



JGMS Principal's Newsletter

October 2009

Principal's Letter

Dear JGMS Families,

Believe it or not, we are already halfway through the first quarter! Student grades were posted on Aspen on October 5th, and final first quarter grades will be posted on November 13th. Now is the best time to work with your middle-schooler(s) to review these mid-term standings and help him or her set goals for the remainder of the school year. Setting positive expectations is very motivating; it helps children take responsibility for their learning.

On another front, believe it or not it is time to sign up for November/December parent/teacher conferences soon. Letters with the username and password that you will need in order to access the system will be mailed home on Tuesday, October 27th. Sign-up will begin at 6 PM on Monday, November 9th and will remain open until Sunday, November 15th. Please remember that the November conference date is Wednesday, November 18th and will run from 4 PM to 7 PM. The December 2nd conferences will run from 12:00 to 2:30 PM.

Another upcoming event is our first dance of the year on Friday, November 6th from 6:30 to 9 PM! It is open to all JGMS students and costs \$7.00, which includes dancing, games, soda and pizza! Please make arrangements with your son or daughter to pick him/her up at either the front or rear entrance at 9 PM.

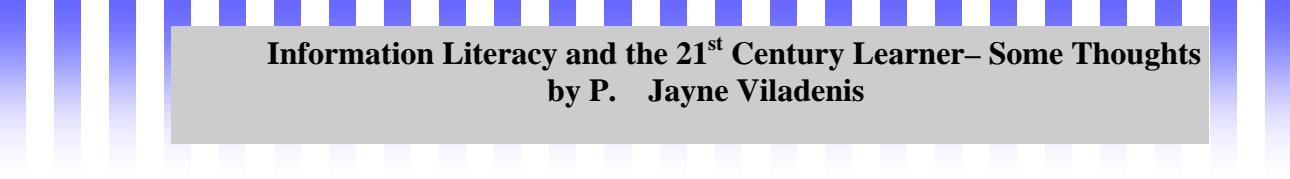
Two exciting events coming up in November that have become annual traditions at JGMS are our Mix It Up day and our Day of Respect. Mix It Up day is part of a national event in which social cliques are disbanded so students can eat lunch with a new group. The idea behind the Mix It Up program is to generate more understanding and maybe even new friendships among students. This year's Mix It Up day is Tuesday, November 10th! Our annual *Day of Respect* will be held on Wednesday, November 25th! Our Chain Reaction Committee, which is comprised of students who wish to give up their time to work on activities to promote a respectful climate among students, will be helping to organize the day's activities and will also be providing student-to-student workshops.. This group will also be spearheading an envelope-stuffing afternoon on November 10th to support the Habitat for Humanity. Any JGMS student who wishes to participate in either the Chain Reaction Committee or in the envelop-stuffing afternoon, please see Ms. Ham, Ms. Anderson or me.

Our next JGMS Newsletter will combine November and December. Please look for it on our website during the week of December 9th. I will also notify you through our AlertNow phone messaging system.

Sincerely,

Jayne Viladenis
Principal





Information Literacy and the 21st Century Learner– Some Thoughts by P. Jayne Viladenis

Before becoming a Principal, I spent many years teaching English, social studies and technology courses. At that time, I considered myself pretty tech-savvy; however, after 10 years in school administration, the destiny so aptly described by the colloquialism “use it or loose it” became my reality with regard to my technology prowess. It wasn’t that I didn’t attempt to keep current; it was just that keeping current wasn’t always easy, especially each time I moved to a new school as a Principal. I guess now that I am not “new” to Bedford anymore, although I still only know how to get home using the 3 main roads in town, I am finding more time to get out there and sample all that Web 2.0 has to offer.

I began my tech rebirth with a foray into blogging last year, as I saw it as a great way to get our “Accept the Challenge” anti-bullying initiative more visibility (<http://jgmsprincipalscorner.blogspot.com/>). But more recently, in my search to connect with other schools and experts in the field regarding this topic, I have “re-immersed” myself into the “Information Age.” Each day, when I log on to my computer, one of the first URLs I load is my RSS (real simple syndication) feed Pageflakes.com. An RSS feed is a super-efficient information filter that allows a person to follow different types of information that is important to him/her. My information is, as you guessed it, mostly education related, although I do have my Red Sox information fed to me daily, along with Boston news. RSS feeds are information aggregators, or online applications that help the user sift through the tremendous amount of information that is found on the web. It is this endless sea of information that is the real point of my editorializing.

