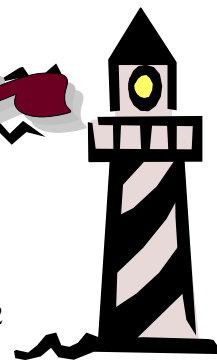




The Beacon



The Newsletter of Mahoney Middle School

Home of the Raiders

December 10, 2009

Volume 19, Number 2

PROJECT REACH STUDENTS BECOME COMMUNITY SERVICE EXPERTS!

The month of November was a busy one for Project Reach students as it put their organizational and time management skills to the test! Students had to run two community service projects at the same time, send 3 students to the Maine Youth Action Network conference for two days, and organize their Opening Ceremonies night that included a potluck dinner and speeches from the 8th graders in the program.

First, Reach students had to organize the annual Maine Recycles Week Poster Contest. Every November 8th to the 13th, Maine's Department of Waste Management promotes awareness, knowledge, and action for recycling and waste reduction in the state of Maine. The poster contest is an

opportunity for students to creatively express their understanding of the importance of recycling and buying recycled and how their actions can encourage the wise use of our renewable and nonrenewable resources. Students started by researching different web sites to compile facts about recycling; for example, did you know that every year we make enough plastic film to shrink wrap Texas?

Next, students created a series of announcements that could be read twice daily to the whole school population using the facts they researched. Then, with their laptops, students designed their own advertisements which they hung around the school. We even promoted Maine Recycles Week on the Mill Creek sign to encourage our community to take part in Recycles Week. The last step, and perhaps the most important, was to

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CALENDAR CHANGE

The Board of Education on December 7, 2009, approved changing the 2009-10 calendar to reflect moving the January 15, 2010 teacher in-service day to April 26, 2010. January 15, 2010 is now identified as a regular student attendance day and April 26, 2010 as a teacher in-service day with no student attendance required. Changing the teacher in-service day allows for the opportunity to negotiate the impact of April 26, 2010 being a district wide furlough day. Pending successful negotiations, a waiver request will be presented to the Commissioner of Education for the reduction in our calendar of one teacher in-service day.

The revised calendar can be downloaded for printing at <http://www.spsd.org>

Mrs. Kathy Germani
Principal

Mrs. Carrie Stilphen
Assistant Principal

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For Your Information

SAVE THE DATE! THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17TH.

WHO: MR. HARMON'S LANGUAGE ARTS CLASS

WHAT: **MYSTERY BOOK LAUNCH PARTY**

WHEN: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 6:30-7:30 P.M.

WHERE: MAHONEY LIBRARY

WHY: TO CELEBRATE THE WORK OF MAHOEY'S YOUNG WRITERS!

Additional information:

Since September 22, our class has been working once a week with local author, Alice James, on writing mystery books. We've worked on topics such as dialogue, setting, character and conflict development, editing and revising, and other elements of mysteries. After Alice's weekly lessons, students applied their newly acquired knowledge to their stories. The end result for each student will be a completed mystery book, for some students, more than 20 pages!

After some introductory remarks, each student will select their favorite passage from their story and read it for the audience. Light refreshments will be provided.



MAHONEY MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Fax: 767-7731

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Office Hours: 7:30 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.

Administrative Office

Kathy Germani, Principal (x 505)
Carrie Stilphen, Assistant Principal (x 506)
Karen Brown, Office Manager (x 500)
Judy Arnold, Office Secretary (x 501)

Special Services

Eileen Spencer, School Nurse (x508)
Jay McCreight, Social Worker (x 541)
Fran LeBlanc, Social Worker (x 540)
Sharon Bouchard, Psychologist (x 542)

Guidance

Pat Peluso, Counselor (x 513)
Lisa Tellefsen, Counselor (x 512)
Cheryl Corbin, Secretary (x 511)



THREE CUPS OF TEA

Our second half day of Mahoney's interdisciplinary unit on *Three Cups of Tea* took place on November 24th. Students continued to explore the themes of the book through a number of activities: making foods from the Middle East; building bridges; creating board games based on the book; playing cricket; learning about Islamic art; creating culture quilts; learning about mountaineering and K2; exploring with Google Earth; working with clay; and sharing tea together. The title of Greg Mortensen's book is taken from the notion of the villagers of Korphe: when you share the first cup of tea you are strangers, with the second you are friends, and with the third you are family.

