



FHTMS Newsletter

October 2008

Volume 3, Number 2

“Working Together To Make a Difference”

Principally Speaking

By Joseph P. O'Brien, *Principal*

We have just completed our first half of the trimester. It is amazing how quickly these six weeks have flown. Teachers have posted student progress on RebelNet, and I hope that you are taking advantage of this communication system. Please let our Guidance Department (652-7105) know of any access issues you have with this internet-based program.

The mid-term also marks the switch for encore exploratory classes. The seventh- and eighth-grade students have switched into another eighth period exploratory or guided study. Students in these grades have three guided studies and three encore exploratories per year. Students rotate each six weeks to one of seven encore classes. Over the two years students will take Pottery, Cultural Health, Passport to Art, Sports R Us, Media Literacy, Sewing/Cooking, or Broadcasting. These classes are great opportunities to broaden students' horizons mostly in the area of right brain activity, thinking, and learning.

Reminders:

October 15 is a late start for FHTMS and SBHS students for Teacher Learning Community classes with busses running one hour later than usual. There will be no school on **October 23 and 24** for the Vermont Education Association Convention days.

Greetings from Mr. Weiss

By Stuart Weiss, *Assistant Principal*

The NECAPs were given the week of October 6. The week of October 13 students who missed tests will be involved in make-ups. These tests are one indication of where our students are in terms of Vermont's grade level expectations for the preceding year in reading and math. Additionally, the eighth graders are tested in writing. This snapshot is only one method of assessing our students. Students are also assessed by their teachers on a daily basis. Also, all disciplines have been working to create common assessments at all grade levels. This means that all seventh graders, for example, regardless of team or teacher are assessed using a common task and scoring method.

Last year at this time I enclosed the following article on working with students on appropriate use of technology. This is a message that is important to repeat every year, so please take the time to read Judith Baenen's article.

(Continued on next page)



*Artwork by Austen Erickson,
Grade 8*

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!

Calendar

Hard copies of our district calendar will be available soon. If you have made a donation to our PTO this year and would like to receive a copy of the calendar (for free!), please send your child's name and TA teacher to Susie Merrick at merrick@champlain.edu.



Artwork by Abby Boardman,
Grade 7

Important Dates

The Teacher Learning Wednesdays for FHTMS this year (which means a one-hour later start for students. Buses will pick up students one hour later than usual) are:

Wed., Oct. 15
Wed., Nov. 19
Wed., Dec. 17
Wed., Jan. 28
Wed., Feb. 18
Wed., March 18
Wed., April 15
Wed., May 20

First FHTMS Social: Friday, October 10.

Ken Wooden of Teen Lures Prevention: Tues., Oct. 14, 7-9 p.m., SBHS Auditorium.

Teacher Convention: Thursday and Friday, October 23 and 24: No school on these two days.

PTO Meeting: Fri., Oct. 31, 12:30-1:30 p.m., in the Library.

Family Fun Night, a wonderful FHTMS tradition: Fri., Nov. 14.

Phones, Blogs, Text Messages -- Students' Use of Technology

By Judith Baenen

According to recent studies by the Kaiser Family Foundation, kids devote an average of 44.5 hours per week to media use, and one-fourth of it is spent with more than one media.

Ten years ago, we educators talked about the coming revolution in technology -- now it's here, and we still aren't quite ready for it! Schools scramble to make sure that cell phones, PDAs, laptops, and school computers are being used appropriately or not at all. Thoughtful middle school leaders are making certain that media literacy is an important part of the curriculum. Astute advisors are talking regularly about the perils of text messaging, blogs, and personal websites.

All of this is especially important in the middle grades because young adolescents have trouble thinking ahead about the consequences of their actions. An insulting text message, a rude photo, a tirade about one thing or another are all too easily sent with no forethought about the world of hurt that can develop at the other end. For example, kids can compose and send a text message without looking at the PDA hidden in their pocket.

