

# Puma News



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South Meadow School

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## Mbots

by *Bella Schwabe*



Once again, the competition and non-competition robotics teams are teaming up to help teach Mrs. Van's seventh grade science class about mBots! The mBots are small blue robots that can be programmed to complete certain tasks. These robots are rather simple to program because of their drag-and-drop block programming software. The programming software, called Scratch, is designed to teach young kids and teens programming. Not only can you program your mBot to move around on Scratch, but you can also program little images, called Sprites. When programming Sprites you can achieve a wide variety of things. For example, you can change the background, change the sprite, make the sprite move around, you can even draw your own sprite! There are practically endless possibilities of what you can

complete using either sprites or mBots. Last year, the competition and non-competition teams worked together to help prepare everything for teaching the seventh graders mBots. First, they had to become acquainted with the mBots themselves. As soon as they received the mBots, they had a small window of time to experiment with them as well as try to come up with ideas of what to do. When they were done with that, they had to start finalizing the lesson plans and start writing the instructions. The instructions were a long and tedious process that involved a lot of trial and error. When writing directions you had to first write a rough draft of the directions. Then, you had to give the directions to someone in the room who had no experience with mbots and tell them to try to follow your instructions. Once they were done, they gave you notes, and you adjusted the directions. This went on until they were extremely easy to follow, and anyone could complete them correctly. After we got the directions ready, they had to start coming up with unique ways to present the lessons they had to give. For the second week they did mBots. We, the EHP students created an obstacle course for the kids to go through. Another week, they created a game called, The Wasteland Game, and the kids who won got ribbons. In order to set up for all of this, they had to stay after school and come during PLUS blocks and recesses to not only test every single robot with the computers, but also to set up the courses and games and put the instructions and/or forms at every table. Overall, they had a really great chance to get creative, as well as to step into the teacher's shoes and experience what it was like to be them. This year, they will do most of the same things in most of the games and obstacle courses, but they may switch it up a little bit. The kids will be coming during their science classes every C day throughout the third quarter. They will also have to do some writing to make sure they were absorbing the information they're receiving. It will be a little bit harder to coordinate this year because all of the students helping are in eighth grade versus when they helped in seventh grade. However, helping with the mBots is a very rewarding experience and one that is actually a lot of fun! To summarize, there is a lot of work that goes into helping with the mbots, but it's a lot of fun and teaches you a lot!



## WINTER SLAM

by Meara McClusky

Each year, at the end of the season, all of the South Meadow School basketball teams host a Winter Slam. Teams from around the district compete in small scrimmages in order to win the title. Both the Blue and White basketball teams have a Winter Slam. The Blue team's Winter Slam was on Saturday, February 4th, and Sunday, February 5th. The White team's Winter Slam was on Saturday, February 11th, and Sunday, February 12th. Each scrimmage is about twenty minutes long, or about two quarters of a regular game of basketball. But, since the games are so short, the rules had to be adjusted. Instead of being fouled out after five fouls, a player would get fouled out after four. Also, when a team reaches six fouls, the other team is in the bonus. However in a regular game, seven team fouls are permitted before a team enters the bonus. In the Winter Slams, there are about five teams in each bracket. So, for the Blue boys Winter Slam, there would be ten teams, and the same for the White boys and girls teams, and the same for the Blue girls team.

However, most teams do not have back to back games, and will get breaks. During these breaks, the players can go to the concession stand, cheer on the other games, or prepare for their next game. The concession stand sells homemade goods, as well as store bought items. Many of the sold items include brownies, chips, sports drinks, and pizza. Many students like to earn their community service by helping out at the Winter Slam. They can help out by working the concession stand, selling raffle tickets, helping with admission, and by being the big puma.

The Blue teams played really well in their Winter Slam. Although neither team made it to the championship game, they showed lots of enthusiasm for the tournament. For the girls, however, Great Brook and Boynton were in the championship. The two teams received medals, but Boynton was the winner. For the boys Blue team, Great Brook beat their opponent in the championship.

The Boys White team played really well, and won two out of their four games. Each game was a really close match. This year, the Girls White team is in the finals! On Wednesday, February 15th, the girls played Nashua Catholic in the final game. The championship game is a full game, unlike the twenty minute scrimmages in the tournament. All the rules for regular games apply to the championship. The girls White team was really excited for the final game, as they have not won a league game this season. If they win, each player will receive a gold medal, a Winter Slam t-shirt, and the year will be printed on a banner in the gym. If they lose, each player will earn a silver medal. The Winter Slam is a really fun opportunity for all students. You can get community service, play in the games, or cheer on the players. Good luck to the girls and congratulations to all teams who played! UPDATE: THEY WON!! :)

