



Artwork by Sage Barton,
Grade 7

Important Announcements

E-Mail Update Reminder

Please send your e-mail address and *any changes to your e-mail address* to Guidance so that Principal Joe O'Brien may keep you updated on pertinent middle school information. E-mails and changes should be sent to Adele Strashnick at 652-7105 or astrashnick@sbschools.net, as well as to your child's team teachers. Thanks!

Student Drop-Off

When parents are picking up or dropping off students, please pull all the way into the parent drop-off lane. There are three walkways connecting that lane to the middle school, and it blocks parking spaces when parents stop before the drop-off lane. Thank you.

Bus Notes

If your student would like to ride home on a friend's bus, they must bring a note from home. Have them bring the note to the main office to have it stamped. Thank you.

FHTMS Newsletter

December 2008

Volume 3, Number 4

"Working Together To Make a Difference"

Principally Speaking

By Joseph P. O'Brien, *Principal*

Middle School Parents still make a difference!

I came across this article in one of my professional journals and thought that it would be appropriate to send along to middle school parents who are working so hard in raising healthy adolescents today.

Most middle schools usually span three years like FHTMS, but the growing your child will do in these years is huge. Your child will grow physically. But expect tremendous mental, emotional, and social growth as well. Your preteen will probably display:

Some degree of self-absorption -- A key job for a child in middle school is to begin to answer the question, "Who am I?" Your child will be thinking about his/her own identity and how s/he appears to others. At time s/he may appear self-centered or even selfish. Try not to let this hurt your feelings. Give them some alone time, but do not allow them to isolate themselves from the family.

Identification with a peer group -- In middle school, the peer group often sets the tone. New behaviors you see in your child may be copied from peers. Your child may not seem as affectionate as before. But don't be fooled into thinking this is a time to back away. Your child needs you as a support and a guide, not a micro-manager.

A strong desire for independence -- This is countered by immature behavior if s/he doesn't get her/his way or if s/he's anxious or upset. This is the age when you can expect to hear, "I'm not a child! Stop treating me like one!" Five minutes later, this person who thinks s/he deserves to be treated like an adult will be having a meltdown that reminds you of her/his toddler years. Be mindful of your child's need for more freedom. But make sure s/he knows that you will link with more responsibility on her/his part (*Middle School Parents Make a Difference*, November 2008, vol.12, no.3, p.3).

Greetings from Mr. Weiss

By Stuart Weiss, *Assistant Principal*

I hope that everyone had the opportunity to meet with your child's teachers during our parent conference days. This is a great way to touch base and have a clearer picture of the work your child is doing in school every day. We encourage every parent or guardian to stay involved with your child's middle school education. Even though your child may be telling you to stay away, they still need you to be actively involved in their lives.



Artwork by Michael Dickhaut,
Grade 7

Important Dates

The Teacher Learning Wednesdays for FHTMS this year (a one-hour later start for students) are:

Wed., Dec. 17
Wed., Jan. 28
Wed., Feb. 18
Wed., March 18
Wed., April 15
Wed., May 20

FHTMS December/January Break: Wednesday, December 24 through Friday, January 2. We return to school Monday, January 5.

Next FHTMS Social: Friday, January 9.

PTO Meeting: Friday, January 16, 12:30-1:30 p.m.

End of Next Trimester: Friday, March 13.

Last Thursday I attended the choral concert. The students in grades 6-8 who participate in our choral program did a fantastic job. To see them on stage poised and ready to sing and then to hear the quality of their performance is always a treat. Next week the middle school and high school jazz bands perform on Monday, December 15. Finally, the 7th and 8th grade bands will perform on Tuesday, December 16.

Last month I mentioned that while at the National Middle School Conference I attended a workshop on Cyberbullying. This workshop was conducted by the producers of a video series call *Adina's Deck*. Their website gives the following description of the issue and the video: *Cyberbullying is threatening, harassing, humiliating, or embarrassing someone by using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, or mobile phones.*

Adina's Deck: The Exclusive Detective Agency Specializing in Solving Cyberbully Mysteries is a 30-minute film geared towards 9 to 14 year olds. The series centers around four tech savvy girls who solve their peers' cyber bullying mysteries. *Adina's Deck* originated from research that was conducted at several San Francisco Bay Area middle schools. Through this research, several learning problems were found: there is a significant knowledge gap between the concepts of virtual identity and real-life consequences. In the process, over 30 middle school girls contributed to concepts used in the script.