While eating my lunch today, I was reading through one of my professional journals, which was entirely focused on its aptly inspired title “A New Age with New Literacies,” when I came across a website that intrigued me. “Big6” is an information literacy website (www.big6.com) that focuses on teaching students the strategies of information problem-solving. What caught my eye was a simple response that a blogger had posted on AskMetaFilter, a question-and-answer website: A user nicknamed ‘jmnugent’ replied to a question posed regarding what to teach 7th graders in an elective computer class:

“My opinion would be that the most important aspect you can teach them is “information literacy”, or in other words: “How to skillfully use the internet to find useful information you need.” (because really, this is THE fundamental skill. It’s the most important skill you can have to help you learn any/all other things.)”

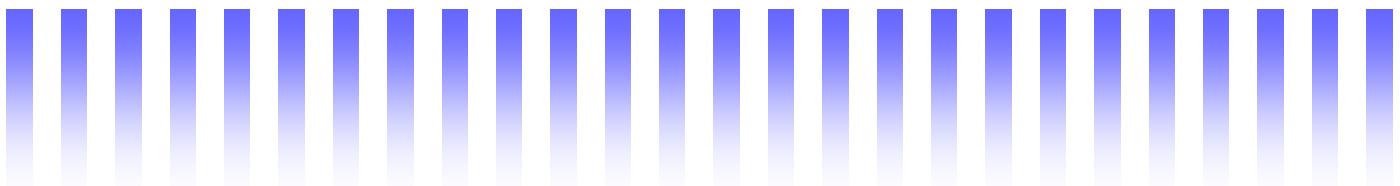
It struck me that our kids are overwhelmed with vast amounts of information each time they use the web, and, thus, their research may suffer. Therefore, the most important skills we can give them are the critical thinking skills they will need to wade through the massive waves of e-information that they encounter. We need to teach our millennial learners not only the skills to locate the information they are seeking but also the skills to discern the validity of what they encounter.

Now that we know what we have to do, we have to figure out how to do it; the “how” is the hardest part! This notion is best summed up in a quote taken from an executive summary on the I-Curriculum Project, comprised of researchers from Germany, Greece, Romania, Spain and the UK, seeking to

determine how we can best teach students to function effectively in an information rich world mediated increasingly by digital technologies:

“... what we need to know, how we come to know and express our knowing must be transformed. For example, the life and work habits of an art historian in the early twenty-first century are not simply those of an early twentieth century art historian who now uses email. Education in art history should not be like previous education in art history with the addition of the ability to enter data into a spreadsheet. Something different is required in the education and training of an art historian – a digital literacy that maps on to today’s and tomorrow’s ways of working and knowing.

We've all got a lot to do!



Chain Reaction Committee Blog Entry

Our Name:

The Chain Reaction Committee (CRC) is a group of friendly, responsible students who were nominated by teachers who thought they stood out as natural leaders. This committee was originally formed as Friends of Rachel (FOR). These students are trying to start a chain reaction between all of the kids here at JGMS.

This chain reaction we are invested in creating is to make the school environment a better place to walk into every morning. We work on spreading kindness, appreciation, confidence in students, and many other positive values needed to make our school the best it can be. We are constantly working on creating a safe and enjoyable learning environment.

Over the past two years we have reiterated how important it is to “treat people the way you want to be treated”. There is no doubt children understand this rule, but the question is whether or not they apply it to the way they act. The Chain Reaction Committee is taking a new approach this year to try and insure that kids really do take it to heart and make this old saying a reality.

Children have always been told what is right, but not always by other kids their age – their peers. This year, instead of having the typical teacher-given lectures on this topic, CRC members are going to be the ones encouraging what the kids **CAN DO** to help, as opposed to what they shouldn’t do. We will be announcing weekly reminders on how as students of JGMS, students can help make our school the best it can be and also help themselves be the best persons they can be!!

Do your part and start a chain reaction of your own!

The JGMS Chain Reaction Committee

Don't Forget to Visit the Principal's Corner Blog on the JGMS Website!



