

Principal's Pen by Dr. John Smith

It is hard to believe that two months have already passed. Even with the H1N1 issues, we have had a fantastic opening. Students and teachers are hard at work.

It is important to get off to a strong start academically. The student planners, listserv, SchoolNet Parent Portal and the new teacher Web sites are great tools for keeping track of student assignments and progress. If you have questions or concerns about your child's progress or assignments, please e-mail or call a team member or counselor for a conference. Communication is the key to success.

Parents, please remind your students that cell phones are not permitted to be on once they enter the building and may not be activated until they *leave* in the afternoon. If the cell phones are found on during the school day, they will be confiscated overnight per School Board policy. There is a phone in every classroom so there are plenty of locations for students to make emergency calls during the day.

I would like to welcome Mrs. Gina Olivieri back to Great Neck. Mrs. Olivieri was an outstanding teacher here several years ago and left to spend time with her children. She replaces Ms. Kaminski as the seventh-grade math/science teacher on the Beachcombers team. Ms. Kaminski recently accepted a promotion as an elementary gifted teacher.

I would also like to announce that Mrs. Sandra Mc Laughlin has decided to retire at the end of this month. She has had an outstanding 30-plus-year career with the division and has been a tremendous asset to Great Neck. We wish her all the best but she will be dearly missed. She will be replaced by Ms. Rachel Lizan. Ms. Lizan received her bachelor of arts degree in political science from George Mason University and recently completed her master's in education at Old Dominion University.

Please encourage your child to get involved with some activity at school. Sports, intramurals, band, orchestra, SCA, yearbook or various clubs are great ways to become active in school and build student self-esteem. Call Ms. White, the student activities coordinator, if you have questions as to what is available.

Parent volunteers are everywhere! Thank you for all the help. Your dedication and involvement in this school is what makes Great Neck Middle School truly great. If you are interested in getting involved, we will find a spot for you. Your PTA is doing a wonderful job and they are all to be commended.

President's Post by Cheryl Wolfe

WOW! It was great to see so many wonderful Reflections entries! Co-chairs **Arlene Willis**, **Sherri McGowan** and **Carmen Keene** worked so hard to publicize the Reflections contest. Thanks for all your hard work. And a

very special thank you to all the students who turned in an entry!

Can you believe that we are already almost through the first nine weeks of school? I know your students have been working hard and will continue to do well. Parents, please make sure you are signed up for the My School Mail listserv and have the school announcements and your student's homework e-mailed directly to you at work or home. You'll find easy directions on how to sign up in the article following this one.

Have you thought about volunteering at Great Neck Middle School? Over the past two decades, research has established a strong relationship between volunteering and health. Those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability and lower rates of depression later in life than those who do not volunteer.

Not only do volunteer activities strengthen the social ties that protect individuals from isolation during difficult times, but the experience of helping others leads to a sense of greater self-worth and trust. And it's good for you!

At www.greatneckms.vbschools.com you can see what volunteer opportunities work for you by clicking on the PTA VIE form.

We are on our way to 100 percent PTA membership, but we still need your help. If you haven't already joined, it's easy to do so. Just fill out the form on the last page of this newsletter and send it to school with your student. We also need your support in "Gull Giving."

Please have a safe Thanksgiving holiday!

It's easy to stay in touch

If you have access to the Internet at home or at work, it's very easy to stay in touch with what's going on in your student's classes, as well as at Great Neck Middle School in general.

Simply sign up for listserv by following these simple steps:

- Go to the Great Neck Web site: www.greatneckms.vbschools.com
- Go to the center of the screen and click on *My School Mail*
- Follow the directions on the page, and sign up for your student's team. You can also visit *vbschools x-tra*, an online subscription service.

Team Notes

Orcas (sixth grade)

Parents, it's easy to stay in touch with what's going on in school through the free listserv. If you aren't already participating in this service, see the information above for easy instructions on signing up.

Progress reports were sent home Oct. 12. Be sure that you ask to see your student's copy. If you have questions, contact your child's teachers via e-mail or a note. If you were not satisfied with the grades, please be sure that you are doing all you can at home to support your student with regard to setting homework and study time. Please be diligent about making sure your child is doing homework and adequately preparing for quizzes and tests.

Here's some of what is going on in classes:

Advanced Science: Students are learning to think outside the box.

Core Science: We're studying scientific method, metric measurement, elements, compounds and mixtures, atomic theory and, last but not least, the periodic table.

