

Highlighter

Issue 3 January 2013

From the Principal's Desk

As I write this letter the first semester has just come to a close. Students have completed a week of mid-terms and are officially half-way through the year. Grades for the first semester will be posted on Friday, February 1st. As hard as it is to believe as we close the book on the first semester we are immediately required to look ahead and plan for next year. In the next few weeks students will be talking with their teachers and guidance counselors about course offerings and sign-ups for next year. Students will have a chance to attend the ORHS Electives Fair on February 7th to learn about our unique course electives. At ORHS we have hundreds of course offerings from which to choose. It is our hope that every student can find something that they are passionate about in our course offerings. Here under the rough of the high school we offer everything from gourmet cooking to ORTV News to Forensic Science. Beyond the walls of ORHS students have the opportunity to take courses at the career technical centers in Somersworth, Dover and Rochester. At the career technical centers students can take a wide range of courses ranging from culinary arts to fire science to cosmetology to automotive trades. If you are anxious to start looking at classes for next year the ORHS Program of Studies is available on the guidance department page of our web site. In addition to what we have in our course catalogue students can also take courses through the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS) and the UNH CATS Program. I think it is safe to say that there is something for everyone at ORHS.

On January 14th the ORHS PTO invited a group of recent Oyster River graduates to come back and talk with the community about their transition to life after high school. As the principal of this school I was not at all surprised to hear how successful our graduates have been in their first year of college. The group of 10 former students was asked to talk about how prepared they felt they were as compared to their fellow college freshmen. The group focused on two areas of strength as compared to their college classmates that they felt were as a result of their Oyster River education. First and foremost was that the students felt that the writing instruction they received at ORHS was excellent. All of the students on the panel indicated that the ability to organize thoughts and write a good essay was essential to their success. The second area of focus by the recent graduates was that they felt that they had developed good study habits. All felt that they had been well coached for the increased organizational challenges that college presented. This public forum was videotaped and is available to view on our web site.

As I mentioned to the school board at their last meeting, ORHS has very nice kids. In the last few weeks I have been reminded of that in two particular ways. The first example came last week when we had a visiting team here from the Deerfield Community School. After spending the morning touring the building and observing our program we ended with an informal gathering in the library. I asked the group how their visit had gone and the response was overwhelmingly positive. Multiple people commented on positive interactions that they had had with ORHS students throughout the morning. One woman spoke about a very pleasant conversation that she had with a group of seniors

in the core while another mentioned the nice kids she spoke to in a freshmen science classroom. The impression that the Deerfield visitors left with was that our kids and school culture is very inviting. The second example of our nice kids showed up on Facebook. A group of seniors who want to remain anonymous have started a Facebook page called "Oyster River Compliments". The idea of the page is really simple. The goal is to encourage people to say nice things about each other in hopes of promoting a more caring community. It was started a couple months ago but really took off in the wake of recent tragic events in our community. Over the last month it has gone from 100 compliments to more than 800. The student organizers approached me about making these compliments more prominent in our school. As a result we have been posting a sampling of the comments on our school message boards in the cafeteria and senior core. It has been a positive addition to our school environment. If I haven't said it enough, we have really nice kids at ORHS.

Sincerely,
Todd Allen

National Honor Society Teaching Assistant Program

Connor Grove, a senior at ORHS, works with students in Ms. Sullivan's Debate & Persuasion class as students prepare for their final Lincoln-Douglas style debates. Connor volunteers time during his free period as a Teaching Assistant. This program, initiated by the National Honor Society this semester, has been very successful. Students like Connor have a committed a free period once a week to help students in various ways in classes that they have already taken, sharing their expertise with their peers. The Teaching Assistant program also allows students to assist teachers with preparing for classes, facilitating discussion, and directing learning stations.



Ready for Spring Flowers?

The students traveling to France in April are providing you with the chance to purchase bulbs to add to your gardens or to start a new one. The students will begin selling on Feb. 1 and continue through March 8. Ask for an order form from trip travelers! So add color to your garden and some green to the students. Flower Power Fundraising sends the order directly to your home and the students earn 50% of every sale. Your support is much appreciated! For more information, contact Regina Smick-Attisano at rasamom3@comcast.net.

