

April 2008 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>
Nora Aivars	Math	3/25/08	4	Eric Sheninger
Lisette Morel	Art	4/1/08	2	Eric Sheninger
Lisette Morel	Art	4/1/08	4	Louis Manuppelli
Alex Ivchenko	Comp. Apps.	4/16/08	2	Eric Sheninger

Summaries: End of the Year evaluations for all staff began on Tuesday 4/1 and will be completed by Wednesday 4/30.

2. Guest lecturers

- Thanks to Ms. Keesing, Ms. Tambuscio confirmed a visit to our school by Holocaust survivors Ina and Jack Polak on 5/19/08
<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/05/nyregion/05nazi.html>. Both Ina and Jack spent time in Westerbork transit camp in the Netherlands during WWII. Their story is documented in a recent film - *Steal a Pencil for Me*. Mr. and Mrs. Polak will speak to a large group of students in the auditorium and then we will have some of our local survivors speak to students in small groups. Students in Social Studies classes will attend the lecture. Additionally, our students attending the large group session will view the film before their visit in all of the Social Studies classes.
- Peer Leadership sponsored a Pasta Dinner on April 5th to raise funds for the current genocide in Darfur, Sudan. Dr. Jerry Ehrlich of *Doctors Without Borders* was the guest speaker. He spoke to an audience of students and parents about his 2005 work in Darfur and his experiences healing dying children. He detailed the effects of this genocide on Darfurians and spoke artwork drawn by children that he was able to smuggle out of the country. The event raised \$1,600 to be donated to Doctors Without Borders.

3. Innovations:

- Members of Student Council and Peer Leadership hosted a meeting with students from Belvidere High School (Warren County, NJ) under the Guidance of Mr. Sheninger, Ms. Schlamp, and Ms. Tambuscio. The premise of the meeting was to exchange innovative ideas unique to each school. The students of NMHS presented various programs that help to define NMHS culture such as Denim for Dollars, Bear Hugs for the Holidays, Fundraising Efforts for Darfur, the Gifted & Talented Program, Holocaust Study Tour, Schooled, and the Flood Relief Carnival. Our students presented a thorough PowerPoint presentation and infused multiple video clips in order to provide a detailed, inside look at life in New Milford. NMHS students then guided representatives from BHS through our building and conversed over lunch catered by Sanducci's. Our students will travel to Belvidere High School on Friday 5/16 to learn about their special programs with the goal of possibly implementing some of them here.
- Mr. Sheninger hosted a breakfast on Thursday 4/3 for all members of student government (grades 9-12 and Student Council). The purpose of the meeting was to convey the message that all students are stakeholders in the culture of NMHS and they should take ownership as to the types of activities that they want to put in place. They were all asked to provide suggestions on how to make NMHS a better place. Categories for discussion included academic programs, social events, fundraisers, spirit activities, etc. It is the goal of the high school administration to hold meetings like this 3-4 times during the school year in order to

instill a sense of pride in the school and make students feel that they have a say and are integral components of the decision-making process.

