

# Puma News



Puma Press

South Meadow School

Tenth Issue 2016-2017

## Brain Teasers

by Kendall Larson (answers on page four!)

1. A man turned 70 in the year 2000, but in 2010 he turned 60 years old. How can this be?
2. Before Mt. Everest was discovered, which mountain was the tallest mountain?
3. I exist only where there is light but direct light kills me. What am I?
4. What invention lets you look through a wall?
5. How far can a deer run into the wood?
6. You are driving a bus. At the first stop, three woman get off, and one child. The next stop, two men got off. At the third stop, two kids and their mom get off. The bus is red, and it is raining outside. What color is the bus driver's hair?
7. I have no special powers, but I can predict the score of any baseball game before it starts. How?
8. The poor have it, the rich need it, and if you eat it, you'll die. What is it?

## Book Review

by Reagan Riffle

Over the course of the past few weeks of vacation, I had a chance to read *Phantom Limbs*, by Paula Garner. I couldn't find the will to put this book down. It follows Otis, a teenage boy, who struggles with the loss of the only girl he loved, a very pressing and nearly abusive only friend, and his baby brother's death in his high school years. In the beginning of the book the reader can simply perceive Otis as another follower of the crowd. After his best friend moved and his little brother died, he had very little depth in his character. It's easy to say some terrible things that happened to him but are hidden far beneath his surface, until Meg, his cross-country closest friend (and girlfriend) during the grief, texts Otis saying she will be returning to their hometown, Willow Grove, that summer to visit her divorced father. Once she arrives Otis has so many questions regarding why she left and what really happened between the two. Not hearing from her in three years after his brother died, Otis is at first exuberant to see her. He revels in their past adventures and what has happened since then to now deeply troubled Meg. Throughout the book, Otis uncovers a great deal of secrets that change his character completely. The book was easy to relate to and overwhelming in the author's capability to write a book that resonates in such close-quarters to real life at a middle school age. I read this in a few hours on my sunny porch with a plate of strawberries and bawled my eyes out. You should too!

## a note to the class of

2022

by reagan riffle

To all seventh graders: slow down. Eighth grade will be the time of your life. You'll learn new things about yourself and your peers, life, and the importance of working hard. It's not easy, but that was never guaranteed. There will be nights where you stay up until 3:00 am after soccer practice and justice club to finish the last assignment. There will be other nights when you take into full consideration the real upkeep of all those assignments. At 9:14 pm they might not matter to you. They matter. But nevertheless, you're dedicating four hard-working years of your life to this school. Whether you enjoy it or dread it, it's on you to have a fulfilling experience so that when you near the end, like I have, it's harshly bittersweet in that you will never step foot in this building the same way again.

## My Life at SMS; A Short Summary

by Gabrielle Oja

Just one thing before you read this: this happens to be my last article for the SMS Puma Press, ever. Writing this was kind of sad. I didn't know what my last article should be about, even once I started writing it. I was changing from topic to topic. Thinking of different things my last article could consist of, not knowing which one to choose, I just kept writing. After much editing, I decided I was done, yet I still decided to go back and write this paragraph...

After being at SMS for so long, it is very hard to say goodbye to everyone and everything. Next year I will be in a new environment with new people. Honestly, I am scared, but also excited. Having been in the same place for such a long time, I am extremely comfortable with SMS. Transitioning to a new school with a new group of people will at first be unusual, but like any change I will grow accustomed to my new surroundings. Nevertheless, I am very excited to transition to high school! There will be so many new people to make friends with, and so many new clubs that I can join. Everyone at ConVal always says that they love it there and that it is such a great school.

Saying goodbye to everyone will be very difficult to do. SMS is such a wonderful school with wonderful people. The environment in SMS is extremely welcoming and kind. The teachers are amazing, and I will definitely miss them! There are many clubs here that I am in and will be sad to leave behind. I will especially miss the Expanding Horizons Program (EHP). EHP has been such a huge part of SMS for me. Without it I don't believe I would have thrived as well as I did at this school. I have made so many friends through EHP, and it will be hard to say goodbye.

I am from Dublin, which means that I was only at SMS for 3 years, Dublin went through to the 5th grade when I was there. I got to SMS in the 6th grade. I'm not going to lie, it was a little tricky transitioning and I was terrified. However, I have loved it here at SMS. In 6th grade I made so many friends. I tried out a ton of clubs, including EHP. I started out in webcasting and at the end of the year I began with Peer Mentors. I ended up not continuing with webcasting, though. I also tried volleyball and student council. Upon coming to SMS I learned that even though it went from 70 kids to 400, there was no need to worry. SMS is a great place, and I have really enjoyed it.

In 7th grade, I started to figure out what I wanted to do and who I wanted to be. It really set in my mind that I wanted to continue to have good grades and that I wanted to always try to be nice and never make anyone feel left out. In 7th grade I joined newspaper, continued with Peer Mentors, but stopped doing webcasting, and also left student council. I had a full schedule. My first articles were pretty bad. I would like to say that I have improved with time. I also realized how much I love math. That year I truly figured out who my friends were and what I'd like to do with my life. When I say "who my friends were" I don't mean anything bad; there weren't fights or anything of that sort. I just learned what type of people I want to associate myself with. I also found that I had a passion for becoming a doctor. In 7th grade I learned that it's not hard to be a "good" student and friend as long as you are loyal and passionate.

