

THE ASHFORD HOWLER

By the Students, for the Students

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

A brief reflection on last month's edition-the first one of the year! November 30th, we passed it out during 7th and 8th grade, having printed 50 copies while expecting extras. To our surprise, we ran out with more requests. Despite the slight errors (Sander von Hollander is a *basketball* player and *former* cross-country runner), we produced the best paper we could. We're also open to picture and writing submission, as well as topic suggestions. (Also, check out our new formatting, and our new 'Submitted Articles' section, featuring a pair from the sixth grade.)

Field Trips

On the 3rd, eighth graders went on a trip to a local theater to watch plays of short stories they read in class. On the 4th, seventh graders went on a half-day trip to an art gallery and viewed a film. Both grades attended the after-school Snow Ball dance the same day.

Rock-Climbing

The fifth grade spent a wild day rock climbing! They spent one exciting December day clambering around and having an excellent time. Miss Dotson, adventurer and rock climbing pro, went with the students.

Our Principal

By Gwen McGinley, Anja Morahn, and Jasmine Perez



Seeing as it is a new year, it is time for a little reflection!

For the three years and counting, Mr. Hopkins has been the principal of Ashford School. He has done some very impressive things over that course of time, including expanding the gym budget, approving the new computer and robotics lab, and worked on our school community.

Since his arrival at the school, we have all seen many changes, from this year's Behavioral Expectations Matrix (the Gold-White system) and the rotating schedule. Fifth through eighth graders now experiences cultural assemblies the first Friday of every month, and we now enjoy Music Tech as a special, which comes with an entire lab filled with high-tech equipment. The majority of projectors and rolling televisions have long since been replaced with Smartboards. For the first time, all grades will do STEAM projects.



In 2011, Ashford School had ranked 361st statewide, according to schooldigger.com.

2015 brought us to 229 and showed true improvement. Students are receiving a higher level of education than before, and, undoubtedly, have a more positive overall experience. Mr. Hopkins has truly worked hard for our community and helped make Ashford School a wonderful place.

Now, for the interview brought to us by Anja and Jasmine.

A+J: When did you first become principal?

Submissions, Cont.

This month, we introduced our Caption The Comic, which is drawn by Amy Brita and captioned by students OR the newspaper staff, should we get no submissions. It features Bat Dad and his charming pooch on their day-to-day adventures. This month's winner, and only submission, was Mr. Kiefer, with runner up Mr. Kiefer! Thank you, Mr. Kiefer!

You can see his winning submission after the rest of our text entries.

Riddle

Here's our riddle of the week! See if you can figure it out. The answer is on the bottom of page 8!

(Hint: the answer is an actual animal. Those of you who enjoy marine biology will have this down!)

What common sea creature sees through more than 100 blue eyes, but have no faces, strain their food but have no teeth, and swim quickly, but have no fins?

Caroling

Recently, on December 14, members of Ashford School's select chorus went caroling at hospitals in Hartford, Windham, and Mansfield. The trip was organized by Ms. Silverstein, our chorus teacher. The students did such an amazing job that they were featured on the Nightly NBC news for their performance! Congratulations!

STEAM Projects

The STEAM project is a way for students to learn how to solve real-world

Mr. Hopkins: I became principal of Ashford school in the summer of 2012.

A+J: Are you enjoying your experience?

M.H: There is nothing that I would rather be doing.

A+J: How has the school changed since you first started?

M.H: There are many new teachers, programs and increasing excitement about teaching and learning among the staff and students.

A+J: What are your hopes for the school this year?

M.H: For students to have more choice in their work and see purpose in their learning.

A+J: What do you think we need to work on in this school?

M.H: I think we could do more to generate enthusiasm for reading and writing.

A+J: What made you want to become the principal?

M.H: I wanted to have a positive influence on more students.

A+J: How do you feel about your relationship with the students?

M.H: Students view me, I believe, as encouraging and celebratory of their individual personal growth, both academic and social.