## Making Animations

by Leah Krason

In E.H.P, there are a lot of chances to try something new with computers. Recently a few students decided that we wanted to make an animation to go on the morning announcements. As it turns out, it was much harder than we thought. After watching a lot of tutorials, we were finally ready to make our first attempt. It did not go well for anyone because the tutorials we watched on Atomic Learning were really old. Still, wanting to make an animation, we looked up more tutorials on the internet, which was very helpful. But, our first lesson stayed in our hearts. Making the first animation took quite a few tries. Meara McClusky and I made two successful animations together. Nicky Dinino has worked on some too, for Valentine's Day. Kendall Larson is also working on animations and has made a few. All of these students are working very hard on them and enjoying making the animations. Hopefully we will begin to see more of these animations.



## Tinkercad

by Sarah Knowles

In Expanding Horizons Program with Mrs. Brezovec, she is showing us how to use a website called Tinkercad. Tinkercad is a program used to create three dimensional objects. Such as a box, little person or maze. Tinkercad allows you to move the object around to be able to look at it from all sides. When you first start to use Tinkercad you will need to create an account in order to be able to save your projects. Once you have created your account there will be a button that says create design. Click on it, and a screen will appear that will have a grid. In the bottom right corner there is a bar that will say ten millimeters. If you double click on it you can change it from millimeters to inches. Once you have your grid set-up you can begin working. There are shapes for you to choose from to create your object. Shapes include pyramid, sphere, rectangular prism, a doughnut shape, cylinder, roof, half a cylinder, and a few others. There is also the option to put text on your design. If you want to do a box, there is a hole that you can do. We started out by making our own design. We could make boxes within boxes, a box. The project we have to do after we do our own creation is to make a maze., just a small one. With curves and turns and stuff. The material that is used to make our projects are either squishy and/or hard. When we do the projects we are free to design it ourselves as long as we stay with in the given measurements. The maze has to be an eighth of an inch tall and about two inches long on all sides. When you place an object on the work surface, you can extend the height, width, and length to what you desire. When you are done you can name your project. In the top left hand corner there is a spot where a random title will have been given. You can change that to what you want. The next time you log on your project will be there. To print this you need a three dimensional printer. I personally think that Tinkercad is a good program to use if you want to create three dimensional objects. Tinkercad is a really fun program and is really easy to get the hang of.



## 8th Grade PLUS Block Change

by Bella Schwabe

In the eighth grade, the way PLUS block is being run is getting adjusted. Originally, students had to silent read in their PLUS block unless they had completed the following: made a certain percentage of their AR goal (this is determined by how far through the quarter we are), if they had band or chorus, or if they had work to make up that they missed due to EHP or being absent. If you had all of this done, you could go to EHP, or if you were not a part of EHP, you would silent read. This worked for some time. However, the teachers felt as though students were not getting enough work done and were not reading enough. So they decided that the best way to go about PLUS block was to have everyone read for twenty minutes at the beginning of the block, unless you have band or chorus, if you have to make up a test or quiz, or if you have completed your ENTIRE AR goal, and not just a percentage. Then, after the first twenty minutes, you could either complete missed work or continue reading if you have nothing to make up. The goal of this change was to not only help the eighth graders read more so they can complete their AR goal, but it was to also help teach them to prioritize and plan out their day more. This is because, if they have a lot of work to catch up and they know this, yet they still have to read for the first twenty minutes of PLUS block, they will make more of an attempt to get work done and not just talk the whole time. The reaction to this change was not a very happy one because most students do not like reading. However, this new change should bring about improvement in reading as well as work ethic and the level of noise in the classroom. In conclusion, although it may not be the most popular choice for PLUS block, it is one that will improve students in the long run.

## Justice Club

*by Reagan Riffle*

We're off to a good start! Justice Club or, Social Justice Club as it previously was called, has had its first two after-school meetings on January 12 and January 26. Student led by Reagan Riffle and advised by Mr. Townsend, the club is all about accepting and embracing difference and change. The first meeting was a basic introduction. Reagan and Mr. Townsend introduced themselves, their motives for leading, their role model, their favorite subject and other things about themselves. Which are (some directly quoted):

### what's your motive for leading justice club?

**Mr. Townsend:** "I've led similar groups to this one in the past at other schools" -

"I have a strong interest in current events" - and I like this kind of positive outlook.

**Reagan:** "At first I was just curious, that was last year. I was curious to see how many people felt similarly to me, so I took a survey" - "the results were rather negative and I realized I wasn't alone. So I created this group to try and spread awareness and build opinions on things that aren't generally taught in school."

