



JUNE 2011



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NOT TO BE MISSED!

- ◆ June 6 -NYS 8th Grade Science Assessment
- ◆ June 3-Theatre Workshop @ 7:30 PM
- ◆ June 6-PTA Meeting SMS @ 10 AM
- ◆ June 9-Incoming Grade 6 Parent Transition Meeting @ 7 PM
- ◆ June 10-Akidemy Awards @ 6:45 PM
- ◆ June 14-June Tunes @ 6:30 PM
- ◆ June 24-Grade 8 Farewell Assembly South High @ 10:30 AM

Principal's News

Dr. James Welsch, Principal
 Dr. Gina Cartolano, Assistant Principal
 Mr. Jerry Cozine, Assistant Principal

Dear South Middle School Parents,

As I write my final column for the 2010-11 Newsletter, it is hard to believe that we are at the end of the year. This year, like most, seems to have flown by. It seems like just yesterday that I was drafting my welcoming letter to you for the new school year. This week I wrote a letter to eighth grade parents regarding commencement, and a few weeks ago I sent a letter to parents detailing the schedule for the end of the year. Time truly flies by when you are having fun!

The 2010-11 school year has been excellent from my point of view. Our students were engaged in meaningful learning experiences, as well as a wonderful variety of extra-curricular activities. Our students excelled in drama, music, athletics, as well as academics. Our clubs had fundraisers to help those less fortunate. Our students entered writing, language, and science contests, and were often named winners. Our morning television show, under the direction of our new advisor, Mr. Zahn, grew and featured new ideas and stories about South Middle School. By all accounts, it was a super year for our school. It is my sincerest hope that this was an exciting year for your children as well.

In a few short weeks, we will say goodbye to our eighth graders. We have watched them grow physically, as well as intellectually and emotionally. The **magic** that is the middle school experience, particularly the **South Middle School** experience, has not been lost on our leadership class. They are an outstanding group of young women and men and they will be a true asset to the South High School community.

When I meet with parents of incoming sixth graders, I often tell them to take a picture of their child on his or her first day of middle school on that early September day. I ask that they take this picture in some prominent place in their home: at the front door, in the living room, in the kitchen. I then ask them to put the picture in some safe place where they can find it in three years. I then ask parents to take a picture of their child on his or her commencement day in the same place and then compare the pictures. They will be amazed at the "transformation" of their child over these three years. Our students arrive as young children, babies really; they leave as young men and women. That is the magic of middle school!

I want to take this opportunity to thank and extend our best wishes to our four staff members who are retiring this year: Mr. John Lento, Department Chair of the Social Studies Department, Mr. Chris Geiger, a member of our Technology Department, Mr. Robert Frangella, a member of our Technology Department who retired at the beginning of this school year, and Mrs. Rose Juliano, who has been a school monitor for many years. I know you join me in thanking them for their many years of service to our students and our school community and in wishing them well as they enter this new phase in their lives.

Finally, I want to wish you all a very happy, healthy, and restful summer holiday. I want to thank you for your continued support of our school. Thank you for sending us such wonderful students to work with.

Peace,
 James R. Welsch, Ed. D.
Principal

8th Grade Highlights from Dr. Gina Cartolano, Assistant Principal

Once again, our eighth grade students distinguished themselves this quarter by participating in many exciting events and even winning many awards! The students have grown tremendously over the past three years and it has been an honor getting to know them and watch them succeed in so many wonderful endeavors. I wish them well as they embark upon this next exciting phase of their lives – the world of high school!! I am confident that they will meet the new challenges with the same high level of enthusiasm that they displayed here at SMS. I want to thank all of our parents for your continued support and encouragement of our students. Your support has meant a great deal in their success. I wish everyone a restful and joyous summer vacation.

Reminder Regarding SMS Commencement 2011

On May 3rd a letter was sent out via email to all parents of eighth graders informing them of procedures for our commencement at South High School which will take place on Friday, June 24th at 10:30 AM. Please remember to drop off graduates at South High School no later than 9:45 AM. **Only TWO TICKETS per child will be provided** and tickets will not be mailed in advance. Please note that younger children are not permitted to sit on the laps of adults; therefore, we ask that you not bring a young child to the ceremony unless you plan to use a ticket for that child. Parking on this day will be VERY LIMITED and parents are encouraged to car pool or get dropped off at the High School. If, for some reason, you know that you cannot attend the ceremony, please let us know in advance so that we can accommodate families that may request additional seating. If you want to request additional seating, please call the school at 441- 4607 (Ms. Pugliese) and ask to be put on the waiting list. We cannot guarantee that you will be granted additional seating. This will all depend on the number of parents who call us in advance and tell us that they do not need their tickets.

TEAMA

This quarter, Mr. Bua started his exploration of America in the 1950's and 1960's, the post-war, Cold War world. Students were exposed to successful trials (Berlin airlift, Cuban Missile Crisis) and tribulation (Bay of Pigs Invasion, McCarthyism, Vietnam) of the policy of containment, and the impact that containment had on a new world order. Students were introduced to the government instructional film *Duck and Cover*, a how-to-survive nuclear war manual for children of the Cold War era. We explored the rise of TV and the impact that advertisements had on society, the movement of Americans into the suburbs and the concept of conformity as a national pastime.