Teachers and school administrators should speak about these issues to parents, some of whom are still in the dark about the negative possibilities and unintended consequences resulting from modern technology. Parents should not be alarmed, but be alert.

Here are some tips for teachers and parents:

- Have a walk-up rule. An adult should be able to walk up at any time and see what is on the screen of a student's phone, computer, or PDA. A quick erasure is a sign of trouble.
- Use the "history" feature on the web browser. This lists the sites that the user has recently visited. Let your child know that you know about that feature! Web browsers also have parental settings that can block access to certain sites.
- Keep technology in the open as much as possible. A lot of parents would be shocked and surprised at how their children are using computers and other technology tucked away in their bedrooms -- and how late at night!
- Talk, talk, talk about it. Have rules. Letting kids know that you are concerned might cause them to curb their use and think twice before sending something mean or seeking something forbidden.

Technology is great when used responsibly. Young adolescents have to be trained, reminded, and supervised to make the best use of all that is available today.

Judith Baenen is president of St. Mary's Academy in Englewood, Colorado, and author of National Middle School Association's HELP (<http://www.nmsa.org/redirect/me0905/help.htm>), More HELP (http://www.nmsa.org/redirect/me0905/more_help.htm), and HELP for Teachers (http://www.nmsa.org/redirect/me0905/help_teachers.htm).



Artwork by Brandon Philbrick,
Grade 8



Artwork by Meghan Cleary,
Grade 7



Artwork by Eliza Alvarez,
Grade 8
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From the Guidance Corner: FHTMS Moves to a Trimester System

By Sheri Rand, *Guidance Supervisor*

Beginning August 2008, the middle school moved to a trimester grading report system. This was done for several reasons. During the last few years the communication venues available to parents, guardians, and staff members have greatly improved. First, telephones in each classroom have made communication more timely and convenient. The school currently has access to 97% of families through their e-mail accounts at home or at their business. In addition, the implementation of our web-based communication tool, RebelNet, has given both parents and students updated information about curriculum, assignments, and progress on a daily basis.

Instead of receiving four interim progress reports and four report cards each year, students will now receive three interim progress reports and three report cards. Another determining factor in this decision is based on the premise that instructional time may be increased as a result to less time spent on the distribution of interim progress reports and report cards.

Important Dates to Remember

Friday, 10/3 Interim Program Report 1
Friday, 11/14 End of Trimester 1
Friday, 1/16 Interim Program Report 2
Friday, 3/13 End of Trimester 2
Friday, 5/1 Interim Program Report 3
Friday, 6/12 End of Trimester 3

FHTMS Information Technology Update

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

As you may have heard, educators are increasingly focused on how we can help students develop “21st century skills.” The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (www.21stcenturyskills.org) defines these skills as the “skills, knowledge, and expertise students should master to succeed in work and life in the 21st century.” The Partnership divides these into four major areas:

1. Core Subjects and 21st Century Themes
2. Learning and Innovation Skills
3. Information, Media, and Technology Skills
4. Life and Career Skills

(For more information, click the **Framework** link at the top of the www.21stcenturyskills.org page; then click on the **red** links.)

Much of what students have been learning for years falls into these four categories, but a focus on 21st century skills will mean that we put greater emphasis on such things as creativity and innovation, critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, information literacy, and technology literacy. As many leading educators are noting, we need to



Thank You

We welcome submissions to this column. We extend a sincere thank you...

...to **Superintendent John Everitt**, for taking time to be a guest speaker at our September PTO meeting.

...to **Amy Blauvelt, Marky Ferguson, and Anita Tuttle**, our Library staff, for allowing the PTO to share their space for our September meeting.

...to **Nan Daudelin** for stepping up to organize the Box Tops and Hannaford receipts collections for our school.

... to **Julie Beatty and Shani Mekler** for stepping up to run our Entertainment Books fundraiser.

You all are awesome!



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.

“prepare students for their future, not our past,” and these are vital skills that students will need in their future.