### who is your role model?

**Mr. Townsend:** "My high school wellness teacher, she was very wise and stood up for what she believed in."

**Reagan:** "I love so many like Ellen Page, Mindy Kaling, Malala Yousafzai, Amy Poehler, Constance Wu, Beyonce, Nicki Minaj, America Ferrera, Rowan Blanchard and so many more."

### what's your favorite subject within social justice?

**Mr. Townsend:** "I've always had a strong interest in current events!"

**Reagan:** "Coincidentally, I'm actually extremely invested in all historical feminism, kinda like the story of how we got where we are and I have a particular interest in LGBTQIA+ rights."

After introducing themselves, they went through each student and asked them questions like; what inspired you to join this club, who's your role model, what's your dream for America and what their opinions are on the Eighth Grade Team's 'What's Your Dream for America' mural, that was curated in Mr. Townsend's eighth grade social studies classes. A general range of answers to each question include:

### what inspired you to join the club?

**Club Members:** "I hear a lot of things that don't sit well with me or I don't understand" - "I have strong interests in the categories we study here and wish to expand my knowledge" - "I want to learn how to react positively to ignorance and hate that I hear, and explain why it's wrong" - "I want to take an action"

### who's your role model?

**Club Members:** (answers range from) Rowan Blanchard, Emma Watson, Wiz Khalifa, Katherine Johnson, Bernie Sanders, and Malala Yousafzai

### analysis of the analysis of the "What's your Dream for America" poster:

**Reagan:** "A lot of students had mixed feelings and questions on political topics that were mentioned, but similar dreams for America were mentioned throughout the discussion.-"

-Morals such as; peace, love, equality, forgiveness and freedom were popular opinions.”

Finally, Reagan offered a wide sample of topics she wishes the group will be able to cover throughout their meetings this year. To quote;

“It’s really such a huge umbrella of positivity. I’m focusing on the positive outlook of spreading awareness and empathy through the knowledge of injustices. Most subjects are fair game here, so come with an open mind and heart to whatever we may be covering, whether it be my, your or their interest”

## Spirit Week

by Nicky DiNino

If you were standing outside the school looking in the window, most of the time everyone is wearing normal clothes. It would be pretty boring. But, during the week of February 20th, if you were looking through the window you would be blown away by the incredible outfits. That is because February 20th is the first day of Spirit Week. Spirit Week is a week where every day has a different theme or a special event. Monday is Dress-Up Day. Everyone can dress up in their best clothes and be fancy. Tuesday is Fictional Character Day. You can dress up as your favorite character from books, movies, the radio, or anything else you could possibly think of. For example you could dress up as someone from the book *Cold Comfort Farm* by Stella Gibbons (I mean no one would know who you were supposed to be, but...). Your character just has to be fictional, so I don’t want to see any Dr.Phils walking around school. Wednesday is Blue and White Day, and it is also the Pep Rally. You should wear your best blue and white clothes. The Pep Rally is always one of the highlights of the year. It is so exciting when your group gets called and you run around the gym and everyone is cheering. Even if for some reason you don’t want to join any of the clubs at SMS, you should just to be a part of the Pep Rally. Thursday is both Twin Day and 5th and 6th Grade Level Competition. Twin Day is where you and someone else (a friend or your arch-nemesis) both dress up wearing as close to the exact same clothes as you can. The 5th and 6th Grade Level Competition is so much fun! Last year the competition was so exciting, and I bet it will be even more exciting this year! The competition is a tournament featuring lots of different events. There is the Limbo, the Scooter Race, Tug o’ War and many more. There are four winners, one advisory from every grade. Friday is Wacky Day and the 7th and 8th Grade Level Competition. On Wacky Day you can wear whatever mixed up, crazy outfit you want. And the 7th and 8th Grade Level Competition is the same idea as the 5th and 6th Grade Competition, except with 7th and 8th instead of 5th and 6th. Spirit Week is always so much fun and this year is going to be the best one yet!

## 5th Grade Technology

by Ted McLaughlin

What is on your mind when you think of technology? To be honest, I don’t really like technology. But some kids absolutely love technology. Yesterday was Valentine’s Day and we had to write three really good sentences about a top article on Google. The article that I picked was called, “Google gives a way 20 million dollars to take away the things we didn’t make or sell.” Then we had to search up a Valentine’s Day quote and pick our favorite quote. My favorite was, “ Valentine’s Day is all about love, but a little chocolate now and then wouldn’t hurt. After we finished the paper, there was a play button on the google sign that lead us to a game. That was only if you finished, which I think every kid did. Besides one who came in late. But it was a game where you were an armadillo, and when he jumped he would turn into a ball shaped like a heart. In the game there were four chapters. They were pretty easy. But after every chapter there was a video of him getting closer and closer to his girlfriend. If you are a fifth grader that loves coding and tech, you will love technology.