The presentation and video were very interesting. To find out more about this project you can visit their website <http://ldt.stanford.edu/~debbieh/index.html>. This is an issue for all students at the middle school level, and I encourage you to be aware of what your child is doing online.

Partnership for Teen Safety: Landmark Event

On Friday, December 5, F.H. Tuttle Middle School's SBNN broadcast team partnered with Teen Lures Prevention, a new teen safety program, to air live, for the first time nationally, the Teen Lures TV Newscast.

The Teen Lures TV Newscast is founded on the principal that "middle and high school students [may] actively participate in preventing sexual crimes against teens and youth. Students serve as news anchors, offering their peers safety solutions in the face of troubling news" (www.teenluresprevention.com).

SBNN advisor and FHTMS educator **Jay Hoffman** and his **SBNN middle school students (Samantha Barrett, Ronak Bhagat, Leah Charash, Neel Desai, Meghan Drouin, Bailey Holt-Gosselin, Janie Merrick, Neerja Patel, Riya Patel, and Hunter Riehle)** hosted over 30 special guests at the live airing, including **Tim Comolli**, South Burlington School District award-winning technology educator; **Martha Hanson**, Lt. Governor Brian Dubie's Chief of Staff; **Steve Dale**, Commissioner of the Vermont Department for Children and Families; and **Jennifer Mitchell** and **Rosemary Webb** of Child Lures Prevention/Teen Lures Prevention.



Artwork by Emma Briody,
Grade 7

Send in Your Box Tops and Hannaford Help Schools Receipts!

Please send in your Box Tops and Hannaford Helps Schools receipts and drop them off with Margaret Pasqual in our FHTMS main office. Thank you! The funds raised from these two sources will go to support student enrichment activities.

FHTMS Information Technology Update

By Kristen Courcelle and Steve Webster, *Information Technology Staff*

Information Technology in the Science Classroom

This month's technology projects provide a couple of examples of how technology can be employed in science classes as a highly engaging tool for helping students practice 21st century communication and creativity skills as they learn key science knowledge and concepts.

Multimedia Cell Models: Amelia Lutz's seventh-grade science students used HyperStudio to create multimedia models of cells that compared plant or animal cells to organizational structures. HyperStudio is software that enables students to construct creative interactive presentations that include text, images, original illustrations, animations, sounds, narration, video, and more.

Each of Mrs. Lutz's students selected a plant or animal cell and an organizational structure such as a school, team, business, hospital, or restaurant for comparison. Students applied their knowledge and understanding of the purpose and function of cell parts as they described the relationship between their cells and their organizations. They created presentations to illustrate the similarities and differences between the cell's organelles and the organization's components.

Students enjoyed this opportunity to further construct their knowledge of cells through a creative expression and synthesis of ideas.

Natural Resource Movies: Chris Towle's seventh-grade science students worked in teams of 3 or 4 students to create 2- to 3-minute movies. These movies explored a variety of natural resources and the impact of use of these resources on the environment and the economy. In this project students used the Internet to research their topics. They learned basic tips about videography. They planned their movies with storyboards and from those storyboards wrote scripts. They then filmed their scenes using the middle school's Flip digital video cameras and used the free Windows Movie Maker video-editing software to create movies with video clips, text, still pictures, graphs, music, and narration.

This project typifies the kind of 21st century communication project that is highly engaging for students and demands that they conduct research, identify key facts and concepts, organize that information into a logical order to make their points, write and edit their writing to create a compelling narrative, and use technology to create a professional-looking presentation -- in this case a movie. Students also practiced collaboration in their small working groups, a key 21st century skill.