A+J: Why did you decide to add the green and gold program and when?

M.H: The past system of awarding Power Paws tickets and then raffling lunches wasn't that motivating to the older students. We designed the new system this past summer through a committee of teachers and administration. The system is evolving as we get ideas from students.

The Behavioral Expectations Matrix

By Jacob Chrzanowski & Emily Russi

Recently, members of Ashford School's climate committee have introduced a policy in which students are given a ranking from white to gold based on performance in Ashford's core values, which are Respect, Responsibility, and Pride. These values cover turning in work, behavior, and quality of work. The rubric looks at student progress and growth.

Submissions, Cont.

Engineering, the Arts, and Math.

- Kindergarten: Health and Nutrition
- Grade 1: How Things Change Over Time
- Grade 2: Why Ashford is Great
- Grade 3: How to Combat Natural Disasters
- Grade 4: Regions & Resources in the USA
- Grade 5: How Innovation Solves Conflict
- Grade 6: Conflict & How to Pay it Forward
- Grade 7: Community
- Grade 8: Community

Our STEAM projects will be presented February 19th. We encourage every grade to work hard and hope their project is successful!

The Yearbook

Seventh and eighth graders can now order their very own yearbook! Forms are due February 12th. Contact Señora Rhubin for more information.

Actual, Real Quote of the Month

Every month, we will be printing an actual, real inspirational quote. This month's theme is acceptance. The quote chosen is from Martin Luther King Jr, an influential activist against racism and a remarkable figure in the mid 1900s.

Students who earn green and gold privileges are usually awarded by getting to wear hats on Fridays, no homework pass, or use devices as offered. Students who have green and gold may also get privileged by certain events such as a dances or gatherings.

We spoke to Vice Principal Mr. Dukette.

[J&E] How do you feel the green and gold system has been working?
[Mr. D] I think the Green and Gold system is a good start. We are looking to give students the ability to show that they are responsible and can earn privileges that will gain them freedom around the building. While we have come a long way, I think there is more we can do to provide our middle school students with the opportunities to have independence and leadership in our school.

[J&E] What was the inspiration for the green and gold system?
[M.D] The inspiration for the system came from our PBIS team looking at the process followed by a handful of other middle schools. We took the good pieces of their systems and built it into something that is Ashford School, through and through.

[J&E] What sort of improvements do you think could be made?
[M.D] I would like to see more opportunities for Gold students to have leadership roles in the school. Additionally, we need to refine the system to allow for students to earn up into new color brackets.

[J&E] What sort of feedback have you received?
[M.D] Feedback has been positive, overall. I think many students felt that the rewards this year for PBIS are more meaningful and age-appropriate. However, we are always looking for more feedback from students.

[J&E] Where do you think the future of the green and gold system is going?
[M.D] I think this system is here to stay, but that it will continue to be adjusted and refined along the way.

While Mr. Dukette had a very positive outlook, student opinion about this new green and gold policy has been very divided. We asked some students how they felt about the policy. A 7th grade student stated that “with the green and gold statuses they are basically labeling us.” Some students have been overheard saying that the green and gold policy is “stupid.” When we asked an 8th grader if she likes the ‘green and gold’, she said “no, because it is rating kids off of behavior.” Another 8th grade student stated that for rewards, such as dances, that takes away from their G period makes them feel cheated. This student also stated that “giving certain students privileges and others is not fair.”

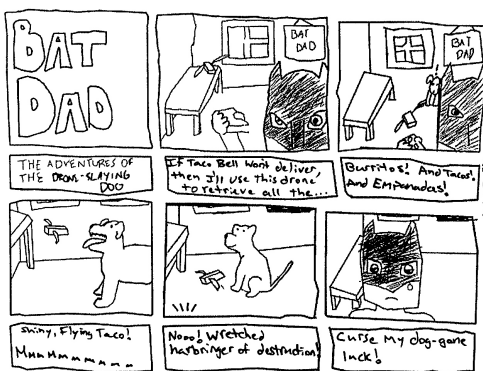
Not all students, however, feel negatively towards the green and gold policy. One student in 7th grade stated that “they think the green and gold is a really good idea” and “achieving the gold privilege is very

Actual, Real Quote of the Month, Feat. the Quote

"Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase. - Martin Luther King Jr."