This year I started doing more with EHP. Even though I didn't join any other EHP subject I still found myself trying to help around the room, along with other things that needed to be done for the school. I would also really like to say that I connected more with my teachers this year than I ever have in the past. I still want to be a doctor-I'm thinking a surgeon. I find myself wondering more about my future and realize that I want to try to get a full scholarship to either Harvard or Dartmouth College. I also find that I enjoy writing very much and like working to make my sentences more structurally sound (I'm definitely still working on it!). Also, I personally can tell that I have matured, and that I am more responsible.

Throughout all the years, my feelings toward SMS have never wavered. I have always believed that SMS is a wonderful school and that all the teachers are wonderful, amazing, caring, and every other positive adjective known to humankind. I really love learning, and I can imagine I always will. When I think back at all the years here at SMS it really makes me sad to say goodbye. I will miss the classes, students, teachers, staff and everything else about this school so much! I really appreciate everything about it. Goodbye SMS, and thank you!

## Slow Down

by Reagan Riffle

For the very last poem I will write in the SMS newspaper (ever), I've decided to recollect years past in the form of a 'pantomime'. The rules for this style of poetry are as follows; write a quatrain (4 line stanza). Take lines 2 and 4 of the first stanza and make them lines 1 and 3 of the second stanza. Continue your poem using this pattern. For your last stanza, go back to the first stanza of the poem. Make line 3 of the first stanza line 2 of your last. Make line 1 of the first stanza line 4 in your last. As a new poet, I really struggled with writing this poem. Not only was the style challenging and hard to work with, but the subject was incredibly hard to put into words. The four years I've spent here have put me through doubt, joy, stress, tears, screams, excitement, and love. I would have never learned as much about myself, my peers, and my world if I hadn't come here. This school served as a steady component in my bumpy life. Whether I was wearing fake glasses, cutting my hair to curl with discomfort around my ears, losing my water bottle and losing it again, tripping over seamlessly flat land, or smiling without my teeth in fear of being "too happy," this school has never changed its role in my life. I can recall waking up at horrid times and dreading the morning advisory call, instead of being thankful that it's all the same, and it's such a huge part of who I am. Now that I'm leaving, and this school will no longer be a stitch to the imperfectly beautiful fabric of my life, it will be a journey worth living to find it again, but this time in ConVal. I easily lost sight of this until this year. So it is time, to slow down.

slow down  
take a breath  
open your eyes  
look how far you've come

breathe more  
it's nearly june  
you were only ten years old  
you've just arrived and now you're close to gone

it's june  
the sms garden starts to bloom  
you'll be gone in less than a month  
you're four years older and wiser

the sms garden is blooming  
all you want to think about is graduation  
you're 14 and ready for high school  
but you won't notice the school isn't coming along

today is graduation  
you hear all your fellow band mates play the song of your departure  
you march to the stage and these four years all catch up in one second  
you've forgotten the present so much that it's become the past

you hear your section become the players you were  
you remember the colors of spirit week, pajama day, orientation  
you yearn for the now past to stay just a little bit longer  
the teachers, clubs, strenuous nights of homework, and early mornings

you're called to the stage  
open your eyes  
a realization! you're leaving the school and this school will never leave you  
you slow down



## Answers to Riddles

- 1- The man lives in 2010 b.c.e., so he only gets older as the years are closer to zero
- 2- Mt. Everest, it just hasn't been discovered yet
- 3- A shadow
- 4- A window
- 5- Halfway, after that it is running out of the woods
- 6- Your hair color, because you are driving the bus
- 7- The score is zero-zero, the score of any game before it starts is always zero-zero
- 8- Nothing



## What's In A Tile

by Maddy Cilley

As an eighth grader here at SMS, you will create multiple tiles. The more you are involved in, the more opportunities there are to make one. There is art class, band, and Expanding Horizons Program. In art, your tile consists of your name, the year you leave SMS or the year you will graduate from ConVal, and anything else you wish to include. This tile is a mandatory project as an eighth grader, and therefore everyone must create their own. This tile is the only way every future student will know who you are as a person. Sometimes in band, your tile is simple; a hand print, and some words or drawings. Finally, in EHP, your tile can be almost anything you wish as long as it has something to do with what you have done in EHP.

Tiles are important, because they are an effective way of communicating what was special to past students, and they can inspire future students. Tiles are also a way of knowing that when you leave the school you will be remembered. They are an everlasting memory of you, and they will not change, even when you do. Therefore, a tile is kind of like a time capsule. We create it, and then we just wait until we remember them and go back to them. By this time, we have changed, and then we can look back at our past selves. So, tiles aren't really just for everyone else to remember you, but also for you to remember you.

