Principal’s Update

Congratulations to art teacher Gina Arena for receiving the David Trigaux Innovation Award by the Weston Education Foundation. This annual award is given to a teacher who has demonstrated an unusual level of originality and dedication toward creative teaching. The Award is a monetary gift which may be used in any way that fosters innovation in the classroom, including travel, studies, or work outside the classroom.

I am also proud to announce that seniors Micah Zirn and Jack Seigenthaler have won scholarships in the National Merit Scholarship Competition, which is a tremendous achievement given the thousands of participants in this program.

May is one of the busiest months of the year with seniors leaving on internship, advanced placement testing, Special Olympics, Relay for Life, the Memorial Day Road Race, Smarter Balanced testing, and our junior-senior prom. Graduation will take place on Friday, June 12 at 6:00 p.m. under the tent. Please join us in honoring the Class of 2015. I encourage families to check our school website and look for upcoming email blasts that will have important reminders and schedules.

Academic Program

Two of our seniors were honored at the Connecticut Association of Schools arts banquet this spring-Adele Kaczmarek, a talented artist, and Julia Weisman, a gifted violinist, were both recognized. Seniors Ryan Garvey and Olivia Watson received leadership awards at the Southwest Conference Annual Dinner this month as well.

WHS students participated in ART JAM 15, the all-district visual arts open house on May 7. Art work from all high school classes was showcased at the event. National Art Honor Society students were inducted in a small ceremony before the show.
Science/Technology
Students in the Project Lead the Way course Civil Engineering and Architecture have their work displayed at the Weston Historical Society now through July 16 as part of the "Landmark Homes of Weston" exhibition. Accompanied by their teacher, some students toured historical houses throughout Weston on Sunday, May 3. The picture shown is in the Weston Woods house where the famous book *Where the Wild Things Are* was written and filmed.

Students in AP Biology started their bioethics research after their exam. They selected biological topics with social, economic, medical, or other implications that impact society and investigated them from multiple perspectives. The project culminates with a paper and a seminar-style roundtable discussion during exam week.

An aviculturist from the Livingston Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy visited biology classes this month as part of an evolution and ecology unit. She brought ducks representing diverse species from around the world, exposing the students to adaptations that are tied to specific habitats.

Animal Behavior students went to the Bronx Zoo this month. They took part in a program highlighting animal diversity and conservation, which are two central themes of this course.

School Counseling
The College and Career Center will be hosting a career program for sophomores on Thursday, May 28, from 12:00-2:30 p.m. The speakers invited represent a variety of careers. The students will have an opportunity to attend two different sessions and hear from a total of six speakers. There are many summer jobs and community service opportunities posted on the job board in the CCC. Students and parents who have questions or need any help can call or email the Director at 203 291-1668 or marilynmoks@westonps.org.

Social Studies
All ninth-grade students are currently participating in the Performance Assessment Design Initiative performance-based assessment. In this performance task, students will be using information from both their social studies and science classes to determine which disease is the greatest threat. After the students have conducted their inquiry project and reached their final decision, they will create a public service announcement (PSA) to warn of the dangers of the disease they have selected. These videos will be viewed by staff members from grades K-12 and 10 finalists will be selected. The 10 finalists’ videos will be viewed by an expert panel, determining which PSA was the most informative and emotionally impactful.

World Language
The world language department will induct students into the National Chinese, French, Latin, and Spanish Honor Societies during the World Language Induction Ceremony on May 20. Students who received gold, silver, bronze, and honorable mention on the national French, Latin, and Spanish exams will also be recognized during the ceremony.
Forty Latin students participated in the 34th Annual Connecticut State Latin Day at Holiday Hill in Prospect, CT. Our students participated with 54 different schools in a variety of ancient culture and athletic-based activities and competitions. Workshops ranging from military drills to legal Latin allowed everyone to participate in something they enjoyed from the classical world.

Spanish 4 classes were inspired after finishing a project where they had to present a newscast about a natural disaster. Students played the role of journalists, victims, firefighters, and policemen. That weekend, Nepal had a terrible earthquake, and they organized a fundraiser for the Red Cross to help with relief efforts. The bake sale held on “5 de Mayo” generated a net profit of $308.

