

Mohawk School News

Volume I Number: I

January 2010

From the Superintendent's Desk

We have a winner! The new name of the former 9-Town News school newspaper is *Mohawk School News*!

As I explained previously, the reason for the name change was to clarify the content of the publication. I believe that *Mohawk School News* accomplishes that goal clearly.

The School System held a naming contest and solicited ideas from the students. The winning submission came from a high school student who would rather remain anonymous, except for the part involving a free lunch courtesy of the superintendent of course!!

The students submitted many good ideas. I particularly enjoyed the "Juice Box" submission by the Hawlemont third grade class. Other submissions included "What Kids Are Doing in School" by BSE, "Learning Lately" by Sanderson Academy, "Mohawk Independent" by Colrain Central, and "Mohawk Communicator" by

Heath Elementary. The Rowe School liked the old name and re-submitted "9-Town News."

I hope that you enjoy the new format of *Mohawk School News*, which is centered on student-written articles from each of the schools within the Mohawk School System. Parents should take full advantage of their newly acquired bragging rights and encourage others to read about the wonderful educational happenings occurring within Mohawk schools.

Mohawk School News is now being distributed in a more cost-effective, electronic format via email and the Internet. If you have not already done so, please provide your email address to your child's school so that we may send *Mohawk School News* directly to you in the future. Otherwise, you will be able to download the electronic publication at www.mohawkschools.org.

Superintendent's Award for Excellence

Sinead Keogh, a Mohawk Senior, has been awarded the Superintendent's Award for Excellence. This award is given annually to the senior who has shown excellence in school and is an active participant in school activities. The award is sponsored by the Massachusetts Association of School superintendents and local superintendents.

Sinead has consistently been on the High Honor Roll, currently ranks first in her class, has been in National Honor Society since her Sophomore year, and is a recipient of the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship.

She has been a member of the Key Club, Student Council and Model United Nations group since her Sophomore year. She was the Science Fair winner and went on to the state fair in her Freshman year. She participated in the Tropical Ecology course and traveled to Belize, took part in the Netherlands Exchange trip, and a member of the Chemistry Olympiad team.

She has been a member of the soccer team and track and field team for four years, skied cross country since her Sophomore year, was a member of the Eaglebrook Community Swim Team and has taken Lifeguard and CPR training courses. She has volunteered for three years on the Shelburne Falls Business Association Bridge Dinner. She has worked at the Greenfield Girl's Club and is currently an employee of the Ashfield Hardware Store.

Sinead is planning to attend a four year liberal arts college upon graduation. She is daughter of Louise and Rory Keogh of Ashfield.



Sinead Keogh with Superintendent Buoniconti



“If I were elected leader of my community, I would make a difference by...”

Ms. Tomasini’s and Mr. Well’s sixth grade classes were approached by the town of Buckland as to their interest in participating in the Massachusetts Municipal Association’s (MMA) fourth annual **MMA Statewide Essay Contest for 6th Graders**. The MMA’s initiative is to raise public awareness, promote the attributes of good local government and encourage future leaders of Massachusetts to take an active interest in their community activities.

To kick off the essay Mr. Stefan Racz, a Buckland Selectperson, and Ms. Andrea Llamas, Buckland’s Town Administrator, spoke to the sixth grades about their roles in our local town government.

The students had fun learning about their local government and wrote some fine essays. The essays here are a random sampling representative of the quality of the essays submitted.

By Erin Crosby: If I were elected leader of my community, I would make a difference by making sure that the roads are taken care of. I would make a park for all ages to have fun and I would keep money for schools.

It is important for kids all ages to have fun. I would keep money for roads because potholes can damage cars. It is important to have money for schools so they will have art, music, and money for other school supplies like desks, chairs, pencils and books.

I think I will make a great leader for my community because I feel it is very important to keep people protected. That would be the difference if I were a leader in my community.

By Samantha Cairns: If I were elected leader of my community, I would make a difference by having some of the taxes go towards buying solar panels. The solar panels would be put on local businesses so our town would save electricity. The reason I would put them on local businesses instead of anywhere else first is because, they use more electricity than anywhere else in our town. But I would espe-

cially put them on restaurants, markets, and gas stations, because they use a lot of appliances such as coolers, lights, stoves (etc.). That is one of the things I would change.

Another thing that I would change or require is every business having to be handicap accessible. For people who are in wheelchairs or can’t walk up stairs (etc.). I don’t think it’s fair to people who are handicapped. I mean it’s just not fair!

Another thing I would change is that I would have trash pick-up. The reason is it would be more convenient for people. Especially for elderly, disabled and people who work hours when the dump is open. The dump is only open on Saturday’s and Tuesday’s. I also think more people would recycle more knowing the garbage truck was going to pick up their recyclables. This would reduce global warming. I believe real estate taxes should be used for this service. That is really something that I’d like to change in my community.

In my opinion these changes would make my community a cost effective, greener and more accessible community for all towns people and visitors enjoy. I think these are all reasonable changes that would make a difference in my community.

