

# In the Middle



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May 2010

## From the Principal

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### From The Principal

By Porter Dodge

I can hardly believe that we are nearing end of another school year. Current fourth graders from Wilkins and Mont Vernon sixth grade students and their parents attended our annual Transition Evenings here at the Middle School. It was a great chance for next year's students to take a tour, hear from a panel of current AMS students, and ask questions. There will be several more informal transition opportunities for new students to meet with guidance counselors and administrators before the end of the year. We continue work on making transition as comfortable and seamless as possible for everyone.

I am very sad to announce that my assistant principal, Deb Martel, has announced her retirement effective June 30<sup>th</sup>. In her six years as my assistant, friend, and confidant, Deb has done her job admirably. She is truly a kind and gentle person of the upmost integrity. The assistant principal's role is not a glamorous one; often working behind the scenes and dealing with difficult situations. By design, Deb has handled many aspects of running the office including most of the discipline here at AMS. The most important part of handling discipline, especially doing it effectively, is to be firm, fair, and consistent. That has been Deb's mantra since she arrived here from Salem High School, where she was a guidance counselor and a Dean of Students. She took the time to thoroughly investigate reports, but also was careful to educate those

breaking the rules in an attempt to prevent reoccurrences.

Some parents weren't always satisfied with the outcomes, especially if it required disciplining their child. In order to have a safe, secure, bully-free environment, Deb held students accountable for their behaviors, even when there was push back. To maintain the integrity of District policies, it was always important for her to be fair and consistent in dealing with everyone.

We wish Mrs. Martel a restful retirement, and we thank her for the long hours and tireless energy she expended for the sake of our children. She will be sadly missed!

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## Dates to Remember

May 31	No School—Memorial Day
June 2	Grade 5/6—Chorus Concert
June 3	Grade 7/8—Chorus Concert
June 7-11	Grade 8—60's Week
June 8	Baseball/Softball Banquet Beaver Brook—Grade 5 (Gagne/Nedelman Team)
June 9	6:30 pm—8th Grade Academic Awards Night Beaver Brook—Grade 5 (Estabrook/Vaillancourt Team)
June 10	Track Banquet Beaver Brook—Grade 5 (Hujsak/Kidder Team)
June 11	8th Grade Barbecue—11:30 am- 1:00 pm Beaver Brook—Grade (Maher/Steenhoek Team) 6th Grade Breek Week begins
June 14—June 18	Grade 6—Greek Week
June 14	8th Grade Celebratoin—Jasper Valley Grade 7—Baseball Lunch Picnic
June 15	8th Grade at Souhegan High School 12:48-2:30 Rain Date—8th Grade Celebration—Jasper Valley
June 16	Grade 5—Canobie Lake Park 8:45 am-3:45 pm Grade 6—Barbecue
June 17	7th Grade Field Trip to Fenway Park
June 18	Grade 8 Graduation—7:00 pm 8th Grade Graduation Dance 8-10 pm
June 21	Last day of School Step up Day

**HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!!!**

# Transportation Reminders

## Transportation Reminders We Need Your Help!!



Even though we are on the very last stretch of the 2009-2010 school year it is vitally important to be safe when transporting your child to and from school. Many of you choose to drive your students and it is not uncommon for the traffic in the front of the school to be heavy. While we know that waiting in line can be frustrating, it is important to continue following the proper procedure. We need your help!

A number of parents have been dropping off and/or picking up near the entrance to the school, i.e. the area just by the front parking lot or in the parking lot. This can be very dangerous as children will dart between cars to reach their destination. Please remember that drop off and pick up should be right in front of the school.

In addition, please be mindful of the fact that there is only one lane of traffic – right along the curb beside the school, where students should be entering and exiting cars. Cars leaving school grounds should be passing on the left. Some drivers have been making a second drop off lane on the left, a very dangerous action as students will have to walk between cars; in addition other cars using that left side to exit might not anticipate having to stop, again creating a dangerous situation.

If your students are taking the bus, we also need your help to remind them of the rules. The lovely spring weather is enticing and our students are feeling the energy of increasing warmth and moving closer to the end of school. Still, there are some important rules that need to be highlighted.

Students should arrive at the bus stop about five minutes before the bus is to arrive. Please remember that no sports equipment that cannot fit into a backpack is allowed on the bus. The bus is already crowded with students and backpacks and there just is not enough room to safely transport these items. For the same reason skateboards may not be taken on the bus.