Information technology can play a prominent role in helping students master many of the 21st century skills. For example, students can use word processors, multi-media presentation tools, web authoring software, video editing software, blogs, wikis, and more to hone their communication skills. They can use spreadsheets, databases, robotics software, Internet resources, and more to practice their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. They can use the Internet to work on information literacy, research skills, global awareness, etc.

FHTMS and the district in general are investigating how we can enhance 21st century teaching and learning. For example,

- At FHTMS, the 7th and 8th grade teams are in the second year of a project that is exploring how we can more effectively use information technology to help students master 21st century skills.
- The Information Technology Education (ITE) team offered a course this past summer in which teams of teachers learned about 21st century teaching tools and strategies.
- We’ve restructured the District Technology Committee into two committees -- one that focuses on 21st century teaching and learning and one that focuses on providing the infrastructure needed to support that teaching and learning.

This is an exciting time! Information technology can be an extremely powerful and engaging tool to help our students prepare for life both at and beyond FHTMS. We intend to use this column to share some of the projects that students are involved in. More next month...

PTO's October Meeting: Please Join Us!

Please join us on **Friday, October 31**, 12:30-1:30 p.m., in the FHTMS Library when guest speaker Matt Beagle Bourgault, VSAC Career and Education Outreach Counselor, will address “Financing and Preparing for Our Children’s College Education: Steps and Information for Middle School Families.” 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. We also will be voting on our PTO budget at this meeting.

For information on September’s meeting, at which **Superintendent John Everitt** was our guest speaker and discussed the district’s new fundraising policies, please go to <http://fhtms.sbschools.net/pto/minutes.htm>.

Update on PTO Fundraising: Innisbrook

We are proud to announce that our profit for our Innisbrook sales for the 2008-2009 school year is **\$3,561**. Many thanks to parent **Amy Deavitt** for her dedication to our school and her hard work in running this fundraiser and to all our members of our FHTMS community who supported this fundraiser. You may still order Innisbrook online to support FHTMS by going to <http://www.innisbrook.com/> and entering code #101697.



Artwork by Trevor Patterson,
Grade 8



Artwork by Sara Fitzgerald,
Grade 7



Artwork by Miriam Stats,
Grade 8

Entertainment Books

In order to best meet our PTO budget this year, the FHTMS PTO is now selling Entertainment Books for 2009. This sale is being organized by parents **Shani Mekler** and **Julie Beatty**. Because of the new school district fundraising policies, there will be no door-to-door sales, but the books may be purchased through any one of the following options:

- An order form has been sent home with students.
- Books will be available for sale before and after the October 10 FHTMS social.
- Books will be available on Election Day, November 4, in the FHTMS lobby.
- Books will be available at Family Fun Night on November 14.
- South Burlington residents may purchase the book at the SBHS home football games on October 11 and October 25.
- You also may order books by calling 863-1325 or e-mailing sdgelf@comcast.net.

Entertainment Book '09 provides discounts to many local restaurants, museums, sporting venues and other businesses, as well as discounts to national hotel and car rental companies. The book costs \$30 **and our school keeps \$15 of that cost**. Proceeds will support enrichment activities for all middle school students. Thank you for your continued support of our PTO!

Update on Student Drama

*The First Light Theatre Project is gearing up for its fall season, culminating with performances at the Waterfront Theatre in Burlington on **January 9 and 10, 2009**. We congratulate members of our FHTMS community who will be part of this project, performing Mother Hicks by Suzan Zeder.*

Director: **David Bailey**
 Student Director: **Carly Stine**
 Assistant Director: **Nissa Kauppila**
 Stage Manager: **Kayla Gilding**
 Assistant Stage Manager: **Ali Barron**

CAST

Mother Hicks: **Becca Janney**
 Girl: **Kaleigh Saunders**
 Tuc: **Austen Erickson***
 Izzy Sue Hicks: **Elly Valastro**
 Clovis Eudy: **Jessica Lynn Johnson**
 Alma Ward: **Michaela Britt**
 Madison Walker: **Kerstin Anderson**
 Villager: **Eliana Cohen**
 Villager: **Jordana Dulaney**
 Ricky Ricks: **Declan Quinlan**
 Jake Hammond: **Connor Young**
 Hoshiah Ward: **Ned Blake**

* For his role, Austen will be required to learn American Sign Language.



