

# PENCIL POINTS

## CALENDAR

- Jan. 12 Gr. 4 & 5 Concert Rehearsal at PHS, 7PM
- Jan. 15 PES PTO, 9:30AM
- Jan. 18 Martin Luther King Day – NO SCHOOL
- Jan. 20 Gr. 4 & 5 Concert, PHS, 7PM – Snow Date, Jan. 27
- Jan. 25 Bd. Of Ed., PHS, 7:30PM
- Jan. 29 Teacher Inservice Day – NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS
- Feb. 1 Celebration of Reading Begins
- Feb. 2 PES PTO, 9:30PM
- Feb. 5 Kindergarten Report Cards Go Home
- Feb. 8 & 22 Bd. Of Ed., PHS, 7:30PM



*Have a wonderful month!*

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### Kindergarten Registration

If you have a child who will be 5 years old by December 31, 2010, please call the PES office (264-8283) to have the child's name put on the kindergarten list.

### Principal's Message

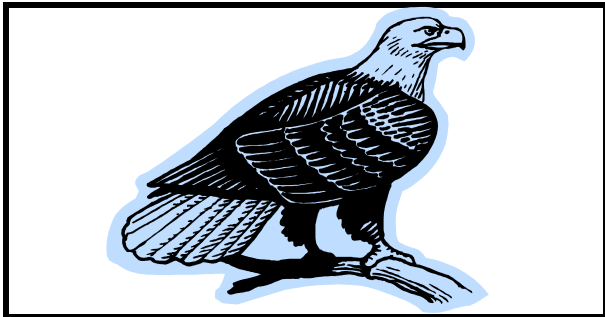
I have just returned from Washington D.C. where I was privileged to be present when Stacie Broden, second grade Pomperaug Elementary School teacher, was given the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. She and the other recipients from around the United States had a week long adventure which included policy discussions, museum and White House tours, meals and meetings with members of Congress, an award ceremony and reception, other professional development, attendance at a recent White House Presidential press conference, and a group photo with President Obama. She also got to shake his hand! I was so proud to be there as her Principal. Pomperaug Elementary School and Region 15 are honored to be represented by such a dedicated and remarkable young educator. Congratulations to Stacie Broden for this well deserved honor. And we know that Stacie is representative of the many outstanding and talented teachers we have in our district!

Another important development at PES is that I have made the decision to retire at the end of this school year. I have had thirty five rewarding years in education, with thirteen wonderful years at PES.

Each day the children in this school have brought me such joy. In this region we have a parent community that takes ownership of its schools. You show a financial commitment and work tirelessly to support the delivery of excellent programs and instruction. When there is a need, you work to fill it. When there is a challenge, you help us overcome. When there is a problem, you work with us to solve it. And I am grateful for the wonderful friendships I have established with so many of you over the years. In addition, I could not have asked for a better staff or sweeter children to work with every day.

Please know that I will do whatever I can to assist with a smooth transition in leadership here at our beloved school. And I will enjoy every last minute of time I have with my fabulous staff, your children, and the families of our PES community.

In partnership,  
Carissa Keepin



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## Class of the Month

Congratulations to *Mrs. Tyler's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class* on being named December's Class of the Month.

## Kindergarten

During the month of December the kindergarten rooms had a wonderful scent of gingerbread. The children participated in various activities around the theme of gingerbread. We did gingerbread sewing, cooking, and math. The children enjoyed reading and comparing different versions of the gingerbread boy. The month was concluded with an exciting gingerbread hunt!

Parent conferences are approaching in February.

## Grade 1

Our first graders are off to a wonderful new year and are so excited to learn in 2010!

In reading we continue to work on fluency and a detailed story retell. We are now focusing on reflections and interpretations of stories. Students are working with partners during reader's workshop and learning how to be good listeners as they share story elements with peers.

In math we are working on grouping objects by tens and representing two-digit numbers using grouping language and conventional names.

In the next few months we will begin our third social studies unit, "Change/Continuity in Our Neighborhood". Children will learn how neighborhoods change over time.

## Grade 2

To help develop spatial visualization skills while exploring the concept of volume, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade is hard at work in math planning models and building with cubes. We will soon be learning about weight and mass. We have enjoyed our character unit in reading. We explored character traits and found evidence of those traits in our texts. We also work very hard making connections to what we read and making vivid mental images to help us better understand text. We are beginning a unit on reading narrative and expository pieces. We are using the strategy of inferring to help us understand the author's message.

