



MSAD 4 The Pirate's

Treasure Chest



Maine School Administrative District #4, 25 Campus Drive, Guilford, ME 04443

December 2011



2nd grader Sadie Davis holds a tarantula at Bug-Maine-ia at the Maine State Museum September 14.

2nd graders explore 'Bug-Maine-ia' in Augusta

Second graders at Piscataquis Community Elementary School traveled to Augusta on September 14 to explore "Bug-Maine-ia," a special presentation on insects and other creepy-crawly creatures that's held

once a year at the Maine State Museum.

Bug-Maine-ia transforms the museum into a place where students can see real bugs—lots of them. The lobby had displays with live specimens—

walking sticks, large Madagascar cockroaches, huge tarantulas, and a living beehive.

Outside, the students could use a variety of traps and nets to catch

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PCHS Theater Arts class performs at arts confab

Bravo to the 19 students in Ms. Griffin's Theater Arts class who recently performed at the Maine Alliance for Arts Education conference in Orono. The class hosted an artist in residence for two weeks and created its own play revolving around the central theme of "community."

Students integrated heavyweight topics such as poor economic conditions, peer pressure, substance abuse, bullying, teen suicide, and tragedy into their one-act play to produce a powerful performance that was met with rave reviews from attending students and adults alike.

The group has been invited to perform their creation at the University of Maine in Augusta's Holocaust and Human Rights Center next spring.

Following the performances and a catered lunch, Guilford, Dexter, and Bangor students attended fun workshops in dance and improv before returning to call it a day.



Students in Ms. Griffin's Theater Arts class recently performed at the Maine Alliance for Arts Education conference in Orono.

12 area businesses partner with PCHS to recognize students

Twelve area businesses are helping Piscataquis Community Secondary School to recognize students and encourage them to develop the skills they will need to be successful in college, the military, or in the workforce.

The businesses have donated \$2,800 to the PCSS Corporate Sponsor Program, which is designed to create a fund to provide a variety of incentives to help motivate students.

The donors were responding to a letter from PCSS Principal Kevin Harrington and SAD 4 Superintendent of Schools Paul Stearns asking them "to band together and show our students that there is a community 'team' out there that is supporting them and rooting for them to succeed academically."

HARDWOOD PRODUCTS, LLC.



The letter said that "every penny received from the business community will go directly to students this year in the form of recognition for both individual and group academic progress and achievement. Each teacher and team of teachers will create customized

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'Every 15 Minutes' coming to PCHS; volunteers needed

Every 15 minutes, someone in the United States dies from an alcohol-related traffic accident.

That is the message that will be conveyed May 10 and 11 when students at Piscataquis Community High School participate in a two-day program called "Every 15 Minutes," designed to show the potentially dangerous consequences of drinking alcohol.

The program, which has been in the planning stages for over a year, is being organized by the PCHS Civil Rights Team and the PCHS Student Council.

In addition to the school, the program will involve the Guilford Fire Department, the Piscataquis County Sheriff's Department, State Police, and Mayo Regional Hospital.

At the heart of the drama will be a simulated automobile crash on

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Superintendent's Message

Fall 2011 Pirate's Treasure Chest

Welcome to the Fall 2011 edition of the *Pirate's Treasure Chest*! These pages are filled with stories and photos that are representative of the fantastic things that are going on every day in our schools. I hope that you enjoy this publication and will join me as we celebrate the efforts and accomplishments of our students and staff.

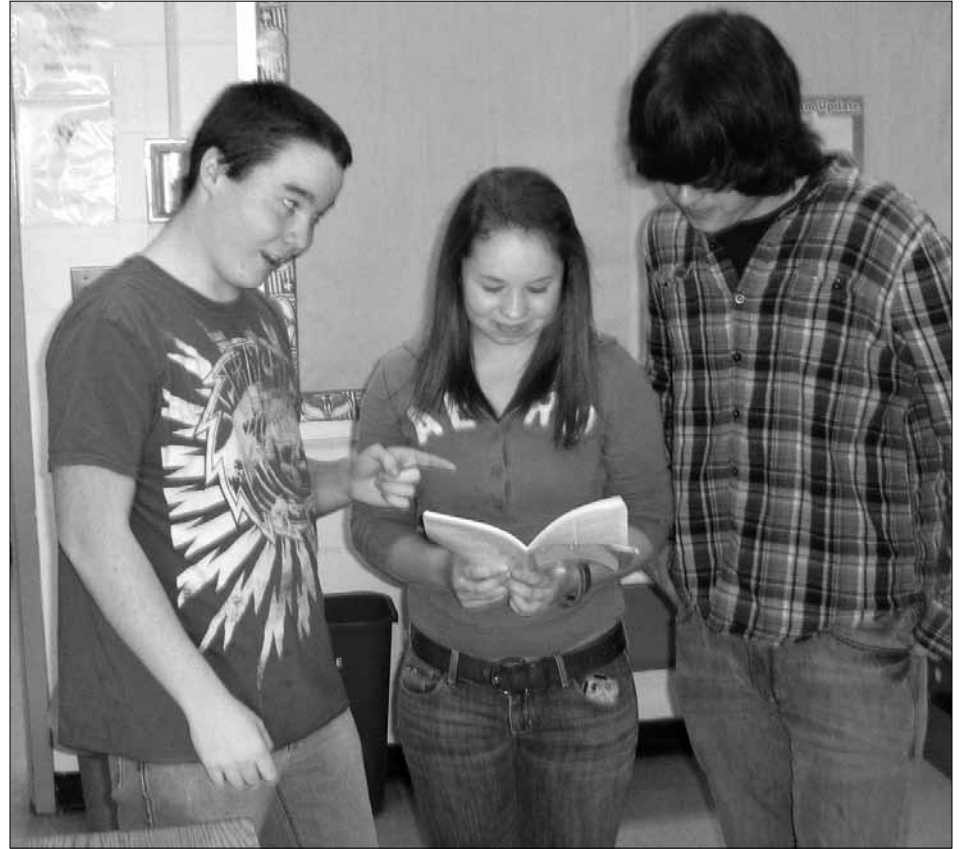
I'd like to repeat my thanks to the businesses who have shown their support for PCSS students through their membership in the PCSS Corporate Sponsor Program. We realize that this is a tough year for everyone and that many businesses had already allocated the funds they had budgeted for community support. Nevertheless, a dozen businesses contributed \$2,800, which will be used by teachers in a variety of ways to recognize student effort and achievement.

I have often said that I am amazed at the level of skill and commitment shown by teachers, students, coaches, support staff, parents, volunteers, school board members, and administrators in SAD 4. That applies to area businesses and many members of the public who don't have any direct connection to our schools. The sacrifices that people make behind the scenes, out of the public eye, to make our schools great places to learn and grow is truly amazing. This culture of continuous improvement and true caring about children that exists in the six towns that make up SAD 4 should never be taken for granted.

—Paul Stearns, SAD #4 Superintendent of Schools



Paul Stearns



"THE MOST BEAUTIFUL ROCK" by Eric Alter, will be presented by the Piscataquis Community Secondary School Drama Club on Wednesday, January 11, at 7 p.m. in the PCES Cafeteria. Above, three of the main characters—Michael Fagan, Samantha-Jo Brawn, and Zachary Fortier—practice their lines.

After-school club formed for gifted, talented students in SAD 4

Four students in grades 5 to 9 turned out on November 10 for the first meeting of an after-school gifted-and-talented club at Piscataquis Community Elementary School. Several more students were in attendance when the club met the following week.

