



Pontiac Jr. High School Newsletter

Message from the Principal

March 2010



The big news in March for all public schools in Illinois is the **ISAT** testing! On **March 1-10** all of our students are taking the ISAT tests in Reading and Math. Our 7th grade students take the ISAT test in Science. The 6th and 8th grade students take the ISAT test in Writing. March 11 and 12 will be used for make up tests but we will return to our regular schedule.

During testing our daily schedule will change slightly since the test sessions are longer than our usual class periods. During test days, students will take two tests, attend a few regular classes, attend PE and their Exploratory class and have lunch, band and chorus.

We appreciate parents encouraging students to do their best on these very important assessments. As always, a good nights sleep and breakfast are a great way to help ensure success. We will provide a small snack each day of testing during 1st hour.

Students and teachers have been working very hard all year on all content areas focusing on the Illinois Learning Standards. We also have had Focus Study Hall review this past quarter on key concepts.

I know testing can be

stressful for everyone involved, but this is the time for our students to shine and I am confident that they will!

The 6th annual **PJHS LOCK IN** will be held on Saturday, April 10 from 1:00 PM – 9:00 PM. Activities we are planning include: 3 on 3 basketball Tournament, volleyball tournament, video game room, Survivor, Team Building, a dance, Bean Bag Toss, Ladder Ball, Dance Center performance, sewing for the service men and women, computer lab and other activities. Pizza will be served around 5:00. We will also have Avantis gondolas on sale for any student who does not want pizza. An information letter will be sent home on March 8 with a permission form for you to sign and return with your student. These forms are due back to school by March 17. A fee of \$10 will again be asked to help us cover expenses.

March is also the month for **report cards** and spring **Parent Teacher Conferences**. Report cards will be sent home on Tuesday, March 16. Parent Teacher Conferences will be held on Tuesday, March 16 from 1:00-7:00 and Thursday,

March 18 from 1:00 – 7:00. Spring conferences will be held for students based on teacher or parent request. Not all students will have conferences but all students will receive report cards.

Students will be dismissed from school at 11:15 AM on Tuesday, March 16 and Thursday, March 18. There is no school on Friday, March 19. Our district Spring Break will be on March 22-26. We will return to school on Monday, March 29.

Enjoy your spring break with your students!

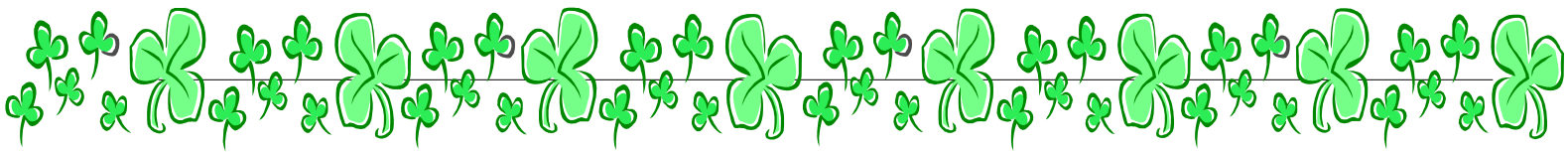
Mrs. Judy Donze



Spelling Bee FYI...Due to lack of funding there will be no Livingston County Spelling Bee or Regional Office of Education Spelling Bee this year.

Upcoming Dates

- **Mar. 1-12**- ISAT Testing
- **Mar. 9th**- Scholastic Bowl Vs. Prairie Central 4:00 pm
- **Mar. 11th**- Scholastic Bowl @ El Paso-Gridley 4:00 pm
- **Mar. 12th**-End of 3rd 9 Weeks
- **Mar. 13**- Scholastic Bowl (Livingston County)@Flanagan 8:00 am
- **Mar. 15th**- Spring Pictures
- **Mar. 15th**- Solo & Ensemble Contest @ PJHS 3 pm
- **Mar. 16th & 18th**- Early Dismissal 11:15 am Parent/Teacher Conferences 1-7 pm
- **Mar. 19th- 28th**- No School-Spring Break
- **Mar. 29th**-School Resumes



6th Grade Science

What does an ornithologist study? What are cormorants and anhingas? What animal consumes 3.3 times its body weight in food in a 24 hour period?

What animals are insectivores?

These are just a few questions that will be answered as the students complete the Animal book. This month we will be studying the four different kinds of birds, char-



acteristics of mammals, and monotremes and marsupials. We are looking forward to studying weather and hopefully be able to get outside to identify clouds, learn weather symbols, and weather forecasting. We want to prove that Punxsutawney Phil really doesn't know anything about forecasting weather!

Mrs. VanHoveln

Science Humor

Question: Why did the grizzly catch cold?

Answer: He went outside in his bear feet!!

