

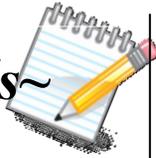


# MMSA NEWS

November 2011

Volume XV Issue XIII

## Notes from the Principals~



Dear Parents,

The weather alone has made this a memorable first quarter of school – four school cancellations before November! We hope that the report card that came home with this newsletter will generate some good conversation between you and your child about how the **academic** part of the school year is going so far.

We hope that the report card indicates good academic progress, positive relationships with teachers, good effort and good work habits. From several years of reviewing MMS report cards, I know that most of them reflect this sort of progress. If your child’s report card matches this description, your conversation with your child will be a pleasure. You can focus on ways to maintain motivation and perhaps consider a different activity or area of the school for your child to explore.

If the report card indicates that there are some areas that need improvement, this is a good time to review your child’s learning habits. The effort mark is a direct reflection of work completion. Students do not receive a mark of “Excellent” or “Good” in effort if they have missed more than one assignment in that class. Routinely, well over 80% of our students’ effort marks are “Excellent” or “Good.”

Please see Letter continued on page 2.....

## Mark Your Calendar

### November

- Nov. 9—Report Cards Issued
- Nov. 10 & 11—No School
- Nov. 15– Photo Re-take day
- Nov. 16- Mark Twain House trip, 1/2 of 8th Grade
- Nov. 17– Board of Education meeting, 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 17– Sports forms due for Basketball
- Nov. 18\_ School Musical “HONK!” 7 p.m.
- Nov. 19- School Musical “HONK!” Performance 7 p.m.
- Nov. 20- School Musical “HONK!” Performance 4 p.m.
- Nov. 21 & 22—Early Dismissal and Parent Conferences
- Nov. 23—Career Day (7&8 Gr.) and Early Dismissal at 12:05 p.m.
- Nov. 24 & 25– No School –Thanksgiving holiday
- Nov. 30– Model Congress, 8:00 a.m.



### December

- Dec. 7-Chamber Choir @ Senior Center Luncheon
- Dec. 8-Board of Education meeting, 7:30 p.m.
- Dec. 12-Progress reports go home this week
- Dec. 14-Winter Band Concert, 7:30-8:00 p.m.
- Dec 15- Band Assembly 9:00 a.m.
- Dec. 21-Winter Orchestra Concert 6:30 p.m.  
Choral Concert—7:45 p.m.
- Dec. 22– Orchestra/Choral Assembly 1:00 p.m.
- Dec. 26-30 Winter Break, No School

### January

- Jan. 2—No School, New Year’s Holiday
- Jan. 16– Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, No School
- Jan. 20– Second Marking Period Ends
- Jan. 25-Group Photo Day
- Jan. 26-Report Cards Issued

At school, teachers will review their students' progress thus far. Teaching teams and individual teachers will assign X-Block time for extra help and studying for students who need more direction in their schoolwork. Sometimes study habits that were adequate in earlier grades are no longer enough as assignments become more frequent or more complex. Teachers will want to work with your child to teach approaches and habits that will help them to become more successful.

Naturally, there are many requests at this point in the year for conferences with individual teachers and teams. If your child has had a successful start, you will find it easier to schedule a conference if you wait until next month. Our priority in scheduling conferences between now and Thanksgiving is to address the needs of students and families who need to establish a more successful approach. With each teacher responsible for 100 or more students, we hope that you will understand this priority as you call to schedule your appointment.

Now it's second marking period – a clean slate, a new beginning, new chances to explore and to be actively engaged in all that MMS has to offer.

Sincerely,  
 Jeff Cryan, Principal  
[cryanj@mansfieldct.org](mailto:cryanj@mansfieldct.org)

Candace Morell, Assistant Principal  
[morellcv@mansfieldct.org](mailto:morellcv@mansfieldct.org)



MMS sixth graders at Overlook Farm in Massachusetts

Arbor Day Poster Winner Misha R., with Bob Heffernan from CT Nursery & Landscape Association and Carolyn Stearns from Distinctive Landscaping in Columbia.



**STAY CONNECTED:** We try to get vital information from school to home as soon as possible. The most effective way that we have found to get information to you is our Q-Notify email system. If you are not receiving our emails, please go to this website to register: <http://mansfieldct.qscend.com/qnotify.aspx>.

Please click on the boxes for *Mansfield Middle School* AND for *Mansfield Middle School Priority & Emergency Notices*.

The email system, of course, only works if you can reliably receive emails. If you don't have an email account, or if you are between accounts, or if your account is on the fritz, please call the MMS Office (860-429-9341) and ask for QNotify messages to be printed and sent home. We will print and send the messages to you.

