

March 2009 New Milford High School Monthly Report

Compiled by Eric Sheninger

1. Observations

| <u>Teacher</u> | <u>Subject</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Period</u> | <u>Observed by</u> |
|----------------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Allison Hall-Goldman | Case Manager | 3/25 | 4 | Eric Sheninger |
| Melanie Siliato | Guidance | 3/25 | 7 | Eric Sheninger |
| Paula Daloisio | Case Manager | 3/30 | 6 | Eric Sheninger |

Summaries: All end-of-year evaluations for tenured staff members have been completed.

2. Guest lecturers

- Bridgid Frentzen and Dino DiStefano from the Community Blood Council of N.J provided an in-service on March 20th, 2009, to our 11th and 12th graders on the importance of blood donation and how each one of them make a difference. This educational program included viewing a DVD, a question and answer session, and ended with a sign up for the blood drive. The Blood Drive took place on March 23rd from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with an excellent response from the student body and the community. A total of 67 units were collected; this collection earned a lucky New Milford senior a \$750.00 scholarship from the Community Blood Council of N.J. The senior recipient will be selected at random later this year.
- Math teacher Rich Cella visited the AP Calculus class on Tuesday March 31st, 2009. Mr. Cella holds an electrical engineering degree from Rutgers University. With this background he readily connected mathematical theory to physical application, which was the purpose of his visit. He talked about the importance of the exponential function to engineers, the constant e, and shared with the class practical applications of this function in the field of electronics.

3. Innovations:

- On Thursday, March 12th, 2009, Mr. Sheninger and Mr. Gouraige (Social Studies teacher, Administrative intern) invited all members of student government to a breakfast as a follow-up to the meeting that was held on February 13th, 2009. The purpose of the meeting in February was to encourage the students to be positive change agents, and take more ownership of the high school by bringing innovative ideas to the administration that they would like to see implemented (see February report for further details). At this second meeting students openly discussed ideas that they had and how they would like to go about implementing them.
- A Student Motivation Committee was organized by the administration and held their first meeting on March 17th, 2009. This committee, consisting of teachers and administrators, will meet regularly to develop specific strategies to increase motivation for learning among students across all content areas. The latest research will be presented and discussed within the group to determine the best course of action to address a growing lack of interest in learning. After a lengthy discussion, the committee came up with the following strategies/ideas that could be utilized to increase student motivation: accountability, raising the bar, interdisciplinary connections, real-world relevance, hands-on activities, consistent expectations on the part of teachers (shared vision), positive reinforcement, utilizing a variety of instructional practices that address all learning styles, alternative/differentiated assessment (one size does not fit all), teacher enthusiasm in subject, increased teacher accountability, incorporating a competitive component, developing questions that have more than one right answer, and tweaking

eighth grade orientation. Another meeting will be held on April 9th, 2009, at which time students will be invited to share their opinions on the topic.