7th Grade Science

In science we have been moving through material very quickly in order to ensure that student have been exposed to most of the basic concepts that will be found on the Science ISAT tests. When ISAT's are finished we will go back and review the information to help students better understand it. One of the main topics we will be studying is genetics/heredity. Students find this topic very exciting and like to consider all of the traits they have inherited from their parents. This would be a good opportunity for you to take time to tell your child about their lineage, or family history as well as where they likely got the visible traits that they have. Although this topic is fun for students, it can also be very difficult. Please remind your student to thoughtfully study for all tests and quizzes. As always, feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Mrs. Hansen

Synergistic Lab

Students in the Synergistic Lab will be starting their last rotation on March 1st. Many towers have been built and will be vying for the top spot on the Wall of Fame. So far, no one has topped Casey C.'s 1st place finish of 472 pounds per square inch. Tower crushing this nine weeks will be held on Friday, March 12th.

Students will also be tasting some new cookie recipes during ISAT testing. Students viewed some of Martha Stewart's favorite cookie recipes last month. Each class voted on which recipe they wanted to taste. Mrs. Loudon will be preparing Rocky Ledge Bars, Old-Fashioned Sugar Cookies and Alexis' Chocolate Chip Cookies for students to enjoy. Yum!

Builders Club News

Many of our members spent a portion of this past month expressing their creativity and artistic talents. We made and delivered 90 handmade Valentines to our senior citizen friends at Asta Care. We sent Valentines of all shapes and sizes, some with drawings, some with "lovely" sentiments, and some even with poetic messages. We have some talented members with kind hearts!

Upon our return from spring break, we will have our annual March of Pennies drive. The money we collect will be sent to the March of Dimes to benefit children born with birth defects. Please look around when doing your spring house cleaning for spare change - in couch cushions, coat pockets, or even in the car - and bring it to school for this worthy cause. There will be containers in all classrooms for the collection.

We have only 3 more BINGO nights remaining this school year. Our next BINGO date is set for Wednesday, March 17th. Please consider donning something green and playing an hour of BINGO with our BINGO buddies. Thank you to all the students who have devoted time each month to socialize in this way with our Asta Care friends.

Mrs. Dunlap and Mrs. Vitzthum, sponsors



News from the School Counselor

Self-Injury Informational Sheet

What is Self-Injury?

Self-injury is the most common label for behaviors in which a person deliberately harms his or her body. Some forms of self-injury include scratching, burning, cutting, biting, and hair pulling. Young adolescents may self injure with common items such as pencil erasers (i.e., rubbing the eraser on the skin until it causes injury) or cutting the skin with paper clips, scissors, razors, etc.

While youth can injure any part of their body, arms and legs are frequently cited as the most common places.

Why do people do it?

- The youth may feel overwhelmed by multiple life stressors - he/she engages in self-injuring behaviors primarily as a means to cope with painful emotions.
- The youth want to feel as if they 'fit in' - feeling included in a peer group.
- The youth may be curious about self-injuring because they have heard others 'talk' about it.

At times there is a secondary gain in which a response from others is not the primary goal of self-injury, but it may serve as a reinforcer for the behavior.

What does research tell us about Self-Injury?

Mental health professionals estimate that 1-4% of the general population engage in self-injuring behaviors; however, the prevalence rate is much higher among adolescents. Some researchers have estimated that 14%-39% of adolescents have engaged in some form of self-harm behaviors.

Warning signs of Self-Injury:

- Cut or burn marks (including scars) on arms, legs, abdomen, back, etc.
- Cutting instruments (e.g., razors, knives, erasers, scissors, etc.) found among your child's belongings.
- Friends or peers are cutting themselves.
- Wearing long pants and long sleeve shirts consistently (even in warmer weather) in attempts to hide self-inflicted injuries.
- Regularly seeking isolation and privacy when emotionally distraught or depressed.
- Frequent injuries with suspicious excuses (e.g. a cat owner who frequently has scratches on their arms).
- Difficulty talking about feelings.
- Poor functioning at home or in school.
- Low self-esteem and/or extreme self-criticism.

Some tips for helping your child:

If you suspect your child is self-harming, obtain professional services from a competent mental health professional to determine the intent and severity of the harming behaviors. The mental health professional will then determine a course of treatment for the youth and family.

- Talk about it with your child- encourage discussion, identify the problem, and remove the secrecy of self-harming behaviors.
- Offer support and be available to your child.
- Withhold judgment- Learn to listen without judging. Because those who self-injure may have difficulty expressing their emotions, or fear embarrassment about the reactions, it is important to encourage them to talk about it without judgment or negative responses.

Marci Hunt
QMHP, MA, LCPC
School Counselor/ Social Worker





Sixth Grade Social Studies News!

Ancient China

The Huang River Valley has been witness to the erratic history of its river. Since the 3rd millennium B.C., the river has changed course a total of 23 times, resulting from buildups in ground level that have come from deposits of loess, and has overrun its levees no fewer than 1,500 times. Because of the loess deposits, the Huang River has the fastest growing delta in the world, growing more than a mile a year! In Chapter seven, students will be learning about ancient China's geography, the Shang civilization, China's first empire under the harsh rule of its emperor, Shihuangdi, and the teachings of Confucius. Let's explore ancient China!!!!