In writing we are working on writing a "small moment" story, focusing on good beginnings, interesting details, and an extended

ending. We are trying our hand at poetry, focusing on our word choice.

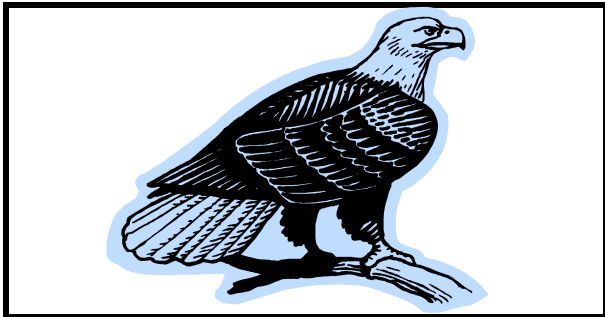
We will soon begin a social studies unit studying Southbury/Middlebury, comparing them to the tundra in the areas of habitat, vegetation, and wildlife.

## Grade 3

Third graders are starting the New Year with lots of enthusiasm and energy. We are reading fiction and non-fiction text, with a focus on main idea and summary in our guided reading instruction. During reader's workshop, we are working on context clues – helping students to identify unfamiliar words and their meanings by using multiple strategies to strengthen comprehension skills.

Our next unit of study in science is "Force and Motion". We will learn about the six simple machines and how they operate. We are also looking forward to an in-house field trip from Hi-Tech, Hi-Touch.

In math we are beginning subtraction with regrouping through the use of manipulatives, the SMART



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board, and eventually pencil and paper. We will also begin to get the students ready for the CMTs by reviewing money, time, estimation, rounding, and word problems – whew!

We wish everybody a very Happy New Year and a wonderful 2010!

## Grade 4

We would like to wish everyone a happy and prosperous new year! Fourth grade is working hard during the Reading/Writing workshop. Students are developing written responses to their independent texts. Students are also reading biographies about the lives of many important people.

In science, we are working on erosion and the children have gained an understanding about physical and chemical weathering. They have enjoyed working with their classmates to complete experiments which help to reinforce their understanding.

Comparing the everyday life of today to the lives of the Connecticut Colonists has proven to be not only surprising to the students but also interesting. The students are

learning how everyday life in Connecticut has changed tremendously since the colonists were here.

In math, students are looking for patterns in point graphs and using the patterns to make predictions. Students will also investigate the meaning of averages by working with connecting cubes. By manipulating the cubes in towers of different heights, they find the median and mean of a set of data. Keep practicing those multiplication facts!

## Grade 5

Happy New Year from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. As we enter a new decade, we are eager to learn!

In reading, we finished reading Hatchet and our independent survival novels. We had a wonderful culmination to our survival unit the first week of 2010. The 5<sup>th</sup> grade traveled to Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton, Connecticut. There we learned various outdoor winter survival skills. We built shelters, helped make a fire, learned compass skills, as well as the importance of staying dry and warm in the outdoors.

We continue working with our Trailblazers math program. We have begun investigating fractions using geoboards and dot paper! We are also continuing our work with multi-step problem solving.

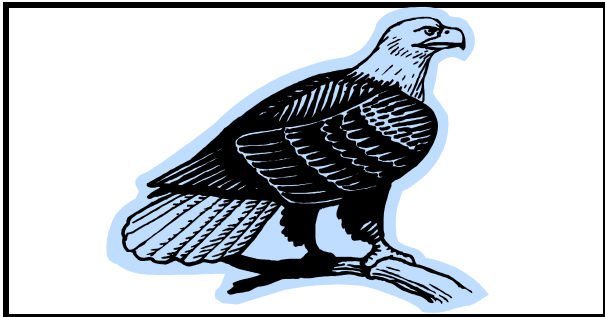
In celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we are writing essays in response to our viewing of his speech in class. We continue working on the traits of good writing. Ask your children about word choice, transitions, expanding details, and the importance of great leads in their writing!

In science, we are having a great time exploring light and sound in the new unit. Using a slinky and a prism we are able to experience these topics first hand.