The club is similar to the club that offered enrichment activities for gifted and talented students last year, but this year the focus will be placed on creative problem-solving and teamwork.

Gifted and talented teacher Amanda Gallant said an Odyssey of the Mind team might compete with other schools, as well as do service projects for the community.

"Even if we don't have an official team, we'll have a school team working on real-life problems," Mrs. Gallant said.

The club is the after-school component of SAD 4's gifted and talented program. Mrs. Gallant said the regular gifted and talented program currently has about 11 students who



Ethan Chadwick, Owen Bennett, Bettina Oms, and Chloe Hamele at the first meeting of the after-school gifted and talented club.

were selected after being nominated by teachers or parents.

"Last year, we had a few 8th graders, and we're waiting to see if they jump back in," she said. "High school students are so busy, they don't always want the extra activities or they have difficulty making

time for them in their schedule."

Mrs. Gallant created a page on the SAD 4 website for the gifted and talented program, which includes a nomination form for both academics and visual and performing arts.

"Teachers, parents, and students can nominate someone as gifted and

talented," she said. "A student could even nominate himself or herself."

However, just because a student is nominated doesn't mean the student will be identified as gifted and talented. Just because a student is very bright doesn't mean he or she is gifted in accordance with Section 104 of Maine's education laws, which govern gifted and talented education.

Mrs. Gallant says gifted and talented students in SAD 4 can receive services in the regular classroom, depending on what they need. SAD 4 does not currently have a pull-out program.

"Last year, a lot of students received extra enrichment projects that they worked on in class when their regular assignments were completed," she said.

If teachers need support, Mrs. Gallant will assist with instruction and make recommendations on how to enrich and accelerate their education.

12 area businesses partner with PCHS to recognize, reward students

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goals for their students. The fund will be used to purchase certificates, small

incentive awards, special trips, pizza parties—in short, whatever the staff thinks will motivate students to 'kick

it up a notch."

"Our local business community has always been extremely supportive of our schools, and this project is no exception." Mr. Stearns said he's hoping the program will encourage a closer relationship between the businesses and SAD 4 schools and lead to more service-learning opportunities for students. "Our Career Prep program will be a natural catalyst as this develops."

He said business owners and managers will be invited to the schools for assemblies, banquets, or other appropriate events designed to recognize academic progress and excellence. "We hope that this will grow in a variety of ways that will strengthen the connections of our students with their communities and the businesses in the area."

Mr. Stearns noted that this is already happening in some areas. He said the PCSS art teacher, Margo Busque, has partnered with Don

Moen in the shop to construct picture frames, which will be placed in the area businesses to display student artwork. The frames will stay with the business, but the artwork will be changed periodically.

Businesses participating in the Corporate Sponsor Program thus far include:

- **Blue/Gold Club** (donation of \$500 or more): A. E. Robinson and Hardwood Products Company.

- **Pirate Super Sponsor** (donation of \$100-\$499): Charles A. Deane Memorial Hospital and Nursing Home, Herring Brothers, Kain's Creations, Kimball Insurance LLC, Moosehead Trail Home and Hearth, Rockwell Gardens, and R. A. Thomas Logging, Inc.

- **Pirate Sponsor** (donation of \$20-\$99): Dover Auto Parts, Inc., Floyd Marsh Plumbing, Guilford Subway, Herrick Construction, and the Maine Highlands Federal Credit Union.



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The Pirate's Treasure Chest banner was designed in 2007 by John Gillis and David Haskell, students in the Graphic Design & Communications program at Tri-County Technical Center.



Haley Construction truck brings a load of fill from Hardwood Products construction site for placement around grade 7-8 wing at PCSS by Lemieux Construction.



Criminal Justice students from Tri-County Technical Center, including McKedra Clements (above), served as safety and traffic officers on the site.

Hardwood Products, Haley Construction, Lemieux Construction help with PCSS project

Thanks to Hardwood Products of Guilford, Haley Construction of Sangerville, Lemieux Construction of Sangerville, and students from the Criminal Justice Program at Tri-County Technical Center, about 8,000 cubic yards of fill have been placed around the new grade 7-8 wing at Piscataquis Community Secondary School, providing a much more gradual slope away from the building.

When the project was put together during the spring and summer of 2010, SAD 4 wasn't able to place the proper amount of fill around the new wing because of time constraints.

Superintendent of Schools Paul Stearns contacted officials at Hardwood Products to see if they could help. The company had a major construction project in the works, and if it came to fruition, SAD 4 was told that they could have access to the fill that they needed.

Haley Construction received the contract from Hardwood Products to haul the fill and were very gracious about delivering close to 8,000 cubic yards of material to the school. Four PCHS Tri-County Criminal Justice students acted as safety and traffic officers on the site. Brian London, McKedra Clements, Scott Moulton,

and Katrina Nickerson made sure that pedestrians were safe as dump trucks arrived every ten minutes for three straight days.

Haley had a local subcontractor, Lemieux Construction, bring a bulldozer to the site to spread the fill around the new wing.

Mr. Stearns said the district has placed a layer of hay on the fill to protect it from the elements over the winter. When spring comes, the district will finish the job by adding loam and doing the final seeding.

"We're grateful for all the local help," Mr. Stearns said. "Thanks to Hardwood Products, Haley Con-

struction, Lemieux Construction, and our TCTC students, we were able to get a significant amount of fill and work done for very few dollars."

He noted that most of the work around the new wing was done while school was in session this fall.

"A lot of 7th and 8th grade students were able to watch Mr. Lemieux operate his bulldozer. As a result, I would imagine that some are probably interested in pursuing that as a career," Mr. Stearns said. "They thought operating a bulldozer looked like a fun job."



Thank you very much to our Piscataquis Community Secondary School
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'Reading is FAME' selected as primary reading intervention program at PCSS

A program that was developed to bring students at Boys Town up to grade level in reading as quickly as possible has been adopted as the primary reading intervention program for Piscataquis Community Secondary School.

The program, called Reading is FAME, is divided into four parts, based on the student's reading level:

- **F**oundations, for students who are reading at the 4th grade level or below.
- **A**dventures, for readers at the 4th to 6th grade level.
- **M**astery, for readers at the 6th to 8th grade level.
- **E**xplorations, for students who are reading at the 8th grade level or above (note: although "Explorations" is part of the Boys Town program, it is not offered at PCSS).

Classes at the Foundations and Adventures levels are limited to six students. At the Mastery and Explorations levels, classes can have up to 15 students.

FAME interventions are available for students in grades 7-12, but the current focus is on grades 7-10.

Students may be assigned to a FAME class based on their reading scores on the NWEA test, which is taken by all PCSS students in September, along with classroom performance, and input from parents and teachers.

The FAME classes are taught by Holly Witick, who previously taught English study strategies as an educational technician.

Seventh and eighth graders take FAME classes for



Piscataquis Community Secondary School

Kevin Harrington, Principal 876-4625

40 minutes a day every day. Students in grades 9-12 take FAME classes for 80 minutes every other day.

Most of the students taking FAME classes this fall are at the Adventures or Mastery level.

Adventures classes focus on building vocabulary and improving reading fluency, while Mastery classes focus on advance vocabulary and improving reading comprehension.

Ms. Witick says students in the Adventures classes read at least eight pages aloud as a group every class period.