Census 2010

Along with report cards, your student will be given information regarding the Census 2010. You will receive a Census questionnaire in the mail during March. Federal funding for school districts is based on the results of the Census. It is very important for all of our district residents to complete the short census questionnaire that you will receive and mail it back. Be sure that your household is counted.

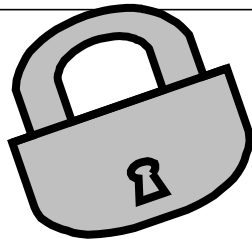
Pontiac Area Chamber of Commerce Student Recognition...

We are proud to announce the following 8th grade students will be honored at the Annual Chamber of Commerce Banquet on March 11, 2010: Alexandra Brown, Alex Kohlmeier and Kelsey Walsberg.

These students were selected based on their scholastic achievement, involvement in clubs, sports, and volunteer efforts.

These students and their parents will be recognized during the banquet at the Elks on March 12th. Congratulations students and parents!!!

Lock In



Lock In Committee Meeting:

The next meeting of the Lock In Committee will be held on Tuesday, March 30 at 5:00 PM. We will finalize Lock In plans at this meeting. All parents/guardians of PJHS students are encouraged to join us at this meeting.

6th Grade Language Arts

Since the beginning of 2010, we have continued working out of our grammar books. But instead of using our spelling books, we are now using our vocabulary books for the remainder of the year. I am very pleased to say that many students have done very well in this area. Students are now responsible for the definitions and synonyms of the 20 new words each week. It is great to see students excited about seeing or hearing one of our new words on TV, in a newspaper article, or in a library book. I have had students ask permission to use the water fountain to "slake" their thirst or to admit that something is an "enigma" to them. Hopefully, you will hear some new vocabulary words being used by your student also. In addition to grammar and vocabulary, we have also been working on our writing in preparation for the upcoming ISATs. There are some very good writers in the 6th grade!

PTO

District #429 PTO will meet at Central School in the PTO meeting room upstairs on Tuesday, March 9 at 6:00 PM. We encourage anyone interested to attend.

Spring Photos

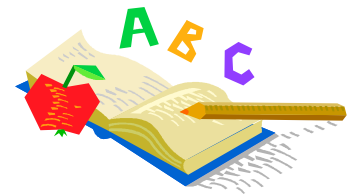
Spring photos will be taken on Monday, March 15. In the spring all students are photographed and parents receive proofs before they make a purchase. These are not prepaid photographs.



From the desk of Miss. Rapp:

In preparation for the ISAT exams, the 7th graders have a bulletin board in their hallway in which the students can answer various literature, science, and math questions. The answers are due to Mrs. Hansen by Friday, March 5th. The whole 7th grade would also like to thank Subway, Fiesta Lanes and McDonalds for their generous donations of prizes used for this activity. Good luck to everyone on ISATs!

Miss Rapp
7th Grade Language Arts



Character Counts

Pillars to live by:

**CARING
RESPECT
FAIRNESS
CITIZENSHIP
RESPONSIBILITY
TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Student Council News

It has been a very busy month for our Student Council members!!

A HUGE thanks to everyone who donated money to the victims of the Haiti earthquake. Our school raised \$514.29!! That money will be donated to the American Red Cross to assist Haiti!! Thanks again for your generosity.

We sold Valentine suckers during lunch for two days and raised about \$200. I think the students enjoyed the suckers and the profit will go towards buying prizes for our door decorating contest in April!!

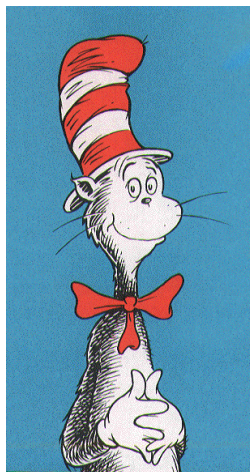
Some of our members have been participating in a Peer Mentoring Program on Fridays. These student council members give up their Study Hall time and offer to help other students in our school. What a super group of kids!! (Thank you to Mrs. Hunt for organizing this for us.

Last, but certainly not least, congratulations to our teachers that were awarded our certificates for the second quarter. The student council presented awards to Mrs. Chiodo, Mrs. Dunlap, Mrs. Hansen, and Mr. Misener. Thanks to all of our staff members who work hard every day and do great things for kids!!

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

6th Grade Literature

We will finish Collection 7 on poetry. There were many literary terms that the students discussed in this unit. We continued with similes and metaphors. The meter, rhyme and alliteration, and tone of poems were studied. I think the favorite selection of this unit was "Sneetches" by Dr. Seuss. Students discovered that Dr. Seuss includes serious themes in his silly rhymes. The students became poets when they wrote odes. Odes are poems written to honor someone or something.



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**