Students went to see the play *Memphis*, where they were exposed through song to the idea that segregation was anything but "separate but equal." Our students engaged in an interactive exploration of the Civil Rights era via photography, biography, documentary and poetry. We will close our studies with an exploration of America from the 1970's to the turn of the century, including a unit on the origins and effectiveness of protest music.

Math, with Mr. Zweig, has been placing the finishing touches in Geometry, Integrated Algebra, and Pre-Algebra to complete the curriculum and start preparing for an intensive review for the math assessments and Regents. We have just finished up reviewing all the past assessment exams and we were quite confident with our performance on the actual assessment. Pre-Algebra will start chapter 10 finding circumferences and areas of circles and then learn about surface area and volume of prisms, cylinders, pyramids, and cones.

Mr. Schwartz's 8th grade science class has wrapped up the curriculum and has begun preparing for the science assessment. The exam consists of both a lab practical and a short answer section. Lab skills will be reviewed to ensure that students are familiar with the use of microscopes, dichotomous keys, and the concepts of momentum and density. Students have been working hard reviewing topics from both 7th and 8th grade as the exam is cumulative. Earth Science classes, having completed their study of astronomy and meteorology, are now delving into geology and gaining an appreciation of how the surface of the Earth forms and changes with time. They are learning how to identify minerals and rock types from specific characteristics and studying how to calculate an earthquake's epicenter from P and S waves and how to sequence the Earth's geologic history from reading rock layers. Topic reviews in preparation for the Regents exam will begin shortly. The Regents lab practical will take place on June 9 and the written exam on June 17.

In Science Research, students completed their science projects and have been working on a natural disaster project. Students have been spending time in the computer room researching natural disasters including the recent Japanese earthquake and tsunami and creating Powerpoints. The project will culminate with each student presenting their findings to their classmates.

After finishing *If You Come Softly*, by Jacqueline Woodson, students in Miss Kostopoulos' classes wrote thematic essays generating their own thesis statements. Afterwards, students met in the Library along with Mr. Bua's classes to complete an interdisciplinary project on segregation and the 1950's in preparation for the trip to the Broadway musical *Memphis*. Students viewed iconic photos, heard protest songs, read poetry of the time, examined picture books, and viewed slideshows. As the students travelled through the Library, they got a sense of what the setting of the musical *Memphis* was about. In addition, students completed a variety of graphic organizers analyzing and connecting the items viewed to the curriculum.

8th Grade Highlights from Dr. Gina Cartolano, Assistant Principal (continued)

Currently Miss Kostopoulos' classes are reading and viewing the play, *A Raisin in the Sun*, by Lorraine Hansberry. As they read, students will further extend their knowledge of the Civil Rights era and explore the theme of a "dream deferred." In addition, students have completed their Legacy project and are immersed in their Final Portfolio which is due on June 8th. Miss Kostopoulos hopes that all students adhere to the calendar provided and complete their benchmarks on time. She looks forward to reading the final products that students create.

TEAM B

Students and teachers were able to connect on an untraditional level with the arrival of Hobby Day. Our team teachers were able to share their knowledge of plants and flowers, autographs, and independent music with students. This is just another way teachers and students were able to generate bonds and memories that will last a lifetime.

All of Team B is anxiously preparing students for end-of-the-year assessments, as well as for their entrance into high school. To balance function with fun, Team B is planning a culminating event for Wednesday, June 22: Rebelstock! Teachers are working hard to arrange a day of "peace, love, and celebration." Activities offered on this day will be historical skits, live music from the '60s, and poetry readings from prominent poets of the time, face painting, and decade appropriate games. This day will integrate social studies content with the closure of students' final year in middle school. This day will also allow students to say their final farewell to their social studies teacher, Mr. Lento, who is retiring. Team B has worked arduously throughout the 2010-11 school year; Rebelstock will be a tremendous opportunity to celebrate a year of triumphs.

Team B's science classes continue to move forward in their curriculum. Eighth grade students have tickled their taste buds in science this quarter as they showed how minerals make rocks. This experiment was proven with Rice Krispy treats and samples of chocolate chip and oatmeal raisin cookies. Students are also impatiently awaiting the formation of large crystals of sugar following the making of super saturated sugar solutions and allowing them to crystallize over the next several weeks.

As we approach the end of the year, students have become fascinated by the 75 million year old dinosaur egg fossil. The question we ponder in class is, "Is there a fossilized baby dinosaur inside?" Review for both the 8th grade science assessment and Earth Science Regents is currently underway.



The Science Olympiad team scored high enough to be invited to participate at the state level. Seventeen students spent the night and day in Kingston, NY competing with 40 of the top NY schools. They had a BLAST (a bit of a pun) as they launched bottle rockets!

TEAM C

Mr. Piteris' Science 8 classes are beginning their review for the upcoming NYS Science Assessment. Both performance and written components are being stressed. This includes physical science, life science, and earth science material. His Earth Science classes are covering geology concepts including plate tectonics, earthquakes, and crustal change. Following this, students will work on landscape development and geologic history. Students are encouraged to attend extra help sessions on Thursday after school for Regents review.