Now, you may be asking how you create a tile knowing all of the pressure that lies on it. Well, you just have to do it. In order to create something that actually reflects your life, you have to put aside the pressure and think clearly. You want to put the parts of you that you feel are most important to you. For me, there are many things I care about, but some of the most important things are dance, music, and friendship. So, I highlighted these things on my tiles.

Tiles are a really special opportunity that we have here at SMS, and we should all be grateful for this chance to leave behind something that represents us. So, when you look up at all of the tiles on the walls, please don't just dismiss them, but rather think of them as a part of a person left behind. That person would want you to understand the message that they were trying to get across, and they would want you to recognize them. That's why we make so many tiles. We make them because we want to be remembered, and that's what is so great about SMS. We offer these opportunities for students to be remembered, so they don't have to worry about being forgotten and that they aren't just a number or statistic. Every person has contributed to the school and helped to make it the place it is today. Everyone has this opportunity because everyone contributes to the school in some way and changes it if even just a little bit. In conclusion, most eighth graders make multiple tiles, they are important to them, and they represent the legacy they left when they moved on to ConVal.

# My EHP Experience Throughout the Years

by *Bella Schwabe*

## **Fifth grade**

Most of fifth grade is rather hazy to me, as it seems like eons ago. However, I do remember one day when my advisory walked down to the EHP room and all sat around a large table. It was only the first or second day of school, and everything was incredibly new and daunting. Mrs. Brezovec addressed our class. She went through each extracurricular we could participate in and what that would entail. I don't actually remember why I decided upon newspaper, but writing has always intrigued me, and I assume that had quite a bit to do with it. There were around 10-12 fifth graders who signed up for newspaper, five from my advisory (there are only two members who have been doing newspaper since fifth grade and are now in eighth grade). Mrs. Decibus, my advisor, also let us know that our whole advisory would be partaking in simple machines (I believe it was only for one quarter but I'm not at all positive), and that our participation in that would affect our science grade. I wasn't too excited about the simple machines, as engineering didn't interest me at the time, but I was alright with it. After that, there aren't any specific memories pertaining to fifth grade newspaper, but in that school year I learned a lot. In that year I began learning the basics of Photoshop (to this day there is still a ton about Photoshop that I do not know). During this time our Newspaper was formatted very differently. Each student composed their own page with an article, multiple pictures, and sometimes a design. We also had an earlier version of both Photoshop and InDesign. I can't imagine that my first page was any good, or what it was about, but in that month or so, I know that I learned a whole lot. Not only about Photoshop and InDesign, but also about computers and such. I can hardly remember anything from simple machines either. I know that we were split up into pairs and given a packet to work off of. I could remember what we created because there are multiple albums up on the EHP website (I would not advise you to look as I made some unfortunate fashion choices, it was really quite dreadful, but you could look at them if you're searching for a laugh).

## **Sixth grade**

Once I got to sixth grade, I was free from the reins of simple machines! (Little did I know that I'd end up on the competition robotics team.) I believe we still did entire pages at this time, which would soon change. During this year I learned a lot more about Photoshop and I believe I got quite into making slides for the morning announcements, although that wasn't exactly the job of a newspaper student. One thing that I ought to make clear is that when you're in EHP, whether it be for Robotics, or Peer Mentors, or Newspaper, you often end up doing a variety of things that may or may have to do with the subject you originally came in for. I find this to be really helpful because you end up gaining a wider range of skills, and you end up challenging yourself more than you would if it was more rigid. In sixth grade, I worked rollerskating a couple times at the end of the year. This is when I learned how rollerskating operated and how to work the music, set up the lights, set up the sound, etc. It was really new to me, but working rollerskating interested me, because I am absolutely terrible at rollerskating (you see, I'm quite clumsy). So, working it gave me a chance to not only learn a lot more, occasionally to socialize, but also to get community service. Sixth grade and fifth grade sometimes blend together for me in terms of memories, so this may not all be in sixth grade. At the very end of the year, the competition robotics team was having difficulty organizing their Lego pieces after their competition. Mrs. Brezovec decided to enlist me as well as two other people in Newspaper to help them organize their pieces. This was not exactly ideal because the Newspaper kids and the Robotics kids kind of had, for lack of a better term, a rivalry. Every Thursday, a few Newspaper students would stay after to work on their pages, the Robotics students would as well. Lets just say we would disagree on the music playing in the room. They often requested classical or Star Wars music, and we wanted... other music. This often started rousing debates that ended with the music off entirely. So, when we were asked to help the Robotics kids we were not exactly thrilled, but I enjoyed organizing so I was willing to help. Eventually, Mrs. Brezovec asked the students who helped with the sorting to join the robotics team for next year. I had never thought about joining, but felt it was a good opportunity, so I agreed.

