

MARTIN KELLOGG MIDDLE SCHOOL

MR. JASON S. LAMBERT, PRINCIPAL

**WORKING WITH PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY TO
TOUCH THE FUTURE THROUGH OUR CHILDREN
December 2007/January 2008 Newsletter**

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

As we enter the months with the shortest days of the year it is nice to know that there are many bright spots here at Martin Kellogg. In November we had an opportunity for parents and teachers to meet to discuss student report cards and progress on individual student goals. We are very proud that the majority of our parents attend these conferences.

The 7th grade team once again held the "Hunger Banquet" program on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving to teach students about worldwide poverty. This powerful program continues to grow, and has been received very favorably.

The PAC sponsored our Recognition Ice Cream Social once again. We hosted over 200 students, who met one or more of the following criteria: All grades equal to or above a B+, all 1's in effort and conduct, or nomination as an Outstanding Student of the Month. This event featured an opportunity for these students to make their own sundae (with ice cream donated from Cold Stone Creamery) and receive a certificate recognizing their achievement. I challenged this group of students to not only earn the grades to return to the next Ice Cream Social, but also to encourage others who were not present to work hard so that they attend as well. Hopefully we will increase our attendance at the next Ice Cream Social in February.

The Student Council is involved in many exciting service initiatives this month. Currently, they are involved with the *Hat and Mitten Tree Program*, collecting new and nearly new hats, mitten, scarves, gloves, ear muffs, head bands and any other items that can be donated to the families in Newington through Human Services. The Student Council is also sponsoring a toy drive in the 5th and 6th grades. Students and staff are asked to donate a new, unwrapped toy. The toys will be collected in homeroom then donated to the *We Are The Children Charity*. The drive will run from Monday Dec 3- Friday Dec 14. The homeroom that collects the most toys will receive an ice cream party courtesy of the Student Council.

Additionally, The Newington Human Service department in conjunction with MKMS Student Council will be sponsoring the Adopt-A-Family program this year. The 7th and 8th graders at Kellogg will be asked to donate to this cause. The homerooms will be assigned a family to purchase gifts for. The gifts will then be delivered to the families by the Human Service department.

Tryouts were held for our spring musical production of *Beauty and the Beast*. Many students auditioned for parts and were cast in the play, or have offered their talent working behind the scenes. In total, over 200 students will be participating in the production. This promises to be a wonderful show and a truly rewarding experience for all those who choose to participate.

And finally, a word on safety as we enter the winter season. It is dark much earlier these months and as the snow piles up on the sides of the road I encourage all parents to revisit the need for safe conduct to and from school with their children. Martin Kellogg lies between two heavily traveled roads and I want to be sure our students are reminded often of the potential dangers of unsafe behavior. I hope you have a happy and safe December and January, I look forward to seeing you at our PAC meetings and other school activities over the next two months.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY REMINDER

Bus safety is a major concern. Please remind your children they **MUST**:

1. Stay seated at all times;
2. NOT rush the bus when it arrives;
3. NOT run to the bus at dismissal;
4. Converse in a low voice;
5. NEVER throw things or behave in an unsafe manner;
6. Obey driver's commands;
7. Show respect and courtesy to the drivers and each other.

Bus safety is so important; please support us to keep all children safe.

If you need to drop off your child, please use the sidewalk side of Harding Avenue or Tom-Lin Entrance. **DO NOT** enter the circle between 7:30 A.M. and 8:30 A.M. or between 2:30 P.M. and 3:00 P.M. Thank you for your assistance in this area.

Do you drop off your child in the back parking lot every morning?

With winter coming, doing these things will make your experience smoother and safer.

- Stay in a single line and refrain from passing out cars whose children are still exiting the vehicle.
- Pull up as close to the sidewalk near the building entrance as possible before having your child
 - get out of the car, especially if no cars are in front of you.
- Be sure that your child has their things together so that they can exit the vehicle quickly once you
 - reach the drop-off point. If they have large instruments or projects and need you to get
 - out of the car to assist them in unloading, you are welcome to park in a space in the lot.
- Follow the traffic circle rather than cutting down the middle lane of the teacher parking lot.

