



JGMS Principal's Newsletter

April 2010

Principal's Letter

Dear Student/Parent,

I hope you each had a wonderful April vacation! As I have said many times, this time of year is a time of great transition at JGMS, as we are working on bringing the current school year to a successful close while we are also preparing to transition to the next.

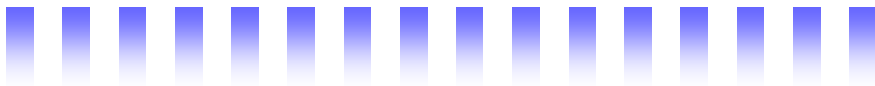
May will be a busy next two months. We have Academic Recognition Night, which takes place on May 20th, the Moving On ceremony, which will happen on June 17th, and we plan to welcome Lane 5th graders and their parents to an Orientation Night on May 13th! While this is all taking place, students will be taking their second session of MCAS beginning May 10th through May 25th. You may find that schedule in our March newsletter. On June 1st eighth graders will leave on the annual trip to Washington, D.C. Those students who do not go on the trip will spend the four days on a variety of field trips to various local sites.

This time of year gets very busy at JGMS! Spring sports are in full-swing, the annual K-12 Art Show will run from April 30th to May 2nd at BHS, on June 9th the JGMS band and orchestra will perform, and on June 14th the JGMS chorus will provide an end-of-the-year. I will be presenting the JGMS 2010-2011 School Improvement Plan as well as changes to the student handbook at the School Committee meeting on May 11th. The School Council and the JGMS Leadership Team have worked in concert again this year to provide a coordinated plan for the next academic year that keeps us on a path of continuous improvement. I appreciate their hard work!

As we have not used any snow days this year, please mark your calendars for June 21st as the last day of school this year! It will be a half-day.

Sincerely,

P. Jayne Viladenis
Principal




 May 2010

John Glenn Middle School Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3(2)	4(3)	5(4)	6(5)	7(6)	8
9	10(1)	11(2)	12(3) Teacher Wkshp. 1/2 Day	13(4) 5th Grade Transition Night	14(5)	15
16	17(6)	18(1)	19(2)	20(3) Academic Recognition Night	21(4)	22
23	24(5)	25(6)	26(1)	27(2)	28(3)	29
30	31 Memorial Day! No School					

JGMS Library News

April 26, 2010



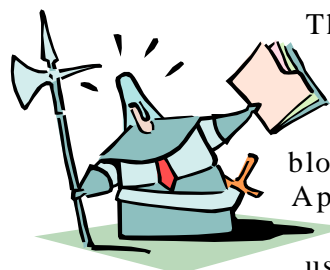
Joan Collins
Teacher Librarian

April is Poetry Month

Cheryl Pespisa brought her students to the library to listen to poetry. They enjoyed different types of poems and learned about figurative language. Robert Frost and Edgar Allen Poe were as popular as always.

Art students in Candy Banks' classes also selected poetry. However, they planned to illustrate a poem. Students still love Shel Silverstein and some of the poems from X. J. Kennedy.

Battle of the Books



The final competition of the 2010 Battle of the Books was held in the library last block before vacation on April 16. Ms. Michaud and Ms. Healy ushered in the winning

blue and red teams to compete before CCTV. Their learning groups watched in classrooms as teams answered questions from all 10 books on the list. Each question was worth 2 points. One point was given for knowing the author's name, and one was given for knowing the correct answer.

The winning team, the Radical Readers, earned a pizza party for their learning group, 6-8. Bridget Towle, Alyssia Smith, Otto Altman, Alijah Dotman, and Daniel Mock were victorious in a tight competition. The Reading Rainbows from 6-3 took second place. Mike Barr, Avi Miller, Jake Turner, Gaby Griffiths, and Christine Madden were just 3 points behind the winning team.

Global Literature Circles and Web 2.0



Glogs are online posters. Students can integrate text, photos, audio, and video into a *glog*. Instead of conventional

paper posters, students create online posters to express their newly gained knowledge about a book, its geography, author, and theme. Users can embed links to websites within their *glog*. This is especially useful to display the author's website. Seventh grade teachers Lynda McGraw and Nicole d'Entremont have their students creating *glogs* as part of Global Literature Circles.

