



Third Issue

Feb. 2011

IHS Word **2010-11**

IHS Word is the Ithaca High School Newsletter, jointly funded by the PTSA and IHS. It serves all IHS parents, caregivers and staff.

Submit news to:
ihs_news@yahoo.com

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Revised: Upcoming programs for parents and guardians include an evening with our new Superintendent, Dr. Brown, date to be announced – watch the listserv for news!

School WILL be in session on May 27, due to the snow day!

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Get important IHS and PTSA news by email: sign up for the IHSPTSA listserv (usually one email per week)!
Send an email to: IHSPTSA-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

To join the discussion listserv, send an email to:
IHSPTSA-discuss-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Visit IHS and PTSA on the web:
Ithaca High School: <http://www.icsd.k12.ny.us/highschool>

PTSA:
http://ihsptsa.clarityconnect.com/IHS_PTSA/Welcome.html

From the Principal

I hope my correspondence finds you living up to a majority of the resolutions for the New Year that you set for yourself. I find it hard to believe that we are half way through the school year and are now well into having the school counselors work with each student on deciding his or her course selections for next year. The goal of each student's schedule is to provide the best opportunity for academic success. Each student's schedule represents many hours of work by administrators, teachers and the school counselors. Counselors, teachers and parent/guardians will carefully review student course requests based upon graduation requirements, sequences and interest in electives. Many opportunities are provided for reflection, decision-making, and consultation with school personnel throughout the school year and beyond. Therefore, changes in a student's schedule for the next year will not be made except for compelling educational reasons after the final course request has been reviewed and signed by the parent, student and counselor. After the schedule has been received in the summer, any such requests for a schedule change must be presented to me in writing for consideration. I realize that some adjustments in a student's schedule may be necessary due to input error or other circumstances. However, changes for convenience or teacher preference cannot be honored due to the imbalances they create, thus negatively affecting other student and teacher schedules. Please keep this information in mind as you work with your child on course selection for next school year.

As we are somewhat on the topic of School Counselors, it is my pleasure to welcome Astrid Brueckner to the IHS community. Ms. Brueckner most recently moved here from Okinawa, Japan where she was a school counselor on Kadena AFB and prior to that a school counselor in Columbia, SC. Ms. Brueckner has also worked as a college admissions counselor and has taught counseling courses for the University of Maryland. Ms. Brueckner works with students whose last names begin with Lb – N. (See p. for an interview with her!)

The construction on the new fitness facility has begun and will continue into next school year. The next phase of construction will require students, staff and parents to enter the building through the main Kulp entrance and then proceed through "B" building (Activities) to access the Gym and main

building as the portion of the sidewalk leading up to the "B" to "C" breezeway will be fenced off until March 1. This will only affect our entrance for three weeks, one of which is our February break. After March 1 the sidewalk will reopen. Please be mindful of this temporary rerouting of foot traffic.

As you are aware, IHS is currently identified by NYSED as a School In Need of Improvement (SINI) based on current English Language scores for the sub-category, Students with Disabilities (SWD). The IHS administration, faculty and community have been working hard to address these issues, and to continue to assess and improve teaching for all students.

The IHS staff is currently working to update the IHS School Development Plan, with emphasis on a number of SINI improvement priorities, and to write a Comprehensive Education Plan specific to ELA and Students with Disabilities. Recognizing that data is needed to make informed decisions, the leadership will continue to work to coordinate curricula and improve the monitoring and assessment of programs and staff. Teachers and staff will examine the distribution of students in all classes. Given the role that the Response to Intervention program has played in supporting students with disabilities, this program will continue to be supported and expanded, including continued training for teachers and staff. The Professional Learning Community (PLC) structure will be sustained and strengthened, including the development of common formative and summative assessments. Staff will identify and work with all students at risk of not graduating, particularly students with disabilities. And effective co-teaching and differentiated instruction will be implemented, including professional development opportunities for all educators with emphasis on differentiated instructional strategies to improve student achievement in the area of literacy across the content areas.

Two upcoming events that I am especially excited for are detailed below. Both of these events will help to foster a sense of community and further support our students to achieve their dreams.

Path of Success Leadership Seminar for all Freshmen, ACE and AVID students! Monday, February 28 - All day

On Monday, February 28, IHS and the Village at Ithaca are partnering to present an all day *Path of Success Leadership Seminar* that focuses both on

academic and personal development. All I.H.S. Freshman, AVID, and ACE students and their teachers will attend. Designed especially for students, the seminar will inspire students and give them the tools needed to recognize their potential, set high goals, maintain integrity, and achieve their best success in academics, their relationships, and future careers.

Alfred Watts, founder of the "Path of Success," a Cornell Alumnus, successful attorney and dynamic speaker, will lead the nationally acclaimed student leadership seminar. Mr. Watts has taught thousands of students from across the country how to improve the quality of their lives and unleash their true potential.