The eighth grade English curriculum reflects the maturity gained throughout the journey of a year. Over the last few weeks, students have worked tenaciously in preparation for The English Language Arts Assessment. Reading comprehension, listening strategies, note-taking skills, and essay writing became the primary focus to refine students' proficiency. Clearly, much growth in style and product was evidenced in student work. Presently, we are coming full circle in our analysis of literature and writing expertise. Our literary focus is on the novel *Jim the Boy* by Tony Earley. We are doing a critical lens analysis of this novel by comparing it to the lyrics of the song "Seasons of Love." This novel poignantly reflects a year in the life of a young boy who is growing up in a rural community during the 1920's. Student writing will be showcased within the legacy project that will contain pieces that document pivotal moments, significant events, and cherished influences. This project is the initial component that will be extended into a final portfolio. In addition to the traditional pieces, students will have one last look into the world of literary devices as they analyze print advertisements. As a final adventure, we will look at the figurative connections between art and poetry.

We will tour the school to analyze the language of art, including line, texture, color, and composition. Then we will compare that expression to the imagery of poetry. It has been an eventful journey from innocence through experience, as reflected in student success. This journey encompasses the knowledge and wisdom gained by each individual student, the theme of the novel *Jim the Boy*, and the premise of the Legacy Project. With confidence, our students will face the next adventure with skill and determination!

Mr. Powder's Pre-Algebra classes have finished preparing for the NYS Assessment Test and are moving into a graphing unit. The unit will cover many of the topics that will be covered in Algebra. His Algebra classes are starting a probability unit, and then will begin to review and prepare for the June Regents Examination.

Mr. DeSiano's classes finished World War II and, as history dictated, immediately began the Cold War. Class discussion focused on the causes of the conflict and how the United States dealt with the issue of containment and public safety on the home front.

Time was also spent connecting the past and the present, as with the current situation at the Demilitarized Zone on the Korean peninsula. Following the Cold War, the class delved into the 1950s postwar economic boom, the growth of the suburbs

8th Grade Highlights from Dr. Gina Cartolano, Assistant Principal (continued)

and the societal changes confronting the nation. This included a unit on the Civil Rights Movement and its impact and relation to current times. Currently, classes are focusing on the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Furthermore, students will undertake a 60s and 70s protest music interpretation project to give students a chance to examine a movement through the music.

Health

The students have been studying about harmful, addictive substances. Drug, tobacco and alcohol education is a major unit of study in eighth grade. An example of a lesson is the “now and future” activity. Imagine what smoking does to your insides and “outsides.” In Health 8 classes students drew themselves now and as a factious future smoker. They were sure to include details such as wrinkled skin, yellow teeth, puffy blood shot eyes. These drawings are displayed in the health classrooms. Stop by and check out our gallery.

Physical Education

On the evening of April 14th, SMS eighth grade students participated in *Dancing with Our Stars* – a culminating event of the world renowned *Dancing Classrooms*. The program, held in PE 8 classes since the beginning of February, helped students to develop respect, collaboration, and self-esteem, as well as how to trust themselves, and, of course, how to dance.

In two separate sessions, students performed seven different types of dance – from the Rumba to the Waltz. Parents and special guests were amazed at the “moves” of our students, and there was no doubt that the *Dancing Classrooms* program was a great success.

World Languages

In the 8th grade, Spanish classes enjoyed learning about food, clothing, the rooms of the house, and furniture this quarter. The students planned menus, went shopping for the necessary ingredients, and even discussed what they would wear to their “feasts.” The 8th grade classes designed their own dream houses and even furnished them in their own style.

Our Chinese B and Chinese 8 students studied a unit on “the restaurant.” In order to make the experience as authentic as possible, (it was impossible to take such a large number of students to one restaurant), we did the next best thing. We brought the restaurant to them. Thanks to the generous donations of our families, the students had the opportunity to take on the roles of chef, waiter, customer, beverage supervisor and cashier. A fun time was had by all and the food was AMAZING!

In French A, students had the opportunity to study colloquial expressions that their French counterparts use in their everyday lives and to create Power Point presentations using these expressions to share their interests and day-to-day experiences. In French B, students designed and described their ideal houses. They presented their architectural plans and made oral presentations. In French 8, students wrote

dialogues related to things that happen when one is at the airport. They also made oral presentations in class. Our LOTE students have also had the opportunity to work with many interesting technology programs to make their experiences relevant and as authentic as possible. Some students posted notes about their favorite sports on “Linio” and “WallWisher,” on-line bulletin boards for students, while others used “Voki,” to create a Spanish-speaking Avatar that was programmed to say what the students wrote about when describing their friends. In other classes, students completed quizzes and homework assignments on-line in keeping with our “Going Green” initiative while others created “Prezi” presentations, a program that allows them to incorporate narratives, clips, images and videos, all on one screen.

Students enrolled in Spanish 8, French 8, or Latin 8 will be taking the Checkpoint A exam. This exam takes the place of what was previously called the New York State Proficiency Exam. The Checkpoint A exam is the final exam and as such will count as 1/9 of the final average for the year. The exam was prepared by teachers and department chairpeople of the aforementioned languages from all over Long Island. The exam consists of a listening, speaking, and writing component. The speaking part of the exam is administered before the written exam on June 20. Students will be working on the speaking section beginning on May 24 through the first week of June. Each student in Spanish and French will have approximately ten minutes to converse in the target language in four distinct categories. The categories are: socializing, obtaining information, personal feelings, and persuasion. The speaking “tasks” have been discussed and practiced in class. Listening and writing tests will also be given in advance of the June 20 date.

