MIDDLESEX MIDDLE SCHOOL

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THE DRAGON

The Student Newspaper for Middlesex Middle School!

Welcome to The Dragon!

By Sarah Colon
Maroon Team

The Dragon would like to welcome everyone to the 2008-2009 school year at Middlesex Middle School. We are the official student newspaper of MMS.

We have a staff of students in grades 6, 7, and 8 that run all aspects of the paper. In past years the students have simply written for the paper, but this year there will be a chance for staff members to do the lay out, take pictures, along with writing articles.

Tomorrow, September 24th, any student interested in joining the paper should meet after school in room 131. During that meeting, students will receive information about the application process, which will included creating your own sample article.

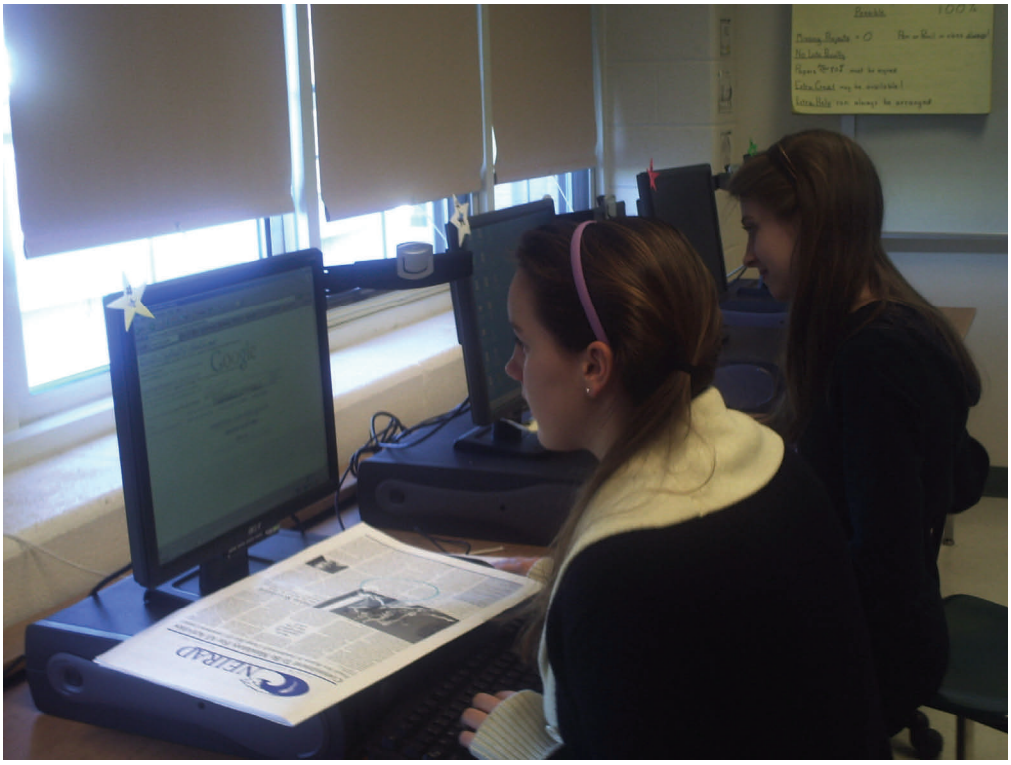
However, if you're not sure about making a full time commitment as a staff member to The Dragon, you can always write an article or a creative writing piece and send it in. These types of pieces are included in our Spotlight section.

If you also have ideas about a new section of the paper, feel free to send it in or bring it to the meeting! We're always open to new ideas!

One final thing we like to do at The Dragon is help improve our community. Last year, The Dragon and the Student Council joined together to carry out a coat drive, and in the end, we got to take a trip to Good Morning America. It was an amazing experience, and we hope to have a similar experience this year.

We're so excited for the Dragon's new, student-driven form and can't wait to get more people involved. We hope all of you read and contribute to The Dragon! Our goal for the year is to get the whole student body involved.

