

DECEMBER 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>
Rich Cella	Algebra 1A	12/2, 12/3, 12/4	7	Eric Sheninger
Jerry Perrone	Admin.	12/2	N/A	Eric Sheninger
Lou Manuppelli	Admin.	12/3	N/A	Eric Sheninger
Yvonne Haskill	Geometry	12/5	1	Eric Sheninger
Sue Grabowski	Algebra 2	12/10	1	Eric Sheninger
Tim Gouraige	Hon. MWH	12/16	5	Eric Sheninger

Summaries:

2. Guest lecturers

- Mrs. Burten invited her sister, Ms. Harriet Loeb, to visit and talk with her classes the day before Thanksgiving break. Ms. Loeb, who is deaf, was accompanied by her dog, Cody, who is a trained dog for the deaf. Ms. Loeb is a writer at the National Weather Service. She spent time with several classes discussing her experiences in high school before there were laws to protect the students with special needs. It was a far different experience, with much less opportunity, than our students enjoy today. Ms. Loeb also discussed her job and responsibilities at the National Weather Service and the accommodations that she requires to do her job successfully. But the true star of the day was Cody. He stayed by her side and performed many of the jobs he is required to do. He truly won the admiration of the students. Ms. Loeb is a true role model for students and is a wonderful illustration of what hard work, dedication, and education can do in overcoming disabilities.
- On December 2, 2008 The New Milford High School's Student Body participated in an assembly entitled "Charting Your Course". The program challenges the students to consider their long-range goals, to organize their thoughts and ideas regarding their future and to chart a course for excellence in their lives. The overall message of self leadership will hopefully motivate the students to stop rationalizing their behaviors and accept responsibility for their own actions. This program was paid for by the New Milford Drug Alliance.

3. Innovations:

- Mr. Gouraige developed and implemented a unique lesson on 12/16/08 in his Honors Modern World History class. After lecturing about The English Civil war in the early 17th century and discussing the characteristics of monarch at that time, he then had the class engage in an interesting venture. The main activity was a cooperative learning assignment where students read a teacher-generated fictitious scenario about an absolute monarch and his suppression of people's rights. After reading the article the students had to write a letter regarding what the position of parliament would be in response to the monarch's policies. They also created a seal on the letter symbolizing the sentiments of the English Bill of Rights.
- There will be an interactive murder mystery presented by The Opening Knights on February 6th and 7th at New Milford High School. Directed by John Coviello and Produced by Kerr Lockhart, the murder mystery, "Actually, I Did It", will feature over thirty-five NMHS students who will perform not only during the evening, but will also write, direct, and stage manage the entire event. There are thirteen student playwrights who will be part of the Student Creative Team. This SCT will go through the entire process of writing, producing,

- workshopping, staging, casting, and directing the show. Every student will have the opportunity to play a principal character during either the first or second performance.
- Mrs. Keesing's library orientation for 9th graders recently culminated in playing "The Library Game", in which teams of students competed for points by showing their prowess with topics presented in a series of library orientation lessons. Areas covered included knowledge of how to use the library media center facility, BELS (the school library catalog), interlibrary loan, website evaluation, and the advantages of using subscription databases. Fast-paced questions (in which team members took turns as responders), individual scavenger hunts, and team poster-making comprised the elements of the game. Teams also added to their score by having valid library cards. Teams from the 9th grade classes of Mr. Engstrom, Mr. Lockhart, Ms. Schlamp, and Ms. DePoto played enthusiastically, as they reinforced their knowledge of library skills.
 - Upon completion of reading and discussing THE KITE RUNNER, Mrs. Consentino and Mr. Coyne's senior class is currently involved in a kite-building culminating activity. Five groups of four students each have been given the opportunity to build and decorate one kite per group. After receiving the necessary directions and materials, the students were immediately engaged in the completion of the task. Each group of students worked very well together and are looking forward to the final challenge...will the kite fly? With weather permitting, this group of seniors will have the opportunity to find out!