Transportation to and from school will be provided on June 20th. Students taking the test take their regular morning bus to school. Students are required to bring number #2 pencils, and pens. The test is expected to begin at 8:30 A.M. and end at about 10:30 A.M. Buses will depart from South Middle at the end of the test. If you require more information please contact Randi Falow.

Technology

The Technology Department is keeping students involved and excited with discussions surrounding alternative energy, electricity and transportation. Students have a lot of problem solving activities to complete before the end of June, including creating nightlights, magnetic levitation vehicles, and wiring circuits.

Day of Silence



Students and teachers participate on the Day of Silence on May 17th.

7th Grade Highlights from Jerry Cozine, Assistant Principal

7th GRADE HIGHLIGHTS

FROM JERRY COZINE, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Less than three weeks of school remaining; it almost seems impossible. But, here we are! After four years at SMS, I am still amazed at how incredibly rewarding it is to work with your children. I have established strong relationships with many of your children, and it has been so satisfying to watch them mature into young adults.

The end of the year has not brought about a slow down with the exciting things going on at SMS. Our students have been quite busy over the last ten weeks – both in and out of the classroom, so I thought I'd give you a brief overview:

TEAM 7SW – SKITTLES

The students of Team Skittles have been utilizing their “flex” periods to work on an interdisciplinary project researching and creating video documentaries answering the question, “*What is the biggest challenge facing the United States today?*” The students have been preparing for the second annual Akidemy Awards, which will take place beginning at 6:45 p.m. on Friday, June 10th. The Akidemy Awards celebrate the student work with a semi-formal awards ceremony which includes paparazzi, a “mocktail hour,” charity fundraisers, classical music in the courtyard and a presentation of the winners among the nominees for Best Documentary, Best Use of Multimedia, Best Collaboration, Best Interviews, Best Editing and Best Interviewers. Students will receive Akidemy trophies and give acceptance speeches. Parents and faculty are encouraged to attend. In addition to our students, a group from former librarian Michelle Phillip’s new school in Bethpage will be competing for the honors as well. Students have worked extremely hard on this project and we could not be more proud of their efforts. Students have done a remarkable job examining problems and composing solutions for the future.

Visions of the Future is the 4th quarter unit for Mrs. Marr/ Mrs. Peretz / Mrs. Roger’s seventh grade English classes. Students will be reading Ray Bradbury science fiction stories and Rod Sterling plays as mentor texts to understand their reading of one of the following dystopian science fiction novels: [Among the Hidden](#), [Bar Code Tattoo](#), [City of Ember](#), [Cyberia](#), [Gathering Blue](#), [The Giver](#), [House of the Scorpion](#), [Hunger Games](#), [Uglies](#), or [Virtual War](#). Many of the books are novels in a series, so students may pursue another title by the same author after reading the studied text. Conversations opened about artists’ and writers’ visions of the future by viewing the futuristic film [WALL-E](#), and by discussing how our present actions impact future generations. In the writing portion, students are writing a science fiction story to express their own vision of life on Earth 100 years in the future. Finally, students are completing a portfolio to reflect upon and showcase their growth as writers, readers and thinkers in the seventh grade and to set goals for the 8th grade. [The portfolio is due June 8th](#). Information about the Self-Select Honors program and the Summer Reading Project will

be distributed in class and be made available online in June.

The 4th quarter ended in the Mannixlab with a student debate on the causes of the Civil War. Each class deliberated back and forth, first in an online/role playing environment using the website www.onlinewarfare.com where they examined the question “*How Could War Look Different?*” and then in the public arena where The North and the South argued through all of the issues which divided our nation. Next, the students delved into the Civil War and examined how our nation was able to gradually heal the wounds that still exist for some today. The debate over state power versus the role of the national government continues to play itself out in our modern political arena. In addition, Team Skittles is examining The Frontier and how we settled the West with the near decimation of many Native American tribes. Finally, the students will grow to understand the Industrial Revolution and how immigration has affected the make-up of our country. The students will then continue the work on www.GoAnimate.com, where they are creating 30 to 60 second cartoon animations that summarize each segment of the content of our entire 7th grade curriculum in preparation for the final examination on June 14th.



In science, Ms. Binder’s classes continued learning about the human body that included the nervous system and how their bodies detect, interpret, and respond to stimuli. Students participated in an activity where they were required to use only one sense at a time in order to identify different objects. Students also engaged in an outdoor activity where they experienced firsthand how the brain remembers patterns. To wrap up the year, students will learn about how infectious diseases are spread and how the body's defense mechanisms try to prevent illness. Students will participate in a lab that demonstrates how diseases are passed from person-to-person.

In Mr. Giannone's math classes, the first part of the fourth quarter was dedicated to preparing for the NYS Assessment, taken on May 12-13. The remainder of the school year will be used to solidify concepts learned throughout the year, but also to introduce the students to concepts they will see next year in Pre-Algebra. We have just begun our unit on linear functions. The students will learn how to work with dependent and independent variables, and will be able to represent linear functions algebraically and graphically. We will then discuss polynomials on a more general level. The students will learn to classify polynomials, as well as perform simple operations with them. Towards the end of the year, we will have a cumulative review of major concepts learned throughout the year in preparation for the final exam.