Advanced Language Arts: Students are reading *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens. They are discovering that child labor did not end with the Victorian Era as in the book, but is still common in much of the world today. They will make a real-world connection between this book written in 1830 and modern times.

Math: We've been doing graphing and statistics. Don't forget to bring pencils to class.

Core English: We're reading exciting stories, getting into figurative language. Don't forget to read independent books daily.

Social Studies: We just finished Unit 1, which covered continents and oceans, rivers and waterways, geographic regions of North America, geography vocabulary and Native Americans.

The best binder is an "Organized" binder!

Waveriders (sixth grade)

After exploring the major geographical features of North America, the Waveriders learned about the people who were native to the land. The Waveriders

then created and wrote Native American stories on "animal skins" and shared them with their classmates. Next the Waveriders will travel to the Old World to learn about the men who explored the new world and changed history forever.

In **Language Arts**, the Wavewriters had a unique writing assignment. Mamma Columbus, Mrs. Cabot and all the other explorer mothers had been wondering where their sons have been. They hadn't heard from them in months, so the Wavewriters eased their minds and wrote them letters. Each Wavewriter assumed the identity of one of the explorers and wrote a letter to his mother about his great accomplishments and meaningful contributions to the world. Of course, the best news was that the mamas didn't have to pay for any of the expensive voyages.

In **Core Math** the Waveriders have been conducting various experiments to examine the difference between theoretical and experimental probability. Rolling animal dice repeatedly and keeping tally charts of the frequencies of events was compared to the theoretical probability of the events. Sometimes the theories were right on or close, but not always. **Advanced Math** students have just completed a Problem Based Learning Unit on healthy habits vs. unhealthy habits.

Waverider **Scientists** have been on a wild and wonderful trip into the world of chemistry. Using lab equipment like alcohol burners and thermometers, students have deduced that elements are the building blocks of matter and without matter the world and its inhabitants could not exist. The Waveriders have begun to think outside the box and are enjoying the learning process.

Cougars (seventh grade)

In **Social Studies**, the Cougars are finished with the Settling the West Unit. Next we are studying the early 1900s, including industrial growth, new inventions, the rise of labor unions and the Gilded Age. We will also be focusing on immigration through Ellis Island.

In **Science**, the Cougars have begun a study of life characteristics, cells and cell processes.

In **Core Math**, the Cougars will be completing Unit 1 on patterns, functions and algebra. Students will be working with expressions and equations. In **Advanced Math**, the Cougars will be completing Chapter 3 and working with simplifying expressions and solving equations.

The **Advanced English** class will be studying mystery novels and how setting affects tone in a novel. We will also be looking at methods of characterization as we read *And Then There Were None* by Agatha Christie. The **Core English** class will be reading *A Single Shard* by Linda Sue Park. Our focus will be on internal and external conflicts, analogies and letter writing.

The library has extended hours before and after school for students who need extra time to do research or extra reading. The students need to have completed a BASE application from the library prior to using the extended hours.

Dolphins (seventh grade)

The Dolphin team is off to a swimmingly super start and we are looking forward to a great year. A big high-five

flip of our fins to all those who helped make Spirit Week and Team Day a splashing success. We also want to recognize all of our student athletes participating in football and boys and girls soccer. This is what makes the Dolphin team great! You see us involved everywhere!

We have settled into our routine and are working our way successfully through our classes. Mr. Hoffman's **Math** students are tackling algebra in their first unit of the year, working with both positive and negative numbers and solving equations. **Advanced Math** students also will be working with Mrs. Long's oyster gardening project from a mathematical and scientific point of view.

Social Studies has closed the western frontier in their Settling the West Unit, turning to the early cities and investigating industrialization, urbanization and immigration of America. Mrs. Poteet will soon have her students entering the world scene in competition and conflict with other nations.

Mrs. Long will be leading her **Science** classes through the Wonderful World of Cells – cell parts, how cells stay alive and reproduce, and viewing different samples of cells under microscopes. The **Advanced Science** classes will continue their year-long oyster restoration project.

In **Language Arts**, Mrs. Nordwall's classes are wrapping up Unit I: The Emergence of Literature with folktales from around the world. They will then begin Unit II: Meaning in Literature with a focus on a novel of a particular genre. In **Core**, students will be reading the historical fiction novel *A Single Shard*, about a young boy in ancient Korea

learning to become a potter. In **Advanced**, Agatha Christie's classic mystery novel *And Then There Were None* will be the focus. Both novels provide plenty of opportunity for students to practice "reading between the lines," discovering many different levels of meaning within the text.

