



December 2014

PEMBERTON

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PRIDE

The Newsletter Of Pemberton Township Schools

BRITISH AUTHOR VISITS MIDDLE SCHOOL 2014 STYLE



He has been called “The Stephen King of young adult horror,” a tribute author Alexander Gordon Smith humbly dismisses. He grew up loving horror stories, and has fulfilled his dream of becoming a successful writer, happy to share his success and knowledge with the young adults he writes for.

Students in Ms. Schoot and Ms. Sitzler’s language arts classes were enthralled to meet author “Gordon” Smith, and even more curious about his life, what led him to become a horror story writer, and how he thinks of his ideas. They realized how lucky they were to be able to spend time with the author—because Smith lives in Norwich, England. Thanks to advanced technology and the wonder of Skype, Pemberton students were able to chat and learn from an author an ocean away, just as if he was in the classroom with them.

A young man who knows how to connect with teens, Smith engaged the students from the beginning of the session with stories of his youth and the blanket statement to them that “Anyone can be a writer.” His warm, humorous conversation immediately put the class at ease, and when he showed them that he still had the first book he ever wrote, (at the age of 6), the laughs kept coming. His charismatic persona drew the students in, and they were soon comfortable asking questions about how he develops his characters, what events in his books had

happened to him in real life, and even if there were WaWa stores in England.

Smith was generous with his time, speaking to 3 separate classes in one day, and giving students tips on the horror stories they were writing in class.



Author Alexander Gordon Smith talks to middle school students from his home office in Norwich, England.

“He made me feel so smart,” said one young aspiring author. “He said my hook was brilliant!”

The teachers saw the impact the session had on their students. “Talking to an actual author whose books are sold internationally and available in their own book fair has really changed the way they view their own writing. They feel as if they have a powerful and unique voice that is important to be heard,” said Sitzler.

Smith is the critically acclaimed author of popular horror books including *The Furnace* series and his newest series, *The Fury*, among others. His enthusiasm for writing was evident, and even contagious. “Talking to Gordon made me feel like an author,” one student explained. “I can’t wait to write more!”

Pemberton Learning Community:
Pursuing Excellence One Child at a Time

VETERANS HONORED THROUGHOUT MONTH OF NOVEMBER

Schools may have been closed November 11th in honor of Veterans Day, but that didn't stop ceremonies from being held throughout the district in honor of our Veterans. Students and staff participated in ceremonies and celebrations in the days leading up to and following the 11th, making sure district and community Veterans were recognized and thanked for their service to the country. Pemberton Township Schools employs over 30 veterans, and over 20% of our students are part of an active military family. Military pride runs high in Pemberton Township!



Fort Dix students explained the meaning of Veterans Day, read poems, and sang patriotic songs at a special assembly.



Denbo/Crichton students and volunteers placed 1,000 flags throughout the school grounds to honor Vets.



Helen Fort/Newcomb Middle School honored Vets with pomp and ceremony at an outdoor assembly for all students.



▲
Operation Yellow Ribbon hosted a hero's welcome for SSgt Eduardo Torres, US Marines Corps, Active Duty. SSgt. Torres, a 1998 Pemberton graduate, returned from his 4th combat tour (this time in Afghanistan) and surprised his mother at work, Denbo/Crichton teacher Miriam Gonzalez. ▶



PECEC welcomed veterans into read, including Navy-Petty Officer 3rd Class Air Traffic Control Retired, Cynthia Roman.



The Joint Base Honor Guard participated in the Busansky Veterans Day tribute that featured music honoring every branch of the military.

CELEBRATING STUDENT SUCCESS—AGAIN & AGAIN!

With the number of students who achieve “Advanced Proficient” on state assessments continuing to soar, the event dedicated to celebrating those students has grown to capacity crowds. So this year, in an effort to allow more family members to attend and make the evening more focused, two separate ceremonies were held—one for the elementary grades, and one for the secondary grades.

Five hundred and forty-four students were honored for their achievements over the course of two nights, including 47 students who scored a perfect “300” on the assessments. Both celebrations featured principals, board members, and administrators lauding the students for their success and continued commitment to pursuing academic excellence. Students were presented



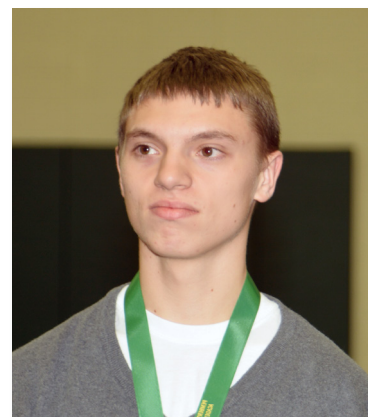
Fifth grader Christian Holliday stands for applause during the ceremony.