Books

Pat Stephen and Marilyn Bemis had their 8th grade students select books at the library for the final book project. Many students chose to work in a group and read the same title.



8th Grade Green and Grey Teams

Eighth Grade Events:

May 10th and 11th MCAS testing : Mathematics

May 17th MCAS testing : Science & Technology

May 20th: Academic Recognition Night

Week of May 24th: D.C. Trip/BHS Fall Sports Assembly with Students

June 1st-4th-35th annual 8th grade Washington D.C. Trip

Academic Highlights:

English: As a prelude to the true high school English experience, we culminate the year with our first introduction

to a Shakespearean play, Romeo and Juliet. This play is a perennial favorite among JGMS students and we know this class will easily identify its wide appeal. Our study will involve an investigation of Shakespeare's

use of poetic and dramatic forms as we learn how to recite and act out popular scenes. Also, an exploration into the Elizabethan period will shape our study. Finally, our students will conclude this unit by viewing Franco Zeffirelli's 1968 theatrical version. Please note: There is a change in routine for the Term 4 independent novel project(s). Grey Team students are required to complete only one project with a new set of question prompts. The due date is on or before June 4th. Green Team students are instructed to "design their own" with the option of working with other students or on their own. They must receive prior approval and the due date is June 5th.

Math: Students are beginning a brief geometry unit that will include work in the areas of angles, lines and two-dimensional shapes. Following this unit, students will be preparing for the MCAS exam.

Science: Our final focus for the year is topics related to weather and climate and astronomy.

Students will explore and contemplate the circulation of energy in the atmosphere and how it inter-relates to the greenhouse

effect. Later, as we investigate and discuss astronomy students will learn about our 'place' in the universe.

Social Studies: Students currently are finishing their study of the Spread of Islam during the Middle Ages. Students in Mr. Casey's classes have been using the program Voice Thread in the computer lab as part of their culminating unit project examining the Golden Age of this Empire. In the following weeks students will be turning their attention to East Asia with a special emphasis on the country of China. Special focus will be placed on key events in China's long history, its geography, and the philosophies of Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism and Communism. Also, prior to Memorial Day, students will be spending time in class preparing for their upcoming Washington D.C. trip.

7th Grade

We hope you had an enjoyable week off from school. We have begun the 4th quarter of the school year and are excited with the accomplishments everyone has made so far this year. Even though the weather is suggesting it is summer, it is important that the students remain focused on their learning through the end of the school year. It is also important that students continue to adhere to the dress code in the student handbook. Students who do not follow the dress code will be asked to change, which may interfere with time in class. There will continue to be homework, studying, and projects for students to complete outside of school, and we appreciate your assistance in keeping your child's attention on learning.

Here is what has been happening in classes:

Science

Students have completed their study of genetics. They studied the human chromosomes on-line to research what genes and genetic disorders are found on which chromosomes. They are currently learning about the Galapagos Islands and Charles Darwin's theory of evolution including how DNA and genetics plays a role in our present-day understanding of evolutionary processes.

English

Technology abounds in English classes this quarter. All students completed a project on *Moodle* and some students are working on a computer poster program called *Glogster* in which they will learn more about the places where their outside reading books were set. Mrs. Collins is also organizing some great opportunities for students to *Skype* with the authors. In addition, students are enjoying reading *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. This book sparks some amazing discussions and debates. Students will start a mythology unit soon that connects to their study of ancient Greece in Social Studies.

Math

Culminating the unit on surface area and volume, students in Level 1 classes will be submitting their box enlargement projects in the beginning of May. Students are currently learning about probability. There will be a test on the unit toward the end of May. Students in Level 2 are also learning about probability. All classes will be reviewing material in anticipation of the Math MCAS scheduled on May 13-14.

Social Studies

Students completed their study of ancient China and began learning about ancient Greece prior to the April vacation. The focus has been on the geography and culture of Greece, the development of democracy, and the city-states of Athens and Sparta. Students will complete their study of ancient Greece toward the middle of May.

On Thursday, May 13th and Friday, May 14th the 7th graders will take the math portion of the MCAS test. Please remember that a good night's rest and a healthy breakfast are especially important on testing days.

There will be information coming home toward the end of May about an end of year field trip for the entire 7th grade. Please be on the lookout for the information and permission slip. Enjoy the spring weather!