"At first, the students don't want to read aloud, but I let them know that it's OK and that no one can make fun of them," she says. "That gets them over the hump. They don't want to be embarrassed, but when they get comfortable, reading aloud is

actually helpful."

In the Mastery classes, instead of reading aloud, the students read several pages silently, and Ms. Witick asks questions about what they read.

"The goal is to build comprehension, as well as vocabulary," she says.

The Reading Is FAME curriculum was developed by Dr. Mary Beth Curtis, director of the Boys Town (recently renamed Girls and Boys Town) Reading Center in Nebraska. The Reading Center was established in 1990 with the intent of bringing remedial students up to grade level in reading as quickly as possible. Many students at Girls and Boys Town are being recognized at Boys Town, recently renamed for their quick advancement in reading proficiency levels.

PCHS Key Club starting to use 'Facebook' to improve collaboration

Facebook?

At Piscataquis Community High School?

Why not, says history and digital media teacher Erick Murray at PCHS, who became Key Club advisor this fall and started incorporating Facebook into the operations of the club.

"Key Club members were already on Facebook, using it for their own needs," Mr. Murray said. "We thought we would harness the power of social networking in order to get students to collaborate with each other so they could have a bigger part in planning our events."

Mr. Murray emphasizes that Key Club members aren't required to use Facebook. "It's strictly voluntary," he says.

He adds that the idea behind using Facebook is to allow the members to provide more feedback on club operations and activities.

"Even if we can't be together all at once, Facebook gives us a way to communicate and get things accomplished more effectively, using something [Facebook] that most students are already using," Mr. Murray says.

Mr. Murray, the Career Prep teacher at PCHS for the past four years, started teaching history on December 5, but he's not sure whether his history classes will have a Facebook page.

"If it benefits the educational process, we might try it," he says, "but not just for the sake of having a Facebook page."

Erick Murray to teach history

Erick Murray, who taught career prep classes at PCHS for the past four years, started teaching history on December 5.

He is teaching four freshman history classes, along with a sophomore history class, and a junior history class.

He also teaches Digital Media.

Mr. Murray is filling a teaching vacancy that was created by history teacher Jeannie Griffin's decision to move to Florida.

Mr. Murray says his undergraduate degree is from Liberty University in Secondary Social Studies Education. He also has a Master's degree in Education from the University of Maine.

He said his goal when he came to PCHS was to teach history, but he had to wait for a position to open



Erick Murray

up. "It's been several years since I've taught history, but it will be a lot of fun," he said.

'Every 15 Minutes' at PCHS to raise awareness of alcohol risks

(Continued from page 1)

the SAD 4 campus, resulting in the "death" of several students, injuries to several others, and the arrest of a student for OUI.

The arrested student, played by a PCHS student, will be treated as if the incident were real—the student will be handcuffed, put in a cruiser, and taken to the Piscataquis County Jail to be booked.

The parents of the "dead" students will be notified at their place of work by a uniformed police officer. The parents will write their children's obituaries, which will be presented at a memorial service on the second day of the program.

During the first day of "Every 15 Minutes," a student dressed as the Grim Reaper will pull a student out of class every 15 minutes. A police officer will then enter the class and read that student's obituary (written by parents). The students will return to class, but in whiteface, simulating death, and not allowed to interact with the student population until the end of the two-day program.

At the end of the first day, students who are doing the role playing for "Every 15 Minutes" will be transported to a local retreat, which will simulate what it would be like to be apart from family and friends. During the retreat, the students will write a letter that begins, "Dear Mom and Dad, Every 15 minutes, someone in the U.S. dies from an alcohol-related accident, and today I died. I never got the chance to tell you . . ." Students will be asked to finish that letter to their parents, and the parents will be asked to write a similar letter to their children.

The following morning, the students will be transported back to school to attend a mock funeral for those who died in the crash. All PCHS students and parents, as well as faculty, staff, and community members will be invited to attend.

Several participating students and parents will speak at the mock funeral on the devastating effect of losing a friend or loved one. The goal is to get students to think about drinking and their personal safety, as well as the

adult responsibility to make mature decisions when life is at stake.

Grief and substance abuse counselors will be available to deal with the potentially emotional response that the events and activities of "Every 15 Minutes" may induce.

The event will need strong community support to be successful, but the PCHS Civil Rights Team and Student Council feel that the potential ben-

efits far outweigh the investment of time and energy that will be required.

A letter has been sent to parents with information about "Every 15 Minutes." Students who would like to participate should contact Emily Wilson or Heather Doherty, faculty advisors to the PCHS Civil Rights Team and Student Council, respectively, for an application form and get parental permission.

Volunteers needed for 'Every 15 Minutes'

The PCHS Civil Rights Team and Student Council are looking for parents and community volunteers who would be willing to help organize "Every 15 Minutes," which is scheduled for May 10 and 11 at PCHS.

"This will be a huge project which will require a lot of community involvement," says Emily Wilson, faculty advisor to the Civil Rights Team.

As the event draws near, she says many different types of help will be needed—food donations, make-up assistance for accident victims and other student participants, chaperones for the retreat, set-up help for the mock funeral, etc.

At this point, however, the biggest need is for people who are willing to serve on the "Every 15 Minutes" planning committee and help organize the event.

For more information about volunteering, please contact Mrs. Wilson or Ms. Doherty at 876-4625.

Life Skills students publish digital newsletter for PCSS

If students at Piscataquis Community Secondary School want to know what's for lunch or what events are coming up at school, they can find all of that information—and more—in *The Parrot*, a weekly newsletter published by Nora Randall's Life Skills students.

The newsletter isn't a public document, but it's available on-line for anyone with an SAD 4 email account.

"Students know where they can find it," says Ms. Randall.

Ms. Randall says her students gather the information, do the word processing, and use Pages, the McIntosh page layout program, to do the design and layout.

The newsletter includes an interview with a teacher and an "inquiring photographer" section, where the Life Skills students ask a question and report the answers that students give, along with their photos.

To encourage participation by students who aren't in the Life Skills class, the names of students who submit articles that are published in *The Parrot* will be entered into a drawing, with an iTunes gift card as the prize.

Ms. Randall says working on *The Parrot* helps her students develop their writing skills and learn the basics of grammar and punctuation.

It also helps them in other ways.

"When my students do the poll question, they are engaging with people every week that they wouldn't otherwise talk with," Ms. Randall

says. "They also have to do a lot of thinking. What would you ask a teacher in an interview? Would you talk to a teacher the same way you'd talk to a student?"

All in all, Ms. Randall says *The Parrot* has been a good project for her students.

"We enjoy it, and I think the school enjoys it as well," she says. "My stu-

dents are able to practice many skills and become more effective communicators."

'The Parrot' publishes story about publishing 'The Parrot'

By the PCSS Life Skills Class

The Parrot is a newsletter that is made by students. There are five students that work on it each week. Each student has a specific job they do. Ms. Randall and Mrs. MacNeil help the students do their jobs.

The Parrot is published once every week for all the kids in the school. It is put into the student conference folder online in the First Class email program every Friday.

There are different features we do each week. One is an interview. We come up with questions to ask, like what the person likes to do, how many jobs they have, or the hobbies they have. We have upcoming events, the lunch menu, sports, ask a poll question, and other stuff about teachers and students.

We use Pages [the McIntosh page layout program] to write the



Life Skills students talk about their digital newsletter.

information into a newsletter. We also use a camera to put pictures into it. We use the Internet,

iPhoto, e-mail, and Comic Life [a cartoon-drawing program]. That is what we do.