The Mandarin IV honors class is in the process of creating a music video starring the class members singing and dancing “Little Apple,” currently a popular folk song nationwide in China. Prior to the project’s creation, the students have been spending time studying and translating the song. The project is a demonstration of the students’ proficiency in Mandarin, the culmination of nearly four years of studying the Mandarin language and Chinese culture and of their ability to communicate both inside and outside the classroom.

Co-Curricular Program
The Class of 2016 is hosting a technology workshop on May 13 for Weston senior citizens. Students will provide one-on-one instruction and help participants use their high-tech devices.

The freshman class volunteered on May 3 for the Rock, Roll, and Stroll event for the STAR Foundation at Sherwood Island in Westport, where the students assisted with the setup and selling of raffle tickets for this program.

Teen Peace Works and Student Government received an official recognition from Governor Dannel Malloy for their work in raising awareness and money for domestic violence victims and their families. Co-presidents Austin Wysota (2015) and Michael Riley (2015) attended the Domestic Violence Crisis Center’s annual spring conference in Stamford. Speakers included writer and businesswoman Leslie Morgan Steiner, who survived an abusive relationship, as well as legal expert and best-selling crime novelist, Linda Fairstein.

Athletics
Spring sports got off to a great start once the weather cooperated, and we are now past the mid-point of the season. From our girls lacrosse team’s first victory over Newtown in the history of the program, to our undefeated boys and girls track and field, the spring teams are carrying on our tradition of excellence. Many of our athletes are volunteering their free time to help out at Special Olympics, form teams and participate in Relay for Life, and assist during the upcoming Memorial Day Weekend Road Race. We wish all of our teams luck as they prepare for the South West Conference and CIAC State Tournaments.
A special congratulations to seniors Caroline Maretz and Micah Zirn for earning the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference Scholar Athlete Award.

Alumni News
Britny (Alvarado) Jones, Class of 2008, who graduated from UVM in 2012 with a degree in nutritional sciences, is using her knowledge to run the family business, The Village Roost in Wilmington, Vermont, a non-GMO, organic café, and marketplace. She and her husband had lived in New Zealand for a year and now make Vermont their home.

Rachel Eddy, Class of 2012, appeared this year in the University of Miami productions of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee and The Women.

Brandon Abrams, Class of 2013, is a sophomore in the architecture scholars program at the Ohio State University. His final project was selected from 35 projects and will be built and featured at the Ohio State Fair this summer. Brandon will be participating in a summer internship at Mojo Stumer, a large commercial firm on Long Island.

Bailey Kleban (class of 2008) graduated from NYU and is planning to attend Columbia University in the fall to pursue a master's degree in social work. Evan Kleban (class of 2010) graduated from the College of William and Mary where he also studied in South Africa and Argentina. He is working in real estate development. Jillian Kleban (class of 2013) completed her freshman year at Fairfield University and is currently on a volunteer trip to Fiji and Australia.

Kaidy Wollman, Class of 2012, will be studying architecture in Rome this summer as part of her integrated bachelors/master’s program in architectural engineering at Penn State University. Kaidy was a graduate of our Project Lead the Way pre-engineering program and credits Ms. Moosbrugger for inspiring her in this field.

Weston Middle School
Amy Watkins, Principal

In this issue…
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WMS Robotics at the Westport Mini Maker Faire
Earth Day: April 22
Author Michaela MacColl Visits Eighth Grade Students
Author Neal Shusterman Visits the Seventh & Eighth Grade Students
Seventh Grade Travels to the United Nations
Eighth-Grade Students Showcase Mentorship Projects

Nutmeg Voting Winners Announced
Nutmeg Book Award voting results are in. We had a total of 93 students vote: The seventh-and-eighth grade first place winner was: The False Prince by Jennifer Neilsen. The sixth-grade first place winner was Shadow by Michael Morpurgo.
Sixth-Grade Wellness Integration
For the three weeks following April break, we integrated important issues from the grade six wellness curriculum into our physical education lessons. Students were engaged in Project Adventure discussions and activities involving the topics of stress reduction and puberty. There are approximately seven lessons that have been organized carefully to maintain the integrity of both health and physical education curriculums. Please feel free to contact your child’s physical education teacher with any questions or concerns you may have.

Congratulations to our sixth-grade students for successfully completing our yoga performance-based assessment. All students learned about yoga and applied their skills while creating an authentic yoga workout for our WMS teachers. Seven lucky students actually held two official classes for our teachers which helped make everyone’s day more calm, peaceful, and productive.