6th Grade**Math**

Culminating the unit on surface area and volume, students in Level 1 classes will be submitting their box enlargement projects in the beginning of May. Students are currently learning about probability. There will be a test on the unit toward the end of May. Students in Level 2 are also learning about probability. All classes will be reviewing material in anticipation of the Math MCAS scheduled on May 13-14.

Social Studies

Students completed their study of ancient China and began learning about ancient Greece prior to the April vacation. The focus has been on the geography and culture of Greece, the development of democracy, and the city-states of Athens and Sparta. Students will complete their study of ancient Greece toward the middle of May.

On Thursday, May 13th and Friday, May 14th the 7th graders will take the math portion of the MCAS test. Please remember that a good night's rest and a healthy breakfast are especially important on testing days.

There will be information coming home toward the end of May about an end of year field trip for the entire 7th grade. Please be on the lookout for the information and permission slip. Enjoy the spring weather!

We are proud to announce the winners of the Battle of the Books. A group from learning group 6-8 proudly represented the red team. Way to go Bridget, Alyssia, Otto, Daniel, and Alijah. They earned a pizza party for 6-8.

Current News in Math:

Students have wrapped up their unit on fractions, decimals, and percents. We worked on applying these skills to our own lives through calculating tax and tip. The next time you are out to dinner with your child, please ask him or her to calculate the tip for you. Next we will be beginning a unit on two-dimensional geometry. Additionally, students will be preparing for the upcoming Math MCAS taking place on Thursday, May 20th and Friday, May 21st.

Science News:

The red team is proud to announce that Mrs. Noferi had a healthy baby girl. We would also like to welcome her replacement, Ms. Carroll. Ms. Carroll was a member of the JGMS faculty for many years, and we are grateful to have her return to us to finish the remainder of the school year in sixth grade science.

In Science, Students participated in the National Science League exam. The top ten scores for the grade were sent on to receive national recognition. Congratulations to Daniel M. Michael B, Chris E, Fionna B, Ben C, Eric L, Chris A, Joe M, Scott T, Alex M, Philip T! In class, we have finished our exploration of Chemistry and have started Physics. We look forward to many hands-on projects as we finish out the school year!

Homework Club

Thursday April 29 was the last day for homework club. Teachers will still be available for help after school as outlined on their syllabi.

In Other News...

We would like to extend a hearty congratulations to our 6th graders who have succeeded in earning the right to compete for a world championship title in Destination Imagination. Congratulations to Michael B., Karthik S., and Chris E. We wish you the best as you prepare to compete in May!



Music and Theater Arts Department



April was a busy month for JGMS music ensemble students. On April 7th, Mr. Maffa directed a concert by orchestra students in grades four through twelve, assisted by his student teacher, Ms. Lincoln. On the next night, Mr. Felker and Mrs. O'Toole showcased our band students in grades five through twelve. Mr. Grunwald's new guitar ensemble made its debut that night as well. Both concerts were outstanding.

On April 15 our choral students took the stage at Bedford High School, combining their voices with Mrs. Pritchett's high school singers. Mrs. Budka and Mrs. Aiken directed JGMS chorus classes in several selections. A highlight of the evening was a piece called "Adoramus Te", sung by all of the students in grades 7, 8 and 9 who had worked on auditions for the Junior District music festival. The concert ended with all 182 singers combined on an amazing rendition of Coldplay's "Viva La Vida", conducted by Mrs. Budka, accompanied by BHS students and Mr. Grunwald on guitar.

JGMS sixth grade music class students are winding up the year with projects on Jazz and Rock music history. In the theater arts classes, students will soon be choosing a special monologue to present in class.



Notes from the Gifted and Talented and Differentiated



MathCounts News

In the past month, the JGMS MathCounts team has participated in their final and favorite competition of the year, the Collaborative Problem Solving Contest. This competition consists of 15 problems, most with multiple parts. Each problem is worth 12 points, divided equally among the parts. The problems tend to be very puzzle-like, and can sometimes incorporate mathematics beyond what we are capable of doing. For example, this year there was a multi-part problem about tethering a pig to a building and figuring out what area it could graze. We solved the first part correctly, but the rest required calculus to solve. Other problems involve only logic and basic arithmetic, but the thinking required is quite advanced.

