

# THOMPSON MIDDLE SCHOOL

## PFA GAZETTE

### WINTER 2008



#### Principal's Message

On behalf of all of us at Thompson *Happy New Year*. These continue to be exciting times at Thompson. We are now planning and preparing for next year's academic program as well as our upcoming state mandated testing program.

The dates for this testing program are as follows:

- Sixth NJ ASK - Monday, May 5<sup>th</sup> through -Thursday May 8<sup>th</sup>
- Seventh & Eighth NJ ASK Monday, April 28<sup>th</sup> through -Thursday, May 1<sup>st</sup>

We have over the years been very fortunate with our state test results that for the record have been very good. You may wish to check us out yourself at [www.schooldiggr.com](http://www.schooldiggr.com). This website indicates that Thompson is ranked #9 out of 1,376 middle schools in the state and one of the top in our county. Still, we can improve! I know, as a school, we can never become complacent and need to constantly do better in everything.

Our goal at Thompson is simple, but yet a very challenging one. We need to turn on our students to academics and in so doing want them to leave here hungry for more knowledge. Secondly, we are aware that our students from time to time make poor choices and poor decisions...we don't (I don't for sure) get overly excited when this happens. We see this as an opportunity for students to grow and learn from mistakes. I have never met anyone that has not make mistakes now and then.

From time to time, I need to articulate the fact that especially, the middle level, we teach students subjects and not teach subjects to students!

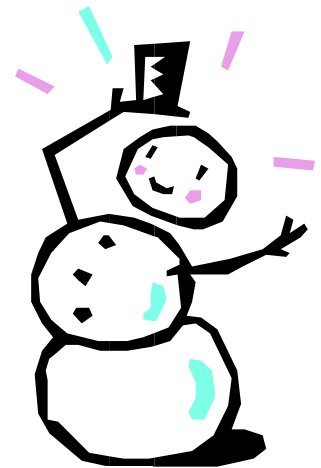
Finally, may I suggest politely that you make the time to discuss with your child a house plan, if in the event we had to have an early dismissal because of inclement weather. Some important topics may include, where the key is, who will supervise them, and where I should go if no one is home.

The early dismissal has not been used often, but it can happen. If the district did implement it we will make every effort to offer students lunch and of course, bus transportation to those who have this service.

Obviously, I will be the last person to leave the premises and no child would ever be left alone.

*Mr. Pat Houston*

Editor:  
Suzanne Rauso



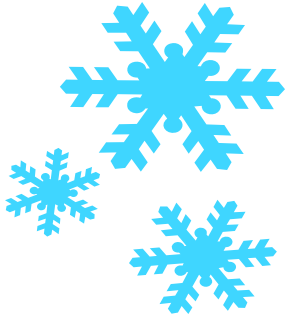
Happy New

#### INSIDE:

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## Notes from the PFA PRESIDENTS

Happy New Year !! Hard to believe that it is 2008 and time to focus on the second part of our school year. Before we do that it's a good idea to recap a few of the events that we had in the later part of 2007. Granny's was another success, we raised \$37,000.00. WOW! That is wonderful even with the lower door sales, the economy and soaring gas prices. Those of you who attended saw some wonderful new crafters and many of them will be returning next year. We have so many contracts in already for next November, always a great sign. Thank you to all who showed up for your volunteer shifts. With all the help it makes for a day with very few glitches. Dana and I had a great time organizing the event but could not have done it without the help of all the chair people and those who pitched in to help them. We can not say thank you enough!!

Teacher grants are now approved and out to the staff. We had a profitable Granny's Attic and are happy to say that we were able to honor all the grants and to make a gift to school of a few more voice amplification systems. Our budget is intact and we are very pleased to be able to keep business as usual.

The new year will bring many PFA-sponsored events, dances, assemblies, athletic parties, Teacher Appreciation Week and much more. Eighth-grade activities are in the beginning planning stages so if you have an eighth-grader and feel you can help, come to the next PFA meeting and see what is needed.