WMS Robotics at the Westport Mini Maker Faire
On Saturday, April 25, the WMS Robotics Club was at The Westport Mini Maker Faire demonstrating student work. This Faire had almost 6,500 visitors. The Westport Mini Maker Faire is an annual event at The Westport Public Library where builders, inventors, and designers from across the local area display their creations. The theme of this year’s Faire was “things that roll,” which was a perfect fit for the club. We are all really proud of our students. Thank you to Mrs. Shuhart, Mr. Ferro, Mr. Lore, and Dr. Hayes for helping prepare the students for this event.

Earth Day: April 22
April 22 was Earth Day in the United States and an excellent day to make a difference. Each of our students took a walk around our school and picked up one piece of trash. They felt proud they had done something for our planet. Imagine if every person on earth picked up one piece of trash a day what a difference it would make. It may become contagious and it may deter the “tossers.” Mrs. Kovac encourages everyone to pick up a piece of trash the next time they are walking through a neighborhood, or on the beach, or anywhere for that matter and make a small difference that could have an immense overall impact. It’s a simple concept, a simple step that will help make our home here on Earth a better and healthier place. Every day is Earth day.
Author Michaela MacColl Visits Eighth-Grade Students

Students in eighth grade started their historical fiction reading last week. This unit is followed by historical fiction writing. We were fortunate, through the generous support of the WMS PTO, to welcome author Michaela MacColl to WMS to share what inspires her to write historical fiction and to provide a real-world connection for our students. Michaela MacColl attended Vassar College and Yale University earning degrees in multi-disciplinary history. Unfortunately, it took her 20 years before she realized she was learning how to write historical fiction. Her favorite stories are the ones about the childhood experiences of famous people. She has written about a teenaged Queen Victoria (*Prisoners in the Palace*, Chronicle 2010) and Beryl Markham’s childhood (*Promise the Night*, Chronicle 2011). She is writing a literary mystery series for teens featuring a young Emily Dickinson in *Nobody’s Secret* (2013) and the Bronte sisters in *Always Emily* (2014). She has also recently begun a new series with Boyd’s Mill/Highlights called *Hidden Histories* about odd events in America’s past. The first entry in the series is “Rory’s Promise” and was published in September 2014. She frequently visits high schools and has taught at the Graduate Institute in Bethel, CT. She lives in Westport, CT, with her husband, two teenaged daughters, and three extremely large cats. Students enjoyed listening to her experiences.

Author Neal Shusterman Visits the Seventh and Eighth Grade Students

Author Neal Shusterman spoke to our students to share about his experience as a writer, what motivates him, and how an idea becomes a book. Different from most author presentations, Mr. Shusterman had our students guide their time together by answering their thoughtful questions. Students were engaged and in awe to hear about his journey as a writer and were inspired to continue developing their writing habit. Neal’s passion is to inspire and excite young students to read. Neal Shusterman is known for igniting many non-readers to read their very first book from cover to cover and has opened up the world of books to those reluctant readers. We appreciate the generous support of the WMS PTO to fund the visit from Neal Shusterman.
Seventh-Grade Travels to the United Nations
Recently, the seventh-grade Team Adventurers and Team Explorers traveled to New York City for a tour of the United Nations, a perfect complement to our Global Connections social studies course. The guided tour of the United Nations included visits to the newly renovated conference rooms of the Security Council, Economic and Social Council, Trusteeship Council and the General Assembly. Students were also able to view several donated pieces of art from member nations. A truly international and enriching experience was had by students and chaperones alike. Encourage your child to share their memories of the trip with you.

Eighth-Grade Students Showcase Mentorship Projects
Nearly 100 eighth-grade students shared their mentorship experience with other students and families at the recent Mentorship Celebration. Students worked with a variety of professionals from chefs, to musicians and artists, to computer engineers. To help depict their journey, students developed visual displays and spent time highlighting the most meaningful and memorable components of this opportunity. Thank you to all of our parent volunteers who helped organize mentors. Thank you also to Lauren Davi, Jen Doyle and Ande Ogden for their help advising this experience for the students.

