

THE QUINCY EDUCATOR

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Spring 2008

At your service



Members of Merrymount Elementary School's Imagination Kids club are dedicated to community service. Pictured are, on ground from left, Grace McDonough, Mary-Kate Lynch, Marina Chafa, Kelly Donahue and Kimberly Andrews; standing from left Julia Donovan, Hailee Walsh, and Reda Laftih.

PHOTO: REBA SALDANHA

Sign of friendship

Third-grader learns a new way to communicate with classmate

BY SUSAN BYRNE

When nominations were sought last year for the Quincy Kiwanis Junior Hero Award, Nancy Tierney and her colleagues knew just the right candidate. A perfect choice was an incredible girl named Danielle Perry.

Tierney has been the school nurse at the Lincoln-Hancock Elementary School for 13 years and has encountered numerous wonderful students. However, Perry's story is certainly among the truly impressive.

Last year a new student from another state joined Perry's second-

See SIGNS Page 10



Lincoln-Hancock third-grade student Danielle Perry demonstrates sign language.

PHOTO: REBA SALDANHA

Momentum building at Central Middle

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

Built in 1894, Central Middle School has a rich historical significance in the Quincy community.

The facility was the site of Quincy's first high school. From 1924 through 1982, it serviced all of the city's junior high students.

Today, Central is the largest of five middle schools in Quincy, serving 650 students in grades 6-8. Students feed into Central from the Bernazzani, Wollaston, Merrymount and Beechwood Knoll elementary schools. As the student population has continuously grown, overcrowding in this 113-year-old building has become a serious problem. The current gym and auditorium cannot adequately meet students' needs, classrooms are too small and students eat lunch in a former basement storage room and play in a

See CENTRAL Page 10

Broad Meadows Elementary School celebrates its 50th anniversary: Page 4

Opportunity awaits us



Mayor Thomas Koch

These first few months as mayor have granted me many wonderful opportunities, not the least of which is seeing first-hand the incredible dedication and commitment of the Quincy Public Schools to the children of this great city.

Our teachers, administrators, support staff, parents and so many others who play a role in our schools show so much passion and care for our students on a daily basis, and I am truly grateful for the opportunity to join with Dr. DeCristofaro and the School Committee in their work toward making Quincy the best school system in the state.

These are unquestionably exciting and challenging times for our city and our schools. Together with the School Committee, we are working hard to keep the Quincy High School project on time and on budget. Our efforts have been rewarded with additional savings from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, under the leadership of state Treasurer Timothy Cahill and Executive Director Katherine Craven.

A new Central Middle School Building Committee is beginning its work, and we expect to see substantial progress in coming months. The MSBA has targeted the Central project as a critical need, and we are committed to getting it off the ground.

As a community, we face serious financial challenges today and in the immediate future. But under the leadership of Dr. DeCristofaro and the School Committee, I am confident that the Quincy Public Schools will remain strong and emerge even stronger in coming years.

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve our city, and if I can be of assistance in any way, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Team approach puts students first



Dr. Richard DeCristofaro

Welcome to the Spring 2008 edition of *The Quincy Educator*. Highlighted in this issue, are many unique and exciting opportunities that our Quincy Public Schools students experience throughout the school year. Teachers and students alike participate

in these creative initiatives and acknowledge, with pride, the extraordinary outcomes of these educational and extracurricular endeavors.

The Quincy Public Schools continues the tradition of its team approach as identified in our District Improvement Plan. Collaboration between levels, within content areas, and across departments is the glue that keeps our teachers and schools on the same page, putting the students first in all that we do.

We are now in Phase 2 construction of the new Quincy High School. The building is on time and on budget. Students and staff are

excited about this monumental undertaking and look forward to the final phases of the Quincy High School building being put into place. The new Central Middle School project has been approved by the Massachusetts School Building Authority and Mayor Koch has selected a Building Committee. Sterling Middle School will not be forgotten as system/city planning continues. We are looking forward to the time when Quincy students are able to attend their new and renovated learning environments.

Quincy Public Schools prides itself in the excellent communication tools it has in place that connect schools and home. From the School Committee support of agenda books for students in grades 4 to 8, to Instant Alert, our telephone and data messaging system, parents are kept informed of their students' academic successes as well as other areas of schooling. Monthly newsletters, the QPS Web site, and Channel 22 are additional ways in which parents are kept up to date on important school news.

Each spring, Quincy Public Schools "Celebrates the Arts" through spring concerts,

school plays, shows, and concerts, both choral and instrumental. We are proud of the arts in the Quincy Public Schools and the incredible work our students display throughout the school year.

Our Community School Business Partnerships support the Evening at the Pops, the Historical Walk for Education, and the QPS Golf Tournament, initiatives that generate revenues that further assist our staff and students. Our business partners, who are an integral part of the Quincy Public Schools, provide our teachers with mini-grants, technology, community service and program support.

As you read the third edition of *The Quincy Educator*, please be reminded that we are proud, in every way, of our teachers, administrators, dedicated mayor and school committee. Each brings excellence in leadership that benefit our most valuable customers, the students of the Quincy Public Schools.

Dr. Richard DeCristofaro is superintendent of schools.

Quincy High construction on schedule and budget

BY RICH FAHEY

The \$126 million Quincy High construction project is on schedule and within budget, with the completion date for the third and final phase of the project expected to be September 2010.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Richard DeCristofaro said the auditorium and gymnasium portions of the project may not be complete, but everything else should be.

The next major date in the construction schedule is February 2009, when the new Math, Science and Technology Academy is expected to open and the demolition of the present East wing of the school will begin.

The school is being built in phases while Quincy High remains open. The discovery of some contaminated soil on the construction site mandated some scheduling revisions for the new Math, Science and Technology Academy to ensure the project would remain on time. While cleanup teams conducted mitigation work, the construction team re-sequenced the entire enclosure schedule for the building. The current school library was moved in April in preparation for the next phase of the project.