7th Grade Highlights from Jerry Cozine, Assistant Principal (continued)

Mr. Zweig's classes just completed reviewing all the past assessment exams, and they are quite confident of a stellar performance on the actual assessment. Currently, the students are beginning with Chapter 10, finding circumferences and areas of circles and then learning about surface area and volume of prisms, cylinders, pyramids and cones and finish up with Trigonometry. Mr. Powder's Pre-Algebra class has finished preparing for the NYS Assessment test and is moving into a graphing unit. This unit will cover many of the topics that will be covered in Algebra.

Overall, Team Skittles is very proud of their students' academic performance throughout the year, our "flex" projects such as *Digiteen* and *The Akidemy Awards*, and their students' growth towards becoming responsible, productive members of the community. They have ushered in the first year of "The Connected Classroom" with patience, creativity and understanding of the skills necessary for their success in the 21st Century.

TEAM 7S – THE FLYING NINJAS

During a poetry unit, Mrs. Giani's English students read and wrote a variety of poems. A book swap took place using two novels, *Miracle's Boys* and *Petey*. After the swap, students responded to their partners' post-its. There was a special connectedness felt throughout the reading of the second book. This unique experience allowed students to communicate with each other while reading their books outside of school.



The Mysteries Book Club is well under way. Strangely, it began with a look at the most popular nursery rhymes! How did Humpty Dumpty really fall off the wall? Why did the dish run away with the spoon? Students had fun creating the mysteries behind these silly, catchy verses. Interest in reading is being sparked through suspense-driven novels, examining the elements of mysteries in short stories and film. In their groups, students have taken on the roles of sleuths, using critical thinking skills and deductive reasoning to crack some convoluted cases. Students are now gearing up for the Final Portfolio Project, which is a masterpiece of their finest writing of the year.

Mrs. Hodgson and class are glad that the assessments are over! We are now enjoying doing math without the pressure of the state exam looming over us. After the assessment, students watched a video of Arthur Benjamin, a "mathemagician." After seeing his math "tricks," some students tried to do fast mental computations of 2-digit squares!

In Math 7, students are now continuing with the study of statistics. Students have learned how to draw double stem and leaf plots, box and whisker plots, and have analyzed and interpreted these representations, along with the line, bar and circle graphs done earlier. The study of probability, which began before the assessment, will be pursued more in depth as

students learn about permutations, combinations, and odds.

Mrs. Hodgson's pre-algebra classes have learned about the relationships between sides and angles of special right triangles, which then led to the study of trigonometry. Students used trig ratios to solve problems involving real world applications (for example, finding the altitude of a plane given its angle of flight and the horizontal distance covered). The next topic to be covered is a more in-depth study of probability. The final topic will be an excursion into polynomials, which will be studied more in depth in algebra.

In science, Mrs. Roozdar joined our class as a student teacher for the fourth quarter. The students finished their evolution unit and did labs involving natural selection and building evolutionary trees. Many of the trees came out beautifully and are now hanging in the room. They learned the modern system of classification. Students classified themselves into different taxa and invented scientific names for themselves. Students also learned how to use and make dichotomous keys for identification. They were back on the microscopes to look at different kinds of protista, such as the paramecium. Next, they learned how living things are organized and began their final topic of human body systems. At about this time, all bid farewell to Mrs. Roozdar. They were sad to see her leave.

Students have finished studying cardiovascular and respiratory systems and will soon be learning about the skeletal-muscular system. In flex, they are preparing for the lab practical, which is part of the final exam. After the practical is over, students will do some body system labs and will study the digestive and nervous systems before preparing for final exams. The written part of the science final is on Wednesday, June 15th.

Mrs. Galgano's classes are finishing up their unit on immigration. Their focus this past quarter has been divided between the reconstruction of the South, closing the Western frontier and industrialization in the North. For Reconstruction, students examined what life was like politically, economically and socially after the Civil War. They also learned what plans Congress laid out for reunification and how they led to the impeachment of President Johnson. They discussed the impact of the Supreme Court's decision in *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, Jim Crow laws and the Ku Klux Klan. Extra credit was given for the movie, *The Conspirator*, which came out in the theater this past April. While learning about the closing of the West, they focused on how Native Americans lost their culture due to the transcontinental railroad and fighting with miners and farmers. Students viewed the TNT miniseries, *Into the West*, to enrich their studies on the effects that westward expansion had on Native Americans. During our studies of industrialization in the North, they made several comparisons to today's economy and our technological revolution comparing Carnegie, Vanderbilt, and Rockefeller to Bill Gates and Steve Jobs. Students enhanced their unit by viewing videos on YouTube and the Library of Congress that dealt with inventions, business models and immigration.

7th Grade Highlights *(continued)*

TEAM 7SM – THE MIGHTY KNIGHT REBELS

Recording key ideas, abbreviating, underlining key words, scanning texts, reading directions, headings, and titles, recognizing question types, using elimination strategies, writing leads, creating endings that linger in the mind of a reader, answering all parts of a task, restating, inferring, describing, explaining ... they've done it all! Ms. Pearce's students used their skills to conquer their 2011 ELA7-their Second-to-LAST ELA Exam!

As this year comes to a close, students will also be publishing their English 7 Final Portfolio. This is their chance to showcase their growth as English students over the course of the year. It is their space to reflect upon their developing views and abilities in writing, reading, listening, and speaking. It's been a wonderful year and it is time to show off all of the stellar work students have done!

Students are now exploring what makes a perfect (and not-so-perfect) society in their Utopia/Dystopia Book Clubs. As they read, students are asking important questions about power, fairness, technology, wealth, and war. As they read, write, and talk about their books, students are working to uncover what their authors are trying to critique about our society.