# 8th Grade Attitude

by Gabby Oja

Hello, right now you are reading this, maybe because you are curious about the 8th grade behavior, or you're just wondering what this could possibly be about. You could even be an 8th grader yourself wanting to hear another 8th grader's point of view on your attitude. But, whatever the reason, keep on reading. It will be worth it! Attitude is very important. Your attitude is the main reason that you are able to achieve greatness. Without a positive attitude towards things, you could become depressed and start to not care about anything. But you need to care! So, that is what I am going to talk about in this article.

Being an 8th grader, everyone looks up to you. Trust me, I'm not just saying that, it's true! If you have a negative attitude towards different subjects, the people that look up to you could become negative as well. I feel as though 8th graders don't realize the amount of responsibility that they need to have, and how influential they are. When an 8th grader does something, many people will think it's cool because they are older, so more people will do it. If their attitude is poor, then, slowly the whole school's attitude will give way to negativity.

For many 8th graders this is not the case. But for some, their attitude is not too fine and dandy. You may be thinking, *how bad is the behavior?* But let me tell you that it's bad enough that we already have a "bad reputation" at the high school. Many 8th graders seem to think that the rules don't apply to them, and that because it's the last year at South Meadow School, it doesn't matter if they get in trouble or not, but that's not true. If you get in trouble this year thinking that it doesn't matter, because you're leaving, you could still have summer school, suspension at ConVal, and you have to make up the work you missed!

The teachers in 8th grade are wonderful! They are trying to get us ready for ConVal by doing many things, but one of those is changing the way of discipline. Next year none of the teachers is going to put up with our behavior. So if a child is being disrespectful, to the office they go. Many kids may think, *hey, I can easily get sent to the office, and stay out of class*, but being sent to the office is not good. It is a black mark on your record that will be carried with you. Being sent to the office is not funny. It means that you were misbehaving and that going to the office is your consequence. To summarize, South Meadow School is an amazing school, filled with wonderful teachers, and I am so glad to be part of the community. The 8th grade attitude could be better, but we are all working on it. Hopefully it will continue to get better, so we can go to ConVal with a "good reputation" and a fresh start. Also, if you're in 8th grade, please think before you act!

## Table Manner Murders

by Kendall Larson

As we know, the start of a new quarter means...new specials! In seventh grade, some classes have just started Consumer and Family (FACS) for the first time. On our first day, we got to watch an intense video on the horrors of bad table manners. In the video, one girl has a dinner party with a bunch of her friends. Each one of her friends, including her, commit a series of terrible manners, in which we have to pick out the different behaviors. These bad manners include the usual chewing with your mouth open and uttering rude comments. Yet, we also learned some new ones. Nobody knew that setting the table wrong or using a big center piece was a bad! After the video, we were split into table groups of about three, and had to guess as many as we could in just five minutes. The people at the winning table, for our class at least were given a cherry cola tic tac. The first day of FACS was without doubt so much fun, and we got to learn about good table manners! We have many more adventures to come in FACS, so we'll keep you posted!

## Spirit Week Days

- Monday - Dress up day (formal!)
- Tuesday - Fictional Character Day
- Wednesday - Blue and White Day as well as the Whole School Pep Rally!
- Thursday - Twin Day and the Fifth and Sixth Grade Competitions
- Friday - Wacky Day and the Seventh and Eighth Grade Competitions

## STOMP

“The Rhythm of New York”

by *Daisy Ober*

In 6th grade music class we watched a video of a group performing on stage that featured tap dancers, drummers, and comedians, except each performer had all of these qualities. The name of the group was STOMP. I was so intrigued that I went home and watched the rest of the performance. After the “final curtain,” I did some research about the group. I learned that they were founded in the UK, and are now a New York group that performs internationally. New York honored STOMP by adding the subtitle, “The Rhythm of New York”.

Again, STOMP features tap dancers, drummers, and comedians. Their instruments are everyday objects: brooms, matchboxes, newspapers, and more. The way they make music with these everyday objects is breathtaking. You might have banged on your bowl with your spoon and then someone else clicked the tongs together once or twice, right? That’s the general idea. Some of the music is very modern American sounding, whereas another song might sound more like African drums or a song from a musical, minus the words. Imagine the song “Hard Knock Life” from the musical *Annie*, now take out the words. STOMP is pretty much a more professional and official version of that.

STOMP was originally created in the UK by Luke Cresswell and Steve McNicholas, in 1991. In 1994, STOMP’s US tour began. STOMP also received a Grammy award nomination in 1994. Then, in 1997, their new 45 minute long TV special, STOMP OUT LOUD, recieved not one, but four Emmy nominations. In 2004, STOMP celebrated their 10th US tour anniversary. In honor of this, Second Avenue at 8th Street, NY, was officially renamed STOMP avenue. Finally, in 2012, STOMP performed at the 2012 London Olympics closing ceremony, one of the highest honors.