Thank you for helping to keep our children safe!

Around the School

Grade 5

Our fifth graders have been busy with various science units. Students have had the opportunity to work on experiments in light, sound, electricity and magnetism. Students are getting a chance to get to know and work with other fifth grade teachers during these lessons as they rotate through the various science units. Both teachers and students have found this experience to be rewarding. Students have been working hard on fractions and area in math. Please remember to practice multiplication facts each night as facilitates all other areas in math.

Beginning in October and running through the remainder of the school year students are learning about making good choices, peer interaction, and human growth and development with our new health teacher, Mrs. Leslie. Mrs. Speranza, our fifth grade student advisor is working closely with these classes to reinforce the key issues that she sees in fifth grade.

This year the D.A.R.E Program will be taught to our students in two four- week time blocks. The first block will run from November 26th to December 21st and the second time block will run from March 25th to April 18th. Officer Webster will be instructing the students on topics including the effects of drugs and alcohol on the body.

Grade 6

Math- After having completed the number theory unit, students are currently working with fractions and decimals. The students are learning about equivalent fractions, benchmark fractions, and fractional magnitude. The classes are also learning how to convert fractions to decimals which will lead them into the next unit where they will convert decimals to

percentages, discounts, and tax rates. Parents can help students understand fractions and decimals by pointing out their use in daily life. This includes baking and household measuring. To assist students with estimating decimals parents can have their children estimate the cost of items purchased, including taxes and tips. As always, we encourage parents to continue practicing basic multiplication/division facts through twelve.

Science- Over the next couple of months, students in science will be in the midst of the Matter Unit. The first thing students will learn is that matter is anything that takes up space and has mass. Students will have to categorize different substances based on whether they are matter or non matter. We will be exploring everything from the states of matter to the difference between chemical and physical changes. Students will learn how the molecules are arranged in solids, liquids and gases. Furthermore, the classes will have to describe phase changes such as condensation, evaporation, melting and freezing in terms of heat energy transfer. During this time, the 6th graders will be actively participating in hands-on lab activities that show some of these phase changes. All students will create an element brochure on the computer using Microsoft Publisher. The brochure will describe the properties, uses, and electron shell diagram for their element. Finally, students will be involved in numerous labs that will demonstrate chemical changes and physical changes

Social studies- classes have already traveled through Ancient Mesopotamia by debating the first set of written laws developed by King Hammurabi and writing their names in Phoenician on clay tablets. From Mesopotamia, students ventured into our current study of ancient Egypt. Topics will include the geography of the Nile River, powerful kings and queens, religion, resources, and culture. Students will learn why pyramids were built and how we now know the meaning of ancient hieroglyphics.

Students will work with technology and art mediums to increase their understanding of the Ancient Egyptian cultures. Through a computer program, many students traveled down the Nile River in search precious stones in order to create a necklace or bracelet for a jewelry shop keeper. With the assistance of the art teacher, students will create exciting Egyptian artifacts. To enhance the curriculum, students will explore more of Ancient Egypt through a special Egypt day. All of the sixth grade teachers and students will come together on this day to further explore the marvels of Ancient Egypt.

Language Arts- Students are continuing their study in the Harcourt Trophies Reading Program. In and out of small reading groups, students are learning many necessary reading skills to help them comprehend and interpret their reading. Skills which you may want to practice with your child include making predictions, finding conflicts and resolutions, and making judgments about what has been read. Recent experts have included a historical fiction piece called, *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry and a realistic fiction piece called *Summer of the Swans*, by Betsy Byars. For further independent reading, copies of the entire books can be found at the library. Students are also continuing working with word parts, synonyms, antonyms, prefixes, and suffixes. Our study of compare and contrast writing will help students better grasp organizing an essay and including appropriate elaboration. Students will read samples of excellent written work and develop their own essays throughout the year.