By Emma Guyette: If I were elected leader of my community I would make a difference by helping my community become more environmentally responsible.

I would start by putting recycle bins by every trash can. Separate bins for bottles and cans and paper would cut down on a lot of waste. If the town collected the bottles and cans, and brought them back to the bottle return, they would earn a lot of money for the town over a couple of years.

If recycling was encouraged more in Buckland, the town would be able to bring in more money. If you are getting paid to bring the recycling to the plant, why wouldn’t you? If the town is getting paid fifteen or sixteen dollars a ton and the recyclables are brought down two times a month, after four years you will have made \$1,536 dollars for your town. That doesn’t

seem like much, but with time that it will grow.

Another idea I would have is to start a “green” fund. I would put all money from can returns and recycling into the fund. If someone wanted to make their house greener or if local businesses wanted to go green, we would let them take a loan out of the green fund. If the town got a little greener, we could help save our world. If I were elected leader of my community I would make a difference by **GOING GREEN!**

By Aaron Nelson: My name is Aaron Nelson and I live in a very rural, poor and undeveloped part of Ashfield in Franklin County. But its rolling hills and magical forests are one of the most beautiful places on the third planet from the sun. Yet, my town does not have enough money for paving and plowing roads and is having trouble funding its schools.

I have learned a lot about town government because my mother is a Regional Planner and my father is a Landscape Architect. Both are closely involved in local government and have taught me a lot about local government over the years and so this essay is dedicated to them.

My town, as said above, is economically distressed and needs ways to raise tax revenues. In addition, there’s a recession going on and people need jobs. I also am very aware of the environment. Therefore, I would try to build wind power facilities for three major reasons:

#1. Private or public, they produce revenue and power creating money that would help pave and plow roads and help maintain public facilities such as the police and fire departments, Town Hall and the local schools.

#2. They would create “green” jobs including construction and maintenance for the power facilities and jobs are the foundation of any good economy.

#3. Wind power plants are energy efficient and will help prevent global warming which will stop the poles from melting

I hope the town would like me.

and save Arctic animals.

I know that some people shall be opposed to this idea and will speak out in public meetings against it, but I believe that many more will benefit by it and hope the Select Board will vote for it. I hope my dreams will become true for the sake of the world and my town.

By Zachary Arfa: If I were elected leader of my community, I would make a difference by supporting the idea of powering everyone's houses with solar or wind electric energy. I think that if everyone were to set their minds to help stop global warming we could. To me global warming is a very important issue to address. If Buckland (my town) were to "go green" it would set an example to other towns in the area to "go green" and then it would spread all through Massachusetts. And maybe even the whole U.S.!

I would also see if we could have more people recycle. For every bottle we recycle the town gets five cents. We could also get people more jobs by paying them to go around collecting bottles. Millions of dollars are kept by the state because of people not recycling their bottles and just trashing them.

Another issue that I think is important to address is how we are spending our money. I think it should all be spent evenly. It should not be spent so that some people and ideas are getting more funding than others. At school every year it seems some people are thinking about taking some of our specials away because of not enough funding. I think it is a bad idea because I feel that children need more areas of learning than just the classroom with everyday subjects.

I would purpose all these things to help the town but I would also listen to the ideas of the people, for instance if they wanted a public park. First I would see if the location and the idea were practical, then I would see if we had enough money from recycling bottles and other things. Then if the majority of the town supported the idea we would start constructing it.

By Chester Hardina-Blanchette:

Repair roads: I would want to repair roads. There are a lot of potholes in the roads of Northampton, which damages tires and cars. These repairs cost citizens lots of money, which is difficult for people.

Increase library hours for public: I want to increase the public library hours. If the public could use the library with more loose hours they would probably read more because it would be easier.

Set up extra curricular activities for kids: Setting up more extra curricular activities is another ideas. If this was done, kids would probably play more sports or join more clubs. Sports would help keep kids healthy and clubs would help kids learn valuable things.

More effective control of trash and waste: I would also want to limit wasted recyclables. This would be done, by making it so that you could not throw away recyclables. This would cost less than putting them in a landfill. This leaves more money for the city to spend on other matters. It is also better for the environment.

Try to provide more money to schools: Another change is giving more money to the schools. This could be possible if we went through with the previous item, giving some of the saved money to schools. This would help because children would have better resources to learn with and thus be better educated.

I would try to do all of these things because I believe they would improve Northampton and it citizens' lives.

By Michelle Wetterwald: If I were elected leader of my community, I would make a difference by trying to raise money to pave roads such as Elm and East Buckland Road. I would also try to limit recyclables being thrown away into landfills. That way, the more things we recycle, the more money we'd get for towns.

Another thing I would do would be to help high school dropouts get their GEDs and find a good job. Right now, people are building a third ban; which we don't

need. I think we should use that money to build a homeless shelter so that homeless people have a warm place to sleep at night.