**Seventh grade**

Seventh grade was one of the most exciting years in terms of EHP. We stopped doing full pages in newspaper, which not only changed the way it looked, but greatly changed the way we wrote articles. I threw myself into Photoshop and worked a lot on slides and drawings. I began working roller skating a lot more frequently and learned how to run it more independently. It became so I was working every other week or so. I also learned how to upload things to the website and how to change things on it as well. In addition to that I learned how to edit photos for the website and for the TV that is in the front of the school. This was also the year that the mbots were introduced. Mbots are small blue robots that are a tad bit easier to program than the regular robots we use for robotics. We got these to help teach the seventh grade programming but presented in a fun and easy-to-understand way. Preparing to teach them involved a lot of time invested in experimenting, writing directions, testing said instructions, setting up, organizing and printing. The mbots were a lot of fun to work with and it was really interesting being put in the place of the teacher and being a leader to my grade. On top of all of that, this was the year that I started robotics. This meant a lot of staying after and a LOT of preparation and learning. Although the main reason I was in robotics was not to work on the robot, I still had to learn some of the basics of programming. That year we used three different robots, each from a different “generation” of robotics and programming. Our team was split in three and each group used a different robot. This worked to our advantage in some ways but was also difficult to operate because the old robots were more finicky and in some cases, the newer robot was less reliable. Being in the smaller groups helped the three new members learn about the robots because it gave us a chance to work one on one and gain more knowledge that way. However, I was learning the oldest programming software, which was not used the next year. The theme for my first year was Trash Trek, which really just had to do with the amount of waste is produced every year and how that affects our environment. Our challenge was to find a way to curb some the waste, or to find a way to reuse it. We decided upon the abundance of E Waste produced because we used so much technology in EHP. We ended up making games out of E Waste; we split up into different groups and each group made a different game. Going into our first local competition we had no idea what to expect. It was new and slightly unnerving. It ended up being a really enjoyable experience that taught me a whole lot of new things. We ended up winning because of our different robots, which was so cool! Because we won an award, we advanced to the State level competitions. We had to adjust our robot and games according to the comments we received on our rubrics. This meant that the next few weeks were extremely busy. We spent almost every day after school, sometimes until six or seven in the evening. States was even larger than Locals and was absolutely terrifying; it was a totally new experience once again. We didn't end up winning any awards at states, even though we should have for our Project! (I'm still a tad bit bitter, if you can't tell.) Either way, States was a memory I will probably remember for the rest of my life as well as my first year of robotics. I was ready for the next year of robotics so we could achieve even more at competition! Right before the end of the year is also when I found out that I had been nominated to be a Peer Mentor, which wasn't very common for a seventh grader. I was really excited because I had wanted to be a Peer Mentor since fifth grade. Training taught me a lot and got me ready for the next year. That summer, the robotics team helped run a robotics summer camp. The first week was for younger kids and they'd learn a simpler programming software, and the other week was for older kids and they'd be learning more complicated programming software. During this time we also began preparing what we could for the next year of robotics so that we were ahead of the game. During the first week it was interesting because I learned a new programming software, although an incredibly simple one, together with the person I was assisting. The first week was more hands-on because they were younger. The first week helped me learn more about “being a teacher” and how to assist individual needs of students. The second week, the kids were more independent, but the material was more complicated. This week they learned one of the softwares we used for our robots, and for a couple days they worked with the mbots. This entire year was definitely one of my favorites for EHP because it was full of a ton of new experiences and opportunities.

**Eighth grade**

When I was in fifth grade, eighth grade felt like an utterly preposterous concept. Everyone seemed so big.

For the first few weeks I still couldn't believe that I was in my last year of middle school. It didn't seem at all possible to me. This year EHP was a tad different. I was one of the editors of the newspaper, which was super cool and gave a sense of confidence with InDesign that I didn't possess before. It was also different being in robotics. It was the same team minus two members because they had moved on to high school. Our entire team was eighth graders, and we were ready and excited for the year ahead. We changed quite a few things about our team this year. First of all, we decided upon one single robot, which at the time was difficult, but it worked. The theme this year was called Animal Allies and had to do with our relationship with animals. We had to figure out a way to improve that relationship. We decided on the subject of pollinators and their declining populations. We did so much research it was kind of crazy. We read books, observed posters, talked to experts, we even created a pamphlet with all of our knowledge. By the time we got to Locals I was less nervous because we were at the same school, and it felt rather familiar. Our project went all right, and we were feeling very good about our core values, in addition to that our robot design was great! Our only downfall: running the robot. We had unusually low scores and our robot was not running at all as intended. Due to our low scores, we fell below 13th place on the robot leader board and were no longer in the running to advance to States. It was disappointing because of how hard we had worked, but we had fun doing it and we had learned a lot so it was alright. Regardless of our non-advancement to States, we still won the Robot Design award because we had created a robot time-line and had documented our programming well. This year I also worked rollerskating even more than last year, I worked almost every week, whenever I could. It was also really fun getting used to being a Peer Mentor. It was kind of hard to get used to meeting with a fifth grader every other week and talking with them, but it got easier as the year went on. My mentees are really cool, so that helped as well. It was also fun setting up for the Puma Pride assemblies, because I had watched them for years but was only getting to see how they operated and how to work one. During the AHT week (I did not attend AHT so I got to go to EHP all week!) I got the chance to create a ceiling tile. I felt like it was a culmination of all of the skills I've developed in EHP. If you were wondering, it is Starry Night, but instead of the tree, it is the Adventure Time tree house (you can go down to EHP to look at it at any time--it's in the back of the room, look up!). In addition to that, more of my summer camp experiences are yet to come. This is because once again I will be assisting at the summer camp and will be helping at dances and such. This year has been full of new experiences and memories when it comes to EHP. Ever since I joined in fifth grade, increasingly EHP had become my home in this school. If I had to choose, I'd say for sure that it is my favorite place in the school. The memories and experiences I've had here are ones that I will take with me through my life. Learning all that I have here in EHP has helped shape in into the person I am today. I know now more clearly what I want to do for the rest of my life. I hope to take the skills I've learned here and build off of them as a go to high school. EHP has been (and will continue being until I leave this school on graduation night!) my entire middle school "career". So long newspaper, I'll miss you!