An Evening of Path of Success for Family and Friends
Monday, February 28, 6:30 – 7:30pm Kulp Auditorium

IHS students are invited to bring family and friends back for an evening review of Path of Success. Alfred Watts will provide an overview of the Path of Success day the students experienced, and will share ideas for families to encourage and support their student's academic and personal growth in the months and years ahead.

Our desire is to repeat this experience for students and their families every year.

"We empower youth to live life with increased intentionality and on the level of their dreams and desires," says Alfred Watts, Founder.

For more information about Path of Success, please visit <http://www.pathofsuccess.org/>

It's all about Community – March 9

On March 9 the IHS community will run an adjusted schedule allowing for community building activities to occur during the middle of the day. These activities are being planned in partnership with several community groups as well as our students and staff. During the days leading up to March 9th students will receive a copy of the book *Where Do We Go from Here, Chaos or Community?* by Dr. Martin Luther King and engage in conversations and activities around community building.

Creating and maintaining a sense of community where all persons are respected and valued is essential. Current world events have reminded me of a story that was shared with me by a colleague a

couple of years ago. He shared with me that this was a true story and how much of a reminder it served to him about how respectful we should be of each other and how we must take responsibility for our words and actions that we extend to those who live in our school community. Many of you have seen the story; however, how many of us live up to the moral of the story each day when we interact with our son or daughter? The stress, peer pressure, harassment and bullying that our children face are issues that cannot be taken lightly. I hope that the article will remind all of us the power of our words and their effect that they can have on those we share them with.

One day, when I was a freshman in high school, I saw a kid from my class who was walking home from school. His name was Kyle. It looked like he was carrying all of his belongings and books from school. I thought to myself, "Why would anyone bring home all his belongings and books on a Friday? He must really be a nerd." I had quite a weekend planned (parties and a football game with my friends tomorrow afternoon), so I shrugged my shoulders and went on. As I was walking, I saw a bunch of kids running toward him. They ran at him, knocking all his books out of his arms and tripping him so he landed in the dirt. His glasses went flying, and I saw them land in the grass about ten feet from him. He looked up and I saw this terrible sadness in his eyes. My heart went out to him. So, I jogged over to him and as he crawled around looking for his glasses, I saw a tear in his eye. As I handed him his glasses, I said, "Those guys are jerks. They really should get lives." He looked at me and said, "Hey thanks!" There was a big smile on his face. It was one of those smiles that showed real gratitude. I helped him pick up his books, and asked him where he lived. As it turned out, he lived near me, so I asked him why I had never seen him before. He said he had gone to private school before now. I would have never hung out with a private school kid before. We talked all the way home, and I carried some of his books. He turned out to be a pretty cool kid. I asked him if he wanted to play a little football with my friends. He said yes. We hung out all weekend and the more I got to know Kyle, the more I liked him, and my friends thought the same of him. Monday morning came, and there was Kyle with his huge stack of belongings and books. I stopped him and said, "Boy, you are gonna really build some serious muscles with this pile of books everyday!" He just laughed and handed me half the books.

Over the next four years, Kyle and I became best friends. When we were seniors, we began to think about college. Kyle decided on Georgetown, and I was going to Duke. I knew that we would always be friends, that the miles would never be a problem. He was going to be a doctor, and I was going for business on a football scholarship. Kyle was valedictorian of our class. I teased him all the time about being a nerd. He had to prepare a speech for graduation. I was so glad it wasn't me having to get up there and speak. I could see that he was nervous about his speech. As he started his speech, he cleared his throat, and began.

"Graduation is a time to thank those who helped you make it through those tough years.

Your parents, your teachers, your siblings, maybe a coach...but mostly your friends...I am here to tell all of you that being a friend to someone is the best gift you can give them. I am going to tell you a story."

I just looked at my friend with disbelief as he told the story of the first day we met. He had planned to take his life over the weekend. He talked of how he had cleaned out his locker so his Mom wouldn't have to do it later and was carrying his stuff home. He looked hard at me and gave me a little smile.

"Thankfully, I was saved. My friend saved me from doing the unspeakable." I heard the gasp go through the crowd as this handsome, popular boy told us all about his weakest moment. I saw his Mom and Dad looking at me and smiling that same grateful smile. Not until that moment did I realize the depth of how words and actions can have an impact on someone's life.

Please never underestimate the power of your words and actions. Think about how one small gesture can change a person's life. For better or for worse, we live in a world that exemplifies at times intolerance for the beliefs of others. Look around and think of all of the wonderful people you have in your life. Now look around and reach out to someone who might need support and a kind word. Extend yourself to them in order to give them a feeling of self-worth that has been extinguished by the words and actions of those who are not capable of focusing on their own insecurities. We have such a special group of students, parents, faculty and staff at IHS, but we also have those who in a time of need will require us to extend compassion and understanding in order to live up to the respectful school we are known for.

