

THE LYNN EDUCATOR

A PUBLICATION OF LYNN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Vol. 6, No. 1

Summer 2010

INSIDE

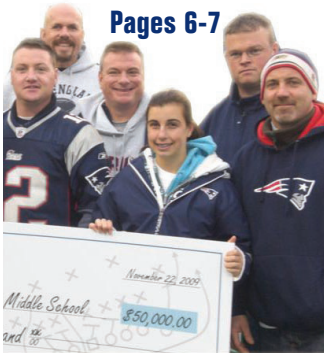
Teachers go
back to school
Page 2



Top Dog
Page 5



Touchdown
for Pickering
Pages 6-7



1 + 1 = 81
Page 12



Marshall plan gets go-ahead

MSBA advances building project

BY PAUL HALLORAN

The plan for a new Thurgood Marshall Middle School has received a much needed green light.

In March, the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) voted to advance the proposal to the feasibility study phase. The decision came a week

after MSBA Executive Director Katherine Craven toured Marshall and met with Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Catherine C. Latham and other school officials.

"The MSBA remains committed to working with the City of Lynn to better understand the issues at Thurgood Marshall Middle School," said Craven.

"We look forward to continuing our due diligence to determine what the best plan of action is moving forward."

"I am hopeful we can expedite the process," said Latham. "We see this as a serious need. I truly am excited the MSBA agrees."

The next step in the process is for the

See **MARSHALL** Page 10

Classical achievement

Two seniors earn admission to Harvard

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

A historic year for Harvard University admissions proved no hindrance for Lynn Classical High School graduates Cara Garrity and Casey Johnson.

Garrity and Johnson were among the record-low 6.9 percent of applicants accepted to Harvard's Class of 2014. Out of a pool of 30,489 applicants – the largest in Harvard's history – the school sent out only 2,110 congratulatory letters.

"It was unbelievable," said Johnson. "It took a few days to actually hit me."

A scholar-athlete, Johnson hopes to play football for the Crimson. At Classical, he was a four-year varsity player, served as team captain and was selected to play in the Agganis All-Star Classic. He is also a 2010 Agganis Foundation Scholarship recipient.

Johnson was also a member of the varsity basketball and spring track teams. He served as a school ambassador, aide to the vice principal and mentor to youth at Callahan



Classical seniors Casey Johnson and Cara Garrity were accepted by Harvard.

PHOTO: RICH YEARWOOD

See **HARVARD** Page 10

LYNN EDUCATOR

City of Lynn

Judith Flanagan Kennedy, Mayor

Lynn School Committee

Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy
Chairman

Patricia Capano
Vice Chair

Maria O. Carrasco
Donna M. Coppola
John E. Ford Jr.
Vincent J. Spirito
Richard B. Starbard

Published by:

Lynn Public Schools

Catherine C. Latham, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Jaye E. Warry, Ed.D.
Deputy Superintendent

Submit story ideas to:

Thomas P. Iarrobino
Secretary to the School Committee
90 Commercial St.
Lynn, MA 01905
Tel: 781-477-7220 x3157
Fax: 781-477-7487
iarrobino@lynnschools.org

Produced by:

GRANT COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTING GROUP

781-598-8200
www.grantgroup.com
gccg@grantgroup.com

Despite challenges, our schools persevere



**Judith Kennedy
Flanagan**

The fiscal difficulties facing our city, state and country have been well documented. Everyone is being asked to do more with less – in both the public and private sectors.

Regardless of circumstances, one area in which we must never accept anything but the best is education. Our teachers, students and administrators are to be commended for putting forth their best effort on a daily basis.

We are not immune to the challenges faced by other urban districts, as you will read in Dr. Latham's commentary elsewhere on this page. What is most important, however, is how we respond when faced with such obstacles. I think you will agree that Dr. Latham and her team are meeting this challenge head-on, and have put a plan in place to get the affected schools back on track in the very short term.

This edition of *The Lynn Educator* also includes stories about some of our very best students, including recent graduates who are heading to outstanding universities such as Harvard, Tufts and

WPI. They are to be commended, along with everyone who helped them along the way, especially their parents, teachers and coaches.

Our schools benefit from a number of meaningful partnerships, such as the ones with GE and the Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development detailed in this edition. We are appreciative of the outside support, which is even more critical in difficult times.

I wish all our students and teachers a restful, safe, enjoyable summer.

Judith Flanagan Kennedy is mayor of Lynn.

We are committed to meaningful change



**Dr. Catherine C.
Latham**

As part of the state's new education reform act, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) identified 35 schools in Massachusetts as underperforming. All of the identified schools are located in nine of the largest urban districts, including Lynn. We have two schools on the list: the Harrington and Connery

elementary schools.

In addition to identifying underperforming schools, the DESE announced a program that will assist districts in their efforts to improve student achievement and reduce the achievement gap in the identified schools. The assistance is expected in the form of additional resources, grants, and authority to

activate immediate and sustainable change.

The regulations for underperforming schools in the Massachusetts education reform act are in accord with the U.S. Department of Education guidelines, and serve well to position the state and Lynn to receive federal Race to the Top funding.

Since I took over as superintendent 18 months ago, I have worked to support all 24 of our schools while putting the greatest emphasis on support for those schools whose test scores are lagging. After my own data analysis was completed last September, Connery and Harrington were among the first schools to receive additional support. The principals of these two schools have worked tirelessly on these new initiatives.

Unfortunately, even though recent programs and initiatives have yet to be measured by the 2010 MCAS results, MCAS scores from 2006-09 did not improve as much as we had hoped. Because of this,

the federal and state regulations require a leadership change. This is a most challenging requirement.

Both principals – Patricia Riley and Michael Molnar – are consummate professionals who know their schools intimately well and have established close relationships with their students, parents and staff.

Dr. Mary Dill, currently principal of the Tracy Elementary School, will take over at Connery and Deb Ruggiero will move from Brickett to Harrington. Although both are sad about leaving their current schools, they are energized by the challenge that this opportunity presents.

I look forward to the opportunity to design a successful transformation model that will be able to be sustained and replicated throughout the district.

Dr. Catherine C. Latham is superintendent of schools.

Middle-school teachers go back to school

BY PAUL HALLORAN

Doug Reeves lectures and conducts professional development for teachers all over the world, but the Nahant resident never had the opportunity to ply his trade in his own back yard.