4. Student honors:

5. Field trips

- On Monday December 1st, Mrs. Bettini's advanced art lab and Art Honor Society students took a walking trip to the Art Center of Northern New Jersey in New Milford. They viewed a juried show of photography, painting, printmaking and sculpture. Alumnus Christian Hincapie's pastel painting was chosen as best pastel in the show. It is outstanding! Matt Kaprielian gave the group a tour of the stone cutting facilities where he takes classes. He showed the students a piece that he was carving from solid marble. The director gave a tour, showed us price lists, and offered some of the students discounted classes.

6. Guidance

- On Thursday, December 4th, the Guidance Department held their annual Financial Aid Workshop for parents of 11th and 12th grade students. Kimber Decker, Senior Vice President of Nelnet Campus Solutions, presented. The night was attended by about 100 parents and students. Attendees acquired valuable knowledge for maximizing their financial aid award. Mr. Decker reviewed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form line by line, answered questions pertaining to specific individual's situations, and provided essential information about the details of the financial aid process.
- Current In-House Scholarships are available in the guidance office and on the Guidance Department website under College Information. Students are encouraged to visit this website in order to become familiar with the various scholarships being offered. Students are to submit a scholarship application request form to Mrs. Massar to begin the application process. In-House Scholarships are to be completed and returned to the guidance department by Monday, February 2, 2009.
- On Tuesday, January 6th, NMHS will be welcoming back 10 alumni students from the class of 2008. Graduates will spend the day speaking to students about their college experiences. The 11th grade students will be addressed in small groups with a focus on the college application process. The 12th grade students will attend an assembly that focuses on life as a first year college student. Both groups will be given an opportunity to ask the alumni

questions. Alumni will have the opportunity to visit with department heads, board members, and other invited guests.

7. Professional Development:

- On Wednesday 12/2 Mr. Lockhart (theatre), Ms. Swartz (music), and Ms. Morel (art) attended an Arts in Education workshop at Bergen County Community College. It was presented in three parts: a PowerPoint presentation and keynote address, a hands-on workshop in each of the teacher's disciplines showing them the work of in-house residents, and, finally, how to be successful in obtaining grants for these programs. This workshop reinforces the ideals we always knew to be true and gave us new insight for future endeavors. We are all excited about the chance of obtaining grants through the county. A lot of groundwork will need to be done first, but if chosen it will be a memory of a lifetime for the students involved. We would like to start small with a three-day workshop offered to first time recipients with a promise of a 20 day resident workshop the following year. Our first thought is to incorporate opera into each of our disciplines. This is something that the students of New Milford rarely learn to appreciate and see. Your help will be needed to make this dream a reality.

Highlights of the PowerPoint presentation:

- Students intensely engaged in the arts score higher on standardized testing regardless of socio-economic standing.
- Children involved in the arts achieve:
 - 4x's higher in academic achievement.
 - 4x's more successful high level math and science projects.
 - 3x's receive outstanding attendance awards.
 - 4x's better in language arts success and poetry writing.
 - 4x's more likely to become class officers and have leadership skills.
- The students learn self-discipline from the arts.
- The arts teach sequencing, which helps students in test taking.
- Students learn a positive skill of critique. It is used to:
 - Evaluate
 - Edit
 - Aid in decision making
 - Develop social and personal skills

Suggested reading is "A Whole Me Mind" by Daniel Pink. Students of the arts will be an asset to the work force of the future. As right brain thinkers, they will rule the world. Their readiness to work in a hands-on design fashion will aid companies and hopefully prevent them from outsourcing work. Student of the arts are able to synthesize more readily from other disciplines and are easily able to tell a narrative.