Mix'n Match

Bedford Families Unplugged November 2009

Take Back Your Time!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		Check out the special highlighted activities – more info at www.town.bedford.ma.us/youth/youthindex.html				
1 Free Family Swim 12-2 Bedford Plaza Hotel - First come, first served	2 Walk around your neighborhood by the light of the full moon	3 Have breakfast for dinner tonight	4 UNPLUGGED! No Homework, No Meetings, No Sports... really!	5 Fitness Stroll at Fawn Lake 1 p.m.	6 Camp Out Inside! Make popcorn, get sleeping bags, tell ghost stories	7 Bedford Center for the Arts - Open Studios, Old Town Hall 12-5
8 Take a Walk in Great Meadows!	9 Play Catch or Frisbee with someone new!	10 Free Family Singalong 7 p.m. Bedford Public Library	11 Veterans Day Attend the Bedford event at Memorial Park	12 Backwards Day - Eat dinner Backwards, start with dessert	13 Read a Book aloud together	14 Historical Scavenger Hunt all month! Get a map, find all spots, & enter to win a prize!
15 Family Dance & Stories 4-6 p.m. Old Town Hall	16 Eat Out - Parents Choice!	17 Winter Bulb Forcing 10:30 a.m. BFC	18 Help a Family Donate food to the Food Pantry at Town Center	19 Play Cards or a Board Game by candlelight	20 Pizza Night! Make your own!	21 Winter Card making 1-2 p.m. BFC
22 Make a Family Story Book with extra photos	23 Collect household change & pick a favorite charity to give it to	24 Send a Thank You note to someone who has helped you	25 Eat Out! Kids Choice!	26 Thanksgiving Everyone write 5 things they are thankful for	27 Make Your Own Ice Cream Sundaes!	28 Wander in the Town Forest
29 Free Family Swim 12-2 p.m. Plaza Hotel - First come, first served	30 Family Choice Day - You pick!	Congrats on unplugging your electronic devices... and continue to find ways to unplug in December and all year long!				

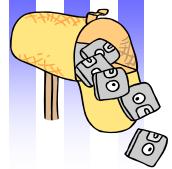


November 2009

John Glenn Middle School

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 Bedford Unplugged	5	6 Dance 6:30- 9 PM	7
8	9	10	11 Veteran's Day! No School	12 School Council, 2:30	13	14
15	16	17	18 Parent Conferences 4 -7 PM	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 Day of Respect 1/2 Day	26 Thanksgiving	27 No School	28
29	30					

Student Email Launched



Student email accounts were recently launched for all HS and JGMS students. These accounts, which are located on the school's First Class email system, allow for easy communication and collaboration between faculty and students. Accounts can be used to email homework or other materials to and from home and will be utilized with various technology projects in the classrooms. Students may not use any other mail system on school computers.



Art News



6th grade students are currently enjoying a curriculum on architecture. After studying the lines and shapes of their own homes, students are now learning about the characteristics seen in Medieval castles. They will then design their own castle, which will ultimately be the tool used for learning more about shading, light, and form.

7th grade students are working on the concept of "visual story-telling" as they re-create a scene from their own lives, and use visual images to communicate this scene to the viewer. 7th graders always have a lot to say and stories to tell, so this project is right up their alley! A fun project using collage techniques with a wide variety of assorted papers.

8th graders have moved into the world of public art by studying artists who have used their art to express political perspectives in a public sphere. Diego River, Dorothea Lange, and Kathe Kollowitz are the motivating drivers behind the concept of political art as another form of visual communication. Students are working in teams to create a mural piece about a theme that is culturally relevant to our society today. This is a big project with a final presentation that other teachers, staff, and administrators are welcome to attend. When finished, these amazing pieces are displayed in the hallway outside of the library. Keep an eye out!



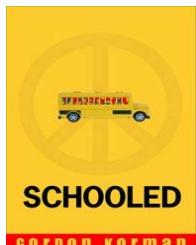
JGMS Library News

October 22, 2009

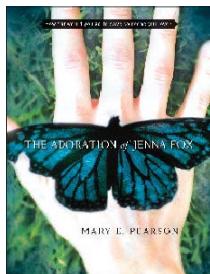


Joan Collins
Teacher Librarian

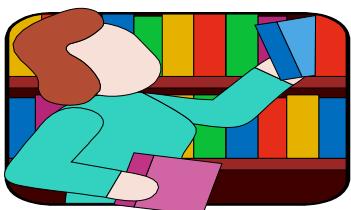
Summer Reading



Sixth graders who read *Schooled* by Gordon Korman gathered at the library for a pizza lunch on October 8. Students talked about how the main character, Capricorn Anderson, affected many lives at Claverage Middle School. According to the story, Cap was raised on a commune with his hippie grandmother, Rain, and found adjustment to school quite the task. SOS teachers Sarah Healy and Melissa Michaud took part in this celebration of reading.

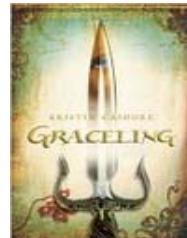


The Adoration of Jenna Fox by Mary Pearson prompted thoughtful discussion for 7th and 8th graders on October 22 when they got together over a pizza lunch. The kids thought about how we search for our place in this world. The main character had just awakened from a yearlong coma, and she slowly learns just what her parents did to save her life. Seventh grade teachers, Lynda McGraw and Nicole d'Entremont, and 8th grade teachers, Marilyn Bemis and Pat Stephen, joined the conversation.