WORLD LANGUAGE NEWS:

It is National Spanish and French Exam Season!

During January, students in both Spanish and French sign up to take the *National Spanish Exam* or participate in the National French Contest, called *Le Grand Concours*. These are national exams compiled by the Association of the teachers of Spanish and Portuguese and American Association of Teachers of French and will be given this year in March and April. Thousands of students volunteer nation-wide to participate in these exams. These are tremendously competitive and demanding contests. Students who achieve state or national recognition will be recognized in the spring.



Because the two language exams are very different in format and developed by two separate organizations, the fee for each test is slightly different:

Spanish students are asked to pay \$4.50 by January 28th.
Date for the Spanish exam : TBA

French students are asked to pay \$5.00 by January 31st.
The date for the French exam is Wednesday, March 13, 2013.

Checks should be made out to ORHS.
Gracias y Merci
¡Buena suerte a todos! Bonne chance à tous!

SPRING FESTIVAL IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER !

Please join us on March 21st for The World Language Festival!

Spanish and French students (Levels 1 and 2) will present such fairy tales as The Three Little Pigs , Fric and Frac and Goldilocks all in the target language. Students will create and serve authentic Hispanic and French foods. Drinks will be on sale all evening. Families and friends are welcome!

Spanish and French Club Fundraiser!

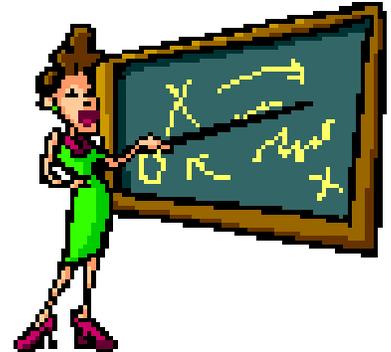
Please consider placing an order for hanging plant (to be delivered in time for Mother's day in May) to help support the Spanish and French Clubs. Last year's customers were amazed by the size and beauty of Wentworth Gardens' fuchsias, geranium, impatiens and petunias. Price of plants: to be determined. Payment is requested at time of ordering.





JUNIOR CLASS FUNDRAISERS

The Junior Class will be selling carnations for Valentine's Day. Students may order one during lunches the week of January 29th. The cost will be \$2.00 and the carnations will be delivered along with an attached note on Thursday, February 14th. Please encourage students to support the Junior Class by ordering a carnation.



On Thursday, February 7th, the Junior Class is holding an event in the auditorium at 7PM.

This **"Friends and Benefits"** event will have friends, couples and teachers competing to see who knows each other best. It will be similar to the format of the Newlywed Game show

The cost of admission will be \$5.00. The names of the contestants are yet to be finalized. Please encourage students to attend this event and support the Junior Class and the Junior Prom.

Valentines Variety Show!

Want to spend a school night in Paris? Well, you can! Since you're saving your Valentine's Day plans for the weekend..... add a little romance and charm to your school night by heading to the MPR at 7:30 on Thursday, February 14th.

\$5.00 gets you French cuisine by candlelight

All students interested in participating or helping out please see Jenny Taylor at school!





Save the Date!

The Noche Mexicana Fundraiser
Support ORHS Classes of 2014 and 2015

Tuesday, March 12



Enjoy a nice Mexican Fiesta with friends or family and support our students at the same time.

More details about the event and the necessary coupon will be forthcoming soon.

News from the English Department

Mouth of the River:

The MOR staff has published Issue #2, and is now online at mornewspaper.blogspot.com. This website features all of the articles from the first two issues, along with website exclusive articles. Students continue to work with their mission statement in mind: "Mouth of the River strives to present the Oyster River community with a variety of engaging and informative stories that represent the voice of the student body."

Look forward to the Issue #3, in circulation on February 12th.

MOUTH OF THE RIVER



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Poetry Out Loud:

On January 17th, students across grade levels participated in the ORHS competition for Poetry Out Loud – a national poetry recitation contest. The event featured judges from the school and UNH community, ORHS Poet Laureate Catherine Geiger as the emcee, and music from DJ DePasquale. The student competitors' performances showcased their talent for and love of poetry. After an evening of wonderful poems, Dan Belshaw earned 1st place, Erin Robert won 2nd place, and Gabriella Trombley won 3rd place. Dan will go on to represent Oyster River at the regional competition on Monday, March 11th at 7pm in UNH's Hennessy Theater.