Murray, PCHS working with DOE to pilot digital citizenship curriculum for Maine

Piscataquis Community High School and digital media teacher Erick Murray are working with the Maine Department of Education and Common Sense Media, a non-profit digital media group, to pilot a digital citizenship curriculum for Maine schools.

The curriculum was developed by Common Sense Media and the Maine Learning Technology Initiative (MLTI). PCHS is one of four schools—two high schools and two elementary schools—that have been selected as demonstration schools for the project.

Common Sense Media is a national non-profit organization that helps families and educators teach kids how to be safe and smart in today's media driven world.

The new curriculum is organized by grade and focuses on such topics as social networking, virtual worlds, commercialism, cell phones, and cyberbullying.

Last year, industrial technology and multi-media teacher Don Moen helped pilot the Common Sense Media middle school curriculum. This year, Common Sense Media and MLTI are extending the curriculum to the high school level.

MLTI says that teaching digital citizenship is critical to youth development and Maine's state-wide technology initiatives.

Mr. Murray has been teaching digital citizenship at PCHS for several years, but he says the new curriculum is the best he's seen "at getting students to think about what they're doing and then asking them why they're doing it."

He says Common Sense Media takes things that students are familiar with—clips from TV shows they watch and music and media that are part of their everyday lives—and in-

corporates them into the curriculum so that the students feel this actually applies to them.

"It speaks in the kids' own language," Mr. Murray says.

SAD 4 technology integrator Crystal Priest says Common Sense Media was formed to help parents deal with all the new media that's out there, and their website (www.common-sensemedia.org) provides a wealth of useful information and advice.

7th, 8th graders learning about risks, rewards of investing through 'the Stock Market Game'

Seventh and eighth graders at Piscataquis Community Middle School are learning about the risks and rewards of investing in the stock market through a simulation game in Rex Webb's social studies classes.

The game, called the Stock Market Game, gives students the chance to invest a hypothetical \$100,000 in an on-line portfolio of stocks and mutual funds. Their goal is to have the best-performing portfolio, based on actual gains and losses on the stock market.

The students think they're playing a game, but they're really learning economic and financial concepts that they can use for the rest of their lives.

Mr. Webb says the students, working in teams of three to five, made investments totaling \$30,000 during October and early November. The next \$30,000 in stock purchases were made in mid-November, and the remaining \$40,000 was invested around the end of the month.

In building their portfolios, the students had to research and evaluate stocks and make decisions based on what they learned. The teams traded common stocks and mutual funds from the NYSE, Nasdaq, and

"This is a new area that didn't exist 10 years ago and that parents didn't grow up with," she said. "Common Sense Media is trying to help them understand it and deal with it."

Mr. Murray says the group reviews movies and DVDs from a parent's perspective and tries to educate parents about where their kids are playing on-line.

"It tries to provide some simple resources to help parents," he says.

AMEX exchanges. They earned interest on cash balances, paid interest if they bought stocks on margin, and paid a commission on all trades. To determine why certain stocks perform the way they do, or why the broader market has moved up or down, they needed to understand how the economy works. They also did the math necessary to calculate their returns.

Mr. Webb says his Stock Market Game teams have been fairly successful over the years, winning two state championships in a row and almost winning a third.

There are currently 114 middle school teams playing the Stock Market Game in Maine, including 26 teams from Mr. Webb's classes at PCMS.

The game started on October 10 and will be completed in mid-December. A second competition will be held in the spring.

The Stock Market Game is sponsored by SIFMA Foundation, which is affiliated with the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association. It is the only stock market simulation supported by the New York Stock Exchange.



Justine Lavigne

Justine Lavigne new PCSS math teacher

Justine Lavigne has joined the staff of Piscataquis Community Secondary School as a math teacher and advisor to the PCHS Math Team.

Ms. Lavigne arrived in mid-October after teaching at Foxcroft Academy for a little more than five years. Previously, she taught at Orono High School for a year.

The Math Team had its first meet on November 2 after just one practice. The team placed 10th out of 12 teams competing, but Ms. Lavigne said everyone scored, including the three freshmen who participated.

"The kids had fun," she said. "Next time we'll do better."

A native of Greenville, Ms. Lavigne graduated from Greenville High School and St. Joseph's College, where she received her B.A. degree in Math, with minors in Education and Philosophy.

She lives in Shirley and enjoys hunting, fishing, and being in the woods. She says she bagged three partridge this year, and she's gone out as often as she can to look for deer.



Maggie Abbott (left) shows her t-shirt with the winning design for the front cover of the 2012 "Pirate Pride" yearbook. Sadie Morin (right) won 2nd place. Her design will be on the back cover.



The "Pirate Pride" staff.

'Pirate Pride' advisor, staff find ways to cut yearbook costs

Pirate Pride is not your typical high school yearbook.

First, all of the pages are in full color, which is a luxury that most school yearbooks can't afford.

Second, it's in the black, thanks to a combination of cost-cutting and revenue-enhancing activities that it has undertaken during the last couple years under the guidance of educational technician Beth MacNeil.

When Mrs. MacNeil became the yearbook advisor in the fall of 2009, the *Pirate Pride* account was about \$2,000 in debt. Since then, she's been able to pay off the debt and pay last year's printing bill in full. This year, *Pirate Pride* started with a surplus.

One of the keys to the yearbook's financial turnaround has been Mrs. MacNeil's willingness to do the sports photography for PCHS, which had previously been done by a professional photographer.

"We figured out some things that the yearbook could do that we were paying other people to do," she said.

In addition to taking team pictures for the yearbook, Mrs. MacNeil takes individual photos and packages them for sale to the team members at a

reduced price. The sports boosters give the yearbook a donation to help compensate for the reduced prices for students.

"Every senior winds up with something," Mrs. MacNeil says. "If they don't want an individual photo, they receive a group photo or they have their own memory mate."

All of the printing is done in-house through the Technology Department, except for some specialty items, like player cards.

Mrs. MacNeil took pictures of all of the fall, winter, and spring sports teams last year, and she's continuing that this year.

She also tries to go to at least three games for each sport to take action shots, which are published on-line at school. The yearbook makes CDs for each sports season and sells them to students for \$5 each.

Mrs. MacNeil also takes pictures at homecoming and other school events.

"We help students get the photos they need for projects, like Senior Scrapbook, and we make money for the yearbook at the same time," she says.

Before, the team photos were taken

by a professional photographer, and the action photos and event photos were taken by students or parents, if at all.

"With a small student body, most of the students who were involved in the yearbook were also on the field playing," Mrs. MacNeil says. "We never knew what we would get."

This winter, Mrs. MacNeil says she's hoping the yearbook will be able to take the photography business a step further, setting up a backdrop and props at basketball games and offering instant photos of kids with the Pirate mascot.

Another factor in the yearbook's financial success has been advertising support from the community, which got a boost last year from an ad sales competition.

Students are given a packet of information about advertising sales and sent out into the community. The student who sells the most ads wins \$100; the student who places second wins \$50. Last year, the competition netted ad sales of more than \$1,000.

"We're hoping that we'll do even better this year," says Mrs. MacNeil.

In addition to the financial benefit,

the ad sales competition means that the *Pirate Pride* staff can focus on producing an outstanding yearbook instead of hustling ads.

One new development this year was a design competition for the yearbook cover, which was won by senior Maggie Abbott. Maggie will receive a free personalized yearbook for her cover design.