Artwork by Lindsay Geier,
Grade 8

Employment Opportunity: School Bus Drivers Needed

South Burlington School District is now hiring full-time, part-time and trip drivers. Great benefits, in-house paid training, flexible hours, good wages, and a great working atmosphere!

The district would prefer a valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL), Senior Vermont Operator's License with Vermont School Bus Endorsement (Class B), and an air brakes endorsement. Candidates must have a three year clean driving record. The school district will provide training to receive a Certification in Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI); Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR); Automatic External Defibrillator (AED), and first aid. If you are interested in joining an established, well trained fleet, please contact us at 652-7258.

Announcement from the Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger

SCHOOL BREAKFAST NOW FREE FOR "REDUCED PRICE ELIGIBLE" STUDENTS

Did you know? Breakfast at school is now FREE every day for children who are signed up for reduced price school meals. There is no longer a charge for breakfast meals.

If your family income or situation has changed, you may apply for free or reduced price school meals by picking up an application at the Guidance Office at FHTMS, or you may download an application on the Internet at

http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_nutrition/school_nutrition/program_info.html

Community care centers such as health centers, food shelves, WIC offices, unemployment offices, congregations, playgroup facilities, child care centers, and adult education programs may also download the school meal application and make it available to families. The application is available in many languages.

If you have questions about this, please contact any of the FHTMS staff in the main office or the Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger at 865-0255.

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.

Volunteers are matched with one student or a small group of students to assist with basic skills in reading, writing, or math, usually in the context of regular class homework.

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.

Outside School Hobbies

We asked our FHTMS staff, "What is one of your favorite hobbies/activities to do outside of school?" Enjoy their responses!



Assistant Principal Stuart Weiss

Joe O'Brien (Principal): I am a sports official for high school and college. I now referee high school soccer and lacrosse and have retired from college soccer and ice hockey. I also play hockey twice a week and dabble in woodworking and fly fishing among other interests.

Stuart Weiss (Assistant Principal): One of things I enjoy doing outside of school is scuba diving. This is a picture of me about 105 feet down in Roatan, an island of the coast of Honduras. I also love to swim, read, and sail. Also, though it is not a hobby, I love spending time with my grandson (and the rest of my family).

Ted Godfrey (Grade 7 Why Not? Team Teacher): One of my favorite activities is restoring our 198-year-old brick farmhouse in Hinesburg. My wife and I do almost all the work ourselves, which takes a bit longer but is much more satisfying and much less expensive. And if we mess up, we can only blame ourselves. We have rebuilt windows, insulated walls and ceilings, put up walls, installed a bathroom, rewired the entire house, repointed the brick, replastered the walls, jacked up and straightened the garages/barns, and landscaped the yards with flowers and trees and shrubs among other things. It keeps us busy but happy.

Mary Lou Wasko (Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher): My current favorite hobby is quilting. I have taken several classes at Yankee Pride store in Essex to get me started using my sewing machine regularly after being too busy to use it while raising my three sons. I have made six quilts now and have just started another one. I had forgotten how precise one has to be in cutting, sewing, and assembling the many pieces of a quilt to produce a beautiful one. I figure this hobby is keeping my mind and skills sharp as I get older!



Made by Mary Lou Wasko
Quilted by Rosemary Terrell
from Quilted Memories

Mary Lou Wasko's Quilts

Caryn Olivetti (School Counselor): I love working with a variety of materials to create art. I enjoy making mosaics, drawing, making cards, and sculpture. Actually, I love a chance to do anything creative in my daily life!