## New Eighth Graders

*by Meara McClusky*

Eighth grade has the potential to be a really fun year. There are a lot of advantages to being an eighth grader, like automatically winning the SMS spirit week chant. Also, you have the possibility of going to AHT, Six Flags, and Canobie. Of all the stuff we get to do, I am most excited to go on AHT. According to the previous eighth graders, AHT is one of the best parts of eighth grade. Going to Six Flags this year was very fun, so next year will be equally great. Aside from all of the field trips, eighth grade will still be exciting. Many previous eighth graders say that students have the most freedom in eighth grade, and are allowed to do many activities, sports, and other clubs. In eighth grade, students are more likely to get chosen for team sports, too. Also, the teachers in eighth are supportive to each student and are very fun. However, I have heard two conflicting quotes about homework. Some students say you do not get much, whereas others say you get about an hour per night. Regardless of the homework, eighth grade is going to be an amazing year at South Meadow.

## Great East

by Leah Krason

The South Meadow School's annual seventh and eighth grade band trip happened in May. The first destination was a band competition called Great East; then, we went to Six Flags. After the long bus ride to Springfield Massachusetts, we arrived and were excited. Being a seventh grader, I had absolutely no idea what it would be like. We went inside, into a small practice room, and ran through our songs. When we were practicing we were short on music stands, so a lot of the band had their music on the floor, and we did the best that we could. Then, we took our instruments and walked onto the stage. It was a nice theatre, and there were chaperones and a few people in the seats. We set up, and Mr. Lowy had us start playing. When we had finished both of our songs, a man walked up, congratulated us, then started our critique. He had us work on a few things, like volume and the articulation of the notes. We played parts of our songs for him, clapped out rhythms, and sang our parts when he was working with us. We ended up getting gold, which is good, but we could have gotten platinum. All in all, we were happy to get such a high score. We came back, spent too much time taking pictures, and were off to Six Flags. We finally had gotten to the most exciting part of our field trip. The minute we got in, we were free to go on whatever rides we wanted, as long as we were in a group. I personally enjoy rollercoasters, so our group only did the really big rides. The weather was perfect, cold enough so nobody else went, but still nice. That meant there were barely any lines for the most part. We only waited about 25 minutes to go on Superman! The longest wait was 45 minutes, for Goliath, but it was my favorite, and definitely worth it. The rides were great and everyone had a fun time; then we had to get back on the bus. After a long and uneventful bus ride back, we got picked up and went home. The band had a really fun and exciting trip, and I was happy to be a part of it!

## Meeting Yoko

by Sarah Knowles

In seventh grade language arts, we read a book about a girl who lived through World War II. Now, we have a chance to meet her. Yoko Kawashima Watkins is the author of a book called *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*. At the age of twelve she was a Japanese girl living Korea because her father worked for the Japanese government. Yoko had an older brother named Hideyo, and an older sister named Ko. One night she had to flee her home in Korea to get to Japan. She, Ko, and her mother left in a hurry around midnight in July of 1945. They walked as fast as they could to the train station where a medical train was heading for Seoul. They got on the train and took off. Along the way they met trouble and had to walk the rest of the way. They got to Seoul after a long walk, got on a boat, and eventually made it to Japan. After a few long months of being separated from brother and father, they were reunited as a family.

When she comes, we will get a chance to ask her questions about what it was like to live through a war knowing you were at a higher risk because your father worked for the government. This is a special chance we get because she is older and lives in Massachusetts. We almost missed getting to meet her. I know that I personally am very excited to get a chance to meet Yoko. I hope that those in fifth and sixth grade get a chance to meet her, as well.

## My Seventh Grade Year

by Lilly Schwabe

My seventh grade year had its ups and downs, but it was an experience that I learned a lot from. My seventh grade year could have not started any better: I found out that I was going to be in Mrs. Van Valkenburgh's advisory with many of my friends from previous years. I kept doing some extracurriculars from previous years and started some new ones. I have been a manager for many sports such as basketball and softball since last year but started managing soccer just this year, in addition to the aforementioned sports. I am also the treasurer for the student council. I play the clarinet in band, and I am in regular chorus and in select chorus. I am in social justice club and am planning to take it over once the eighth graders graduate. Two of my favorite classes were social studies and math. Mr. Driscoll always had me interested in the topics and my favorite topic that we talked about was Greek mythology. I had a great year and appreciate all the people that made it so great.