To view a video montage of the day, visit the Mahoney website (<http://mahoney.spsd.org>) and click the link to Mahoney Buzz, the school blog. The pictures tell the story of a day of very active learning, proving that school can be fun!

PENNIES FOR PEACE

We are collecting lots and lots of Pennies for Peace, the fundraising arm of Greg's Central Asia Institute that raises money to build schools. Student Council has organized this drive, with a goal of raising 60,000 pennies. That \$600 will pay for one teacher for one year in Pakistan. Thanks to Student Council and Mrs. Rioux and Ms. Schmeierer for their hard work!

We welcome all your pennies from home, too.

THANKSGIVING AT THE INN

The library has received two free copies of *Thanksgiving at the Inn* by Tim Whitney. The author lived in South Portland as a youth, attending Memorial and then Cheverus. Although currently living in Texas, he visits South Portland frequently since his parents bought back the house he grew up in here. He generously donated the books to the library. There is even a chance he will be able to visit Mahoney on one of his trips to Maine. One reviewer calls the book, "A touching story of family and forgiveness for fathers and sons everywhere." Check it out at the library!

Connie Burns
Teacher Librarian

MAHONEY MIDDLE SCHOOLERS WORK WITH AN AUTHOR

Norman Harmon's 7th grade language arts class at Mahoney Middle School has been privileged to work with South Portland author Alice James during the fall. Alice comes weekly to instruct the nineteen students on writing mysteries. Each student is writing his or her own mystery book. Students have worked on dialogue, character development, plot, and setting. They've talked about allies vs. villains. They've created storyboards. They have learned how to manage the "muddle in the middle" of their story, the value of connecting the hero to the villain, and the importance of setting a trap. Students have responded to Alice's warmth, knowledge, and obvious respect of them. They are working hard and now identify themselves as writers.

To celebrate their collaboration with Alice James and their hard work, there will be a Book Launch party in the Mahoney Library on December 17th from 6:30-7:30 for students, teachers, parents, and friends. We would encourage any writers who live in the community to join us, too. The young writers would love to meet you.



From the Classroom

MAINELY GIRLS

Two new groups of girls have signed up to participate in the Mainely Girls Book Club this year in the library. Through the Mainely Girls Foundation in Rockland, we receive 15 copies of a book that the girls in each group select from a list of available titles. All the books are intended to empower girls by having protagonists who successfully wrestle with issues that affect middle school girls. The only cost to Mahoney is return shipping of the books. Over the course of a year, we read 5 or 6 books together and meet to discuss them.

The 6th grade participants are: Sarah Glidden, Adele Small, Courtney Stiles, Phoebe Little, Josie DiPhilippo, Lean Berry-Sandelin, Nikayla O'Donal, MacKenzie Jones, Emily Whynot, Mary Cronin, Rachel Dang, Olivia Eaton, Shelby Albert, and Baileigh Burns.

The 7th/8th grade group includes: Sally Keiter, Lucy Weaver, Brigid Ratliff, Stella Gotts, Emma Muse, Pratt Olson, Lydia Holmes, Gaby Ferrell, Eliza Schwartz, Christina Eckholm, Isabella Frederick, Hailey Kemp, and Anna Foth.

MRS. DOUGHTY'S CLASSES

Language Arts

A highlight of our year is working with our 3rd grade friends to create some poetry.