DeCristofaro said the school building subcommittee has improved its efforts in communicating with all involved parties. "We've had regular meetings with department heads, with teachers and staff and trying to make sure everyone knows what's happening and how it may affect them," he



Quincy High construction is expected to be completed by September 2010, said.

The Quincy Public Schools Web site — www.quincypublicschools.com — provides construction timelines and schedules and hotline numbers.

Quincy High Principal Frank Santoro said both Tishman Construction, project manager, and Gilbane Construction, the construction manager, have held regular meetings with him and his staff to keep them updated and he has a monthly calendar that details important upcoming events.

Although the removal of oil tanks cost an estimated \$1.5 million, DeCristofaro said the project remains on budget and no major changes in design have been planned. The school was designed as a project with both energy savings and environmental concerns in mind. One of the features will be a sustainable energy garden with photovoltaic electrical panels, solar hot water collection,

and a science greenhouse.

The project's design and approach meet the Mass. Collaborative for High Performance Schools (MA-CHPS) criteria to gain additional grant funding from the Massachusetts School Building Authority. For example, typical classrooms will have sloped acoustical ceilings to allow for greater day-lighting, and tall operable windows with room dimming shades, amenities that are not only energy efficient, but also provide for a better learning environment.

The new QHS will include four separate academies with related disciplines. The new Math, Science and Technology Academy will integrate elements of the former Center for Technical Education, with areas for physics, biotechnology and math in the same area.

The new high school will also include Fine Arts and Humanities academies, as well as a separate academy for freshmen.

Both DeCristofaro and Santoro expressed appreciation for the QHS seniors who endured the disruptions from the construction but will never have a chance to attend the new building. A photo was taken of the 300 seniors on the construction site.

Other important features will include a 750-seat, air-conditioned theater with dramatic arts classroom, a large 3-station gymnasium with multi-purpose room and fitness/cardiovascular room, wireless intranet access throughout the facility, and a state-of-the-art library media center with separate computer lab.

THE QUINCY EDUCATOR

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Thomas Koch, Mayor

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Turning the page

Three Quincy principals retiring after a century in education

BY RICH FAHEY

They came, they saw, they conquered. And now it's time to rest.

Three Quincy school principals will call it a career in June, and will take with them many decades of experience, treasured recollections and institutional memory.

Donald Houghton, Allan Osborne and Laura Bogan are the retiring administrators, and one of the things all three are looking forward to is "taking a vacation when no one else is."

Osborne, 57, principal of the Snug Harbor Elementary School in Germantown, will say goodbye after 34 years in education, 23 in Quincy, the last 10 as principal of Snug Harbor. He said the rewards from a career in education have been tremendous, and he "absolutely" would do it all again, but noted that the job has changed in recent years with the advent of high-stakes testing.

"I think there's added pressure at the top, a higher level of stress," Osborne said. "Every principal is aware of the fact that if you don't meet your AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress, part of the federal No Child Left Behind Act) for several years, you'll be subject to a lot of scrutiny."

Osborne was a special education teacher before going into administration, and his wife, Debbie, is a classroom teacher in Bellingham. He thinks some kind of classroom experience is a must.

"I think it's an absolutely necessary, valuable thing to have," he said. "I still like to talk to my wife about certain situations and what's going on in her classroom."

Both Osborne and his wife are retiring this year, a decision they made together two years ago. Osborne said he has a lot of other interests, including writing professionally, which he has done since working for a newspaper while still in high school. He has written textbooks and articles for professional journals.



Snug Harbor Principal Allan Osborne chats with first-grader Emma Ayer.

Donald Houghton, 58, said while he may be leaving the Squantum School as principal, he still has family in the neighborhood, so he still plans to spend a lot of time there. Houghton spent 13 years as a classroom teacher and seven years as an assistant principal at Central Middle School before beginning his 14-year tenure as Squantum principal. He knows that being a principal "is a marriage between you and the school."

Like Osborne, he believes an effective administrator should have classroom experience.

"Definitely, it helps you as a principal to have taught in the classroom," he said. "When you're leading the teachers, you have to know in advance what issues may be raised."

Having the community really invested in the school is a huge plus. "It's what you wish and hope for as a principal," he said. "The students are on the same T-ball teams and after-school programs and there's a high degree of parental involvement."

Meanwhile, the job has incrementally changed.

"It used to all about culture of a building," he said. "If the kids were happy and the parents were happy, things were great. Now there's outside factors."

Houghton hopes to travel, maybe play some guitar gigs with a friend, and make his own hours as a real estate agent. The family will still be represented in the schools: daughter Beth Houghton teaches seventh-grade science at Central Middle School.

If you find that Bogan, principal of the Atlantic Middle School, after 21 years as a principal and 41 years overall in education, sounds at times a little bit like a CEO instead of a school principal, there's a good reason for that. In addition to her educational degrees, Bogan has a master's degree in business and it has influenced how she has gone about her job.

She began her career as a junior high social studies teacher before moving into administration, and she admits taking some of the business school concepts and applying them to her role as principal.

"You judge and evaluate, develop a team structure and make decisions not shooting from the hip, but really listening to people," Bogan said.

She said she found it important to come to a consensus when solving a problem and having the facts behind her when it came time to make a decision. "You have to be grounded," Bogan said. "You have to do the best you can for your customers — the students and parents."

Bogan is troubled by the emphasis on high-stakes testing, and feels more of a balance should be struck on trying to meet the needs of all children when it comes to learning.

"The state needs to look at what we're doing to some kids," she said.

Bogan said she has loved teaching and administration, but she will also enjoy getting some rest, contemplating a future career, traveling and playing tennis.



