

# Holland Brook Happenings

## November 2008

### Thoughts from the Principal . . . . .

This morning at Holland Brook School students exercised their right to vote. The school-wide voting event was the culminating activity of a two week learning experience. I am pleased to note that all HBS student voters arrived on time and at the correct polling station, and presented their voter registration cards to the election monitors. 5<sup>th</sup> grade student leaders served as poll workers and kept everyone organized. There were a few long lines but everyone was patient and polite. Students who lost their registration cards were provided with a provisional ballot and were allowed to vote. A few students even submitted absentee ballots prior to Election Day.

Ms. Sarah Mahoney and Ms. Amy Tarreto led the school-wide effort to engage our students in this historic election. Over the course of the last two weeks students learned about John McCain and Barack Obama, and where both candidates stand on the issues. Our students were also exposed to a variety of sources of information with great care taken to present a multi-faceted view. Our students also learned about what a president does and the voting process in general. Follow-up lessons will focus on the Electoral College and the power of the vote.

Mrs. Sepesi guided a group of students to prepare and present campaign speeches for Barack Obama, John McCain, Joe Biden and Sarah Palin. Two third party candidates, Bob Barr and Ralph Nader, were represented and their student surrogates had a chance to sway student opinion. The campaign speeches were well received by our students. A few students explained they even changed their mind about who to vote for based on the persuasiveness of the speeches. Congratulations to the following students for a job well done!

**Campaign Introducer:** John Witt

**John McCain:** Eric Kostakis, Catherine Deptuch, Alex Cicala

**Sarah Palin:** Hayley Filippini, Zach Sokol

**Barack Obama:** Justin Berger, Kristine Sauerborn, Robert Nashed, Lynn Vorwick

**Joe Biden :** Stephanie Gotfried

**Bob Barr:** Paige Palazzi

**Ralph Nadar:** Cassie Halper

The results of the election will be posted on our website. The address to point your browser to is <http://www.readington.k12.nj.us/hollandbrook/site/default.asp>.

I would like to thank the Student Leadership facilitators Mrs. Julie Bartus and Mrs. Tommasina Biase for organizing this special event. I would also like to thank the following student leaders for working the polls and ensuring a fair and efficient voting process for all students: Elisabeth Atlasman, Sarah Boden, Allie Brembt, Aia Dakka, Kasey Dameo, Juliana DellaPello, Catherine Deptuch, Samantha Fabbriatore, Hayley Filippini, Will Getz, Stephen Giordano, Emily Grube, Quinn Hickey, Suzanne Hlinka, Lizzie Knoop, David Leshik, Emma Maurice, Lacey O'Dowd, Paige Palazzi, Maria Pansari, Anjali Patel, Courtney Patterson, Jacquelyn Pierre, Nicole Prager, Emily Renjilian, Jessica Ruffa and Dominic Vastano.

In Education,

Alfonso Llano





## Fifth Grade Features

Fifth grade Bobcats are having an out-of-this world October. In social studies, we are continuing our study of the five themes of geography. Students are practicing their learned map skills through participation in a scavenger hunt with Mrs. Sepesi where they locate places using a GPS device. Science class has truly been a "mixture" of enriching activities. We studied different types of mixtures, heterogeneous and homogeneous, and how solutions are a special kind of mixture. We're counting on our fluency practice in math class to keep our skills with multiplication and division facts sharp. Students are learning how to identify the situation in a word problem in order to solve it accurately.

Writing workshop is filled with our young authors focusing on narrative topics as well as thought provoking topics in our Project Wisdom journals. Meaningful discussions often accompany our weekly entries. In reading workshop, we're reading and thinking about our self-selected novels and Harcourt narrative stories. Besides aiding students in understanding reading comprehension strategies, these stories also serve as models for our writing projects. Fifth grade Blue Waves and Green Frogs had a blast during HBS Spirit Week. We enjoyed the exciting activities, and we are very proud of the money we raised for charity. Fifth grade school spirit soars!