This year we have once again partnered with Ms. Reinhold's class at Brown School and will be taking the month of December to create and illustrate poems. Then, just before our holiday break, our 3rd grade friends will come to Mahoney where we will have a poetry reading in the library. Mrs. Burns always greets us with a fun poem or two to get the poetry reading underway.

Another wonderful yearly experience for 7th grade students is studying Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol at the Portland Stage Company. This is an anticipated event that gives students an opportunity to experience some excellent literature both in written form and on stage.

Science Classes

Our study of astronomy culminates with students collaborating with two or three other students to create a mural of the universe. This is a big job and students will be working hard to create beautiful murals which contain many of the terms we have been studying in class. Stop in after the holidays and you will find the 7th grade wing lined with constellations, comets, binary star systems, nebulas, supernovas, etc.

When students return from the holiday break, we will begin our study of human body systems.



7TH GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS

MRS. GOTT AND MR. MANTIS

It was nice to talk with parents during school conferences. Thank you for your support.

What happens when you reach a turning point in your life? That is the big question we have been trying to answer in our new READ 180 Workshop - Turning Points. In our readings, we meet teens who have overcome challenges and turned their lives around. We watched a video about Juan Rodriguez who moved to the Bronx from Puerto Rico. Pressures led him to drop out of school. He hung out with a tough crowd until a mentor taught him how to box. Juan pursued his new dream all the way to the Golden Gloves. We read about Jonathan Fong who moved from Taiwan to the U.S.; he had to start over. Learning a new language was tough, but making friends and fitting in was even tougher. We also read about Ekiwah Adler who was confined to a wheelchair, but poetry became the vehicle that carried him far. He was a published poet by the age of ten. We are currently reading an article called "Hard Time". Life was hard for two sisters who came to the U.S. from the Dominican Republic. It became harder when their mother was arrested and sent to jail. A question we had before our reading was "What was their turning point"? We

are in the process of figuring that out.

We have been connecting our readings with the comprehension skill of comparing and contrasting. Comparing and contrasting helps build vocabulary, develops concepts, and promotes higher-level thinking. Understanding how to compare and contrast helps readers organize and keep track of information they learn, improving overall comprehension. We will end the Turning Points Unit writing about a person we admire the most. Students will focus on descriptive writing techniques using interesting and specific details.

We know the holidays are a busy time for families, but we would like to stress the importance of reading over the school break. It doesn't matter if it is a newspaper article, magazine or instructions to a video game. The sports page is always of interest to middle school students! Please encourage your child to read at least twenty minutes a day.

Happy Holidays!

GRADE 6— HEFFERNAN/GURNEE/ WOODBURY TEAM

Language Arts

First of all, we say thanks to all of you for attending your child's conference recently. We found those conversations very helpful and productive and hope you did as well.

Since then, our focus in LA has remained on the 3 Cups of Tea novel and activities, including a game-making project in which students create a game with the object and play somehow based on the people, events, setting and/or themes of the book.

The students seem to be very engaged by both the book and the project, both of which will wrap up in the next week or so.

Math

In Math, students are in the midst of a Data About Us Project meant to help them practice and show the skills/understandings we have been working on in class around understanding, collecting, organizing, showing and analyzing data. The essential question for this unit is, "How and why do we use data to find and explain what is *typical*?"

Students will start sharing those presentations on or around Dec. 17.

Science

Congratulations to Anna Kiselevich! Anna was a winner in the Statewide Recycling Poster Contest. She created a

poster with the theme "Save the Earth-Recycle!" Anna's artwork will be part of a calendar that displays outstanding work from all over the state of Maine. This calendar reminds us that recycling is a year round program. Anna's science class period 2 also won the Wii party for having 100% participation in this contest. We are very proud of all of them.

Currently in science class we are learning about atoms and molecules. Students are researching and will be creating a model of an element of their choice. For most students their work on atoms and molecules is new learning and we have been using the laptops to do some research. There are at least three websites on Mrs. Gurnee's webpage that should be helpful for their learning.