- Mr. Manuppelli created a positive referral system in order to acknowledge when students are doing the "right thing". Teachers have provided information about students that are excelling in school, helping their community, or have made a positive change in their own lives.
- Ms. Perna's 9th grade World History classes recently finished up a unit on the Enlightenment. At the conclusion of the unit, the students worked on an authentic learning MySpace project in which they created a MySpace page for one of the Enlightenment thinkers. Students did further research into the Enlightenment thinker they chose and then took this research and created posters modeled after actual MySpace pages. On the MySpace pages students included images of the thinker, an "About Me" section in which they described the thinker's views, Top Friends, a wall with comments, and other information that would be found on a typical MySpace page. Students enjoyed being able to take a concept that they are very familiar with and use in their everyday lives, and translate it into something for their history class. They had fun with the assignment, created great posters and demonstrated their knowledge of this particular era.
- In an effort to increase communication with parents on the happenings at NMHS and network with key stakeholders in education, Mr. Sheninger is using a social networking site called Twitter (www.twitter.com). Twitter is a website that allows people to communicate through the exchange of quick and brief statements. An account was created to disseminate useful information about NMHS (i.e. testing, mailing dates of progress reports/report cards, school events, etc.) and valuable parent resources instantaneously. The best part is that once someone is signed up to "follow" these updates they will receive these messages instantly to their Twitter page as well as on their cell phone (standard text rates apply). Signing up is easy! Go to www.twitter.com to create a user profile. Once registered, perform a search for Mr. Sheninger's username: (NMHS_Principal) or last name (Sheninger). After the search is completed, click on his profile and select "follow". To receive updates via text to a cell phone, you must first add your cellular device (click settings on top of the page followed by devices) and then select to turn on updates on his profile (there will then be 2 green check marks the picture, one for following and one for device updates on). If a person does not wish to sign up they can still view the profile and any updates by going to the site listed below and either book marking it or adding it to their favorite places:
http://twitter.com/NMHS_Principal
- In order for Ms. Smith's chemistry students to learn about and use the Activity Series, and apply its concept to chemical reactions, they were asked to create a game using only the game formats of "Simon says" and "Jeopardy". Their task was to create a game that would teach a non-chemistry student (9th grader) about the Activity Series and how to use it. Each group consisted of approximately three to four students. Students' grades were based on three factors. Each group was first judged through having their classmates playing and accessing the game using a form that was based on nine categories. Each category was worth a total of ten points and consisted of a) Instruction on Playing Game, b) Content, c) Easily Understandable, d) How well the game taught them, e) Repetition, f) Organization, g) Presentation, Look and Neatness, h) Questions and their Answers, i) Accuracy. This first judging was used to give students feedback and allowed them to fix any issues brought up by their classmates. The second judging/assessment of each group's game was done by students in different chemistry classes. Again, the same form was used to access the finished game. At this point, each group in all the honors chemistry classes has played the game on Activity Series at least twice. The last assessment of the group's games was played by 9th graders, who not

only assessed the game for the above nine categories, but also took a mini-quiz to determine what they had actually learned from playing the game.

- Ms. Smith (chemistry) and Mrs. Beiner (home economics) planned and completed an interdisciplinary project. Mrs. Beiner's class made ice cream of different flavors while Ms. Smith's classes were responsible for developing and building a cooling device that will keep the ice cream cool for a specific amount of time (twenty minutes) at room temperature (80 F - 100 F) during the summer months. Students chose their own groups of three to four students. Students developed devices ranging from elaborate cooler constructions to using the simple chemistry of rock salt with ice water. There were great successes among all groups in meeting the desired goal which was well beyond what was expected. Students were both surprised and excited at their accomplishments. Each device will be judged on April 1st, 2009 by selected guest judges on each group's device's appearance, durability, meeting the goal of cooling for twenty minutes at temperatures above 80 F, and the group's explanation of the chemistry behind their devices. Some of these Ice-cream projects will be presented in the first Science Exhibition Fair to be held on Wednesday, April 22nd, 2009.
- On March 26th, 2009, the Student Assistance Program sponsored a Class of 2012 Health and Educational Alliance. The freshmen students were asked to register for workshops on topics that addressed their interest. Six different seminars were sponsored: Understanding Your Body, Gang Involvement, Racial Diversity, Adolescent Substance Abuse, Effective Study Skills, and Developing a Sense of Trust. Experts in these particular domains were represented by individuals employed through Bergen County Community College, Hackensack Medical Center, High Focus Treatment Center, Bergen County Gang Unit and New Milford High School. Overall the program was a great success.
- The Math Department observed Pi Day on March 13th this year. It was a day of celebrating all round figures. Classroom activities included acting out the string circle puzzle problem, reading Sir Cumference and the Dragon of Pi, eating pizza pie for lunch, and a pi digit writing contest. Felicia Trinidad was this year's Pi Digit winner. She successfully wrote 104 digits of pi.

