

NOVEMBER 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>
Linda Keesing	Media Spec.	11/10	3	Eric Sheninger
Nicolette Perna	Am. Hist. 1	11/11, 11/12, 11/13	1	Eric Sheninger
Tim Gouraige	MWH	11/16	3	Eric Sheninger
Lawrence Ramsey	Geometry	11/17, 11/19, 11/23	3	Eric Sheninger
Dave Wilson	Economics	11/20	7	Eric Sheninger
Matt Frederick	Phys. Ed.	11/16, 11/17, 11/18	2	Jerry Perrone
Michael Coyne	Spec. Ed.	11/19, 11/20, 11/24	2	Jerry Perrone
Joyce Monroe	French 1	11/19	4	Lou Manuppelli
Faye Consentino	English 12	11/19	7	Lou Manuppelli
Marlyn Cabrera	ESL	11/20	8	Lou Manuppelli
Maria Grompone	Spanish 1	11/16	6	Lou Manuppelli
Karen Vicari	Bus. Firm	11/12	7	Lou Manuppelli
Rose DePoto	Tcher Cadet	11/12	5	Lou Manuppelli

Summaries:

2. Guest lecturers

- On Tuesday, November 24, 2009, Dr. Andolino of the Skylands Medical Group spoke to the Early Childhood development classes about labor and delivery. She explained potential complications during a pregnancy and genetic defects to the class. Dr Andolino ended her presentation by answering questions about multiple births.
- On Wednesday, November 25, 2009, Harriet Loeb, a writer and editor for the National Weather Service, came to New Milford to speak to several classes. Miss Loeb, sister of Ms. Burten, has come to New Milford several times to speak about her educational experiences as a deaf student in the public schools before there was Special Educational programming. She was accompanied by her therapy dog, Cody. Cody, a labradoodle, was as compelling to the students as Miss Loeb. Miss Loeb spoke to the Future Educators Class concerning the impact of teachers in her education. She also spoke to several English classes how reading and writing were fundamental to her success and communication. Students asked thoughtful questions about her life as a deaf woman, the use of sign language, the role of parents in encouraging her to do better, and her accommodations in the work place. It was an enlightening experience for many of our students.

3. Innovations:

- The tenth grade Honors English classes of Mrs. DePoto recently completed their reading of The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne. As a culminating project students were asked to design their own "scarlet letter" based on a personal flaw or weakness in their lives. They wore this "badge of shame" all day on Monday November 16, 2009, to understand fully the feelings and predicament of Hester Prynne, the main character in the novel studied. In class, they were asked to write a brief explanation of this flaw, and how it affected their lives. They were also asked to come up with a game plan for turning the flaw into an asset. This is authentic learning at its best!
- To celebrate American Education Week, the Future Educators Club sponsored several activities the week of November 16-20, 2009. On Monday, November 16, they began the "Thank a Teacher" campaign with the writing of notes to "a teacher who made a

difference in your life”. These notes were put into a red box under the plasma TV on the main floor and were distributed to recipients on the Friday of that week.

- This past Veteran’s Day, Mr. Coyne’s Language Arts class took a look at New Milford’s fallen heroes from World War II and the Vietnam War. The students read about every soldier who gave up their lives for our freedom, and then picked two that really influenced them. They then wrote summaries of the soldiers’ lives, explained why they picked them, and why they felt so inspired. The students presented their essays orally to express their feelings for each soldier.
- On Tuesday, November 10, 2009, Ms. Lyons and Mrs. Grompone collaborated and combined their Spanish III classes to record dialogues using IPODS. Both classes have been working on the past tense, and have been learning how to describe past events. In this particular assignment, students were required to record a dialogue describing a competition or sporting event that they had seen at New Milford High School. For most of the students in the class, this was the first time that they had used IPODS to make a voice recording. The students learned how to use the microphones on the IPODS to record themselves speaking Spanish, and were able practice their pronunciation in the target language. Students worked in pairs to record dialogues that they had worked on in class and submitted them for a grade. At the end of the class, students listened to the dialogues that they had created with their classmates.