Once on the bus student behavior is governed by the same rules as those in the school. The students must be courteous, no profanity. There is no eating and/or drinking on the bus. Students must stay in their seats, and nothing (and no body parts – head, hands, feet) should be hanging outside the window. During these lovely days the window may be open, but it can only be open halfway.

Finally, students must remember that the bus driver is in charge. He/she may assign seats as necessary, warn and/or write up students who are not following bus rules.

Deb Martel

# Health Office News

## News's from the Health Office



### May is National Physical Fitness and Sports Month

Help your child – and your whole family – eat healthy and stay physically active. Your child can learn healthy habits now that will last a lifetime.

What can I do to help my child stay at a healthy weight?

Help your child stay at a healthy weight by balancing what your child eats with physical activity. One of the best ways to prevent overweight and obesity in your child is to improve the eating and activity levels of your whole family.

Parents are often the most important role models for children. When you eat right and are physically active, your child will be more likely to make these choices, too. Plus, getting active and eating healthy as a family will help you spend more quality time together. For more information on this topic please go to the Department of Health and Human Service web-site healthfinder.gov at <http://healthfinder.gov/Default.aspx>



### Attention Parents of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students

**Your child may need 2 vaccines before the beginning of the school year 2010-2011 which are Tdap and 2<sup>nd</sup> Varicella.**

#### **Tdap vaccine**

When a child is 11 years of age or older, and it has been 5 years or longer since the last documented dose of a tetanus toxoid-containing immunization, the child shall receive a booster dose of tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccine,

#### **Varicella vaccine**

Students entering sixth grade will be required to have received two valid doses of Varicella vaccine. If your child has had chicken pox they will not need the Varicella vaccine. We will need a note from parents or a health care provider stating that your child has had chicken pox.

# Lea, lisez, read!

Ask any seventh grader who has been communicating with students in a school near Florence (Italy) and he or she will tell you that there are more similarities than differences among them. Our Italian friends attend school 211 days a year and spend half of their day on Saturdays in class, but other than that, they like much of the same music and many of the same sports and books.

Our shrinking global community requires, more than ever, that our students become familiar with young people in countries all over the world. The AMS library media center fosters familiarity with customs and situations of children in a vast number of countries. Both fiction and nonfiction titles open the door to greater understanding and empathy.

Take, for instance, *Rickshaw Girl* by Mitali Perkins. Any fifth grader who reads this brief book will gain a sense of how difficult life can be, especially for a girl, in Bangladesh. When Naima damages her father's rickshaw, his means for putting food on the table, she must be creative to remedy the situation. You don't have to go out of the United States to learn about another culture. Jacqueline Dembar Greene's *Powwow: A Good Day to Dance*, a nonfiction title about a Wampanoag boy in Massachusetts who attends social gatherings with his family, gives students an accurate picture of traditions still practiced by some of the citizens in this country.

Linda Sue Park writes about Korea. Sixth graders should read her brief account of a kite flying contests in ancient Korea. In *The Kite Fighters* two brothers are involved in a contest that uses surprisingly crooked means to win the New Year's event. *When My Name Was Keoko* expresses the pain of living under the dictates of an occupying country. Sun-hee and her brother must change their names and way of life to appease Japanese rulers in this World War II novel.

Every seventh grader should read Valerie Zenatti's *A Bottle in the Gaza Sea* to gain some understanding about the Israeli-Palestinian situation. It's a message in a bottle story that results in an e-mail correspondence between a Palestinian boy and Israel girl; they never meet. Move on to China for a semi-autobiographical novel, and vivid, account of the Chinese Cultural Revolution by Ying Chang Compestine in her book titled *Revolution Is Not a Dinner Party*.

In Beverly Naidoo's *Burn My Heart*, eight graders will find a novel about the complex black and white relationships in 1950s Kenya. There is much to think about in this gripping story about a white farmer's son, Mathew, and Mugo, a Ki-Kuyu man's son.

~ S. Haldane

*AMS librarian/media specialist*



## Amherst Middle School Teachers Present Their Interdisciplinary Unit to the Department of Education

Seventh grade teachers, Sam Giarrusso, Linda Farrington, Deborah Hinrichs and music teacher, Larry Ballard will soon present their published grant to the Department of Education in Meredith on May 21, 2010. Last fall they applied for the New Hampshire NCLB Title II-D Grant and were awarded \$10,000. The focus of the grant included several goals: synthesis through collaboration, integration of technology, and authentic assessment.