That changed on May 24 when Reeves – founder of the Leadership and Learning Center and author of 29 books and numerous articles on leadership and organizational effectiveness – conducted two sessions in the lecture hall at Breed Middle School for all Lynn middle school teachers and principals, as well as school administrators.

Reeves' presentation set the stage for one of the most ambitious professional-development initiatives ever undertaken in Lynn Public Schools, according to Deputy Superintendent Dr. Jaye Warry.

Middle school teachers, principals, guidance counselors and central office administrators participated in a two-day course – Power Strategies for Effective Teaching – run by consultants from the Leadership and Learning Center. The course focused on strategies that teachers can use to improve student achievement.

Targeted federal Title I money was used to



Middle-school teachers listen to a presentation by Doug Reeves. PHOTOS: RICH YEARWOOD

fund the initiative, in which all middle school teachers took part. That's one aspect that made it unique.

"Usually when you do professional development, not all teachers take part at the same time," Warry said. "Everybody getting the same training at the same time gives them a common language."

One area the course focused on is technical writing, Warry said, referring to writing students do related to the subject matter they are learning, as opposed to creative writing.



Teachers also learned how to help students use the Cornell note-taking system.

This summer, a clinic will be held at the three public middle schools, with about 80 students who have been identified as needing some extra assistance attending at each school. Teachers will get a chance to implement the strategies they learned in the professional-development course.

Reeves, who volunteered his time on May 24, said one challenge all school districts face is improving on how they "use data to make

better teaching and leadership decisions." He said Lynn is ahead of the curve in that regard since it evaluates testing data on a regular basis, as opposed to only in response to annual standardized test results.

"If you're only using annual testing data, it's too late to be effective," said Reeves, who founded the Colorado-based Leadership and Learning Center 15 years ago and moved to the area in 2001. "No coach would make adjustments based on an annual evaluation. It has to be an ongoing process."

Reeves told teachers and administrators at Breed "the greatest teachers can work with the most challenging students and make a difference."

Reeves said it is important that school districts realize that accountability extends beyond classroom teachers. "Policy makers, the school board, superintendent, principals, teachers all have to be accountable," he said. "Nobody is motivated by threats. We need data to know we are getting better."

The sessions at Breed were also open to fifth- and ninth-grade teachers in Lynn Public Schools. The school department also invited middle school teachers from Sacred Heart, St. Pius, St. Mary's and KIPP Academy.

Virtual is a reality at Tracy

Grant funds 30 new computers

A year ago, most classrooms at the Tracy School only had one computer, and getting an entire class to go online at the same time was only a dream.

That all changed this year, thanks to a grant from the Gelfand Family Charitable Trust. The grant paid for 30 new computers to equip a separate computer lab room. Now, students can work on computer projects all together.

“The whole class can go in together. They can all be on the same page,” said Tracy Principal Dr. Mary Dill.

Teacher Jeanette McGarry loves being able to take her class into the lab, especially when it comes time to prep for the MCAS exam.

In the first year with the computer lab, students have used the room to take on all kinds of projects. Fifth-graders researched explorers and wrote reports about them. They also studied and examined rocks and minerals, eventually creating stories about their birthstones.

Students in grades 1 and 2 were taught to use Microsoft Word, and solved math problems on an education website.

Most of all, the students have enjoyed the work they’ve done in the computer lab.

“The kids love it,” said Dill.

The principal credited Francis Vigeant, who is involved with the school’s Know Atoms science program, for being instrumental in helping Tracy obtain the grant to pay for the computers. She said the entire school is grateful for the gift.

“It’s made an extreme difference,” she said.

Tracy School students work in the computer lab.
PHOTO: RICH YEARWOOD



Changes at the top for five elementary schools

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

At the elementary school level, new transitions are bringing hope for transformation.

Superintendent Dr. Catherine Latham has appointed Dr. Mary Dill, current principal of Tracy Elementary School, to assume leadership of Connery Elementary, and Debra Ruggiero, current principal of Brickett Elementary, to assume leadership of Harrington Elementary. The moves take effect on July 1.

“I am joined by my entire staff in the process of actively working to redesign and reposition Connery and Harrington for the hard work of school improvement,” said Latham. “Both schools will have new principals to oversee this work, and those principals will act as the leaders of their respective design teams.”

In March, Connery and Harrington were among 35 schools statewide to be designated Level 4 schools by the Massachusetts Dept. of Education. The schools are eligible for federal aid and state support to bring about dramatic improvements in student achievement through a blend of new school designs, better instructional support and stronger leadership.

“This is an unprecedented opportunity for management and teachers to come together and institute the long-lasting, transformative changes these schools need to turn things around to the benefit of students,” said Massachusetts Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester.

For the next three years, Massachusetts is eligible for an estimated \$76 million in federal funding. Districts that commit to one of four intervention models identified by the U.S. Dept. of Education can apply for grants of \$500,000 or more per year on behalf of each Level 4 school. Two-thirds of the Level 4 schools are located in Boston and Springfield. The other schools – in addition to the two in Lynn – are in Fall River, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, New Bedford and Worcester.

Latham said she hopes to build on the reform work that began earlier this year. Since September, the district has provided Connery and Harrington with additional support for professional development in teaching English language learners and using data to drive instruction; before- and after-school academic assistance; technology additions and updates; English language classes for parents; and partnerships with Endicott and Salem

State colleges.

As part of the redesign plan, Patricia Riley, current principal at Connery, will replace the retiring Linda Mann at Shoemaker Elementary. Michael Molnar, current principal at Harrington, has accepted a position in another district.

To fill the other administrative openings, Latham has appointed Eileen Cole as the new principal of Brickett Elementary, where she is currently a fourth-grade teacher. Pattye Griffin, elementary math coach for Lynn Public Schools, will be the new principal of Tracy Elementary. Gayle Dufour, head of the elementary science program at Ingalls Elementary, will take over as principal of Hood Elementary.

“All of our new principals are actively involved with our data-driven decision-making initiative, and all have worked with our elementary school improvement planning teams,” said Latham. “They are well respected for the high standards they set for their teaching and the high expectation they hold for their students. I am excited by their knowledge, experience and enthusiasm, and feel confident that they will provide excellent leadership to their respective schools.”