The Dolphin teachers want to recognize two outstanding students: **Chad W.**, the Dolphin Student of the Month, and **Jacquelle R.**, our Citizenship Student of the Month for Diligence. High fives of the fins all around!

Parent tip of the month: Drill basic math skills with your child. Make a game of it with rewards.

Beachcombers (seventh grade)

Beachcombers have had a great start to this school year. During Spirit Week, the Beachcombers won the award for Best Beach Theme! We would like to welcome the new addition to the Beachcomber team, Mrs. Oliveri, who is teaching math and science.

Beachcomber **Science** students just completed their first oyster gardening field trip, which was very successful. We have 1,870 very healthy little oysters! We have just started our cell unit and will be creating our own cell slides as well as observing several other slides.

Ms. Ward's **English** students have been studying the world of Greek mythology. **Advanced English** students are just beginning a research project and we will enjoy a refresher course on the *Habits of Mind* from our Gifted Resource Teacher, Mrs. Susewind. Advanced students will link the *Habits of Mind* to our study of mythology through

a collaborative project. **Core English** students are learning valuable lessons from myths like *King Midas and the Golden Touch*.

In **Advanced Math**, students are working hard solving equations. In **Core Math**, students are very excited about starting equations.

In **Social Studies**, students are studying immigration at the turn of the century and how the United States became the largest industrial nation in the world by 1900. If you have any interesting stories about how your family came to America, please share them with us.

Please subscribe to the Great Neck listserv in order to keep up with assignments, homework and upcoming tests and quizzes. You'll find information on how to do this on page 2.

The Beachcomber team would like to wish you and your families a safe and Happy Thanksgiving.

SWAT Team (eighth grade)

SWAT students are off to a good start this year. We have many students who are actively participating on sports teams and in other school activities.

Congratulations to **Conor F.** for winning the Top Gull award for October. He is being "showcased" in the main foyer. Also, congratulations to **T.Q. H.** for being named SWAT Student of the Month, and to **Kaivon K.** for being recognized for Diligence in the Principles of American Citizenship program. Keep up the good work SWATs!

News from the Panda Team

A big HELLO from the Panda Team! We have been extremely busy. By the time you are reading this, we will have gone on several community trips, including Sugar Plum Bakery, Wavy TV10 and the Back Bay Mining Co.

All of our students have been learning about Ancient Greece and Rome. We also participated in Spirit Week, and we are proud to say that we won the Most Improved School Spirit Award!

Our biggest news is that we have opened our coffee shop, *Café Del Oso*, which means “coffee of the bears.” We are very proud of this latest project, only the second one in Virginia Beach in a middle school setting. We are open daily from 8:30-9:30 a.m., and will offer delivery service for our teachers. Feel free to come by the teachers’ cafeteria next time you are in the building for coffee, tea, hot chocolate or muffins. All of the Pandas wish everyone a safe and happy Thanksgiving.

Musical Notes

Stay in tune with strings

Congratulations to all of the orchestra students who auditioned for Junior District II Orchestra, Saturday, Oct. 17 at Blair Middle School. The following Great Neck Middle School Orchestra high-scoring students were selected:

Eighth grade: Will C., double bass; Jared M., double bass; Sam K., viola

Seventh grade: Jacob N., violin; Molly S., violin; Ashley W., violin; Diana A., viola

Eighth-grade alternate is Lauren L., 4th cello alternate

The Junior District II Orchestra will be held **Jan. 8-9, 2010**. Student fees to participate in this event are due no later than Tuesday, Dec. 3.

Please note the following important information and dates:

Boys’ concert dress: black dress pants, a white collared dress shirt and black socks and dress shoes (no sneakers).

Girls’ concert dress: black dress skirt (knee length or longer), white dress blouse and black dress shoes.

Monday, Dec. 7: Pre-concert practice after school from 3:50-5:20 p.m. in the orchestra room for seventh and eighth graders only.

Tuesday, Dec. 8: Sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade Winter Concert Performance in the GNMS auditorium for parents, supporters and friends. Concert dress clothes are mandatory. (*Now is a good time to make sure that last year’s orchestra black dress shoes and clothes still fit.*)

Dec. 17: School Day Music Assembly. In order to perform, concert dress clothes are mandatory.

