

# Pontiac Jr. High School Newsletter

December 2009

## Message from the Principal

Happy Holidays to all of our PJHS students and families! We have three full weeks of school until the winter break. We appreciate your help during this busy time of year to be sure your student has sufficient time for home work and a good nights rest.

The Winter Concert for band and chorus will be held at PTHS on Wednesday, December 16 at 7:00 PM. We made every attempt to schedule the concert on a different night of the week but we were not able to do that this year. We look forward to celebrating the holidays with the beautiful music our students have been preparing. We hope you can join us!

Second quarter Progress Reports were sent home on Wednesday, November 25. Every student received a Progress Report. If you did not receive one for your student, please contact the office.

Our students and staff have been very generous this past month making donations to the United Way Campaign and the Fall Food Drive. Thank you to all the teachers who

organized the food drive and everyone who made donations of food items or money to provide Thanksgiving meals to many families in our community.

The ISAT tests are coming! On March 1-12 all of our students will be taking the ISAT tests in Reading and Math. In addition to Reading and Math, 7th grade students take a Science test and 6th and 8th grade students take a Writing test. These test results are used to determine if our school is making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

I am extremely proud of our students and staff at PJHS for achieving AYP for the past two years!!! We look forward to another year of demonstrating student achievement. Please be sure to keep these dates in mind as you schedule appointments for your students. They always perform better on tests when they take them with the whole class.

Our first quarterly PBIS Celebration was a great success and students are working hard to



meet school wide expectations to earn the second quarter celebration. We sincerely thank all of the individuals and businesses that have supported this new program with donations of prizes and money. We currently have 396 students enrolled at PJHS. We can be very proud of the exciting activities that are happening in our school and the terrific students and staff who make this a wonderful place to learn and work.

This is the time of year to live life with a grateful heart. May your family have a wonderful holiday and enjoy your winter break!

*Mrs. Judy Donze*



### Upcoming December Dates

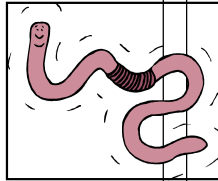
- Dec. 9th-Sports Booster Mtg. 6:00pm in the commons
- Dec. 16th-Winter Music Concert 7:00pm at PTHS
- Dec. 15th-PTO Mtg. 6:00pm at Central School
- Dec. 18th-End of 2nd nine weeks
- Dec. 18th-Early Dismissal at 2:15pm for Winter Break

### Winter Break

Students will be dismissed for winter break on Friday, December 18 at 2:15 PM. We will all return to school on Monday, January 4 at 8:00 am.

## 6th Grade Science

We are beginning a new book in 6th grade science. The book is green and titled "Animals". The students will be learning about animal characteristics and a variety of animal behaviors. Invertebrates will be the first topic that will be studied. Students will be introduced to three major classes of mollusks: gastropods, bivalves, and cephalopods. We



will be researching the mollusks' bodies, feeding habits, and circulatory systems. We will also be studying annelid worms including earthworms, marine worms, and leeches. Your student may come home complaining that doctors sometimes use leeches to reduce swelling after surgery!

Mrs. VanHoveln

## Science Humor

**Question:** Forwards it is heavy, backwards it is not, what is it?

**Answer:**  
Ask your student for the answer.

## School Store

School Store is now open! Every Tuesday, the school store stops at your student's classroom. Items for sale include:

- \*\*Pencils \$0.25
- \*\*Lead \$1.00
- \*\*Mechanical Pencils \$1.00
- \*\*Folders \$0.50
- \*\*Notebooks \$1.25
- \*\*Erasable Pens \$1.00
- \*\*Pens \$0.25

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## 7th Grade Social Studies News

In Social Studies, we began a unit on Canada. The students will be studying in detail the 10 provinces and 3 territories of Canada. We will be learning about their landforms, economy and people. Some interesting Canadian facts: Canada is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest country of the world, Canadian Shield covers more than half of Canada's entire land area, most Canadians live in the southeastern part of Canada, and Canada is a bilingual country with two official languages (English and French). Ask your student about any other interesting information they have learned about Canada during this unit of study. As we study Canada, students will be writing a 5 paragraph essay to compare and contrast Canada and the United States landforms and/or bodies of water during their Language Arts class. The essay will be a grade in Language Arts and in Social Studies. We will be having our Chapter 5 test about Canada on Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup>.