## MMS NEWS



**Singing with the Kronos Quartet:** On Tuesday, September 27<sup>th</sup>, thirty-six Mansfield Middle School students performed *Vintern Var Hård*, a Swedish song, with the Kronos Quartet, a world-famous, Grammy Award-winning group. We rehearsed with the quartet the previous night, perfecting the difficult song. We had very little time to rehearse this piece; two weeks to memorize the Swedish text and notes. The talented students spent every available minute in the chorus room, working constantly to make it flawless. The performance on September 27<sup>th</sup> with the Kronos Quartet was a success. Everyone had a great time throughout the whole process, and we learned so much from the unforgettable experience.

(Written by Annie Morrison, Gr. 8)



**Window painting:** On Saturday, October 22, 55 MMS students joined Art teacher Shaun Rock at the Downtown Storrs shops where they painted Halloween scenes on store windows. Students created their own colorful designs, and they received many appreciative remarks from shoppers.

**Visiting Principals:** Fourteen principals from Jilin Province, China, visited MMS one morning in October to get a first-hand view of an American middle school. After getting an overview of the MMS curriculum, organization and budget, four bi-lingual MMS parents, one MMS alumna, and nine bi-lingual students took our guests on small-group tours of the school. The principals appreciated that the tours were conducted in their own language. Their visit to the United States included a week of touring cities and a week of studying educational topics in a program arranged by the Connecticut Association of Schools.



**Grade 5 Science:** During Fire Prevention Week, Grade 5 experienced the Smokehouse Escape Trailer, classroom lessons on kitchen fire safety, and had a visit by the K-9 Arson Detection Dog. In addition, artwork by a dozen MMS fifth graders has been featured since the start of school on the Channel 30 morning news during the Bus Stop Weather report. Fifth graders enjoyed a presentation by meteorologist Bob Maxon in November at the conclusion of the weather unit in science class.



**Cross-Country Team:** In all of our programs, we try to develop in students the belief that hard work leads to growth and success. The MMS Cross Country team is a small group (5 boys and 6 girls) that has experienced increasing success due to the effort that they have put into their training this fall. During their October 24 meet with Columbia, every single runner recorded a personal best time as they won their first meet of the season. Some runners improved their times by over a half-minute since the beginning of the season. Thanks to Mansfield resident and former MMS parent Ken Rawn for coaching the team this season.



News from the Classroom

The eighth grade class enjoyed its Boston field trip- walking the Freedom Trail to view locations important to our American Revolutionary history. The presentation at the Old North Church informed students about the truth of Paul Revere's ride before the Battle of Lexington and Concord. We also toured the historic Copp's Hill Burying Ground and Faneuil Hall. The students were also able to see the site of the Boston Massacre, although the site is currently undergoing renovation. As always, a highlight of the trip was the time students were able to spend in Quincy Market. The weather also cooperated-it only started pouring when we boarded the buses for the trip home!



Grade 7 Activities-



Above, Brian A. showing his Egyptian drill (made as part of his Egypt project). On the right, Re-enactment of travel to Egyptian Afterlife: feather of ma'at on Joseph; Jeremy as Ammut; Aaron and Ryan as the mummy and its ka (soul), and Tyler as Horus.



Fiddlehike 2011 participants on the Appalachian Trail in New Hampshire.





## Calling all MMS Gardeners!

### Did you know that MMS has a vegetable garden?

Last spring and summer, students from MMS and campers from Camp Mansfield (with the help of MMS compost!) grew over 150 pounds of vegetables for the Covenant Soup Kitchen.

With your help, we could produce much more, and be able to offer the garden to MMS teachers as an outdoor classroom.



Come and get dirty! Assistance is needed with:

-  Spring tilling and fall clean-up (Sat, Nov 19th at 10:30 a.m. will be our fall clean-up)
  -  "Home Game Workdays" (weed while you cheer!)
  -  "Adopt-a-week" summer and fall maintenance/harvesting
- donations: tools, seeds, plants, coordination

Please join us Saturday, November 19th at 10:30 a.m. for fall clean-up.

For more information, please contact **Sally Milius** at [shmilius@gmail.com](mailto:shmilius@gmail.com) or call 860) 336-9005.



Weird Birds by  
Shel Silverstien

**Birds are flyin'  
south for winter,  
Here's the Weird-Bird headin' north,  
Wings a-flappin, beak a chatterin',  
He says, "It's not that I like ice  
Or freezin' winds and snowy ground.  
It's just sometimes it's kind of nice  
To be the only bird in town."**

**Next MMSA Meeting:  
Wednesday, November 16th,  
at 7:00PM in Room #99**

Please come and hear about MMSA activities and opportunities to be involved in your child's education in a positive, productive way!

**GOT IDEAS?  
Bring them along!**

New faces and voices are always welcome.