If we were given grant money, I would also use it by building handicap accessible doors in every building. Sometimes it's hard for working moms to afford everyday day care for their child/children. So I would create a daycare that's free if the mother has to work. With so many immigrants in Massachusetts to look for a job, if someone didn't know English, I could create classes so immigrants could learn English and get a job. With the economy being bad and many people and families who are out of work and are having a hard time paying their bills. In my opinion, every town should have a park to play in. So, if I were elected I would make sure there would be a park to play and have fun in.

Being energy efficient is one of the main things in the local towns. We can be energy efficient by using a kind of light bulb called florescent bulbs. Florescent light bulbs use less power and are more energy efficient.

As I said, if I were elected leader, I would do all the things I said to make a difference.



A Kid's Life in Asia, Part 1

by Cassandra Bigelow

The Rural Life

A kid's life in Asia is quite a bit different than around here. Most kids have beds that they roll up and store away during the day and sleep on at night. They wake up at around 7:00 to get ready for school.

They eat a breakfast that may consist of rice, sausage, cheese, or tea. A school day for most Asian children is around six hours. They go to school five days a week along

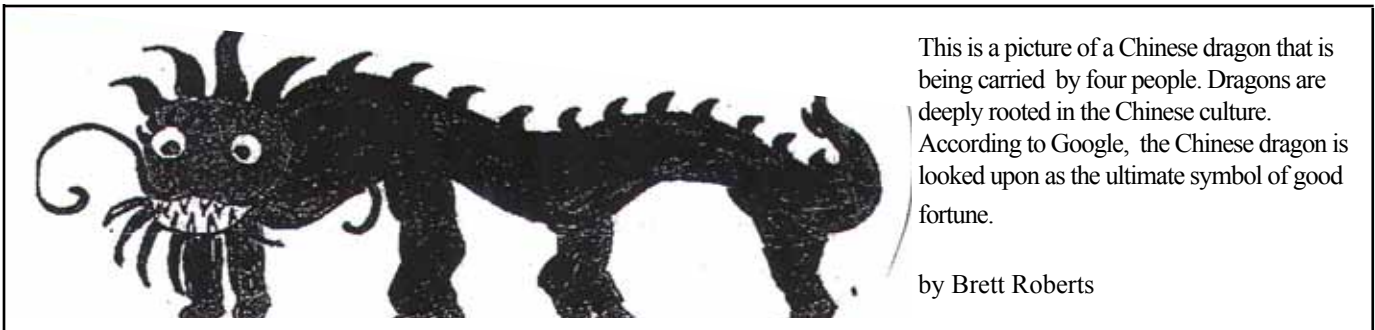
with an additional half day on Saturday. A normal day of school include classes teaching the Chinese language, fundamental mathematics or moral education. They eat lunch in their rooms, taking turns serving each other. Kids are allowed to drink coffee during lunch. They do this in the city also.

City Life

There are many similarities in life in rural areas and city areas. In the morning, kids get up around 7:00 to do their chores and get

ready for school. A lot of families own pigs, chickens, goats, or bunnies, so the kids take part in feeding and caring for them. Most families that live in the city don't own big farms because they don't have land. So, families may keep their animals in their basements. Kids walk to school at about 8:00. School life is very similar in city as in the rural areas. Children keep a toothbrush at school so that they can brush their teeth after lunch. They do this in rural schools also.

"Sometimes in the rural parts of Russia, kids get to ride motorcycles around town."



This is a picture of a Chinese dragon that is being carried by four people. Dragons are deeply rooted in the Chinese culture. According to Google, the Chinese dragon is looked upon as the ultimate symbol of good fortune.

by Brett Roberts

A Kid's Life in Asia Part 2

by Rains Browning

The Rural Life

In the afternoon after school, an Asian kid usually goes home and gets a snack, such as noodles or potatoes. Then when they get home, sometimes they have a friend over but a lot of time they help on the farm. Sometimes, in the rural parts of Russia, kids get to ride motorcycles around town. In places like Japan and China, lots of kids help their parents grow rice. In Korea, they grow the same things as China and Japan. In places like Russia, they would help their parent grow potatoes mainly, but other stuff too. Some people have chambers just for potatoes. People in Mongolia make most of their money off of livestock. They grow lots of different kinds of fruits and vegetables. For dinner in Russia, they eat pota-

toes at almost every meal with stew and a vegetable, depending on what they have. In China, Korea, and Japan, they eat rice, a vegetable, soup, and on occasion, sushi in Japan. Then in all countries I have talked about, they go to bed.

City

When they get home, they have a snack like noodles in Japan, China and Korea. In Russia, they would have potatoes. In Mongolia, they would eat vegetables that were available, if anything at all.

Every kid in Japan, China and Korea is expected to do at least one after-school activity. A popular after-school activity in Korea, Japan, and China is Taekwondo. Some educational after-school activities in Japan, China, and Korea are spelling and grammar. You can also learn math. The last one is making characters. A character is a symbol that is painted to stand for something. In Russia, you can learn every thing the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean

children learned, except they would learn Russian. They could also learn ballet. Mongolia does not really have any after school activities.