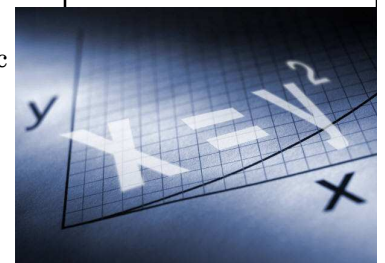


## 7th Grade Math Corner

We just finished working with Hands-On Equations Learning System Level I. In this level the students will reinforce their basic computational skills, develop their problem-solving skills, and gain confidence in algebraic reasoning. The students will learn to solve the most basic equations for success in algebra. Please ask your child about pawns, legal moves and keeping

the equation balanced. The students really enjoyed working with the Hands-On Equations materials to solve basic math problems.

Happy Counting:)  
Mrs. Wasson



## Dean's Notes

On Friday October 30 we celebrated our first PBIS quarterly celebration. All students who displayed positive behavior throughout the first quarter were able to participate. We had planned on an outside "tailgate party", but with the weather we were forced to stay inside. However, each student was fed a hotdog lunch with chips and cookies provided. Several teachers worked hard to come up with indoor activities to make the afternoon a success. Several prizes were also given away to randomly drawn students, in addition to our weekly drawings. Some of the rewards we give away range from gift cards to local businesses, t-shirts, ala carte money, preferred lunch seating, first in lunch line, etc. This new program has made a great impact on student behaviors so far, and is solely funded by sponsors and donations. We gratefully welcome any type of donation that anyone is able to help with.

Please know that anytime students have a problem with another student or anything else that they can always feel free to come in and see me. My door is always open. Remember that bullying is unfair and one-sided. It is when someone keeps hurting, threatening, frightening, or leaving someone out on purpose. Please do not be a bystander. Report this behavior to an adult and/or fill out a bullying referral report in the office.

Students are required by law to be in regular attendance at school. Parents must call the office before 9:00 a.m. at (815) 842-4343. After a student has been absent for three or more consecutive days due to illness, they may be required to provide a physician's notice. Also, once students have been absent from school for 15% of the total school year, they will be required to have a physician's note when absent. Students who are unexcused to school will be turned into the Livingston County Truancy Review Board.

### A big thank you to our up to date PBIS Sponsors:

Education Foundation District 429  
 McDonald's  
 State Farm-Lisa Kelly  
 Trainor BP  
 Wal-Mart  
 Joe's Pizza  
 Pontiac Sports  
 The General Store  
 Baby Bull's  
 Klopfenstein's  
 Several Jr. High Staff Members

WJEZ  
 Caryl and Maryln's Salon  
 Wolf Creek Golf Course  
 Hicksgas  
 Johnson's Press of America  
 Joanna's Floral  
 Pfaff's Bakery  
 Gem's Carpet Cleaning  
 DeLong's Causal Dining  
 Bernardi's

Mr. DeLong  
 Dean of Students

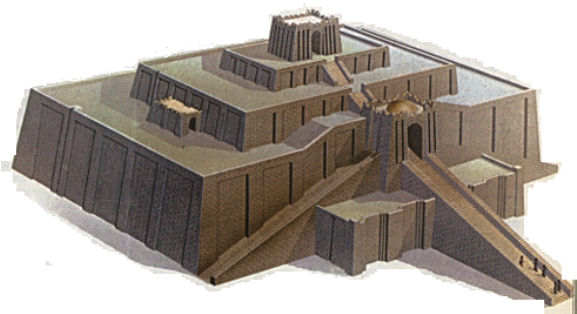
## Sixth Grade Social Studies News!

A big thank you to all parents who helped support our students in creating some fantastic Egyptian projects!! They have been enjoyed by many!!!

### On to Ancient Mesopotamia

From Egypt we move to Ancient Mesopotamia. Farmers lived between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in an area known as ancient Mesopotamia. This area was first called Sumer and then later Babylon under Hammurabi. They built cities and developed cuneiform writing. The Hebrews founded a monotheistic religion and the Kingdom of Israel. Not only will students be immersed into the geography and history of Mesopotamia, but they will also discover that the wheel, the greatest invention ever, was probably developed in this area. What would life be like if the wheel had never been invented?

Let's explore Ancient Mesopotamia!



# Student Council News

Congratulations to the following teachers for receiving an award from Student Council: Mrs. Fraher, Mrs. Abry, Mrs. Wasson, and Mrs. Cheryl Krueger. These teachers were nominated by Student Council members for doing an outstanding job in their classrooms. After being nominated, the Student Council members then wrote letters explaining why these teachers are so wonderful!! Student Council members presented these teachers with a framed letter and a small gift during a monthly staff meeting. The students truly enjoyed the opportunity to say thanks! Student Council will be recognizing more teachers after the next two quarters. Thank you to all the staff members at PJHS for all that you do every day to make school enjoyable.