Grade 7

Ms. Laccone's Science It has been an exciting first making term in science class. We began the year with lab safety and the correct use of many of the laboratory instruments, like the microscope. Students are also focusing on science going on in the world through the weekly activity "Current Events". We have just completed your study of cells, which included several laboratory experiences with the microscopes. We are now beginning our study of the Human Body, beginning with the skeletal and muscular systems.

In social studies, Ms. Laccone's class has finished their study of the geography of the United States and we are rapidly moving through our studies of the American colonies. Soon we will learn about the American Revolution, the Declaration of Independence, and the U.S. Constitution. I have and will continue to tie in other learning activities when applicable to help prepare students for their experiences during Colonial Week in May.

Mrs. Weber's Social Studies Students have completed their study of how the 13 original colonies each came to be. Now, each child has selected a colony where he/she will design a brochure giving reasons why others would want to settle there. The projects will be completed by November 20th, and on display for all to see after Thanksgiving break. Then, we will follow the colonies as they mature and eventually find reasons to separate from England. So, stay tuned as we watch our country grow.

Mrs. Weber's Language Arts - We continue to hone in on both our reading and writing skills with a bit of grammar thrown in for good measure. Students and teacher continue to enjoy the wonderful selections of literature within our new anthology. One of the favorites was "Miss Awful", the unmotivated student's worst nightmare teacher! After reading this great selection, students wrote an expository piece describing his/her definition of great teaching or super lessons. I gained some great ideas as they shared their past experiences with me. We will continue to read, write and grow as the year progresses. Always remind your child to read at home for pleasure each and every night.

Ms. Blais – Math Pre-Algebra students have been working with adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing integers. In addition, they have been learning how to graph points on a coordinate plane. Then they were introduced to equations and different properties. Following that, students will be working with factors and fractions. What fraction of that mouth-watering apple pie did YOU eat this Thanksgiving? What fraction of your plate was covered by all of that delicious food?

7th grade On-grade math students have been studying Rational Numbers. They have been converting fractions to decimals, decimals to percents and percents to fractions. They recently have been learning how to add and subtract fractions as well as multiply and divide fractions. Next, they will be learning to relate ratios, rates and unit rates. For example, what is the ratio of vegetables to desserts at Thanksgiving? What was the rate at which your son or daughter devoured their Halloween candy? How much does gas cost now per gallon? After this unit, we'll be moving onto Geometry and Measurement!

Mrs. Davies - Science Classes have just finished learning about all the parts and functions of the microscope. Earning an 80% or above on the *big test* will allow the students to get their Microscope License! By the time you read this we should be working in the lab looking at pond water organisms and making our own animal and plant cell slides. This unit on cells prepares the students to study the Human Body which begins after the holidays.

Social Studies Class has studied the 13 original colonies in-depth. Our culminating activity for chapter 4 was to design a poster that would invite and encourage people from England to come live in their colony. They are hanging in the classroom. Our next several chapters will be a study of American culture and identity, the road to the American Revolution, and the Declaration of Independence.

The Pathways to Friendship and Freedom program is going great. We just returned from visiting our partner school in Danbury and spent the day doing a variety of cultural activities with our friends. Our next fieldtrip is in February, where we will spend the day at Yale University participating in a program about different cultures throughout the world. We continue to write letters monthly to our partners and I know many email friendships have developed and are going strong! It was nice to see so many of you during November conferences. Happy Holidays to you all!

Ms. Laccone's - Science It has been an exciting first making term in science class. We began the year with lab safety and the correct use of many of the laboratory instruments, like the microscope. Students are also focusing on science going on in the world through the weekly activity "Current Events". We have just completed your study of cells, which included several laboratory experiences with the microscopes. We are now beginning our study of the Human Body, beginning with the skeletal and muscular systems.

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Mr. Spitzer's language arts classes are progressing with grammar, spelling and persuasive writing lessons. In addition, we have been reading and enjoying several stories in the new anthology as we discuss theme, plot characters, setting and author's craft. As always, students are encouraged to read every day at home in addition to any reading done within the class. Students occasionally respond to their reading in their Reading Response Journals in the classroom.