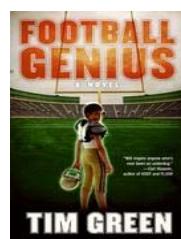
Great New Books for Middle School Kids

Graceling by Kristin Cashore



With lots of action and adventure rolled into a strong female character, new local author Kristin Cashore has created a readable fantasy that has been dazzling the girls.

Football Genius by Tim Green



Former Atlanta Falcon player, Tim Green, has penned his first YA novel. He calls on his inside knowledge from professional football to create a likeable hero in young Troy. Troy is an underdog who succeeds in his mission with the help of a Falcon linebacker and his mother, a wonderfully strong woman who is single handedly raising her son.

Library Activity

Art teacher, Candy Banks, directed her 7th graders to listen to poetry and then to select a poem to include in a sketchbook.

Candy's 8th graders began working on their mural projects. They searched for images on various subjects such as global warming, poverty, hunger, equal rights, and the economy. Students used ABC Clio's Issues Database to find pictures to inspire their murals.



FROM THE HEALTH OFFICE



The school year is underway and business is picking up in the health office. It should prove to be a busy flu season. I can't stress enough the importance of keeping your child home if he or she is ill. The Ma Dept of Public Health has issued some guidelines for schools. If your child has a cough or sore throat and a fever above 100.4 degrees the child should be kept home. It would also help to tell me of flu-like symptoms as I will be attempting to track cases. The child can return to school f fever free for 24 hours without tylenol or ibuprofen.

Please stress the importance of frequent hand washing as well. Athletes should be reminded not to share water bottles. Hand sanitizor is available in classrooms.

Reminder: A physical report is due for all sixth graders as well as students who are new to Bedford schools.

School wide Vision and Hearing screening will take place the first 2 weeks of November. Students with corrective lenses should remember to have them available.

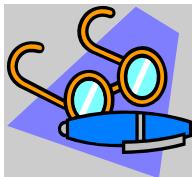
Thanks to all parents who sent in required forms so promptly.

Please feel free to call me with any questions.

Carol Eaton R.N. 781-275-3165



Physical Education



In the next two weeks PE units are coming to a close which means unit tests will be administered to all students. All study guides can be found on Mrs.Ham and Mrs.Beinert Hunnewell's webpages.

In the first two weeks of November students will be having vision and hearing tests done during one of their PE classes. Students are reminded to bring their glasses during these two weeks.

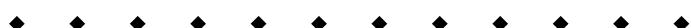
As it is getting colder out we want to remind students to bring warmer clothing to wear outside during PE classes. We try to continue to go outside until Thanksgiving.

If you are cleaning out your garage this fall and come across any sporting equipment that you no longer need please consider donating them to the PE program at JGMS. We are especially looking for field hockey sticks, baseball/softball gloves, tennis rackets, and golf clubs (higher numbers only please: 8,9's and PW).

As we are learning about life skills in class be aware of teachable moments at home that provide opportunities for discussions about good decision making. Continue to check in with your child about topics that are being covered in their life skills class.

Remember that both life skills classes have webpages (which can be accessed through the JGMS webpage) as resources for course information so please refer to it often for updates.

Libbey Beinert Hunnewell
John Glenn Middle School-Fall athletic director
Bedford High School Girls Lacrosse
Webpage: http://mail.bedford.k12.ma.us/~libbey_beinert
Work Phone: 781-275-3201 X3219



Counselor's Corner....Did you know.....

Did you know that if your child was new to Bedford and the Middle School this year they were invited to join the Newcomers' Club? The 7th/8th grade Newcomers' Club meets during Advisory on day 3. All of the 7th and 8th grade students new to Bedford have joined us.

We eat our snacks, share our stories about who we are, where we came from and why we moved to Bedford. These meetings have given the students an opportunity to talk about how they feel about their move, how to go about connecting with other students and making new friends and how we can provide support for one another in the halls, the lunchroom and in classes!

There was consensus that the best way to meet new people is to try to keep a smile on your face (even when your stomach is in a knot!), meet one person who introduces you to their friends and join in activities in school or in town where you have something in common with the other students.

Ask your children about our group....it has been fun getting to know them.