- The National Art Honor Society is collecting eyeglasses for the Lion's Club International Eyeglass Recycle Program. Everyone is being asked to consider donating eyeglasses, sunglasses (prescription and non-prescription), and eyeglass cases in good condition to this cause. The Art Honor Society will be sending them to the Lion's Club to be recycled and distributed to people in developing countries who need visual correction. Drop off your donations to Mrs. Bettini's Art Room – 230, NMHS.
- The History and World Language Departments worked collaboratively with the Computer Applications course this month. During computer applications class, the students created a PowerPoint presentation about an individual from World History other than the U.S. After researching the individual using the Internet, the students created a PowerPoint presentation and then used the Smart Board to present it to their class. World Language students created a 2-sided travel brochure using Microsoft Publisher. The brochure included airfare, foreign currency, exchange rates, natural resources, popular food, cooking, eating, attractions, pastimes, sports, fashion, design, and hotel information.
- Ms Smith's Chemistry class was given the assignment to "Teach Chapter 9 - Stoichiometry" to students who have not taken any Chemistry. Students worked in either pairs or alone and chose their own format for the project. They were given a rubric specifying what content they were required to have from chapter 9 and also any previous chapters that allow or help them to teach the chapter. Some of the formats students chose were PowerPoint presentations, a magazine, rap song/video, scrapbook, video skits or posters. Projects were due on April 10 and the students had to present and teach, using their format, to select 9th and 10th grade students, as well as to some adults. With the collaborative help from Mr Arturi and Ms Gandolfo, several students came and evaluated how well the students explained and taught them chapter 9 during periods 2, 4, 6 and 8 on Thursday April 10, and Friday April 11th. All student evaluators completed an evaluation sheet explaining what they had learned and which group(s) were effective in their explanations of Chapter 9. Their evaluations were incorporated into the student's project grade for the 3rd marking period. Honary mention of projects: Eva Mendelson and Mark Diaz - Video Skit; Diane Montecucollo and Jayleen Quevedo - Professional Magazine; Dan Suarez and JJ (James) Tufaro - Teaching Video; Brian Perez - PowerPoint; Ali Metwalli - 3 Dimensional Poster; Kelly Dunbar and Lee Trifari - Powerpoint - Making of smores; Regina Carbone and Jen Campanelli - PowerPoint and making of cookies; Jeffrey Jimenez - Video Skit; Cody Donovan and PJ Doherty Rap Song/Video; Amanda Vaughan and Robin Rebusillo - Powerpoint and John Mayisoglu and Chris Tacoma - PowerPoint.
- The French classes presented a program to the 6th and 7th grades at the Middle School on Tuesday, April 15. The program consisted of students speaking of the importance of the French language for international travel, careers, culture and pleasure. Students prepared PowerPoint presentations sharing their recent trips to Quebec and "French New York". They also performed their bilingual version of several songs from Les Miserables and Beauty and the Beast (La Belle et la Bete). The French 2 class performed their French version of the Three Little Pigs while the older students performed a skit about mistaken identity during a visit to the doctor. Finally, Paul Robalino spoke of how his efforts to save the French program sparked the interest of the Harvard interviewer during his recent interview. He encouraged students who speak a language fluently not to miss the opportunity to challenge themselves by choosing a different language to study in school. He explained how top universities are looking for evidence of a sincere interest in learning, and how learning French opened the door to him to a new culture. The program was received very enthusiastically by the middle school students!
- This spring sees the inauguration of what we hope will be a new tradition at NMHS: the annual Student Short Play Festival and Competition. Building on the long-established end-

of-the-year Drama Class presentation, that Class and the Opening Knights (NMHS's new year-round drama club) are producing an evening of all-student theater, culminating in a competition for the best new play of the year. New plays were solicited, and from those submitted, five were chosen as semi-finalists, to be presented on the evening of Friday, May 16. From those five, 3rd, 2nd and 1st prize-winners will be selected, accompanied by prizes in the form of gift cards worth \$25, \$50 and \$100 respectively. All the plays will be directed by students under the supervision of Mr. Lockhart, supported by Mr. Coviello and the members of the Opening Knights. Semi-finalist playwrights are in alphabetical order, Ryan Dempsey, Jessica Milne, Vanessa Rappa, Shawn Theodore and Sean Walsh. Subjects range from the ordinary terrors of student life, to science fiction and metaphysics. Mr. Lockhart says the idea occurred to him as he was teaching about the festivals in ancient Athens for which all the great tragedies of Sophocles, Aeschylus and Euripides were created. "Yes, they were perhaps trying to express something eternal about the human spirit," he says, "but they were doing so in order to win prizes and renown." Judges will be selected from the audience, so Board members are strongly urged to attend what will hopefully be an historic event for the arts at NMHS.

4. Student honors:

- Congratulations to junior Kinjal Desai on her selection to the 2008 New Jersey Governor's School in the Sciences. Kinjal is the seventh New Milford scholar to be selected for the Governor School Program in the last six years and she is the first to be selected in the Sciences. Kinjal is the number one academic student in the junior class. She has received Departmental awards in both Mathematics and Science for both her freshman and her sophomore years. She has been a three year Math League member and top Math League student for the last two years. She has been a three year participant in the Gifted and Talented Program. As a member of the High School Debate Team, her team last year won the State Championships in the prestigious Lincoln-Douglas Debates. She is a member of the National Honor Society and the Spanish National Honor Society.
- Congratulations to David Gongon for having the highest individual overall score in this year's Math League! He beat out students from Dumont, Tenafly, and River Dell. This marks the first time a New Milford student has finished in first place!
- Paul Robalino was recently accepted to Harvard and Princeton. With his acceptance to Yale earlier in the year, Paul has now been accepted to three Ivy League Schools.
- On May 1, 2008 Michael Konotomanolis and Mrs. Tambuscio have been invited to speak at the annual Bergen County Holocaust Commemoration sponsored by the UJA of Bergen County at Temple Sholom in River Edge. Over 500 community members will be in attendance.
- The following students, through a rigorous audition process in south Jersey, were accepted as the newest members of the All-State Chorus.: Lijin Joy and Jonell Robles will perform in Atlantic City at the Teachers Convention and the NJPAC next November with the All-State Mixed Chorus. Melissa Milne will perform at the Music Teachers Conference and NJPAC in February with the All-State Women's Chorus.
- Jessica Marciano (senior) and Alvin George (freshman) performed on violin with the professional orchestra for "Thoroughly Modern Mille." This was a very difficult score and they worked many hours independently while displaying their talents masterfully.