In social studies, Mr. Spitzer's students are completing their study of the thirteen colonies, and beginning to look at the events leading to the break with England and the Revolutionary War. Pupils are genuinely interested in the lives and times of those brave settlers who also helped to create our great nation.

Mrs. Gallese's Language Arts classes are ready to enjoy selections in "American Voices" our second theme in our Literature Anthology. We'll read a historical short story, a historical essay, and an autobiography. Students will be asked to read a historical fiction novel independently. Our work with persuasive writing continues. We know how to use a "List and Choose" strategy to select three broad but distinct arguments to support our opinions. Next we focus on elaboration of details. Students will be composing their own revolutionary period newspaper which will include a news feature article, a biographical sketch, and a letter to the editor about a colonial issue. Meanwhile, grammar studies continue with a review of capitalization rules and how to achieve subject-verb agreement in writing. Our spelling continues to improve with use of Sitton Spelling strategies!

Room 203 Social Studies students have culminated their studies of the thirteen original colonies with advertising campaign posters to entice other settlers to the colony of their choice. We continue on with Triangular Trade and the French and Indian War. Students will be creating timelines of the causes leading up to the Revolutionary War. In an effort to understand the trouble over taxes England had imposed on the colonists, we will act out a simulation of colonial reaction to the Stamp Act. This will lead up to the "shots heard 'round the world" from Lexington and Concord and "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere" to warn the colonists the British were coming. We'll take a look at what the Declaration of Independence actually declared and learn how the very first government of our country was set up under the Articles of Confederation. So, there are many fascinating topics ahead regarding the design of cornerstones we still live by today! Please ask your child to at least look at the front page of the newspaper and/or to watch 5-10 minutes of the news regularly so they can connect history to their world today!

Mr. Cashman – Math Pre-Algebra students have recently completed a unit dealing with equations. Concepts have involved the distributive property, simplifying algebraic expressions, solving equations by multiplying, dividing, adding, or subtracting. Students have also learned to solve and write two-step equations. Grade level math students have recently completed a unit on decimals. Concepts included comparing and ordering, rounding and estimation, and computation of decimals.

Mr. Cashman – Social Studies students have recently completed a unit entitled "The Road to Revolution" whereby the causes and events that led to the Revolutionary War were taught and discussed. We are currently studying The American Revolution which include the early years of the war, the expansion of the war, and the path to American victory.

Grade 8

Eighth grade Pre-Algebra and Grade Level Math: We are concluding our geometry unit with three-dimensional solids. Students have identified the following figures: prisms, cylinders, cones, pyramids and spheres. They have used these figures to identify bases, faces, edges, and vertices and measure and calculate volume and surface area. Pre-Algebra students have and will take district-wide common assessments on two-dimensional and three-dimensional geometry.

After the geometry unit, we will be working on a data analysis and statistics unit. In this unit, students will be calculating the mean, median, mode, and quartiles for a set of data. Students will construct and interpret stem and leaf plots, box and whisker plots, and scatter plots. The graphing calculator will also be introduced during this unit.

The **Algebra 1-A** students have completed the two-dimensional and three-dimensional geometry units and have begun their study of Statistics. Data will be collected; organized in tables; and displayed using bar graphs, line graphs, line plots, stem-and-leaf plots, and box-and-whisker plots. Data will be analyzed using measures of central tendency and measures of variation. Correlation between two data sets will be explored when scatter plots are constructed. When the data is linear, predictions will be made from a line of best fit on the scatter plot. The study of Probability will follow the data analysis unit. Students will determine the number of possible outcomes of an event using tree diagrams, the Fundamental Counting Principle, and permutations and combinations. Fair games will be investigated. Theoretical and experimental probability of simple and compound events will be calculated. Determining the odds of an event will conclude the Probability unit. The last unit before beginning the study of Algebra will involve ratios, proportions, and percents.

