

THE BELLRINGER

AMHERST PTA NEWSLETTER
SERVING CLARK, WILKINS AND AMS

www.amherstpta.org
ptaboard@amherstpta.org

November 2008

Dates to Remember

November 3rd-25th-Clark/Wilkins Thanksgiving Food Drive for Share
Tuesday, November 4th- AMS/Clark/Wilkins- Late Start
Saturday, November 8th- PTA Family Science Day- Wilkins Gym 10am-3pm
Tuesday, November 11th- Veterans Day- No School
Friday, November 14th- AMS Dance, Grades 6-8 7-9:30pm
Tuesday, November 18th- PTA General Meeting, Wilkins Library 7:30pm
Tuesday November 18th-25th- Clark/Wilkins Book Fair
Thursday, November 20th- AMS/Clark/Wilkins- Parent/Teacher Conferences 5-8pm
Friday, November 21st- AMS/Clark/Wilkins- Parent/Teacher Conferences Early Release
Wednesday, November 26th-Friday, November 28th- Thanksgiving Recess- No School



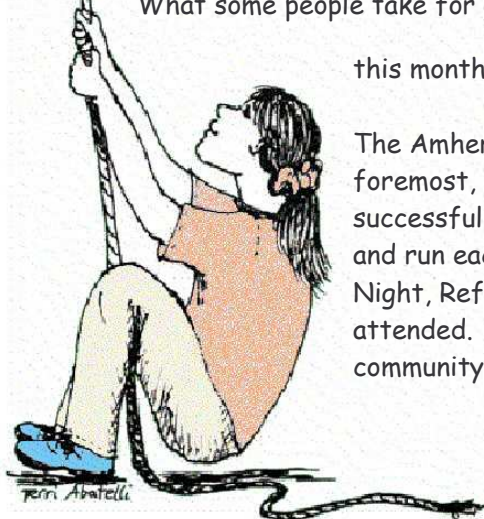
Co - President's Letter

Three years ago my son arrived home from kindergarten with a beautiful card with the words "I am thankful ..." on the cover. Since he was our eldest child, I braced myself for the rest of the card which, I was sure, would bring tears to my eyes. Inside, the card read "for my Monster Trucks" with a picture of two very large machines smashing into each other. As we begin November and start hearing people talk about giving thanks, I think back to that card. What some people take for granted, others are most thankful for. It is that simple truth that

this month is all about.

The Amherst PTA has many reasons to be thankful this season. First and foremost, we are thankful for all of you! Amherst PTA programs are successful because of the large number of volunteers who help plan, publicize and run each event. Our membership is growing and our Family Information Night, Reflections Info Night and general meetings have all been well attended. Thank you for taking the time to be such an active part of this community!

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Roni Abatelli

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We would also like to thank Gillian Smith for volunteering to fill the open Vice-President position on the PTA Board. Gillian will do a wonderful job helping the PTA Committees publicize their events. She brings experience, energy and an unwavering commitment to the Amherst PTA. Please join us in welcoming Gillian to her new role.

Lastly, we need to thank Dotsie Bohan, Susan Durling and the entire committee for yet another successful Magazine Drive. This is one of our largest fundraisers of the year that will help to fund PTA events, curriculum enrichment programs and spring grants.

Sincerely,

Christine Poisson & Krista Hanks

Amherst PTA

Co-Presidents

Thank You

To the PTA Board,

Thank you for the generous check you sent for classroom supplies. As a new teacher at Clark there were several items I wanted to purchase for my students.

Thank you for everything you do for our schools and the staff. I am excited to be a part of a great team.

Sincerely, Kim Ballantyne

Dear PTA Board and Members,

As we see our new school year well underway, our curriculum enrichment programs beginning and our Magazine Drive winding down, I feel it most fitting to thank all of you for the endless support, dedication and cooperation that you all devote to our schools, our children and our staff. With the Spring grant, I was generously awarded 2 items that have proven instrumental in my second grade classroom. The tabletops white board assists us daily during our guided reading groups. The children love it! The second item, a large, lined magnetic writing pad that adheres to my large white board allows the children to view handwriting and writing lessons from their seats.