Pie Partnership

Our first-ever FHTMS Pie Partnership was an enormous success! Because of the generosity of our FHTMS community, we were able to donate 75 pies to the Boys' and Girls' Club of Burlington, as well as raise over \$200 for our FHTMS PTO to support student enrichment activities. Special thanks go to **Sam Mazza's Farm Market** for their generosity and organization.

Entertainment Books

Our PTO's sincere thanks go to parents **Shani Mekler** and **Julie Beatty** for running our Entertainment Books sales this year. This fundraiser netted \$1,560.00, which will be used for student enrichment activities.

Thank You

Our FHTMS community has many people to thank this month. We welcome submissions to this column. For this month, we extend heartfelt thanks to...

...**Irene Sauer** and **Donna Jacobs** for organizing and coordinating the Spaghetti Dinner portion of Family Fun Night.

...**All the students, staff, and family members** who volunteered at Family Fun Night. We had over 100 of you!

...**All FHTMS staff members, their families, our FHTMS students, and their families** who attended Family Fun Night. You made this night special!

...**Al's French Fries, Chicken Charlie's, Dunkin' Donuts, Leonardo's, Petra Cliffs, Talent Skatepark, and Zachary's**, our local businesses that made donations to Family Fun Night.

...**All the parents and guardians** who donated to Staff Appreciation Day.

...**The Party Store** on Susie Wilson Road, who gave us a significant discount on supplies for Staff Appreciation Day.

...**I-Party**, who donated balloons to Staff Appreciation Day.

...**Paraprofessional Staff** who use the copy room for their office space, to **Lynn Currier**, and to those **Staff Members who have their offices just outside the copy room**. Lynn and the Paraprofessional Staff all graciously gave up their teaching/planning space on Staff Appreciation Day, and those Staff Members with offices outside the copy room never said a word about how loud we were setting up for Staff Appreciation Day!

...**Sam Mazza's Farm Market**, for their generosity and compassion in understanding our vision to donate 75 pies to the Boys' and Girls' Club of Burlington and to raise funds for our PTO.

...**Joyce Hendley**, for her working so closely with the Boys' and Girls' Club of Burlington to create the magic of the Pie Partnership.

...**FHTMS Drama Students (Kerstin Anderson, Michaela Britt, Austen Erickson, Kaleigh Saunders, and Elly Valastro)**, and **David Bailey, Drama Advisor**, for attending our November PTO meeting and sharing your excitement and knowledge about our FHTMS drama program. It was wonderful to hear!

...**Nothing But Noodles**, who provided refreshments at our November PTO meeting.

...**all FHTMS students, staff, and families** who attended the first Dialogue Night (there were over 250 of you!) and the follow-up Dialogue Night (there were over 80 of you!), with a special thank you to students.



Artwork by Matt Jenkins,
Grade 7



PTO's November Meeting: Please Join Us!

Please join us on **Friday, January 16, 12:30-1:30 p.m.** for our PTO meeting, where our special guests will be members of our **FHTMS Jazz Band** and teen leaders from our **South Burlington High School SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) group**, a group formed as a result of the Dialogue Night. All FHTMS parents, guardians, and staff are welcome to attend to hear information, meet other families and staff members, and learn more about our school.

For information on our November meeting, please go to <http://fhtms.sbschools.net/pto/minutes.htm>.

Also, we are delighted to inform you that thanks to both **Andy Pearson** and **Jim Shields**, South Burlington School District staff members, we now have a podcast of our special VSAC presentation to our PTO on "How to Finance Our Children's College Education." Please check it out at <http://imabelab.sbschools.net/podcasts/collegefunding.mp3>.

FHTMS Community Cookbook!

By Joyce Hendley, *Parent Volunteer and PTO Secretary*

Share your ideas, your skills, and most importantly your **RECIPES** as we plan the first-ever FHTMS Community Cookbook!

The FHTMS PTO will produce its first community cookbook, coming this spring! We'll help raise much-needed funds to support enrichment activities for our students – and celebrate the great cooking going on in our community.