Playing in the band

With more than 120 students in our band classes, we are off to a great start! Our student teacher, Mr. Jason Stanley, has completed his time with us and is now continuing his student teaching experience at Cox High School.

Pep Band has 65 members and has performed for the groundbreaking ceremony for the new middle school and the home football games at Cox. The

group also may be playing for some fall sports championship games.

The Jazz Ensemble has begun rehearsing before school, and all groups are looking forward to their first performance at the evening Holiday Concert **Dec. 15** and the school Holiday Concert **Dec. 21**.

Singing in the chorus

Best of luck to all seventh- and eighth-grade chorus students who will audition for the 2010 All-District Chorus. The audition will be **Saturday, Nov. 7** at Ocean Lakes High School. The time of audition will be announced soon.

Our first-semester chorus students will perform for the Military Family Breakfast **Tuesday, Nov. 10**. Students are reminded to wear red, white and/or blue and to meet on stage at 7:45 a.m. that day.

Bits and Pieces

It's application time!

Applications for the 2010-2011 Plaza Middle School International Baccalaureate are now available in the guidance office. Completed documents will be accepted until **Feb. 1, 2010**. If you are interested, we highly recommend the Program Information Night **Dec. 9** at Plaza Middle School.

Kemps Landing Middle School applications should arrive soon. The deadline for submitting that application is also **Feb. 1, 2010**.

For our current eighth graders and their parents, check vbschools.com for the latest information on high school academy programs and advanced academic programs. We hope you were able to attend the Oct. 22 overview that provided a wealth of invaluable information. Application packets are available in the guidance office and online. Be sure to read and complete the requirements carefully since late applications cannot be accepted by the coordinators of each specific program.

We hope your families are staying healthy. In the event of illness, however, we recommend the following if you need assignments: subscribe to listserv (for daily e-mail homework notices), subscribe to ParentPortal (vbschools.com), e-mail the teachers directly, and learn to access Virtual Classroom (VC) for handouts, etc. Your child knows how to access VC per the teachers' instructions, and all teacher e-mail addresses can be found on the Web site www.greatneckms.vbschools.com

Be a partner in education

Harris Teeter is now a partner in education with GNMS. To participate in the program, just link your VIC card to the school account number, 7545, at the register or at www.harristeeter.com.

It is a one-time sign-up process. Every time you make a purchase using your VIC card, a percentage will be contributed to the school. This will only apply to certain Harris Teeter-brand items.

Tell your friends, family and neighbors our school account number so that they can be linked, as well. It's an easy way to raise funds for our school.

It's wunderbar

The students in Frau Naden's German class are off to a wunderbar start!

For example, they can introduce themselves, tell their age, favorite color, where they are from and how they get to school.

All of them have made a cool tombstone with bibliography for a famous German American, Austrian or German-speaking person. The cemetery was on display in the library for Halloween.

Cash-o-la night at Shorebreak

Come to Shorebreak from 5-9 p.m., **Tuesday, Nov. 3** and help raise money for your school.

Students do not have school that day, so take the night off and have someone else cook! Just mention that you are there from Great Neck Middle School and we will receive a portion of the sales for that night. Feel free to bring friends and neighbors.

For more information contact Beth Rozier at btrozier@aol.com or 692-0696.

Turn these in and raise \$\$

Boxtops: www.boxtops4education.com will give you great recipes that you can make using Boxtops products. It will also tell you how to get bonus boxtops.

Farm Fresh receipts: Turn in your shopping receipts by sending them to your child's teacher or putting them in the red box in the front lobby of the school.

Tyson chicken labels: These also can be deposited in the red box in the front lobby.

Campbell's UPCs: There are many labels that can be used including Pepperidge Farm products. Keep your eyes open for UPCs with the Campbell's kid on them! Don't forget that lids from V8 Splash count, too.

Here are the frequent buyer cards that we get points for: **Harris Teeter, Target** and **Kroger**.

Keep your eyes open for **Subway** information coming soon, as well! It's so easy to help out our school just by doing the things that we do every day.

PTA membership news

Congratulations to the Orcas, winners of the PTA membership drive contest. The entire team will be receiving Krispy Kreme doughnuts. We would also like to recognize **Ms. Mayes, Ms. Langford** and **Ms. DeTorres**. All three obtained more than 100 percent membership in their homerooms. Great job!