To help you get a complete picture of our paper, take a look at the various articles we work on here at your student newspaper. Enjoy!



Last year's student editors work on The Dragon during club time.. (Photo courtesy of Yearbook.)

Darien to Darien project continues with Variety Show Two

By Juliane Roach
Navy Team

This past spring, students were introduced to one wonderful program: Darien a Darien.

One of Middlesex's most beloved teachers, Mr. Smith, notified students, teachers, and parents of Darien, Connecticut's connection to a very different town, located in Central America. We were told that our little town was in fact named after another small town in Panama. This town also had students, teachers, and parents just like us...but with one major difference: Darien, Panama is rainforest land.

When Mr. Smith learned that town's many challenges, a plan began to form: we will help the schoolchildren create a more pleasant learning environment. The idea hit the ground running. T-Shirts were made, fundraisers were created, and one of the program's highlights, The Middlesex Variety Show, was organized. First selectwoman Mrs. Evonne Klein was even in attendance!

By collecting money for the t-shirts, tickets, and generous donations, Middlesex raised enough money to build a computer lab for our friends in Panama. But we didn't stop there. Under the direction of Mr. Smith, our school is still participating in this program today!

During a recent assembly, Mr. Smith told of a visit he took to our Nicanor school to see our Panama friends this past summer. He described of friendly schoolteachers, grateful students, and amazing food.

However, he also stressed that our job was not done. In fact, a second Middlesex Variety Show is scheduled for October 30th in efforts to raise enough money to supply Nicanor School with their first-ever playground and more books for their growing library.

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Welcome Back!

From Silver to Orange, Ms. Prushko is a Go!

By: Emily Molnar, Tan Team

Two years ago, Ms. Prushko came to MMS and joined the Silver Team as their science teacher. One year later, she switched to the Orange Team.

Having been on Silver Team, I enjoyed having Ms. Prushko as my science teacher, and I know she enjoyed teaching as well, but I actually had time to interview Ms. Prushko, to see how much she is enjoying the Orange Team.

Emily: Where you sad when you left the silver team?

Ms. Prushko: I was sad to leave the Silver Team because I really liked that team, but I was excited to work with teachers I haven't worked with before on the Orange Team.

Em: Do you feel good about your move to the Orange Team?

Ms. P: Yeah. 'Cause I like both teams, and I feel it's important to have different experiences.

Em: What are some fun things you remember from the Silver Team?
Ms. P: The Bronx Zoo trip. I loved the Bronx Zoo trip. Also the trip to the Museum of Natural History in New York. We also went to an IMAX movie.

Em: What are some fun activities that you have been doing on the Orange Team?

Ms. P: We have Africa Day. And we get to go to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Em: Are you happy with your students this year?

Ms. P: Of course! I love all my students every year!

TOPS schedule set for 2008-2009 school year

By Caroline Weihs, Green Team

If you are new to MMS you might not know about TOPS.

The Teen Options Program (TOPS) is sponsored by the Darien Youth Commission. TOPS are outside of school activities for all middle school-aged kids in the town of Darien.

There are dances, parties, and even a Hindley Fair Night. It's a great way for Darien kids the same age to get together as a whole. And they're a lot of fun, too!

You can get a special discount as a prepaid member for only $50 or you can pay the fee at the door. To the right are the schedules for the different grades.

Former 8th grade students enjoy one of the many TOPS dances held throughout the year. (Courtesy of the Yearbook staff.)