Volunteer Forms go home in the summer but many chairperson positions will become available due to children growing up and moving on, and so will their parents. If you have thought about a

chairperson position and would like to inquire about it please don't hesitate to call one of us or to email us. We are more than happy to give you the details as to what would be involved.

Hope to see you all at the next PFA meetings. Remember they are the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of every month, an hour and half long at most, but filled with valuable information and guest speakers from the district. Please join us!

*Christy Weil and Dana Johnson*  
**Co-Presidents**

## Student Assistance Coordinator

Greetings to All. Happy New Year!

We have been busy here at Thompson. In November I presented workshops to our students on the dangers of inhalants. It was interesting to hear some of their comments. The research indicates that middle school age students are the most likely age group to abuse inhalants. It is a small percentage of kids who engage in this risky behavior; however, it is so dangerous that it is important to reinforce the potential consequences of this behavior. The health and physical education staff and I have been conferring and using the materials purchased last year in their health lessons on substance abuse. The Drug Awareness Kit has been

effective; it depicts several different types of drugs and what they look like. It also has information about the effects of these drugs. It is important that our students know ahead of time what they may encounter so they may make an informed decision.

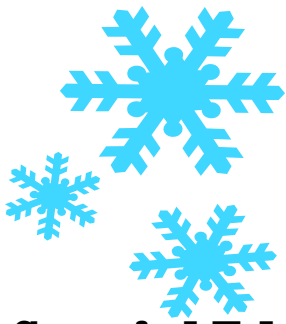
I will be meeting with our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students shortly to present a workshop on the signs and symptoms of depression. Depression is not uncommon among the adolescent population. The Rebel 2 group will be visiting the Nut Swamp School to do a cross-age teaching lesson on the dangers of smoking in February. The model black lung, the tar jar, and the model cancerous mouth that we purchased last year have been potent visual aids for our students and the younger students.

## Rosemary Richards

We will have a performance of the one-man show called DIRT in April. John Morello depicts several characters and how substance abuse has affected them. He is entertaining, engaging, and powerful.

I have the pleasure of working with many students on a variety of issues. We have an active and in my opinion excellent special services staff here at Thompson. We confer regularly about issues affecting students and create plans as needed to address them. Please feel free to call me at extension 8774.

**Students in middle school need to know ahead of time what they may encounter so that they make an informed decision about not using drugs or alcohol.**



## Special Education News by Lynn Godfrey, Coordinator

As we begin the second half of the 2007-2008 academic year, may we take this time to wish you a Happy New Year. We would also like to extend our congratulations to Mrs. Talty, and Mrs. Lanza on earning their Master 's degrees in the Art of Teaching. It is quite an accomplishment to earn a degree while working, and taking care of an active family. Bravo!

### Classroom Updates

#### Mrs. N. Pavelka-Luebs

Pre-Algebra-ICS eighth grade classes have worked with investigations dealing with using Mathematical Models with hands-on activities. Students are currently working in the text Looking for Pythagoras, and using the Pythagorean theorem. They will also use "Learnia Testing" which will enable them to practice test orientation that will provide feedback to teachers regarding critical information concerning student's areas of strengths and weaknesses.

Social studies ICS classes are learning about local and state governments. They have the additional advantage of being taught by a former mayor. Students made maps of Monmouth County, as well as designed an ideal school.

Science ICS classes learned about the periodic table and then created projects that included slogans, prices per gram and uses for these elements. Currently, the class is doing labs regarding topographical map models, and learning about elevation, index contour and relief maps.

#### Mrs. Lanza and Mrs. Pavelka-Luebs

Both teachers had their eighth grade language classes work on a project designed to encourage the development of reading and writing skills while integrating Internet technology into the classroom curriculum. Classrooms from a variety

of schools world wide are paired together. Students then designed an original monster picture with a description of the monster. The partnered classes then exchanged their descriptions on the Internet. Students were then challenged to use reading comprehension skills to read the descriptions and translate them into a monster picture. The true challenge involves creating a redrawn picture as close to the original picture as possible without looking at the original and using only the written description of the monster. The paired school was ST. Gregory the Great located in Hamilton, NJ.