BUT...this will *not* be "just another community cookbook." We want to gather recipes that speak to the needs of today's busy families and the interests of our neighbors in the South Burlington community, such as:

- Bake Sale Staples
- Super-Fast Dinners/Crockpot Recipes
- "Bring-a-Dish" Entrées
- Kid-Friendly Vegetables
- Meals-on-the-Go/Lunchbox Ideas
- Local Favorites (famous dishes from local restaurants, community leaders)

WE NEED RECIPES!

Got a recipe (or four) to share? Submit your recipes to the PTO mailbox in the main office by **Friday, Dec. 19**, or save us time by entering your recipe online. Contact joycehendley@yahoo.com for a link and password.

JOIN THE TEAM!

Creative cooks, editors, typists, designers, and other helpers needed.

Kickoff Meeting: Friday December 12 -- 9:00 a.m.

RSVP/directions/questions: Contact Joyce Hendley at 660-2775.

Bon appétit!



Artwork by Courtney Banach,
Grade 7

Request for Articles from FHTMS Students

FHTMS Students -- Do you have a topic about which you feel strongly? Want to have your voice heard? The *FHTMS Newsletter* would like to hear from you. The deadline for the January newsletter is **Friday, January 9**. Please send any and all submissions to parent Susie Merrick at merrick@champlain.edu or leave your article in the PTO mailbox in the main office.

Cyberbullying

By Basundhara Mukherjee, *Grade 7, Peer Leadership Student*

FHTMS Peer Leadership and Student Council members went together to the *World of Difference Conference* on November 6 at the Capital Plaza Hotel and Conference Center in Montpelier.

It was a great conference which was based on cyberbullying. John Halligan gave his powerful speech as he did last year. It really made a difference in the message this conference was trying to give.

Some things which were important at the conference were the methods of cyberbullying and the forms of cyberbullying. The methods of cyberbullying are the places which cyberbullying can take place, for example, E-mail, Chat Rooms/IM-ing, Cell Phones/Text Messaging/Photos/Videos, Social Networking Sites (Facebook, MySpace), Websites, and Blogs/Message Boards/Gaming Sites.

The forms of cyberbullying were the different ways people can be cyberbullied. The different forms of cyberbullying we learned about are:

Flaming: Online "fights" using electronic messages with angry and/or vulgar language.

Harassment: Repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and/or insulting messages.

Cyberstalking: Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating. Engaging in other online activities that cause a person to be afraid for his or her safety.

Denigration: Showing disrespect towards someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships.

Happy Slapping: Using a phone camera to videotape an unsuspecting individual who is physically assaulted and then distributing or posting the videotape for others to see.

Impersonation: Breaking into someone's account, posing as that person, and sending messages to make the person look bad, get the person in trouble or danger, or damage the person's reputation or friendships.

Outing and Trickery: Sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information online. Misleading someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information, which is then shared with others online.

Exclusion: Intentionally rejecting someone from an online group, like a "buddy list," Facebook group, or game.



Artwork by Jack Barron,
Grade 7

Trolling: Intentionally posting provocative messages about sensitive subjects to create conflict, upset people, and baiting them into "flaming" or fighting.

We talked about how cyberbullying can affect someone so badly. It can ruin relationships, reputations, and many other things. It can be an extremely serious matter.

A good thing to prevent cyberbullying is to stop anyone who you see doing it, whether it's being assertive or if it's not sending something mean. This is something which is very common, and it can be prevented. The best thing you can do is to stop yourself every time you are tempted to cyberbully someone. Think about if you have ever used one of these forms of cyberbullying or if you have ever seen it. **Let's do our best as a school to stop this!**

For more information, please contact Caryn Olivetti, Peer Leadership Advisor, colivetti@sbschools.net or 652-7104.

Get An Inside Look at the FHTMS Curriculum: Enterprise Needs Parent Volunteers!

Enterprise is a program at FHTMS that provides students with individual and small group assistance in acquiring skills in reading, writing, math, and study skills. This program relies on volunteers and has produced excellent results during the last ten years. *Enterprise* students have benefited from the work of many volunteers.

As you may imagine, the rewards for the volunteers are sometimes tremendous. Not only is academic progress visible, but also there are countless opportunities to build positive self-esteem and self-confidence. Volunteering in *Enterprise* is a nice way for parents of middle school students to participate in the life of the school. Any amount of time during the school day, even an hour or so per week, is of great value.