One of STOMP’s performers is a man named Desmond Howard. In ‘Newspapers’ a number that I watched on YouTube, Desmond plays the part of a hilarious man and pulls it off flawlessly. He had me in fits of laughter throughout the entire number. One of the leaders of the group is Simeon Weedall. Again, he plays a hysterical character, and again, he does it perfectly. The performers interact with each other, and the audience during the show, sometimes using gestures, also sometimes using sound. Some cultural references have found their way into the music and dance of STOMP, too. Personally, I love how this group gives an example of a show that isn’t just about watching a bunch of people perform. They give an example of a show that people go to to be involved in something so much bigger than just the music that they are hearing, or the performance that they are watching, people go because of the community feeling.

STOMP is a great group. Every member has great stage presence, and they are all great at what they do. Every one of them is a role model. Their music is incredible, their acting flawless, and their dancing unbelievable. People all around the world deserve to enjoy this special kind of performance. That’s why I have spent so much time learning about this amazing group. I would like to be involved in something like this too.

### Carnation Sales

by *Erin Meiklejohn*

Valentine’s Day was coming up, and the student at South Meadow School were just dying to get their friends and family a beautiful gift. Carnations, beautiful flowers that really say “I love you”, only \$1 per person from January 23rd to February 3rd, every day before school and during lunch and recess Carnations have been sold. Then this past Tuesday; February 14, 2017, they were given out by the student council to everyone’s homeroom advisors during PLUS to people who really deserve it. Whether you are a secret admirer, best friend, or family member, carnations are for all. It’s the true spirit of Valentine’s Day, a quick gift for someone you care about.

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## Having a Peer Mentor

*by Otto McLaughlin*

A peer mentor is usually a person that is older than you, that tells you where everything is, plays games with you, and makes your school experience here at SMS better. My peer mentor is a girl named Rya. She is a nice peer mentor that helps me feel more comfortable at SMS. Not all people at SMS are peer mentors. Most peer mentors are engaged with their peer mentees, play games and have a conversation together. But, sometimes out of the corner of my eye I can see some peer mentors not talking to their peer mentees, but usually they do play games and have conversations, or just talk because I can't hear them. Peer mentors keep me and mostly other 5th graders up to date, like they talk about spirit week and what the event is each day of the week. They also probably talked about (at least mine did) the pep rally. My advisory has already won the turkey trot, and I'm hoping Mr. Iwanowicz can have his name up there twice. One thing I want my peer mentor to do is to pick me to be a peer mentor next year. I want to be a peer mentor next year because I don't want kids to be uncomfortable when they come to one of the best middle schools in New England. It's been fun knowing my peer mentor, and it's also been fun being at this amazing school.

## High School Scheduling

*by Bella Schwabe*

The eighth grade class has begun preparations for high school. In order to do this, they have to begin planning their schedule for Conval. Even if a student is not planning to go to Conval, they are still getting a schedule in place just in case. To start, each student got a piece of paper with all of the classes provided on it. Then, a guidance counselor from the school came down and explained the schedule and semesters. After that, we picked six classes that we were interested in (usually it would be eight, but our math teachers wanted to help us pick our math). Each student was required to check an LA class, Eastern World Heritage, Physical Science, as well as a math class. Then, we could pick other classes like Spanish 1, Band, Chorus, 2D art, 3D art etc. You could also sign up for some honor classes and in order to do that you had to speak with the teacher of that class and get their approval. After that, we had to sign it and our parents also have to sign it. Along with that paper we received a page with all of the co-curricular activities offered at Conval so we could think about what we wanted to join. To conclude, everyone is very excited and nervous for high school, but getting our schedule's ahead of time will help ease the stress of the rapidly approaching change.

## Life as a Student Council Member

*by Ted McLaughlin*

Have you ever thought about being in student council or what it would be like to be in student council. For me, Student Council is a blast, we do so much fun stuff. One thing that we do is that before every meeting we play a game. Usually we play Night at the Museum. Which is a game where someone turns off the lights and a person has to go into the hallway and counts to ten. Then they came back in and try to catch someone who moves, if the person does catch you move you're out. The last person to get caught wins. But after we play a game we talk about what we are planning. Just two or three weeks ago we planned Fun Friday, which wasn't easy. But now we just finished planning Spirit Week, which we only had one day to do it, because we have had so many snowdays. But we pulled through and we are hoping that everyone has a fantastic spirit week. I can tell you what we are doing for Spirit Week. On Tuesday it's fictional character day that is when you can dress up as your favorite character. On Wednesday it's Blue and White day which are the school colors. On Thursday it's probably my favorite day, twin day. I already am a twin with a kid named Otto. But I want to be a twin with one of my friends, Oliver. It's kind of convenient because we both won the Turkey Trot, Otto also won it. On Friday it's class and grade competition day where a class gets a point every time it wins a competition, you get a point. But there is more to it but it isn't exactly relevant. Being a Student Council is hard especially when you are a fifth grader, but you feel so nice and accomplished, so maybe next year you can run for Student Council.