Social Studies

We just completed our unit on the Fertile Crescent that culminated with a very competitive game of Jeopardy among teams of students. I was impressed with the knowledge that students had acquired in just six weeks. Ask your child about topics like city-states, diaspora, cuneiform, Phoenicians, Israelites, monotheism, polytheism, ziggurats, Hammurabi and Assyria to name a few, and you will be impressed with what they can

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From the Classroom

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tell you!

We started the unit by analyzing the function and elements of a timeline. Each student created a timeline of their life, with significant events in their lives and in history noted along the line. We then looked at important happenings during the beginning of civilization including examining the first Sumerian writing called cuneiform and the first written code of laws. Students had fun dramatizing some of Hammurabi's laws and then applying them to Mahoney rules. Students also analyzed some of the great leaders and accomplishments of the Mesopotamian civilizations, writing about daily life in a Sumerian village and designing an epitaph for King Nebuchadnezzar, creator of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. Finally, students demonstrated their understanding of the beliefs and ideas of the Israelites by creating comic book story panels using laptops that illustrated and explained these ideas.

We turn now to Egypt as we begin our exploration of the geography, government, religion and contributions of this amazing ancient civilization.

BAND AND CHORUS

Mark your calendar; there's a concert on the way! **Wednesday, December 16th** the Mahoney Music program will present the first concert of the year. Once again, we will perform at the beautiful South Portland High Auditorium. Students need to arrive no later than 6:20 p.m. Concert dress is expected (white top, black bottom, ties and dress shoes). The 6th, 7th and 8th grade bands, Concert Chorus, Select Chorus and Performance Jazz Band will be featured. All are invited to attend, and the concert begins at 7:00 p.m. A concert notice has been sent home, including a request for parent help before, during and after the concert. In advance, thank you!

Congratulations to the Mahoney 7th and 8th grade band members who auditioned to participate in the 2009-2010 Middle School Honors Festival. Auditioning is not an easy thing, and your efforts are appreciated. We are proud to announce the students accepted are Isabella Frederick, Hannah Calkins, Hannah Johnston, Gilead Biggie, Richard Luther, Emma Kane, Anna Foster, Harel Biggie, Taylor Knowles, Sally Keiter, Sam Woodward, James Falconer, Lucy Weaver, Liam Kramer-White, Jack Scofield and Andrew Tibbetts. Congratulations also go to Ellie Crawford, Hannah Gato, Maddie Martin, and Emily Osolin for auditioning and being accepted into the Honors Festi-

val's Chorus.

The festival will be hosted at Scarborough High School on Friday, February 26 and Saturday February 27, 2010. The public concert is scheduled at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 27th.

Mahoney 6th grade students will soon be nominated for participation in the 6th Grade Honors Music Festival to be held on Saturday March 13th, 2010 at Loranger Middle School in Old Orchard Beach. Students will be nominated based upon ability, evidence of progress, interest, and positive contributions to rehearsals and performances. The Honors Concert will be at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 13th at Loranger.

A special thanks goes out to all of the parents who have volunteered (or will volunteer!) to assist with our concerts and events. Your help is essential and very much appreciated. The fall Marching Band Show brought out over 100 volunteers, and Mrs. Barry was fortunate to have many parents at the ready to assist before the middle school students performed. Parents are encouraged to get involved with the upcoming events hosted in South Portland this year – the State High School Jazz Festival on Friday, March 26 and Saturday, March 27 at SPHS (afternoon and evening), and the ever-popular All-City Jazzapalooza on Tuesday, April 6th. Helping host events is a



great way to be involved with your older adolescents' activities.

Outstanding musicians don't just happen – they develop over time with practice! Encourage your son or daughter to practice regularly and you will hear the results right away! Studies show that involvement in music programs has a long-lasting, positive effect in many other areas including academic achievement, test-taking ability and self-discipline. Parents don't need to be musicians to help their children with practice – just be supportive and lend an ear. You'll be glad you did.