Diana Siegenthaler (Counselor 7 Navy and Purple, Grade 6 Blue)

Erin Money (Counselor 6 Red and 8 Green and Gray)

SOS

The sixth grade Student-Owned-Strategies (SOS) class spent the first part of the school year exploring the Five Keys to Learning. Students have successfully learned how to use Power Notes to organize their thoughts and stay actively engaged in their reading. They have also learned the various uses of the Circle Map, a brainstorming strategy for activating background knowledge. Not only are the students practicing and using these strategies in SOS but they have also begun to use them in their content area classes, promoting the importance of applying strategies in all subjects. Within the upcoming months, students will be collaborating with the library and technology departments to create their own video booktalks on Moodle, which will be shared with the rest of the JGMS community. We look forward to viewing their book talks!



Foreign Language

French



Grade 6 French

Bonjour tout le monde! Good news – our textbooks have arrived and we are moving right along in the Unité I curriculum. We've been working on and mastering greetings, introducing yourself, saying where you're from and asking someone where they're from, asking someone how old they are, and finding out someone else's age. We've also been having some fun with number problems – in French! The unit 1 test will be coming along shortly.

Grade 7 French

Bonjour tout le monde! The students are adjusting nicely having French on a more regular basis, i.e. five days out of six. Of course, what comes with that is having French homework on a more regular schedule, as well. We are currently in Unité IV where the vocabulary focuses on people and the things that they own. The students are learning to tell others about themselves, to describe their friends, give people's ages, and to describe what is in a bedroom. The students are currently in lesson 11 and are learning about adjectives in French. Culturally, we've talked about how French teens spend their free time and we've learned a bit about Haiti.

Grade 8 French

Bonjour tout le monde! The eighth graders are working hard. It's wonderful to see the progress that they have made since 6th grade. When they look at the lessons at the beginning of the book, the comment is usually something like "it's so easy".

We are currently finishing up on Unité VI. The students have learned how to name and describe the clothes that they, or others, are wearing. They have practised being able to express the price of clothing in French. We have examined French money and how the Euro works. The students have also learned to make comparisons and the point out objects. Culturally, we've learned about some French stores and shops, how French teenagers buy clothing and how much they have to spend compared to their American counterparts. There have been some interesting discussions – in a positive way.





Foreign Language

Spanish

Students in Spanish 6

Students are being introduced to their new Spanish practice workbook called *Más Práctica*. In the last section of this workbook students can find a resource section with complete vocabulary lists and grammar points of each lesson. This is most helpful to students completing homework activities in the workbook. The sixth grade Spanish classes have been studying the verb *gustar* and many new infinitives. They have been asking and answering each other's questions about what they like and what they like to do. Recently they started working with all the forms of the verb *ser* and the subject pronouns to create their own sentences. This is taking place in the cultural context of Miami, Florida.

Students in Spanish 7

We are finishing unit 2, chapter 2. We have been communicating about time, schedules, saying where people are going and where they are, and asking and answering questions. We also have been learning about schools and food in Mexico.

Students in Spanish 8

We have started Unit 4 Chapter 1. They are learning to identify places in the city, give addresses, choose transportation and ask for and give directions. They are learning to use the verbs *decir* and *salir*, prepositions of location and regular affirmative familiar commands. All of these activities are in the cultural context of Oaxaca, Mexico.





From the JGMS Music Department



The music department is excited to welcome a new staff member. Evan Grunwald is teaching 6th grade general music at JGMS this year. He is also on the faculty at BHS, where he teaches guitar and music theory. Mr. Grunwald is a professional guitarist, and a graduate of the Berklee College of Music.

All of our music and theater arts programs are in full swing at JGMS. In the 6th grade, Mrs. Budka and Mr. Grunwald have finished their units on rhythm using drums and unpitched percussion instruments. Mrs. Budka's students are working on a project about the invention of music notation in medieval times, and Mr. Grunwald's classes are researching the evolution of musical instruments. In Theater Arts classes, seventh graders are developing their ensemble skills through theater games, beginning theatrical improvisation, and reading the play "Willie Wonka, jr."

The Band, Orchestra and Choral ensembles are all working on repertoire for our first concerts. This year's concert dates for Band, Orchestra and Chorus can be found on the Music Dept Calendar. Go to the JGMS website and click on "Music" in the "Departments" drop-down menu. Please be aware that a date is subject to change in unavoidable circumstances, so make sure you read any notices or emails that might have updates. Contact the ensemble directors for more information. They are:

Band - James_Felker@bedford.k12.ma.us
Orchestra Phil_Maffa@bedford.k12.ma.us
Girls Chorus Amy_Budka@bedford.k12.ma.us
Boys Chorus Linda_Aiken@bedford.k12.ma.us

The music area is a busy place after school, where something is happening every day.