8th Grade Events

Sept. 12	BEACH PARTY
Nov. 14	OLDIES NIGHT
Dec. 5	MISTLETOE MAGIC
Feb. 6	VALENTINE'S DANCE
Mar. 27	ICE SKATING PARTY
May 8	HINDLEY FAIR NIGHT

7th Grade Events

Oct. 17	FALL FUN DANCE
Nov. 3	NIGHT @ THE MOVIES
Dec. 5	MISTLETOE MAGIC
Apr. 17	SPRING FLING
Mar. 27	ICE SKATING PARTY
May 8	HINDLEY FAIR NIGHT

6th Grade Events

Oct. 24	BOWLING PARTY
Jan. 23	GYM & SWIM NIGHT
Mar. 6	MY THREE SONS
Apr. 24	CLASH BASH
May 8	HINDLEY FAIR NIGHT

New Teacher Spotlight: Señora Mendoza

By Sloane Palmer, Tan Team

This year, the World Language Department welcomed another new teacher to MMS: Ms. Mendoza. Here is The Dragon exclusive on the newest face at Middlesex.

Sloane: How long have you been teaching?

Ms. Mendoza: I have been teaching for four years.

Sl: Where have you taught?

Ms. M: I taught in a school in Mexico.

Sl: Really, where in Mexico? What was it like?

Ms. M: [The school] was located about 10,000 feet up in the mountains in south western Mexico. I taught students in a one-room school house from ages two and a half to twelve years old. It was a very rural, remote community. There was no electricity, no refrigerators, no phone, no computer, and no running water.

Sl: Where else have you taught?

Ms. M: I also, taught in Westport for ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders.

Sl: How do you like MMS so far?

Ms. M: The kids are very smart, very, very polite, interesting and fun!

Sl: What do you teach and in which grades?

Ms. M: I teach five Spanish classes. I have three classes for six graders and two classes with eighth graders.

Sl: What are your favorite hobbies?

Ms. M: I love music, dancing, reading, and traveling. I also love to explore, biking, hiking, and cooking and eating foods from different countries!

Thank you Ms. Mendoza! Hope you have a great year at MMS!

Looking to advertise with The Dragon?

Contact the or the advisors (Mr. Sorensen or Ms. Warren) for opportunities to advertise your event with the only student newspaper at MMS? You can also email us at: *TheDragon@darienps.org*

Eighth Graders Prepare for Boston Trip

By Anjali Krishnamachar
Tan Team

What event has the power to single-handedly arouse over 300 grumpy, eternally sleep-deprived eighth graders and get them up before five o'clock in the morning? Well, it's definitely not an over-enthusiastic need to study for school (although some would like it to be).

No, these teenaged morning monsters are preparing to go on the fabled Boston trip! It's unbelievable, but somehow, MMS' faculty manages every year to bundle the entire eighth grade on a whirlwind journey, to Boston and back – truly a feat to be proud of!

For this year's Boston-goers, tension and excitement rises higher than ever. After the orientation meeting in the auditorium, Middlesex's senior-most students have rushed around with room-signup forms, eagerly asking friends to "please, oh, please" room with them at the Double Tree Hotel. But that's not all that is on students' minds. After hearing about activities such as the Duck Boat Tour, the Blue Man Group, and even a three-hour-long dance, students simply cannot wait until October 15th to board those coach buses and set off with their teachers and peers.

Other highlights of the trip will include visiting various Plymouth sites, Salem touring, Lexington and Concord, and even the famed Boston Museum of Science.

I know that some parents' eyebrows shot up sky-high when they saw the cost of the trip, but a little research showed that the price is right on target. The trip fee covers the cost of all meals on the trip, lodging, transportation, and all of the tour guides and entrance fees.

I also discovered that, even with the current tough economic times, the price of the trip has stayed exactly the same from when my sister traveled to Boston three years ago.

But wait! There are some old Boston myths that must still be cleared up! One of the most frequently asked questions by students is this: Do the chaperone teachers really tape the hotel room doors so that there is evidence of students sneaking out at night? Well, I have several answers. For one (and if you believe my sometimes flippant elder sister), the answer is yes. But if you're like me, and don't necessarily believe all the flying rumors, we'll just have to wait until Boston to find out.

But when asked to share their favorite part of the Boston trip, the answers really start to vary. From the teachers, I am told several of the touring stops such as Lexington and Concord or even seeing the Mayflower II and, of course, Plymouth Rock are incredible!