#### Ms. Sumick

The sixth grade resource students have been studying Rome and made Emperor coins and Roman mosaics as part of the LEADS initiative. The eighth grade is studying North America and its landforms.

They are researching how the region's economy is effected by its trees, landforms, and famous landmarks.

#### Mrs. Godfrey

The sixth grade language arts class just completed the novel Tuck Everlasting. As a culminating activity the class enjoyed the movie the last day of class before winter break. We have also completed units on Sentences, Capitalization, and Punctuation. Our writing will now focus on persuasive topics in preparation for the NJ Ask. Our next novel will be Holes.

The seventh grade language arts class completed the same grammar units, but read the novel Hatchet. They too enjoyed seeing the movie of the novel they read. Presently, the class is reading the novel Where the Red Fern Grows. Seventh graders have also begun writing persuasive essays.

In our ICS American history class we learned about the different Native American tribes. Students were divided into five groups and each group wrote

an original story, which included all the unique characteristics of the tribe. The story was written in a hard covered book and illustrated. The finished products were very creative and artistic. Our second project was individual. Each student was assigned an explorer to research. Each student then presented their research on a poster to the class and discussed the importance of the explorer's discovery.

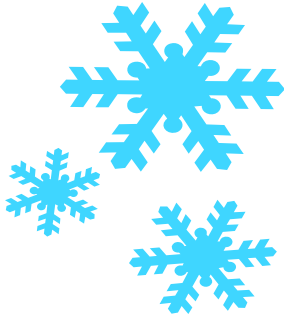
During the first marking period the seventh grade ICS science class studied our planet's water cycle. One eye-catching project was a poster on which students designed pictures and slogans that instructed people in ways to prevent the waste and pollution of water. Currently, we are exploring the animal kingdom and have just completed one of the most fascinating labs. Students dissected owl pellets to learn about the diet and digestion process of the bird. The class was so engrossed by their bone findings that it was difficult to stop the investigation so they could get to their next class on time.

We look forward to a very productive and rewarding remainder of the school year.

Dissecting owl pellets proved to be interesting and en"gross"ing!



Students completed units on grammar, reading, writing, art, and science with their in-class support and classroom teachers.



# Winter



Winter is upon us, and we have lots to share. The Student Activities committee has been busy. The Annual Toy Drive, which provides toys for Middletown Helps Its Own, was in full effect the week before winter break. All of Thompson helped out. Our generosity was amazing. Each homeroom from the three grade levels donated new toys. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who helped make this year's toy drive a successful one. Together, as a school, we collected 550 toys. This is an amazing accomplishment. Thanks again for all

## Student Activities

your help Thompson!

### Attention Eighth Graders:

Your 8<sup>th</sup> grade group pictures are still available for purchase! If you are interested please contact the company.

Contact: Jenn

1-800-968-1446 ext. 1# or check at the website:

[www.panoramaphoto.com](http://www.panoramaphoto.com).

The School Pep Rally will be on Friday, January 25<sup>th</sup>. This is a time where our school can come together and show our support for the members of our sport teams.

GO THOMPSON!!!

January is also the time when the Student Activities will diligently work on the upcoming school trips! The first trip will be for the 6<sup>th</sup> Graders. They will be going to Medieval Times on April 11<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Miss Garofalo*

*Miss Sumick*

## Activity Arts Department Mrs. Williams

Happy New Year to all of our students and parents! The Activity Arts Department is in full swing with our many projects and events. The 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Chorus and Band have had successful performing seasons with visits to the elementary schools, evening concerts for the community, and a school wide holiday assembly. Congratulations to the over 800 students who play or sing music at Thompson. Ms. Nelson, Mrs. Raguseo and Mrs. Williams direct the groups.

Ms. Nelson would like to thank all the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students and their parents for their dedication and hard work. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade Winter Concert was a wonderful success and you should all be very proud of yourselves! Mrs. Raguseo and Mrs. Williams are also proud of the accomplishments of their students.