- The International Foods class worked on a unit about the food bank's shortages in this country during the month of November. The students formed learning communities to research the US food classifications and the percentages of citizens that fall into the various categories. They spent a week creating and sampling foods that a person/family in need would have available to them. The learning communities then worked to prepare a Hunger Banquet called “A Seat at the Table”. This program was presented to three classes on Wednesday, November 18, 2009. The program included a Power Point presentation, student’s written stories illustrating the food classifications, and three different meals representing what someone from each classification would eat. The participating students were placed in three groups by selecting a colored stick. Green was food secure and dined on Lasagna, Salad and Cookies. The red group was food insecure or food emergency. They dined on macaroni and cheese with iced tea. The Blue group was hunger or famine. They dined on steamed rice and water from the fountain. The goal of this program was to develop empathy towards people in need and to encourage the students to bring in more canned food for the NMHS food drive.
- The NMHS REBEL Chapter recently looked at the following smoking statistics:
 - 10,700 New Jersey kids under 18 become new daily smokers each year.
 - 398,000 New Jersey youth are exposed to second-hand smoke at home.
 - 15.1 million packs of cigarettes are bought or smoked by New Jersey youth each year.
 - Big Tobacco spends an estimated \$231.2 million on marketing and advertising in New Jersey.

- Smoking is the largest preventable cause of death and more than 8 out of 10 smokers started at or before the age of 18.

To address these staggering statistics, **New Milford High School's REBEL Chapter** sponsored a smoking cessation program on November 19, 2009, the day of "The Great American Smoke Out". The program was called "**Adopt a Smoker**". New Milford High School students who smoke cigarettes were asked to make a commitment for one day or the rest of their lives to stop smoking. The twenty-seven students who voluntarily enrolled were assigned a REBEL buddy and received rewards, goodies and positive acclamations throughout the day to address their need for nicotine. At the end of the day, seven students agreed to make the commitment to stop smoking once and for all. If this program can help address one student's addiction to nicotine, then the program was a success.

- The Emerald Knights have been meeting on Wednesday afternoons to work on designing their "Dashboard for the future" in the Dash + Competition (<http://www.fuelourfuturenow.com/Contest>). Students have come up with several innovative ideas which use many novel and current technologies. They have enlisted the help of Math teacher, Mr. Ramsey, to critique some of their ideas and to help with any technical issues that may come up. In addition, fellow student Mario Romero helped with the technical make up, and with an explanation of how an automobile works. Students will be judged in three areas: 1) Dashboard Design, 2) Technical Plan - This requires students to answer five questions, explaining to the judges the "why" and the "how" for their design, and 3) Video Pitch - Convincing the automakers and the general public that they have created the dashboard of the future and why their dashboard design should be chosen. The official entry of the dashboard has to be submitted by March 2010. Members of the Emerald Knights are Disha Dass, Meredith McCann, Jennilyn Robles, Shanen Mulles, Eileen Gongon and Ms. Vikki Smith as team advisor.
- Mr. Lockhart conducted a class for the benefit of every English section whose teacher wished them to attend a lesson in the use of blank verse in Shakespearean plays for the direction and guidance of actors and directors. The thesis of the lesson, which relied on members of the cast of MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING using demonstrations from the text of that play and other Shakespeare works, was that the structure and the use of blank verse in Shakespeare is not so much about letting the audience enjoy "poetry," but is employed to instruct the actors and directors in the correct interpretation of the characters and situations of the scene at hand. To give a simple example, any variation from the "da-dum" rhythm of iambic pentameter should be a clue that Shakespeare is seeking a different emphasis for a line or a phrase, and that therefore he wishes to call attention to those "off-rhythm" words. Students (very ably) assisting were Melissa Milne, Mark Diaz, Kelly Novak, Leonard Perez, Disha Dass, Andrew Bridge, Gideon Lazares and Sean Niranjana.
- Mrs. Keesing and Mrs. Torpie collaborated on a series of lessons about climate change with 9th grade biology classes. Students worked in small groups utilizing Web 2.0 technology, and they conducted research using subscription databases, eBooks, and other resources to learn about renewable energy, activities of other countries regarding climate change, and other aspects of the issue. The authentic learning task required students to use a wiki created by Mrs. Keesing and Google Docs to collaborate on their research and compose a letter to President Obama, in which they expressed their concerns about climate change. These letters were sent to the White House in hopes that someone in the administration will read them in advance of the President's upcoming trip to the Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change. Mrs. Keesing and Mrs. Torpie are also in the process of submitting the students' work to a panel that is interested in learning about projects that promote both collaboration and global competency. The New York Times