As always please feel free to stop in or contact me with any questions or concerns you may have. Thanks for all your support and here's to early spring.

Respectfully,

Donald Mills
Principal
274-2143

Fine Arts Boosters Think Ahead

The Fine Arts Booster Group (FABG) believes the arts should stay an essential part of education. Join us as we strategize about how to support the arts in our schools. We will have a "retreat" meeting on March 5 in the morning to discuss our future goals. Contact president@fabgithaca.org for details.

FABG, an affiliate of IPEI, is focused on all the arts, grades K-12. Your perspective, concerns, and ideas are appreciated. Join the listserv by emailing FineArtsBoosters-subscribe@yahoogroups.com and watch for announcements about upcoming strategy meetings. Visit www.fabgithaca.org for information and membership. Contact president@fabgithaca.org if you are interested in volunteering. We are currently seeking a volunteer comfortable with computers and in-design who can layout the performance booklets used for school concerts and plays. This job can be done from the comfort of your desk!

Martha Frommelt, FABG President

PTSA News

From the PTSA President

Welcome to Winter, everyone. The days are getting longer, but it still somehow seems that spring is far away. As we pass the halfway mark in the school year, our students, teachers and staff are all working hard.

Given some of the cutbacks in discretionary funds at the school, we at the PTSA have been exploring new ways to support families and teachers. Super-thanks to those of you who helped make the holidays special for families in need at IHS. Working with the Family Liaisons and the Student Council, the PTSA collected over \$200 in donations for holiday gift baskets.

We are now reviewing a second round of mini-grants for teachers. These awards of up to \$200 each support teachers who go the extra-mile to provide academic support for our students. As part of this program, the PTSA was also able to award the Family Liaisons support for a "Sunshine Fund" to help any student in need.

As a result of our fall mini-grants program, we will be collecting donations of garden tools for the Tot & Teen Pre-K program at IHS, so watch for more details as it gets closer to planting season.

Upcoming programs for parents and guardians include an evening with our new Superintendent, Dr. Brown, in March - *date to be announced*. In April, we will examine the impact of the 2011/2012 budget on IHS. In May, we will have the District-wide budget meeting. In June look for our Alumni College Night.

We also hope to be able to screen the documentary movie, *Race to Nowhere*, this spring. As the NY Times (12/09/10) described it: *The film portrays the pressures when schools pile on hours of homework and coaches turn sports into year-round obligations. "Everyone expects us to be superheroes," one high school senior in the film says. The movie introduces boys who drop out of high school from the pressure, girls who suffer stress-induced insomnia and worse, and students for whom "cheating has become another course," as one puts it.* We're waiting for the creators to release an educational site-license, so be on the lookout for that. You won't want to miss it!

Thanks again to all the parents who support the Monthly Munches for teachers and staff. Please put us on your schedule-- upcoming munches will be on March 3, April 7, May 5, and June 2. If you are willing and able to send food, email Penny at promantic@cityofithaca.org. And look for the school-wide Appreciation Lunch in March. Help is always appreciated.

We hope you all have been successful in finding a way to connect with the IHS community, be it through academics, sports, theater, music or the arts. If not, there's still time! See the contact emails/numbers below to find your way in, for as Anne Frank once wrote, "*How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.*"

Sue Merkel
smerkel@twcny.rr.com

IHS PTSA - Parent Teacher Student Association.
Visit the Web site at:
http://ihsptsa.clarityconnect.com/IHS_PTSA/Welcome.html, or contact President Sue Merkel, at:
smerkel@twcny.rr.com.

IHS Student and Class Activities - Activities Director, Karl Mellander. Email:
kmelland@icsd.k12.ny.us

FABG - The Ithaca Community Fine Arts Booster Group Visit their website: www.fabgithaca.org or email: president@fabgithaca.org

IPEI - The Ithaca Public Education Initiative. Visit the Web site at: www.ipei.org or call 256-IPEI.

SportsBoosters - The Ithaca Sports Booster Club
Visit the web site at:
<http://sports.dir.groups.yahoo.com/group/IthacaSportsBoosters> or email:
SportsBoosterPrez@yahoo.com.

Ithaca SEPTA - Special Education PTA For more information, email Samantha Preston, Secretary, at: Slp59@cornell.edu

Welcome Student Activities Director, Karl Mellander

Ithaca High School welcomes Karl Mellander as the new Student Activities Director. If his name sounds familiar, it is because Mr. Mellander has been a teacher in the math department since 2005. Although he continues to teach some math classes, his new purview as Activities Director pertains to anything outside of the classroom and not related to athletics. This includes coordination of IHS clubs and the planning and facilitation of senior graduation and school dances. He works very closely with the Senior Class to ensure the safe and successful execution of all senior activities. Additionally, Mr. Mellander is the advisor for the Class of 2012, the Ultimate Frisbee Club, and co-chair for Site Based Council.