## What a Year

by Jack McLaughlin

This year has been one crazy year alright, and it's sad that it has to come to an end. As a seventh grader, this was one of the best years I've spent at SMS. We have had field trips, fun projects, and said goodbye to amazing teachers. The seventh grade has only had one field trip so far, but it was a fun one for sure. We traveled to Manchester, NH, to see *A Christmas Carol* after we read the book in Language Arts class. That project was one of the best all year. Another fun project we did was the atom project in science class. In this project, students had to choose the atom they wanted to do from the periodic table. On the last days of the project, students would hang up their atom model in Mrs. Van's room for everyone to see. Then, after their presentations, their atom would get graded by Mrs. Van. She came up with another fun project for the seventh grade to do which was the electro magnetic fishing pole. For students to build this, they would start with a piece of wood that is 50cm long at minimum and tape a battery to it. They would then attach wire to the end of the battery and attach the other end of the wire to a switch to turn the battery on and off. Another wire would then attach to the switch and run along the wood until the drop where the wire would drop at least 30cm. The student would then wrap a wire around a nail and have the wire come back up around the wood and attach at the other end of the battery. Students would then have to pick up paper clips. Whoever picked up the most paper clips (by weight) wins. Mrs. Van came up with a lot of projects but she isn't the only one that comes up with them. Ms. Wall has had us do some pretty great projects as well. One project we did was after the students read their books, they would make a movie about their book. The books you could read were *The City of Ember*, *The Giver*, and *The Last Book in the Universe*. Another project the seventh grade did was not in Ms Wall's class, but it was an idea for Puma Time. This project was about puppet making! Students made a paper puppet first, envelope puppet second, sock puppet third, and lastly the seventh grade did shadow puppets. The first three puppets were for the students to keep and play with, but the shadow puppets were used as a performance tool at the end of the unit. At the end of the year South Meadow School will have to say goodbye to two seventh grade teachers. After this year, Mrs. Van will retire teaching along with Ms. Heald. Ms. Heald is the seventh grade math teacher, and she will be missed here at SMS. She made math a fun class, and she is always very excited to teach students. She and Mrs. Van will be missed. Overall this has been a very good year for the seventh grade, and there is still more to come, but not much, as summer is near.

## Architecture in Art

By Kendall Larson

In seventh grade art with Ms. Fox, we are learning about and creating our own architecture. After learning about architecture, we will be sculpting our own architecture out of clay and painting it! To start the unit, Mrs. Fox showed us a slideshow with pictures of famous architecture, and we looked at different books and such to give us ideas. Then, once we have an idea of what we might sculpt, we sketched our idea onto paper (well the best we could anyway), and the dimensions for the building. The building that we create has to be a certain length, width, and height, so we had to describe that in our sketch. Also, our structure had to have specific standards to reach in order to meet the rubric, such as a removeable roof. Our sculptures can be inspired from other architectural feats, or just out of our own imagination. The next couple of weeks were then dedicated to constructing our architecture. Constructing could be difficult, since it included many parts. We must add texture to the building, and attach pieces in a way so that they don't fall apart. There are also many tools that we can use to add to the work. When the project was done, we let it dry for a week, and then Ms. Fox will fire it and we can paint it. After filling out a little work on paper, the building is complete. All in all, this unit had many steps, including studying architecture, and eventually designing our own. We got to design a clay building, and then construct it ourselves. This project was really fun in many ways and is definitely recommended for future seventh graders.

# LEAH'S KITCHEN CORNER

Welcome to Leah's Kitchen Corner! This monthly column will be full of some of the newspaper staff's favorite recipes. We hope you enjoy reading and creating what we have for you!

## Mixed Berry Smoothie

This homemade smoothie is so refreshing! Original recipe courtesy of Gabby Oja! This yields 16 oz. of smoothie.

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup vanilla yogurt
- 1 cup frozen mixed berries
- 1 medium banana (frozen or fresh)
- 1/2 cup coconut milk

### Directions:

- Add your frozen mixed berries and banana to the blender. Follow with the coconut milk and yogurt.
- Start blending the smoothie on the highest speed. When almost blended, switch the speed to a medium-low.
- The smoothie should only take one to two minutes, but it depends on your blender. You will know that it is done when there are no more chunks.
- To finish it off, pour the smoothie into glasses, and add straws if desired.

## Edible Cookie Dough

This great recipe can be useful in so many ways! Recipe from [howtocakeit.com](http://howtocakeit.com). You can also view the recipe from youtube, under the account How To Cake It. It is an amazing recipe!