The driving force behind this grant is the seventh grade research unit developed by Deborah Hinrichs and Deborah Curran. This interdisciplinary unit explores the essential question, "Can one person make a difference?" The unit focuses on humanitarian issues around the world and the organizations that are working to make a difference. Students gather information by researching their organization. They then synthesize this information and write a written research paper using proper citations, a timeline, and a math statistics page. The culminating event includes the OXFAM Hunger Banquet attended by students, faculty, and parents where poetry is recited, skits are performed, and student produced infomercials are showcased using the Mac computers provided by the grant awarded to AMS.

The funds received from this technology mini-grant were used to purchase five Mac computers. Students learned new applications such as, iMovie and Garage Band to create podcasts with accompanying music and lyrics. The grant allowed students the opportunity to fully immerse themselves in the video/editing process using green screen technology which they were eager to learn. The addition of these new Mac computers is used in a variety of classes throughout AMS. Since the computers are stored in portable carts, all teachers have access to them. Peering into classrooms, one can find students collaborating on an audio podcast in science class, designing a video podcast in social studies complete with props, or composing songs in music class. Students now can add Macintosh video technology in their repertoire of technology expertise. Amherst Middle School teachers quickly point out that the district has been incredibly committed to date with the infusion of technology and is constantly exploring opportunities to improve student learning through the most updated technology in the classroom.

As a result of the seventh grade research unit, students learn that one person can make a difference. Amherst Middle School is proud to honor that goal. The efforts of Sam Giarrusso, Linda Farrington, Deborah Hinrichs, and Larry Ballard have demonstrated that teachers, too, can make a difference in the lives of children.



# Amherst PTA's 2010 Production - Children of Eden - A Huge Success!

We would like to thank everyone who participated in and attended this year's production of Children of Eden. We cannot thank the community of actors, production crew, and loyal audience members who supported this beautiful show. It never ceases to amaze us the time and effort put in from all the volunteers, from audition night to the final Sunday matinee performance. A special thank you to Alan Kaplan, our director for sharing your wisdom and dedication with us this year.

And also to Martha Daniels Holland, choreographer, Joe Rojek, music director, Roger Hurd, assistant director, Eric Abis, orchestra conductor, Paula Troie, costume coordinator, Laura Majore, makeup coordinator, and countless others backstage from the stage crew, ticket committee, publicity, chaperones, and parents driving to and from rehearsals each week. Through everyone's

Finally, we would like to announce next year's show!. The 59th Annual Production will be The Music Man, which will be directed by Dave Ostrowski and Kevin Linkroum. We know this long standing Amherst tradition is in good hands and we look forward to seeing you all at auditions, on one our production crews, or in the audience next year. Have a great summer!

Jackie O'Dowd and Rita Piotrowski - Co-Producers

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## The Bard be Here! Or, Eighth Graders Visit Elizabethan England

Eighth grade English Language Arts students encounter William Shakespeare this year as they read his comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. As they pursue their study of Shakespeare, students portray various parts of the play with increasing fluency, discovering as they gain comfort with Elizabethan English that this is indeed a comedy! They weren't at all sure in the beginning!

During the course of reading this classic work, students engage in various activities and complete authentic assessments, including but not limited to, *readers' notebooks, storyboards, accordion books, character circles, performances, class discussion and group work, note taking & fact sheets*. Sharing the brilliance of William Shakespeare's language brings to light why indeed, "the play's the thing!"

# Meet Amherst Middle School's Superman

Amherst Middle School's staff members know who the "go to" guy is when lockers jam, rooms are cold, chairs are broken or pencil sharpeners are dull. Mr. Roger Langley, the Facilities Manager, oversees a small staff and is responsible for the aesthetic beauty and maintenance of AMS.

Roger has been a vital member of AMS for the past ten years. He arrives before 6:00 AM each morning and often times can be found greeting both teachers and students while making repairs. When asked what the most challenging part of his job includes, Roger replied that in his quest to make everyone happy, there are times that he just can not. Teachers would point out that it is a rare occasion he is unable to fix something. AMS is fortunate to have his expertise in the building and credit him for maintaining a learning environment that is safe and clean for students.

Roger's favorite part of the job is the challenge in "fixing" the "unfixable." He said it is truly rewarding to see the results of his hard work, determination, and know-how. He fondly remembered the time when he alone, repaired the heating system at AMS and didn't have to call a company to make a school repair visit. Roger added that as much as he enjoys making repairs, he holds dear interacting with the staff daily. He commented, "I love the staff! It's making people happy that makes me happy; I'll try to fix anything I can. Troubleshooting is what I like to do." The staff would quickly agree that Mr. Langley is without a doubt, irreplaceable!