To volunteer or get more information call Tara Gauding or Sissel Ann Kristiansen at 652-7107 or e-mail Tara Gauding at tgauding@sbschools.net or Sissel Ann Kristiansen at skristiansen@sbschools.net.

School Budget Vote: Update

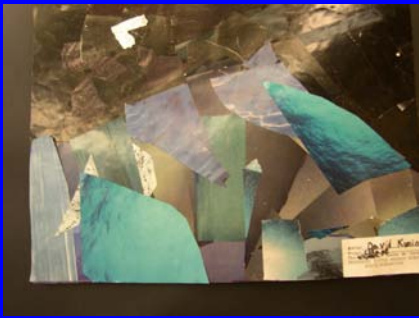
By Lisa Levite, *Parent Volunteer*

On September 2, 2008, our South Burlington City Council voted to change the day that South Burlington residents vote on City and School budgets from the third Tuesday in May to the first Tuesday in March, also known as Vermont Town Meeting Day.

This change means that school budget inputs and public budget reviews will be held during December and January of 2008 in preparation for the **March 3, 2009** vote.



Artwork by Jordan Brace,
Grade 7



*Artwork by David Kunin,
Grade 7*



First Light Theatre Project

School budget proposals will be reviewed at the following meetings:

Citizens Budget Committee Meetings are ongoing and are scheduled on an as needed basis. Please call Delina Gilroy in the Superintendent's office at 652-7250 for the date and time of the next meeting.

December 10, 2008 – Presentation of the school budget to the School Board, 7:00 p.m. SBHS Cafeteria

December 17, 2008 – Budget work session, School Board meeting, 7:00 p.m. FHTMS Library

Copies of these presentations to the School Board will be posted on the School District website, <http://www.sbschools.net/>.

Information about additional opportunities for public review of the school budget will be communicated as they become available. Please watch this space for updated information.

Seventy percent of the voters in South Burlington do not have children in the school system. Therefore, it is very important that the voters who do have children in the school system voice what investments they prefer be made for the education of the children in our city. Your PTO would like to facilitate this communication of the proposed school budget to the parents in our community. Ideas and suggestions are welcome and may be directed to your local PTO or to PTO volunteer and Rick Marcotte Central School/FHTMS parent Lisa Levite, lisalevite@comcast.net, 860-1506.

FHTMS Students to Perform with First Light Theatre Project

By Roz Saunders, *Parent Volunteer*

This January, sixteen FHTMS students will participate in the third annual First Light Theatre Project weekend of One-Act Plays at Waterfront Theatre in Burlington. FHTMS students will join with students from Edmunds Middle School in Burlington, Colchester, Williston, Shelburne, and Charlotte to perform a variety of original, traditional, and contemporary short plays. The performance is a culmination of collaborative acting and lighting design workshops as well as a rehearsal process at each school.

FHTMS eighth graders **Kerstin Anderson, Michaela Britt, Austen Erickson, Becca Janney, Kaleigh Saunders, and Elly Valastro**; seventh graders **Ned Blake, Eliana Cohen, Jessica Johnson, and Declan Quinlan**; and sixth grader **Jordanna Dulaney** have been rehearsing *Mother Hicks* since early October. Written by Susan Zeder and set in southern Illinois in the great Depression, *Mother Hicks* is a story of three outsiders -- a founding girl known only as Girl; a deaf boy, eloquent in the language of his silence; and an eccentric recluse, Mother Hicks, who is suspected of being a witch. The tale, told with poetry and sign language, chronicles the journeys of these three to find themselves, and each other, in a troubled time.



In addition to the cast, also participating are eighth grader **Avni Nahar** (lighting), and sixth graders **Kayla Gilding** (stage manager) and **Ali Barron** (assistance stage manager and lighting technician).

The four performances are **Friday, January 9, 6:30 pm; Saturday, January 10, 1 p.m. matinee and 6:30 pm; Sunday, January 11, 1 p.m. matinee.** Tickets will be available at participating schools, Dorset Street Beverage (starting December 29) and at the door.