Read all about it

Breed students create their own newspaper

BY JESSICA BENSON

Students at Breed Middle School have a new way of finding out what's happening at school: their very own newspaper.

The Breedly Times published its inaugural issue this spring, and was an immediate success.

"It was really positive. Everyone loved it," said eighth-grade English teacher Nancy Mades, the faculty advisor to the all-student staff of the newspaper.

Mades, who has taught at Breed for four years, had long wanted to launch a student newspaper at the school. A 20-year veteran of the journalism business, which included time spent as a reporter for a daily newspaper, Mades believes that a school as big as Breed will never lack for story ideas.

"A school this size, with this much stuff going on, should have a newspaper," she said. "I don't think we'll run out of things to write about."

The first issue featured stories about plays, sporting events and the Saturday school program. It also included a "fashion-forward" crossword puzzle, just for fun. Of the 200 copies printed, 100 were sold for 25 cents each, while the rest were given away. Money raised through the sale of the paper will go toward purchasing camera equipment for the newspaper staff.

Future stories for the paper will be about end-of-the-year sports and field trips, a dance, the eighth-grade roller skating



Students at Breed Middle School published their own newspaper.

PHOTO: RICH YEARWOOD

party and the mock trial program. All of stories are written by students; artwork and photographs are also done by students only.

Sixth-grader Caleb Reddick came up with name of the paper and won a roast beef sandwich, fries and soda, delivered to him during lunchtime at school as a prize.

For now, Mades is editing the stories, laying out the pages

and writing headlines. But next year she hopes to turn over the reins to her students, with plans to teach them how to do layout. Ideally, she would merely serve as an advisor, letting the students control the entire process from start to finish.

Already, a core group of students interested in putting together the paper has emerged for next year. These students were among the two dozen who tried out for the paper this year.

To test potential newspaper staffers, Mades gave each an assignment, picking all of those who turned theirs in by the deadline.

Other students will get a chance to join the staff in the fall, when Mades holds a new series of tryouts. Students interested in writing, drawing or photography are encouraged to inquire.

Mades found a number of students interested in joining the paper. "They were really enthusiastic," she said. "They loved being able to write about

their friends."

This year's *Breedly Times* staff members include: Danielle Gaudet, editor-in-chief, Pheobe Jean, news/features editor, Andre Gaudet, sports editor, Tyla Levesque, photo editor, Erastus Thuo, arts editor, staff writers/artists/photographers: Nicole Johnson, Khadiga Bereir, Linda Khuth, Cynthia Thin, Kimphuong Ngugen and Bernardo Arreaga.

All for one (book) and one for all

BY JESSICA BENSON

How do you get hundreds of teenagers, their parents and teachers, plus custodians, secretaries and cafeteria workers, to all have something in common?

Some English teachers at Classical High School think they have found the answer: Give them all the same book to read over the summer.

"In the past, summer reading was placed on the English Department. But this is school-wide," said Jerry Burke, head of Classical's English Department. "We will all have something in common."

Everyone in the Classical High School community is being asked to read a book by local author Hannah Tinti, an adventure novel called "The Good Thief."

Tinti, a Salem native who now lives in Brooklyn, N.Y., said she was flattered when she heard her book was chosen for Classical's ambitious new program. "I'm totally thrilled," she said. "I'm really

excited about it."

The idea actually came about several years ago, when teacher Rosanne Driscoll learned about a similar program at then-Governor Dummer Academy in Byfield. Driscoll shared her idea with fellow teacher Patricia Frey, who eventually suggested Tinti's book. Frey knows Tinti personally, since her husband and Tinti's father own a law firm together. The relationship, and the fact that Tinti is originally from the area, made it easier to book her for appearances at the school.

Frey also thought "The Good Thief" would be the perfect book to use to launch the project at Classical, since the book is a fun read that people of all ages can enjoy.

"It was very clever, the twists and turns," Frey said. "I enjoyed it."

When told of the plan, Tinti quickly agreed to visit Classical not once, but twice, to discuss her book. She immediately loved the concept. "It's a great idea," she said. "More high schools should do it."

"The Good Thief" follows 12-year-old Ren as he tries to find out why he was abandoned at an orphanage, and why he is missing his left hand. Along the way he meets scam artists and grave robbers.

Frey describes the book as a cross between "Treasure Island" and "Oliver Twist." The book is set in New England, and Tinti promises that Classical students will recognize place settings in the story.

As students return to school in the fall, the idea is that they can talk about the book among themselves and anyone else in the school building. Tinti plans to visit Classical in the fall to answer questions about the book. Students who are especially interested in writing may also have opportunities to chat with the author.

Before classes broke for the summer, Tinti was to have visited the school to get everyone excited about reading her book.

Burke plans to expand the project to get parents involved as well. Parents may receive a phone call about the program, with an invitation to read the book and discuss it with their children.

Mayor Kennedy rights summer reading program

Mayor Judith Kennedy will reinstitute the Mayor's Summer Reading Incentive Program for Lynn students in grades preK-8.

"This effort promotes the importance of reading and rewards each individual for his or her hard work on achieving the goal of reading a specific number of books," Kennedy said. "The program has been successful in the past and we expect the same great results this summer."

The Mayor's Summer Reading Incentive Program is a continuation of the Lynn Public Library's reading initiative which requires participants to read a specific number of books. All pre-K through grade 8 readers who read an additional five books, or read for 10 hours, will be invited to an ice-cream party in City Hall, hosted by Kennedy in late August.

Students can register for the Mayor's Summer Reading Incentive Program at the main library on North Common Street. Completed forms must be returned to the Mayor's office by August 26.

For more information, and the required reading, contact the Mayor's office at 781-598-4000 or the Lynn Public Library at 781-595-0567.

Special students get early start at Washington

By RICH FAHEY

In an ideal world, every child would be ready to learn on his or her first day of school.

But the reality is that children — even at a very young age — may have emotional, physical or developmental issues, or need help with their speech or communicating with others.

Children as young as two years, 10 months are eligible to be evaluated for the Early Childhood program at the Washington Elementary School. Parents may be referred to the program by a physician, social worker or someone else who knows of a child's disability or need for services.