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup salted butter, room temperature
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 tablespoons whipping cream
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups semisweet chocolate chips

### Directions:

- In an electric mixer, cream the butter, sugars, and vanilla
- Scrape down the bowl then add in whipping cream
- Slowly add in the flour and mix until incorporated
- chill the dough for one hour in the fridge

## Fresh Fruit Yogurt Smoothie

A recipe that is perfect for this summer! From [allrecipes.com](http://allrecipes.com)

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups fresh blueberries, raspberries, strawberries and sliced bananas; mixed
- 2 cups plain or vanilla yogurt
- 1/4 cup white sugar

### Directions:

- Blend the mixed fruit, yogurt and sugar into a blender until desired consistency
- Fill any small container with the mixture and put a popsicle stick in it
- Place in the freezer for at least five hours

Enjoy! A perfect summer treat!

## My Fifth Grade year

*By Ted McLaughlin*

Where do I even begin? This fifth grade year has been so much fun for me. Everything is far different than elementary school. The grading system works differently, there are more kids, and so many more things to do. In the first quarter I did chorus. I did chorus for more social purposes than singing purposes. But I ended up quitting at the end because singing really isn't my thing. But I performed in the Winter Concert, and it was pretty fun. It was interesting to try something new, but I probably won't do chorus again. I don't do band either, I wanted to do band but I was way too busy. So I won't do anything very musical in my four years at S.M.S.

But I am in student council. Student Council, I think, is the most fun after school activity in school. When you go to prom or something like that and you are in Student Council, it's pretty fun to know that you had something to do with it. Also, at the end of the year, Student Council gets a party. It has pizza, juice, cupcakes, and games. One time in Student Council, we went to Pheasant Lane nursing home. But guess who didn't go? Me. I just happened to have strep throat at the time that they went. It was definitely the right decision for me to not go, because some of the "Campers" at the Nursing Home might have already been sick, and I didn't want them getting more sick. But I was really mad when I realized I couldn't go. I think the most fun I have ever had in Student Council is probably when I got to drink hot chocolate, eat popcorn and watch a movie. I bet the rest of the fifth graders would agree with me. Or they might say the cookie decorating. But that's what I have done in Student Council this year. In my opinion, Student Council is a really fun program, and one that you should check out!

My favorite special by far is P.E., gym in other words. I love gym so much because I am an athlete. You don't have to do be an athlete to like it . My favorite thing to do in P.E. is to play this game called speed ball. It's when you have to kick the ball up to your feet (or, "convert" the ball) in order to take a shot in a basketball hoop. But you can also kick it in between two cones. If you make a shot behind the three point line it counts as three points, and obviously anything in the three point line is two points. If you made a shot or you scored a goal you would put the points you earned on the board. At the end whoever has the most points will win!

Just yesterday or whenever this gets published we went onto the Freedom Trail in Boston, Massachusetts. The coolest part was that we got to go onto a coach bus, and we got to go into the Old North Church. We also saw a brand new Lamborghini. We got to see so much stuff in the Old North Church. We also learned that you can fit 40 caskets into one little tomb. Also, we got to see a picture of the steeple on the Old North Church in the middle of falling. In addition to all of that, we saw the Boston Garden going through the Tunnel, going to the Freedom Trail. Sadly, we didn't get to see Fenway Park, or (Fenway Paak, if you're from Boston). It was probably the best field trip I have ever been on. But, in third grade we went to a field trip to see the "Lego Movie", at the local movie theater. However, I think the Boston Freedom Trail wins because after the movie everyone started singing "Everything is Awesome", which is a song that I really don't like.

Mrs. Hayes is finally back from her medical leave! She is only teaching in the afternoon, but today we had to write an essay about Harriet Tubman. So we did that for the entire morning. But I think I was the third one to finish. It only took me one block to finish it, or almost one block to finish, so I just ended up reading for an entire block. I think the best part of my fifth grade year was the 4+ months of having Mr. Lefko being my teacher. Everyone is going to be making him a card, but I am going to make him a huge piece of paper that says "Thank You Mr.Lefko." I already gave him Larry Bird socks. Mr. Lefko is my second favorite teacher, next to Mrs. Gordon, from my fifth grade year.



# Fidget Spinners

*By Otto McLaughlin*

Fidgets are suppose to be objects that help you focus. However, some kids use fidgets as toys, but they probably don't know that. For example, there is a fidget called a fidget spinner, and it is probably one of the most popular items in the US right now. Most kids use them as toys, and very few people use them for focusing. In my grade the teachers have banned them because kids were playing with them, taking them apart and building them up again, and trading them in class.

When teachers find the students playing with a spinners they confiscate it and give it back to them at the end of class, the end of the day or even at the end the school year. Most teachers absolutely despise the spinners, but some of the teachers don't mind them. Some students get colored ones, which is, in my opinion, not very smart . This is because, if you are trying to use it, the colors will most likely distract you. My teacher, Mr. Iwanowicz, brought seashells from his last vacation for us kids to use for fidgeting, as opposed to a spinner, which he is not a big fan of. He only allows the ones that had a smooth side to them. But you're only allowed to use them in his class, so no kid should keep them. There are about 10 to 20 seashells in his box and there are usually 15 to 20 people in a class so it works out well.