Thank you once again to the South Portland Music Boosters, for all of their support thus far in the year. Their next meeting is Tuesday, January 19th at Memorial Middle School. Additionally, the March meeting will be held on March 9th in the Mahoney Cafeteria. The meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. The music parents are also busy at work every Saturday night raising money to help support our program. If you are interested in this great group, check out their website at www.southportlandmusicboosters.org. This informative website contains photos, audio clips, and important information about music in our city.



REACH Bus Stuffers

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challenge students to volunteer to speak to science classes in an effort to promote the poster contest. Reach officers took up the challenge, and armed with poster boards and examples of winning posters, they presented to all the 6th and 8th grade science classes.

Did all this effort pay off? You bet it did. According to last year's data, Mahoney Middle School submitted 57 posters in 2008. In 2009, Mahoney submitted a grand total of 191 posters! Mrs. Gurnee's Period 2 class achieved 100% participation and earned themselves a fully catered Wii party, and out of the 1,800 posters submitted by the entire state of Maine, our very own 6th grader, Anna Kiselevich, was one of the lucky 13 students to have her

poster selected for the 2010 calendar! Congratulations Mahoney students on a job well done!

The next week, Reach students tackled our annual food drive, Stuff-A-Bus. Every fall, Chuck Igo, the morning host for 100.9 FM, tries to stuff a school bus full of non-perishable food for the Wayside Preble Soup Kitchen. Once again, students created announcements to be read by our Reach officers twice a day. School store manager Chris Perkins adapted a popular song so the lyrics talked about bringing in your canned goods. President Hannah Gato and VP Ethan Shrestha sang songs on a daily basis and for one week only we asked students to raid



From the Classroom

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their cupboards and bring in items for the soup kitchen.

Soon, intense competitions between grade levels ensued, each vying for the coveted fully catered Wii party. That's right; each homeroom in all three grades could win a Wii party complete with food and drinks. All they had to do was have the highest percentage of canned goods for their homeroom. In the end, with the bus coming to stuff, Project Reach students collected the data....could they beat last year's record of 932 items?

Well, thanks to the Fab Four Office Ladies (Mrs. Germani, Mrs. Stilphen, Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Arnold) who choose to lead by example by dominating the overall collection and sparking a school wide competition that involved staff and students, Mahoney Middle School collected over 1,300 non-perishable items! Our crack mathematician, Mrs. Kill, who calculated the percentages for Stuff-A-Bus, reported the following: Coming in 1st place for the 6th grade is none other than, heavyweight champions, Mrs. Rosenblum's homeroom with 356% of wish list items, which breaks down to 3 1/2 cans per student. Dominating the 7th grade was the never give up,

never give in homeroom, Mrs. Dugas' with 483% of wish list items-which breaks down to 4 4/5 cans per students. Winning the 8th grade was that clever one Mrs. Rioux's homeroom with a whopping 1040% or 10 2/5 cans per student! Let it be known, that Mrs. Rioux has never lost a competition in her life!

But the real winners of Stuff-A-Bus are the Preble/Wayside Soup Kitchen who now has enough food to last throughout the winter!!!! Chuck Igo spoke to the Project Reach students and informed us that the soup kitchen was running out of food on a daily basis and had to turn families away. Well, thanks to you and your heroic efforts, all the families in the greater Portland area will have a food for the winter!

CLOTHING GIVEAWAY

Clothing and Diaper Giveaway for Residents of Greater Portland (including South Portland)

PROP's Parkside Neighborhood Center will be holding a **Winter Clothing and Diaper Giveaway on Saturday, December 12th from 10 am to 1 pm** at the Parkside Neighborhood Center on 85 Grant Street.