The evaluation of a child can include assessments of his speech and language abilities, motor skills, and cognitive development; older children may undergo a neuropsychology evaluation. Then there is a "team meeting" with parents and those doing the evaluations to discuss the results.

"That's where we decide on the placement of a child,"

said Janice Sheehan, director of the Early Childhood program. "Do they belong in a program for developmentally delayed children? Are they autistic? Do they have behavioral or emotional issues?"

The team also discusses whether an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is warranted and whether

“

Unless the positive behaviors are reinforced at home, students are unlikely to maintain them.

Mark Williams
LPS behavior analyst

programs in place at Washington are suitable for the child.

The school also works with in-house professionals in areas such as behavior modification. Recently, that included four parental training sessions with Mark Williams, a board-certified behavior analyst for Lynn Public Schools. The meetings were translated into Spanish and babysitting was also available to parents, with dinner provided by students at the Lynn Alternative High School's Culinary Arts Department.

Williams said he asked parents to reinforce lessons and behaviors taught in school.

"Unless the positive behaviors are reinforced at home, students are unlikely to maintain them," he said.

He also explained to the parents how their own behaviors — both good and bad — become learned and how they can become ingrained in a child. Williams also stressed the importance of getting help for children at a young age.

Sheehan said that the school and its students continue to be the beneficiaries of community-minded people such as Brothers Deli owner George Markos, who donated hot dogs and hamburgers to feed 200 people at a family cookout on June 11, and Garelick Farms, which provided the ice cream.

Sheehan said the Washington School community has also benefited tremendously from its ongoing partnership with Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development (LHAND) and Executive Director Charles Gaeta. LHAND is a member of Washington's School Improvement Team.

"Our staff has really bought into it on a personal level," said Gaeta. "There is a lot of outreach with the families and the staff there. It's our pleasure to give something back."

Sheehan marveled at the annual Christmas party put on by LHAND employees. "The workers donated to make sure every one of our children got a gift," said Sheehan.



Megan Forti was the Lynn English High School 2010 valedictorian.

PHOTO: RICH YEARWOOD

Top Dog

Valedictorian excelled in academics, athletics

By MEAGHAN CASEY

A soccer standout, class president and yearbook co-editor, Megan Forti had quite a bit on her plate during her senior year at Lynn English High School, but that didn't prevent her from graduating as the 2010 valedictorian.

"When I entered high school, I didn't start off with the goal of graduating as valedictorian, but with the goal of doing my best," said Forti. "The key to balancing it all was remaining stress-free. I made sure to set my priorities straight and keep up my academics before I focused on sports and clubs."

During her four years at Lynn English, Forti was a member of the varsity soccer, basketball and indoor track teams. She devoted her senior year to soccer, serving as captain. She was named team MVP, leading scorer and Northeastern Conference All-Star as a freshman, sophomore and senior. (A knee injury prevented her from playing as a junior). She was also named Lynn English Student-Athlete of the Year.

"Megan is the consummate student-athlete," said English girls soccer coach Ed McNeil. "She excels both in the classroom and the playing field. Her work ethic and her supportive team attitude are second to none."

Forti was also a member of the French Club, Latin Club/Certamen Team, National Honor Society and WGBH Quiz Bowl. Outside of school, she volunteered in her church as a Confirmation teacher and worked with children with autism. She graduated with a 4.56 GPA and earned high honors for 16 consecutive quarters.

"Although academics are very important, they aren't the only thing out there," said Forti. "I've learned just as many things through sports, clubs and community service. Staying involved allows you to meet so many more people and have experiences that you would otherwise miss out on if you didn't branch out into other activities."

Forti will attend Worcester Polytechnic Institute. She plans to pursue a degree in biomedical

engineering and continue her soccer career at the Division III college level. Her brother, Alex — Lynn English's salutatorian in 2005 — is a recent graduate of WPI.

"My brother just graduated with his master's, so I've spent much of the last five years on the WPI campus," said Forti. "I always told myself I wouldn't go there because I didn't want to follow in his footsteps, but ultimately it was the perfect fit for me."

In fact, she is anxious to embrace the next step in her academic journey.

"I'm looking forward to the challenge of college," she said. "I know that I'll be tested academically and I'm excited to take on that challenge. Academically, I feel Lynn English has given me a solid foundation and prepared me for most of the things I will encounter next year."

Her advice to fellow graduates and rising seniors: "Focus and motivation are two things that come from within," she said. "The only person that can push you to be your best is yourself."

Touchdown for Pickering



A grant from the NFL network and matched by the City allowed Pickering to renovate its gymnasium and purchase new fitness equipment.



New fitness equipment at the school



Representing Pickering Middle School at a Patriots game were, from left, Kristin Lannon, student Christina Lannon, Dennis Thompson, Principal Bob Murphy, teacher Jim Foley, student Nicolette Agnelli, Jeff Newhall and Dave Angelli.

School gets \$50,000 from NFL Network for gym, fitness room

By Rich Fahey

An NFL program has scored a touchdown for students at the Pickering Middle School, as the school was one of four winners in this year's NFL Network's Keep Gym in School Fitness Program.

A \$50,000 grant from the program was matched by the City of Lynn, allowing the school to keep a second physical education teacher, buy fitness equipment that will benefit students for years and refurbish the gymnasium.

The school's win was highlighted at a Patriots' game last fall. The final piece of the grant was an educational piece in which a student was selected from a group of essays

written about fitness.

Brett Erelli, 14, plays football for fun, when he's not playing hockey or baseball or golfing. His winning essay brought a sports' fan's bonanza. It allowed Erelli, his father, John, Pickering Principal Robert Murphy, physical education teacher Jim Foley, and Dennis Thompson, Lynn Public Schools director of health and physical education, to journey to New York City as special guests of the NFL to participate in the Play 60 Youth Football Festival during NFL Draft Week in April.

Erelli and the other winners were chosen based on a series of criteria including improvement in five fitness assessments, weekly fitness logs, and an essay contest.

The students participated in football drills and games with top 2010 NFL draft picks, including No. 1 and No. 2 overall picks Sam Bradford and Ndamukong Suh.

At the awards ceremony attended by NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, Deion Sanders of the NFL Network presented the winners with a Keep Gym in School trophy for their efforts.

After the festival, students, their families and schools representatives, attended a special luncheon held in their honor in Times Square and then were invited to Radio City Music Hall to attend the 75th Annual NFL Draft as VIP guests of NFL Network.