Chris Towle (Grade 7 Discovery Team Teacher): One of my favorite outdoor activities is to bow hunt. Last year I harvested a deer in New York.

Pat Mainer (Grade 7 Discovery Team Teacher): I enjoy doing just about anything outdoors. I particularly love extended backpacking trips. This is a picture from a wonderful trip in the Sierras in California.



Pat Mainer's trip to the Sierras

Kris Kenlan (Grade 6 Polaris Team Teacher): In my free time I enjoy watercolor painting and a variety of outdoor activities (kayaking, horseback riding, hiking).

Yearbook Order Time!

It's that time of year to order our beautiful FHTMS Yearbook. Please go to <http://fhtms.sbschools.net/> to order online, and click on the link provided.

Questions? Please contact Amy Blauvelt, Yearbook Advisor and Library Media Specialist, at ablauvelt@sbschools.net or 652-7110.



Congratulations to **Veronica Taylor**, Grade 8, who was the first place winner in the 2008 Colgate Country Showdown and also placed first at the Tunbridge World's Fair!

As a result, Veronica was invited to participate in the New England Colgate Finals on October 4 at the Topsfield Fair.

Our most sincere congratulations to you, Veronica!

School Safety Committee

The FHTMS Newsletter had a chance to speak with Kary Towne, school nurse, and Greg Wolf, grade 8 Fusion team teacher, about the important FHTMS Safety Committee on which they both serve.

How would you define the FHTMS Safety Committee?

The FHTMS Safety Committee consists of a group of staff who meet on a regular basis. We try to anticipate potential situations and provide assistance to students and staff when a situation arises that warrants a response. We examine all aspects of school safety from routine issues as slippery hallways during snowstorms to more serious ones such as a trespasser in the building.

Who serves on this committee?

Each school in the district has a core group serving on the committee. These committees can be comprised of a principal, assistant principal, student resource officer, guidance counselor, nurse, head custodian, school social worker, teacher, and para-professional. We are fortunate at FHTMS that our teacher representative (Greg Wolf) is an EMT and that our para-professional (Brett Leonard) has a connection to after-school activities and the South Burlington Recreation Department.

When and why was this committee started?

This committee has existed in various formats over the years, evolving over time to meet the new challenges schools are facing. Last year it was decided to split the district level committee into smaller school-based units to best meet the needs of each building.

What are some of the guidelines the committee has offered to the school? How does the committee instruct the school staff in these guidelines?

This committee has worked on a Standard Emergency Protocol (SEP) Plan for the South Burlington School District. This plan is designed to provide a fast, consistent reference for handling an emergency, as well as to define the communication steps and procedures necessary to handle a wide range of emergency and disaster situations. As well as handling in-school emergencies, the plan also addresses emergency procedures for after-school activities. Each teacher has been given a copy of this plan which is kept in an easily accessible spot in the classroom. The plans are also readily available in multiple other high visibility spots throughout the school.

One very concrete example immediately comes to mind. We've always held monthly fire drills. However, it wasn't until recently that we worked to have 100% student and staff accountability during these drills. Now when we have a drill, or a real incident, we can be assured that we have accounted for the whereabouts of all students and staff.

In your personal opinion, why is a committee of this kind important to a school or any community group, for that matter?

Greg Wolf: We live in a changing and sometimes violent world. Communities and schools need to be prepared to handle the many types of emergencies that may arise. By planning for emergencies, and practicing emergency drills, we become better prepared to handle the different types of emergencies that may come our way.

Grade 8 Intrepid Team Complaint-Free World Idea



This year, the grade 8 Intrepid Team resolved to enhance the school climate and culture of FHTMS by adopting the “Complaint Free Kids” initiative.

The Complaint Free World Program began in July 2006 when Will Bowen handed out approximately 250 purple bracelets to people to encourage them to think more positively. The idea was simple: put a purple rubber bracelet on either wrist, and when you catch yourself complaining, switch the bracelet to the other wrist.