Drumroll, Please!

And finally, we have the comic, captioned by Mr. Kiefer.



The captions are as follows:

TITLE: The Adventures of The Drone-Slaying Dog!

FRAME 1: If Taco Bell won't deliver, then I'll have to use this drone to retrieve all the..

FRAME 2: Burritos! And tacos! And empanadas!

FRAME 3: Shiny, flying Taco! Mmmmmmmmmmm.

FRAME 4: Nooo! Wretched hound! Bringer of destruction!

FRAME 5: Curse my ...dog-gone luck!

Again, thank you, Mr. Kiefer.

good." The student also said that "I like the privilege of using electronics."

Innocent Art

By Jasmine Perez

Recently, some of our 7th graders went to Real Art Ways in Hartford to see a movie about an illegal Spanish immigrant named Inocente (which means innocent) who is a homeless 15-year old, and is afraid to tell her friends.

Color is her personal revolution and it's sweet on her canvases. Art creates a world that looks nothing like her own dark past.

She uses art to express her feelings and has been in an art show where she had to create 30 paintings in a short amount of time."It was very fun. I loved it," Says Emily Russi. "It was amazing to see all of the different kinds of artwork [by different people.]"



This is Inocente in a picture from the New York Times, painting one of her pictures "Masters Of Disguise."

December-January Sports [Basketball]

By Gwen McGinley

This last month, basketball season started up again, giving us Junior Varsity and Varsity girls' and boys' teams. The teams are six through eight.

While all four teams have been doing their absolute best, boys' varsity has only lost one game this season. As of this issue's printing, both JV and V are currently playing a home game (in the gym, about ten yards away!) against Parish Hill. This Thursday, they'll play against Pomfret, and then again against Eastford on the 25th.



Meanwhile, girls' JV and V are playing the same teams, although today they are away and tomorrow they will be at home. Our girls' teams



have a lot of powerful players at the moment, including Jojo Doten, who recently scored her first Varsity basket, as well as Taegan Botti, eighth grader and team captain.

Please feel free to show your support for the teams by attending their games and wearing green and gold.

We wish the best of luck to all teams and all team members. Go Wolves!

The 2015-16 Winter Concert

By Emili Magowan

Throughout the course of the year, students in 4th-8th grade prepare for the annual concerts. There are two concerts in December—a day concert, which always happens to be on a Wednesday, and then a concert at night on that following Thursday.



Concert band is a combination of fourth and fifth grade band members, but accompanied by star instrumental students in the 8th grade. If you are a student in the 4th and 5th grades you can play in concert band. On the other hand, symphony band is compiled of band members in grades 6-8. Both concert and symphony band do not require auditions to become a member of. The last type of instrumental band Ashford School provides for its students is jazz band. Aside from concert, and symphony band, jazz band requires auditions to become a member, along with the dedication to work hard.