HAWLEMONT



Hello, Good-bye
By Shelby

Hello to jumping in leaves
Good-bye to jumping in pools

Hello to frosty mornings
Good-bye to hot days

Hello to football games
Good-bye to soccer games

Hello to staying in hotels
Good-bye to camping in the woods



Hello, Good-bye
By Tati, Alex, Brandon, and Amber S

Hello to carving orange Jack-o-Lanterns
Good-bye to slicing red juicy tomatoes

Hello to wearing scary costumes
Good-bye to tank tops, shorts and bathing suits

Hello to waking up early for school
Good-bye to sleeping til noon

Hello to red and gold and orange and yellow and plum
colored leaves
Good-bye to leafy green freshness

Hello to hot chocolate on frosty mornings
Good-bye to lemonade on a hot afternoon



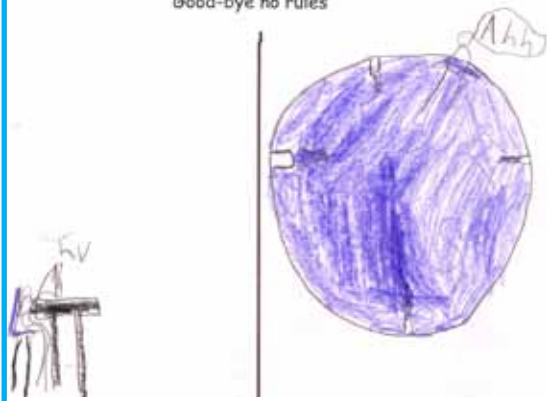
Hello, Good-bye
By Elliot

Hello school work
Good-bye summer freedom

Hello book reading
Good-bye heated hot tub

Hello florescent light bulbs
Good-bye summer heat

Hello rules
Good-bye no rules



Hello, Good-bye
By Kayla

Hello to carving pumpkins
Good-bye to camping

Hello to Thanksgiving
Good-bye to jumping in the pool

Hello to leaves changing colors
Good-bye to playing outside

Hello to Halloween
Good-bye to riding bikes





ROWE



Rowe School Activities

by Principal Bob Clancy

We had a great November with a wide variety of enrichment activities both in and out of the school day. STARLAB, an inflatable planetarium came to Rowe School on November 2nd. Students in all grade levels observed the motion of the night sky and learned more about the origins of the constellations. STARLAB came to Rowe School thanks, in part, to a grant from the RoweLocal Cultural Arts Council.

The third through sixth grade students had a great, and long day, on November 10th as they headed out to New York City at 6:00 a.m. for a visit to Liberty and Ellis Islands returning to school at 8:30 p.m. The trip was a fantastic part of the curriculum and instruction on immigration. A walk around the Statue of Liberty and then a visit to the Museum on Ellis Island gave everyone more of an understanding of the obstacles immigration presented to people trying to come to America. Mrs. Poplawski's class has an information display set up in the lobby with dozens of facts on the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island that students researched during the unit.

As a follow up report on the Pri-

mary Classrooms Penny Fair, students raised \$71.15 for the Heifer International Program. This program helps seven million families in 125 countries move toward greater self-reliance through livestock, training, and "passing the gift". They had a lot of pennies to count and thank everyone for their support. Well done!

Our Cultural Studies Unit this year is on Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. The



student performance this year will center on Grimm's Fairy Tales and will be presented in the form of a three-ring circus on Wednesday, December 16 th, at 6:30 p.m. (snow date will be the 17th). To assist students and staff, our artist-in-residence this year is from "Circus Smirkus". During the week of November 16-20, students developed their powers of concentration, along with focus and persis-

tence on learning circus skills, while at the same time gaining confidence and strength at problem solving skills in order to deal with new and old challenges. Our students were coached in ten important learning skills: try, try again, try a new way, go slow, step-by-step, stop and visualize, watch, wait, read, and listen. Mr. Rick Davis, from Circus Smirkus, captured the hearts of everyone as he helped students find out that these strategies do hold physical and tangible uses in ways that they know how to use. Students are now taking the skills learned to the next level as they prepare for the evening performance.

After school activities continue this winter with the STEMWAYS science program for grades 4,5, and 6; basketball for grades 4,5, and 6, and the fiber arts club is due to start up again shortly. The school day winter winter enrichment program will be held on Thursday's in January at Berkshire East.

Kerri McLatchy did four sessions of bowling with 28 students in November. There were many that joined the Strike and Spare Club in Shelburne Falls!

Ice Day

by Gabe Seaver

One day in February, I wake up and my world has turned to ice. At first I think I'm dreaming, but when I touch the window and an icy chill fills my hand, I know this is not a dream. I walk upstairs. I see steam rise from my mouth, my chattering teeth sounding like all those ice covered trees when the wind blows.

I keep walking. When I come around the corner, I see my mom. She says, "Good morning". I reply, "Good morning." She's holding a cup of tea. Steam rises out of the top like smoke rising from a chimney of a little house in the woods: so warm, so welcoming.