We have begun a simulation game to introduce our next unit in social studies. We are learning about the Silk Road and many of the early explorers in this unit. Map skills will also be reinforced during this explorers unit of study.

## Physical Education

The 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students at Pomperaug



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Elementary School have recently completed their Muscular Development unit. Throughout this unit they learned important topics related to the development of muscles through concepts such as "strength versus endurance", "resistance", and "progression". A couple of questions you could ask your children to know what they have learned include; "How could someone get greater muscle strength? How could someone get greater muscle endurance? How would someone benefit from greater muscle strength and/or endurance?"

Recently the Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> grade, and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students have had opportunities to engage in sport related skills. The most recent sport skills the students have been practicing relate to basketball. They have practiced dribbling, passing, and shooting at age appropriate levels. We have encouraged them to continue to practice or play on their own since basketball season is underway. If you'd like to challenge your child to see what they have been practicing ask to see how they dribble while looking up or bounce passing by pushing the ball forward.

Before the winter recess all students are participating in winter related activities to encourage sledding, throwing snowballs, ice skating, building snow forts, and more. Please help encourage your children to be active as much as possible and as safely as possible throughout the winter season.

## Music

PES students have spent the last month preparing for concerts, composing music, and working on mallet technique. Kindergarten students continue to strengthen their singing voices and work on free moving in the music room. First grade students are working on accompanying the song, "You Can't Make a Turtle Come Out" on glockenspiels. Both playing styles require different mallet technique. They are also working on detecting rhythm vs. beat. Second grade students are continuing their comparing work from first grade. They are listening to two musical examples deciding if they are the same or different. We have been using a computer program called "Hearing Music" and have passed through level 2 and are working on level 3. Third graders are expanding their folk dance knowledge, adding a new dance

almost every week. We are finishing up our "Hambone" books and anticipating the recording session of their ideas. Recorder letters will be arriving soon. Keep you eyes out for them! Fourth and fifth grade students are putting the finishing touches on their concert program. They're looking forward to performing on January 20th at Pomperaug High School.

## Art

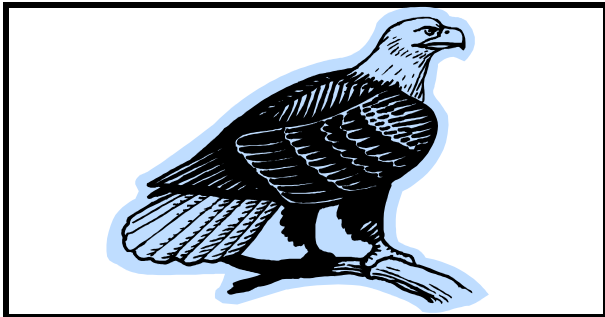
Students in grade 3 have just finished beautiful winter scenes with watercolors, learning the art of layering their colors through the added use of applying masking tape to their work.

The students will now begin their well-loved snowman portraits learning about foreshortening and point of view. We will get them up in the hallway as soon as they are finished, but watch out because every year when these go up we have a snowstorm. Really!!!

## Media Center

### *Celebration of Reading*

It's coming! All the information needed about the theme, rules, fun days, and tally sheets will



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be in the special packet the children will receive on Monday, February 1<sup>st</sup>. They can hand in their first tally sheet starting on Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>. Each day one tally sheet from each grade will be drawn for a prize for that student. Other prizes will be awarded on the last day to the top 3 readers per grade and the class in each grade that has the most minutes read.

Children in grades 3, 4, and 5 will be invited to make posters to display in the school. All interested students will be given guidelines as to slogan and size specification. Only those that follow the guidelines will be displayed throughout the school. The students interested in doing this will receive information during their Library class.

The due date for this extra credit project is January 27<sup>th</sup>.

### *Nutmeg 2010*

Voting will take place during the last two weeks of January. To be eligible to vote, students in grades 4 and 5 need to have read or listened to three or more of the current Nutmeg Nominees. The votes will be submitted to the state

chairperson. The results will be shared when we find out the winner after it is announced on February 14<sup>th</sup>.

### *Nutmeg 2011*

Nominees will be available for check out starting February 2. The PTO has once again purchased multiple paperback copies of these books. Do know the Southbury Public Library also will have multiple copies and audio versions if they are available.