Thank you once again for providing me, as well as my colleagues the opportunities that you offer our

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schools thru your endeavors.

I am grateful for all that you have done and will continue to do in the name of education. We are very fortunate to have such wonderful resources for our children and the PTA is a cornerstone that allows this to occur.

With much gratitude,

Maria Lemelin :o)
First/Second Grade Teacher
Wilkins School

PTA Committee Chair Wanted for the 2008^2009 School Year

The PTA has a committee chair position open for Staff Appreciation at the Amherst Middle School. Staff Appreciation is a nationally sponsored PTA program which celebrates teachers and staff during the year. In the past there has been a Fall breakfast, a mid-Winter lunch, and Teacher Appreciation week in May. Please consider chairing this committee. This a wonderful opportunity to become involved in a great organization dedicated to the success of children and the support of our teachers and staff. For more information about this opportunity, please contact Jil Romano at 673-7980 or at jilmarc@comcast.net

Attic Resource

Middle School

Kelly Kalenik

- Bingo chips or something similar to mark bingo cards
- Books of any genre appropriate for teen readers for DEAR
- Tennis balls (used are fine)
- Board games (any level)
- Aquarium plants-especially 'baby grass')

Mrs. Barry

- Fabric
- Sewing notions, braids, trims, to be used for various art projects.
- Men's clean shirts to be used for smocks in the art room.

- an 8mm (or Super 8mm) video camera.
- LCD projector.

Pam McGoven

- Toilet paper rolls
- paper towel rolls or wrapping rolls for a project i am doing with my small group math class.

Music Department

- Disinfecting wipes to clean instruments.

**Please contact teachers directly to donate items.*

Dr. Mary Jennings, Superintendent of SAU #39 was the Guest Speaker at the Amherst PTA October 2008 General Meeting

Dr. Jennings began her presentation by highlighting that the three school districts that comprise the School Administrative Unit #39 are Amherst, Mont Vernon, and Souhegan cooperative school districts. These three districts represent the K-12 learning experience for students and their families in the Towns of Amherst and Mont Vernon.

The mission is "To Engage, Support, and Challenge All Students." Currently the focus is on measuring individual achievement in all subject areas through an emphasis on literacy across the curriculum; and become more unified across all three districts that engage similar content so as students approach each new school they have a seamless flow as one school district. In fact, this is a priority! Dr. Jennings visits approximately four classrooms each week. This allows her to see what gets implemented and to see how what they are planning gets implemented.

SAU #39 is in its second year of strategic planning to assure that all students will make measured progress in all subject areas for art, reading, social studies, mathematics, science, etc. How do they demonstrate that students are making progress and measuring progress in a positive way? Data testing. Yes, teachers are assessing students through DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association), and NECAP (New England Common Assessment Program) testing. Using this data helps teachers to understand and tailor their classroom instruction according to their students learning levels. For example, based on a child's different area of reading the teacher can group students accordingly with differentiated instruction.

Teachers can also report back to parents during parent conferences to review current status and discuss targeting where their child needs to be. Eventually, our children will be able to look at their own results to determine their strengths.

Implementing a new science curriculum and making new changes in mathematics are some additional school goals. And, the literacy coaches are continuously coordinating the literacy program and special education programs.

We hope you stay tuned to Dr. Jennings and the SAU #39 Strategic Five Year Plan. There is a lot to accomplish and you can continue to help all of our children by encouraging reading and writing at home with your own. Improving a child's progress at home increases their learning improvement in school.

Renovations will continue over the next two summers (2009 & 2010). The current renovations will greatly improve energy efficiency -- particularly over the winter. More renovation details will be discussed at the next PTA General Meeting.