## february's alcaic poem!

by Reagan Riffle

dear reader,

From now on, I've decided to try and extend my knowledge of different poetry forms as much as possible. In order to accomplish this, I will use a different and generally unknown form of poetry for each month's poem. This month, I am channeling the greek poet Alcaeus, who created a poem with a four-line stanza that employs a specific syllabic count per line and a dactylic personality. enjoy. :)

some say that this month is all-bout-love  
but rather it's something more typical  
it really is not difficult to love,  
so why is our limit valentine's day

to all the lovers and fighters on earth  
may every season be the one to say  
i love you, i love you, and i love you  
it is always an appropriate time

celebrate love like any other day  
be graceful, be loud, and be dangerous  
don't resist or hold back for the fourteenth  
but unconditionally love; always

Brezovec students why they do these things. Why do students not put up chairs? "We think other people will do it for us" says one 8th grader. Another student says that "We just want to leave early for class and forget to put them up." A common pet peeve that teachers have are tapping and talking when others are talking. In fact, sometimes Mrs. Norby thinks she is talking to herself because everyone else are doing their own thing. A good amount of teachers have a jar of pencils for students that are unprepared for class because they forgot a pencil. Teachers will then let the students use the pencils that are in the jar. A common pet peeve that teachers who do this have is when students don't return the pencils they use. Mrs. Van is one of those teachers who gives out pencils to students. She says when someone takes a pencil she is disappointed but she understands how students don't return the pencils. She does highly appreciate when a student returns a pencil for another student to use. Another pet peeve that teachers have is when students lose a paper and start blaming it on the teacher saying that they passed it in, when in the end they find it in their locker. Doing this makes the teacher feel bad and worried for the student because they think the teacher messed it up. When the students find the paper or project in their locker, the teacher is relieved at first that they found the paper but a little angry at the same time because they thought they lost it. Almost every teacher has a pet peeve and the ones who don't aren't usually the everyday teacher you're used to. In fact, everyone has pet peeves. Some examples are traffic, drinking straight out of a milk carton, and chasing after a ping pong ball. Teachers are definitely not the only ones who have pet peeves. In fact, even students have pet peeves about teachers, but that is a different story.

## Pet Peeves

by Jack McLaughlin

When students walk into class, they don't usually go into class and say, "How am I going to annoy my teacher today?" Sometimes, though, teachers think that's what students think when they first walk into class. Everyone has pet peeves, parents, students, but in particular teachers have a ton of pet peeves. I mean their job is almost set up for pet peeves knowing that every 45 minutes they have to deal with 20-25 kids. Students tap, rock in their chair, and talk when they are not supposed to, and those are just a few pet peeves that teachers have. I walked around the school interviewing teachers asking what their biggest pet peeves they have are. After getting these pet peeves I asked the students why they do these things that drive teachers nuts. The first teacher I interviewed was Mrs. Brezovec. Her pet peeves were a little different from the others since she is the EHP teacher. It drives her crazy when student don't plug in their laptop so they can charge when they are done with it. A few more pet peeves are leaving legos on the floor, not shutting down computers at the end of the day, and not putting up chairs at the end of the day. I asked Mrs.



## How Do Kids Affect Your Education?

by Lizzie Rizzotti



What comes to mind when you're going to class? Going to your favorite subject? Sitting with your friends? Or maybe being constantly annoyed by the same kid everyday? If you're reading this, you are one of the many people that may be affected by the rudeness of others that can majorly impair your learning. In many cases, there will always be that kid who interrupts the teacher when he/she is talking, makes snarky side comments, or an non-apparent joke.

One reason a kid may be annoying is because they actually don't want to do the work. In the eighth grade I know many students who will act out in hope to get sent to the office to miss class. When kids rebel against the teachers wishes, it usually takes the teacher four or five interruptions until they finally send them down. For me, I know that math is not my strong suit. So when I'm trying to understand the lesson and a few kids are constantly interrupting, it is disrespectful and I end up having to come back in to fully understand the concept of the lesson. You can most definitely tell a teacher but they most likely already know.