4. Student honors:

- On Wednesday, March 18th, 2009, The Challenge team of seniors Kinjal Desai, Trisha Javaluyas, Angela Wan, and Kristi Saporito, and junior Filip Piasevoli competed against The Bergen Academies in the second round of the competition at NEP Studios in NYC and did an exceptional job. The competition, sponsored by Cablevision and News 12, which aired NMHS's second round battle with Academies on Saturday, March 27th, 2009. For more information on the competition visit <http://www.powertolearn.com/challenge/>.
- As part of the requirements for participation in the finals of the Panasonic Creative Design competition, the two teams from NMHS presented their written reports and engineering logbooks to the Panasonic Corporation on Thursday, March 5th, 2009. The reports and log books contained records of the activities that were performed during the design and construction of the robots. The two teams also made their oral presentations on Tuesday, March 17th, 2009. The students met with a panel of engineers to explain the underlying scientific and engineering principles of their design and construction of the robots. Both teams delivered well-prepared PowerPoint presentations that were well-accepted by the panel, and the teams are now preparing to participate in the finals on Thursday, March 26th, 2009. NMHS was represented by Justin Munier, Charles Seifert, Adrian Tiongson, Eileen Gongon, Kasumi Almeida and Mario Romero. The advisors were Mr. Peter Torpie and Dr. Adu Asa-Awuku.

- Senior Lijin Joy was selected to sing at the All Eastern Chorus Concert in Providence, Rhode Island during the Music Educators National Conference. The All-Eastern Chorus is made up of students within eleven states of the Eastern seaboard who scored highly in All-State Chorus Audition. Lijin is only the second student who received this honor in our school's history.
- Junior Melissa Milne completed her rehearsals, which began on alternate Saturdays in September, and performed at NJPAC with the All-State Women's Chorus in late February. Her final rehearsals were at Rutgers during the New Jersey Music Educators Conference. Her initial audition for this prestigious group was last March. Seven students from New Milford performed with the North Jersey Region 1 Chorus in late February at Secaucus High School. They were: Meredith McCann, Jessica Milne, Melissa Milne, Leonard Perez, Jennilyn Robles, Jonell Robles, and Azela Zarate. The audition for this coveted group was the first Saturday in January and they continued to rehearse twice weekly until the concert. The Music Department would like to thank the parents of these very talented students for taking the time to drive them throughout the state of New Jersey.

5. Field trips

- The Engineering Club participated in the Engineering career day seminars organized by the NJ Society of Professional Engineers and held at the Science and Engineering Resource Center of Rutgers University, on March 18th, 2009. The purpose of the gathering was to expose high school students to the fields of engineering. Representatives from several engineering companies attended including Dewberry, Navair, PB Americas, PSE& G, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Ethicon, Ferreira Construction and Alcatel Lucent. Also in attendance were local colleges Rutgers, NJIT, Stevens, Rowan, Fairleigh Dickinson, and The College of New Jersey. At the general session, representatives from local colleges discussed the significant role of engineering in our modern society and described the typical undergraduate engineering curriculum. NMHS students attended four presentations: The Wonders of Engineering by Dewberry, What can you do as a Biomedical Engineer by Ethicon, Career Opportunities in the Electric Energy Industry by PSE&G and Engineering for Transportation Systems by PB Americas. Students also had the opportunity to discuss possible careers in engineering with both with representatives from the local colleges and the engineering industry. Mrs. Vicky Smith and Dr. Adu Asa-Awuku accompanied the team of twenty students to the career day.
- **The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC - March 12 - 13, 2009:** Fifty-one students had the opportunity to visit The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) for two days. Most of the students in attendance participate in the *Holocaust/Genocide and Human Behavior* elective course. Students had the opportunity to view a new exhibition entitled *The State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda*. The students were given an overview of this new exhibit by **Mr. Peter Fredlake**, the Director of National Outreach prior to experiencing the exhibit. This exhibition is the first curated exhibit by USHMM that focuses on the Nazi regime and Adolf Hitler. The on-line exhibition can be viewed at www.ushmm.org. The students also had the opportunity to understand the architecture of the building by Museum Educator, **Ms. Carly Ward**. They learned about the architect, James Ingo Freed, and "What Makes the Building Talk". This was an important opportunity for the students to be engaged in the meaning of the physical surroundings of the Museum. A tour of the Permanent Exhibition reinforced student learning by experiencing artifacts that reflect the history discussed in the course. After a tour of the Permanent Exhibition, students met with **Mr. Henry Greenbaum** - a Holocaust survivor. Henry spoke about

being deported from his hometown of Starachowice, Poland in 1943 and being sent to Auschwitz. There he worked for the I.G. Farben Company and later he was sent to a camp in Flossenbug, Germany. After a four month death march, he was liberated in Germany on April 25th, 1945. Henry's ability to tell his story along with his warm and caring nature left a lasting impression on the New Milford students.