- Knowledge Network, CISCO, the Asia Society and a handful of State Departments of Education, including the New Jersey Department of Education, are project partners.
- Students in Mr. Devereaux AP Biology class had to create presentations describing the different stages of mitosis. Students came up with various ways to get the information across, such as creating rap songs, role-playing activities, and creating Twitter accounts to make status updates that highlighted the different events that occur during the cell cycle.
 - Ms. Constantino's and Mr. Coyne's juniors learned a great deal about the various ethnicities of their fellow classmates during a study of immigrant literature. The list includes Italian, Irish, Greek, French, Spanish, Costa Rican, English, German, Dutch, Polish, Swedish, Turkish, Armenian, Dominican, Mexican, Chinese, Filipino, Russian, Ukrainian, Ecuadorian, Hispanic, Indian, Guyanese, Czech, Kurdish, Puerto Rican, and more. Each student had the opportunity to create a Family Tree, make a presentation enlightening their classmates about the culture of their various homelands, and enjoy a culminating Food Fest sampling of delicious ethnic dishes prepared by their gracious relatives. Thanks to all who contributed and made this wonderful activity possible. It was indeed an enjoyable and memorable learning experience!

4. Student honors

- Freshman Kaysee Orozco was named 1st team All-Bergen County for girls' tennis.
- Senior Michael Themistocleous was selected by the Bergen County Soccer Coaches' Association to receive the Unsung Hero Award for NMHS boys' soccer.
- Senior Azela Zarate performed with the All-State Mixed Chorus in Atlantic City during the Teacher's Convention. The following Sunday she had the opportunity to perform at NJPAC. We are proud of her accomplishments and the time she took to rehearse alternate Saturdays in Central Jersey.

5. Field trips

- On Wednesday November 18, 2009, members of the Teacher Cadet class attended a workshop at FDU on "What Makes a Great Teacher?" On Thursday, November 18, over 40 students in the FEA participated in Teacher Shadow Day where students were paired up with faculty members and administrators for a real live look at a typical day in the life of an educator. The day began with a breakfast and ended with a focus session in the Library during Period 8 to go over what was learned by the activity.
- Members of the Choral Ensemble, Nick Novak, percussion and Anthony Vinci, trumpet, performed at the Borough Hall for the Veteran's Day Service. Azela Zarate closed the ceremony singing God Bless America.
- The Tri-M Music Honor Society and the Choral Ensemble traveled to Montclair State University to be involved in Theater Arts Day. They had an opportunity to take classes in the morning given by the professors of the college. In the afternoon they had the treat to watch the performance of Arcadia in which a former alumni of NMHS Joshua Dela Cruz ('07) had the lead. Josh lighted up the stage with his talent.

6. Guidance

- During the month of October, all 10th and 11th grade students took part in the PSAT testing. The results are to be distributed to students in early December. The Guidance Department will give a Power Point presentation provided by the College Board explaining the PSAT results, as well as how to use these scores in the post high school planning process. The students will receive a detailed score report showing each right/wrong answer and their original test booklet. These materials will assist students in

planning their SAT preparation and help them to identify what areas they will need to strengthen their skills.

- The Guidance Department will be taking a group of nine qualifying seniors to William Paterson University for an Immediate Decision Day on December 2nd, 2009. The students will have the opportunity to experience a quick, easy, and personalized admissions process. They will speak with an admissions counselor, tour the campus, leave with a decision, and possibly, a scholarship.
- On Thursday, December 3rd, 2009, the Guidance Department will hold their annual Financial Aid Workshop. Kimber Decker, Vice President of Nelnet Campus Solutions, will be our speaker. Mr. Decker will review each item on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form, answer questions pertaining to specific individual situations, and provide essential information about the ins and outs of the financial aid process.

7. Professional Development

- Mr. Sheninger spoke at the 140 Characters Conference: Exploring the State of Now at the Kodak Theatre in Los Angeles, CA last month. He was part of a panel with educators from across the country and world that spoke about the emerging role of Twitter in education. The panel specifically discussed how Twitter is being utilized by stakeholders in education to share resources, collaborate globally, engage in thoughtful dialogue/discussion on educational issues, as well as being a means of meaningful professional development. A video of the entire panel discussion has been posted and can be viewed at <http://140conf.blip.tv/file/2790496>. Separate interviews that Mr. Sheninger gave or was a part of can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nizYnTe2TYU> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEMe1GPau-U>
- Mrs. Keesing recently attended the annual New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL) Conference. She learned more about a variety of new technologies, listened to a bestselling author about crafting a young adult novel, and she is excited about trying out some of the engaging Web 2.0 applications to see where they might integrate with the curriculum.
- NMHS educators have begun to join The Educator's PLN (The personal learning network for educators. This professional/social networking site was created using Ning, a collaborative web 2.0 application. The sole purpose of the site is dedicated to the support of a Personal Learning Network for Educators. Members can view other educational Ning sites, join subject/content-specific groups, post videos, participate in chats/discussions with educators from all over the world, and learn about professional development opportunities.