Outside of AMS, Roger continues to make repairs, but his focus is technology. He can be found repairing and rebuilding computers and other forms of electronic equipment. When Roger is not repairing something, he can be found riding his Harley. With a smile spread across his face, he added that he likes to fly solo on his Harley during the weekends.

Roger described his job as fun, interesting, and rewarding, but ask any staff member at AMS and they will tell you that Roger Langley is caring, thoughtful, willing to go out of his way to do anything, dependable, energetic, humorous, witty, and **can absolutely fix anything!** He is Amherst Middle School's Superman, the one to the rescue, making miracles happen on a daily basis.

# Summer Arts Camp

Summer Arts Camp -returning this year! Courses will be taught by local professional artists with a knack for working with teens. This is for students going into grades 5-9 from all local schools. The camp will run the weeks of June 28 and July 12, Monday through Thursday, from 10:00 to 12:30 pm at MMS. Two courses will be offered each week. Courses are: "Bird in a Nest: Felting and Paper Clay" with JoAnn Kitchel,



"Playing with Metals for Ornaments and Jewelry" with Karen Mitchell, "Fun and Funky Mosaics and Stepping Stones" with Susanna Ries and "Fresh Air Drawing and Painting" with Beth Cianci. Summer Arts Camp is run by the Milford Middle School (MMS) Enrichment Program in partnership with Mont Vernon Artisans. It is funded in part by the NH State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more information and a brochure, please contact Libby Anderson at 672-9876 or mmsenrich@charter.net or Nina Zotcavage at 673-7365 or jzotcavage@aol.com.

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## 6th Grade News

On May 12, 13, and 19, sixth graders, accompanied by staff and parent chaperones, had the opportunity to visit the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston, MA. Students received a guided tour of the MFA's Ancient Egyptian collection that included a visit to the MFA's current special exhibit, *The Secrets of Tomb 10A: Egypt 2000 BC*. Students and chaperones also had the opportunity to spend some time on their own to visit the Mesopotamian, Greek and Roman collections. With over 40,000 items on display, the MFA has one of the finest collections of antiquities in the United States. It was a great opportunity to view and marvel at the unique craftsmanship and ingenuity of these fantastic cultures.

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## Some Middle School Reminders



### **Late Arrival to School**

School begins at 7:40 am. Attendance is taken in homeroom between 7:30 and 7:40 am. Any student not in homeroom at 7:40 is tardy. If a student is not in homeroom at 7:40, he/she must check in at the office before going to class. In order to have an excused absence, students must have a note, a phone call to the office, or a parent may escort the student into the office. Any student receiving an unexcused tardy will get a note home to be signed. **Three unexcused tardies will earn a detention.** Please try to send a note or make a phone call, even if you're late by just a couple of minutes or if you're stuck in traffic on Boston Post Road.

### **Arrival to School**

No student should be dropped off before 7:00 am. There is no adult supervision until after 7:00 am. Please be careful after dropping off your children as you leave the school area as there are a lot of students walking over from the high school.

## The Summer Success Program is a great way to reinforce skills and gain new ones!

Open to all Amherst/Mont Vernon students entering grades 5 - 9 (September '10)

### Dates and Times

July 6<sup>th</sup> – July 22<sup>nd</sup>

Classes held Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday

Session One - 8:30–10 a.m. Session Two - 10–11:30 a.m.

### What will be offered?

#### ~ Math Workshop

An individual plan will be developed for each student based on his or her strengths and weaknesses.

Session One - 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> Grade

Session One - 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

#### ~ Reading Workshop

Through novel reading, students will be exposed to reading comprehension, journaling, vocabulary and word study, and sentence structure.

Session Two - 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> Grade

Session Two - 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

#### ~Writer's Workshop I & II

What obstacles do you face as a writer? Do you have trouble getting started? Do you feel that you need to work on adding voice or description to your writing? This individualized program is designed to help students better understand and apply the writing traits, and will provide strategies to help them develop the confidence they need to improve their writing skills.