For Brett Erelli, the son of John and Robin

Erelli, the biggest star of the trip to New York was the city itself. "Walking around the city — especially Times Square — and meeting all the players was the best part. It was my first time in New York," he said.

Murphy said the trip was "a once in a lifetime opportunity. It was great to interact with all the players — there were 18 invited draftees and 60 draftees in all. It was first-class all the way."

The grant enabled the school to purchase fitness machines that students will be able to use both during gym classes and after school.

"This will have a lasting effect on the fitness levels of our students for years to come," said Murphy.



Pickering student Brett Erelli receives a trophy for his winning essay on fitness from Deion Sanders of the NFL Network and Jillian Michaels.



Jillian Michaels with physical education teacher Jim Foley, at left, and Principal Bob Murphy.



Pickering students are enjoying the refurbished gym.



GE employee Donna Ouimet tutors Connery students Carla Herrera, left and Alex Karasik.

PHOTO: RICH YEARWOOD

GE volunteers help do the math at Connery

BY JESSICA BENSON

Engineers at General Electric have found an unusual hot spot for lunch: the cafeteria at the Connery School.

Twice a week, a group of volunteers from GE talk about math over lunch with fourth-grade students from the school. The program helps students improve their math skills, while allowing the volunteers to give something back to the community.

"I love to see the kids and try to show them why math is important," said Erin Foote, one of the volunteers from GE. "To get them excited about math is great for us."

Approximately 20 volunteers each year are assigned to students needing extra help with math, giving them one-on-one attention for the duration of the school year. Connery Principal Patricia Riley says she looks for students who fall in the middle academically — those who aren't the best at math, but also who don't need intensive tutoring.

"With a little extra help, they can make a big jump," Riley said.

The GE engineers give up one or two lunch breaks a week, while students also give up their recess to participate in the program.

"I was surprised by how many kids gave up their free time," Riley said. "The kids really look forward to when they come."

GE has long had a close relationship with Lynn's schools. For years, volunteers have visited schools to read books to students.

But a few years ago, employees at GE decided they wanted to try

something different. Hearing that students at Connery — a school close to the GE plant — needed help with their math skills, the employees decided to start the program.

It is now in its fourth year, according to Foote, who not only acts as a tutor, but serves as a coordinator for the tutoring program. In addition to the math tutoring, a small group of volunteers also teaches fourth-graders how to play chess.

“

I love to see the kids and try to show them why math is important. To get them excited about math is great for us.

Erin Foote
GE volunteer

Foote said she finds it rewarding to watch how students improve after several months with their tutor. "We all really enjoy seeing their progress over the school year," she said.

The progress has even been measured on the MCAS exam; the students who receive the tutoring have shown noticeable improvement. "The math scores have been going up steadily," Riley said.

Teachers at other schools who have worked with volunteers from GE have also found them to be helpful. At the Tracy School, teacher Jeanette McGarry has seen the difference the volunteers have made with her school's science program, and she has been impressed with the way the engineers can talk to students about topics such as windmills and aerodynamics.

"It's wonderful to have that knowledge," she said. "They've been extremely helpful."

Foote said GE's volunteer programs show how teachers and parents are not the only ones invested in the educations of the city's children. "There are other people in the community who care about the students," she said. "We like to take time out of our day to help them."

Studying science is elementary

The experiment using potatoes and onions to make batteries and study electricity is always popular with students, says teacher Jeanette McGarry. So is the one where everyone gets to make a periscope to test their theories about vision.

McGarry's students at the Tracy School also liked designing contraptions to fit over their heads, with funnels to trick their brains into thinking noises are coming from somewhere else. "They thought that was funny," McGarry said. "That was a huge hit."

The Know Atoms program, from a company based in Salem, uses real-world experiments like these to teach science. Lessons are linked together from year-to-year, building on skills taught the year before.

So far, the program has been dubbed a success at the Tracy School, where it has been used for the last three years. Students look forward to the lessons, and their test scores are starting to reflect their new-found excitement about science.

But the program would not be possible without grants from General Electric, which covers all of the Know Atoms expenses. The grant covers training for the teachers, plus all of the materials used in the experiments.

McGarry noted that the materials expense can get high, since most of the items involved are only used once. "It's very costly," she said. "If you can get the materials paid for, it's great."

Not only do the children enjoy their Tuesday science lessons and the different projects and experiments they get to participate in, but the program has already helped boost their MCAS scores, said Tracy Principal Dr. Mary Dill.

Know Atoms has been so successful at Tracy, other schools in the district are now looking to implement it. This year, the Lincoln-Thomson School started it, while Lynn Woods is planning to begin Know Atoms in the fall.

Ellen Fritz, principal of Lynn Woods School, said she decided she wanted it for her own students after seeing the positive results at Tracy. "The data suggests it's working," she said. "I don't want to miss the opportunity."

Fritz came upon Know Atoms while trying to find a way to refocus her school's curriculum back on other subjects besides math and English. Science, she felt, had been neglected.

Fritz said she was especially excited by the hands-on aspect to Know Atoms. She's looking forward to her teachers learning more about the program over the summer.

At Tracy, McGarry agreed that getting kids actively involved in experiments is the key to the success of the program. "The students really love hands-on," she said. "It's a wonderful program."



Bryan McAskill

On time all the time

Bryan McAskill takes dedication to school to a new level

BY RICH FAHEY

Filmmaker Woody Allen is supposed to have said: “90 percent of life is just showing up.” If that’s true, Bryan McAskill doesn’t have a worry in the world.

The Lynn Tech senior has always shown up — never missing a day of school since kindergarten, or even being late once. He admitted that it was tough to keep the streak going after he was accepted to UMass Boston this spring and the inevitable case of “senioritis” crept in.

“I started the year ranked No. 9 in the class and moved up to No. 5,” he said. “Maybe some other people took it easy.”

McAskill, quiet by nature, is a three-time winner of the school’s Student-Athlete Award — he played four years of varsity basketball as a 6-2 center for the Tigers.

“I actually had him for five years. He came to us in the exploratory program in the eighth grade,

and he never did anything wrong,” said Tech basketball coach Marvin Avery. “He was always on time, respectful and never complained about his playing time. He’s going to make something of himself.”