Mr. Mellander grew up in Upstate NY, attending high school in Rochester and then going on to Hamilton College where he earned a Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics. While attending SUNY Binghamton, where he earned his Master's Degree in Teaching, he was offered a position to teach at Winston Churchill High School in Potomac, MD., but instead happily chose Ithaca as home. "I spent every weekend up here while I was doing my Master's and knew it was what I wanted," said Mr. Mellander about his choice. In his spare time, he enjoys a wide range of outdoor activities including fly fishing, soccer, volleyball, ice hockey, and both XC and downhill skiing. Talking about his love for winter sports, he confessed, "teachers love snow days too."

Looking to the future, Mr. Mellander would like to bridge the social gap for students and create clubs and after-school activities that incorporate the full spectrum of student needs so that greater participation can be achieved. "I wanted to work with the classes and work with the clubs" he said, describing his role as liaison between community, students, staff, and administration. He emphasized his eagerness to act as intermediary saying, "I hope parents don't hesitate to call me with questions or concerns."

Mr. Mellander has already made significant accomplishments during his short stint as Activities Director. For example, there is a great improvement in the atmosphere at school dances. Mr. Mellander credits the work of the Site Based Council for many of the changes in school dance guidelines and the resulting good behavior at last month's Winter Formal.

What inspires him? "I am most inspired by teachers who are willing to do what they need to do for their students. That's the kind of thing I am amazed by because I know it's incredibly hard. We have a lot of them here."

The student activities schedule and Mr. Mellander's contact information can be found by following the Student Activities link from the IHS homepage at <http://www.icsd.k12.ny.us/highschool/>.

Interview submitted by Melynda Wissar

Ithaca High School announcements are available on the website:
http://www.icsd.k12.ny.us/highschool/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=24&Itemid=66

Welcome IHS Student Counselor, Astrid Brueckner

In December, IHS welcomed a new School Counselor, Astrid Brueckner. Ms. Brueckner moved to Ithaca 18 months ago from Okinawa, Japan where she was a civilian employee on a military base. As a School Counselor in the elementary, middle and high schools there, she had the opportunity to work with children, teens, and families from all over the world.

Ms. Brueckner was born in Ohio and attended high school in South Carolina. As her father was an archaeologist, she became accustomed to living in new places and developed a love for travel. Ms. Brueckner returned to South Carolina to earn a Master's Degree in Counseling and an Education Specialist in Counseling (Ed.S) after attending the University of Nebraska where she graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology. After spending 5 years in Japan, she moved to Ithaca and married her husband in February of 2010.

In addition to her full time career at IHS as a School Counselor, Ms. Brueckner is currently earning her Administration Certification at SUNY Binghamton. She finds the challenging balance between her work as a counselor and her role as an administrative intern to be "a nice blend of student interaction and administrative work."

Ms. Brueckner is very excited about her new position at IHS. "I enjoy my job, especially the problem solving component, and working with students at the high school level-I think this is the best fit for me. High school students are still seeking guidance and direction yet able to process and form their own ideas and opinions. I especially enjoy laughing and joking with them to help relieve their stress."

It is clear that Ms. Brueckner's extensive travel experience and work with students from many countries has prepared her well for the diverse student body at IHS. "I've had some fantastic opportunities and hopefully I've become more empathetic and compassionate because of them."

As a lover of the outdoors, Ms. Brueckner knows she came to the right place. She and her husband have enjoyed hiking the local trails and gorges here in Ithaca. She is also involved in a charity running group called *Team In Training* in which she raises money to support the fight against cancer.

If you the parent/guardian of a child with the last name Lb-N or if you just want to introduce yourself to the newest member of the school support staff team, stop in to the student services office at IHS and say "konnichiwa" to Ms. Astrid Brueckner!

Interview submitted by Melynda Wissar

AVID News

AVID 9

We are excited to introduce the two new AVID elective teachers working with the 9th grade classes this year:

Megan Kruger graduated from SUNY Oswego with a BA in Anthropology and an MA in Secondary Education for History. She has been at Ithaca High School since the 2007-2008 school year, teaching multiple courses in the Social Studies department.

She is currently teaching United States History in addition to her class of 13 AVID students.

Ms. Kruger reports that she is "both delighted and excited to be an AVID teacher. AVID is an important program that helps guide students through high school and onto college. The transition through high school can be touch for many students and I wanted to be able to help make it more meaningful and useful for them." She also looks forward to guiding

the students through the often confusing and cumbersome college application process.

Jocelyn Lutter is a graduate of the University of Vermont, where she received a BA in Art Education. She is currently finishing her Master in Education at Elmira College. This is her third year as an Art teacher at IHS. She teaches a variety of classes, including Studio Art 1, Studio Art 2, Ceramics Handbuilding, Ceramics Wheel Throwing, Advanced Ceramics, Sculpture 1 and Sculpture 2. This year, she is also teaching a class of 18 ninth grade AVID students.