5. Field trips

- Due to a grant awarded to Mrs. Burten, from the Eagleton Foundation and Rutgers University, 42 students along with Mr. Gouraige, visited the Trenton State House on April 7, 2008. A brief tour of the State House included the Legislative wing and the Senate chambers. Later, the students were sworn in as representatives and engaged in debate on the

merits of a piece of legislation that had been previously discussed in chambers. It was extremely exciting for our students when they were escorted back to Senate chambers where the Senate was called to order to vote on several pieces of important legislation. New Milford High School was recognized on the floor by Senate President and former Governor, Richard J. Codey and our representative Jerry Cardinale. The students witnessed an historic moment as the Family Leave Act was voted on and passed by one vote.

- Nine students will be participating in this year's Holocaust Study Tour to Germany, Czech Republic, and Poland. A significant new experience has been created for the students while visiting a small town on the Czech/Polish border - the towns of Olomouc and Trisce. Last year, while traveling through Olomouc on the way to Poland the group discovered the remnants of Jewish life that existed there before and during the war. Upon return, Mrs. Tambuscio discovered that a diary utilized in the Holocaust course was from the towns of Olomouc and Trisce. Otto Wolf kept a diary while he and his family hid in the forest and in homes in Olomouc and Trisce. Otto and his brother did not survive the war. His sister did and later when she emigrated to America she donated Otto's diary to The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Through contacts with the editor and translator of the diary, Mrs. Tambuscio was able to locate descendents of the rescuers. There will be a very special meeting of our students and the descendents of the rescuers in the mayor's office of Trisce. Additionally, a local Holocaust survivor, Mr. Milos Dobry, will be taking us to the homes where the Wolf family was hidden as well as into the forest where the family was hidden in underground bunkers. The group looks forward to presenting the entire scope of the program to our school community and beyond this June. Funding Note: Approximately \$47,000 has been raised to supplement the cost of the trip by generous individuals, corporations and foundations!!!
- Students in Mr. Devereaux's and Ms. Smith's Ecology classes attended the Bronx Zoo on 4/17 to get an up close and personal look at the animals so often discussed in class. The students used the trip to the zoo to look at the various biomes that the zoo simulates, and will be focusing on the evolutionary adaptations that the animals have made to live and reproduce successfully in their environments.
- Members of the high school band and music department enjoyed a phenomenal performance of the *Blue Man Group* in NYC on Wednesday April 16th. Most students said it was a high school experience they will never forget. Sophomores Brian Drew and Kenny Van Sadere's names were broadcast on the stage (Thanks to some teacher input). Everyone was excited and surprised to be recognized by a familiar film crew (the one from Schooled) that was filming a promo for the show. Look for New Milford students once again on TV in the upcoming months!

6. Professional Development

- During the April faculty meeting, Ms. Keesing presented a brief overview of selected electronic resources – some we subscribe to already for the high school, and some that have been set up for us to try. These subscription online databases and eBooks (reference books online) are invaluable resources for our students. They are available to high school students and teachers 24/7 with unlimited remote access from the high school library media center webpage. The two databases that she outlined for the faculty are Issues: Understanding Controversy/Society and Today's Science. She has requested that teachers try out both the eBooks and our range of online subscription databases and get back to her with their feedback. Studies continue to show that although teenagers may be savvy about navigating the Internet, they have quite poor research skills. It is vital that we convince our teachers of the great value of requiring our students to use the types of electronic resources that were demonstrated. We need to expect that our students will use databases and eBooks for their projects and assignments, and rubrics should reflect and reward that use.

- Mrs. Porr recently attended a Counselor Visitation Program sponsored by the Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges. She had the opportunity to visit the following institutions: Cedar Crest College, DeSales University, Lafayette College, Lehigh University, Moravian College, and Muhlenberg College. During each visit Mrs. Porr toured the campus, spoke with student panels, and met with the school's admission departments. This was a wonderful opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge of these colleges, as well as receive essential college admissions updates.