Our halls are decorated with high quality work from our Art and Art Appreciation classes. Student displays range from replicas of

Georgia O'Keefe's Monumental Flower Projects, and Ceramic Slab Pottery boxes from Mrs. Smith, to Masterpiece Parodies from pop artists with Mrs. Kaufman. Our Contemporary Issues classes are keeping current with "Time for Kids" and other publications that reflect our latest news with Ms. Vaccarella and Mrs. Smith.

Mrs. Ballone and Mrs. Humann continue to work with our students in computers using PowerPoint, Excel, Access and much more. In Computer Class, Grade 6 has completed their research and brochure on Myths, Legends and Heroes. Grade 7 has completed research on the American Revolution and presently planning a database for Excel. Eighth graders are getting ready to give Oral Presentations as a culminating activity to their research of Civics or Geography.

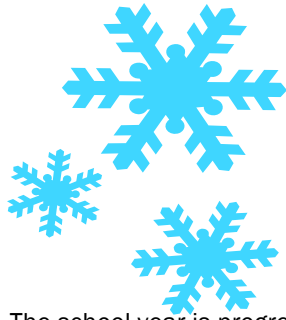
Mr. Kumfert and Mrs. Kaufman are producing shows in the Video Production classes and even

recorded a video of the chorus Winter Concert for the students.

### Upcoming Events:

**Variety Show, March 18 & 19.  
Six Flags, High Note Festival  
Music Competition, May 16**

**Video production, computer presentation, musical competition and performance, and art projects are all part of the activities at Thompson.**



# Winter

## Language Arts News Mr. Carl Gentry Coordinator

Students of all grades are reading novels and exploring themes of diversity and individuality.

The school year is progressing rapidly as we are coming to the close of the second marking period. Therefore, the language arts department would like to highlight some of the areas explored by students during the first half of the year.

On the sixth grade level, all classes have been exploring the themes of "Contributions to Society" and "Myths, Legends, and Heroes" with such novels as *Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt, *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, *The Roman Mysteries: The Thieves of Ostia*, *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan, *The Mirror of Fire and Dreaming* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, *The City of Ember* by Jeanne DuPrau, *The Roman Mysteries: The Secrets of Vesuvius* by Caroline Lawrence, *The Egypt Game* by Zippa Keatley Snyder, *Atticus of Rome* by Barry Denenberg, *Holes* by Louis Sachar, *Call it Courage* by Armstrong Sperry, *Flush* by Carl Hiaasen, *Graphic Greek Myths and Legends* by Nick Saunders, *The Children of the Lamp* by P.B. Kerr, and *Sea of Monsters* by Rick Riordan. Additionally, sixth graders have read short stories and non-fiction selections in the *Prentice Hall* anthology. During the course of reading these novels and short stories, students have been involved in many PBLs (projects) such as newspapers, interactive museum exhibits, original myth plays, personal hero research projects, etc. Finally, sixth graders have participated in many exciting and diverse writing experiences such as letter writing, narrative stories, speculative essays and persuasive essays.

On the seventh grade level, students have been exploring the theme of

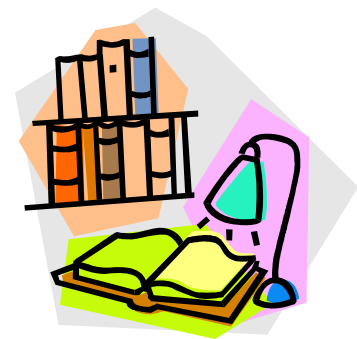
individuality with such novels as *Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls, *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, and *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor. Additionally, some students have read titles such as *The Ransom of Mercy Carter* by Caroline B. Cooney, *Witch Child* by Celia Rees, *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London, and *The True Stories of Pirates* by Lucy Lethbridge. Seventh graders have also read short stories and non-fiction selections in the *Prentice Hall* anthology. During the study of these works, students have participated in PowerPoint presentations, author studies, group utopia projects, comparison and contrast assignments, photo albums with captions, PBLs, etc. Additionally, our seventh grade students have written journal entries, persuasive essays, poetry, and speculative essays. Students in G&T have been reading novels and short stories related to the themes of prejudice and discrimination. They wrote fictional autobiographies, gave presentations relaying facts about other countries, created advertisements utilizing propaganda devices, and wrote and directed musical plays based on the previously stated themes. Additionally, these students are investigating a unit on values and human behavior.