Squantum Elementary School Principal Donald Houghton, shown with, Brandon Kelleher and Kelsey Dyer, won't be a stranger after he retires.



Atlantic Middle School Principal Laura Bogan works on a project with Katrina Habib and Jason Cumisky.



Students were all smiles at the Broad Meadows 50th Anniversary celebration.

Broad Meadows celebrates half-century

By RICH FAHEY

In a half-century, the ties that bind a school to a community can become so close that it is hard to think of one without the other. That's the way it is with the Broad Meadows Middle School and the Quincy neighborhoods it serves — Houghs Neck, Germantown, Merrymount and Adams Shore, four of the city's closest-knit neighborhoods.

In an open house on April 13, Broad Meadows students and staff reunited with past staff and former students to mark the school's 50th anniversary in an event that drew about 500 people to the school on Calvin Road.

Visitors checked out displays from each of Broad Meadows' five decades, including old yearbooks and class pictures. The parent-teacher organization sold personalized bricks, which will be installed outside the school. Commemorative T-shirts and sweatshirts also were on sale. Bricks continue to be sold at the main office (617-984-8723.)

The school, which has become known for its commitment to projects involving social justice, community service, and global awareness, welcomed its first class in September 1957. In 1982, Broad Meadows Junior High School, with grades 7-9, became Broad Meadows Middle School with grades 6-8. It now houses 340 students.

"It is a joy to work in a school that enjoys as much community support as this one does," said Principal Larry Taglieri. He noted that assistant principal Janet O'Hara Kane, an Adams Shore native, is an alumna, graduating from the school in 1961. O'Hara Kane spent 14 years as a teacher at the school before becoming assistant principal.

"We don't have community school in our name, but that's what Broad Meadows is," she said. "We have strong ties with community groups such as the Germantown Neighborhood Association. Our students have a real sense of belonging and that's vital."

Open house guests included Superintendent Dr. Richard DeCristofaro, Mayor Thomas Koch, Sen. Michael Morrissey, Rep. Stephen Tobin and City Councilor Leo Kelly.

The school has earned a series of honors. In September 1991, Broad Meadows was recognized as a National School Of Excellence by the U.S. Department of Education's Secondary School Recognition Program. Broad Meadows was also one of the only middle schools in the country to receive the Blue Ribbon Award in both History and The Arts Education.

In 1996, the school was also awarded the prestigious Reebok International Human Rights Award for its renowned work with child labor. In 1998, the U.S. Agency for International Development made Broad Meadows the first school ever to receive its Domestic Partner Award.

"It is a joy to work in a school that enjoys as much community support as this one does."

Larry Taglieri
Broad Meadows Principal

Write stuff

Award-winning literary magazine created by Atlantic students

By MEAGHAN CASEY

You might call them literary masters.

The students involved in Atlantic Middle School's nationally-recognized literary magazine, "Young Writers," capped off 2007-08 with three significant honors.

The magazine received recognition from the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), earning the ranking of Highest Award, which is the NCTE's top rating in The Program to Recognize Excellence in Student Literary Magazines. In 2007, 439 middle, junior and high schools in the U.S., Canada, and American schools abroad submitted entries. Of those, 62 magazines were nominated for the Highest Award with 20 selected.

Only two other Massachusetts schools were recognized: Arlington High School and Maimonides School in Brookline, which both received the Superior Award.

"Young Writers" also earned first place with special merit in the American Scholastic Press Association's Annual Contest/Review for Scholastic Yearbooks, Magazines and Newspapers. Only school publications with special and outstanding design and content



Atlantic Middle School writers, from left, Brandon Kou, Donna Niosi, and Nolan O'Brien display the literary magazine's 2007 awards.

received a ranking of first place with special merit.

The Columbia Scholastic Press Association (CSPA) recognized the publication with a Silver Crown award at the 84th annual Scholastic Convention at Columbia University. Of the 1,888 current CSPA members eligible to enter the Crown Awards, 1,355 magazines, newspapers and yearbooks submitted copies for this particular judging. Publications were judged on writing/editing, design, concept, photography, art and graphics. Only three other middle schools were honored for their magazines. They included Harker Middle School, San Jose, Calif.; Grand Avenue Middle School, Bellmore, NY; and Lewis F. Cole Middle School, Fort Lee, N.J.



Student graphic designers, from left, Dragon Che, Juancarlos Franco, Minh Phan, and Mitch Law work on the latest edition of the magazine.

In the business of learning

By RICH FAHEY

Everyone knows it's a tough environment for retail stores. It's even tougher for start-ups.

But a group of entrepreneurial first- and fifth-graders at Squantum Elementary School are making a go of their school store — and getting some valuable math lessons, to boot.

About every two weeks, the store is open for two days in the school's main lobby during snack time, and all kinds of school supplies — pencils, folders, sharpeners, items with the Squantum school logo — are available at a reasonable price. Students use a revamped book case with the school logo to sell their wares.

The school has been up and running since last September, and has been making a steady profit, which will go towards purchasing math teaching aids such as rulers and protractors that will benefit all students." It's been a remarkable hit," said fifth-

Squantum School store teaches students entrepreneurial skills

grade teacher Rachel Bloom.

The students purchase the supplies at local stores and resell them at a small profit. They use a cash register purchased with a \$300 start-up grant from the school PTO. Rebecca Cordero's first-graders and fifth-graders share the work. First-graders tally what items are sold, how many, and what the cost of each item is. Fifth-graders handle the cash and make change. Students also come up with advertising to inform fellow students when the store will be open and what items will be available.

The store is one of several strategies aimed at improving students' math scores. "It makes working with decimals, for instance, a lot less abstract," said Bloom. "You have pennies, which are hundredths of a dollar, and dimes, which are a tenth."

She said many first-graders can make exact change from a bill, a skill that is usually acquired at a later age. Students keep track of how many of each item has been sold, so they can restock.