There were so many submissions that the yearbook staff also selected a back cover, which was designed by junior Sadie Morin, who was presented with a t-shirt.

Mrs. MacNeil says last year's yearbook sold out for the first time in many years.

"I had to tell some students that they couldn't have a yearbook because they didn't order ahead of time," she said. "The company shipped us a box of extras, but we sold all of them."

The yearbook costs \$52.80 per copy to produce, but the staff keeps the price at \$40 and makes up the difference through ad sales, sports photos, and other fund raising activities.

7th graders visit Cole Land Transportation Museum, interview veterans

Seventh graders from Piscataquis Community Middle School visited the Cole Land Transportation Museum in Bangor on November 2.

The field trip had a dual purpose—to view exhibits on transportation in Maine and to participate in the "Interview a Veteran" program.

The museum exhibits included many different modes of transportation in Maine, including bicycles, sleds and snowmobiles, cars, trucks—including early Coles Express trucks—motorcycles, snowplows, wreckers, and fire trucks.

There was also a Bangor and Aroostook diesel engine on a rail siding with a boxcar and caboose.

The "Interview a Veteran" program encourages students to do just that—to sit at a table with a veteran, hear their stories, and learn what their daily lives were like when they were serving in the military.

The veterans who were available on November 2 had served during World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. During previous visits, PCMS 7th graders have talked with veterans

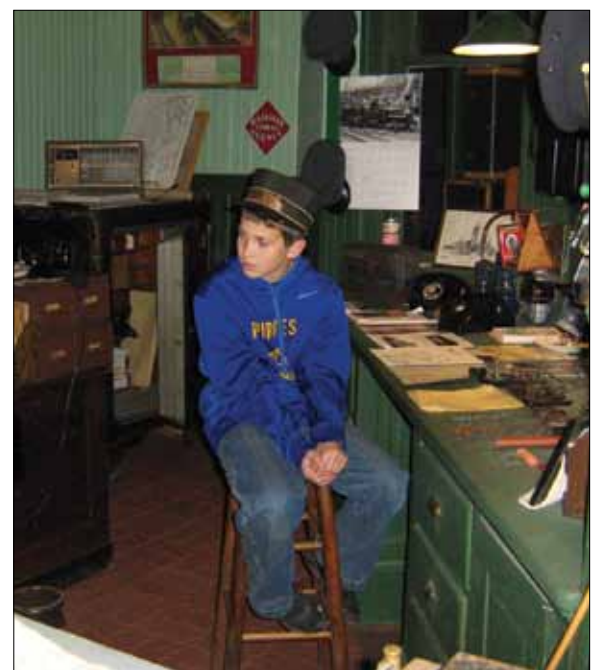


PCMS students participate in the "Interview with a Veteran" program at Cole's Transportation Museum in Bangor.

from the Gulf War, Iraq, and Afghanistan, but those younger veterans weren't at the museum this time.

Galen Cole, founder of Coles Express and the transportation mu-

seum, encourages students to talk to family members and relatives who are veterans, ask them about their experiences, and thank them for their service.



Nick Easler sits behind the desk at the Enfield Station display at Cole's Transportation Museum.

Mr. Cole said a number of the veterans on November 2 spoke to him about how well behaved the PCMS students were during their tour.

7th grade science classes tour Challenger Learning Center, complete space mission

All three 7th grade science classes at Piscataquis Community Middle School toured the Challenger Learning Center in Bangor and successfully completed their "Rendezvous with a Comet" mission in outer space.

The 7th graders made the trip on three separate days, October 25, 26, and 27.

The Challenger Learning Center offers students a hands-on simulation of a space journey, with half of the students working in mission control and half working in the space station.

The students play a variety of roles, including navigator, medical officer, communications officer, robotic specialist, and aeronautical engineers.

When the students arrive at the Challenger Learning Center, they go to the debriefing room, where they learn about the mission. Then, when the mission is ready to start, the mission controllers go to the Mission Control room, while the astronauts go through a flight simulator to the space shuttle and then, after docking, to the space station.

The students in Mission Control have to communicate specific instructions to their counterparts on the space station, and the astronauts have to confirm that they understand



Jessica Moore sits in the Barany chair at the Space Station to test the health of her vestibular system as Medical Officer Caitlin Patterson monitors her performance at the Challenger Learning Center in Bangor.



Cassandra Erving sits at the Navigation station in Mission Control at the Challenger Learning Center in Bangor.

the instructions.

During the mission, the aeronautical engineers on the space station have to assemble a probe, which is launched into a comet's tail to collect data. In addition, a couple of astronauts do a space walk, putting on a pressure suit so they can go outside the space station and make repairs.

Seventh graders at PCMS have been going to the Challenger Learning Center for eight years.

"It's one of the best field trips of

the year," says 7th/8th grade social studies teacher Rex Webb. "The SAD 4 Board of Directors has kept it in the budget. It's well worth the money."

Trip to D.C. planned for 7th, 8th graders

Seventh and eighth grade students at Piscataquis Community Middle School will have the opportunity to visit Washington, D.C., and the "historic triangle" in Virginia during April vacation this year.

The trip will be led by social studies teacher Rex Webb.

Last year, Mr. Webb led a tour of Boston and Salem, MA.

This year's trip will leave on April 17 and return April 20. The itinerary will include the Jamestown Settlement, Colonial Williamsburg, and Yorktown (the historical triangle) in Virginia, and Washington, D.C., where students will visit the Capitol

building, the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, Mt. Vernon, and the Arlington National Cemetery.

Students interested in registering for the trip should contact Mr. Webb. Fourteen students are currently registered. Mr. Webb expects that number to double over the next month or so.

Several fundraising events have been scheduled to help defray expenses, including a bottle drive this fall and a spaghetti supper and silent auction at the Masonic Lodge on November 19.

A Valentine's Day raffle will be held in February.



SOCIAL STUDIES WORLD CUP UNIT—Alanna Page lines up a shot against Courtney Deane as Kolby Kain looks on and Aaron Fish and Darren Weeks keep score during the World Cup unit in Rex Webb's 8th grade social studies class. The 8th graders did research about the teams that competed in the 2011 women's soccer World Cup in Germany and the countries they represented.

7th, 8th grade staff at PCES publish monthly newsletter that's available via e-mail

Keeping up with their children's school activities has become easier for parents of 7th and 8th grade students at Piscataquis Community Middle School.

For a number of years, the 7th and 8th grade staff has produced a newsletter telling parents what teachers are doing in the classroom.

Now, that newsletter is being e-mailed to parents who request it, and it's being posted on the SAD 4 website [go to the PCSS page and click on "Academics"] for parents who would rather not receive the e-mails.

Parents can also have a paper version delivered to their children to take home.

"So far it's been well received," says Robyn Rich, 7th/8th grade English/language arts teacher who collects the information and compiles it into a newsletter format. "We've received some compliments from parents who say it's helpful."

Ms. Rich says this is the first year the newsletter has been available electronically.

"I talked to some parents who weren't getting news about anything, because the newsletter never made it home," she said. "We decided to do it electronically so that more parents could actually get it."

The newsletter contains a brief report by each 7th and 8th grade teacher about what they're doing in the classroom, as well as general information about things that are happening in grades 7 and 8.