From the students (now in higher grades), I have heard that the Blue Man Group and the dance party are the best. Or simply the answer that just spending three days away from home with the entire grade is amazing.

Who to believe? One thing is certain: this year's Boston trip is sure to be a wonderful experience and a complete success!

Jane returns to save MMS students

Dear Jane,

I am new to the middle school, and up until this year I only had one teacher for all my classes. I'm sort of getting used to the system, but I have noticed one serious problem. It's only the beginning of the year, but already I have had 3 quizzes on the same day! I want to do well, but it's nearly impossible to devote enough time to each subject with regular, daily homework and after-school activities like sports. What should I do to balance my classes with my sports? And how do I know how much to study for each test?

- Swamped in Schoolwork

Dear SiS,

This happens to even the most organized, prepared students. We can't influence when our teachers hold tests, but here are some tricks to help. I suggest that you do your regular, daily homework first- things that you don't have to work too hard on. Then, if you have a sport, you can go to the practice or game knowing that you don't have much left to do. After that comes the difficult step: studying! Personally, I read over my notes and decide what is the hardest, and I spend the most time studying that. If the difficulty of each subject seems even, then spend an even amount of time on them. Also, making up games or typing study guides really helps the topics stick! Good luck and have a great first year at MMS!

Dear Jane,

The person whose locker is next to mine is REALLY rude. He swears all the time and always slams the door, even though I ask him not to. And if he's not doing this, he has his locker opened all the way so it blocks mine. I don't want this to go on for the rest of the year! What should I do to make it stop?

- Losing it Over Lockers

Dear LOL (haha! LOL!),

It's nearly impossible to have your locker next to someone you get along with 100% of the time, but this does seem particularly bad. You could always tell a teacher, one who you like and who would do something about it. The boy would have to listen when all of a sudden detention comes into play. If you don't want to resort to that, you could also be just as obnoxious as the other student, but I wouldn't recommend it because someone else may be bothered by your counterattack! Overall, the better way to go is to ask a teacher. I hope this clears up soon!

Dear Jane,

I have a new best friend this year, and I'm worried about some unusual habits that she seems to have. Every day at lunch the only thing she brings to school is a red liquid in a large container. I also see her with the book Twilight every free moment of her day. Finally, she looks a bit pale, and keeps complaining of the sun light. What should I do?

- Creeped in the Cafe

Dear CitC,

That is one interesting situation! It's good to hear that you're making friends, even if they seem a little different. The most important thing is that you be upfront and honest with her. Tell her how you feel. I'm sure it's not what you think it is. If the question persists, though, make sure not to visit her house after dark or walk down mysterious alleys with her. Just kidding! But seriously, let her know how you feel.

XOXO,
Jane

Who is Jane?

"Jane" is ***The Dragon***'s resident expert in all things middle school. If you have a problem or question about middle school life, "Jane" is here to answer it. There are several ways to submit your problems or questions. You can drop a note in the folder located on the *Spotlight* board outside the main office, or print off a form from the link on the front page of our online edition. Once you fill it out, drop it off in Mr. Sorensen's or Mrs. Boulier's mailbox, located in the first floor copy room. You can also email us your problem. Feel free to send us a note at:

TheDragon@darienps.org

Writer's Spotlight

A section dedicated to creative writing from MMS students!

Once Upon a Fence

By Sloane Palmer, Tan Team

Prologue

"Ow" I whispered. While my best friend, Annabela pulled me up from the cold, hard autumn ground she asked, "Why do they always bother us, Blossom?"

Myrtle and her gruesome followers, Tori and Lori, always picked on the two most innocent girls in the 6th grade.

"Oh, no! Here they come again!" we said in a chorus.

"So what are you two going to be for Halloween?" Myrtle smirked, "teacher pets?"

"Myrtle, that's going to be hard for them" said Lori. Right on cue Tori screamed,

"Because they already are!" The three of them burst out laughing.

"No." Annabela said with pride and courage, "We are going to be the fairies." Once again they shrieked with laughter. "Then what are you going to be?" I asked quietly.