Students may attend either Session One or Session Two

### *Registration Deadline:*

*Friday, June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010*

*Enrollment can only be held for student if payment is received by registration deadline*

*Mail the registration form and payment to:*

*Summer Success Program  
c/o Amherst Middle School  
PO Box 966  
Amherst, NH 03031*

*Or*

*Drop it off at the office.*

*For information about any of these programs or scheduling,  
please contact **Tiffany Maher** at [tmaher@sprise.com](mailto:tmaher@sprise.com)*

**SUMMER SUCCESS PROGRAM  
REGISTRATION**

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*Student's Name*

*Grade Entering in Fall of '10* \_\_\_\_\_

*Address* \_\_\_\_\_  
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*Parent/Guardian*

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*Phone Number*

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*Email address*

**CHECK ALL THAT APPLY**

\_\_\_\_\_ *Reading (5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>)*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Math (5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>)*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Reading (8<sup>TH</sup>/9<sup>TH</sup>)*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Math (8<sup>TH</sup>/9<sup>TH</sup>)*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Writer's Workshop I*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Writer's Workshop II*

## *The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards of 2010*

### *Honor the Nation's Most Talented Young Artists and Writers*

2 students from Amherst Middle School, Amherst, New Hampshire have received prestigious national Awards for their outstanding artwork through The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, the 87 year-old national program that recognizes outstanding creative teenagers and offers scholarship opportunities for graduating high school seniors.

*This year's Award recipients from Amherst Middle School are: Samantha Prue , grade 8, a Silver key in printmaking for her print Electric Current and Skye St. James, grade 7, a gold key in photography for her photo, The Girls Picture Book.*

The Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, the national nonprofit organization that runs The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, will honor these students on June 9, 2010, at a gala celebration at Carnegie Hall in New York City. Selected award recipients and high school seniors recognized with top honors for portfolios will have their art/writing exhibited in Manhattan at the World Financial Center Courtyard Gallery in Lower Manhattan from June 9-25. **Skye St. James, photo The Girls Picture Book will be on exhibit.**

*These students join the ranks of some of our country's most revered artists and writers who have received Scholastic Art & Writing Awards in the past, including Robert Redford, Andy Warhol, Truman Capote, John Lithgow, Bernard Malamud, Joyce Carol Oates, Tom Otterness, Philip Pearlstein, Zac Posen, Sylvia Plath, Richard Avedon, and Robert Indiana.*

*The first level of recognition for these students' outstanding work took place through The Scholastic Art Awards of New Hampshire, one of 96 affiliate organizations nationwide that, in partnership with the Alliance, conduct The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards .On February 13,2010, 243 gold keys were awarded to represent the state of New Hampshire at the national level from 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade and in a variety of categories. Samantha Prue and Skye St. James were awarded gold keys for their artwork. The exhibition and awards ceremony was held at the Stockbridge Theater, Pinkerton Academy, Derry, New Hampshire. Eight of Mrs. Marilyn Barry, art teacher at Amherst Middle School were recognized for excellence at the awards ceremony. There were over fourteen hundred and thirty five individual works of art by public, parochial and private schools competing for recognition in The Scholastic Art Awards of New Hampshire on January 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>.*

*After receiving awards locally, the work of these students was evaluated by an esteemed panel of jurors in New York City, alongside thousands of entries from other regional affiliate programs across the country. Notable past and current jurors include Robert Frost, Chuck Paluhniak, Gary Panter, Elizabeth Bishop, Frank McCourt, Judy Blume, Billy Collins, Peggy Noonan, William Saroyan, KiKi Smith, Faith Ringgold and Lesley Stahl.*

Since Scholastic, the global children's publishing, media and education company, founded the program in 1923, more than 13 million of America's most talented junior high and high school youth (grades 7-12) have participated in The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, and 9 million have been recognized and shared in \$25 million in cash awards and college scholarships. The Awards bring teenagers' visual art and writing to a national audience by showcasing their remarkable work and encouraging their creative journey and career development. In addition to awarding annual scholarships to top portfolio award recipients, the Alliance collaborates with colleges across the country that make an additional \$3.9 million in financial aid available to national award recipients.

Local sponsors that support The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards include Pinkerton Academy, The New Hampshire Institute of Art, The New Hampshire Art Educators' Association, Coca-Cola of Northern New England, Brown-Monson Foundation, John and Sheila Hoglund. The work of the Alliance is made possible through the support of Scholastic Inc., the Title Sponsor; The New York Times; Command Web Offset Co.; Ovation; The Maurice R. Robinson Fund; Jack Kent Cooke Foundation; AMD Foundation; and Amazon.com.



Gold Key Recipient Skye St.. James (7th Grade)  
and  
Silver Key Recipient Samantha Prue (8th Grade)



School winners whose work was chosen to go onto the  
Doodle for Google contest representing Amherst Middle School

Tessa Allcock, Grade 6; Brooke Carlson, Grade 8, Ethan Chen, Grade 5;  
Ryan Boehm, Grade 5; Amanda Aveling,, Grade 7; Heather Fortier, Grade 5 (photo on right)