Ms. Lutter says that "I have really enjoyed my first semester as an AVID teacher and am grateful that I was given this opportunity. AVID is an excellent course to prepare students for the expectations and rigors of college through learning skills and study strategies that are necessary for success in education. Students are also able to research and visit colleges, meet successful individuals, and explore their future goals."

AVID 10

According to Ms. Khavarani, the AVID 10th graders have gotten off to an excellent start this year! Just this past month, the students planned and staged a hugely successful handball tournament. But that is not all. These AVID all-stars have also been busy working in the community and fulfilling their required fifteen hours of community service. Many have already surpassed the goal! And to top it off, the AVID 10 students have been excelling academically.

The AVID 10th graders were busy preparing for the PLAN test in January. While some were reluctant to start the process of standardized test-taking, they are excited to begin the college admissions process. The AVID 10 class will take a field trip to Cornell University in the spring.

This is an awesome group of students, and Ms. Khavarani feels fortunate to be their teacher.

AVID 12

Mrs. Kiely reports that the AVID 12 class worked hard on college applications this fall, and a few students have already received letters of acceptance and generous scholarship offers. Most of the applications have been submitted, so the class is now working on financial aid and scholarship applications. We look forward to celebrating more college acceptance letters in the coming months! This year, AVID 12 is offered as a concurrent enrollment class with TC3. This means that students who successfully complete the course requirements can earn 1 elective credit from IHS, as well as three credits for TC3's ACAD 150: College Success Seminar. The class is designed to ease the transition from high school to college, and the students will take a field trip to TC3 in the spring to learn more about academic expectations, student life and resources that support students on college campuses.

AVID 12 students are also planning a Brownie Bake-off fundraiser on March 14. The AVID seniors are confident that Mrs. Kiely makes the best brownies in the world, but they are looking forward to the competition.

Music

Congratulations to the following IHS Choir members who were selected to perform in the 2011 Seneca-Tompkins Sr. High All-County Chorus. The festival was held on January 21 and 22 at Trumansburg High School. Vanessa Anderson, Matt Avery, Emily Behrmann-Fowler, Savannah Charif, Austin Cody, Sandrine Duboscq, Julie Erickson, Haley Evanoski, St. John Faulkner, Harmony Graves, Josh Greenberg, Zoe Kiriazis, Lena Kornreich, Jenna Ledet, Jon Liebherr, Allison Mollenkamp, Naomi Powers, Hannah Rawlings, Naomi Raymond, Julia Ridley, Tony Ruta, Emily Scarpulla, Ben Sherman, Sarah Skrovan, Courtney Smalt, Casey Smith, Michael Stern and Elena Studier.

Congratulations also to the following Choir members who were selected to perform in the 2011 Sr. High Area All-State Choruses. The festival was held on February 4 and 5 at Ithaca College.

Matt Avery, Emily Behrmann-Fowler, Jacob Clay, Haley Evanoski, St. John Faulkner, Addison Gates, Harmony Graves, Josh Greenberg, Engy Hassan, Zoe Kiriazis, Lena Kornreich, Jon Liebherr, Tony Ruta and Caroline Sendek.

Way to go, Choir members!

Submitted by Art Loomis

FINE ARTS

Rigor, relevance and relationships are the focus of Superintendent Luvelle Brown's vision. It is also the spirit embraced by the Fine Arts at IHS. Our foundation course, Studio Art 1 & 2, has been redesigned this year, with an emphasis on that vision, using visual thinking and skill practices, literacy exercises and personal connections as the driving force behind the program. The Studio 2 course will continue to unfold in a Journal format, documenting the student's reflective writing, brainstorming, ideation, drawing drafts and finished product. We will also introduce "letter correspondence" as a tool to engage the student in a personal exchange with artists and ideas. The letters will be reflective and analytical, as well as a vehicle to introduce graphic design and illustration. We will be photographing artwork from Studio 1 & 2 and publishing a catalog to share the new directions, best practices and challenges of these courses.

Spring semester also brings some changes to the Art department staff. We say goodbye and thank Diane Booth for her good work teaching Studio this past semester. She will now be full time at Boynton Middle School. Jackie Richardson, who has previously taught at IHS, will return this Spring to teach two sections of Studio Art 1. She will split her time with IHS and Boynton. We are lucky and delighted to have Jackie back as a member of our team.

The District Art teachers invite our colleagues, students and the community to check out our group exhibition at the Alternate Federal Credit Union during the month of March 2011.

Scheduling has been underway and the Fine Arts department is available to answer any questions and offer information on including the arts as an intrinsic part of a holistic education. The Arts are smArt at IHS.

Carol Spence
cspence@icsd.k12.ny.us

English Department

The Student of the Quarter Award from the English Department for first quarter always goes to a senior. This year the department voted Yuliya Nikulina to be the recipient. Second quarter's award was a tie between juniors Hannah George and Adele O'Rourke. Congratulations to these three students for their effort to produce high quality work in English.