When the store is open, one day is designated for students from kindergarten-Grade 2 to shop, the second day for students from Grades 3-5. Bloom said fourth-graders are already lining up to apply for slots running the store next year.

"It's already become part of the school culture," she said.

Students have also done a good job making sure that figures tally up correctly at the end of the day. "It's a lot closer than you'd expect," said Bloom.



Squantum School store staff, from left, Samantha Smith, Chris Gorman, Matt Monahan, Cindy Nguyen, Rose Roper and Jake Murray.

Saturdays are for learning — and fun — at Marshall

By RICH FAHEY

It's 8 a.m. on a Saturday in March at the Marshall Elementary School, and about 30 grade 3 and 4 students are hard at work studying English Language Arts — and having some fun at the same time.

This is Saturday Academy at the school, and the staff and students are putting in a four-hour day on a normal day off.

Marshall guidance counselor Colleen Jackson, who coordinates the Saturday program, said the academy is aimed at at-risk students identified from assessment tests, including the MCAS.

"We targeted kids we felt were on middle ground, who need a little support but are close to passing the MCAS," said Jackson.

The students spent five Saturday mornings in March from 8 to

noon studying English Language Arts, and were slated for four more Saturdays in May to study math. The Marshall was targeted for some extra help because of its MCAS scores and because the school has not been meeting its Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The program was funded under the federal Title I program.

Jackson said the staff goes out of their way to make the experience as pleasant as possible for everyone. "Every week we have a specific theme for that week and raffles for prizes," she said.

Students have enjoyed Red Sox Week, French Toast Week, and Patriot Trivia Week.

Math games abound. Students can guess how many animal crackers are in a container or how long a stuffed animal is.

The Marshall asked for volunteers from its own staff to work the

academy. Two literacy teachers and two grade 4 teachers handled the ELA sessions, and the regular Grade 4 math team is handling the math duties.

Past MCAS tests give school staff clues in what areas students need to improve.

And using such tools of the trade as MCAS prep booklets and practice passages, they can target the weaknesses.

The school administered pre- and post-tests in English Language Arts to students who attended the Saturday sessions in March. "We have found that overall, students who attended the courses showed significant improvement in the post-test," said Jackson.

Jackson said the key to the program's success is keeping students healthy — a run of flu in March hurt some students' attendance — and the atmosphere fun.

Noteworthy



Tracy O'Sullivan directs the Montclair Elementary fifth-grade chorus.



Above, North Quincy High School All-State Chorus members Brianna Shetler, left, and Hannah Chan pose with choral director Tim Carew. At left, All-State chorus member Kirsten Shetler.



Above, John Adams Orchestra

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the Quincy Middle
School Jazz Band
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Quincy music program is hitting the high notes

By RICH FAHEY

The citywide music program is hitting a series of high notes. They include:

- ◆ Students in the city's elementary and middle schools had a chance to strut their stuff alongside the professionals on May 8 at a Quincy Symphony Orchestra concert at the Marriott Hotel in Quincy.
- ◆ Three students being named members of the All-State chorus that performed at Symphony Hall in late March.
- ◆ The Montclair Elementary fifth-grade chorus planning to entertain senior citizens at an intergenerational-concert on June 2 called "The Gift of Spring."

The QPS John Adams elementary school orchestra performed before the Quincy Symphony concert in the

hotel foyer, while the Middle School Jazz Band performed three numbers as part of the concert that began at 8 p.m.

Proceeds from the concert, sponsored by the State Street Corp., benefited the city's music programs.

"I told the kids, you have to bring your 'A' game," said David Bradley, the band teacher for the city's five middle schools. "You're going to be up there with some serious musicians."

The jazz band came into existence last September. The members are Peter Giunta, piano, Broad Meadows; John Bottary, drums, Broad Meadows; Victoria Samsel, drums, Central; Timothy Bill, trombone, Central; Jack Glennon, saxophone, Central; Andrew Keezer, saxophone, Atlantic; Declan McGaffigan, saxophone, Atlantic; George Bill, trumpet, Central; Alex Samsel, trumpet, Broad Meadows; Jessica Hurd, bass, Point Webster.

The group has been rehearsing numbers such as "Discover the Blues," by Andy Clark; "Killer Joe," by Benny Golson; and "Blues by Five," by Tommy Flanagan.

"We opened it up to everyone at the beginning of the year and these are the 10 who have stuck with it," Bradley said. "They're all very talented and they've gone above and beyond what you'd expect, especially in giving up those early release times on Tuesdays to rehearse."

He said the members of the group have also worked diligently on their own time.

Three North Quincy High students — Kirsten Shetler, Hannah Chan and Brianna Shetler — were selected for the prestigious All-State Chorus. They first had to audition successfully for the Eastern District Chorus and then be recommended for the All-State Chorus.

They then again auditioned successfully and

attended a three-day seminar in Boston that culminated with a performance at Symphony Hall on March 29. It was the first All-State honor for sisters Kirsten and Brianna Shetler, while Chan was honored for the second time.

On June 2, Montclair's fifth-grade chorus plans to entertain seniors who will be transported to the school from local senior housing complexes for a concert and reception, part of the Quincy schools' intergenerational outreach program.

"The Gift of Spring" will transport the seniors on a musical voyage, according to Montclair music teacher Tracy O'Sullivan.

"It's a great way to bridge the gap between the seniors and the students," said O'Sullivan.

The school is using mini-grants and sponsorship from Aviva Life Insurance of Quincy to put on the event.

North Quincy student means business

BY SUSAN BYRNE

David Duong, a senior at North Quincy High School, is already making a name for himself in the business world.

After completing a five-week course last summer titled, "How to Start and Run Your Own Business," Duong and several others from NQHS and Quincy High were asked to create a business plan. His plan focused on building and servicing computers in his Quincy neighborhood.