An added highlight to our trip to USHMM included another opportunity to visit the high security archive within the Museum. **Dr. Jane Klinger**, Director of Conservation and Collections afforded us this very special visit. Last year, Jane knew that we were interested in Otto Wolf's diary and that during our overseas trip we would be visiting his hometown and the rescuers that hid the Wolf family in underground hideouts and homes for over three years. She informed me that the Museum had the diaries in their possession and that next year when we return she would allow us to see them in the archive. On March 13th, 2009, students participating in the overseas trip this year and prior years had the opportunity to view the diaries and learn first-hand how they were acquired, preserved and the current research on the inks used by Otto in the diary. Otto's diaries have never been displayed anywhere in the world. They were given to USHMM several years ago by the only surviving relative, Lici Garda, Otto's sister. The diaries were then digitized and used by scholars over the years to bring this story to life. Those who have translated or written about Otto's diary have never seen the actual diaries which are in four separate notebooks. For the students and teachers it was an amazing opportunity to see up-close his handwriting, the markings in and around the pages of the diaries, how each diary was labeled in sequence and the overall authenticity of these remarkable documents that serve as evidence to an era in human nature that is often very difficult to comprehend. Otto was fifteen years old when he began writing in hiding about his experiences - we wonder if he ever thought about how much of a contribution these diaries would make to our understanding of the Holocaust as well as serve as evidence to genocide?

- The trip on Monday, March 23rd, 2009, to the New Jersey Vietnam Veteran's Memorial was fun, informative, and quite remarkable. Included in the trip were Ms. Consentino's and Mr. Coyne's English 12 class and Mrs. Burton's U.S. II class. Mr. Wilson was also nice enough to chaperone with us. The tour was guided by two Vietnam Veterans named, Rick and Herb. Both gentlemen are New Jersey residents and both were drafted into the U.S. Army. They gave great insight to "what really happened" in the war as well as a terrific historical perspective. The NJVVM is both beautiful and symbolic with its statues, tear drop shaped cemetery, a perfectly round wall of the names of the 1,557 New Jersey residents that never came home and the tree of New Jersey in the center of it all. Next to the memorial was the Educational Center that includes photographs, historic timelines, films, personal letters and photographs. This is the only Vietnam memorial in the country with its own educational component. One of the many highlights of the trip was when Mr. Wilson and a few selected students found the four names of the New Milford residents that were Killed in Action on the wall. They include James B. Woods Jr., Lester G. Michels, Lawrence R. Merschrod, and Thomas E. Grix. We are currently putting together a Vietnam War Memorial ourselves that we will put across the Social Studies Office. However, the best highlight of the trip was when one of our tour guides, Herb, told us that our students was one of the best groups he ever had. His exact quote was, "Your kids get it." We left the NJVVM with a new sense of what the Vietnam War was really like and a new sense of pride about our state and especially our country.
- Mr. Coviello took his Sociology classes to the Hackensack courthouse on Friday, March 27th, 2009, to observe the sentencing of criminals. This trip is part of a much larger unit on deviance and social control. The students observed more than ten criminal sentencings that ranged from mild to severe. The data collected concerning negative sanctions will be applied to course studies.

- Members of Student Government and Peer Leadership visited Pompton Lakes High School (Passaic County, NJ) on March 27th, 2009, under the guidance of Mr. Sheninger, Ms. Schlamp, Ms. Bernardo, and Ms. Tambuscio. The premise of the meeting was to exchange innovative ideas unique to each school. This is the second year that NMHS students have visited another similar high school in order to raise the bar at their school. NMHS students were intrigued by several activities that are run at PLHS and are eagerly looking to implement some of them during the 2009-2010 school year.

6. Guidance

- On Tuesday, April 7th, 2009, the Guidance Department will be sponsoring the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) for any interested 11th grade students. The ASVAB is part of a career exploration program that assists students in choosing a career and/or college major. This career program combines a student's skills and interests to develop a comprehensive and personalized report with suggestions for possible careers that are based on these findings.
- On Friday, April 24th, 2009, the Guidance Department will be hosting a Career Day for 11th grade students. This is a great opportunity for juniors to learn more about careers they have an interest in and gather information that may help them decide on a college major.
- On March 27th, 2009, Ms. Siliato attended the "1st Annual Lunch and Learn" sponsored by Lincoln Technical Institute. Ms. Siliato toured the campus, attended academic workshops, and met with the school's admission department. This was a wonderful opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge of Lincoln Technical Institute.