The English Department administered the new, one-day English Regents exam the morning of January 11 to 348 students. While there still remain a few bugs for the State Education Department to work out, in the end, the new exam was a relief to many students who dreaded the old, two-day, four-essay format. A record number of students—twenty-one—received a 100 on the exam.

Those who were absent for any reason or who failed the exam and who are in the senior or junior cohort group will need be present at the next

administration of the exam during the June 15-24 Regents week.

In January the department also participated in a day of professional development, which included doing a gap analysis of their present curriculum with the new ELA Common Core State Standards that were adopted by the State Education Department in Albany on January 10. The majority of these standards come from the federal government with fifteen percent written by a NYS committee. For a look at the new English standards and new literacy standards in social studies, science and technology, go to:
http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/common_core_standards/pdfdocs/p12common_core_learning_standards_ela_final.pdf.

In addition, the department's teachers were engaged in training to be able to use the new mobile lab of 25 laptops the department has

acquired. Already students are using this lab for assignments during class time.

Scheduling continues for next year's courses. Seniors have seven choices of classes: English 12, English 12 Honors, WISE, English/Media, Advanced Placement Language or Advanced Placement Literature, and English 101-102 (a course with dual credit at TC3).

Any student can sign up for an elective. The following electives will be offered only if there are enough students for a class: Speech and Debate, Creative Writing, Introduction to Philosophy, Film Study, Expository Writing, Journalism, and Great Books.

Shirley Kennedy
English Dept. Chair

Code Red Robotics

Code Red Robotics has started their eleventh Build Season! The team, composed of 51 students, 15 professional mentors, and parent volunteers, works for six weeks from early January to late February in order to build a large robot. During this six week period, Build Season, students work weekdays from 5-9 pm and eight more hours each Saturday. The end result? A 120-pound, competition-ready robot and a LOT of learning along the way.

The FIRST competition, for which the team is gearing up, is a challenging global contest. FIRST is an organization designed to spread technology awareness, and the acronym is short for "For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology." One thousand five hundred teams from ten countries compete at the high school level in regional and national events. The program creates an exciting and highly educational environment where the students work collaboratively with professional engineering mentors in the spirit of "Gracious Professionalism." Every year, the students design and build a complex, computer-controlled machine to play a new game. Major funding comes from the generous donations of local and regional companies and individuals. Code Red students will compete against other robotics teams in Rochester in March and Boston in April.

For more information, email:

Alejandro Younger,
Student Public Relations Officer
publicrelations@team639.org



Math

The American Math Competition (AMC) was given on February 8th. Over 200 students from IHS participated. We were proud of our students who took up the challenge, and tried the test. A sample question is given at the end of this article.

In March we will have Pi Day (3/14). This April is Math Awareness Month and will be celebrated at the high school with a week of challenge questions and prizes. Questions are accessible to students at all levels of ability and winners are chosen at random from those who submit a correct answer.

Students should be signing up now for courses for next year. Because of a very tight budget and reduced scheduling flexibility, it is important to make careful decisions for next year's courses. If you are not sure of what level to sign up for, please communicate with the student's current teacher.

If your child has fulfilled their 3-year math requirement for graduation, we strongly encourage them to sign up for a fourth year of math. Recent studies have shown that students who pursue four years of high school mathematics are much more likely to be successful in college. Colleges know this and look for a fourth year in student transcripts. We are now offering dual credit in all our pre-calculus

classes. This means that a student would earn both high school and college credit for these courses, and the college credit is free.

The math department would also like to recommend some math electives. Computer Programming is offered as a semester course and teaches students the rudiments of computer programming. AP Computer Science is also available to students who have completed at least Programming 1 (1 semester), and have a strong interest in Computers. AP Statistics is open to all students who have taken, or are currently enrolled in, Algebra 2. This course helps students understand the role that statistics play in our world, how they are both used and

misused. Fractals and Chaos is a one semester elective, offered both fall and spring, which explores the strange new ideas of fractal mathematics and the science of chaos. Students should either have completed Algebra 2 before taking Fractals, or take them at the same time.

And now our sample problem:

Four coins are picked out of a piggy bank containing pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters. Which of the following could not be the total value of the chosen coins? (A) 15 (B) 25 (C) 35 (D) 45 (E) 55

Library Lines

The Library is excited for February—for one thing, it's not January! Also, a good month for writing love poems to be presented at the Poetry Slam in April. Also, Black History Month, and we encourage all students to read something they haven't before, about Black history. We have gotten *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, by Rebecca Skloot, about an African American woman whose cancer cells have been used for research for decades. We also have a Best Book of the year, on the New York *Times* and many other lists: *The Warmth of Other Suns: the Epic Story of America's Great Migration*, by Isabel Wilkerson. Wilkerson focuses on three families who decide to escape the Jim Crow South in the 30s 40s and 50s, and their luck in new communities to the North and West. This is a landmark book—get hold of it if you can! The High School will also be having a community read of Dr. Martin Luther King's last book, *From Chaos to Community*, so look for your student to bring it home.