7. Facilities

- LCD projectors were mounted on the ceilings in rooms 335, 331, and 328. These projectors will be used for PowerPoint presentations and the viewing of video clips during instruction.
- The mobile iPod lab has been assembled and is now ready for use.

8. Guidance

- On Friday, April 11th the Guidance Department hosted Career Day for 11th grade students. There were 33 presenters representing a wide variety of professions. Students learned about two different careers during thirty-five minute small group sessions where they were able to ask questions about the occupations. We are very grateful to the presenters for giving of their time to assist our students with their career exploration.
- 11th and 12th grade students in Advanced Placement (AP) classes will be taking their AP exams on certain days from May 5th-13th. These tests are a culmination of a year of rigorous and intense coursework. Since AP classes are taught at a college level, students have the opportunity to earn college credit depending on their scores and the college they decide to attend.
- On Saturday, May 3rd New Milford High School will be holding the SAT exam beginning at 8am. Students participating in this test will receive detailed instructions of when and where they should report on that day. The SAT is also being administered at local area high schools on June 7th. Register online for the June test at www.collegeboard.com before the May 6th deadline.

9. Other

- Mr. Sheninger participated in a panel discussion with administrators from Pennsylvania at East Stroudsburg University on Wednesday 4/3. The purpose of this panel was to participate in a discussion with graduate students who are aspiring administrators and answer questions relating to educational administration.
- Mr. Tusa reports that the two Saturday review sessions for the US History AP Test (April 5, and April 12) were two of the most successful sessions to date with some 3/4 of students reporting. There will be additional after school review sessions starting some two weeks prior to the exam (4/28-5/8).
- Mrs. Vicari visited other high schools in April to observe various business courses and met with the Business Education Department staff in order to prepare our new Business Entrepreneur class to be offered in 2009-2010. She visited Passaic Valley High School and observed the International Business Practice Firm Class on 4/16 and Teaneck High School on 4/17 where she observed a Small Business Management class.
- We are very happy to announce that the production of *Thoroughly Modern Millie* has made it to the final rounds of the 2008 Rising Star Awards sponsored by Papermill Playhouse in 3 categories:
 - 1) Outstanding Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role- Hannah Faye Zarate
 - 2) Outstanding Scenic Achievement: Jim Africano and Lynette Bettini
 - 3) Outstanding Hair and Makeup Achievement- cast of the show assisted by Mrs. McCarten and Mrs. Foo

The overall production score of the show was 19.75. Production scores may range between 13 and 78, where the lower the score, the higher the ranking. To qualify for the final rounds in the Awards program, there must be a nomination by all four judges in that category. We received 3 out of 4 nominations in the following categories:

Outstanding Achievement by a Teacher or Outside Director: James Vagias

Outstanding Achievement in Choreography: Holly Jahn

Outstanding Lighting Achievement: George Milne and Justin Muniere

Outstanding Costume Achievement: Ruth Beiner and the Drama Mamas

- The spring sports season is off to a good start. The boys track team won the First Place Team Championship at the Aviator Relays in Hasbrouck Heights on 4/11. Senior Patrick Mitchell set a new school record of 22'5 _" in the long jump, breaking a record set in 1970 by Bob Ryan. The girls' team finished a strong second at the Aviator Relays, medaling in 13 of the 18 events. In addition, the baseball and softball teams have established themselves as contenders in the BCSL Olympic division and currently are undefeated in the league. Overall, the softball team is now 5-1 and the baseball team is 6-1, both with important league games in the coming week. Currently, the boy's tennis and golf teams are off to their best start in recent years. With a 7-2 record, the boys' tennis team is making a push to qualify for the State Tournament for the first time in recent years. The golf team is also off to its best start in recent years by totaling nearly as many wins through one quarter of the season as had been won last season.
- The NM Drug Alliance is sponsoring a fundraiser basketball game between members of the NMPD and the NMHS faculty and coaches. The game is scheduled for May 2nd at 7:00pm in the high school gym. Proceeds will go to the NM Drug Alliance and the NM Athletic Boosters. Admission is \$2.00 for students/children and \$4.00 for adults.
- Mr. Arturi taught CPR to numerous New Milford Graduates that received certification as part of the senior health curriculum and have returned to get their certification updated for different reasons - primarily because they need it to meet college requirements in their major or for their job. This is another way in which NMHS continues to give back to the community.