I come to the window...and see the damage. I look around in disbelief, happiness, and sadness. Two of our apple trees are down, as are a cherry and a birch. I'm amazed at how everything is glazed with an inch of ice. I know that today is not a snow day, but an ice day.

I run downstairs to tell Lilly and Emilia. "Wake up! Wake up! Today is a snow day!" They jump out of their beds like they're lying in ice water and fly up the stairs like they're in a marathon. I hurry up after them. As I run up the stairs, I know this is going to be a day to remember.



Twelve Moons in a Year; A 2009-2010 Calendar

As part of this fall's study of the Solar System, the third and fourth grade students learned about the phases of the moon and seasons. The calendar project, inspired by the book, 13 Moons on Turtle's Back, by Joseph Bruchac and Jonathon London, reflects the Native American focus on the natural world. Many Native American cultures named each of the year's thirteen full moons based on what was happening in nature of each of the seasons. For example; January might be called "Moon of Popping Trees, and May, "Budding Moon".

After many class discussions, the students suggested names for each of the "moons" based on what was happening in their world, and in the Rowe School culture. They voted on their favorite names which are as follows along with the student that described it:

September "Moon of Apple Picking";
Jordan Rice

October-"Moon of Carving Pumpkins";
Hailey Larned

November-"Moon of Mini-Courses";
Kurt Shippee and Zakary Miller

December-"Moon of Ice Skating";
Gracie Gokey and David Hobbs

January-"Moon of Snowball Fight";

Brianne Cousineau

February-"Moon of Love";

Erin Laffond

March-"Moon of Bears";

Lukas Bird

April-"Moon of Eggs";

Seren Stegner-Reid

May-"Moon of Hiking";

Leah Wozniak and Mackenzi Coulombe

June-" Moon of Peace";

Emma Poplawski and Lilly Seaver

July-" Moon of Dragonflies";

Sean Clancy

August-"Moon of Many Colors";

Kirsten Griswold

Ouch!

by Dan Burke

SCHLARK! SLAM! CRUNCH!
SCRAAAAAAAPE! The sled came off the first stonewall, scraping some against the rocks and skidding across the ice covered driveway, spinning around and around, then smack! Crunch! I was back on the snow facing forward and moving fast. I swear my heart skipped a beat when I saw the second stonewall. This wall was six feet tall, two feet taller than the last wall. I regretted getting so much speed in the first place by going to the top of the snow bank...

I pulled my sled to the top, thinking how fun this run would be! I climbed on

the sled, balanced, grabbed the handles, leaned forward, and shot down the bank before I could have second thoughts. I hit the jump and caught three feet of air easily. Gliding across the snow at a quickening pace, the sled began to make a slurping sound as I decelerated across the slushy driveway. My face got so wet from the slush, I couldn't see a thing, and then BANG! I hit the snow bank on the other side of the driveway. I shot up it, almost stopping at the top, and then rushed down the other side and the short hill beyond it.

I looked up, just in time to brace for another impact!!!! SCHLARK! SLAM! CRUNCH! I went off the second stone wall, slamming to the ground. I started picking up speed again. I looked back, watching little ice pebbles rolling behind me and trying to figure out what was making that annoying scraping. I must have turned to look at the right moment because just as I did, I hit a wall of pricklers. But I didn't stop; I just kept going, making a tunnel behind me. Finally, I hit a log that stopped my sled dead in its tracks. But my body kept going, tumbling another five feet through the pricklers. I got up, happy to be conscious. Then, first making sure I had all my limbs, I crawled on my hands and knees back through the pricklers until I got to the original tunnel my sled had made. I crawled out, pulling my sled behind me. When I finally stood up it felt so good to stretch my legs. I started back up towards the hill thinking about how I could do the route again, but make a jump over the log I hit. If I could do that, the run would be awesome, but my mom was calling me to come inside interrupted my thoughts.

I broke into a full run to my house. "I guess I'll have to do it tomorrow." I sighed to myself, as I put my sled in the garage and walked to the door. I stepped in and felt warm air sting my face, chapped from being outside in the cold so long. I took off my snow clothes, walked into the kitchen to find a piping hot cup of hot chocolate on the counter. I grabbed the cup and walked to the dining room table, and slowly sat down, sipping my hot chocolate. As I looked out the window at my backyard, I thought about making my tunnel through the pricklers longer, reaching all the way into the woods and down to the stream. I thought about how I ended the run today conscious and alive, but would I tomorrow?





Sixth Graders Study Human Body

In science, the 6th grade class at Sanderson Academy has just finished studying the human body; specifically the muscular/skeletal and cardio/pulmonary systems. As the unit wrapped up, students were asked to reflect on the most interesting learning tool, hardest learning tool, and the most fascinating slice of learning...