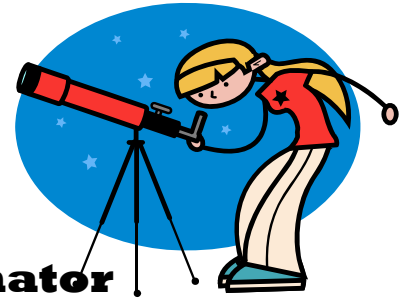
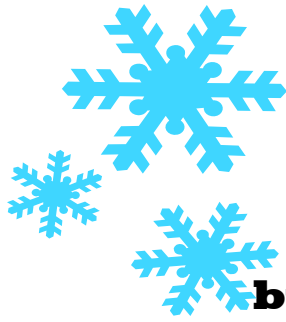
On the eighth grade level, students have been exploring the theme of diversity with *Farewell to Manzanar* by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck, and *The Diary of Anne Frank*, along with an intense study of the Holocaust. Culminating activities at this grade level include writing assignments utilizing the mobile laptop computers, book advertisement posters, and creating commercials and

advertisements. Also, eighth grade students are involved in writing persuasive essays, speculative essays, and daily journals. G&T students explored a unit on abilities and disabilities. These students have researched a person (through books and the internet) whom they consider to be a genius in a particular intelligence. As a culminating activity, they have written essays as well completed PowerPoint presentations about their genius's abilities. Students also reported on different disabilities and created inventions to support individuals with those disabilities.

Our department is always happy to provide you with the information you need. In keeping with open lines of communication, if you have any questions or concerns about the language arts program at Thompson, please email me at [gentryc@middletownk12.org](mailto:gentryc@middletownk12.org), or call 732-671-2212 ext. 8761.

Students are participating in writing activities such as narrative stories, essays, and autobiographies.





## Science News

by Ms. Eileen Jessurun, Coordinator

The science department would like to extend our wishes for a Happy, Healthy and Successful New Year to all the members of the community. We are excited about having the opportunity to teach, inspire and motivate our students as well as learn from them. We expect a wonderful 2008.

Mrs. Resnick's Science Classes

6th Grade: "Why is the red liquid sitting on top of the clear liquid in bottle A, but is below it in bottle B?" The sixth graders are grappling with the concept of density as a physical property of matter. They have been using balances and graduated cylinders to measure mass and volume to calculate the densities of a variety of objects, and will go on to study chemical properties and changes and the structure of matter.

8th Grade: The 8th grade is finishing up a unit concerning the geologic structure and history of the Earth. We have studied minerals and rock types, and will research how the shifting of tectonic plates causes earthquakes and volcanoes. Our next unit will be "Interactions of Matter" when we will consider atomic structure and how this relates to chemical reactions.

If it stinks, it must be chemistry. Mr. Jacoves' 8th grade classes have been busily creating reactions, observing explosions and investigating acids and bases. Next up on the schedule will be a virtual tour through the Nuclear Age as we discover radiation, the atom bomb and the Chernobyl accident through the wonders of the Internet.

Surf is up in 7th grade, we've been building rivers, shooting the curl on monster waves, investigating tsunami and ocean currents and in general getting the classroom wet and sandy. Next up will be astronomy where we

will find out if we have what it takes to launch and recover a small space probe.

Over in the Environmental Club we have been putting the finishing touches on a school survey designed to see what the school would want to have in our courtyard. Once that is finished we will get to work on planning our new courtyard while we also learn about how our choices affect global warming.

Mrs. Van Fechtmann's classes: 7th and 8th grade class are completing units. 7th graders are completing the Animals unit with an owl pellet dissection. We will begin the Cells book next, in which we will explore animal and plant cells as well as genetics, heredity and evolution. 8th graders are completing the Chemistry unit by discussing the benefits and dangers of nuclear energy. We will be taking a closer look "Inside the Earth" at minerals, rocks, earthquakes and volcanoes.