### *Classes*

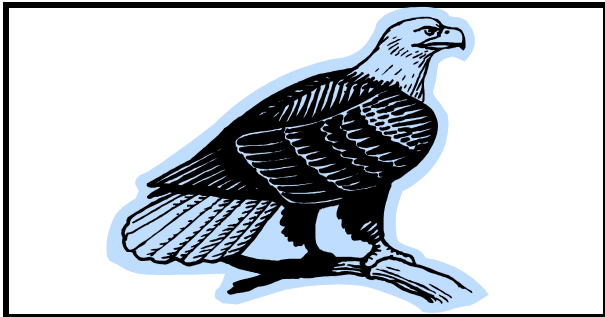
The upper grades are honing their skills on various reference materials. Fifth grade is spending time working with the three indexes of the World Almanac as they search for facts. They will also be using them for the Presidential project that they are working on with their social studies teachers. Fourth grade is learning to use the print encyclopedia before we go on to World Book online. Key words are being stressed as the starting point followed by using the indexes available to them for both of these reference sources.

Third grade will be spending time learning to navigate KidsInfoBits, an online resource that will help them with their items of interest

and information for projects. Your taxes pay for this great resource that only Connecticut residents have access to. All you need to get into ICONN.org is your library card number at home. In school we have a special access point and the children can go right to our web page to use it.

Second and third grades are being introduced and are reviewing the criteria for the various Book Awards as we await the announcement of the newest Caldecott, Newbery, Dr. Seuss, etc. A quick review and introduction to the winners will take place with all grades after they are announced on January 18<sup>th</sup>.

Second and first grade are being encouraged to take out an additional book as they become more proficient in reading. If a first grader takes out one of our books from the Big Red E section (Early and Emergent Reading books), they can take out a second book of choice. They are then encouraged to share these Big Red E books with family members and let me know who they read to. These books are being shown and a brief summary shared with them



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so they are familiar with what is available.

If a second grader takes out a Pink Dot (Beginner Chapter books), they can take out another book of choice. In class they will have the opportunity to share a book talk about their book with us. This way the children are learning about the books and series in our collection.

Both groups need to return both books in order to take out more.

Snow is in the air both literally and figuratively. All the books on display have some connection to snow, snowy places, snow sports, etc. A snow theme of some kind is involved with the stories being shared with the various primary grades. We're using book props, an author on tape, and a biography as we explore this theme.

### Donations

Thank you to all those who continue to drop off gently loved books for use by our classes or for inclusion in our Library collection.

### Guidance

We hope you're all off to a great start to a "brand new year". We would like to thank the Pomperaug Pals for all of their hard work during the first half of the year—great job!! For the second half of the year, the Pals will make monthly visits to our neighbors at Kensington Green. More information will be sent home.

Guidance lessons continue in grades K-4. K-2 classes have been focusing on friendship/social skills. The topic of bullying behavior will also be discussed in all grades, although the presentations will vary to keep the lessons age appropriate. Third grade continues with the "Free the Horses" program. We hope you are following along with us as you read the parent notes that go home. This month, Mrs. Keepin and Mrs. Soltesz will be presenting in-depth bullying lessons in fourth grade and Mrs. Soltesz will be following up with related lessons (focusing on strategies). Guidance lessons will resume in fifth grade when the DARE program is completed.

We will be offering *Changing Families* groups to help some of our students with needs in this area. These groups will help support those students who are currently going through family changes that may include divorce,

separation, and/or blending. If you feel your child could benefit from this support and you would like him/her to be a part of this group, please let us know before February vacation.

As always, if you have any questions, concerns, or comments, please feel free to call us. We continue to enjoy working with all of you. Happy New Year!!

### From the Nurse's Office

The cold weather is upon us!! Please make sure that your child is properly dressed for the weather conditions. The children go outside for recess if the temperature and wind chill are 20 degrees or above. If your child wants to play in the snow they must have waterproof snow pants, boots, gloves, etc. It would best for everyone to have an extra set of their own clothes in their locker or backpack for the unexpected slip in a puddle or leaky boots.

Just a reminder, in the event of an absence to call the school and leave a detailed message with your child's symptoms before 9:15AM. I need to track trends of illness so these details are necessary.