“Face masking was a great learning component. I of course knew everyone had their own different face, but I didn’t know that only a twin could match it. It was a wonderful hands on experience that made me think twice about school. Everyone got a turn being the comforter, the mask maker, and the person getting the mask, so it was fun for everyone. Speaking of comforting, that was great too; it made me feel safe that someone was there with me at all times. Masking someone else’s face was great too, getting my hands down and dirty. I loved masking faces and at the same time we were learning.” - Hailey

“I think the hardest learning tools were the x-rays. I found them difficult for a few reasons. One is that it was hard to figure out the orientation. Sometimes, they were sideways, upside-down, and all tilted. Two is that there didn’t seem to be more than one of each bone, and some of them were a bit fuzzy. Third, some of the breaks were small enough that it was hard to see them and if the x-ray was fuzzy, it was almost impossible. That is why the x-rays were the hardest to use and a bit confusing for me.” – Cam

“The most fascinating component for me was the Bone Detective book. What I thought was interesting about it was the detectives could tell if the victim was Hispanic or not just by the shape of the skull. One of the detectives used clay like material on the skull to find out what the victim looked like; she put the material all over the skull, shaped it, then added eyes and a wig to match the picture, if they had one. In class we did an experiment like this, only with plaster. We put the plaster on our faces to

make a mask. In the end we all tried to figure out whose masks was whose. I thought it was interesting to learn all the ways to find out who a person is with bones.” – Heather

“A fascinating slice of learning from the human body unit was when we did the bone experiment. We saw what happened to bones in different liquids over a period of time. We observed the bones in their jars and sketched out what they looked like in our notebooks. After about two weeks, we took them out to see what they looked like. Some were squishy, slimy, black, white, and one even fell apart! All of the outcomes were unique and interesting; overall this was an enjoyable learning experience.” – Leif

“To me the most interesting component was simple but amusing to use. I liked the bottle model. It was interesting because it showed clearly how the lungs and diaphragm work together. It made learning exciting with just a bottle, cling wrap, and balloons. Watching it amazed me because I didn’t think it would ever work. The bottle model really helped me to understand the idea in an easy way.” – Erica



Mohawk Seniors Receive John and Abigail Adams Scholarships

Based on their achievement on the MCAS exams, twenty-two Mohawk Trail Regional High School seniors have qualified to receive a John and Abigail Adams Scholarship which entitles them to four years of free tuition at participating Massachusetts state or community colleges.

Now in its sixth year, the Adams Scholarship rewards high academic achievement on MCAS tests, and provides families of college-bound students with financial assistance.

Congratulations to the following Mohawk recipients: Grace Ahrensorf, Marissa Avery, Ian Boyd, Stephanie Craig, Lee Drewitz, Patrick Dubie, Caroline Geiling, Hussain Hamdan, Alec Henry, Dakota Keller, Sinead Keogh, Stacie Lewandowski, Eliza Manning, Taylor Mikucki, Madeline Oldenburg, Jazmine Peck, Ryan Sandvik, Sean Scanlon, Lindsay Smith, Geordin Soucie, Joshua Therien, and Dana Williams.

Mohawk Offers Ancient Greece and You Independent Study and Trip to Greece

by Sean Scanlon

A group of eighteen Mohawk students, led by English and History teacher Neale Gay, will be departing West County for Athens, Greece in April to immerse themselves in classic Greek culture, history, and literature. Most of the participating students are seniors and juniors, but there are a few especially interested and motivated sophomores accompanying Gay and his co-chaper-

Mohawk Lending Team Venture

by Caroline Geiling

It was junior year and I needed a subject for my independent study. My brother, an economics major in college suggested microfinance. Right now you're probably thinking, "Huh? What's that?" I know I was. To phrase it succinctly, microfinance is "the supply of loans, savings, and other basic financial services to the poor" (CGAP). Well, I decided that I had found my subject, but who would be my teacher? I asked Ms. Dole, she agreed, and my independent study was started.

We began by reading Banker to the Poor: Micro-Lending and the Battle Against World Poverty by Muhammad Yunus, a 2006 Nobel Peace Prize recipient. This book provided an excellent introduction to microfinance, telling the story of how Yunus developed the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh in the 1970's as one of the first microfinance operations in the world. From this book I learned that it does not take much to break the cycle of poverty and change someone's life. As one real-life scenario from the book proved, it could be as little as twenty-two cents!

Early on I decided on a goal to donate to a micro-lending organization. During my studies I discovered Kiva, the world's first person-to-person micro-lend-

ing website which allows people to lend to entrepreneurs around the world whether it be a dairy farmer in Kenya or a tailor in Bulgaria. What's great about Kiva is users are given regular updates on their loans and once they get their money back they can choose to withdraw or re-loan it.

Inspired by my independent study, this year I started The Mohawk School District Lending Team in conjunction with the National Honor Society through Kiva with Ms. Dole as the adviser. Right now the team is comprised of a group of supportive students and faculty. This fall we each contributed a small amount of money to our team's funds, and made a loan to a group of women in Uganda. The leader of the group is forty-six years old with eleven children who is in the charcoal business. She intends to use our loan to purchase fifteen bags of charcoal to sell for a profit, allowing her to feed her children every day and send them to school. In the coming year we will be receiving repayments on this loan and will then choose another entrepreneur to lend that same money to.