Intrepid Teachers challenged their students to establish the habit of being “Complaint Free” for 21 days (scientists believe that it takes 21 consecutive days of a new behavior for it to become habitual). By switching the bracelet from wrist to wrist with each complaint until they've gone 21 consecutive days without complaints, then they will establish a habit of being “Complaint Free.”

To date, nearly 5 million purple bracelets have been sent to people in over 80 countries around the world. For more information, go to <http://www.acomplaintfreeworld.org/>, or send an e-mail to AComplaintFreeWorld@gmail.com.

What inspired you to serve on a committee of this kind?

Greg Wolf: As an EMT, personal and community safety is one of my main concerns. I enjoy having the ability to mix my rescue work with my work here in school.

Odyssey of the Mind Awareness Session

Where can you see unusual vehicles traveling to exotic locations alongside Greek heroes and goddesses? Or small towers of balsa being crushed by weights? How about hearing about strange superstitions or robotic creatures that copy their inventors? If you join Odyssey of the Mind, you'll see all these things and many more creative, humorous, and unusual things at the Vermont Odyssey of the Mind Tournament.

Odyssey of the Mind is designed to help students learn how to think creatively and to solve problems as part of a team. What's even better is kids have fun as they learn! South Burlington school teams have done exceptionally well in Odyssey of the Mind over the years.

Come to the South Burlington Schools Odyssey of the Mind Awareness Session on **Monday, October 13, 6-7:30 p.m.**, in the FHTMS Library and find out how you can form a team and get started on your fun and exciting journey of imagination.

Contact Tim Perkins, 434-4738, or vtootm@accessvt.com or visit <http://vt.odysseyofthemind.org> for more information.

FHTMS Award-Winning Film Crew Goes to Washington, D.C.

By Jay Hoffman, *SBNN Advisor and Technology Teacher*

Earlier this month our video team, comprised of **Neel Desai** (Grade 8), **Riya Patel** (Grade 8), **Lea Thali** (Grade 9), and **Elizabeth Lee** (Grade 9), traveled to Washington, D.C. to celebrate the team's first-place finish in the eSchool News' Empowered Education Awards in the middle school category. The competition invited students from around the country to submit an original short video on the theme of “How Technology Helps Me Learn.” The event was sponsored by eSchoolnews and the Pearson Foundation.

I think the highlight of the trip was meeting U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy, U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders, and U.S. Representative Peter Welch. In the Senate building we could feel the electricity of events that have shaken our country in the past several weeks.

Opportunities like this for our students are so vital. Our students learned, much to their surprise, that their skills rivaled those of the best in our nation. The competition allowed me as a teacher to see if I am giving my students what they need to be competitive and helped me fine tune my teaching. This trip built my team's self-esteem and confidence to such a degree that I could see the difference in them upon returning. This is what happens when a public school system is working in concert!

FHTMS Rebel Clothing

Looking for a good gift or a way to show school spirit? Order forms are available in the main office for the following Rebel clothing:

T-shirts
Hoodies
Sweat pants
Shorts.

All orders due by **Friday, October 31.**



We are grateful to our maintenance and custodial staff for their hard work to beautify our grounds.

Talking with Video Team Member Neel Desai

The FHTMS Newsletter had an opportunity to ask Video Team member Neel Desai a few questions about the remarkable experience of making the video and traveling to Washington, D.C., with his teammates.

What was the highlight for you personally when you and your teammates were creating the “How Technology Helps Me Learn” video?

I think that the best day of making the video was the last day. We were still editing the last bit of the piece, and Mr. Hoffman was leaving to go to Florida. His plane was leaving at 1:00, and we had three hours to finish the film. We were running around the studio, filming last bits, redoing some shots, and cramming everything in.

At 12:30 we put the DVD in to burn. We checked it...it worked...but the sound did not come. We went back to the computer and fixed the sound, and at 12:45 we put another DVD to burn. It was so intense. When I look back at it now, I can't believe how we pulled it off.