Band: Quite a few 8th graders have joined the BHS Marching Band, which rehearses on Monday and Thursday evenings. Some attended band camp over the summer in Ellsworth, Maine at YMCA's Camp Jordan. The BHS Marching Band plays at home football games. They recently marched in the Bedford Day parade, and have participated in the MICCA band competitions in Methuen, Wakefield, and Lowell. For more information, contact Mr. Felker.

Junior District Festival: We have joined the Eastern District of the Massachusetts Music Educators Association, and will be participating in the Eastern District Festivals. Band, Orchestra and Chorus students are invited to audition. Mr. Maffa and Mr. Felker give information about this during band and orchestra rehearsals, and band and orchestra students should contact them for more information. On Mondays and Fridays after school Mrs. Budka is offering coaching for those students interested in trying out for the Junior District Chorus. Mrs. Budka can send 6 altos, 6 sopranos, and an unlimited number of basses and tenors. The auditions are on January 30th, 2010, at Concord-Carlisle High School. Students who are chosen to participate will rehearse and perform in a festival concert on March 5th and 6th, 2010.



Select Chorus: Mondays Boys and girls in grades 7 and 8 are invited to join Select Chorus. This is an after-school activity for singers with a high level of interest and ability. Students self-select to join this group. You do not have to be a member of Chorus to join. The Select Chorus group will sing one or two pieces at each Vocal Showcase concert this year.

Jazz Band: Thursdays All instrumentalists are invited to join the JGMS Jazz Band, which meets after school on Thursdays. It also meets on Tuesdays as needed. Some experience in playing and reading music is required. Jazz Band performs at the Band and Orchestra concerts, and often competes at the Jazz Educator's Association festival.

Guitar Ensemble: Fridays Mr. Grunwald will host a guitar ensemble on Fridays after school from 2:30 til 3:45. Students who play guitar or bass guitar are welcome. Some experience with guitar technique is necessary. To find out more about this ensemble, see Mr. Grunwald or Mrs. Budka.

Spring Musical: In December we will have sign-ups and auditions for our Spring musical, "Fiddler on the Roof, Jr." There is a question about the dates for the musical, due to a change from the Mass DOE in the March MCAS dates. Stay tuned for a clarification of that soon. Information about the musical is announced to students in our morning announcements.

Students in all grades are invited to participate in the musical as cast members, and 7th and 8th graders may choose to work on the stage crews. Many parent volunteers are needed to make the show a success, so please consider helping out in some way. More information will follow in the next newsletter.





Field Trip Review

The Blue Team

The Blue team had a great field trip to Great Meadows on October 9th. The kids did a great job collecting observations and making inferences about the National Wildlife Refuge, and wrote some interesting descriptive paragraphs. The teachers enjoyed getting to know the students a bit better during the walk there and back on the beautiful fall morning, and look forward to repeating the trip in the spring to see all the changes and work on our comparing and contrasting!



The Red Team

We had a wonderful time at Great Brook Farm. We observed a wide variety of plant and animal life and used our newly acquired science skills to make observations and inferences about what we saw. We will be using our understanding of adjectives to turn some of these observations into a descriptive writing piece for English. Without a doubt, topping off our day at Kimball's was a lot of fun. Overall, this was a wonderful time for students and teachers to get to know each other a lot better and do some team building!



Interdisciplinary Update:

The Blue and Red teams are currently focusing on the interdisciplinary data analysis concept of graphing in math, science and social studies classes. In math, students are specifically focusing on the Cartesian coordinate plane, bar graphs, line plots and circle graphs. Students in studies are working on examining and creating climate graphs with an emphasis placed on scale. In science class they are continuing our exposure to variables and working on charting them in tables and in line graphs. We feel that this broad spectrum of data activities allows students to see how certain concepts are universal across the grade six curriculums.

A Desperate Plea from the Blue Team:

We are only two months into the school year, and all our tissues are almost gone! Having already gone through two significant cycles of colds among the students, we are asking if parents can send in another box to Ms. Coletta, who will distribute the boxes among the blue team teachers. Thank you so much for your help!

Attention all 6th grade parents!

On November 3rd, Election Day, the JGMS Guidance staff will be holding their annual 6th Grade Parent Coffee. After voting, feel free to come in and meet the Guidance staff and network with other "new" middle school parents! Learn what to expect as a middle school parent and how best to navigate your way through these fun filled and challenging years. We will meet from 7:45 am to 8:45 am in the Principal's Conference Room. RSVP if possible: 781-275-3201

All 6th grade parents will receive a postcard in the mail about this morning event.