Weston Intermediate School
Pattie Falber, Principal

In this issue…
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Fourth-Grade Electricity Unit
Fifth-Grade Historical Fiction
Eli Whitney Museum
Willy Wonka and the Downtown Cabaret
Earth Day and “Going Green” Initiative
Connecticut Honors Choir
Art Jam

Third-Grade AIM Unit
This month the third grade students began an Academic Innovation and Measurement unit on endangered animals. This is a multi-disciplinary unit which encompasses reading, writing, science, and technology. The
students have learned that endangerment occurs as a result of animals’ inability to adapt in a timely enough fashion to changes in environment, food supply or predators, and they were very surprised and saddened to see so many animals on the endangered species list. Each child has selected an animal to study and they are immersed in researching all they can about their animal and why it is facing endangerment. In science, they are exploring the physical structures and behaviors that allow many different kinds of animals to survive and reproduce in environments that meet their basic needs.

Fourth-Grade Electricity Unit
The fourth-grade students have just wrapped up an engaging multi-disciplinary unit on researching electrical inventions. Students used their learning of electricity from science to write two different pieces, the first an “all-about” piece of writing, and the second a more focused research paper on an important electrical invention. Students researched the importance of the invention and how it has continued to help improve our lives today. The unit culminated with students working collaboratively to create a multi-media presentation designed to showcase their research.

Fifth-Grade Historical Fiction
Fifth-graders complemented their study of the American Revolution with a look at historical fiction texts during reading and language arts. All classes read The Forgotten Flag, a historical fiction set during the Revolution in Fairfield, CT. Students used the contextual information in the story to expand their knowledge of the Revolution and gained understanding that there is a lot to be learned when reading such stories. Authors of historical fiction spend a great deal of time researching geographical places, societal traditions, habits and lifestyles, as well as the key people and events that shaped the culture of the time of their story, and weave in that information, giving the reader a glimpse into a bygone era. Students were then invited to read a historical fiction set in a time period that interested them. Many students report that historical fiction is now a favorite genre.

Eli Whitney Museum
To culminate their unit on electricity and to kick-off a new science unit on forces and motion, the fourth graders spent the day at the Eli Whitney Museum applying their knowledge to two fun projects. They explored the challenging mechanics of catapults using rubber bands to power a ping pong ball through the air. They also built a model of a house with a circuit that included a switch, incandescent lightbulb, and LED bulb. As they built their model, they discussed open and closed circuits and applied their understanding as they made the necessary connections to light their house.

Wily Wonka at the Downtown Cabaret
Last month, our third graders completed a unit on fractured fairytales where they wrote their own very imaginative, highly creative story using what they learned about the magic
of fairy tales. So to culminate this unit, the third graders traveled to the Downtown Cabaret to enjoy a one of a kind stage adaptation of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. The show featured Roald Dahl’s timeless story of the world-famous candy man and his quest to find an heir but with all the fun and mayhem we’ve come to expect from the Cabaret Children’s Company.

**Earth Day and “Going Green” Initiative**

Author Christine Pakkala visited our school to help kick off a “Going Green” initiative for Earth Day. Inspired by Ms. Pakkala’s book, *Last-But-Not-Least Lola Going Green*, the third-and-fourth grades classes are developing eco-friendly projects that will beautify the school and help us be more environmentally friendly. The fifth-grade students will leave their legacy by planting flowers and hanging bird houses in the courtyard. The PTO has been working to update and beautify our courtyard in order to make it an outdoor learning space to be used for academic purposes as well as other events in our school.

**Connecticut Honors Choir**

Four of our fifth-grade students participated in the 2015 Connecticut Elementary Honors Choir on May 1 at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford. These students performed choral repertoire with over 200 students from the state of Connecticut under the direction of Dr. Sandra Doneski, who is a distinguished choral conductor, college professor, and author.

**Art Jam**

On Thursday evening, May 7, our school was abuzz as students and families enjoyed walking through the art-filled halls, and listening to the many talented student musicians and singers. This was the first year we participated in an all-district art open house, and I am sure it is on its way to becoming a yearly event. To add to the enjoyment of the evening, the wonderfully warm weather was perfect to allow our musical groups to perform outside. The string ensemble performed in the front of the school, while the choral and band soloists used our beautiful newly refurbished courtyard which is beautiful and helped make the evening even more special.