## From the Fabulous Fourth Grade



### Social Studies

During the first weeks of school the fourth graders have been exploring what makes our country so unique. From landforms, to the environment, to climate, to the economy; our future geographers are discovering what defines each region. Through these studies we have been preparing to begin our "travels" throughout the United States' Five Regions. Our first stop on this long journey will be to our very own region, the Northeast. In addition, we have focused on our country's government and the upcoming election. Our final unit during October involves a trip back in time to 1828. The children visited Cold Brook School for an authentic 1800's classroom experience.

### Language Arts

Language Arts is now in full swing. Students are involved in Reading Workshops, learning a variety of strategies based on the theme, "Reading Is Thinking". They are reading fiction and non-fiction pieces while they practice their skills. Our Scholastic News provides the students with up-to-date information on the upcoming election. By the time they are ready to "vote", they will be well informed voters. They may even tell you some things you didn't know about the candidates. Our literature program is differentiated to individualize instruction for each student. Our students are excited about reading every day! Writing Workshops go hand-in-hand with reading. As students explore styles and craft of authors, they begin to develop their own writing skills and styles. Students are exploring narrative writing and poetry. We are looking forward to the return of our Poet in Residence, Luray Gross, this fall. We will continue to encourage our young authors to try new ideas and strategies in their writing pieces.

### Math

Math Expressions is under way! Fourth grade students began the year by practicing their fact fluency. They did so by observing multiplication patterns, factor triangles, and arrays. Students take on leadership roles by participating as student leaders during lessons. Beginning in Unit One, students will be learning about reading and solving problems using graphs and tables as well as using variables to write and solve equations.

At home, continue to practice fluency with multiplication and division facts. Also, look for the Home/School Connection packets sent home at the beginning of each unit. For more information, visit [www.eduplace.com](http://www.eduplace.com) for extra challenge worksheets that correlate to the program.

### Super Scientists

The Weather Unit has begun with great excitement! The Fourth grade scientists have been exploring the Water Cycle and how we affect it. They can even sing about it! Evaporation, Condensation, and Precipitation are being explored as we experiment with water. In addition to the water cycle, we are experimenting using the different types of tools meteorologists use to measure the weather.

The class trips to the South Branch Raritan River have been successful. All the students were well prepared to explore the water environment. The South Branch Water Shed facilitators have been to all classrooms to discuss the investigations that done at the river site, and are following up with us to draw conclusions about our findings. The students collected macroinvertebrates at the river site, and determined the water quality of the river. What successful investigators we are! Thanks to all the chaperones for your assistance on this trip.



### Bobcats Have Good Character

We have had a very busy start to the school year. Holland Brook School celebrated its second Spirit Week from October 1<sup>st</sup> through October 8<sup>th</sup>. Students were broken up into 4 teams and competed in various activities to earn points. Each activity promoted school spirit, cooperation and sportsmanship. On the last day of Spirit Week, students participated in Activity Day, which entailed many fun activities that promote good character. We ended the day with a Spirit Assembly and kicked off Holland Brooks Theme for the year. The school wide theme reminds students, staff, parents, family and the community that we are all dedicated to having a fabulous school year, so.....let's all **"Make It Happen."**

This year Holland Brook started a new Character Education program called Project Wisdom. Every morning students hear an inspiring and thought provoking quote during the morning announcements. The quotes are also displayed in the classroom via all of our great technology. These daily quotes are discussed throughout the week with the teachers. Finally, students participate in a writing prompt that is directly related to the weekly quotes. Please ask your child(ren) to share what they are writing in their journals and what the quotes mean to them. This should foster some pretty lively dinner conversations!!!!

We are ending the month of October with School Violence Prevention and Red Ribbon Week. Students are learning ways to prevent school violence and doing various lessons to promote diversity and tolerance. Each classroom is receiving lessons about bullying. The lesson will be completed by the end of November. The students are also learning how to stay drug, alcohol and tobacco free. They are wearing their Red Ribbons proudly and will be participating in classroom discussions and lessons to keep them healthy and safe.

Finally, if you have questions or suggestions about counseling services or other character programs at Holland Brook, please feel free to contact me at the school. I hope everyone has a safe and productive school year.