Mr. Newfield's classes: 7th grade classes are about to finish the Cells Book and are going to begin the book on Astronomy. Students may want to get in touch with the Middletown Astronomy Club at "Starastronomy.org". They do some exciting night viewings to which the public is invited.

8th graders are studying the forces that shape the Earth's surface. If you take any road trips north and west of the Raritan River make sure they check out the "Falling Rocks".

Miss McDonald's classes have been busy with many hands on experiences. The 6th grade class is exploring the characteristics of living things, bacteria and viruses and plant processes. The 8th grade class has just

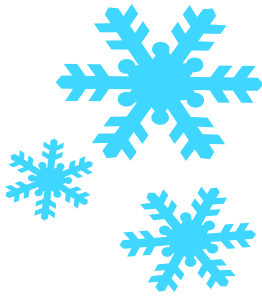
started a new unit on sound and light. We are investigating sound properties through many demonstrations.

Mrs. Jessurun's 8th graders have just completed web quests, presentations and projects on plate tectonics, earthquakes, volcanoes and continental drift. They are beginning their study of chemistry by constructing a periodic table and using it to discover why elements are arranged on it in a very specific order. They will continue their study of atoms and bonding by doing research and experiments.

The 6th grade classes are now studying weather. We are doing mini labs on changes in density, movement of air due to pressure changes, forming clouds in a bottle and observing heated globes and why seasons occur on Earth. Students will learn how to read a weather map and predict the weather based on cold and warm fronts.

Mrs. Nelson's 6th grade class is pouring, measuring, mixing and observing physical and chemical changes in matter. The 7th grade class just completed their unit on invertebrates, creating a book describing their favorite invertebrate. The 8th grade class is doing a lot of hands on experimentation, discovering how different waves of energy pass through our environment.





## World Language Department Mrs. Ellen Finkelstein

Why do we include World Languages as part of the curriculum? What are the benefits of second language learning? The advantages are many, and they extend to one's personal, academic and professional life.

Second language learning broadens your experience and expands your view of the world and your understanding of other cultures. It encourages respect for other people and helps you develop into a responsible citizen. Knowing another language will enable you to enjoy travel to other countries and to communicate with people in your own country who speak another language.

Academically, there are significant benefits to learning another language. Research consistently indicates that learning a second language can improve your skills in math and language arts, as well as your scores on standardized college entrance exams such as the SATs. Further, the longer you study a foreign language,

the stronger your skills in these areas become. Language learning stimulates your intellect, improves your critical thinking abilities and teaches you how to learn. It also improves your understanding of your own language through comparison and contrast with the second language.

Studying a second language can also be a benefit as you enter the world of work. More and more businesses work closely with companies around the world. More American companies have offices worldwide as well. Companies need all kinds of workers who can communicate in different languages and understand other cultures. People who know a second language enhance their employment opportunities in fields such as technology, business, law, health care, the military and the social services.

As you begin to study a second language, be patient! People develop

different levels of fluency, depending in part on how long they study the language. Most Americans will not sound like a native speaker who has learned the language at home as a child. However, students who are diligent about their language study will be able to make themselves understood, read relevant information and converse with native speakers. Language learning does not happen overnight; it takes time and practice, just like learning how to play an instrument or developing the skills of a sport. However, it is time well spent, as the rewards of second language learning are great!



Second language learning helps you enjoy travel and expands your view of the world.

### Greetings from the Media Center!

Ms. Raymond, Media Specialist

Happy winter! Students have been visiting the media center with many different classes to work on research projects and reading activities over the past few months. Some recent topics of study have been: The contributions of ancient China, Greece and Rome to modern society, civil rights, invertebrates, current events, health issues, the Pacific Islands, disabilities, Paris, mystery stories, biographies and more!

#### Just so you know:

- The media center contains almost 8,000 books and periodicals geared specifically towards middle school students

and educators. We also have thirty computers that are connected to the district's network. Students have access to the Microsoft Office suite they use in computer class, the card catalog and several research databases. As students conduct research they are given assistance with search techniques and web page evaluation. They are also guided through cross-referencing options.