Right now, we have 736 PTA members. We need 289 more to have 100 percent membership for the school. If you haven't joined, you can fill out the form on the last page of *Gull Post* or visit www.greatneckms.vbschools.com and click on *PTA*.

Great Neck teachers rock!

Congratulations to our Teachers of the Week for October: **Lennie Hooten, Christi Lyons, Colleen Clukey** and **Sylvia Pitzer!** They rock!

We'd like to thank The Spa at O2 for being our sponsor and generously donating \$25 gift cards. The Spa at O2 is located at 1200 First Colonial Road and the phone number is 351-2002.

Thank you, hall chaperones

During the first week of October, the sixth-graders took the Stanford 10 exam. A very generous group of parents gave up a few hours of their morning to escort students to and from the restrooms, and to keep the hallways quiet. Thank you to **Terri Bay, Kimberly Beck, Lucie Brown, Larry Burkhead, Jason Calayo, Anne Frankrig, Day McQuown, Kathy Milonas, Andrea Riddle, Patti Ripoll, Stella Waltz, Kara Russell, Asli Bayazitoglu, Andrea Curtis, Michelle DeVito, Carol Hahn, Catherine Peralta, Mary Thuot, Terri Piston, Danielle Wilson, Liz Needham, Loretta Rinaldi, Christie Sorenson, Merle Younkin, Tina Dulong, Cindi Gianascoli, Karen Hosack, Alisa Muriano, Maria Pope, Jovan Rojas, Robin Trimble, Michelle Wilson, Pattie Adams, Lori Carter, Carol Wootton, Pamela Hamacher, Mo Majewski, and Cathy Davis.** The Stanford 10 would not have gone so smoothly without you.

Being a hall monitor is a great way to see Great Neck Middle School at work. It's a real window into your child's day. The next opportunity to volunteer will be in March and then again in May. If you are interested, please e-mail Cathy McDermott at Cathjoemcd@cox.net

News from the library

The Book Fair will be held **Dec. 10-18.** Be on the lookout for specific details in early December.

Before and After school library program gives your child an opportunity to

use a variety of library resources. Please make sure your child has a permission slip on file. The activity bus is available.

There is a one-hour Library Orientation to help parents become familiar with resources and library procedures. Both morning and after school options are available; for details e-mail Dee-Magdalena.Robinson@vbschools.com.

Meet the GNMS PTA

Here's the roster of parent volunteers who make up the Great Neck Middle School PTA Board.

President, Cheryl Wolfe
First vice president, Anita Ward
Second vice president, Tonya Frye
Recording secretary, Beth Rozier
Corresponding secretary, Cathy McDermott
Treasurer, Robbin Favaloro

Committee chairs:

Benevolence: Tonya Frye
Classroom Enrichment: Kathryn Jillard
Dance: Beth Rozier, Rachel Baldwin, Lisa Campbell, Diane Shirley
Dollars for Scholars: *Open*
Field Day: *Open*
Football Concessions: Laura Edwards
Hospitality: Andrea Riddle, Kathy Milonas, Betsy Fiskus
Juvenile Protection: Lyn Cherry
Landscaping: Lee Ann Sullivan
New Student: *Open*
Newsletter: Joyce Hearn, Jill DeCarlis
Parent Visitation: *Open*
Proctor: Cindy McDermott
Reflections: Arlene Willis, Sherri McGowan
Scholarship: Michele Brunn, Kathryn Jillard
School Store: Cindi Gianascoli
Sixth-Grade Orientation: Lori Molodow, Sandra Chang, Laurie Harrison
Staff Appreciation: Joanne Moorefield
Student Activities: Cindi Gianascoli
Student Directory: Pam Daniels
VIE: Karen Stewart, Lynn Apperson, Ericka Miller
Teacher of the Month: Laura Edwards
Web Page: Lisa Norman

Virginia PTA

Every child, one voice

ANNUAL PTA MEMBERSHIP DUES

ALL-INCLUSIVE MEMBERSHIP (National, State and Local)

_____ Members at \$5.00 per member

Member's Name _____

Member's Name _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Child's Name _____

Grade _____ Teacher _____

Child's Name _____

Grade _____ Teacher _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

GNMS Gull Giving \$ _____

Gull Giving is a voluntary donation made directly to the Great Neck Middle School PTA. PLEASE consider donating because each dollar is used to support our PTA budget.

To join the PTA, simply fill out this form, include your dues payment and send it to school with your student.