Ms. Crielly  
School Counselor



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### Science Bits and Bytes

4<sup>th</sup> Grade Science Lab:

In fourth grade, we will continue to learn about the 6 simple machines. We learned about the wheel and axle by designing and making spinning tops. Our highest record was 11 seconds. We utilized paperclips as weight on our spinning tops. Students used this data to make their own design. Each scientist's goal was to make the longest spinning top. Check out the science lab portion of the HBS website for some photos and school records of our spinning tops.

Our next machine will be the lever and how it helps us in our everyday life. We will also learn about how ancient civilizations used levers to build many wonders of the world. We will build our own levers and attempt to balance 2 loads.



### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Science Lab

In 5<sup>th</sup> grade, we continue our unit on Food and Nutrition. The students are using various indicators to help us learn what is in different food items. Students used a natural indicator, red cabbage juice, and ph strips to determine whether liquids were acid, base, or neutral. In Part 2 of the acid test, we learned how to measure the amount of acid in liquids by using baking soda as an indicator. The results are in: we tested 5 different drinks: lemon, lime, orange, grapefruit, and mixed fruit. Our 5<sup>th</sup> grade scientists proved with 99% accuracy that lemon juice contained the most acid with lime coming in a close second. Our next set of tests will determine which drink has the most vitamin C. We will be using indophenols as an indicator. Stay tuned for the results of this experiment in the next Holland Brook Happenings.

**Science Fact of the Month: Velcro was invented by a Swiss guy who was inspired by the way burrs attached to clothing.**



### Musical Notes

We have had a wonderful beginning to the school year in the music room! We are learning to build rhythms, read music from the staff, move to experience and show musical concepts, find

our way around programs like Finale notepad and Garageband on the macs, and sing new songs from different genres and cultures. Much of our learning is being enhanced by new technologies in the music room. Our smart board has helped us to build parts to play, our projector brings us pictures of faraway places, and our sound system broadcasts accompaniments and musical examples. Visit the website for upcoming dates and news from the music room. Our new technology will be opening a whole new world of experiences for our musical Bobcats!

For your calendar! The 4<sup>th</sup> grade winter concerts will be December 10<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

The 5<sup>th</sup> grade winter concerts will be on December 17<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

### Chorus

The HBS chorus met for the first time on October 7. Our risers were filled to capacity and the sound was wonderful! We are already busy preparing for upcoming performances. All chorus news will be posted and kept up-to-date on the music/chorus page of the school website.





## Physical Education

Our Bobcats are being challenged with the Presidential Physical Fitness test. The test is made up of 5 challenges. The mile Run-Jog-Walk for 5<sup>th</sup> graders and the ½ mile Run-Jog-Walk for 4<sup>th</sup> graders measures their cardiovascular and cardiopulmonary endurance. Their upper strength will be measured with the pull-ups and bent arm hang tests. The shuttle run evaluates their speed and agility while the curl-ups challenge shows their level of abdominal strength and endurance. Flexibility is the component featured in the sit-and-stretch test.

The scores our Bobcats receive will be evaluated to determine a percentile score. Students receiving all 5 scores in the 85% percentile will be awarded the President's Patch and Certificate. All 5 scores above the 50% percentile will secure a National Patch and Certificate. Students will have the opportunity to improve their scores in the spring. Good luck, Bobcats!

## Art Class

The fifth graders are finishing their complimentary names designs, which focused on complimentary pairs of color and block lettering. The results were bright and very bold! They are now studying Pablo Picasso and Abstract Cubism. The students looked at several different abstract portraits done by Picasso, as well as explored a website [www.mrpcicassohead.com](http://www.mrpcicassohead.com), where the students were able to create abstract faces. This website is a great tool to help students understand the idea of abstract art and prepare them for the drawings they will eventually be creating. The sketches of the portraits look great so far and the students are really having fun exploring the many faces they can create.

The fourth grade just finished their primary/secondary shape designs, where they reviewed primary and secondary colors. They created their own color wheels, and using markers and shapes, designed their project. The next project is also focusing on color

theory and the color wheel. This time the students are looking at warm and cool colors, as well as complimentary pairs. They are creating leaf collages and then doing a watercolor resist using crayons and watercolors.