7. Professional Development

- On Friday, March 20th, 2009, Mr. Manuppelli attended a law conference entitled the Rule of Law conducted by the New Jersey Law Center. This conference had presenters from the New Jersey Supreme Court, Seton Hall Law School, New Jersey State Bar Association, and other renowned institutions. He was able to network and acquire information on school law.
- On Friday March 20th, 2009, teachers throughout the district attended a one-day, in-house Professional Development training workshop on LessonWriter (www.lessonwriter.com). It is a completely free program created by Mr. Stephen Churchville, enabling teachers to teach literacy skills across the curriculum. LessonWriter creates lesson plans and instructional materials for teaching English language skills from any reading passage. The program analyzes text for vocabulary, grammar and usage, pronunciation, word roots and stems. This innovative program allows teachers to save time creating interesting standards-based lesson plans, track classes, design a unit of study, and accommodate students by differentiating instruction to individual students...especially struggling ELL students. Teachers who attended the workshop have been asked to turnkey information learned to their fellow peers. The first one is scheduled on Monday, March 30th, at the high school in room 240.
- Mr. Sheninger and Mr. Manuppelli attended Gang Awareness training at Paramus High School on Tuesday 3/31.

8. Facilities

9. Other

- Congratulations to the girls basketball team on winning the first-ever NMHS girls or boys basketball State Sectional Championship. The team accomplished this feat after overcoming a fourth quarter deficit in the finals to defeat Park Ridge by the score of 39-

35 at Bayonne HS. On the way to the championship, the girls defeated Verona in the quarterfinal and Butler in the semifinal. Overall, the team was 22-7, tying a school record for wins in a season.

- A special congratulation goes out to senior wrestler Dan Suarez on being the first NMHS wrestler to place in the NJSIAA State Wrestling Championships that took place in Atlantic City. Dan won two matches on the first day and one on the second day to advance to the medal rounds. On the last day, Dan won his final match to finish as the 5th best heavyweight wrestler in the State of New Jersey.
- Working, the 2009 NMHS spring musical was a massive success. This show showcased the various professions that make our society run smoothly on a daily basis. Forty-one cast members and twenty crew members came together to form a magnificent company that made the entire process run smoothly and successfully. Along with affecting well over one hundred and fifty students who participated in set builds, painting projects, and graphic design, the adult production was extremely extensive. These members include, but are not limited to, Producer John Coviello, Music Director Kerr Lockhart, Choreographer Lauren Palmeri, Costumer Ruth Beiner, and a host of other teachers and community members. Directing this year's spring musical was alumnus Alexander Diaz who did a terrific job with bringing his vision to life on stage. Also, our lighting designer George Milne was able to once again bring Broadway level lighting into our school. This was truly a unique experience that our students will treasure forever.
- The High School band performed a Spring preview concert at the middle school on March 26th, 2009. The show consisted of some jazz band pieces, original works, a ukulele trio and a drum solo. The middle school audience was very appreciative.
- The Senior Citizen "Twilight" Prom took place on Thursday March 26th, 2009, from 6-9 p.m. in the High School Cafeteria. The Music Honors Society and Student Council fundraised for the DJ, party supplies, and souvenirs for this special event. The following food establishments donated the delicious food: Big Jims, Celtic Kitchen, Charlie Browns of Oradell, Costco of Hackensack, Garden Café, Italian Connection of Dumont, Jersey Boys, Lieto's, Mangiannos of Riverside Square, Roman's, Sopranos, and Stop and Shop of Bergenfield. Ms. Schlamp and Mrs. Swartz would like to thank Mrs. Beiner and Mr. Pevny for their help in setting up the event, and Mr. Sheninger and Mr. Manuppelli for helping to fill the seniors dance cards. The King and Queen were crowned and each was presented with a twenty-five dollar gift certificate to a local restaurant. A good time was enjoyed by all.