Thank you to the students who worked our first 50/50 Raffle at the boys basketball game on Tuesday, November 24<sup>th</sup>. Our winner of \$64 was Joe Dittmer. Thanks to everyone who bought raffle tickets.

On Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, from 4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. we will be working at the Secret Santa Shop at Central School. Right now we have 13 students signed up to help donate their time.

Stay tuned for more exciting Student Council news! Also, feel free to listen to the announcements and come to our next meeting!

## News from the School Counselor:

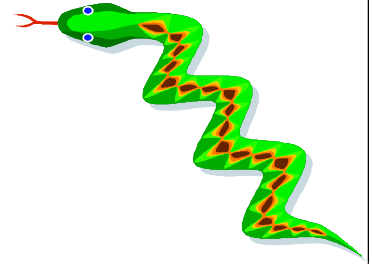


The holiday season is drawing near, which is a great opportunity to teach our children about “gratitude”. It is very easy for children to get caught up in the heightened ‘wish list’ and focused on ‘how much stuff they can get’ over the holidays. But what about gratitude and being thankful? Take the holiday season as an opportunity to show our children that the holidays are not all about what you can get, but also what you can GIVE. Small service projects around this theme can help children develop empathy. Empathy is the ability to understand how someone else is feeling and to act on this feeling—to “put yourself in someone else’s shoes”. By helping others who may be less fortunate, your child can better understand how fortunate their own family (and even on a more individual level, how fortunate he/she) is in comparison to others. Some possible service projects include: become involved in a holiday food drive, donate time at the local food pantry, help serve a meal at a homeless shelter, clean out closets and donate toys and clothes to the Salvation Army (or to a homeless shelter, or to a specific family in need), or “adopt” a needy child and purchase gifts for that child at holiday time. By teaching our children to help others, we are also giving our children the gift of gratitude.

*Happy Holidays!*

Marci Hunt, QMHP, MA, LCPC, School Counselor

## 6th Grade Literature



We are in the middle of Collection 3 where we are learning about different forms of fiction. Our next story will be “Medusa’s Head” and then we will move on to “Perseus and the Gorgon’s Head.” Both of these stories are Greek myths and students will focus on the features of myths and mythical heroes. Myths are stories involving gods and other superhuman beings. Our last story in this collection will be a folk tale, “How the Snake Got Poison.” The term folklore is used for the traditional songs, stories, proverbs, and riddles passed down from generation to generation. “How the Snake Got Poison” is an African American folk tale retold by Zora Neale Hurston explaining how rattlesnakes came to have a poisonous bite and a rattle on its tail.



### *Character Counts*

#### *Pillars to live by:*

- CARING**
- RESPECT**
- FAIRNESS**
- CITIZENSHIP**
- RESPONSIBILITY**
- TRUSTWORTHINESS**

## Builders Club News

November was a busy month for our club. In observance of Veteran's Day, we created a Wall of Stars display in the commons. Students brought in stars with the names of friends and loved ones who have or are serving in all the branches of the armed forces. We displayed 149 stars to remember and honor our veterans. A big thank you to Hannah Dunlap for painting the banner above our display.

During our last meeting, we made Thanksgiving cards for our BINGO buddies at Asta Care. We then hand-delivered them to our friends there when we gathered for our monthly BINGO games. We are thankful to have so many helpful young students interested in spending time with our older nursing home friends.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, December 10 and the next BINGO will be on Wednesday, December 16.

Mrs. Dunlap and Mrs. Vitzthum, sponsors

## From the desk of your friendly Resource Officer, Shawna Gilliam

With the winter and holiday season upon us, many people often hit the roads to travel. These are just a couple of tips to help keep you safe while out on the roads. Before you hit the roads you need to be sure you have everything you may need in case of an emergency. You should also plan your route in advance and check weather reports. This is just an example of some of the items you should keep in your vehicle during your travel.

Flashlight, Maps, Bottled Water, Shovel, Basic First Aid Kit, Blanket, Hat, Gloves, Boots, Spare clothes, Spare tire (to include jack and tire repair kit), Non Perishable food items (peanut butter, energy bars, crackers)

If you find yourself stranded, do not panic. These are few tips to help you. Conserve your vehicle fuel by letting it run with the heater on about ten minutes every hour to keep warm. Be sure to crack the window slightly to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Turn to dome light on at night to help road crew workers spot you. Be sure not to run the battery down. If you have a cell phone conserve the battery life by turning it off when not in use. Use spare clothing and blankets to help keep warm. Never leave your vehicle on foot. Stay inside your car. You are more likely to be found there. Have a safe and Happy Holiday Season!