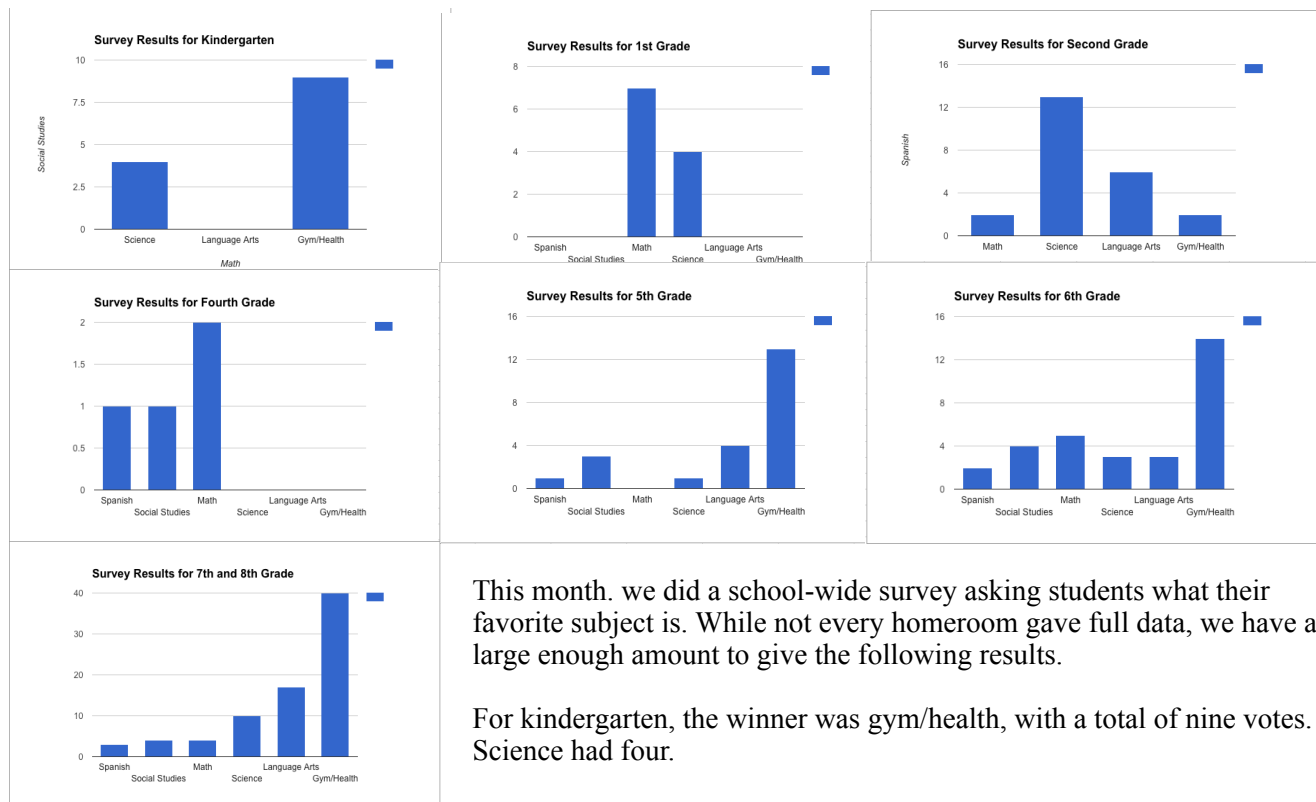
All sections of band worked extremely hard to perform an amazing ensemble. In jazz band, soloists Emma Bean, Grace Maines, Emma Schillinger, Taegan Botti, Zach Hall, and Sutton Fransen did a fantastic job. They definitely pull more attention to the music, while adding excitement. Though they have to have more practice and use more time, it is surely worth it. The commitment of jazz band is evidently time consuming, according to trumpetier Grace Aukerman, who says that after all the practice, she gets a 'feeling of greatness' when she performs. Saxophone player Emma Bean, and trumpeter Grace Maines say that “[the] concert was very fun” and that “they are very excited for concert night.”



Chorus is also divided into three levels. The vocal parts of the concert is separated into concert chorus, select chorus, and choral. Concert chorus is a medley of 4th and 5th graders. Vocal rehearsals were just preparing for the extravagant performance at the Winter Concert. However, it is mandatory for every 4th grade to be a member of the concert chorus. This is because Ms. Silverstein would like everyone to have tried it before they decide. Choral is a compilation of students who enjoy singing in 6th through 8th grade. Vocal rehearsals and warm-ups for choral differ for those of the concert chorus by being more advanced. Choral practices get harder and harder because they need a challenge. Select chorus is the most advanced level. This group sings difficult songs that feature hard chords and tricky melodies. They always do an outstanding ensemble. The once-a-week practice shows up in the musical production in such disbelief.