Mrs. Doyle's math and flex classes are doing some fun, interactive Smartboard assessment reviews. Her Algebra students are preparing for their first NYS Regents. Mrs. Doyle's Pre-Algebra and Math 7 classes are starting to review for the first of four unit tests. These four unit tests review this year's math work. Hopefully, there is enough time at the end of the year to make mini math booklets and work on puzzles, pictographs, and a survey or two as well. Everyone worked hard this year, and learned an amazing amount of math. All of the students are well prepared for the challenges of the years ahead.

In 7th grade science the students are learning about the functions of the human body systems and how they interact together. The students have created models of the urinary system, circulatory system, and digestive system. The students are now preparing for the lab practical section of the final exam. The exam assesses the student's knowledge of laboratory skills learned this year. Some of the skills include microscope measurement, specimen identification, and reactions of chemical indicators on certain substances. The written section of the final exam will be given on June 15th.

Mr. D'Angelo and Mr. DeSiano's social studies classes started off the marking period by discussing the Reconstruction of the South after the Civil War. We examined how this time period helped to shape race relations in the US for the next 90 or so years. We also discussed modern day examples of reconstruction, i.e. New Orleans, Haiti, Japan.

From there, we moved on to discussing the closing of the American Frontier. We talked about the impact that the building of the Transcontinental Railroad had on the US, and then compared it to the advent of the Internet. We also spent time discussing how the culture of the Native Americans of the Great Plains was altered forever. We have recently begun to discuss the Industrial Revolution and all of the wonderful technological innovations that came along as a result of it.

During the unit on Reconstruction we discussed the assassination of President Lincoln. The topic of assassinations was then explored further in Flex. We discussed the successful and unsuccessful attempts on the lives of US presidents as well as other important leaders (McKinley, JFK, MLK Jr., Reagan). We also discussed the protection techniques of the modern day Secret Service.

Technology

The 7th grade technology students are building egg crash cars and solving all the problems associated with protecting its occupant. They are studying safety, engineering, and momentum. Hopefully, all cars will survive their crash as will their passenger-the egg.

Health

Students have been studying the importance of self-esteem. Feeling good about oneself and understanding strengths leads to a productive life. Students are involved in a fun activity, the "warm fuzzies." Each student receives anonymous compliments from every classmate. Some of those compliments highlight school, sports, friendships and events that happened as early as kindergarten. Ask your 7th grader to share their warm fuzzies; it will bring a smile to your face!



World Languages

In 7th grade, Spanish students studied one of their favorite topics – "el fútbol" and they viewed videos of some very exciting games played by both American and Hispanic soccer teams. They also spent time in the computer lab researching the 2010 World Cup, and personalizing the experience by learning about some of the teams and players that competed last year. In addition to soccer, the students also enjoyed discussing our own country's national pastime, baseball, as well as basketball and tennis...a little something for every sports enthusiast!

Once again, I encourage you to check our website on a regular basis to see the great things occurring at SMS.

Be well,

Jerry Cozine

6th Grade Highlights and Miscellaneous News

Math

With the math assessment completed, the sixth grade students are taking the geometry unit to the next level and applying it to surface area and volume of polyhedrons. Using hands-on 3-D shapes, the students will identify the number of faces, edges, and vertices. With this knowledge, they will then calculate the surface area and volume. Following this unit, the students will explore probability with hands-on experiments involving coins, dice, and cards. Since sixth graders are not allowed in a casino, a field trip to Connecticut or New Jersey is not "in the cards." We will end the year with a discussion of rational and irrational numbers, finding square roots, and the Pythagorean Theorem. Problem solving that applies Pythagoras' theory will be explored.

EP is currently exploring probability, permutations, and combinations. When your child is sitting with a deck of cards, he or she is actually doing homework. Many probability questions refer to the student having knowledge of a standard deck of cards. Since time is limited, we will *not* be doing a casino night with the students! Following this fun unit, the EP students will also explore surface area and volume of 3-D shapes.

Music

On May 10, 2011, a dozen vocalists sang at Cabaret Night at Cafe Rustica of Great Neck. They were able to collect over \$600.00 dollars to support programs sponsored by the Great Neck Breast Cancer Coalition.



Members of the Choral Music Program, directed by Shelley Willcox, raised money with their Cabaret Night

Science

The 6th grade scientists are examining what makes up the world around us. We are learning about the chemistry of matter. We are navigating our way around the Periodic Table of the Elements, and can even draw a picture of an atom! We are investigating how and why atoms interact to form compounds and the differences between compounds and mixtures. In the last weeks of the school year, we will learn more about chemical reactions and the wonderful world of chemistry.

English

Phew! The ELA exam is over, and our hard work in developing our grammar and reading comprehension skills paid off, as we successfully completed two days of state testing.

Classic novels are all the rage this spring! All sixth graders are being exposed to a classic novel, and learning to appreciate the timeless lesson each novel has to offer. We offer many thanks to the librarians for their help and expertise.

As we begin to reflect upon our learning from this year, each student will be required to complete the portfolio assignment. This project asks students to compile their work from this year, and to examine their growth as readers and writers. Please ask your child to share his or her hard work with you, as this portfolio should showcase examples of the effort put forth this year. Keep an eye out for the 7th grade summer reading assignment- it will be posted on the SMS website soon.