Sixth grade students Amanda Neve and Caitlynn Kish were honored for achieving Advanced Proficient for the third year.

with ribbons and certificates acknowledging how many years they have been in the Advanced Proficient category, and 12 students achieved this honor for the 6th year—every year that the ceremony has been held! Congratulations to all these high achieving students.

Right: Middle school principal Keith Swaney congratulates Araceli Licona on earning Advanced Proficient for the fourth year.



PTHS senior Colin Biggs proudly stands to be recognized at the Student Success Ceremony.

HORTICULTURE STUDENTS HELP FIGHT HUNGER



Members of the high school FFA participated in a unique fund-raiser, by carving pumpkins to help raise money for Farmers Against Hunger. They then took the carved pumpkins to Russo’s Orchard Lane Farm in Chesterfield, and spent the afternoon networking with patrons to help the cause. In the spring, the students will return to the farm to help harvest fruits and vegetables, which will then be donated to families in need.

◀ *Pictured are FFA officers Tyler Allison, Amber Scelza, Samantha Gregory, and Dale Sutton.*

STACKHOUSE ELEMENTARY WELCOMES NEW PRINCIPAL

Melissa Shinn has been named the new principal at Stackhouse Elementary School. And while she may be a new face in the halls of Stackhouse, she is a familiar face to many in the district. Shinn is a 1988 graduate of Pemberton Township High School and pleased to be returning to the district where she began.

She joins Pemberton from Burlington County Special Services, where she most recently worked as the principal of the elementary campus and alternative program,



and worked 9 years as a teacher prior to that.

Shinn earned her MA in Education Leadership from The College of New Jersey, and her BA from Georgian Court University. She is currently continuing her education in a doctorate program at Rowan University.

Shinn is proud to be back in Pemberton in a leadership role. "It's nice to be able to give back to the community that enhanced my life as an individual," she said.

PEMBERTON STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN JOINT BASE STEM EXPO

Students interested in careers in science, technology, engineering and math were invited to participate in a unique program on the Joint Base this summer. Giving up their free time on a warm summer day, 16 middle and high school students chose to attend the 2014 STEM Expo on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst.

Pemberton students joined teens from two other area high schools and Burlington County College for the full day of interactive activities on the base. From chemical defense demonstrations, to launching water rockets, to Air Traffic Control Simulators, students were given an elite insider's look at some of the government's most sophisticated equipment and programs. JB MDL staff gave demonstrations, answered questions and guided students in the field of STEM, encouraging them to continue on the STEM educational path.

PTHS freshman Arishia Stewart, who is interested in engineering and math, found the day to be very informative. "I'm thinking of following in my dad's mission as a reserve technician," she said. "This program was really helpful and a lot of fun."



Above, Pemberton students gather on the tarmac as they get ready for guided tours inside two military airplanes.



▲ *Above, Christopher Koszyk checks out the view from the cockpit.*

◀ *Left, students tour the cargo area of the KC-135 airplane.*

Happening Around Our Schools



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1. Students at Stackhouse happily display the rewards they earned for completing the summer reading program, as part of an incentive program sponsored by reading specialist Ms. Smith.
2. Harker-Wylie students participate in the school's "Turkey Trot" to raise contributions for the annual food drive.
3. Students in Ms. Parente's 1st grade class at Emmons proudly display the letters they wrote for Operation Goody Bag, as part of a September 11th service project.
4. Preschool student Aliyah Bergmann prepares for her dental X-rays as part of the free Mobile Dentist check-up at PECEC.
5. Members of the PTHS National Honor Society and Interact Club were joined by local Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops at the annual Pemberton Rotary Food Drive. Canned foods donated from each Pemberton school and fresh perishables purchased by the Rotary Club were hand-delivered to 37 Pemberton families for the Thanksgiving holiday.



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PEMBERTON TOWNSHIP RECREATION DEPARTMENT

UPCOMING WINTER ACTIVITIES

FUNTASTIC CRAFTERS

For boys and girls ages 4-8. 8-week session: Wednesdays, January 14th-March 4th / 5:45-6:30pm at the Pemberton Township Senior Center. Fee: \$40/resident, \$50/non-resident. Projects to include: Olaf Snowman, water bottle penguin, Valentine's & St. Patrick's Day projects and more. Registration accepted in-person, by mail and online. 10 registrants maximum.