Ultimately, the whole performance was outstanding. After all the hard work everyone put into making the 2015-16 winter concert, it definitely was a spectacle to be remembered. Thank you to all the people who participated in the concert, we can't wait to see what you have for us when spring comes around.

School Survey



This month, we did a school-wide survey asking students what their favorite subject is. While not every homeroom gave full data, we have a large enough amount to give the following results.

For kindergarten, the winner was gym/health, with a total of nine votes. Science had four.

For first grade, the winner was math, with seven votes! The runner up was science, also with four votes.

For second grade, the winner was science, with thirteen votes! Language arts came second, with six.

For fourth grade, the winner was math, with two votes! Spanish and social studies *tied* for second, with *one* vote!

For fifth grade, the winner was gym/health, with twelve votes! L.A was runner up, with four.

For sixth grade, the winner was gym/health again, with fourteen votes! Math was second, with five.

For seventh/eighth grade, gym/health won! It had forty votes. L.A was runner up again, with 17 votes.

And our school's favorite subject is..

Gym and health! It had seventy-eight total votes! Congratulations to Mr. Hollister and Ms. Noheimer. The students obviously appreciate your work.

Submitted Pieces

Our (new!) Submitted Pieces section collects articles from infrequent writers. If you wrote an informative *or* creative piece and would like it published, you can contact us to see it here!

Disclaimer: Prior to publishing, articles may have been edited for grammar and content.

Japanese Beetles

By Kate Lindsay and Olivia Figella



Do you have plants in your garden that look skeletonized? Did you know about the Japanese beetle? Did you know that a female Japanese beetle could lay up to sixty eggs in their thirty to forty-five day adult life span?

Most people first notice Japanese beetles when they see the destroyed outdoor plants. When you look closer at the plants, the adult beetles are easy to see as they eat. The adults are also pretty good fliers and can be seen flying around the yard. However, they are terrible at taking off from plants.

The Japanese beetle is native to Japan. The insect was first discovered in the U.S in 1916. It is thought that this beetle's larvae got to the U.S in a shipment of iris bulbs.

As I said before, the Japanese beetle is terrible at taking off from plants. That is our advantage. If you are okay with spending an hour or so trying to get rid of Japanese beetles, you should do the following:

Use traps. Placement will be a major factor so your plants do not get harmed. The traps should be placed away from other plants. If you can find out where the Japanese beetles are coming from, put the traps there so that they don't have time to get to your plants. Some exterminators and lawn control professions that provide and use these types of traps suggest placing them over a water bucket to increase the area of capture with the result of eliminating a higher number of beetles. However, this will only eliminate those that are present and will not do anything for the larvae that may already be in the developmental stages in your lawn.



I hope that you have learned a lot from our article!

Solar Energy

By Autumn and Felicia

Energy costs are going up and up. Connecticut has the highest average energy bill in New England. The average cost is \$144.40. Solar energy, in our eyes, is the way to go. Sure, a solar panel costs a lot, but it is all worth it! We are here to tell you some benefits of switching to solar energy.

Solar energy is sustainable and renewable. Once solar panels are installed and they are working, they will require very low maintenance. Solar energy is also a noiseless producer of energy!

Write Don't Fight



It is also more cost effective and involves fewer emissions to use solar energy. Who wouldn't want to make the planet greener by switching to solar energy? If you are getting interested in switching, here are some solar energy sources in Connecticut near you: Solarcity, C-TEC Solar, Sungetivity, and Vivint Solar.

We are two sixth graders at Ashford, CT. Our names are Autumn and Felicia and we are trying to make the Earth a better and greener place. Visit our website that we just created at aandfsolarenergy.weebly.com. Thanks for taking the time to read our short article. Come on, let's make the world a better place!

Thanks again!