8. Facilities

- In response to H1N1, hand sanitizer dispensers have been installed in various locations throughout the building.

9. Theatre Arts

- Through the collective effort of faculty, students, and parents over a substantial period this fall, New Milford High School presented its first Shakespeare play, the romantic comedy *Much Ado About Nothing*. Work began with the editing and preparation of the performance text by Mr. Lockhart of the English Department, who directed the production. Pre-production by Mr. Coviello of the Social Studies Department and Ms. Kolb, Music teacher at Owens Middle School began in September, when the play was cast and rehearsals began. Soon thereafter, Mr. Torpie of the Science Department

pitched in with logistical support in rehearsals; Mr. Torpie also demonstrated a remarkable flair for Shakespearean interpretation, filling in for any missing performers at rehearsal. As he has done so often in the past, Mr. James Africano pitched in with his cadre of parents and other adults to realize the conception of the set, creating a Spanish Mission environment for the story. Art classes and the Art Club led by Ms. Bettini and Ms. Morel, following the lead of alumnus Matthew Kaprielian ('09), brought the scenes to life using a number of techniques to transform flat scenery into solid-looking building materials, including those of a miniature chapel. Students Jessica Milne and Sarah Torpie (both class of '11) stepped up to take principal responsibility for designing, building, gathering and coordinating costumes with the support and guidance of Mrs. Beiner, no little task, given the Old Southwest setting of the production; and these young women are to be especially congratulated for their initiative and persistence.

As opening night approached, Mr. Coviello put the stage crew to work, both helping to finish the set, wrangle props, execute the lighting plans developed by alumnus Justin Munier ('09) and operate the sound equipment for the music and microphone amplification required. Regular support in terms of bringing food, helping sell tickets, photography, and general morale was supplied by the McMahan, Kaprielian, and Milne families. Our deep gratitude is owed to all our parents.

Most importantly, after some struggle, the heightened language of Shakespeare, both in verse and prose was deftly and clearly interpreted by the students, led most especially by Melissa Milne and Mark Diaz ('10), Kelly Novak, Andrew Bridge and Leonard Perez ('11), and Disha Dass and Mary Costa ('10). While fine work was done by all, these students deserve special commendation for the clarity and balance they brought to this new challenge. This was a landmark learning experience in Language Arts and in theater for all involved. Not only did our students meet and surpass the expectations laid out, not a few indicated their desire for more and further challenges in production of Shakespeare and other classical theater.

10. Other

- Mr. Sheninger, science teacher Mr. Devereaux, and senior Kaitlyn O'Donnell recently met with reporter Alice Stockton-Rosini from 1010WINS (<http://www.1010wins.com>) to talk about the power of Twitter in education and how it is being used as a global collaboration tool. The radio interview aired during the morning of Wednesday, November 18, 2009. Anyone that wants to hear all three forty-five second pieces of the interview can visit <http://drop.io/a4jyuv0>.
- On Wednesday November 18, 2009, NMHS staff and students were interviewed by CBS News NY reporter Cindy HSU for a story called "N.J. Principal Teaches Students To Tweet". The article and video (on right hand side of the screen) can be viewed at <http://wcbstv.com/topstories/twitter.new.milford.2.1320932.html>
- On Friday November 20, 2009, the Record of Bergen County ran an article entitled "New Milford teachers using Twitter, social media sites to engage students". The article can be viewed in it's entirety at http://www.northjersey.com/news/111909_New_Milford_teachers_using_Twitter_social_media_sites_to_engage_students.html
- On Monday November 23, 2009, the class of 2010 hosted the first Powder Puff football game in many years. All of the classes freshmen through seniors participated in the game and it was a great success. Each grade was assigned a color T-shirt for the event, which made for a very colorful and exciting view of the game. The players and coaches devoted many hours and a lot of hard work to get ready for the game. They held practices almost everyday after school and even on weekends to prepare for the event. The teams fought hard and played with a lot of intensity and enthusiasm. The night was

a great success for all of the participants but especially the freshmen class who pulled of a big upset win over the sophomores in the first game and the juniors in the final game to clinch the Championship. The seniors raised over \$1000 for their class with both admission to the game and in T-shirts sales. I would like to thank all who were involved in the game and the preparation for the game. In particular Keith Deveraux, Lawrence Ramsey, Patty Bernardo, Ruth Beiner, Anne Teets, Russell Petrocelli and everyone else who made this event possible. The Powder Puff Game was an excellent success and we hope to keep the tradition going through the years.