The summer "Biz Camp" was sponsored by the Quincy Public Schools Extension and Continuing Education, along with MY TURN, Inc., a community-based non-profit youth development agency that provides career planning, college preparation, field trips and career research.

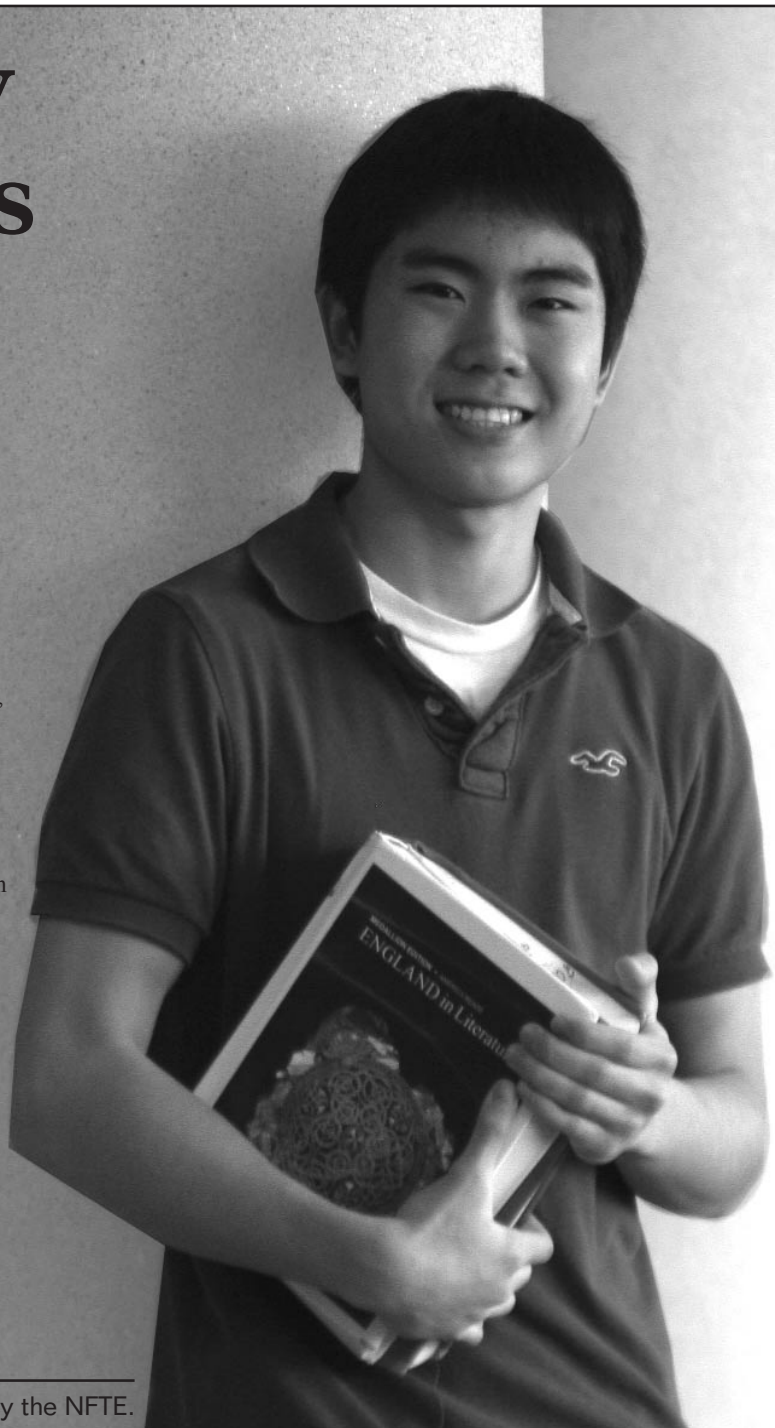
Jean Auguste is a career specialist at MY TURN and first met Duong in class. "David is a very good student and wants to start his own business someday," she said. "We are pleased he is so active with MY TURN. I know David is an excellent wrestler, too. He is a very driven and motivated student."

After submitting his business plan to the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE), Duong won honors at the regional competition and earned a trip to challenge others at the national level later this year. In February, Duong was named Young Entrepreneur of the Year by the NFTE.

The National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship helps young people from low-income communities build skills and to develop core values, such as, individuality, initiative and community.

Duong spent three days in New York City where he received his award for being named Young Entrepreneur of the Year. After graduation, he will continue with business in college and perhaps graduate school.

David Duong was named Young Entrepreneur of the Year by the NFTE.



Merrymount students are at Quincy's service

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

Imagine a club in which students, inspired to do something beyond themselves, are making a big impact in their own community.

In Quincy, that club exists thanks to fifth-grade students Julia Donovan and Kelly Donahue. The pair founded Imagination Kids, a club dedicated to community service. Ten other Merrymount Elementary School students have joined. The students meet monthly at Donovan's house to plan projects and fundraising initiatives.

"We do so much community service here at Merrymount, but it's wonderful seeing kids take the initiative to set up projects themselves, outside of school," said Merrymount Principal Ann Pegg.

"It's been really good giving back to the community and we get to do it together, so it's fun," said Donovan.

"I'm really interested in helping people and I thought it was a great idea," said Donahue.

This year, the group has been active in supplying food and clothing to the Germantown Neighborhood Center. Through the center, the students adopted a family – a mother and her three young sons – and provided them with clothing and gifts at Christmas.

During the winter, they decorated and sold pine cones, raising more than \$400. A car wash at Central Middle School was scheduled for May 31. The funds will be sent to an organization that supplies nets to families in India to shield them from mosquitoes and hopefully prevent the spread of malaria.

Donovan and Donahue were honored for their service at the Kiwanis Club Junior Heroes breakfast in March. They hope to continue the club as they advance to middle school.