- For projects at home, the Middletown Schools web site <http://www.middletownk12.org> contains links to our database

subscriptions and many excellent web sites. The Thompson Media Center link <http://www.middletownk12.org/thompson/library.htm> also contains pathfinders for resources related to current class projects.

- A variety of special events are held in the media center throughout the year. These include a book fair, a book club, student presentations, guest speakers and frequent thematic contests and games. There is always something happening in the Thompson Media Center!





## Math Department News by Mr. Mark Sessa

### MATH CLUB

We are now offering our students more opportunities with our math club. Mrs. Castle offers regular math club meetings for students of all grades. One program that is being offered is the peer-tutoring program. Students can now come in once a week and receive help from another student in math. You can access the times and schedules through Mrs. Castle's web site.

### MATHEMATICS CONTEST RESULTS

Thompson Middle School has entered five math contests this school year thanks to the financial support of the Thompson PFA. Over 100 students have participated so far. For most contests, students show up on their own time, usually at 7:25 AM in the morning!

\*The CBA Math Contest (now named the Brother Christian Jones Math Contest), held Saturday, October 20th, 2007 was open to a team of eight 8<sup>th</sup> graders. The Thompson team finished 9<sup>th</sup> overall in the public school division. Our top scorer was **Andrea D'Souza**. Approximately 320 students participated from 42 schools.

\*The AMC-8 Contest is an international contest. Twenty-one of our 8<sup>th</sup> graders participated. Over 270,000 students from 2,200 schools participated internationally. Our top scorers were **Andrea D'Souza** and **Frank Tota**.

\*The American Scholastic Mathematics Contest is a national contest given 6 times a year. The contest is open to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

The Overall Standings After 3 Contests Are:

- |                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. Matt Littenberg | 5. Garrett Davey |
| Andrea D'Souza     | Jerry Lunanuova  |
| Brian George       | 6. Billy Sansone |
| 3. Frank Tota      | 7. Chris Daubert |
| 4. Joyce Chin      |                  |

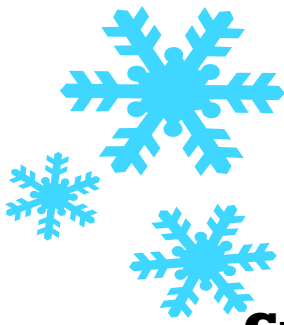
\*The SIGMA Mathematics Contest is a national contest given 5 times a year. The contest is open to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. The Overall Standings After 2 Contests Are:

| Grade 6           | Grade 7               | Grade 8              |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Andre Le       | 1. Sam Altland        | 1. Andra D'Souza     |
| 2. Ryan McKinney  | 2. Tommy DiMeo        | Brian George         |
| 3. Joe Castellano | Billy Sansone         | Matt Littenberg      |
| Casey Bandilla    | 3. Alyssa Centagorta  | Frank Tota           |
| 4. Alex Sundt     | 4. Cristina Naha      | 2. Chris Daubert     |
| Nick Schweizer    | 5. Tricia Valerio     | Claire Griffin       |
| 5. Costa Costidas | 6. Ryan Chasco        | 3. Joyce Chin        |
| Marianna Fleming  | Victoria Palfini      | Garrett Davey        |
| Christopher Young | 7. William Recanatini | 4. Samantha Peterson |
| Julia Castellano  |                       | Geena Lucibello      |

Encourage your child to take advantage of peer-tutoring in math.  
Check Mrs. Castle's website at [www.middletownk12.org/thompson/castle](http://www.middletownk12.org/thompson/castle)

\*The New Jersey Mathematics League Contest is given once a year statewide. Students compete individually, by grade level, and they also compete as a school.

**FOR A SCHEDULE OF THE REMAINING CONTESTS, LOG ONTO MR. SESSA'S WEB SITE.**



## Guidance News

The New Year begins the scheduling process for the 2008-2009 school year.