Students at JGMS work together on the CPSC over the course of a week. In the end, we submit one solution sheet as a school. This year, students in MathCounts and many other students collaborated to solve the problems. Many even stayed after school for two hours on the Friday before break to finish off our answers!

JGMS has participated in the CPSC for three years prior to this. Out of those, we have scored in the top 15 schools nationally for two of those years. In our first year, we scored 11th, and last year we scored 7th. This is particularly impressive as the contest is offered to students in 6th-12th grade, and JGMS was the top middle school in the country in both our 1st and 3rd year. This year, we have put in enough work to have high hopes we will once again attain that status. We are particularly proud that we caught an error in the solutions!

We have yet to receive our scores, as some of the solutions may be disputed through Friday, April 30th. However, based on our calculations, we expect to score at least as well as last year. For more information on the competition, go to <http://www.natassessment.com/>.

MathCounts will not be held on Monday, May 10th or Monday, May 17th, but will resume afterwards to close out the year with logic and math puzzles.

Advanced Math Pull-Out Classes

The 6th grade advanced math pull-out class is beginning their geometry unit. Students will be working with two dimensional geometry. We just finished up working on percents. 7th grade students have been working on probability, including counterintuitive problems such as the Monty Hall problem. 8th grade students are on the verge of deriving the quadratic formula!



Tech Ed News**7th Grade Solar Car Class**

Students continue to work on building and testing model solar cars. Students are invited to compete in the Junior Solar Sprint, which will be held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on May 15th. At this annual event, students are provided with the opportunity to race model solar cars. Over the years, many students from JGMS have participated successfully. According to past participants, this is a fun educational event! We hope that many students will participate again in the Junior Solar Sprint this year! For complete details, please click on www.basea.org/jss.php.



Spanish

Spanish 6th Grade:

Students in Spanish 6 are writing an introductory letter to a pen pal. In this letter they are .describing themselves and their families. They are learning to talk about classes and classroom objects, say how often they do something and discuss obligations. They are going to learn to express frequency with adverbs and obligation with *hay que* and *tener que*. They are conversing with classmates using all the forms of the present tense of –ar verbs. The chapter takes place in Mexico City, Mexico. We explore further Mexico City by video, reading an Aztec legend on how the city began, and do some fact finding.

Spanish 7th Grade:

In seventh grade Spanish we are continuing to study sports, making comparisons, and saying what people play, what they know, and what they know how to do. This is set in the context of San Juan, Puerto Rico and can be found in unit 3, chapter 2. We will soon begin learning/reviewing weather, seasonal clothing and accessories, stating an opinion, describing how people feel, and saying what is happening. These are in unit 3, chapter 3.

Spanish 8th Grade:

All eighth grade Spanish classes have been working on an interactive online poster called Glogster. They have created this commercial for a pharmacy with affirmative and negative commands and various pharmacy items. They have included sound and have shared their glogs within their classes. At the present time students are learning to say what people are doing , persuade others, describe a house and negotiate responsibilities. They are learning to use direct object and reflexive pronouns with the present progressive tense, to use the verb *deber* and to form adverbs that end in *–mente*. Students will experience hot and cold *tapas* ,snacks and appetizers served in many regions of Spain. This lesson takes place in the cultural context of Barcelona, Spain.



French

Grade 6 French

The sixth grade French students continue to work hard. Because of the new schedule, we are ahead of the game compared to previous years. Currently, we're working hard on subject-verb agreement with the verb "être". This topic was formerly introduced in the fall of the seventh grade. Go 6th grade!

Grade 7 French

The seventh grade French classes are currently in lesson 19. As you know we started the unit with a Défilé de Mode – Fashion Show. This week we're learning how to make comparisons with both regular and a few irregular adjectives. Before the end of the year I hope to help the kids master a.) Naming, describing and comparing clothes, b.) Shopping for clothes, and c.) Using virtual Euros to make purchases.

Grade 8 French

Tomorrow, the eighth grade French classes will move into the 2nd year French textbook. Today they are doing the final assignment from the French I textbook – a writing project composed of a couple of paragraphs about a friend or relative. After they are graded, these paragraphs will be filed in their portfolios as a culminating activity. In the near future we'll be working on a short story entitled "Le Bal Costumé". The students will be learning new vocabulary, doing crosswords, and taking an oral quiz. I'm looking forward to the results!

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