"We...are... going...to...be...the...three... witches!" Tori and Lori exclaimed. They walked off falling onto each other, laughing and cackling.

Chapter 1

"They're getting closer!" Annabela screamed with fear. Feeling the cool crisp air whip my face I swung my head around.

"Wow, they sure look a lot like witches." I said as I brought my head back. Seeing the smile creep onto Annabela's face, I said "let's turn here." Our eyes popped open seeing the dead end that awaited us. We turned around on our heels, but it was too late. "What are you going to do, fairies?" cracked Myrtle.

"That's the fairies to you" Annabela said lamely.

Looking stupidly at her followers, Myrtle said, "Fine freaklys, I mean fairies."

"Give us all of your candy, and we will let this one slide" laughed Tori. Taking a step towards Myrtle, I said,

"No - you always push us around and we don't like it!" As I looked back at Annabela for approval, Lori took a step forward and pushed me to my misery.

"Looks like we are on top of you again" they said as a threesome. I searched my body for any signs of bleeding. Luckily there were none.

"Now give us all your candy, bracelets, and, oh your long fake eyelashes," demanded Lori as Annabela helped me to my feet.

"But before you said only our candy!" whined Annabela.

"Well, you should have thought about that before you made us mad!" Myrtle smirked.

As they started to corner us I whispered to Annabela...

For more, check out The Dragon Online!

SKETCH

By Emily Molnar, Tan Team

Sarah scanned the inside of the box she called her room. She let out a rather loud sigh and looked back down at her chubby thighs where her sketchbook lay. Sarah loved to sketch; anything, EVERYTHING. No matter if it was a picture in her mind, or a vision through her big brown eyes, she would sketch it.

At this particular moment, she was sketching her future; her dream house, job, pet and even family. It was late at night and Sarah grew tired, so she pulled off her clothes and squeezed her pajamas over what she thought was her fat body. Then she hopped into her bed with her multi-colored bed spread and matching pillow-cases, and continued sketching her dream life. By the time the hour hand on her pink Barbie clock hit midnight, she was asleep.

"Mom, wake up mom!" Sarah's eyes just barely opened when she realized she wasn't in her room. Yet when her eyes fully opened a few seconds later, she analyzed her surroundings and noticed that she had seen this room before. It did not take her long to figure out that she had seen the screaming little girl next to her before also. Yet the only thing that did not look familiar was... her! Her thighs were small, and her body, the skinniest she had ever seen it, also, the nightgown that she wore looked as if it was made for a 40 year old. That was the only bad part.

"Mom, get up! PLEASE MOM!!" The 10 year old girl screeched with excitement. Sarah turned her head a bit to the left, so that she was facing the girl.

"Huh?" Sarah questioned in a voice that made her sound drunk. "Where am I? Who are you?" Sarah asked in worry.

For more, check out The Dragon Online!

A Tribute To A Fallen Giant

By Caroline Golino, Green Team

The Yankees lost on Monday night.
Now their season is done.
They really did put up a fight,
But they lost by more than one.

It does not mean that all is lost,
For not all is lost, you see.
Boston *will* soon feel the cost;
It's the way it should be.

Because Tampa could beat our team,
They must be really good,
Boston's eyes will no longer gleam;
All will be as it should.

Yankees fans, no need to pout,
Though Boston is in,
And yes, the Yankees are still out,
But the Red Sox Just won't win.

A-Rod and Jeter will be back,
And the other teams will fear,
'Cause we won't cut them any slack...
JUST WAIT UNTIL NEXT YEAR!

The Spotlight Section is dedicated to publishing creative student writing!

The articles in this edition are from issues published last year, as a sample of what you can produce for us!

To go along with our website, we also have a Writer's Spotlight Bulletin Board right outside the main office!

Also, visit THE DRAGON website for more information, and email your original pieces directly to us at TheDragon@darienps.org

Thank you for your continued support! http://www.darienps.org/msxmagazine