"One of my goals this year is to do a better job of communicating with parents and letting them know what we're doing," says Ms. Rich. "Seventh and eighth grade parents definitely want to know what their kids are doing in school, but their kids don't always place a high priority on telling them. This [the electronic newsletter] is another way to keep parents in the loop."



THE NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY at Piscataquis Community Middle School currently has eight members. They are—Front row, (l. to r.): Megan Bergeron, Charlotte Clukey, and Lucinda Wingert. Back row: Jordynne Littlefield, Mikayla Dow, Haley Bergeron, Josie Knowles, and Hannah Fairbrother.

SAD 4 receives \$15,000 grant for curriculum, health initiatives

SAD 4 has received a \$15,000 Coordinated School Health Program (CSHP) grant to help with the health curriculum and health initiatives for the next three years.

Activities supported by the grant will include staff training to implement the "Take Time" program, as well as after-school programs for children.

The grant will also help pay for the SAD 4 Wellness Team to attend the annual Wellness Conference at Sugarloaf.

SAD 4 school nurse Sharon Foster said the "Take Time" program involves taking 10 minutes per day or 5 minutes twice a day to do some sort of physical activity in the classroom.

"It's proven that if students have just five minutes of physical activity, their brains work a lot better," says Mrs. Foster.

She said the plan is to train three staff members and implement "Take Time" in grades K-2 this year, grades 3-4 next year, and grades 5-6 in the third year of the grant.

Mrs. Foster said some of the grant monies are likely to be used to support after-school programming at Piscataquis Community Elementary School.

She said a teacher has volunteered to do a dance program.

"We found last year that students will sign up for after-school activities," she said. "We had 60 kids sign up for Walking Wednesdays."



Piscataquis Community Elementary School
Julie Orton, Principal 876-4301

Welcome to the 2011/2012 School Year!

As we begin our second year as Piscataquis Community Elementary School, we are proud of the sense of community that we have been able to build with students, staff, families, and the community. Having a school population of preschoolers through grade six students holds great possibilities for collaboration. We have several classes of older students who read or write with younger students on a weekly basis. The reconfiguration has been a positive influence on our school.

The concepts of HERO (Honesty, Effort, Respect/Responsibility, and caring for Others) were formally introduced in October, and we have activities planned over the next several months to encourage students to strive for these high ideals.

During the first several weeks of school, we spend much time getting to know our students. We learn their strengths and needs as we work side by side each day. We also use more formal assessments to gain information about ways to help students learn. We recently received the results of our spring 2011 Science MEA for fifth grade students. We're proud to say that these students, our present sixth graders, performed five points above the state average on this assessment.



Julie Orton

We recently held parent/student/teacher conferences, giving us a chance to sit down together and set individual goals for students. We will check in on the progress your child is making toward meeting his/her goals periodically during the school year.

This year we are working on a school-wide goal of building students' vocabulary. We know that a rich vocabulary will help students to succeed in all areas of life and we are exploring different ways to help them build vocabulary. Reading to children and listening to them read on a daily basis are two very powerful ways that you can help your child at home.

In the present climate, where accountability and attainment of learning standards are stressed, we try to maintain a healthy balance between academics and the social and emotional needs of children. We believe in the importance of knowing our students, and we realize that all students come to us with individual strengths and needs. We accept children as they are and help them move forward to become engaged learners who take pride in their own accomplishments.

Thank you for your support as we move forward through the school year. Our school is very much a part of the community, and we welcome opportunities for sharing a variety of educational events with the public.

Sincerely,
Julie Orton, PCES Principal

Denise Thomas new literacy coach at PCES

Denise Thomas is the new literacy coach for Piscataquis Community Elementary School.

As literacy coach, Ms. Thomas works primarily with teachers to help them improve their literacy instruction techniques.

She also works with students, but in the context of the work that she does with teachers.

"I might do a demonstration lesson with a group of students so their teacher can observe how a research-based lesson might work," she said. "Or I might come in if a teacher has a student that he or she is concerned about. But I don't have my own group of students."

Ms. Thomas came to SAD 4 in 2003. For the past five years, she had been working as a literacy interventionist, helping teachers look at data and assessments and helping them use those assessments to guide their instruction. She also did one-on-one instruction as a Reading Recovery teacher.

Last year, PCES didn't have a literacy coach, so Ms. Thomas began doing a lot of the things that a literacy coach does, even though she hadn't gone through the formal training.

This year, she is being trained as a literacy coach at the University of Maine through the Maine Partnerships in Comprehensive Literacy.

Ms. Thomas is currently focusing her coaching efforts on teachers in grades 4-6. The K-3 teachers at PCES were able to work with literacy coach Shelly Snow for several years when she was at McKusick Elementary School and Guilford Primary School, but grades 4-6 were located at the middle school, which didn't have a literacy coach.

Ms. Thomas is also continuing to provide some interventionist services, such as helping teachers use assessment data to guide their instruction.

In addition to working with individual teachers, Ms. Thomas is meeting with grade-level teams and providing professional development for the staff as a whole.

For example, she recently met with the 5th grade team



PCES literacy coach Denise Thomas (right) works with 2nd grade teacher Diane Stephen.

to talk about the fall assessments, what the results showed, and where that data suggests they should go next.

Ms. Thomas also participates on the PCES Leadership Team, which meets after school once a month to decide what needs improvement and what the staff as a whole would like to see for professional development.

In addition to Ms. Thomas, the team includes Principal Julie Orton, Special Education Director Trisha Kurt, one teacher from each grade level, and one representative each from the special education staff and the Title I staff.

'Foodplay' delights PCES students with healthy message

A colorful cast of characters and fantastic feats of juggling were combined with a serious message about healthy eating and exercise during a performance of "Foodplay" at Piscataquis Community Elementary School on October 24.

The program, which was funded by the Piscataquis Public Health Council, was designed to empower students with the skills they need to take charge of growing up healthy and fit.

The performance followed the antics of Johnny Junkfood, who wants to become a national juggling star but keeps dropping the balls because of poor eating habits. With the help of the "Coach" of the junior juggling team—assisted by the PCES audience—Johnny learns to juggle the food he eats to wind up with a balanced diet.

"Foodplay" also shows children how to see through TV commercials, decipher food labels, and make choices that are good for their health.

Sharon Foster, school nurse for SAD 4, said the PCES students enjoyed the performance.

"They're still talking about the 'go food' and the 'woe food,'" she said.

The traveling theater group that performs "Foodplay" also visited schools in Greenville, Corinth, and Dover-Foxcroft during their visit to Maine.



PCES students display signs with the HERO acronym and what it means.



Fourth grade HEROes of the month for October.

PCES encourages students to demonstrate 'HERO' qualities

Along with the acquisition of academic knowledge and skills, students at PCES are learning about personal qualities that contribute to a successful community.

These qualities are represented by the acronym HERO, which stands for:

- **H**onesty
- **E**ffort
- **R**espect/Responsibility
- (concern for) **O**thers

During each week in October, students and teachers focused on one of the HERO concepts by engaging in daily discussions, using literature and video, and completing classroom projects.

The HERO program will be in place for the entire school year at PCES. Different grade levels are developing plans to promote the concept and recognize students who exhibit the HERO qualities.

PCES Guidance Counselor Fred Andrews said a HERO program was in place when the PCES building was a middle school. T-shirts from that era were used to decorate bulletin boards and promote the program this fall.

"The key is to adapt the program for the K-6 grade levels, rather than middle school," Mr. Andrews said.