In the future we hope to generate more funds so that we can loan to more people, so keep your eyes peeled. I encourage you to check out Kiva at www.kiva.org, and learn more about how it works. Maybe you'll even want to become a lender, and join the Mohawk School District Lending Team to help alleviate poverty!

ones, English teacher, Scott Whitney and guidance counselor, Angie Cullinan.

This unique educational opportunity is an ongoing effort on the part of Mohawk Trail Regional High School making education more experiential. A large part of this attempt is making the classroom more than four walls of the physical Mohawk building.

"Scott Whitney and I took students to Italy two years ago, and more recently to the Netherlands", said Mr. Gay. This trip, though, is a bit different. "Part of going on this trip is that students are enrolled in an independent study I designed called, "Ancient Greece and You." Gay went on to explain that the independent study is meant

to underline what students will be experiencing in Greece. "We'll start by reading Homer and move on to individual topics based on student interest. We'll have an event in the spring where students share their topics with the school community."

Upon completion of a trans-Atlantic flight and touch-down in Athens, the Mohawk group will be immediately met by a translator and tour guide who will remain with the group throughout the trip. The itinerary includes three days in Athens in and around the famous Acropolis, where students will visit the Parthenon and the site of the first modern Olympics in 1896. From there, the students will visit Delphi, Olympia, and other sites of

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Greece

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ancient importance. Students will then board a ship and sail into the Aegean Sea where they will disembark on some of the more important islands, including Mykonos, Patmos (the setting for the biblical Book of Revelation), and Rhodes. Finally, students will see the Temple of Artemis, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, outside of Kusadasi, Turkey.

The larger context of this trip is Mohawk's attempt to bring the classroom into the world. Scott Whitney, Neale Gay, and Kathy Stier, Wayne Kermensky, and Leanne Loomis are all in the process of organizing international trips, with high school teachers Gay, Whitney, and Stier all offering courses for credit (currently independent studies).

A major obstacle these teachers have is affordability for trips. "We do fund raising, and have recently included a number of parents in our attempts. This has defrayed some of the cost, but it's still an issue," said Whitney. For the Greece trip student sold candied apples at football games and had a major fund raiser on November 14th called, "Getting Green for Greece", where old electronics were taken away and recycled. "These efforts were amazing," said Whitney, "but, we'd like to create some sort of on-going apparatus so that all students can have this kind of educational opportunity. A student should not be excluded because they can't afford the bill."

Our Class Speakers

By Alma Crawford-Mendoza, 9th grade

On Friday, October 16, 2009, Caroline Drew and Peggy Macintosh came to room 213 to talk about racism. Caroline Drew is from the U.K. and specializes in equality and diversities in the social science. Peggy Macintosh also specializes in social science and white privileges. Caroline showed us a film that she produced and before we saw the film she introduced it to us. She told us about the people she interviewed and what often happens in the UK if someone is being racist to others. Caroline says, often, "We push things under the carpet." Her movie is based in Somerset, England, where no one would expect lots of racism to be happening, but the victims

The Mohawk English Department is currently accepting donations for the 2010 Greece trip. Any donations can be made payable to the Mohawk English department.

Spanish Students Celebrate El Dia de Muertos

On November 19, Mohawk Spanish 2, 3 and 4 classes celebrated the Mexican holiday "Day of the Dead" with a community reception featuring homemade Mexican food and an exhibit of the altars they created after learning about "*El Día de los Muertos*". The "Day of the Dead" is Mexico's most important holiday. For the past ten years, Mohawk Spanish students have had the opportunity to participate in this multi-disciplinary hands-on project that focuses on helping students gain insight into how another culture approaches this aspect of the life cycle.

This year, as in the past, student altars ranged from very personal and dedicated to deceased relatives/friends to those that celebrated the lives of departed

celebrities. One young man created an altar in memory of his great-grandfather for whom he was named while another young man honored his grandmother, an avid garden by decorating her altar with beautiful hand-crafted origami flowers. In addition to these creations, there were altars memorializing Elvis, Selena, Natalie Wood and other well-known people. The Mohawk Spanish Program's Day of the Dead Celebration is an annual event. We hope you will join us for this celebration next Fall.



A Spanish student's altar

know it is. Caroline finds three people to interview for her movie; their names are Sophie, Leon and Lubna. I was truly blown away by terrible treatment people of color, or people from foreign countries receive. This movie was thirty one minutes long and switched back and forth between Lubna, Sophie and Leon talking about their encounters of extremely offensive and racist situations.