We are happily running our afterschool program, the library open until 4:30 p.m. We hope that you will support the Library, as you have done so wonderfully this year, when budget time comes. We have been so blessed by your contributions of books and cash. We do need the institutional support of a book budget and staff to run the library, though, so stay tuned to the District web page for Board matters, www.icsd.k12.ny.us. Budget discussions take place through March and April, and the vote, of course, is in May.

A fun thing that several of us have signed up for is Shelfari, available free online. You can list favorite books, see what others are reading—great fun. Our new Superintendent, Dr. Luvelle Brown, has Shelfari—take a look on his homepage!

"An IQ does not measure a capacity for love." --Madeleine L'Engle, *A Circle of Quiet*

Nan Bell, Ithaca High School Library

World Languages Department

Claudia Miettunen and her guest teacher from China collaborated on a Critical Language Program Grant for a week-long celebration of Chinese New Year. Critical Language Program grants are funded by the Teachers of Critical Languages Program which is sponsored by the US Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and administered by American Councils for International Education. The purpose of the grants is to promote the learning of critical languages, specifically Chinese and Arabic.

The activities for our grant included an interactive informational table and display during the lunch periods the week of January 31st where students could learn about Chinese New Year, learn simple Chinese phrases, watch and try Chinese calligraphy, complete a culture quiz to enter a drawing, learn about the Chinese course offered at the high school

and much more! Due to logistical constraints we were only able to offer this activity at IHS, LACS and Boynton. Our guest teacher will be with the district until June and staff from all schools in the district as well as clubs and community organizations are encouraged to invite her to your classroom or your next meeting by contacting Claudia Miettunen at miettun@icsd.k12.ny.us.

Señora Miettunen's Spancom students are in the midst of a unit on the natural world focusing primarily on the Amazon Rain Forest and endangered species. We are in the early stages of planning a Skype session with a very unique environmental high school in the Amazon Rain Forest of Ecuador.

Submitted by Claudia Miettunen

Notes from "Multi-level Latin"

The heart and soul of a Latin class is the periodic reading of a new Latin passage "at sight," i.e., a passage the students haven't studied previously. As they take turns reading a sentence or two of Latin aloud, and then take a shot at translating what they've read into English, the students are simultaneously practicing all the skills that go into becoming successful readers of Latin texts. The goal is for all the study of individual noun, adjective and verb endings, and memorization of vocabulary items, to come together and enable them to recognize grammatical constructions and individual words in a passage they've never seen before. It's the teacher's job to support and facilitate this activity, perhaps by pointing out a useful footnote on that page, or reminding the student who's translating of the implications of an ending he's overlooked, and, in general, to cheer them on as they undertake this demanding and exacting task.

So, how can a Latin class function, when there is only one teacher for multiple class groupings, all reading different texts at different levels, in the same class period? This is the situation we face every day fourth period, when Latin 2, Latin 3, and Advanced Placement all meet at the same time. Within Latin 2 and Latin 3, also, there have developed different groups: two reading levels in Latin 3, and something like four groups in Latin 2. After all, students differ from one another in the ease with which they grasp new language concepts; they have different amounts of time to spend on any

particular class; their levels of devotion to Latin necessarily differ. It seems to work best to allow the students to find their preferred pace—fast or slow—through this material; and so there are multiple groupings of Latin students all making their way through the various curricula.

Some students in Latin 2 have nearly finished the entire curriculum in one semester; they are likely to complete the Latin 3 curriculum by the end of the year as well. These students are working ahead largely on their own, with little direct guidance from me, through the packets of exercises that I've developed for the Latin 2 chapters in recent years. Much of their reading "at sight," as described above, is done on their own—I have the pleasure of reading and correcting the work they've come up with--while I'm engaged with students who need more direct instruction. Other students are far enough ahead to make it likely that they'll complete some significant portion of the Latin 3 curriculum this year, too, which will allow them to do more readings of original Latin texts, next year, than the Latin 3 curriculum has time for; they will be that much more prepared to read the most demanding Latin texts, such as Vergil's *Aeneid*, with comparative ease, when they finally reach the AP level. With all the different groupings, we do also occasionally find time for a common pursuit, like practicing the scansion of Latin poetry all together.

I grew up in a time and place that tolerated tiny classes of five students or so reading the *Aeneid* in our Latin 3 class, so we had the benefit of our learned and witty Mr. Eaton reading new Latin passages with us pretty much every day. Still, I think what made me really learn Latin from that wonderful teacher was when I conceived the notion of reading all six books of the *Aeneid* on my own, so I wouldn't have to skip any of them; I had to work ahead as best I could at home, ploughing through hundreds of Vergilian hexameters. (I didn't learn till the end of the year that there were actually another six books to go!) I can't tell how well I understood

the portions that I read on my own; I threw out the 'translations' I came up with, lest I discover how bad they were, as soon as I came home from my freshman year in college. Still, that was the moment when I took real ownership of my Latin learning. In a way, I think that's what the students in the multi-level Latin class are encouraged to do, too; and, in a sense, it may be the best contribution to their education in Latin that I can make.

