classroom teacher. Most requested have been *Reluctant Hero: A Snowy Road to Salem in 1802* by Philip Brady, *My Name is Not Angelica* by Scott O'Dell, *Fallen Angels* by Walter Dean Myers, *I Am David* by Anne Holm, and various titles by Ann Rinaldi. A sample of each of these two categories is organized and available on the display shelves. In addition, books newly processed are on display for easy browsing and several have been on waiting lists. Students are improving with checking due dates (stamped in the book) and renewing books in time so there's no overdue notice and fine!

Our laptop computers have been busy in classrooms this month. Students are becoming adept at researching with databases and using reference resources, as well as word processing and Power Point applications. Other classrooms had non-fiction books from the library in their classes for unit resources.

Book of the month: *Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld, a fantasy/adventure story set in a futuristic society where Uglies can be changed into Pretties, but what if you want to be who you already are? (Psst-I heard there's a movie in production!)

Site of the month <http://www.teenreads.com/reviews/index.asp> for reviews, author info, series books, new books, books into movies, and more.



INTEGRATED SPECIALS - CONT'D

Health and Wellness - Mrs. White

In the last few weeks, Team Hypatia has been working hard to understand the effects of alcohol on the brain. We have talked about alcohol use, abuse and dependence. We have reviewed our knowledge from last year about the brain and then learned what changes when alcohol is introduced. We were also visited by Officer Dunne during our alcohol unit. We literally got a new perspective when we tried on the "under the influence" goggles. We had a lot of laughs but also understood an important message. Alcohol changes the way we see things!

We have also learned more about eating disorders and the media. We have examined how media messages can affect our body image and what we think of as ideal.

In the next week we will move on to our CPR and First Aid unit. Students should expect to be studying between ten and fifteen minutes per night. Team Hypatia will end their time in Wellness with Ms. Christy's unit on career development.



Family and Consumer Science- Mrs. Sarvaiya

Team 2 has just started Family and Consumer Science, also known as Home Economics. Currently, we are making our felt designs. Most of us have passed the drawing stage and will now begin to cut and pin everything together. Later this quarter we will learn about good nutrition and how to stay healthy.

Before we really started to get into our felt designs, Mrs. Sarvaiya went over kitchen safety, sanitation, and food safety. Our classes also watched informative videos on how to be safe in the kitchen. Once that was wrapped up, we got to do a hands-on activity. Our first experience in the cooking lab was making brownies. We learned how to prevent injuries and germs from spreading, by keeping the kitchen neat and sanitary while cooking. In future cooking labs, we will use our skills to make Mexican food, hummus, cakes, and many other dishes.

In nutrition and food science, we will be covering a variety of topics that will be used in our everyday lives. We will learn about nutrients, such as carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, and minerals. We will be studying how to read food labels and will discuss how dangerous high cholesterol can be. Together, we will learn the effects of excessive amounts of salt, sugar, and fats in our body. For homework, we will need to go to www.mypyramid.gov to get our own personalized food pyramid and health guide based on the FDA's new food pyramid. This will teach us how to make healthy food choices.

By the end of this quarter, we will learn many more skills that we can use later in life, like reading and following recipes, preparing meals, using the right utensils, eating healthy food, measuring fabric, and sewing. Family and Consumer Science class is a fun experience because everyone has a chance to try something new.



SPORTS UPDATE

INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS: BOYS BASKETBALL –

The Hollis Brookline Middle School **boys' basketball** team has been hard at work with practice and games. The boys are playing hard and creating a number of turnovers. Struggling with their defense, however, the boys have lost their first three games against **Milford, Parkside and Amherst**. Coaching the boys team this year is **Coach Leonid Gershgorin**.



GIRLS BASKETBALL –

The Hollis Brookline Middle School **girls' basketball** team has also been working hard with practice and games. The offense has been working in a balanced team attack while defense has been scrambling and aggressive. Great ball movement and unselfish play has led to their two **wins against Milford and Parkside** with one loss against **Amherst**. Coaching the girls again this year is **Coach Peter Stopera**.

WRESTLING

The **Hollis Brookline Middle School Wrestling program** is well on its way. **Practices** began on Tuesday, November 13th and take place **Monday through Friday from 2:30 until 4:00 p.m. at the middle school**. The team will compete in **twelve meets this season**, followed by the **Tri-County League meet**, the **Regionals** and the **State meet**. Our first meet will take place on **Thursday, December 6th against Milford and Amherst** at the Amherst Middle School. Wrestling is a very demanding and intense sport that requires commitment from everyone involved. There are no tryouts and everyone that participates in the program is guaranteed to wrestle. Coaching the wrestling team this year is **Coach David Quinn**.



AFTER SCHOOL SKI

The **Hollis Brookline Middle School After School Ski Program** is well underway. We have seventy-six students who have enrolled and my sincere **THANK YOU** to all parents who have volunteered to chaperone. I am still in the process of contacting volunteers and setting up a chaperone schedule. A list of dates and information will be forthcoming to chaperones as well as information to parents of all students involved as to where skis and bags should be dropped off. **Thank you for making this ski program possible**. Remember our **first ski date** will be **January 7, 2008**.



PHYSICAL EDUCATION- Ms. Bottcher & Mr. Johnston

The 7th grade physical education classes experienced the game of rugby by playing a few modified games before moving inside for the winter. They have just completed work on the rules, skills, etiquette, and positioning necessary to play volleyball games. Classes have discussed and posted the qualities and sounds of good sportsmanship in preparation for the class round robin tournament. The New Year will find the seventh graders working on a personal fitness unit. This unit will cover self-evaluations, health-related and skill-related fitness components, types of fitness programs, target heart rates, and developing a fitness brochure in the computer lab.

Our 8th grade students are currently involved in a round robin volleyball tournament. The unit will culminate with a championship team from each class period playing against the faculty and staff on Friday, December 21. The eighth grade students will move on to a Project Adventure unit beginning January 2. Students are presented activities that provide both physical challenges and critical thinking skills. These activities involve an entire class yet challenge the individual. Cooperation, communication, leadership, decision-making, creativity, and organization are just a few of the skills needed to successfully complete the challenges. The high point of this unit will be climbing our indoor rock wall and taking a field trip to Boulder Morty's indoor climbing facility just before winter vacation. The field trip dates are February 15 (Team Hypatia) and February 22 (Team Prescott).



