



Superintendent's Corner

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Superintendent

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As the school year begins to wind down, end-of-year activities and celebrations are gearing up! This has been a great week for celebrating the accomplishments of our students and for witnessing some of the hands-on activities that teachers have developed to engage their classes.

Top 10 Dinner Molise

The week got off to a great start with the Top Ten Dinner on Monday evening at Molise. Each year, the top ten graduating seniors are recognized for their accomplishments at a dinner celebration. Each student gets to select one teacher that has made a difference for them during their career in Amesbury. The students write a letter to the teacher explaining the impact they have had on the student and then the teacher gets to speak about all of the ways that the student exemplifies the great character traits of our student population. It is a great honor for the teachers to be asked to speak at this event. This year, the following students (listed alphabetically) were recognized, along with their selected teacher:

- Abby Davis – Mrs. Richmond
- James Doherty III – Mr. Ackerman
- Michael Gadbois - Ms. Regis
- Hailee Gibadlo – Mr. Bissaillion
- Joy Jancewicz – Mrs. Brockmrye
- Sydney Knowlton – Mr. Connors
- Patrick McCue – Ms. Saurman
- Catherine Peerson – Dr. Walsh
- Molly Rains – Mrs. Daileanes
- Jacob Sunnerberg – Ms. Leary



8th Grade STEM Project

This week, I was invited to visit the 8th grade math classes to observe the students as they built “Rube Goldberg Machines”.

According to Mr. Denio, “A Rube Goldberg Machine is a deliberately complex contraption in which a series of devices that perform simple tasks are linked together to produce a chain reaction. Each activation of one device triggers the next device in the sequence. The expression is named after American cartoonist and inventor of such contraptions, Rube Goldberg (1883–1970). Remember the game “Mouse Trap”? That game was inspired by these machines.

The objective of our invention is to pop a balloon as the last step. There must be at least 10 steps to complete this task. The first action in the chain reaction is set off by a human being and the contraption should do the rest.

We are also very fortunate to have the guidance of Zach Umperovitch. Zach is a Geologist who lives in NH (this week he is in Death Valley on a field study). He is a graduate of Purdue University

who holds 2 Guinness World Records for the largest Rube Goldberg machine ever built. As luck would have it, one of Zach’s record breaking machines was a balloon popper just like ours! He got into making these complex machines while in college which eventually led to competitions like the “Engineering Olympics of America.” He has a passion for making these machines and does very large builds yearly; he has built machines for the likes of ESPN and the MythBusters. Here is Zach’s youtube channel which shows some of his work:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/zumperov>.”



On Wednesday, students attended the assembly presented by Zach Umperovitch. He shared with the students a number of clips of various Rube Goldberg machines and had discussions with them about the technology behind creating those machines. Thursday, I had the chance to visit a couple of the classrooms to check out their creations. It was amazing to watch the students work collaboratively with one another as they devised their machines and then problem-solved when something didn’t work. This type of critical thinking from the students was impressive. To the right is a picture of one of the groups’ creations. A still picture certainly doesn’t do it justice. Mr. Denio sent me a link to another group’s machines. Check it out at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=svVnMxockK0>

Rotary Teacher of the Year



This week, the Rotary Club celebrated Leslie Barnaby (Cashman technology teacher) as the teacher of the year. Leslie was nominated by a number of people, including former principal and current school committee member Peter Hoyt, for her outstanding dedication and the unwavering commitment she has to each child. Ms. Barnaby was joined at this celebration by her husband, two daughters, Cashman principal Dr. Charette and Mr. Hoyt. This was such a well-deserved recognition – Mrs. Barnaby exemplifies all of the positive character traits that we hope for in our Amesbury staff.

NECC Class of 2017 Celebration

Thursday night, I attended a celebration of the class of 2017 students that participated in NECC's Early College High School program. Ms. LaValley from the school committee also attended this great evening. Students had an opportunity to hear from staff and faculty from both Amesbury Public Schools and Northern Essex Community College, as well as one of their classmates. It was a wonderful evening to recognize all of the students' hard work and their commitment to learning. Many of these students will be graduating with their classmates from AHS next Friday, but unlike their peers, they will be entering college as sophomores, based on the number of college courses they participated in while in Amesbury. The Early College High School program is a great way for students to experience the unique traits of a college level course, while receiving the support to develop the skills necessary to be successful in college. I appreciate the continued support of President Lane Glenn and all of the staff at NECC for ensuring the success of this program.

Last night, I also received an email from Senator Kathleen O'Connor-Ives regarding potential funding for the early college program. She indicated that she had filed a successful earmark for funding of the Early College Program administered through NECC. While this funding will most likely have to go through the veto process and will hopefully not be subject to 9c cuts from the state, it is an encouraging first step. I appreciate the continued support of Senator O'Connor-Ives.



AHS Sing Out

Today was the last day of school for our seniors at AHS. They concluded their day with an annual tradition – AHS Sing Out. During this event, seniors have the opportunity to perform for the whole school, the yearbook dedication is announced, seniors present the class gift to the school, and various yearbook memories are shared. This is typically a very happy event for all students, as they have the opportunity to reminisce about their four years in high school. However, I must admit that there were many tears in the auditorium during the beginning of the program, when the senior class announced class donations to three organizations in the names of some special people. First, the seniors recognized custodian Mike McCann who has been out since last year due to a medial issue. Next, the students announced a donation on behalf of Principal Elizabeth McAndrews, recognizing her fight with cancer and her continued commitment to the schools. Finally, the senior class announced a donation to the Juvenile Diabetes Association on behalf of classmate Eric Dawes. Eric accepted this donation, but also pointed out that he was accepting on behalf of himself, as well as others in the school... in particular acknowledging his *best buddy* David Follansbee. This event reinforced for me what wonderful, caring students we have in Amesbury... students that recognize and support one another. This year's yearbook was dedicated to AHS Cafeteria manager Jeanne Shaheen, one of AHS' unsung heroes! I wish the students the best of luck in their future endeavors. Please be sure to join us at Landry Stadium (weather permitting) Friday, June 2nd at 7:00 pm for the Class of 2017 graduation.

Be well and have a great **long** weekend **with your families!**

Gary