Submitted by Suzanne Nussbaum

Fine Arts Booster Group

The Ithaca Community Fine Arts Booster Group (FABG), an affiliate of IPEI, invites community members to take an online survey at <http://fabgithaca.org/survey>. This survey will provide the boosters will information to shape future goals in a tough economic time. Interested parents and community members are encouraged to take the five minute survey. The boosters serve all the elementary, middle and high schools in the Ithaca District.

Formed in 2001, the Fine Arts Booster Group is evaluating its goals for the future and assessing current arts needs in the Ithaca City School District. For more information about the booster group, contact Martha Frommelt at president@fabgithaca.org or 277-4631. If you want to stay informed about what is happening with the fine and performing arts in the Ithaca City School District, consider joining the Ithaca Community Fine Arts Booster Group (FABG) listserv. Through this service, information about arts issues, performances and general news is posted. Join by emailing FineArtsBoosters-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

The Fine Arts Booster Group's mission is to support the fine and performing arts throughout the Ithaca City School district. The volunteer group is committed to supporting all the arts for all students in the district. FABG is an affiliate of the Ithaca Public Education Initiative (IPEI). IPEI is a community-based, not-for-profit organization that works to develop supportive community and private sector relationships with the Ithaca City School District.

*Next issue of IHS Word:
deadline for submissions
March 31, for publication
April 15.
Submit items to:
ihs_news@yahoo.com*

Equity and Inclusion Leadership Council

The Equity and Inclusion Leadership Council (EILC) was formed to engage the community in supporting the District and the Board of Education "equity plan," along with the goal of closing the educational achievement gap. The EILC's members include parents, city and county administrators, teachers, directors of community programs that serve young people, representatives from the business and faith communities and representatives from both urban and rural communities. Collectively, they bring an important institutional memory of equity issues within the district and years of experience in youth development, supportive connections to families in our school community, expertise in equitable and inclusive practices, and a deep commitment to the success of all young people.

In an effort to continually define and refine ourselves to be most effective, the EILC has been reworking its Mission Statement. This amended statement was adopted at our January meeting:

Equity Inclusion Leadership Council—"Inspiring Equity Through Excellence"

The Equity and Inclusion Leadership Council (EILC) is an autonomous liaison between the Ithaca City School District and community groups. Our mission is to assist the district in achieving equity through excellence. The EILC will accomplish this by monitoring, assessing, and guiding district equity efforts, and by initiating proposals that reflect the needs, perspectives, insights, and resources of the community.

At our January meeting, we had a discussion with Bob Van Keuren, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, on the Recruitment and Retention Working Group. The goal of this group is to develop a strategic approach to the Board of Education goal to recruit and hire a racially diverse staff, with a staff/student ratio of .33 by 2012, and to ensure that staff are culturally competent. Members of the EILC participated in the working group, along with other interested community stakeholders. Highlights of the plan include "growing our own" teachers from the ranks of teacher assistants and aides, streamlining the application process, and training screeners and interviewers. Based on the working group's assessment of what it would take to attain their goals, it was recommended that an HR assistant administrator be added to the HR department's roster to continue this critical work. The EILC applauds the Board of Ed's decision to give the HR department the appropriate leadership staffing to continue this vital work.

Also at our December meeting, we bid good-bye to Dr. Judy Pastel, after 15 years of service as Superintendent. We then started the year by welcoming Dr. Luvelle Brown at our January meeting. Dr. Brown outlined a vision for the District that emphasized preparing our children for entry into and success in the global labor force, and excellence in 21st century literacies.

We look forward to working with him toward achieving our goals of equity and excellence.

The Equity Inclusion Leadership Council meets on the first Wednesday of every month. For more information, see: http://www.icsd.k12.ny.us/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=172&Itemid=613

Submitted by Sue Merkel

Ithaca High School announcements are available on the website:
http://www.icsd.k12.ny.us/highschool/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=24&Itemid=66



Visit us on the web:

Ithaca High School: <http://www.icsd.k12.ny.us/highschool>

PTSA: http://ihsptsa.clarityconnect.com/IHS_PTSA/Welcome.html

Get important IHS and PTSA news by email: sign up for the listserv!

Send an email to: IHSPTSA-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

To join the discussion listserv, email IHSPTSA-discuss-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Next issue of IHS Word: deadline for submissions March 31, for publication April 15.

Submit items to: ihs_news@yahoo.com

Remember: School IS in session on Friday, May 27, due to the snow day.