Sterling student's essay a winner

BY RICH FAHEY

Sterling Middle School student Tommy To is the tops, according to the judges who pored through 2,000 entries in the eighth-grade division of the 2007 Will McDonough Writing Contest.

To's essay titled "Overcoming a Fear" is a fictional story about a boy overcoming his fear of playing tackle football. The essay was chosen over all other entries in his grade level.

The fourth annual contest, sponsored by the New England Sports Museum, honored winners in Grades 4-12 in ceremonies at the museum within the TD Banknorth Garden. The Sports Museum is a non-profit educational institution housed in the Garden that has served Boston and New England for the past 30 years.

To was honored before a Boston Celtics game on April 2 which he and his family attended. The awards were presented by ESPN sportscaster Sean McDonough, Will's son. To also received a \$100 savings bond.

The Will McDonough Writing Contest is

named in honor of the late Will McDonough, the long-time Boston Globe sports columnist and the only Globe sportswriter ever nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. Editors and writers from the Globe judged the contest, grading the students on topic development, organization, style and mechanics.

Students in Sterling's sixth, seventh and eighth grades participated in the contest, designed to encourage the development of language and writing skills while incorporating the topic of sports and such concepts as teamwork, respect, and perseverance.

"It was a very well-run contest," said Sterling Principal Christine Barrett, who also attended the ceremony. Winners and their families were treated to dinner, the ceremony and the Celtics game that followed.

"One of the Globe judges came up to our table and said Tommy's essay was by far the best essay he had read," said Barrett. "It was a very proud moment for Tommy and his family."



Sterling eighth-grader Tommy To won the 2007 Will McDonough Writing Contest.

A rewarding experience

Retiree is a valued volunteer at her alma mater, Wollaston Elementary School

By SUSAN BYRNE

After retiring from a career in computers, Marie Pereto-Hedin knew she wanted to devote some time to volunteering in the community, but where? Her choice seemed simple as she looked down the street toward her alma mater, the Wollaston Elementary School.

Not sure how to start, Pereto-Hedin hand-delivered a letter to the principal, Susan Troy, last spring. Now she is a regular volunteer each Monday in Deidre Murphy's fourth-grade class.

There is a particularly large enrollment in the fourth-grade class this year, so her help has been well received. Murphy appreciates all that Pereto-Hedin has brought to the classroom.

"She's a natural teacher," Murphy said. "Although she started in both classes, she works mostly with the ESL students helping them read. She treats it as a full-time job and is just fabulous. The kids love her and she is invaluable with reading. She even brought in valentines for all the children in February."

The feeling is mutual. "Deidre is a wonderful teacher. For my birthday,

she showed up at my house with flowers and birthday cards from the kids. They were so thoughtful," Pereto-Hedin said.

It truly has been a rewarding experience for Pereto-Hedin. "There is a little girl who speaks no English and it is exciting to watch her face when she makes word associations from pictures," she said. "For example, she saw a picture of a child on a beach and she started making a swimming motion. The other kids in the class are also very helpful and supportive. It's so exciting when a child hasn't been able to read and finally can say words out loud."

Murphy even re-arranged her reading schedule to Mondays to make sure Pereto-Hedin could be there. "It's like having a paid professional next to me. She even takes home all the lessons and really provides a mature pair of hands, especially with guided reading and the ESL students who need extra support," Murphy said.

"I knew Wollaston Elementary would be a good place to use my time and talent. I value public education, and I live so close to the school. It's been very rewarding," Pereto-Hedin said.



Wollaston Elementary School volunteer Marie Pereto-Hedin reads to fourth-grade ESL students, from left, Ada Huang, Shawn Chen, Hellen Chen and Raymond Ching.

Bernazzani plans a fitting memorial to teacher

By SUSAN BYRNE

The students and faculty at the Bernazzani Elementary School mourned the loss of beloved second-grade teacher Jane Farrell-Smith when she died in October, 2006. Now, they will dedicate a special area to remember her at a ceremony in late May.

According to second-year principal Peter Dionne, the area in front of the school will include two converging pathways, landscaping and a memorial stone. "I didn't know Jane Farrell-Smith, but her favorite movie was the 'Wizard of Oz.' We plan to make the pathway like the yellow brick road. It winds and meets where the kids funnel into school in the morning. Jane had always been outside with the kids in this area."

Third-grade teacher Lauren Laub worked side-by-side with Farrell-Smith for 13 years. "Our classrooms were adjacent, and we shared a door



Bernazzani Elementary School will dedicate an area outside the school to former teacher Jane Farrell-Smith, who died in 2006. From left are students, Isabella Falco and Kerry Helan, Principal Peter Dionne, student Sean Dooling and third-grade teacher Lauren Laub.

between the rooms. She was a phenomenal teacher," Laub said. "We shared many stories. Our teaching styles were similar, and we even coordinated second- and third-grade activities, like the Cinco de

Mayo celebration."

Farrell-Smith grew up in Springfield, but she taught close to 20 years in Quincy, her husband's hometown. She was an avid Red Sox fan and loved the "Wizard of Oz."

Laub described a favorite antic of her friend. "She had a great sense of humor. She would sing the yellow brick road song in a high-pitched voice like the munchkins. She was very funny."

"Jane was animated and liked to do hands-on activities to get away from the pencil and paper," Laub added. "She had a love for science and brought learning alive for the kids. Her love of nature is something we'll all remember her by."

The local community has pitched in to help with the area being built in Farrell-Smith's memory. O'Connor Masonry of Quincy has generously donated labor. Almquist Flowerland and A. Monti Granite have been hired to provide landscaping and engraving for the memorial. A donation from last year's fifth grade will be used to purchase the stone.

Dionne noted the simple inscription planned for the marker: I think I'll miss you most of all. "It's Dorothy's line to the scarecrow at the end of the Wizard of Oz," he noted.