- Ms. Burten attended a workshop on December 3, 2008, sponsored by the Association of Mathematics Teachers of New Jersey. It was a workshop designed for Special Education teachers of Mathematics. Approximately 460 Special Education teachers that are highly qualified in Math attended the conference.
- On December 9, 2008 Mr. Wilson attended a workshop at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York as part of the orientation for the "Fed Challenge." This program, started by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in 1993, is an annual contest that allows students to analyze the current state of the economy and make their own recommendations in the style of the Federal Open Market Committee. Teams of three to five students design a 10 minute presentation and then face questions from a small panel of judges. The entire presentation is based upon student research of current economic statistics and trends. Three additional talks were given to provide background on the current crisis in the American economy. They were:

1. *"Background on the Subprime Mortgage Crisis"* delivered by Richard W. Peach Senior Vice President at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York
2. *"Key Issues for Monetary Policy-Makers"* presented by Raymond Stone of Stone & McCarthy Research Associates
3. *"Aligning Incentives in Securitization"* presented by Adam B. Ashcraft of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

Each interesting, albeit intense, presentation was about several fundamental economic facts that surrounds the start of the current recession. Each presentation was followed by a brief question and answer session. The focus was not only about the causes of the crisis, but also presented possible actions that the Federal Reserve might implement to ease the strains on various sectors of our economy. Copies of the PowerPoint presentations can be found at: <http://www.newyorkfed.org/education/fedchal.html> (follow the links on the right side of the page under "Fed Education" for Ray Stone, Adam Ashcraft, and Richard Peach)

- Ms. O'Donnell, the High School Nurse, attended the following professional development sessions and earned continuing education credits through the Nursing Spectrum:

Dog Bites in Children

Heroin is Not Chic: The Epidemic Continues

How Can We Reach Teenager Smokers

To the Point: The Contemporary Body Piercing and Tattooing Renaissance

She also attended a workshop on 12/8 at the Paragon Federal Credit Union entitled Communicating with Parents: Interpersonal Skills that Work

- In 2001, Peter Torpie was selected to participate in Columbia University's Summer Research Program for Science Teachers. Columbia University awards a minimum of 10 new Fellowships to New York Metropolitan area Middle and High School Science classroom teachers and Science staff developers/instructional specialists. These awards support the teachers' work in research laboratories over the course of two summers. Science teachers, staff developers and science administrators who wish to participate in this program must be committed to working in a University research laboratory for eight weeks in EACH of TWO consecutive summers. The primary aim of the Summer Research Program for Science Teachers is to provide New York Metropolitan area Middle and High School Science teachers with sustained hands-on experience in scientific research so they can better understand the practice of science, better transmit to their students and fellow teachers a feeling for its practice.

The program serves four major purposes:

SCIENCE CONTENT: Teachers participate in an informal seminar on a topic of broad general interest led by Columbia faculty or a speaker from another of New York's science-rich institutions.

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION: Teachers describe their research to one another at regularly scheduled oral presentations or poster sessions.

SCIENCE TEACHING: Teachers discuss common problems and exchange ideas on what works in the classroom.

PEER COACHING: Second-year participants provide guidance to their first-year colleagues.

The program encourages participants to report how their experiences have engaged them intellectually, provided them with new avenues for personal and professional growth, increased their appreciation of the process of scientific discovery, and enhanced their ability to communicate the excitement of science to their students and fellow teachers. Teachers who have participated in this program have reported that these experiences have revitalized their science teaching by encouraging them to increase laboratory-based constructivist

learning in their classrooms. The program has also given them insight into the personal qualities and technical skills needed to work as a laboratory technician, graduate student, postdoctoral fellow, and senior scientist, thereby aiding them in providing guidance and encouragement to students.

Participating teachers are expected to share their research experiences and new skills with their students and fellow teachers. The program's ongoing analysis of the effects of teacher participation on student outcomes shows that students of participating teachers demonstrate an increased interest and performance in science. Peter have been an exemplary candidate and has since provided lesson plans to this program which are used to help provide guidance to fellow teachers and candidates. Thanks to Peter Torpie's recent contributions of two of his chemistry lesson plans to the program, the Columbia University's Summer Research Program Lesson Plan Repository now has 341 standards based lessons. Below are links to the websites for Peter Torpie's Chemistry Lesson Plans:

<http://www.scienceteacherprogram.org/chemistry/Torpie08-1.html>

<http://www.scienceteacherprogram.org/chemistry/Torpie08-2.html>

8. Facilities

9. Other

- On 12/2 the administration received a letter from Dr. Paul Winkler, Executive Director of the NJ Commission on Holocaust Education. In the letter he stated that during the weekend of 11/14 – 11/16 he had the wonderful opportunity to work with Colleen Tambuscio, a Special Education and Holocaust teacher here. Ms. Tambuscio has been selected by the State, the Commission on Holocaust Education, the Liberty Science Center, and the National Association of Families of Victims of 9/11 to work on developing a curriculum for schools related to 9/11 and terrorism. Dr. Winkler explained that the input from Ms. Tambuscio and fourteen other selected individuals began the process of curriculum development, and on 11/16, the group reached an agreement on a mission statement, units for the guide, issues for student achievement, and the beginning of classroom activities (lesson plans). The group will meet again in late April 2009. Prior to that time, three committees (K-5; 6-8; 9-12) will meet and work to develop thirty-five lesson plans in order to ensure the successful completion of the guide, which will be presented next fall under the auspices of the Governor at the Liberty Science Center.
- In conjunction with the New Milford Police Department, a successful lockdown drill occurred at 9 AM on Wednesday 12/17.
- Culinary Arts had a Gingerbread House contest. Students made the houses from scratch and used their creativity to decorate them. Each kitchen had to have two accessories (car, mailbox, stack of wood, etc) and at least one tree. Judging took place on Monday 12/22 and the winning kitchen received a pizza party. The top five Gingerbread Houses will go on display by the cafeteria.
- The High School Band performed at the Town Holiday tree lighting ceremony on the first Sunday of this December. A variety of material was well received in the very cold weather! A supportive crowd enjoyed the band's interpretations of the holiday classics as well as a few tunes from the fall season.
- The High School music concert included contemporary versions of *Merry Gentleman*, *We Three Kings*, *Ukrainian Bell Carol* and a Holiday Medley. One of the highlights was a lively drum duet between Kenny Van Sadlers and Nick Novak at the conclusion.
- BookChat! Club advisor, Mrs. Keesing, enthusiastically reports success with the club's first book sale. The event served as a fundraiser to support the school's four classes. Total proceeds of \$320 translate into a donation of \$80 to each class. BookChat solicited contributions of books in good condition for readers of all ages from students and teachers.

Mrs. Keesing wants to thank senior Amanda Pennino for her book sale suggestion and her leadership. Thanks also are due to members of BookChat who helped with the sale and to the students and staff members who supported the sale. The success of this sale makes it likely that BookChat will make it an annual event.

- This year's Spring Musical will be "Working", A Musical based on the famous book by Studs Terkel. Alexander Diaz will be directing this year's show and auditions are currently taking place. The show will run from March 19th to the 22nd in the James Africano Auditorium. Tickets will be \$13.00. Kerr Lockhart will be returning as our music director and John Coviello will be producing this year's show. Also, a calvacade of New Milford's finest educators will be working on this show including, but not limited to, Walt Pevny, Ruth Beiner, Karen Vicari, Nicola Schneider, Nicollette Perna, Joe Manzo, Linda Keesing, and retiree James Africano. The Opening Knights will be presenting their second annual winter fundraiser this year on February 6th and 7th. This year's show will be an invitational, interactive murder mystery called "Actually, I Did It!" This show will be student written, directed, stage managed, and produced. Seating is limited and invitations will be sent out soon, so express interest as soon as possible! The cost of attendance for this fundraiser will be ten dollars. This cost will include refreshments. Alexander Diaz will be holding a spring musical fundraiser on Friday, February 13th! This fundraiser will be a love song review starring many NMHS alumni, Alex's theater cronies, various other rising stars, and some other very special guests. Details will be coming soon!
- Dan Suarez began his senior year by pinning his opponent in the finals of the Fair Lawn Cutter Classic to win the 285lb championship. The team will be competing in the BCCA tournament on January 29th and 30th.
- The boys' basketball team opened their season on Saturday 12/20 with a victory over league foe Emerson. They will continue their league schedule on 12/22 versus Dwight Englewood and then host the Group I Holiday tournament on the 27th and 29th.
- Once again the bowling team has jumped out to a great start. With an undefeated record, they are looking forward to upcoming matches against league rivals North Arlington, Harrison and Becton.