Illinois State Police Winter Road Conditions 1-800-452-4368 or [www.gettingaroundillinois.com](http://www.gettingaroundillinois.com)

## 8th Grade News

Congratulations to all the students who received a 100% on their Preposition test!! These high scores will result in a better understanding of prepositional phrases. In Science we are continuing to study the human body. Math classes are studying solving algebraic equations. Please continue to turn in homework and keep track of your math notes. Your child needs to bring in index cards for our Constitution unit in Social Studies that will start in January. In Literature, we finished reading "The Diary of Anne Frank." We are currently watching the movie. We also visit the Library each Thursday so please remember to bring your library books to school on Thursday!

This year the 8<sup>th</sup> grade will be hosting a Christmas party for the 1<sup>st</sup> graders at Central School. Please send in a \$2.00 donation with your child. This money goes to buy Christmas presents for the 1<sup>st</sup> graders. More details to come about the party itself. Additionally, if you are willing to donate some cookies for the Christmas party, please let Mr. Misener know, and he will let you know when to send them in to school. Lastly, please continue to participate in the fundraising in order to raise money for the Great America Trip in May. It will be here before you know it!!

## Holiday Food Drive

Pontiac Jr. High School concluded its Fall/Holiday Food Drive on November 25<sup>th</sup>. We had a great response this year. We were able to collect over 4000 items to be distributed to the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry and the Livingston County Food Pantry. We were also able to collect enough monetary donations to purchase 24 Thanksgiving meals from County Market to disperse to PJHS families. Mr. Misener's study hall had the highest average item per person and won a pizza party. Thanks to Pizza Hut, Joe's, and Casey's for donating the pizzas and to County Market for donating the pop to drink. We were able to make the Thanksgiving holiday more enjoyable for many families! Thank you to everyone that donated items and were able to make monetary donations!



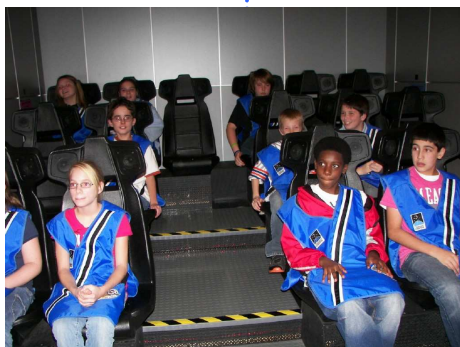
# 7th Grade Field Trip

**\*\*Thank you to the Education Foundation and Humiston Trust for helping fund our field trip.**

During the first week of November, the 7th grade class will took a field trip to the Challenger Learning Center, Prairie Aviation Museum, ISU Planetarium, and the Livingston County War Museum. Students had many weeks of preparation to get ready for this field trip. It was a wonderful hands-on learning experience! We were so happy to be able to offer this opportunity to our students. Thank you to parents for your support and for all of those who volunteered to chaperone. Read on to learn more about what the students did during their field trip.

## Challenger Learning Center

The Challenger Learning Center offered students the chance to fly a simulated mission into space. Students acted as real astronauts preparing for and carrying out a mission to Mars. Each student had a particular role, and it helped the class realize just how important teamwork is in order to have success. This portion of the trip encouraged students to apply their skills in math, science, reading and technology. To learn more about the CLC please visit their website at: <http://challengerlearningcenter.com/>



## Prairie Aviation Museum & ISU Planetarium

At the Prairie Aviation Museum, students had the chance to see many historic planes as well as more recent planes that have been used in the military. In addition to learning much more about the history of aviation, students also got the chance to sit inside a helicopter that was used in WWII. At the ISU Planetarium students got to gaze at the stars and learn more about distant galaxies and constellations in the night sky.



## War Museum

The 7<sup>th</sup> graders also visited the Livingston County War Museum in downtown Pontiac. While there students had the opportunity to meet many veterans who live in our community. Not only did they get to hear first-hand accounts from the people who served, but also, they were able to view countless artifacts from the wars and other military history including uniforms, maps, weapons, journals, photos and more. The students really enjoyed all there was to see and especially liked the cookies the veterans had prepared for them. We'd like to thank those veterans for their service to our country and for their warm welcome at the museum. To learn more about the museum check out their website at <http://warmuseum.blogspot.com/> or go check it out for yourself!