McAskill said basketball taught him many lessons. “Leadership is important. You have to be a team player and work together.”

“I’ve only been a guidance counselor for a few years, but I’ve never heard of an attendance streak like Bryan’s,” said Heather Toomey, McAskill’s guidance counselor for the last three years. “I think it really helped him to succeed because by always being in class, he always knows what’s going on and he doesn’t have to play catch-up.”

Toomey said McAskill indeed is quiet — something his classmates have noted — but when he wants to, he has a deft sense of humor.

Another thing McAskill takes seriously is his volunteer work. He has worked with the Salvation

Army donating clothes to the homeless, aiding earthquake victims in Haiti and serving Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners to the homeless. He has wrapped and delivered gifts for Toys for Tots, and tutored other students before and after school.

Toomey said McAskill has been extremely proactive in helping fund his college education, seeking out grants and scholarships. “He’s a go-getter and eager to help himself,” said Toomey. “He knows where he wants to go and what he has to do to get there.”

McAskill landed a job working for Eastern Bank this summer to help finance his education, a job Avery said he was proud to write a recommendation for.

McAskill said he is looking forward to the college experience, and expects to take business and management courses with an eye towards entering the business world someday.

Ferguson has educated students for 40 years

FERGUSON: from Page 12

Ferguson, too, was pleased to see Ruggiero return to the school in an administrative role.

“The reward of this job is seeing the kids become successful,” said Ferguson. “If you stay in the same building long enough, you come in contact with generations of former students.”

Ferguson’s influence has made its impact on her own children as well. Her daughter, Julianne, is a teacher at Harrington Elementary School. Her son, Thomas, is a teacher in Winthrop and his wife, Michelle, teaches in Wakefield.

“I always looked up to her, and I always wanted to be a teacher because of her,” said Julianne. “You can tell how much she cares about her kids. It’s pretty inspiring.”

Julianne began teaching in Lynn Public Schools five years ago, turning to her mother for guidance and support.

“It’s so nice to have a mentor who’s that close to you,” she said.

“I just told them, ‘Everyday, it’s a new adventure,’” said Ferguson. “You never know what the kids are going to do. It’s certainly never boring, but always gratifying.”



Above, Raemary Ferguson answers a question for student Emi-Ling Morales. At left, Ferguson with Brickett Principal Deb Ruggiero, whom she had as a fourth-grade student at Brickett.

PHOTOS: MEAGHAN CASEY

Mann retires after 41 years in LPS

MANN: from Page 12

“It’s the depth of the problems children have these days. They are a lot more complicated and they need a lot more help navigating the world,” she said. “It’s a scary world out there sometimes for little children and it seems to be increasing all the time. I feel badly for them.”

Mann said she follows her students as they progress through the schools after leaving Shoemaker, and noted with pride that six of Lynn Classical’s top students this year are graduates of Shoemaker and Pickering Middle School.

She now has the grandchildren of students she taught years ago and a member of the Shoemaker School Site Council is someone she had as a fourth-grade student.

Mann said she expects to be heavily involved with family after she retires, including helping to care for her 89-year-old mother, but she already knows where she’ll be with her friends on the Wednesday after Labor Day in September, the traditional first day of school.

“We have it all planned,” she said. “It’s a table for four at the Wenham Tea House.”



Linda Mann

AROUND
LYNN
SCHOOLS

Aborn Elementary

The Aborn School held elections for a first-ever Student Council, with a mission to organize community-service projects.

Breed Middle School

A team of Breed students participated in the sixth annual Rube Goldberg

Machine Building Competition. They included: Joe Benevento, A.J. Bradbury, Michael Fitzgerald, Timothy Fitzgerald, Tyler Goodwin, Tyron Huot, Adam Lovett, Jesse Mower, Anthony Ong, Matthew Riley, Zack Say and Courtney Smith. The team placed 11th out of 24 teams. The school is proud of their participation, creative minds and diligent effort.

Connery Elementary

Attorney James Carrigan visited with fourth- and fifth-grade students to talk about Law Day and to encourage them to work hard and follow their dreams. He also presented the school with the Lynn Bar Association Award, honoring

the dedication of the faculty and administration.

Drewicz Elementary

In conjunction with Tufts University, Drewicz developed the STOMP Robotics program for fifth-graders. Teams developed robotic cars out of LEGOS and raced them down the halls of the school.

Thanks to Eagle Scout Troop 466, the schoolyard now features a U.S. map painted on the ground. The map will be a great teaching aid for students to find different states.

Lynn Tech

U.S history students visited City Hall to

familiarize themselves with the logistics, as well as the different departments of the city’s government. They also had the opportunity to have lunch with Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy.

The Lynn Tech robotics team has competed in the FIRST Robotics competition for the past five years. The past two seasons, the team won the Gracious Professionalism Award at the regional event, held in Boston.

Lynn Woods Elementary

The Lynn Woods School had a gym makeover. The family of the late Bob Cogan, a former third-grade teacher at the school, made a generous donation

toward this project. The school’s business partner, Cuffe-McGinn Funeral Home, also contributed to the school improvement project.

Shoemaker Elementary

Shoemaker classes visited the Museum of Science, Franklin Park Zoo, House of Seven Gables, the Boston Ballet and Boston Harbor Cruises. These trips provide students with experiences related to their studies. They have also been treated to wonderful shows – the Gerwick Puppets entertained, Slapstick Science astonished, Eden’s Edge enlightened and the New England Aquarium brought a tide pool exhibit to the school.