Another huge reason kids act out is that they may just want to fit in. This may sound completely crazy when you read it, but it may seem "cool" in a specific friend group to be bad. This actually happens and there are many instances where I have seen negative encouragement to do something bad. Even in the eighth grade where we are supposedly mature, that isn't always the case. I myself don't enjoy the interruptions. In general, kids just need to learn some manners. Talking back to a teacher as you would a parent just appals me. It is so disrespectful to the adults that come to teach you for their job. When five to ten kids act out it doesn't help.

Lastly, all they want is attention. If you have a kid who is constantly acting out during class, they might just want attention. Most times kids try to get positive attention. But when they don't receive that positivity, they go for the other kind of attention, the negative attention. I am only speaking for the eighth grade. From what I have observed from my fellow students is that being sent to the office is no longer a punishment, but now a way of getting attention. To conclude, being in eighth grade does not always mean all of us learn maturity. So many kids are like this even into adulthood. In general, kids just want attention whether it's negative or positive. A big part with growing up is having to fit in. Lastly, most kids act out because they don't want to do the work.

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## Getting In The Spirit of Spirit Week

By Daisy Ober

The staff and students are all pumped for next week. Why? It's Spirit Week! With twins, characters, wacky hairstyles and crazy outfits, it's hard not to get excited. Whispers of plans and ideas are filtering throughout the school, at least that's what my advisory has proved. We spent our entire advisory block this morning discussing and tie-dying t-shirts for next Thursday.

Attention 5th and 6th graders! Remember, wear your advisory color on Thursday! If you aren't sure what your advisory color is, your advisor will know. If your teacher hasn't brought it up, you should start making plans with your friends! It's a competition after all! All of our advisories want to win! Get in the Spirit! Okay, I'm done. You'll get enough pep rallying next week.

I came from Dublin Consolidated School, so I wasn't here last year. From Kindergarten to 4th grade, I always was into Spirit Week. It made me feel like there was more to school than just learning. Twin Day and Wacky Day have always been my favorites, and I was really glad that both of those days were continued here. Spirit Week is a great way to encourage school spirit and get kids involved in extracurricular events. Now go get excited!

# Nothing But the Truth

by Lorien Tyne

Avi, is a well known writer of more than 75 different novels, and in the eighth grade Language Arts class one of his many books has been read out loud. The novel, Nothing but the Truth is written in script format so everyone was assigned characters to talk as. The novel is about a boy named Philip Malloy and how his refusal to be respectful takes a large and rather drastic turn. He acts out during the time his class is suppose to be standing silent and respectful while listening to The Star-Spangled Banner. This gets him sent to the office and eventually gains him a two day suspension from school. From the press, community, and teachers, as well as Philip and his parents, the story is twisted into a nationwide story of a boy kicked out of school for patriotism. No matter how hard everyone tries to get to the bottom of the situation and find the real truth, it seems to be lost in each character's scramble to use the circumstance to their own advantage. Philip ends up getting a bad grade in English, not being allowed on the track team, socially outcasted, and losing his college money because he transfers to a private school. This book has been read for four years now and is important to the eighth grade syllabus because as stated by one of two English teachers, Ms.Hopgood, "Nothing But the Truth is significant to our curriculum due to the rebelliousness of the main character, consequences of choices/behaviors, and readability of the book." Novels in the eighth grade class are chosen for their readability, concepts and connection to our curriculum. There are also lessons that can be learned through the reading such as, "consequences of our actions, shades of truth and lies, and understanding how our actions impact others." in Ms.Hopgoods opinion. After reading the story in class and discussing it each student wrote an argumentative essay supporting their claim on whether or not Philip deserved what he got. This was a pre-assessment though so the students were not previously taught on the format or details of writing an argumentative piece. Pre-assessments are important for teachers so they can see what they need to focus on while teaching and how much their students already know. Argumentative writing is a crucial skill to learn no matter what career you go into. Many types of applications such as college and job applications require an essay or form of writing explaining why you should be chosen for said job or space in an academy. Overall the novel and assignment of this unit teaches the eighth grade class many things and is an exceptional addition to the students education.



## Harris Center Field Trip

*By Maddy Cilley*

The eighth grade science classes went back to the Harris Center for their second field-trip this year, on February 2. This trip included activities such as hiking through the snowy forests and identifying animal tracks, as well as looking for deer signs. To prepare for this trip, the eighth graders have been learning about deer ecology. Ecology is the study of relationships between organisms, and organisms and their physical environment. To understand deer ecology, they also had to learn about other terms such as “carrying capacity” and “adaptations”.



It took a lot of hard work, but now they are all near-experts of deer ecology.

The field-trip itself was half of a school day, but very educational. Each group was made of two science classes and was split in half when we got to the Harris Center. The students were able to learn all about deer’s habitats, and behavior. When this knowledge was combined with student’s prior knowledge, they were able to make amazing discoveries. Such as, why there are too many Whitetails in New England, and why it is our job as humans to manage the deer population.