Dr. Jennings' visit was the first in a year long series of special guests at PTA General Meetings. The PTA General Meeting scheduled for November 18th will feature guest speaker, Nancy Head from our School Board who will discuss the renovations to our school buildings, including an overview of what has been completed and a timetable for the remaining improvements. All community members are invited to attend.

**Family Science Day
Saturday, November 8th, 2008
“Energy Matters”**



Only a few more days until the special day of parent-child interaction and learning at Family Science Day. This is the **Eleventh** year that Family Science Day will bring parents and children together in an interactive setting to learn some scientific principles---and of course, to have lots of fun!

This year come to Family Science Day to think and learn about energy - how to harness it, make it, use it and save it! If you have never participated before, or if you are a “repeat customer” please come to see new Science Day displays and experiments never shown before at Family Science Day! Just like in past years, there will be more interactive experiments and displays this year---something for everyone! We set up the experiments and exhibits so that parents and students can have fun learning something new!

The Flight Simulator (based on the Wright Brothers first plane) will be there again, an Amherst PTA Family Science Day tradition and a real crowd pleaser! First time “pilots” and experienced “pilots” alike will have a thrill! Spectators (parents) have a great time too!

Location: Wilkins Gym
Date: Saturday, November 8th
Time: 10am-12 noon or 1pm - 3 pm
Participants: Kindergarten through 4th grade, accompanied by parent

We want to provide everyone with the opportunity to join in this fun. That means that students from both Clark and Wilkins Schools in any grade (K-4th grade) can attend either the 10 am-12 noon session or the 1 pm- 3 pm session. Siblings are also welcome, it is a terrific family event!

Come join us in this great community activity! Please contact Jane Soddors at 672-7882 for volunteer information or for general information on the event. We hope to see you there!!

**November General Meeting
Change in Date**

Due to Veteran's Day, the PTA's November General Meeting will be held on the **third** Tuesday, November 18th at 7:30 p.m. in the Wilkins Library. Special guest Nancy Head will speak about the next phase of construction at all three schools and answer questions from parents. Our General Meetings also feature reports from the school principals and information about our various committees and volunteer opportunities. All members of the community are welcome to attend.



WOW!

PTA/PTSA Reflections Entries Due December 3, 2008!!

Looking for something to do over Thanksgiving break? Why not paint, draw, write, play music, dance, take a picture or make a movie!! It's that time of year again! While you're sitting around with your stomach full after all that turkey, why not work on your Reflections projects? This year's theme is "Wow!". Remember, you don't have to be a member of the PTA to participate, **ALL** students grades K-12 can enter as many pieces in as many categories as they wish!! Entries are due into your school office no later than Wednesday, December 3, 2008.

All entry forms and rules can be found this year at www.AmherstPTA.org/reflections. In an effort to be more "green" no forms will be in school offices this year, unless requested. Please be sure to fill out the entry forms completely and follow all the rules or your piece will be returned.

If you have any questions, please contact co-chairs:

Shelly Kayser 673-6457 SKayser@hughes.net

Wendy Conway 672-5679 Mconway0427@comcast.net





Holiday Story Time

Take time to celebrate the holidays, while sipping hot chocolate, and enjoy listening to teachers and community members read holiday stories! All families are invited to attend the Holiday Story Time on Friday, December 5 from 6:30 to 7:30 PM in the Clark Multipurpose Room. Pajamas and blankets are encouraged! We hope to see you there!!

Save the Date! *Peter Pan* Auditions

Auditions for the 2009 Amherst PTA Play, *Peter Pan*, will be held the evenings of January 6 and 7, 2009 at Clark School. Watch for details in email, local newspapers, and our website www.amherstpta.org/play <<http://www.amherstpta.org/play>> .

A Math Carnival is coming to The Wilkins School in 2009!!