What was your initial reaction to receiving the award?

I was actually really surprised our video went this far. We started working on it two weeks before the deadline which was in April. We had two weeks to do better than all the other teams that had four months.

We thought that we should give this competition a try and never really expected to even be in the top 50. When we came in the top 50, I realized how far ahead we were in technology than the rest of the country. We had such better equipment than most of the high schools around the country. I was really surprised then. But still I was not sure if we were going to become the top three. There were a couple other good schools out there. When we got announced first, I was incredibly shocked. I was really happy.

What was the highlight of the trip to Washington, D.C. for you?

I think the highlight of this trip was meeting U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy and U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders and seeing their reaction to our film. I was really shocked to see how much they liked it and how much they want to help incorporate technology into our education.

As a student, why do you think special opportunities like these are important?

This competition has taught me not just video and computers but about teamwork, time, planning, and just having fun. I think doing extra-curricular activities should be a big part of every student's life. Getting good grades is very important, but with these types of opportunities added, it can make anyone a really well-rounded person.

Editor's Note: To see photos of the FHTMS Video Team on U.S. Senator Bernie Sander's website, go to <http://sanders.senate.gov/> and click on "09/23/2008 - Frederick Tuttle Middle School Empowered Education Awards Champions" in the right-hand menu under "Photos."



Ken Wooden of Teen Lures Prevention will speak to Teens and their Parents and Guardians.

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!



Nationally Known Safety Expert to Speak

Please join us on **Tuesday, October 14, 7:00-9:00 p.m.**, in the South Burlington High School auditorium when Ken Wooden, founder of Teen Lures Prevention, will speak to parents, guardians, and students in Grades 6-12 on what middle and high school students need to know to help keep themselves safe from crimes targeted at teens. This evening has been organized by the South Burlington Parent-Teacher Organizations. The event is free and open to the public. For further information, please call 660-3189.

News from our Community Library

We are pleased to announce a new offering of programs for middle and high school students at the South Burlington Community Library, 550 Dorset Street. For more information and to register, please call 652-7080.

Chess Classes: Bob Claussen will teach multi-level chess classes for middle and high school students. Beginners, intermediate, and advanced players are welcome. Thursdays, 4:00 p.m., on Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, and Nov. 6, 13, 20.

Beginner Yoga for Teens and Tweens: Looking to try something new? Would you like to learn yoga as a tool to help manage stress and improve focus? Learn enjoyable and easy-to-do breathing exercises, postures, and relaxations that can benefit you from head to toe! Join certified Hatha Yoga Instructor Sylvia Kabusk for this class designed specifically for the middle and high school student. No flexibility is required. You may pre-register for one or all of the classes. Sept. 29, Oct. 6, Oct. 20, Oct. 27, Nov. 3, and Nov. 17 at 3:45 p.m. Space is limited to 16. Wear comfortable clothing.

Kids Culinary: One World, Many Cultures: Chef Kelly Dietrich of Souza's Churrascaria and founder of Kids Culinary Summer Camp in Highgate will teach cooking from different ethnic groups. Oct. 1, 8, and 22 at 3:45 p.m.

Just Plain Batty? Teacher, and Naturalist Jerry Schneider will be here to dispel fearful myths about bats and to shed light on the important work that bats do as part of the food chain (eating those pesky mosquitoes and moths). He will show a wonderful slide show of photographs taken by Merlin Tuttle of Bat Conservation International, introduce you to live bats, and show how they communicate with each other with echo sounds. Everyone will also have an opportunity to make a unique bat t-shirt. Oct. 15 at 3:45 p.m.

Jewelry-Making: Students from the University of Vermont Living and Learning Center will demonstrate jewelry-making and help participants get started with their own project. Oct. 29 at 3:45 p.m.

Anime: Students from the UVM Living and Learning Center will share their anime expertise and teach their skills. Nov. 5 at 3:45 p.m.

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>