The First Light Theatre Project provides a professional environment where adolescents receive training and experience in acting, design, directing, and playwriting. For more information please contact Project Coordinator **David Bailey** at dbailey@sbschools.net.

FHTMS School Musical: Cinderella!

By Tim Maynes, *FHTMS Musical Director*

The FHTMS Drama Department will be presenting the classic Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *Cinderella* this spring!

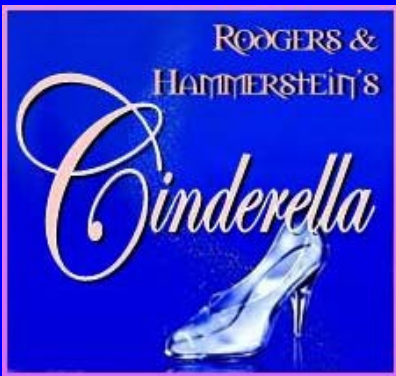
There will be an informational meeting about the show on **Tuesday, January 20, at 3:30 p.m.** in the FHTMS Chorus Room.

Audition Dates: **Monday-Wednesday, January 26-28 at 3:30 p.m.**
Show Dates: **May 8 and 9**

Cinderella will be directed by Tim Maynes. Maynes, who graduated with a B.A. in Drama from Ithaca College, performed in the first musical FHTMS ever presented (*Peter Pan* in 1997) and continued to be active member of the FHTMS and SBHS drama programs while he was a student in the district. He is thrilled to be returning to direct the program he remembers fondly as one that changed his life.

Maynes is the current Artistic Director for Lyric Theatre's LyricKids summer camps, has directed for Stowe Theatre Guild, is the Assistant Director of the South Burlington Recreation Department's Summer Youth Theater Camp, and has assistant taught many FlynnArts classes and camps.

Maynes is joined by a talented and passionate production team consisting of Music Director Nate Venet and Choreographer Julia DiFerdinando. Venet has extensive experience music directing area middle and high school musicals, including recent FHTMS and SBHS productions. DiFerdinando, also a previous member of the FHTMS and SBHS Drama Departments, has extensive acting, dance, and choreography experience. She most recently choreographed a production of *Once on This Island* at Ithaca College (which Maynes directed).





Tuttle's Garden with the newly installed fence.

Regular Submissions

For questions about the *FHTMS Newsletter* and/or to submit an article, please contact Susie Merrick at 660-3189 or Merrick@champlain.edu. The newsletter is published once a month during the school year.

We welcome submissions!



DiFerdinando, Venet, and Maynes encourage all FHTMS students, regardless of experience, to become involved with *Cinderella* – an experience that they anticipate will be truly magical.

Please visit the Drama Department's website for more information about the show and auditions:

<http://fhtms.sbschools.net/admin/Drama/Cinderella/Index.htm>

Please contact director Tim Maynes at: fhtmsdrama@yahoo.com if you have specific questions or concerns about the play.

Tuttle's Garden

Thanks to **students in Erin Needham's Technology Education classes**, **Erin Needham** himself, South Burlington High School Spanish teacher **David Shiffert** (formerly an FHTMS staff member), and to a grant received from the Friends of Burlington Gardens and the Vermont Community Garden Network, our FHTMS outside garden now has a fence that encloses the space and keeps it safe.

The garden began, in the words of David Shiffert, "without fanfare, in the fall of 2007, as an outdoor classroom for the school's Healthy and Sustainable Living class. Although this course is not part of the 2008-2009 curriculum [at FHTMS], our garden remains and will find new enthusiasts at the middle school."

News from the Community Library

Please mark your calendars for the following days when our Community Library at 550 Dorset Street closes at 3:30 p.m. in 2009. For more information, please call 652-7080.

Presidents' Day	Feb. 16
Columbus Day	Oct. 12
Veterans' Day	Nov. 11

Recreation Department Link

Take a look at the South Burlington Recreation Department link on our own FHTMS website: <http://fhtms.sbschools.net/admin/RecNews08/index.htm>