The will to win, the desire to succeed, the urge to reach your full potential... these are the keys that will unlock the door to personal excellence. – Confucius

Technology

For this semester, students' simple machines are on the horizon. Exploring the lever, wheel and axle, pulley, inclined plane, gear, and screw will be fun and exciting when they build these using Lego Dacta kits. Mass production exploration is almost complete as the stationery holder nears completion. All 6th grade students have been introduced to hand tools and how to use them safely and efficiently.

Art

The eighth grade students in Art Foundations went on a trip to the Museum of Modern Art in New York City in April. The students viewed the special exhibition, "Abstract Expressionist, New York," as well as MoMA's permanent collection. Back in the classroom, the students created abstract paintings and sculptures inspired by their field trip experience.



Abstract Symbol Sculpture created by Kassie Alicea.

6th Grade Highlights and Miscellaneous News

Battle of the Puebla



Cinco de Mayo

World Languages

The 6th grade Spanish classes' students have learned how to express their thoughts, likes or dislikes, and describe their world in the target language. In their continued effort to learn about the countries of the world where Spanish is spoken, some students celebrated "Cinco de Mayo" with a discussion of the real significance of the holiday, and why it is celebrated. Some classes then had their own celebration/ review session while engaging in a "Students versus Piñata" contest!

Social Studies

As our study of Ancient China comes to a close, we set our sights on the land bridge of the Bering Strait and the civilizations of the Americas. This is just one of the many theories that exist to explain the presence of the first peoples in the western hemisphere. In class, we will be focusing on the Five Nations of the Iroquois, relating it to the elements of the culture web. Students will study the map of New York State to further their understanding of the essential question of, "How does where you live affect how you live?" During our flex period, classes will be researching either the Incas or the Aztecs, with a culminating activity to reflect their learning.

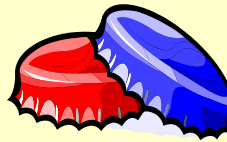
Our year of sixth grade social studies comes to an end with a unit on the Age of Exploration. Students will learn how European explorers came to the New World and paved the way for the birth of a new nation.



Replica of caravel ship used in 15th century exploration

Physical Education

We started the final quarter with a swim and lacrosse unit. While the girls swam, the boys played lacrosse and vice versa. Swimming and swim safety is such an important unit to prepare our students for the summer. We are excited to finish the year with a softball/tennis choice unit. Each PE period, students can choose which sport they would like to participate in for the day! Finally, the students will clean out their PE lockers and hopefully save their locks for next year! Good luck to all of the 8th graders!



CAPS BACK PROGRAM

Homerooms Heating Up - no, we are not referring to the weather, but rather the 1st SMS Caps Contest that has some homerooms IN IT TO WIN IT. In an effort to help students identify and recognize environmental concerns in their school, community and beyond, Great Neck South Middle School joined with the Town of North Hempstead in their Caps Back program this past fall. To generate awareness of the program and promote service learning, a school-wide contest is presently being sponsored. The contest has already generated thousands of caps that will be re-ground and reused for Aveda organic hair products. How cool is that!

The contest ends at the end of the month so you still have time to send any plastic caps or lids to school with your child(ren). Winners will be announced on HTV.



Lego Club

The Lego Club has been very busy this year. The club started in October and has met every Thursday after school with Mr. Moore in room 405. Each month students work on a different project. For Multicultural Week, the club members made objects from other countries like the pyramids of Egypt, Italian sports cars, Ninja warriors, and the Roman Coliseum. The structures were displayed in the front showcase in February. Recently, the club worked on inventions and participated in some in-class competitions. Any student is welcome to attend and may bring his or her own bricks from home. We have some Legos available, so anyone can participate. Bring your Legos and your imagination!

Multicultural Club

The Multicultural Club, together with The Girls Scouts of SMS, went to Lakeville Elementary School for the Bridging Ceremony on May 2nd. It was a beautiful ceremony and inspiring for club members.

Science News

We are proud to announce that several of our Science Challenge students received awards at various competitions.

Andrew Schneider, an 8th grader here at South Middle School, won Highest Honors at the Long Island Science Congress Competition for his research project entitled "Mutagenic Effects of Radiowaves on *Drosophila melanogaster*." In addition, he won two special awards: The Patricia Ford M.D. Award and the Micro-Optics Award.

The following students were awarded "Honorable Mention" at the Science Congress competition:

- **Suann Chi** and **Christie Liu** for their research project, "Effects of Sugar on Pea Plants"
- **Wilson Lee** and **Eddie Wang** for their research project, "Effects of Chewing Gum on Memory"
- **Alexa Thorne** for her research project, "Propagation of Spider Plants in Different Media"

The following students received Honorable Mention awards in the eCYBERMISSION competition, a web-based science, technology, engineering and math competition, sponsored by the U.S. Army:

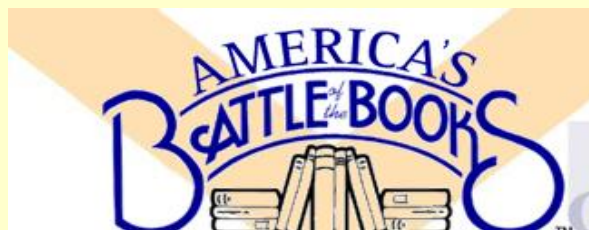
- **Christine An**, **Rachel An** and **Claire Polizu** for their investigation on how to minimize the frequency of birds flying into glass windows of buildings.