The **Algebra 1-1** students recently learned how to write and evaluate numerical and variable expressions using order of operations; and translated verbal phrases and sentences into algebraic expressions, equations, and inequalities. In Chapter Two, they studied the properties of Real Numbers; used algebra tiles, number lines, and rules to add, subtract, multiply, and divide rationals, and applied the Distributive Property to simplify variable expressions. Students will soon be learning techniques for solving linear equations and inequalities in one variable. In Chapter Four, linear equations and functions with two variables will be solved and graphed using a variety of strategies, including the use of the graphing calculator (TI - 84 Plus). Students will demonstrate their understanding of concepts and skills when modeling and solving real-life problems. The NHS Algebra 1-1 Midyear Exam will be administered in January before the end of the second marking term.

Counseling Corner

Mrs. Laura Lynch	Grade 8 and Grade 6 Team II
Mr. Jim Murphy	Grade 7 and Grade 6 Team I
Mrs. Laura Speranza	Grade 5

The school counselors are working with students in all grade levels on lessons relating to respect for self and others, effective communication skills, and managing offensive behavior.

Eighth grade students recently completed the Self Directed Search Career Explorer. They discovered their Holland code and learned more about their interests, education choices and career options.

The middle school counselors at Martin Kellogg and John Wallace are planning a High School Choice/ Activity Fair on January 10 at 6 p.m. at Newington High School. More information will be sent home to the parents of Grade 8 students in December.

From, *101 Ways to Praise Kids*

☺ That's Incredible ☺ Outstanding Performance ☺ You're Special ☺ You Tried Hard ☺ You Should Be Proud!

Reminder

Good attendance and punctuality are values Martin Kellogg Middle School works to instill in all of its students. Daily attendance is critical to learning given the extensive curriculum requirements of our middle school. A student who is tardy to class does not receive the full benefits of personal interaction with his/her teacher and other students. When the student loses classroom time, both student and teacher must find a mutually convenient time to make up missed work. The making up of assignments cannot substitute for actual physical presence and participation in the classroom lesson.

Martin Kellogg Middle School teachers, counselors, and administrators believe that adults have a responsibility to help students organize their time and put their priorities in order so that school attendance and performance receive the highest attention. With this in mind, the faculty and administration of Martin Kellogg have instituted the following attendance regulations for all students which can be found in the student handbook:

“**Tardy students** - must report to the office for a late pass. A note explaining the tardiness or a signed late pass must be returned to the homeroom teacher the next school day. Our *new modified* tardy policy is as follows:

Any student who is tardy ten times, excused or unexcused, will receive a one hour detention. If that student continues to be tardy and reaches fifteen, they will be assigned an administrative detention. Any additional tardy arrivals will result in the student remaining after school for one hour on the day of the late arrival.

Leaving school grounds once students arrive is not permitted without parental authorization. Once a student leaves at the end of the day, they may not return to school except with a parent. “(Page 5, Student handbook)

“**Attendance** – a parent or legal guardian should call the school before 9:00 a.m. on the first day of absence. Otherwise a staff member will call a parent at home or at work. Failure to bring a note could result in a one-hour detention or a suspension for truancy. All work must be made up as soon as possible after returning to school when an extended absence is necessary, a parent or guardian should notify the school in advance. Teachers will **not** be asked to plan work ahead for students taking unscheduled vacations. **AN EXCUSE NOTE MUST BE GIVEN TO THE HOMEROOM TEACHER ON YOUR FIRST DAY BACK TO SCHHOL.**” (Page 2, Student handbook)

Music Department Winter Concert Season is approaching!!!
Don't be caught off guard!
Come and enjoy an evening of wonderful music
Performed by Kellogg's musicians.

If your child is a member of band, chorus, or orchestra, please mark the concert dates and times on your calendars and be sure your child has their concert attire ready.