Leon's family originated from the West Indies. He said having grown up in the city England, he did not experience any racist remarks, but when he moved to Somerset, he was faced with a completely different situation. Many of Leon's experiences happened in school. At age seventeen, in

one of classes, boys were referring to Asians and them growing rice, they later said we should drop a bomb on all of the Asians. In another of Leon's classes, they were reading *Of Mice and Men*, and on the first page there was the word, "coon". Leon said he raised his hand and asked the teacher if this was a racist book. The teacher answers that "coon" is referring to a raccoon. Leon said he felt uncomfortable reading the book and the teacher defiantly repeated that Leon has to read the book. Leon also said people have been in shock when he told them he didn't smoke weed because they thought he was the type to do that sort of thing. At every turn, Leon said he felt like, "I've got to defend my identity."

(Class Speakers continued on next page)

Class Speakers continued

Sophie was about the same age as Leon. She also experienced many of her racist situations at school. She said when she went to her friend's houses, their parent would not let her in the house because she "looked like trouble." She especially remembered in class when one boy said that he missed when the good old KKK was around because then you could throw blacks out the window. When Sophie had a problem she felt she really had to prove that it was a real problem. At home, Sophie also couldn't feel comfortable because occasionally people would come outside her house with swords, they would also throw bottles. She said she went to a college because it was more cultural while her white friends didn't have to worry about that. Sophie says, "They can be and I can't."

Lubna is a middle-aged woman from Morocco with three children. She said before she moved to Somerset she pictured a fairy tale land, but was much surprised. She had never been called slang racist remarks and told to go back to where she came from until she moved there. Lubna said she felt conscience about what she wore and who she acted around others. Her worst experience was when someone called her and made her listen to a recording of someone being beheaded. After the recording, someone said this is what should happen to all of you. Lubna said, "You always feel your insides boiling."

In many places you can see racism, many people assume that if someone has darker skin they are a terrorist. Sometimes at airports, you can observe that many of the people under detailed inspection at the security gate are people with darker skin. With Sophie's situation, when her friend's parents won't let her come in their house, I see a problem. How are new generations ever going to get over racism if parents are acting like this around their children? Or with Leon's situation, with the teacher that made him read a racist book that made him feel uncomfortable. How will the world change if adults don't make an effort? Most children look at their elders as their role models. If children are growing up with racist parent there is a good chance they will be racist too. The only way the world can stop this terrible disease of being racist is to work together to make a change that will last forever.

Mixing Up Social Groups at Mohawk

by: Dave Gott
Diversity Club Advisor

"I think we should do Mix It Up Day a lot more often." "It was amazing; I learned a lot." "Boring." "I've never seen anything like it. It should be done with the entire school." "I'm shy and don't like strangers surrounding me." "I liked having a longer lunch and meeting 8th graders." "I really liked the high schoolers."

These were among the comments from 7th and 8th graders regarding Mix It Up at Lunch, which was facilitated on November 10 by over 30 trained Mohawk high school facilitators who were in turn assisted by middle school peer leaders, staff, and community volunteers. Participants were randomly assigned to sit at tables at which structured questions were asked and conversations were encouraged among youth who may not normally spend time together. The purpose of this activity was to help youth look at their social choices and consider positive connections with those who may be different from themselves.

Students debriefed after the event in their classroom and completed a survey on social grouping at Mohawk. Survey results were compiled by Mohawk Diversity Club members, especially 12th grader Dana Williams, as well as by Jeremy Galvagni's research class. 7th and 8th graders believe that Mohawk students break into cliques most often in the cafeteria, followed in descending order by: on buses, on sports teams, in the classroom, for assemblies, in after school clubs, for recreational activities and for spectator events. "Hallways" was frequently written under the category of "other" settings where youth divide themselves into groups.

Survey questions also addressed how group members express their affiliations (eg: via clothing or hobbies), whether individuals have ever felt unwelcome by a group of students at Mohawk, whether individuals have been part of a group that rejected others, how easy it is to make friends with people of different groups, and how welcoming our school is to all kinds of people. Students were also asked about what

they personally will do to help make Mohawk a more welcoming place for everyone.

Social grouping is natural and can help each of us feel rooted in the world. But social groups can also isolate us and feed prejudice. Mix It Up events and surveys help us to understand how accepting we are as a community of learners and where we need to go. If you would like to receive copies of the survey or discuss these issues further, feel free to contact Lynn Dole, Jeremy Galvagni, Leann Loomis or Dave Gott.

Mix It Up Day is a program developed by the Southern Poverty Law Center. It is coordinated at Mohawk by our Diversity Club which is jointly sponsored by Mohawk Schools and Community Action Youth Programs of Greenfield. Ice cream for Mix It Up Day was provided through the school lunch budget and with support from Ashfield Hardware.

Middle School Students Volunteer in the Community

Middle School Counselor Leann Loomis has established a service club for 7th and 8th graders to provide volunteer service within the community. In November the group participated in the "Leaves, Windows, and Wood" Clean Up Day organized through Shelburne Senior Center. The middle school students joined community members in assisting seniors in Shelburne and Buckland with friendly visits to help rake leaves, stack wood, or help with other fall chores in preparation for winter.

The student volunteers are looking for other opportunities to provide service in the community. If you would like to suggest a project, please contact Leann Loomis, Middle School Counselor at 625-9811, extension 1304.