Examples of the HERO Principles in Action:

Honesty

- Doing your own work when that is the expectation.
- Possessing only items that belong to you, or have been given to you to use.
- Telling the truth, even when it could result in negative consequences for you.

Effort

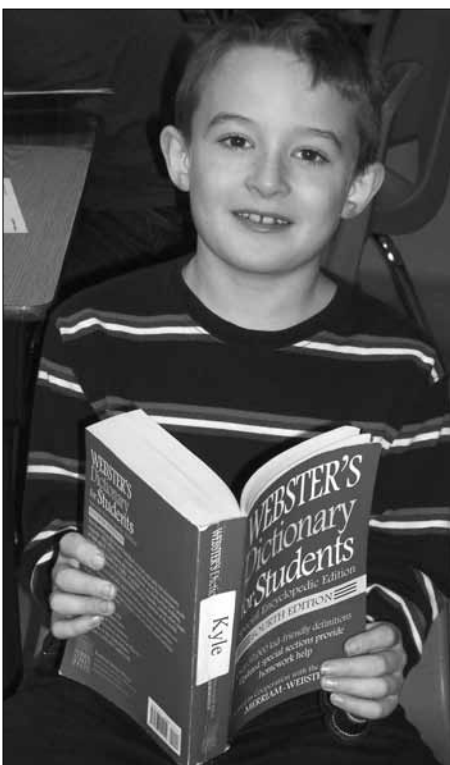
- Attending school every day unless having a legitimate excuse.
- Working to the best of your ability.
- Seeking help when necessary.

Respect/Responsibility

- Making positive comments to others.
- Conducting yourself in a manner that allows others to learn.
- Being on time and prepared to learn.
- Completing all assignments and projects.

Others

- Helping and encouraging others.
- Including others in activities that they have been excluded from.
- Treating others as you wish to be treated.



Kyle Bagley with the 1,000th dictionary.



PCES 3rd graders get their dictionaries at the Valley Grange Hall.

3rd grader receives 1000th dictionary from Valley Grange

Kyle Bagley was both surprised and pleased during a recent trip to the Valley Grange Hall when he discovered the dictionary he received from Valley Grange was a landmark. Ironically, his older brother Adam was present to explain how he used the dictionary he received three years ago during a similar visit.

Kyle and his classmates were the eighth class from SAD 4 to receive

dictionaries as part of the Words for Thirds Program—a program that the Grange has now expanded into three districts covering six schools.

Program coordinator Walter Boomsma noted that even with the expansion, PCES is still "home base" for Grange members. "This is the only school where we have launched other programs like bookworming and newspapers in education," he said.

"We really feel like this is home and these are 'our kids.'"

Sixth graders Alexandra Huff and Billy Griffith joined Adam Bagley to share how they've been using their dictionaries. Involving older students in the presentation program was a first this year—an idea that will likely be repeated. "We know this is a program with long term impact and results," Boomsma explained. "It's

really not just about third graders. Our first recipients are now juniors in high school. I hope I live long enough to be giving dictionaries to their children!"

Additional information about the Valley Grange's Words for Thirds program is available at <http://valley-grange.com>.

Or you could ask a third grader!

Veterans Day assembly features letter from PCHS grad now in Army

When the first SAD 4 Veterans Day assembly was held seven years ago, Jake Bailey was in 7th grade, and he volunteered to do a slide show and presentation for the program.

Jake participated in the program every year after that, and when he reached high school, he served as master of ceremonies.

Last June, he graduated from PCHS, but he still managed to be part of this year's Veterans Day assembly—as an enlisted man in the U.S. Army Artillery at Fort Lewis, WA, where he is training on the M270 Multiple Launch Rocket System.

Carol Poirier, grade 5/6 teacher at Piscataquis Community Elementary School, who organizes the Veterans Day assembly, said Jake enlisted in the Army just before Veterans Day last year.

At the time, Mrs. Poirier asked Jake to write her a letter about his experiences in the Army. Jake responded with a three-page missive about his job as a rocket launcher crew member—and his advice to PCHS students who are thinking about enlisting.

This year's Veterans Day assembly was held on November 10 in the PCHS gym. Mrs. Poirier said it followed the traditional format, with a couple of additions.

First, this year's program included a choreographed line dance by PCES 3rd graders under the direction of physical education and health teacher Sheryl Allen.

Second, the students welcomed Chief Master Sergeant Jeffrey Amos, the brother of Beth Weymouth, who retired after 28 years in the Air Force, and thanked him for his service.

Jake Bailey talks about military life, decision to enlist

Jake Bailey's letter to grade 5/6 teacher Carol Poirier, who has organized the SAD 4 Veterans Day assembly for the past seven years.

Dear Mrs. Poirier,

I recall that last year when I enlisted, you asked if I could write a letter about what it is like in the army today. Well, I did not forget, and I knew you would not let me.

When I first left home, I was unsure of my decision. I was a little homesick at first, but as the days went by, I decided it was what I needed. I needed to get away and become my own man, so-to-speak.

As of right now I love being in the Military. I really enjoy what I do, and I look to extend when my current term is up. I can see myself serving at least 10 years. . . .

Basic training was fun. It had its challenges, but I enjoyed it. . . . It was exciting to face difficult tasks and conquer them. For example, I was dead afraid of heights. . . . I had to repel down a wood faced wall with nothing but a rope tied in a Swedish seat. After climbing to the top of the ladder and peering over the edge of the wall, I began to shake almost uncontrollably. Sweat was pouring from me, and I had to say to myself: "I got this!" After it was over, I felt like a new person. Much of that was relief. . . .

There were 15 guys in my group with one other by the name of Bailey. Everyone in the army uses last names. He was Big Bailey, and of course, I was Little Bailey. Fortunately, the one name I was never called was Beetle Bailey. Anyway, Big Bailey became my best friend, and I think we will be life long friends even though he is now in Georgia, and I am stationed in Washington State.

I was able to choose what I wanted to be trained in, and I chose field artillery, probably because I'm

from Maine and love to hunt. It also looked like fun, and so far, it is fun. . . . I am currently in training to operate the M270A1 MLRS tracked vehicle [which is] used to launch rockets capable of taking out high value targets up to an unclassified distance of 300 km. . . .

For those of you who might be considering enlisting, I have four major points to make:

First, when you go to enlist, there are various signing bonuses, depending on how many years you sign for. Don't sign on for four extra years just because of the bonus. You don't want to be stuck doing something you hate for 6 years. Sign for the minimum, and then if you like it you can extend for more time.

Second, the military is taxing on the body and the mind. There will be tough times and trials.

Third, start getting into shape now. You will feel so much better during basic training if you are physically fit.

Finally, I miss being able to see my family on an every day basis, especially since my niece was just born. I also miss being able to hunt and fish whenever I want. However, there comes a time in a person's life when he or she needs

to get out on their own. The independence in the military is great. I like being out on my own, but also hate it at the same time. I guess that is part of growing up. . . .

Please say thank you to the veterans in the audience for their service to our country.

Oh, it is okay for you to send me a care package now.

Sincerely,
Jake



Jake Bailey during Artillery training.



Fifth graders from Piscataquis Community Elementary School were allowed to pick a bag of potatoes to bring home after their field trip to Cleaves Farms in Sangerville.



PCES 5th graders learn about potatoes during visit to Cleaves Farms

By Mike Clukey
5th grade teacher, PCES

Fifth graders made their annual field trip to Cleaves Farms in Sangerville in late October to see how potatoes are grown, harvested, stored over the winter, and sold for seed.