A large portion of the field trip, was spent inside the beautiful facility watching and listening to a powerpoint about Whitetail deer. The powerpoint was led by John, one of the many helpful Harris Center employees, who visits the classroom often. He also led the group through a game, which stimulated how deer and their habitats’ relationship changes as years progress. In this game, the mini-ecologists lined up on either side of the room. Half of them were resources, and the other half Whitetail Deer. While facing away from each other, everyone had to choose a symbol to represent food, water, or shelter. To represent food, you place your hands on your stomach, water hands on your mouth, and shelter you create a teepee over your head with your arms. Next, you turn around and the resources stay in place, while the deer seek out what they need at that moment (what their symbol represented), before finding a resource with the same symbol. Each resource could only be used once, so after it was used it became offspring, and joined the deer side (the person who was a resource went back to the deer side with their one deer person). If there were deer who did not get the resource they had needed, they die, decompose, and then become a resource. After each round, John counted up the number on each side, and created a line graph to represent the data. We found a pattern in our graph, that showed as the number of deer go up, the resources go down, and vice versa. This activity really helped illustrate the pattern in nature to the students on the field trip.

For the second half of the trip, classes went outside into the woods. However, there was an opportunity to look at some artifacts before going outside. Some of the artifacts that were shown to the students, include: Whitetail deer coats, deer scat, deer antlers, and bark that bucks had rubbed against. These artifacts were examples of some of the things they would be looking for while outside. Once everyone got outside, they were all led by different leaders (there were three different groups) into different parts of the land. This part was very exciting, because there were many different animal tracks for students to identify with their group leader. As the groups got further into the woods, there were more diverse tracks to look at. Some examples of tracks seen include: mouse, chipmunk, squirrel, deer, and dog. They also saw plants that had been rubbed by bucks, and plants and trees eaten by Whitetail deer. In conclusion, the eighth graders second trip to the Harris Center, was very educational and a wonderful experience overall for the mini-scientists. They have a third trip coming up in the spring, so keep an eye out to hear more!



## Flowers for Algernon

by Bella Schwabe

In eighth grade LA with Ms. Hopgood, we are reading an excerpt of a story called, *Flowers for Algernon* by a writer named Daniel Keyes. *Flowers for Algernon* is told through a series of progress reports that 32 year old Charlie Gordon writes following his experiences. Charlie has a developmental disability that leaves him with an IQ of 68. He gets chosen to take part in an experimental procedure that would potentially triple his IQ and increase his learning abilities. From the beginning you can obviously see through his writing that his reading and writing skills are at a very low level. He talks about how he started in classes for adults, and how his teacher, Ms. Kinnian, put him in the running for the procedure, per Charlie's request. Charlie desperately wants to "become smart" because he would like to please others around him. Once he is told he is being considered, he becomes very excited and is very eager to begin. However, the scientists debate about using Charlie. When Charlie comes to the lab, they introduce him to Algernon, a mouse who got the procedure a short amount of time before him. After Charlie receives the operation, they begin testing Algernon and Charlie. They put Algernon in a maze with cheese at the end. They then started the timer and had both of them solve the maze. Algernon won for the first few times, but eventually the operation started to take its toll on Charlie and he began winning. Once Charlie got the operation you could begin seeing the drastic change in Charlie's spelling, punctuation, grammar and vocabulary. Before the operation, Charlie worked at a factory and was often laughed at. He thought all of these people were his friends, but after the operation he realized that they only kept him around to make fun of him. He felt shameful. Then, he became much smarter than all of the other workers, and they created a petition to fire Charlie. This is because they resented Charlie and his newfound intelligence. After he was fired he started receiving a salary from the lab. He continued taking tests and learning and his intelligence reached a genius level. His communication skills started waning because the people around him didn't know the things he did. Eventually, he decided to study Algernon and the effects of the operation that was done on them. He realized that eventually his intelligence would start to fade and he'd begin forgetting things. His IQ would return to a similar number to what it was before and rapidly. Algernon died, and Charlie then entered a profound depression and almost completely isolated himself. He wrote about how he forgot things and how his ability to read seven languages disappeared completely. He had to start looking all of the words he wrote up in the dictionary and his vocabulary returned to an elementary level. He started getting sick and sleeping for a week at a time. He ended by saying he was leaving to go somewhere that no one knew him. Overall I thoroughly enjoyed this story and the exploration of the human brain and what happens when someone tries to "play god". This story was originally published in 1959 in the *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. He won multiple awards for his novelette. He later reworked it into a full length novel, which was published in 1966. The short story and novel have many distinct differences, but both are very interesting and touch on important subjects.