SCHOOL LYNN DIRECTORY

Elementary schools

Aborn

Anne Graul, Principal
409 Eastern Ave., Lynn, MA 01902
781-477-7320

Brickett

Debra Ruggiero, Principal
123 Lewis St., Lynn, MA 01902
781-477-7333

Julia F. Callahan

Edward Turmenne, Principal
200 O’Callaghan Way, Lynn, MA 01905
781-477-7340

Cobbet

Dr. Brian Fay, Principal
40 Franklin St., Lynn, MA 01902
781-477-7341

William P. Connery

Patricia Riley, Principal
50 Elm St., Lynn, MA 01905
781-477-7344

Drewicz

Bernadette Stamm, Principal
34 Hood St., Lynn, MA 01905
781-477-7350

Robert L. Ford

Claire Crane, Principal
49 Hollingsworth St., Lynn, MA 01902
781-477-7375

E. J. Harrington

Michael Molnar, Principal
21 Dexter St., Lynn, MA 01902
781-477-7380

Hood

Joseph Cole, Principal
24 Oakwood Ave., Lynn, MA 01902
781-477-7390

Ingalls

Kimberlee Powers, Principal
1 Collins Street Terr., Lynn, MA 01902
781-477-7400

Lincoln-Thomson

Helen Psallidas Mihos, Principal
115 Gardiner St., Lynn, MA 01905
781-477-7460

Lynn Woods

Ellen Fritz, Principal
31 Trevett Ave, Lynn, MA 01904
781-477-7433

Sewell-Anderson

Patricia A. Mallett, Principal
25 Ontario St., Lynn, MA 01905
781-477-7444

Capt William G. Shoemaker

Linda Mann, Principal
26 Regina Road, Lynn, MA 01904
781-477-7450

Edward A. Sisson

Jane Franklin, Principal
58 Conomo Ave., Lynn, MA 01904
781-477-7455

Tracy

Mary Dill, Principal
35 Walnut St., Lynn, MA 01905
781-477-7466

Washington

Nancy Takis-Conway, Director
Janice Sheehan, Director
58 Blossom St., Lynn, MA 01902
781-477-7401

Middle schools

Breed

Fred Dupuis, Principal
90 O’Callaghan Way, Lynn, MA 01905
781-477-7330

Thurgood Marshall

Richard Cowdell, Principal
19 Porter St. Lynn, MA 01902
781-477-7360

Pickering

Robert Murphy, Principal
70 Conomo Ave, Lynn, MA 01904
781-477-7440

High schools/Alternative

Lynn Classical

Gene Constantino, Principal
235 O’Callaghan Way, Lynn, MA 01905
781-477-7404

Lynn English

Andrew Fila, Principal
50 Goodridge Street, Lynn, MA 01902
781-477-7366

Lynn Vocational Technical Institute

James Ridley, Director
80 Neptune Blvd, Lynn, MA 01902
781-477-7420

Fecteau-Leary Junior-Senior High

Maura Scully, Principal
33 North Common St. Lynn, MA 01902
781-268-3000

LEEP Evening Program

Karen Twomey, Director
50 Goodridge St., Lynn, MA 01902
781-477-7361

MARSHALL: from Page 1

City and MSBA to agree on a design for a new Marshall, which may be built on the Porter Street site

where the existing school stands. The Fecteau-Leary building would likely be used as a transitional facility.

There is a possibility Lynn would be invited to participate in the MSBA’s Model Schools program, in which school districts can adapt and reuse the design of successful, recently constructed schools in order to reduce time and expense. The Model Schools program was instituted last year for high schools and expanded to include middle and elementary schools earlier this year.

Model Schools are efficient in design and easy to maintain. They incorporate sustainable, green design elements when possible, and are flexible in educational programming spaces, while encouraging community use.

After a design is accepted, the MSBA and the City would enter into a project funding agreement, in which the MSBA would commit to funding a certain percentage of the construction costs.

“We still have a ways to go, but we are in the

pipeline,” said Kennedy, adding she is appreciative of the efforts of Rep. Steven M. Walsh, Rep. Robert F. Fennell and Sen. Thomas M. McGee in advocating for the project with the MSBA.

“

This partnership between the City and the MSBA is a major step forward in securing the funding to rebuild Marshall Middle school and create the best possible learning environment for our students.

Rep. Steven M. Walsh

Since its inception in 2004, the MSBA has made approximately \$6.6 billion in reimbursements to cities, towns and regional school districts for school construction projects.

Two Classical seniors get into Harvard

HARVARD: from Page 1

Elementary School.

“I wanted to be involved in the community so I could be a role model for younger students and athletes like myself,” he said.

Ranked 16th in a class of 256, Johnson excelled in the classroom as well. He enrolled in four Advanced Placement (AP) courses and was a member of the National Honor Society. In addition to Harvard, he was accepted to Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Boston University, Bentley and Northeastern University, among others. He plans to major in economics.

Garrity, this year’s valedictorian at Classical, will pass up a coveted seat at Harvard and enroll at Tufts University in the fall. Tufts received 15,437 applications this year, making it the third-largest applicant pool in history. Of those applicants, 24.5

percent were accepted – the lowest rate since 2001.

“The environment at Tufts fit what I was looking for, in terms of where I want to take my undergraduate education,” said Garrity, who plans to major in biology and music. “I know biology and music are two different ends of the spectrum, but science has always been my favorite subject and I’ve been involved in the music program for the past eight years.”

Garrity, who plays flute and piano, was a member of Lynn Public Schools marching, jazz and concert bands and was selected to play in the Lions Club All-State Band. She also served as editor-in-chief of the school newspaper, participated in the drama club, volunteered for the Arthritis Foundation, took seven AP courses and was inducted into the National Honor Society and Music Honor Society. Her other college acceptances include Boston College, Boston University, Northeastern University and the University of Vermont.

DEDICATIONS AT ENGLISH



Debra McManus receives a hug from her daughter, Yiyi, at the ceremony to dedicate the Patrick J. McManus Guidance & Career Center at Lynn English to her late husband, an English alumnus and former mayor of Lynn who died last July. Looking on are their other children and Pat's mother, Kay.



Lynn English held a ceremony May 10 to commemorate the rededication of the Abraham Lincoln foyer at the school. Renovations to the foyer included the refinishing of the large bronze statue of Lincoln as well as other Lincoln memorabilia. Tim Ring, a teacher at the school and vice president of the Lynn Museum and Historical Society, noted that the boots Lincoln was wearing the night he was assassinated were brought to Lynn by a Union soldier and remained in his family's care for 82 years before being donated to the Ford's Theatre Museum in 1947.

Music program is noteworthy

Lynn receives national recognition

BY RICH FAHEY

How do you make yourself almost indispensable?

If you are a fine arts program — or, more specifically, a music program — you try to integrate what you do into as many other subjects as possible. And you make sure you get as many students as possible to participate in your program.

On May 5, the All City Elementary String and Band Concert filled City Hall Auditorium while the All City Middle and High School Band, String, Orchestra, and Jazz Bands Concert was held May 19 at Breed Middle School. Both were celebrations of students of many different experience and ability levels, united by their love of music.