LEGO CREATIONS

8-week session: Mondays, January 12th-March 2nd at the Pemberton Township Senior Center. For boys and girls ages 4-11. Lessons for ages 4-7 (5:45-6:30pm): Early Simple Machines, DUPLO Tubes Experiment Set, Tech Machines, Community Sets. Lessons for ages 8-11 (6:45-7:30pm): Simple & Motorized Mechanisms. Registration accepted in-person, by mail and online. 10 registrant maximum per age group.

PEMBERTON FAMILY GAME NIGHT

Hosted by Daniel McAlister. Pemberton Family Game Night is a group for people of all ages to come and enjoy a night of fun playing games. A variety of board games,

card games, dice games, coloring books, Legos and puzzles will be made available for use. Families are also welcome to bring and share their own games with other members. Family Game Night will be held at the Country Lakes Clubhouse, 6-10pm on the following Saturdays: January 17th, February 21st and March 14th. Children under the age of 12 must be accompanied by an adult. No pre-registration required! Questions? Email Daniel at daniel.r.mcalister@gmail.com or visit our Facebook page: Pemberton Family Game Night.

PROGRAM REGISTRATION

Mail-in forms and online registration is available at www.pemberton-twp.com. Register in-person at the Recreation Department located at the Country Lakes Clubhouse (69 Tensaw Drive, Browns Mills) / Monday-Friday, 8:00am-4:30pm.

CONTACTING THE PEMBERTON TOWNSHIP RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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TUNING IN TO BEDTIME STORIES

Now, young children throughout the district can get cozy in their pajamas at home, turn on their TV, and listen to a favorite bedtime story read to them by a Pemberton staff member—all they have to do is tune in to district operated Channel 19 on Mondays and Wednesdays at 7 pm.

Recorded in the TV studios at PTHS, *Bedtime Stories* features a wonderful selection of children's books, read aloud by staff members from throughout the district. A few of the readings even have a live audience, as classes from the Pemberton Early Childhood Education Center traveled

to the high school to listen as the reading was recorded.

The project was initiated by literacy coach Kathy Spence, with the goal of getting more students exposed to reading outside of school. The media services department videotapes, photographs, edits and broadcasts each book episode. Nearly 50 books have been recorded to date and are currently airing; for a complete schedule, check out the link on the district homepage entitled "Channel 19 schedule."



Above, students from PECEC enjoy a story read by their teachers as it is recorded live in the TV studio at the high school.



FALL FESTIVALS, FUN, AND ACTIVITIES



... & THE HARKER-WYLIE GREAT LITERARY PUMPKIN CHALLENGE!

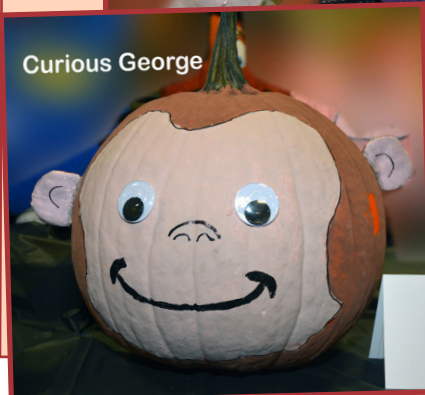
Rainbow Fish



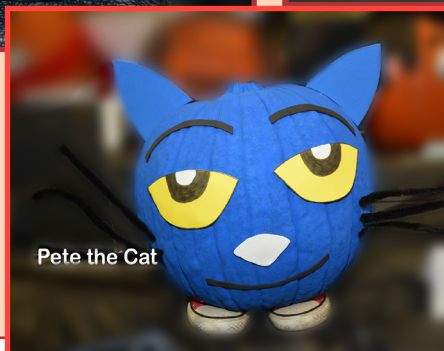
Pippi Longstocking



Curious George



Pete the Cat



Skippyjon Jones



Pemberton Township Board of Education

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Co-Op 1st Quarter Awards



Cooperative Education students were recently presented with awards acknowledging their achievements during the first quarter.

The PTHS School-to-Career Advisory Board presents awards to co-op students and student interns who exhibit such qualities as outstanding attendance, maturity, behavior and citizenship.

Pictured above are this quarter's recipients: Skye'Lyn Puckett, Jeremiah Carter, Deanna McGriff and Olivia Mendoza.