Shared Decision

The Shared Decision Making Committee's proudest accomplishment for the 2010-2011 school years is the video production, featuring the "Habits of Mind." The SDMC has presented the "Habits of Mind" to the South Middle School Building Curriculum Group and the South Middle Building Representative Group. SDM displayed the video to each of these groups. At the June faculty meeting the video will be presented to the teaching staff. We plan on exhibiting this video at the district year-end Shared Decision Making/UPTC meeting.

A metaphor that can best describe our work: "Habits of Mind is like the Food Pyramid for Intelligence." This quote was taken directly from Mr. Po Shum, parent co-chair for our committee. As we explored the "Habits of Mind" we were motivated by the many possibilities. A major strength for our group was student involvement. Their attendance was critical for our success. We were able to come to consensus early in the year. This helped us to focus on the "Habits of Mind." Another positive activity for our group was the use of "icebreakers." This enabled our group to share ideas in a collegial atmosphere.

We plan on having earlier communication with other building committees. Having a chance to meet bi-monthly with other groups can aid in goal formation and goal achievement for Shared Decision Making. These meetings can provide valuable feedback for all building committees.



Library

As another school year comes to a close, the library is already beginning to plan for the next school year. All of the materials checked out by students **will be due** to the library by **June 6th**. Please check your lockers and home for any books you may not have returned. We are busy preparing for new books we will be adding to our collection for next year! Don't forget to come to the library in September to see what exciting new titles we have purchased.

The library will also be hosting the second annual Battle of the Books on June 7th and 8th. This *thrilling* competition will allow for students to show their knowledge of different books and each team will have a chance to win some exciting prizes! BOB is an event not to be missed!

Community Action

On May 13, 2011, members of the Community Action Committee accompanied by Ms. Musmeci ventured to the Marriott Hotel in Islandia. Here, the CAC was privileged to witness an extraordinary graduation ceremony of The Canine Companions for Independence. This organization provides service dogs for children and adults who need assistance in their daily activities. Michael Chasse, a young man injured in a skiing accident, was the speaker for the Graduating Class of 2011. Michael, who is wheelchair bound, has been paired with Caleb V. Michael. He spoke of the joy he has experienced since meeting Caleb and of the training process they completed before graduation day.

Our final activity of the year will be to assist Parkville School on June 16, 2011 in helping to run their annual picnic. The CAC students will do face painting, spin art, and tattoos for the children of Parkville and their families. Ms. Musmeci would like to thank all the CAC members for their dedication to helping others.





Message from the President

PTA President's Message

Dear SMS Families:

The month of May is here, and June is right around the corner. The conclusion of another year, Can you believe it?

I would like to thank all of you for a wonderful year. From the beginning, we were out of the box, running. We had very successful Photo days, our Fantastic Book Fair, and the Delicious Apple Tasting. Our support of the Spaghetti Dinner; "*squisito*" which means exquisite in Italian. Our support of the fantastic school play, "The Wizard of Oz." The PTA's support of the program regarding our 8th grade Ballroom dancers, a bow to you all! We also supported the 8th grade dinner dance. Thanks to everyone involved for the on-going backing of Teacher Recognition Day. Our monies have also gone to the Author Visit, and to SADD assemblies.

I am grateful to our Administration: Dr. James Welsch, Dr. Gina Cartolano, and Mr. Gerald Cozine for their leadership. On behalf of the parents, congratulations are extended to our teachers. You make everyday an important academic day, but also you give to our children the gift of wanting to learn, and learn more.

Thank you to the secretaries in our offices, and to all our staff who are willing to extend a helping hand.

I would like to recognize my colleague on the Executive Board, Louise Hochberg, who has given selflessly of herself to the South Middle School Executive Board. She is graduating, but of course continues to be a beacon in the Educational Parent-Teacher community.

The School Budget has passed. I would like to thank you for exercising your civic duty and leading by example for all of our children.

Finally, the PTA has given the school the beautiful television and new bookcases in our foyer. We have expended monies for a greenhouse that will be in place for the 2011-2012 school year. Please check it out in the fall to see what will be growing. The Greenhouse project will be a wonderful inspiring academic vehicle for our students to study the environment.

Have a wonderful summer, and I look forward in seeing you in the fall.

Best Wishes,

Judy Liman
PTA President

SMS PTA Executive Board 2010-11

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VP's Communication	Michael Cuttino Tracy Berlinsky
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SDM Committee Chair	Po Shum
SEPTA Delegate	Carol Valic



Special thanks to Nancy Arciere for all of her assistance in the layout of the newsletter.



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SMS Becomes Even More Environmentally Friendly

In cooperation with The Town of North Hempstead, South Middle has joined with many schools throughout Long Island in a new recycling endeavor. The **“CAPS BACK”** program partners The Town of North Hempstead with Estee Lauder, the maker of Aveda products, to lead this innovative plastic bottle cap recycling initiative. Students, staff and families are urged to collect/drop plastic bottle caps, as well as any type of plastic lid (ex. butter) in the **“CAPS BACK”** bin located in the front lobby. Collected caps will be ground down, remolded, and reused on Aveda’s organic products. This program will reduce the amount of waste material and teach our students the importance of taking responsibility for their environment and the future.