It certainly is an appropriate sentiment for Jane Farrell-Smith's special place.

Student learns new way to communicate

SIGNS: from Page 1

grade class. He was profoundly deaf and experiencing a difficult time adjusting to his new surroundings.

“Danielle took it upon herself to help her classmate. She went to the library and taught herself sign language from books,” said Tierney.

Even though principal Ruth Witmer is new to the elementary school this year, she is very familiar with Perry’s story. The assistant principal, Dan Gilbert, and classroom teacher, Trudy Roybal, joined Witmer this winter at the Quincy Kiwanis award ceremony.

“The whole experience was a moving moment for me as an educator,” said Witmer.

“No one in the school knew sign language, and Danielle asked her mother to take her to the library so she could learn it to help another student.”

In addition to recognizing Perry’s award in the morning announcements, Witmer was delighted to see that Perry was acknowledged on the PTO’s reader board outside of the building where the neighbors could see the news as well.

The youngest of four children, Perry, who is now in third grade, has made an unforgettable impression on her teachers and staff. Tierney is quick to praise the Junior Hero Award recipient. “Danielle is an all-around great kid. She’s a big helper in all of her classes.”

Momentum building at Central Middle School

CENTRAL: from Page 1

driveway as opposed to a schoolyard.

“The school system has been great about renovations, whether it’s been roof repairs, painting or new boilers,” said Principal Jennifer Fay. “Unfortunately, there’s only so much you can do and you can’t make a small space larger.”

In November, the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) approved Quincy’s Statement of Interest to construct a new middle school, and in April the MSBA advanced Central to the design stage. The board agreed to new construction as opposed to renovations.

“Our formula is to look first at the needs of the priority schools on our list, and then at the level of urgency,” said Katherine Craven, MSBA executive director. “We’re trying to work with schools who are most in need.”

The district has established an eight-member building committee, which includes Fay, Superintendent Richard DeCristofaro and city solicitor James Timmins, who serves as chair. The committee will be working closely with the MSBA throughout the planning and construction phases.

Fay is looking forward to being able to assemble her entire student body for guest speakers, meetings, promotion ceremonies, concerts and plays. She also hopes to have conference rooms to be able to meet with groups of parents, and have the building wired for the most advanced technology.

The new building will not only positively affect Central students, but also students residing in the neighborhood district who participate in after-school programming. Additionally, the school hosts the Advanced Placement classes for all of the district’s middle school students.



Quincy High School auto body and auto repair students gather around their restored Honda with teachers Tom Walters, front right, and Ed Campbell, far left.

Extreme makeover

Quincy High students raffle rebuilt wreck to raise money for scholarships

By RICH FAHEY

With gas closing in on \$4 a gallon, some Quincy High students offered a great deal – a chance to win a car with low mileage that gets 34 miles per gallon on the highway.

Students in the automotive and auto body programs at the school painstakingly restored a 2005 Honda Civic LX Coupe that was raffled off on May 16 to raise money for the Technical Major Scholarship Fund.

The fund aids students in technical majors at the school who seek additional education or specialized training after leaving Quincy High, and also helps students get started in the industry by awarding grants to purchase expensive tools. Automotive technicians can spend thousands of dollars just getting started.

“This car is like brand new, it came out so good,” said auto body teacher Tom Walters about the students’ work on the car, a former salvage vehicle donated by the Quincy Mutual Fire Insurance Co. “It’s very sporty, a top of the line model with a lot of bells and whistles.”

Walters estimates he and the students put \$3,500 back into the vehicle, which Walters says is now worth about \$9,000. The students were hoping to raise about \$10,000 for the scholarship fund.

Students and faculty at the school sold \$10 raffle tickets for the car, which has only 11,500 miles on it and with its manual transmission gets even better gas mileage.

According to U.S. government statistics, a 2005 Honda Civic can be expected to get 27 mpg in the city and 34 mpg on the highway.

Cars have also been donated to the automotive and auto body programs in the past by Arbella Insurance, or auto dealers such as Quirk.

The project also involved students in business, graphics and communications, who marketed and publicized the effort, broadcasting information on the school’s TV station, as well as posting fliers and putting information on the school’s Web site. About 100 students were involved in some aspect of the project.

The good news is that there are jobs aplenty awaiting students who graduate as automotive technicians. Employment of automotive service technicians and mechanics is expected to increase 14 percent between 2006 and 2016, compared to 10 percent for all occupations, according to U.S. government data. The occupation will add a large number of new jobs, about 110,000, over the decade.

“This is a huge field with a lot of opportunity,” said Walters.

Keith Segalla, Quincy Public Schools academic support specialist, said that in the past, a raffle was held among graduating seniors with perfect attendance to give away restored vehicles, but this project was a good chance for students to help each other.

“This is a wonderful collaboration among several different programs at the school to help the scholarship fund,” he said.

“

“This is a wonderful collaboration among several different programs at the school to help the scholarship fund.”

Keith Segalla
Academic support specialist



The current Central Middle School facility was built in 1894.

A learning environment

Beechwood Knoll begins project to create outdoor classroom

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

Set amongst marshland, wildlife and nature trails, at Beechwood Knoll Elementary School, nature is the ideal classroom.

The school is in the process of moving forward with plans to build an outdoor classroom, wildflower garden and sitting area with benches. Plans also include refurbishing the trails for walks, reseeding the recreational area for soccer and installing motion lighting for evening security.

The project has been approved by the Quincy Conservation Committee and is supported by the School Committee and Superintendent Dr. Richard DeCristofaro. In April, the school hosted a community meeting at the proposed site, unveiling the design plans.

“This is something we’ve been working on for two years,” said Principal Diane O’Keefe, who has led the efforts with teacher Tom Natola and parent Cherie Dewar. “Since the salt marsh is a sensitive area, we wanted to address any concerns that the community may have had.”