For the second time in three years, a national group has taken notice. The NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants) Foundation has named Lynn one of its 2010 Best Communities for Music Education.

The districts were measured across curricular and programmatic criteria as well as public support of their music programs. The survey was developed and administered by The Institute for Educational Research and Public Service, an affiliate of the University of Kansas.

Each school receiving the Best Communities designation scored in the 80th percentile or higher in the survey's

grading process. Participants in the survey answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program, and other relevant factors in their music education programs. The responses were verified with district officials, and advisory organizations reviewed the data.

In Lynn, about 11,000 of the district's 14,000 students are involved in the music program, according to Joseph Picano, supervisor of fine arts for Lynn Public Schools. He said the designation is particularly important at a time that many districts — including Lynn — are enduring deep budget cuts and struggling to keep arts programs afloat.

"We now have a formal music curriculum in places for students from kindergarten through grade 12," said Picano.

That curriculum is also adjusted to enhance each school's curriculum.

"We are always looking at ways for our music teachers — or our art teachers, for that matter — to hook up with teachers of other subjects to enhance both their curriculum and our curriculum," said Picano.

He said establishing solid links across the educational spectrum and the large numbers of students participating in music programs have contributed to the support the program enjoys.

The elementary school concert had to be moved to City Hall Auditorium to accommodate all who wanted to attend. A program that once had 30 students now encompasses 650.

At the secondary level, Lynn has a performing concert band, marching band, string orchestra, jazz band, and a symphonic orchestra, and recently incorporated all the same performing units at the middle school level.

"We're also lucky because we have so many parents advocating for us and supporting us in groups such as the Band Boosters," said Picano.

Picano said the program has also tried to be very visible to the public, performing for many civic groups, at public events and on holidays.

Alumni of the Lynn music program are making their mark in music programs at Berklee College of Music, Salem State, UMass-Amherst and Harvard, where three members of the band are alumni of the Lynn program.

Another key to the program's success has been instructors such as Toku Kawata, who teaches strings in Lynn but is also a renowned concert pianist who won first place at a recent competition at Carnegie Hall; and Linda Drugan, who received the Distinguished Music Educators award from Yale University, one of only 40 teachers in the country to win the award.

Series of high notes

Some facts and figures about the Lynn Public Schools music program that helped earn the NAMM Foundation's 2010 Best Communities for Music Education Award.

- Approximately 11,000 of 14,000 students are involved in the music program from grades K -12.
- There are choral groups in all schools that have music.
- Instrumental instruction begins at grade 4 and continues through high school for band and string instruments.
- Students from all schools perform in district auditions for vocal and instrumental students. Every year Lynn students who pass the audition wind up in the All State Orchestra, and some go on to perform at Symphony Hall.
- Lynn has the largest number of students in the state getting scholarships from the Handel & Haydn Society. They study weekly at New England Conservatory. The scholarships are awarded to students from grades 3-12.
- The Lynn Jazz Band has won gold and silver medals in competitions, along with the concert band.
- A partnership with the Boston Symphony Orchestra allows Lynn to receive coaching from symphony players, guest appearances, performances, and educational workshops for the teachers that follow all the guidelines of the Dept. of Education. In addition, 400 elementary students each year go to a youth concert at Boston Symphony Hall.

1 + 1 = 81

Shoemaker principal Mann retires after 41 years in Lynn schools

BY RICH FAHEY

The deal has been struck, and longtime Shoemaker School principal Linda Mann can retire in peace.

“I told (Superintendent of Schools) Cathy Latham that if she brought Pat Riley from the Connery School in to take my place, I would retire,” said Mann, principal at the Shoemaker for the past 19 years and a veteran of 41 years in Lynn Public Schools.

In May, Riley was assigned to replace Mann at Shoemaker. Mann said one of the reasons she supported Riley because of Shoemaker’s nine classrooms for autistic students (to go along with 12 regular-education classes). Riley has an autistic grandson and has managed similar programs at Connery.

Mann said she has a “real sensitivity” to the program – named C.O.A.C.H. for Creating Opportunities for Autistic Children – something she didn’t have when it started. “My biggest fear was that when I retired that something might happen to it,” she said.

Shoemaker has long been one of Lynn’s highest-achieving elementary schools. Mann credited a staff of veteran teachers, little turnover and a high rate of volunteerism and fundraising by parents. “The parents have stepped in to provide big things such as listening stations, and smaller things such as laminating films. Sometimes they’re little things, but they make a big difference,” she said.

Mann, who has worked at every elementary grade level and at several Lynn schools, is a native of Lynn’s Pine Hill neighborhood. She attended Lynn elementary schools, St. Mary’s for middle school and high school, earned a bachelor’s degree from Westfield State College in 1968 and a master’s degree from Salem State College in 1972.

Mann said if there is a difference between the students she educated early in her career and today’s kids.

See **MANN**
Page 9

Ferguson has educated Brickett students for the last 40 years

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

After four decades of influencing young minds at Brickett Elementary School, Raemary Ferguson is hanging up her teaching cap.

Ferguson, who entered the teaching profession 41 years ago, started out at Sacred Heart School in Lynn before finding her permanent post at Brickett one year later. She has never left.

“I knew in high school that I wanted to go into this field,” she said. “I originally planned on going into secondary [education], but when I taught fourth grade at Sacred Heart, I loved it.”

Born in Lynn and raised in Nahant, Ferguson is a graduate of St. Mary’s High School. She went on to earn her

bachelor’s degree in education at Salem State College and her master’s in early childhood education at New York University. During her tenure at Brickett, she taught sixth grade for 23 years and fifth grade for the past 17 years.

“She’s incredible,” said Brickett Principal Debra Ruggiero. “After 41 years, she’s just as strong. She hasn’t missed a beat – or a day. We’re lucky to have her, but sad to see her go.”

Ruggiero’s connection to Ferguson dates back to 1975, when she was a sixth-grader in Ferguson’s social studies

class.

“I have to say, as a student, her opinion of me meant a lot,” said Ruggiero. “Seeing her here [when I came back as principal] brought back a flood of memories from childhood.”

See **FERGUSON** Page 9



Raemary Ferguson

Shoemaker students will miss Linda Mann.