Renee Anderson
Erin Money
Diana Siegenthaler
Jessica Smith

Counseling staff

Students of the Month:

The Red team is pleased to announce that our student of the month for September was Sam H. Sam was observed extending kindness toward another student frequently during his science class. He is also responsible and an active participant in all of his classes. Congratulation Sam!

Congratulations to Carrie L., the Blue Team Student of the Month! Carrie started off the year great, going out of her way to help her friends and classmates navigate the school and their day while still maintaining focus and effort on her own studies. Great Job Carrie!

Curriculum Updates from the English Department:

Tuesday, October 20th was the NCTE's National Day of Writing. To celebrate, we had a "Drop Everything and Write" day. Each student selected a quote that was meaningful to him/her and incorporated this quote into some sort of writing piece (story, play, etc.) in class. Although there were many relevant and well written pieces, we have included just a few that stood out as inspiring and/or thought-provoking:

Quote:

“Go big or go home.” –Author unknown

Go big
Or go home
Always try your hardest
Never give up.

There are people in line
In line for their dream
But you’re ahead of them
You have a chance.

So make it all count
Never give up
Always try your hardest
Go big
Or go home.

-By Bianca M.

Quote: “**If the world hurts me, it is for a good purpose.”** –Author Unknown

As I reached for the cold and hard doorknob I thought about the dreaded drill. When I walked inside the dental office the a.c. blew in my face. The cranky receptionist asked who I was, and I told her my name. I also told her I had an appointment with Dr. Wohan. She told me to sit down. I wasn’t sure who to sit with, the little boy picking his nose or the older man picking his nose. I decided I would sit with the little boy. As soon as I sat down, the loud speaker called the boy next to me. Then I thought. I knew that if the world hurt me, it was for a good purpose. I heard it, the horrible, loud, dreaded drill. The world was spinning around me. Then the loud speaker called my name. I walked down to a door. The door said, “Dr. Wohan”. I had butterflies in my stomach. Dr. Wohan had an eyepatch, a peg leg, and a beard; the only thing that was missing was a parrot. If the world hurts me, it is for a good purpose. Then I sat down on the chair....

-By Sam T.

Quote: “**Don’t judge a book by its cover.”** –Anonymous

I open my eyes and look around the crowded cafeteria. It was just like my old school. The jocks sit together and the mathletes sit together, and of course the only open seat was with the pops (a.k.a. the popular girls). They always have the pretty hair and clothes, but they are always the mean girls that even teachers get out of the way for. Maybe they are not always mean. That could only be my old school. I knew I was going to prove to myself what defined pops at JFK High School. I walked over and before I could sit down they said it was saved for someone. I knew it; everywhere at every point on this Earth popular means mean. Of course that seat wasn’t being saved; they didn’t want me. Soon I see a teacher’s aid walk in with a freshman with Down Syndrome. She sat down right there with the pops and stayed. Wow! That seat really was being saved for someone that needed it a little more than me. I guess its true what they say, “Don’t judge a book by its cover.”

- By Alyssia S.

Quote: “Only in America...” –popular expression

Only in America

Do we leave the doors to the bank wide open
And chain the pen to the table

Do we order a Big Mac and large fries
With a diet soda

Only in America can we own one third
Of Earth's resources, and have 1 in 8
Americans struggle with hunger.

Do we outlaw red pens in some states
For degrading self-esteem

Do we pay \$100 for pepper just for
Status

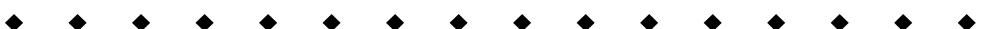
Do we make a Hot Pocket for vegetarians
Just because vegetarians like diarrhea too...I think.

Only in America can I write
This and not go to jail.

-By Ben Fi.

A Note from Ms. Fricke:

In English class, we have just wrapped up our personal narratives, and now, the classroom walls are alive with colorful illustrations by all of our Blue Team authors! This week, we have just begun our work with The Magician's Nephew (the first book in C. S. Lewis' Narnia series), and have jumped into the deep magic pool that leads to Narnia. Ask your student for more details!





Grade 7

Seventh Grade is off to a great start! Students are working hard and showing increased responsibilities in their classes. We are enjoying getting to know your children. Here is what has been going on in the classes this past month:

English

Students have been continuing their work on writing, grammar, vocabulary, and folklore.

Students have completed the study of the fable and they have demonstrated their understanding by creating their own fables. In addition, students are completing their first term independent reading projects.