Tuesday, January 27th
Wilkins School Cafeteria
6-8 p.m.
For students in grades 1-4



Join us for an evening full of math fun. You will find your favorite carnival games with a math twist. Guest Mathematicians will be on hand to delight the students and families with special games and challenges. We will have some of the favorite events from last year, as well as many new challenges for the students. Look for the signup sheet in your homerooms in January. Questions? Please call Betsy Cissel (673-2348) or Carol Hopfenspirger (673-2223).

9th Annual Amherst Junior Women's Turkey Trot



DATE: Friday, November 28, 2008

PLACE: Historic Amherst Village Green

REGISTRATION: Forms are available at Amherst Town Library, Runners Alley, and Sportshoe Center or to register online go to Coolrunning.com.

QUESTIONS?: E-mail Mary Lou Mullens at AmherstTurkeyTrot@comcast.net

Come walk or run off your Thanksgiving dinner with our 5k or One Mile Fun Run. Don't miss your chance to get a commemorative t-shirt, given to the first 100 entrants!

All proceeds go to area charities.

HOLIDAY TOY STORE



The Holiday Toy Store, in its 21st year, is a special event in December that gives parents in financial need from Milford, Brookline, Mont Vernon and Amherst an opportunity to choose holiday gifts for their children, free of charge, from the specially set-up Holiday Toy Store. This is a cross community effort between non-profit organizations, businesses, churches and individuals. In the spirit of the season we are asking for your generosity in supporting this effort. We are asking for new, unwrapped toys for infants through teenagers, as well as, new hats, mittens and gloves. Donations may be left in collection boxes found at the Amherst library, Kringle's Toy Box, Fredrick's, Hampshire Hills, Clark and Wilkins' schools, as well as, other locations. Boxes will be labeled as Holiday Toy Store. Monetary donations are also greatly appreciated by December 10th, with checks made out to Holiday Toy Store and mailed to PO Box 6, Amherst, NH 03031. All monetary donations go towards buying toys.

However you choose to contribute, do so with a kind and loving heart, with the knowledge that you have helped to brighten the holiday season for the children in the Souhegan Valley

Parenting Talk at Milford Middle School

Parent-to-Parent presents the second in a series of five parent-planned interactive talks for parents of elementary and middle school students on Tues Nov 18. The topic is: "Mood Swings and an Attitude: Understanding Your Teen and Preteen". Presenter Jane Richards-Jones is Parent Educator and mother of two young adults, one step child and several grandkids. She has a Masters from Teachers College, Columbia. Ms. Richards-Jones will concentrate on changes in behavior and how to improve communication and cooperation in the family. The talk will be held at the Milford Middle School from 6:30 to 8:00 PM. There is no fee for the talk. Light refreshments will be provided.

"Games Galore", a recreational program for students aged 3-14 will be held at the same time as the talk. Older students will have open gym time and make a gumdrop turkey centerpiece. For younger students there will be a seasonal craft, stories and games. A complimentary snack of doughnuts and cider will be provided. Games Galore is free if a parent attends the talk.

The talks are sponsored by NH Children's Trust Fund, CAST (Community Action for Safe Teens), MMS Enrichment, The Youth Council, Nashua, Brookline Lions Club, Brookline Women's Club, and Milford ES PTO.. For questions contact Libby Anderson at mmsenrich@charter.net or 672-9876.

Amherst Recreation

Recreation Basketball

Be sure to register early for our popular recreation basketball league!! You won't want to miss out on the skill development and fun our leagues brings to young athletes.

1st & 2nd Grade Hoops

Passing, dribbling, shooting skills taught & reinforced through informal games.