All of the Holland Brook artists are doing a great job and they seem to really be enjoying the projects. Keep it up Bobcats! Van Gogh would be proud!!

Mrs. Coyle-Sands

### **Museum of Modern Art**

#### **New York**

#### **Van Gogh and the Colors of the Night**

September 21, 2008–January 5, 2009



#### **Joan Miró: Painting and Anti-Painting 1927-1937**

The Joan and Preston Robert Tisch Gallery, sixth floor

November 2, 2008–January 12, 2009

**Press Preview: October 28, 2008, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.**



## Innovation & Design

Innovation & Design has started off this year with a bang! The 4th and 5th graders started by working in groups to do the "Name Tag Design Challenge." This challenge seemed to be impossible - but every group finally figured out the tricks on how to create a name tag for each child in their group based on some of Mrs. Ray's Rules!

Our first unit in fourth grade is called Innovation - in this unit each group will work on creating a hand product that is a better version of one that is already out there. The students have been working on using their hands as a tool for measuring and learning about the Engineering Design Process.

Our fifth graders began by working on their structural engineering unit. Their challenge is to create the strongest, most efficient beam possible out of only paper. The teams have already created company names for their Engineering Groups and have begun building their first beam to be tested.

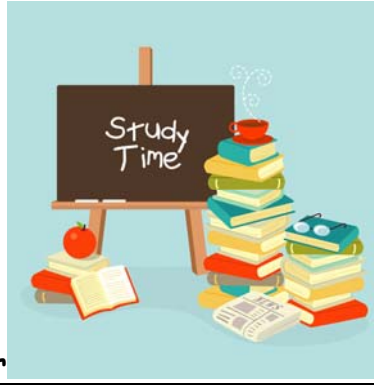
Both fourth and fifth graders will start using some of the innovation technology in the ID classroom. We will start podcasting, taking digital photos, blogging and creating iMovies. Check the Innovation and Design Website to see some of our projects posted within the next few weeks!

Mrs. Ray

## Student Leadership Club

Holland Brook's Student Leadership Club election was held on October 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Student Leadership Club applicants created posters and essays that expressed their ideas and reasons for being a leader. All HBS 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes studied the anonymous posters, read the essays and voted for the candidates they felt would best represent our school. We would like to thank all 5<sup>th</sup> graders who took part in the elections and congratulate our new 2008-2009 Students Leaders.

Elisabeth Atlasman  
Sarah Boden  
Allie Brembt  
Aia Dakka  
Kasey Dameo  
Juliana Della Pello  
Catherine Deptuch  
Samantha Fabbricatore  
Hayley Filippini  
Will Getz  
Stephen Giordano  
Emily Grube  
Quinn Hickey  
Suzanne Hlinka  
Lizzie Knoop  
David Leshik  
Emma Maurice  
Lacey O'Dowd  
Paige Palazzi  
Maria Pansari  
Anjali Patel  
Courtney Patterson  
Jacquelyn Pierre  
Nicole Prager  
Emily Renjilian  
Jessica Ruffa  
Dominic Vastano



From Our Media Center

November 11<sup>th</sup> is National Young Reader's Day; so why not celebrate by taking your young reader to the library! Especially since 4<sup>th</sup> grade will be spending the next few weeks exploring literary elements such as plot, conflict, character traits, points of view, and setting.

While fourth grade is delving into the inner workings of literature, fifth grade will be investigating the available reference resources available at our library. We will be doing this in preparation for learning the research process. We will begin by reexamining the World Almanac and will have several exciting rounds of World Almanac. This is a game very much like *Jeopardy* where teams of students compete against each other answering questions from the World Almanac. From the almanac, we will continue to review library reference materials with a lesson on periodicals.



## Instrumental Music

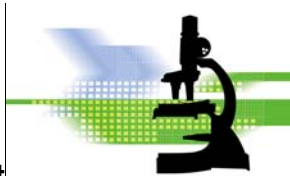
The 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Instrumental Music program at Holland Brook School is in full gear! Instrumental music students are off to a great start learning how to play their new instruments. At this point in the year, students should be practicing about 100 minutes a week, and all home practice should be recorded in the parent-initialed practice log each week. A reminder to students: please remember to take your instrument home on lesson days!