O’Keefe expects to begin planting the garden before the end of the school year. Work on the outdoor classroom, which will consist of a 32 x 40-foot platform, will begin in the fall. She envisions the new area as a haven for environmental learning.

“It’s a chance for students to get up from their desks and away from the computers, and gain a deep appreciation for the environment around them,” said O’Keefe.

O’Keefe has seen the effects first-hand. Five years ago when she was teaching, she brought her students outside for a day of learning. Part of their assignment was to create poems with illustrations.

“They turned in the most amazing poetry,” she said. “It was so moving and so beautiful that I never forgot that experience. It’s been my passion ever since to create an outdoor space that would foster that kind of creativity and hands-on learning.”

The principal hopes teachers will use an interdisciplinary approach, taking full advantage of what the outdoors has to offer.

“For math, students can perform tide measurements or temperature comparisons,” she said. “They can do pH testing, carbon dioxide monitoring, artistic sketches and creative writing. They can learn about how Native Americans used the marsh. We can even use it for performing arts and musical events. There’s so much to do out there, the possibilities are endless.”

Collecting for a cause

Parker students raise funds for crisis center

BY RICH FAHEY



Student Vicky Chan gathers cans at the Parker School.

It is, says Principal Maryanne Palmer, a way to reach out to the community beyond the Parker Elementary School.

Students at the Parker School have forged a partnership with the Quincy Crisis Center, located at the United First Parish Church on Hancock Street. The center’s food programs include emergency food delivery, daily hot meals and a holiday meal program.

The school’s 287 students banded together to donate cans and bottles to help the crisis center, and were able to donate \$365 towards the center’s food programs.

Kathi Garrison, a volunteer at the center, says money generated by Parker School students helped purchase turkeys at Thanksgiving.

“The students’ generosity helped put Thanksgiving dinner on the table for 257 families,” she said.

Garrison said the students’ example is in the same spirit of the crisis center itself — “Neighbors reaching out to help neighbors.”

Palmer noted that some of the families of her students have been helped by the center.

All the students get involved in the effort, and the school also uses it as a way to sharpen math skills. Each time 10 bottles or cans are donated, a student gets to color in a feather on the Thanksgiving turkey. Bags of 100 cans or bottles at five cents each allow for multiplication.

“It’s a way to bring the math curriculum to life,” said Palmer.

Fifth-graders collect the cans and bottles from each classroom and help load them onto the redemption truck when it arrives.

“This is absolutely something the kids look forward to,” Palmer said. “They’re excited to contribute and we’re always trying to beat our record from the year before.”

The school also works with the center on another project — the donation of winter coats for the needy.

“It’s always a big day at the center when the fifth-graders parade down here with their donations of winter jackets,” said Garrison.

“It’s good for our kids to see the crisis center and the work it does,” said Palmer. “It sends a powerful message.”

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SPORTS

THE QUINCY EDUCATOR



n the ball

North Quincy softball team stages turnaround

BY RICH FAHEY

On their way out the door, the North Quincy High softball team made their presence felt in the Atlantic Coast League.

Only three years after going 3-17, the Red Raiders went 11-7 in the regular season, including a 10-3 mark in ACL play, good enough for second place in the North division behind crosstown rival Quincy (16-4, 12-1).

Both the Red Raiders and the Presidents played their last season in the ACL before moving over to the Patriot League next season, and both teams wanted to go out as a league champion.

The teams battled to the wire, with Quincy clinching the league title with an extra-inning, come-from-behind 3-2 win

over North Quincy on May 21.

North Quincy started the season 6-0 before losing a tough 2-1 non-league decision to Archbishop Williams and splitting two games in its own invitational tournament.

Quincy is led by star freshman pitcher Korey Sorenson, who went 16-4 with a league-leading 0.60 ERA and 168 strikeouts. Senior shortstop Marybeth Torpey led the league with a .576 average with five home runs and 21 RBI.

"This is the first time in a long time both schools have had good softball teams," said North Quincy softball coach Mike Connor, whose team lost to North Attleboro in the first round of this year's MIAA tournament.

After the 3-17 season in 2005, the Red Raiders improved to 7-11 in 2006. Last year, North Quincy went 15-5 and also finished second in the ACL North before losing to Somerset in the first round of the MIAA tournament.

Connor said that with everyone back from last year, pitching and defense have carried his club again this season. Neither junior Brittany Folkins nor senior Paige Bonanni is a flamethrower, but both throw strikes and they split the duties. Bonanni went 7-3 and had the second-best ERA (1.93) in the league this year.

"Both pitchers worked hard and improved in the off-season," said Connor, who can also rely on Sammy Bonanni, Paige's sister.

Senior catcher and co-captain Kerry Coughlin hit .518 and threw out more than 70 percent of runners attempting steals this year, according to Connor. "She neutralizes the opponent's running game right off the bat," he said.

Shortstop Kasey O'Connell hit .453 and played well defensively for the Red Raiders. Left fielder Rebecca Goreham is an RBI machine, while junior centerfielder Siobhan Carnell had a great catch and seven putouts against Marshfield. Junior Kathleen Lynch is a skilled third baseman. Folkins, when she isn't pitching, is an All-ACL second baseman, and sophomore Jessica Ainsley can play in the infield or the outfield. Catherine O'Connell mans first base and Jessica Ainsley and Simone Leary play right field.

"Every game a different player has stepped up for us," said Connor.

Connor said his team has what it takes to win the tough games.

"We play the game strong and we're mentally tough," he said. "Our players have great attitudes and they're very coachable."

North Quincy High softball coach Mike Connor, far right, and assistant coach Dan Coughlin.



Rebecca Goreham takes a swing.



North Quincy's Sammy Bonanni throws a strike.