When operating a fidget spinner, you put your finger in the middle, where there is a hole. There are usually 3 sides and you flick one of the 3 sides with your fingers and then it spins. You can get these at a toy store, off of Amazon, you can get them off the streets (that may be just New York City though). You can basically get them anywhere. Usually the fidget spinner cost \$5 to \$100 so they are kind of a waste of money. But, some kids even make their own with a 3-D printer or out of regular objects. Some of the spinners make a sound when they are spinning, and some kids silence it with oil.

I think kids like it so much because of the look of it when it is spinning: when it is spinning the silver on the spinner looks interesting. It's like a tire on a car, it spins so fast that all you can see is the silver objects on the tire. It's not just one color. There are variety of colors like: blue, red, pink, basically any color of the rainbow, and you can have a rainbow as a color. These spinners were originally for kids with ADHD, but now everyone has one, and everyone wants one. Even though they have their place in the classroom, they have recently become quite the distraction in the various grade levels.



## Memorial Day Assembly Reflection

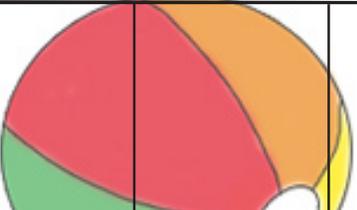
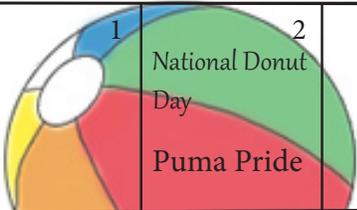
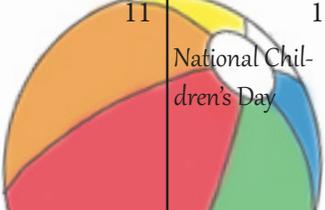
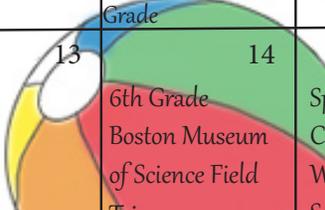
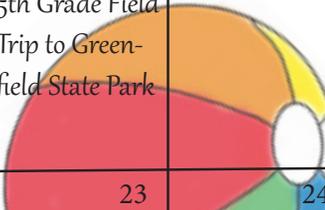
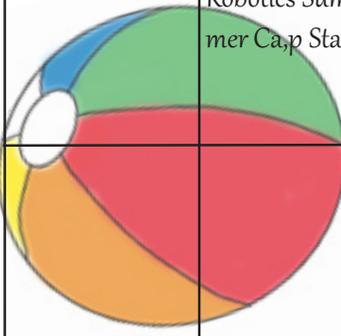
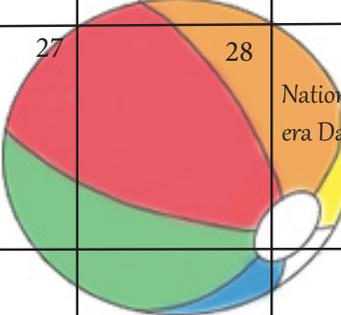
*by Nicky DiNino*



Recently, former principal Mr. Dunning came to talk to us about what Memorial Day means to him. He is a Green Beret and served in Vietnam back in 1969. He told us about how Memorial Day is more personal to him than Veteran's Day because he knew someone who died during the war. His name was John Katinburg, he was a fellow Green Beret, and most importantly he was his friend. They were the two youngest at the place where they were stationed at the time, so they stuck together. Mr. Dunning didn't just tell us about how brave or strong John was, he also told us how funny and nice he was. It really made his story more personal because anyone can say "Oh he's really brave," but you would have to really know someone to know how funny or nice they are. He said that the thing Military people are most worried about is dying in vain, and that is why he tells us about John every year. As long as us kids learn about him, and other people who died for the country, they will never be forgotten. His heartfelt speech, Mrs. Fortin singing "Green Beret", and the 7th and 8th grade band playing the National Anthem and Taps all worked together to make this both a moving and memorable assembly. On Memorial Day remember the incredible sacrifices that John and everyone else who died serving their country made, and appreciate how they have changed your life for the better.



# June

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
				 1 National Donut Day Puma Pride	2	3
4 National Cancer Survivor's Day	5 Training Day – All Peer Mentors	6 Training Day – All Peer Mentors 4th grade visits	7 5th Grade Field Trip – Fisher Cat Stadium Parent Orientation – 4th Grade to 5th Grade	8 SMS Newspaper – Field Trip to St. Andres Art Institute	9	10
11 	12 National Children's Day	13 	14 6th Grade Boston Museum of Science Field Trip	15 Sports Award Ceremony – Winter / Spring Sports 2017	16 5th Grade Field Trip to Greenfield State Park	17
18 Father's Day	19 7th Grade Field Trip – Roll-On America	20 8th Grade Field Trip – Canobie Lake Park	21 8th Grade Move Up Ceremony First Day of Summer	22 6th Grade Field Trip – Launch Trampoline Park	23 Last Day of School – 1/2 Day	24 
25 	26 Robotics Summer Camp Starts	27 	28 National Camera Day	29	30 National Meteor Watch Day	