Where: Wilkins School, Who: **Grades 1 & 2**, When: Sat. 1/10 - 2/14, Registration Deadline: 12/15/08

Under the Moon Hikes

Join us for stories and a walk in the woods along easy paths that accommodate people of all ages. Let P MEC help you find your way around the night sky. Bring a flashlight to help you navigate uneven terrain. When:

Full Moon Hikes

Friday, 11/14 at 7:00pm

Friday, 12/12 at 7:00pm

New Moon Hikes

Friday, 11/28 at 7:00pm

Saturday, 12/27 at 7:00pm

Where: Various Locations (see the P MEC website)

Leave No Child Inside

School Vacation Day Programs

Are you wondering what your children will do on their school vacation days? Send them to P MEC where they'll spend the day learning about and enjoying nature! Content topics vary from day to day depending on weather. When: Tuesday, 11/11 (Veteran's Day), Wednesday, 11/26 & Friday, 11/28 (Thanksgiving Recess), Friday, 12/26 (Winter Break), Monday, 12/29 - Friday, 1/2 (Winter Break), Where: P MEC, Time: Half Day 9:00AM-Noon or 1:00-4:00PM, Full day 7:30AM-5:30PM

Leave No Child Inside - An Evening in the Woods

Send your child to P MEC to reconnect with nature! The Joe English reservation is an enchanting place at night. Your child will love outdoor activities such as star gazing, night hikes and observing animal habitats. Children grades K - 8, When: 11/14 & 12/12, Where: P MEC, Time: 6:00-9:00pm

Monthly Creature Feature

How long can a beaver hold its breath for? What is the only bird that can fly backwards? Do frogs drink through their skin? Why do only the female mosquitoes bite? Learn the answers to questions like these and more during "Creature Feature" at the Peabody Mill Environmental Center. This monthly program is geared towards people of all ages who want to see live animals up close and personal. When: Saturdays 11/1 & 12/6, Where: P MEC, Time: 2:00-3:00pm

Fall Youth Wrestling

Come out and learn to wrestle or work on your skills with Dennis Wilson. Join in the fun and competition against other local teams! Who: **Grades 5-8**, Where: Souhegan High School, When: 11/17-2/19, Mon. & Thurs. 6-8pm

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How to Survive in the Wilderness Hike

Are you a casual hiker who wants to know more about hiker safety and survival? Join Mountain Man, Chas Terry, for a stroll through the Joe English woods while learning about hiker safety and survival. Chas will discuss hiking safety, hiking during hunting season, and survival skills. This is a great way to familiarize yourself with the trails adjacent to P MEC. Please wear appropriate footwear and bring water to drink. When: Saturdays, 10/25 & 11/15, Where: P MEC, Time: 1:00-3:00pm

Stonehearth Open Learning Opportunities (SOLO)

Wilderness First Aid

Become certified in SOLO Wilderness First Aid (WFA). SOLO courses are designed for trip leaders, park rangers, outdoor educators, mountain and river guides, and outdoor enthusiasts who want to know how to prevent accidents as well as how to cope when the unexpected occurs. SOLOs' "hands-on" approach trains you to act competently in the kind of emergencies you are most likely to encounter. More info on SOLO can be found at: <http://soloschools.com>. Box lunch will be provided. Please wear comfortable clothing, including walking/hiking shoes. When: Saturday & Sunday, 11/22 & 11/23, Where: P MEC, Time: 9:00am-5:00pm

Adult Gentle Yoga

Come and Join Leslie Formby a certified and trained Hatha Yoga instructor. Leslie will lead her students in the traditional holistic approach to Hatha Yoga. Exercises through controlled breathing techniques will benefit you by reducing stress and gaining physical exercise.

When: Thursdays, 10-11:00am

Session 3 - 1/8-2/19 (no class Feb vacation) @AFS

Session 4 - 3/5-4/23 (no class April Vacation) @AFS

Session 5 - 5/7-6/25 @P MEC

P MEC - Peabody Mill Environmental Center

AFS - Amherst Central Fire Station

For additional information about these programs and all of the other recreation offerings please visit our website at www.amherstrec.org. Also watch for the recreation program offerings listed in the Amherst General Quarterly publication coming to your home in December.