We want to give Dan the home court advantage, so come support him! poetryoutloud.org.



ORHS Poetry Out Loud
Champion
Dan Belshaw, '14

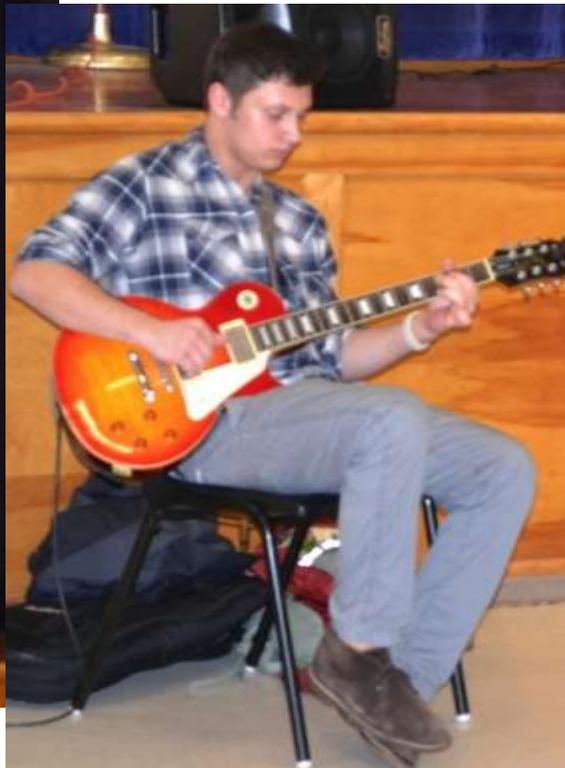
The evenings competitors,
from left:
Dan Belshaw '14,
Stephanie Schiavo '16,
Mary Claire Attisano '16,
Gabriella Trombley '16,
Erin Robert '15,
Siobhan Slavin '15,
Katherine Lanoue '16,
Charlie Gould '16,
Julien Pelletier '13.





The talented Catherine Geiger, '14, emcee for the event and our ORHS Poet Laureate.

Catherine started off the evening by reading from her original poems.



From left: Third runner-up, Gabriella Trombley, '16, recites "Alone" by Edgar Allen Poe. DJ Depasquale, '13, plays jazz guitar for the event. Second runner-up, Erin Robert, '15, during the intermission

Debate & Persuasion:

Ms. Sullivan's Debate and Persuasion class completed their final debates: Lincoln-Douglas style. Lincoln-Douglas debates are "Value" debates because they argue issues of moral and philosophical importance. Earlier in the year, our class focuses on policy debates. Lincoln-Douglas debates are the culminating activity in this class and showcases our students' abilities to argue all debate positions: Constructive, Rebuttal and Cross-Examination speeches. The picture shows Erin Roger and Sedona Clothier who debated Resolved: Media Censorship is immoral.



New Courses and Course Registration Information for 2013-2014:

The English Department has made some exciting changes to the program of studies! Read below to learn about these changes and new course offerings within our department.

Women's Literature:

This course will run next year, but not the following year. If you're a sophomore or junior interested in this course, be sure to sign up this spring. Students in Women's Literature will read carefully and think critically about a variety of issues surrounding the lives of women today and in the past, both in the United States and around the world. We will explore topics relating to women through various genres: novels, short stories, essays, film, poems, music, and magazine and newspaper articles. Although we will focus primarily on contemporary works and issues, we will look at literature from the 1800s and early 1900s to build a historical context from which to extend our study.

Practical Writing and Presentation:

This course is recommended for students seeking to improve their fundamental writing and presentation skills. The course will emphasize competencies in writing and verbal communication skills. Student will also have an opportunity to work on writing to help them become career-ready as well as prepared for other courses within the English electives system.

Other New Courses Offered for Communications Credit:

Students are required to take at least $\frac{1}{2}$ credit in communications in order to fulfill English requirements for graduation. We are excited to announce that Video Production 1 and The Art of Communication will now meet that communications requirement. The credit will be granted for students taking the courses beginning next fall.