DENTAL CARE AVAILABLE

Community Dental – Portland

640 Brighton Avenue, Portland, ME 04102; Tel: 874-1028

Provides dental services for children and adults. Services are available on a sliding fee schedule for uninsured residents of Community Dental's service areas in southern, central and western Maine who meet income guidelines.

University of New England

Dental Hygiene Department/Westbrook College Campus (*work done by students)

716 Stevens Avenue, Portland, ME 04103; Tel: 221-4900 (open September-April)

Offers dental hygiene services that include oral examination, oral hygiene instruction, blood pressure screening, x-rays, teeth cleaning, fluoride treatments and sealant placement. These services are available to the general public. MaineCare is accepted for patients through age 20 only. No other insurances are accepted: only cash or check payments.



SOUTH PORTLAND 2008-2009 NCLB REPORT CARD NOW AVAILABLE

The NCLB Report Card is an accountability and reporting tool required of all school districts that receive Title I funds through the No Child Left Behind Act. South Portland receives federal funding to support literacy, professional development, English Language Learners, Safe and Drug Free Schools and Effective Learning Environments. This report will be posted yearly based on data from the previous school year.

The NCLB Report Card can be view on-line at www.spsd.org within the Superintendent's Message. The NCLB Report Card can be viewed in print-

copy at the following locations: South Portland School Department - Office of the Superintendent; within each office of each of the South Portland Schools; South Portland City Hall; South Portland Public Library (Main and Branch); and the South Portland Community Center.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES

Mahoney's daily announcements are always accessible from the Mahoney website. You'll also find an online calendar, laptop information, Project REACH newsletters and Special Announcements. For more district news, including H1N1 bulletins, visit www.spsd.org.

SPORTS ELIGIBILITY

Students are expected to pass all courses (this includes both full year and semester courses) with a 70 or better. If, at the end of a ranking period, a student has earned a grade below 70 in 2 or more classes, s/he is ineligible to participate in any extra-curricular activities until the next ranking period closes. If a student earns below a 70 in one class, s/he may ask to be placed on Academic Review. Academic Review would allow a student to tryout and practice with a team or activity, but not participate in games. After two weeks, an administrator will review this student's current grades and if all are above 70, s/he is able to fully participate; if they are not meeting this standard they are removed from the team. There would be one more review midway through the quarter, if all grades are above 70, s/he is off Academic Review and returned to full status for the remainder of the quarter. Those students who do not meet the standard of earning a 70 in all courses by either the two week or the four week check in will be removed from the extra-curricular activity.

TARDINESS

Please remember that school begins promptly at 7:55 each morning. Students who are not in their homerooms at this time are considered late and need to get a pass from the main office. If the student does not have a note from a parent/guardian or if a phone call has not been made alerting the office of the late arrival, this is considered an unexcused tardy. On the third unexcused tardy and every one thereafter in a quarter, a student is assigned an office detention. Arriving late to school not only causes missed learning time for your child, but also potential disruption and interruption of the teaching and learning going on in the classroom that they enter. Please do all that you can to ensure that your child get to school on time.

HOMEWORK CLUB HAS STARTED!

Does your child need a place to work after school? Three days a week, they can attend Homework Club. A teacher provides a classroom and some guidance for students to work on any assignments or projects they might have. The schedule is posted outside of our main office on our information bulletin board or parents can call the main office for the details. We hope to see many students taking advantage of this convenient opportunity!



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December 10, 2009 Volume 19 Number 2

Mahoney Middle School
South Portland School Department
240 Ocean Street
South Portland, Maine 04106

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Dates to Remember

December

- 16 Band and Chorus Concert—7 pm
- 17 Grade 7 Mystery Book Launch Party 6:30 in the library
- December 24—January 4 - Winter Vacation—No School

January

- 15 Full student day - changed from original calendar
- 18 No School – Martin Luther King Day
- 22 Second Quarter Ends

February

- 14—21 - Winter Vacation—No School

A full calendar of events is available at <http://mahoneymiddle.wordpress.com/calendar/>