Mr. Gomulka, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade guidance counselor, will be meeting individually with students in February to schedule students going to High School South or High School North. In mid to late January, 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will bring home a course selection guide to assist in the course selection process. Students going to other high schools will continue to be monitored as the process plays out.

Mr. Anderson, 7<sup>th</sup> grade and Mrs. Mason, 6<sup>th</sup> grade will be visiting classes in late January/early February to assist students in making their elective choices for next year.

Mr. Gomulka, next year's 6<sup>th</sup> grade guidance counselor, will be visiting elementary schools with Mr. Houston from January 25<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> and will meet with the 5<sup>th</sup> grades. This fun and informative day is a great

## Mr. Jim Anderson

way for the future Thompsonites to get a taste of what will be happening in middle school.

On February 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM there will be a new parent orientation for parents of incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

Other important reminders:

7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade State testing – April 28<sup>th</sup> – May 1<sup>st</sup>

6<sup>th</sup> grade State testing – May 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>.

7<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra testing – week of April 7<sup>th</sup>. (Testing will be done in math classrooms.)

The guidance department can be reached at the following number (732) 671-2212.

|                       |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Mrs. Ford (secretary) | ext. 8709 |
| Mr. Anderson          | ext. 8705 |
| Mr. Gomulka           | ext. 8706 |
| Mrs. Mason            | ext. 8707 |

## **Social Studies Department News - Kevin Graham, Department Coordinator**

Welcome to the end of our school year's first half. It has been a good one so far. The end of the second marking period marks the half way point of the school year. For eighth grade Social Studies students this means the beginning of a new course. For students who had been in Civics class during the first half of the school year, the new course is World Geography - a prelude to a required Freshman High School course entitled World Cultures. Eighth grade World Geography is a continent-by-continent study of the earth. Students who had been taking World Geography class during the first half of the school year began the study of American Civics - a study of how

our government works at the Federal, State, County and Local levels.

The end of the first / start of the second half of the year is a good time of the year for a student to assess his/her performance so far and to consider what areas of their schoolwork could be improved upon and how. I believe that a strong finish to a school year can set the stage for a good start in the next year. Now is the time to make that happen. Maybe some fresh school supplies; maybe a set time for homework; maybe a discussion with a teacher will do the trick. We all need to give ourselves a "clean slate" at times. I believe what lies ahead is far more

important than what is behind us. A student who has been discouraged by substandard performance needs to be given, and to give, themselves, a chance to start over and reverse their course. It is never too late to improve what you have a desire to improve. If I can be of assistance in any way please feel free to contact me by phone (732-671-2212 ext. 8789) or e mail:

[grahamk@middletownk12.org](mailto:grahamk@middletownk12.org).



You can always improve!

# **THOMPSON MIDDLE SCHOOL**

## **PFA GAZETTE**

### **WINTER 2008**

#### *Calendar of Events*

##### January

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Monday, 21   | School Closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day |
| Monday, 28th | Parent Faculty Meeting at 9:15 AM             |

##### February

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Tuesday, February 5    | School Closed for Students. Professional Day for Staff |
| Friday, February 8     | Student Council Dance 5-7:30 PM                        |
| Tuesday, February 12   | Thompson celebrates "Diversity Day"                    |
| Monday, February 18    | Schools Closed Presidents' Day                         |
| Wednesday, February 20 | New Parent Orientation 7:30 PM                         |
| Monday, February 25    | Parent Faculty Meeting at 9:15 AM                      |
| Tuesday, February 26   | High Honor Roll Breakfast                              |

##### March

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Friday, March 7     | Student Council Dance 5-7:30 PM          |
| Wednesday, March 12 | Faculty Meeting /NJ ASK 2:50 PM          |
| Monday, March 17    | Parent Faculty Meeting at 9:15 AM        |
| Tuesday, March 18   | Variety Show for students 2:45           |
| Wednesday, March 19 | Variety Show for parents 7:30 PM         |
| Thursday, March 20  | Schools Closed –End of Day Spring Recess |
| Monday, March 31    | Schools Re-Open                          |