Social Studies

Students have completed the unit on Archaeology, which focused on how archaeologists excavate a site, evaluate the artifacts and fossils they find, and use different types of sources to put together the puzzle of history. Students have begun their unit on Early People, focusing on the different characteristics and tools of early species, how people adapted to their environment, and how hunter-gatherers lived. Students enjoyed being able to hold and study the skulls and tools of five of the earliest ancestors of humans in class. They will end the unit next week, after learning about how people began to settle down to farm and the six characteristics of a civilization.

Science

Students have been studying Ecology. They have been making food chains and food webs while learning how energy travels through an ecosystem. They are working on a project that requires them to make a miniature ecosystem using two-liter plastic recyclable soda bottles. With this unit the hope is that students will gain an appreciation of nature and protecting the environment.

Math

Students in Level 2 classes recently completed a unit on decimals, and students will now learn about fractions. Having a solid foundation with their basic multiplication facts will be extremely helpful for students as they move on to the next unit. Students in Level 1 classes have finished the chapter on integers. They will be working on a project, applying graphing of coordinates, that will be due on November 2nd. The next chapter will focus on solving equations and inequalities.

Interims were posted to Aspen on October 5. Please continue to check Aspen, as some teachers continue to add grades following the Interim. Grades close for the first quarter on November 6, and will be posted to Aspen on November 13.

Parent conferences will be held on Wednesday, November 18, and Wednesday, December 2. There will be information about how to sign up for conferences coming soon from the office.





Grade 8

Events:

- Shawsheen Valley Regional Technical High School will present their program of studies on Wednesday, October 28th during a scheduled eighth grade assembly.
 - The first term ends on November 6th. Report card grades will be posted on Aspen and mailed home on or around November 13th.
 - Parent/Teacher conference time – Thursday, November 18th in the evening (4-7 pm)
 - Our kick-off meeting for the 8th grade class trip to Washington D.C. will take place sometime in early November in all social studies classes. Parents will be receiving detailed information from Mr. Casey at this time.
- * Finally, we wish our guidance counselor Ms. Money all the best as she anticipates the birth of her second child due near the end of the month. Good Luck, we will miss you!

Math:

During the initial week, students were asked to probe, once again, the perennial favorite, “Why do I have to use math in my life?” Each class submitted work goals for the year followed by a search to find relevant news stories that highlighted math facts in real-life applications. As a warm-up to the study of algebra, the rules and order of mathematical operations along with a review of variables and how to understand their use were stressed and reinforced. Currently, the task of solving algebraic equations has begun. We have nearly completed a unit on solving equations and are beginning to work on the concepts of equations and inequalities.

English:

As a writing warm-up activity, our students were asked to describe a place, a thing or someone they treasure and later to construct a bio-poem, a poem that cleverly displays one’s interests and dreams by combining text with graphics. Our focus, thus far, on the writing process required that they examine and question, “Why are routines and procedures important to writing?” and “What are the qualities of good writing?” We will require that our students, over the course of this year, reflect upon this question as they brainstorm, develop, revise and then edit their work. Our literature unit during term one is a selection of short stories including the ever popular, “The Most Dangerous Game.” Through our readings and follow-up discussions, we hope our students develop a deeper understanding of literature as they attempt to answer, “What are the qualities of a good story?” Please note: Our classes have all been assigned an independent novel study that is due November 3rd.

Science: Students in science class have recently completed their first major unit on Mapping the Earth. Students examined various types of maps as well as learning how modern technology aids in making very accurate maps.

Students have participated in a number of hands-on lab activities examining a number of topics including the scientific method, volume, length, mass and density. Students are well into their second unit of study that focuses on Earth structure and Plate Tectonics.

Social Studies:

Since the beginning of the school year, students in World History I have been working on answering the question, How do value systems affect political, social, and economic relationships? Students have been examining the topics of Feudalism and the role the Christian Church played in Europe after the collapse of the Roman Empire in the Early Middle Ages in Europe. In the upcoming weeks we will be examining the Renaissance and Reformation periods in world history as well as discussing the impact these movements had on the development of the “modern” world.



Starting this October and through March 25, 2010 JGMS will have the opportunity to earn cash through the Stop & Shop A+ Bonus Buck Program.

All you have to do is:

Log on to www.stopandshop.com/aplus to register online

OR

Call 877-275-2758 to register your card over the phone

After you register your card, each shopping trip to Stop & Shop, where you use your Stop & Shop card, earns cash rewards for JGMS!

Each month, the amount of cash awarded will be updated on the Stop & Shop website. You can track the amount of points you earn for our school by checking your grocery receipt or by going online. Our school will receive a check at the end of the program. The money earned will be divided between all JGMS teaching teams, to be used for field trips, projects and activities.

Remember, even if you registered your card last year, you must re-register this year for our school to receive credit.

Thanks for your support!