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**Hurlbutt Elementary School**

**Laura Kaddis, Principal**

**In this issue…**

**Hurlbutt Reads Together**

**Teaching and Learning**

**End-of-Year Concerts**

**Parent Support**

**Hurlbutt Reads Together**

Our third annual One School One Book program this year featured *Mercy Watson to the Rescue* by award-winning author, Kate DiCamillo.
One School One Book is a program designed by Read to Them, a non-profit organization that promotes family literacy. The program encourages reading together at home by providing every student and family with a shared reading experience. At Hurlbutt, we keep the title a secret from the entire school until our kick-off assembly. Throughout the week leading up to the event, we share clues with our students about the book. They love trying to figure out which book we will all read.

Our all-school assembly kick-off to reveal the title of our book was full of surprises. The entire school community was involved in the fun, and Chef Luis stopped by with the final clue by delivering a giant bread loaf and butter. Students familiar with the series know that Mercy Watson loves toast with butter. Volunteers from the Weston Fire Department were on hand to help deliver the books to each class. Mercy joined us for the assembly and presented each class with their very own Mercy mascot. Each night the students were eager to read the next chapter of Mercy. Throughout the week, students were involved in all-school activities that helped bring the story to life for them. One of the favorite activities was creating and wearing their own pig noses. To wrap up this all-school activity, we gathered again as a school community. Mercy joined us and led our pig parade. Since Mercy’s favorite food in the book is toast with butter, we collected breakfast items throughout the week to donate to the Weston Food Pantry. We are so proud that we collected more than 425 items.

Teaching and Learning
As part of our science unit on living things, each first-grade class received Painted Lady butterfly eggs. Students learned about the eggs of the Painted Lady Butterfly and how to care for them so that they would continue to grow and develop. Students are recording their observations in their science notebooks, including sketches and labels of the eggs, their food, and habitat. There will be great excitement when the caterpillars form their chrysalises to begin metamorphosis, and even more when the beautiful butterflies emerge about two weeks later. The classes will then release their Painted Ladies to complete their life cycle in freedom.

Our Hurlbutt scientists are learning about living and non-living things in their current unit of study. There has been much excitement in the kindergarten since the arrival of another group of eggs. Our young scientists have been observing and describing eggs that will soon bring us baby chicks. We have a live stream of the eggs set up so that our students can follow their development 24/7. The baby chicks join the ant farms and pet rocks in our collection of things for this exciting unit.
Through the continued generous support of our PTO, our second graders were able to put their knowledge to work in the Hurlbutt garden. Our second-grade scientists have been studying soil and in the classroom recently planted brassica seeds to see how they grow. They also experimented with lima beans to see if they germinate without soil. Students brought in soil samples to compare and analyze. All second graders had an opportunity to visit the Hurlbutt garden, help turn the soil, and then make observations and notes in their science journals. We are looking forward to our newest PTO sponsored garden at Hurlbutt….a butterfly garden.

End-of-Year Concerts
Our first-grade students performed their Mother’s Day concert this month. The audience was moved by the energy, enthusiasm, and musical skill of our young singers. The songs were designed with input from the students. Each class worked with Mr. Henderson to pick their favorite things about their moms. Lyrics they created include, “Nobody can bake exactly like mom.” This verse repeated with various activities including, run, snuggle, and party exactly like mom. They loved adding movements to the song. In keeping with Hurlbutt tradition, the students always have a song for dad. The highlight this year was the verse, “nobody can fix the toilet like dad!” while they acted out plunging the toilet. All of our students were eager to show off their music skills by performing a rhythm that they had never seen before. Throughout the year, the students have learned to read simple rhythms and have learned about quarter notes and eighth notes and how to perform them with a steady beat. The concert concluded with the song, “Just Imagine.” This song was a wonderful culminating song for the year as the students sang, “Just imagine, just imagine. Just imagine all the things that we could be.”

Parent Support
On a recent trip to the historic estate of Mount Vernon in Virginia, a Hurlbutt family brought home a representation of American history for our school. Marlo Villepigue, along with first grader, Gavin signed up for a copy of Rembrandt Peale’s Porthole Portrait of George Washington through the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association of the Union. This association is a private, non-profit organization founded in 1853 by Ann Pamela Cunningham and is the oldest national historic preservation organization in the country. Mount Vernon is owned and maintained in trust for the people of the United States by the Ladies Association. In an effort to celebrate Washington’s character, leadership, and accomplishments, the association is distributing replicas of his portrait to schools, libraries, or government offices. We are grateful to the Villepigue family for bringing this educational piece of artwork to Hurlbutt. George Washington’s portrait will proudly hang in the Learning Resource Center.