The fifth grade curriculum integrated potato studies in social studies, science, and math. In social studies, the students discussed the impact of the European discovery of

the Americas and the resulting "Columbian Exchange," with potatoes and corn. Potatoes were first discovered in South America by Columbus, then taken back to Europe as they could be grown in a variety of locations. In science, the 5th graders studied flowering plants (like potatoes) and how they make seeds. In math, the students calculated how many pounds of potatoes are stored in crates and bins, then determined how many tractor trailer loads that

would equal for transport to customers' farms. The students learned that potato farming is a year-round business.

Cleaves Farms grows eight varieties of seed potatoes, which are shipped to farms from Florida to Michigan. Potatoes used for seed can't exceed 3¼ inches in length. The potatoes are stored over the winter in unheated buildings, because potatoes produce heat, and need to be in perfect shape in the spring.

Fifth grade teachers said the students had hoped to pick potatoes in the field to take home to their families for dinner, but the fields were too wet. Since Cleaves Farms wanted the students to have potatoes that could be baked or made into mashed potatoes, they were allowed to pick them out of large storage bins. This is always a big hit with children.



Sydney Hutchins and Dylan Sandburg catch insects behind the Maine State Museum during Bug-Maine-ia.



Taylor Folsom, Joseph Wertz, and Martina Hill catch insects behind the Maine State Museum during Bug-Maine-ia.



Martina Hill shows off an insect she caught during Bug-Maine-ia.

2nd graders visit 'Bug-Maine-ia' at Maine State Museum

(Continued from page 1)

insects, and an entomologist was on hand to help them identify what they caught.

Downstairs in the museum, there were exhibits of water insects, as well as other insect displays.

"The students could see insects on plants, in the air, and in the wa-

ter," said 2nd grade teacher Melissa Stearns. "Some of them were able to eat mealworms—they didn't have to, but they could if they wanted to."

The exhibit coincided with the 2nd graders' first science unit of the year, which was about insects.

The field trip was free, as the museum doesn't charge admission for

school groups attending Bug-Maine-ia. HUGS, the school's parent support group, paid for bus transportation.

Mrs. Stearns said this was the seventh time that 2nd graders from SAD 4 have visited Bug-Maine-ia.

She said the favorite part of the exhibit for most students was seeing all the live specimens when they en-

tered the lobby. They were allowed to handle some of the insects, including the Madagascar hissing cockroaches, which grow up to 4" at maturity.

Several students also got acquainted with the museum's tarantula.

They also enjoyed looking at insects through microscopes and magnifying glasses.



Courtney Quimby, Hailee Hartford, and Grace Buehne relax during the 2nd grade trip to the Maine State Museum in Augusta to see the Bug-Maine-ia exhibits.



Martina Hill, Joseph Wertz, Harley Richardson, and Dylan Sandberg get ready to try their luck at catching insects behind the Maine State Museum.

Weekend Backpack Program gets additional support . . . and more customers

The Weekend Backpack Program in SAD 4 has received a \$2,000 donation from the Plum Creek Foundation, which will fund the program through the end of the school year.

The program, which was initiated by the United Way last March, provides more than 60 students with a backpack full of food every Friday afternoon to ensure that they don't go hungry over the weekend.

The food is provided by the Partnership Food Pantry in Guilford. The backpacks are filled on Wednesdays by Kiwanis volunteers and then delivered to Piscataquis Community Elementary School and Piscataquis

Community Secondary School for distribution to the students.

Al Hunt, pantry director for Partnership Food Pantry, told the Bangor Daily News the backpacks are filled with 6-7 pounds of food each week, including a box of cereal, cans of fruit and soup, milk, peanut butter, a box of macaroni and cheese, apples, and cereal bars.

The program started with 50 L.L. Bean backpacks that were purchased by local businesses. The Kiwanis Club recently purchased a half dozen backpacks so that SAD 4 could provide weekend food for more students.

When backpacks were distributed

on the first Friday in November, 63 students in the two schools took them home.

"Every week we add a couple of names to the list," says Sharon Foster, school nurse for SAD 4, who oversees the program along with Roxanne Chase, secretary and SAD 4

food service supervisor.

"It's a good program that's helping a lot of people," says Mrs. Foster. "There will probably be a lot more before we're done. The word is getting around, and people are asking us if they can participate."

World adventure

This winter the Maines family of Abbot is taking a home school trip to India, Thailand, and a few other countries in Southeast Asia. They will be posting notes on their travels on a blog site. They plan to share some of what they are learning with others, so they will be attempting to make the blog site as informative and interesting as possible. It will include some photos. All are welcome to check it out at mainesinasia.blogspot.com



Two groups of 6th graders at Piscataquis Community Elementary School try out Michelle Figg's new homemade drums. The drums come in three sizes—3 feet, 2 feet, and 2½ feet tall.

PCES music teacher starts 6th grade drumming program with homemade drums

How do you start a drumming program for 6th graders when the drums cost \$200 apiece and you need 24 of them?

If you're Michelle Figg, music teacher at Piscataquis Community Elementary School, you search the Internet and find a way to make homemade drums for \$9 apiece.

That's a true story, but it gets even better.

Miss Figg found a website that showed how she could make drums using concrete form tubes (\$8.28 at Home Depot), cut in half, with fabric stretched over one end, stapled, and painted.

She made two of the drums with art teacher Jane Daniels and brought

them to the HUGS meeting to ask the parent group if they could provide funds to purchase the materials needed to make 24 drums—one for each student in her 6th grade music class.

As we said, the story gets better.

Word of Miss Figg's presentation to HUGS reached Jason Higgins of True Textile, which manufactures interior fabrics for healthcare, education, and office environments.

Mr. Higgins said True Textile fabrics are wound on heavy-duty fiber tubes, which are similar to concrete form tubes, but thicker, heavier, and sturdier. He said he'd donate enough tubes to make drums for the entire class, and he'd provide the fabric, as well.

Miss Figg said drums made with the True Textile tubes have a slightly different sound, but they'll last a lot longer.

Another advantage is that the True Textile tubes can be cut into several different lengths—little drums, 2' tall; medium drums, 2½' tall; and big drums, 3' tall. The different-size drums will accommodate different-size drummers, along with adding some variations in tone to the drumming arrangements.

Miss Figg says her students are currently focused on holiday concerts and will start using the new drums in January.

She says the students will learn real drumming patterns from all over the world, with primary focus on Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

She'll break down the drumming patterns into small pieces for each instrument, and students will have their own patterns.

"Once they learn the patterns, they put a bunch of different patterns together, and it teaches them balance and teamwork," Miss Figg

says. "They have to work together. If they don't, it doesn't sound good. As soon as everybody starts working together, going at the same time, and playing the patterns right, a great sound emerges—just from percussion instruments."

She hopes that the 6th graders will be able to put on a drumming performance in June to demonstrate what they've learned during the year. Physical education teacher Sheryl Allen has said she would be on board to add a dance/movement component to the concert.

She's also hoping that the students will learn some additional lessons from their new drumming experience.

The first lesson is that students don't need expensive instruments to make good music.

"You can use local, recycled materials and make great sound," Miss Figg says.

Second, traditional band instruments aren't the only way to make music. By working together, students can make music using percussion instruments alone.



The drums are made from heavy-duty fiber tubes, which are wrapped with decorative paper.



Another group of PCES students try out the new drums.