The Instrumental Music page of the Holland Brook School website has recently been updated. Please visit the website to learn about upcoming playing assessments and directions for band members using iPas software. Weekly schedules are also posted – please check back often!

Mr. Hasselbring

## Enrichment News

Enrichment at Holland Brook School is off to a great start. Mrs. Sepesi has visited all Holland Brook School classrooms and acquainted students with enrichment opportunities available to them this year. All students were given a letter to take home describing these activities as well as a separate page about the Invention Convention. If your child did not bring home either of these letters, please contact Mrs. Sepesi at ext. 624.



## **Science Fest**

Holland Brook School fifth graders enjoyed the Science Fest on October 15<sup>th</sup>. Nineteen presenters shared their expertise in different areas of science while engaging students in hands-on activities. Students attended 4 sessions of their choice. The 19 presentations were: Architecture, Astronauts & Rockets, Aviation, Building Molecules to Make Medicine, Cow's Eye, Crime Scene Investigations, Dirt on Soil, Electricity, Fire Safety Fooling the Fish, Gems, Horseshoe Crabs, Penguins, Police Dogs, Reptiles, Rocks & Minerals, Science

of Sifting, Seeing Eye Guide Dogs, and Veterinary Medicine. Thanks to all of our presenters who took time from their busy schedules to enhance the lives of our 5<sup>th</sup> graders. A special thanks to parents and grandparents of our HBS family: Dr. Crielly, Mr. Vitez, Mr. Skee, Mr. Farr, Mr. & Mrs. Roberts, Mr. Taylor, and Mrs. Shor.



### **5<sup>th</sup> graders are Geocaching!**

Fifth grade students have been embarking on an interesting and challenging enrichment activity reinforcing concepts learned in their 5 themes of geography unit in Social Studies. After a brief introduction of satellites and their relationship to GPS systems, students equipped with GPS systems have been traveling around the perimeter of Holland Brook School in search of maps hidden in various locations. Students used the GPS systems along with clue cards to find marked waypoints leading them to specific maps. Students were able to measure the accuracy of the GPS systems with tape measures. This activity enabled students to better understand latitude and longitude, and the importance of GPS systems in everyday life.

### **Math Problem of the Week**

The Math Problem of the Week is placed in classrooms on Monday of each week when there is a full week of school. Please keep in mind that completion of these Math problems is one of the criteria used for entrance into Continental Math League. Students who complete 80 % of the Math Problems of the Week will receive a certificate at the end of the school year recognizing their efforts.



## **Invention Convention**

Students participating in the Invention Convention should submit their ideas to Mrs. Sepesi as soon as possible. After submitting their ideas, students will receive a notice telling them to begin their invention. A brief **journal** or log must accompany the invention. The journal should include thoughts, steps and issues that the student encountered as he/she worked on the invention. The journal is not judged but a student will be eliminated from the judging process if he does not have one.

Mrs. Sepesi

## **From the H S A**

It has been a busy Fall so far....

First, a big thank you to Sheila Mieman and Leslie Otto for running our Fall Book Fair and to all the parent volunteers for their hard work. The new company, AllBooks, offered the children a fantastic selection of books and earned the school over \$4000 in free books.

On October 24<sup>th</sup>, our Family Pumpkin Carving event took place. HBS families had a lot of fun carving pumpkins, watching a movie and going on the "Pumpkin Walk". Thank you to Rose Dix, Christine Vastano and all the volunteers who made this family event so successful!

Our children were presented with the first Cultural Arts program of the year called Operaworks Trio. The students and faculty seemed to enjoy the program very much. Keep an eye out for flyers from our Chairpersons, Kelley Dameo and Megan Altzman, for the next exciting program.



The next Family School Connection meeting at HBS is on November 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:30. A flyer will be coming home outlining the topics for this meeting.

Finally, a reminder to save the date for the HSA Casino Night on March 7<sup>th</sup>. We are always looking for volunteers for this fun filled night so please look over the volunteer forms and send them back if you would like to help out.