Concert Dates

Band: 6th-8th Concert, Symphonic and Jazz Bands: Thursday, December 20th
5th grade Thursday, January 24th

Chorus: All choirs: Tuesday, January 8th, snow date-Wednesday the 9th

Concert 1: 5th grade chorus, 6th grade Treble Choir, Kellapella Fellaz and Bellas at 6:15, singers arrive at 5:45

Concert 2: Chamber Singers, Boys' Chorus (also Kellapella Fellaz and Bellas)
Singers report at 7:15, concert at 7:30

Orchestra: All grades: Wednesday, January 16th

The choral and instrumental music departments at Kellogg have slightly different dress codes

Band and Orchestra: Black slacks/skirts (no jeans), white shirts/tops, ties for boys.

Singers:

Boys: Black slacks (no jeans), solid color shirt and any pattern tie. Shoes should be dark with no stripes or white designs. (Black leather-type sneakers, dress shoes are ok)

Girls: Black skirt or slacks (no jeans), solid color top, dress shoes (HIGH heels are discouraged, but low ones or flats are fine- we'll be on risers.)

Information from the School Nurse

Annual posture screening for all Kellogg students will begin in December. The purpose of this screening is to detect early signs of scoliosis, an abnormal curvature of the spine. Screening is done on an individual basis during gym classes by the school nurse. The 5th grade scoliosis screening will occur in late March or early April after an assembly to which parents are invited to attend.

Computer Education

All fifth grade students have set new passwords, and they can independently log onto the computer. They are using the Windows organizational system, which includes creating appropriate file names and saving their work into folders. Students are using Internet keyboarding software to enhance their keyboarding skills and are reviewing the basics of Word. By the end of the school year, each student will use PowerPoint to create a multimedia project.

In sixth grade, students are using the Internet keyboarding software to improve their keyboarding skills, and they have reviewed the basics of Microsoft Word. Students will be introduced to spreadsheets and graphs using Microsoft Excel. Next, each student will do research on a topic, and use Publisher to create a brochure.

Seventh grade students are using Internet keyboarding software to sharpen their keyboarding skills. They have reviewed the basics of Microsoft Word and design principles for using Photo Story. Each student is currently collecting data that will be used to create a newsletter using Publisher and a short video using Photo Story. They are using both print and Internet materials.

Eighth grade students are using Internet keyboarding software to enhance their keyboarding skills. They have completed reviews of Microsoft Word, Publisher, Excel, and PowerPoint. Each student is working on a major computer project that will involve the use of many skills and programs.

Dates to Remember in December

Tuesday, December 4th

3:00 pm – Faculty Advisory Meeting

Wednesday, December 5th

Grade 6 Field Trip to Basketball Hall of Fame

Wednesday, December 12th

7:00 PM – Board of Education meeting

Thursday, December 13th

Grade 7 Gifted/Talented Class field trip to Stanley Whitman House

Tuesday, December 18th

2:50pm – Faculty meeting

Thursday, December 20th

6:45pm – Grade 6-8 Band Concert

Monday, December 24– Tuesday, January 1, 2007

Holiday Vacation – schools closed

Office open December 26 – 28, 31

January 2008

Wednesday, January 2nd

2:50pm – Faculty Advisory Meeting

Tuesday, January 8th

6:15pm – 7:15pm Choral Concert grades 5 & 6

7:30pm – 9pm Choral Concert grades 7 & 8

Wednesday, January 9th

7:00 PM – Board of Education Meeting – Town Hall

6:15 pm – Choral concert snow date

Friday, January 11th

12:30pm – High School Department Chairs Grade 8 course selection

Wednesday, January 16th

6:15pm – 9pm Orchestra Concert Grades 6-8

Thursday, January 17th

Grade 7 Gifted/Talented field trip to University of Hartford

Friday, January 18th

Grade 8 Spanish Class field trip 10am – 2pm

Tuesday, January 22nd

3:30pm- 5:30pm Aspiring Leaders Academy I Year 2
7pm – PAC meeting

Wednesday, January 23rd

10:00am – Student of the Month Reception Town Hall
7:00pm – Board of Education Meeting

Thursday, January 24th

7:00pm Band/Orchestra Concert Grade 5