

The Sousa Notes

Home and School Association Newsletter – Spring 2019

A Note from Dr. Meoli

Tra la, it's May the lusty month of May
That lovely month when everything goes blissfully astray

You may know that this lyric, along with most of the musical Camelot, was written a few miles from Sousa Elementary School, right down the beach from where John Philip himself lived only a few decades before. May does tend to be a rather hectic month when testing, concerts, budget votes, and field days bring one school year to a close as planning begins for the next. With spring in full swing, the winds of change are blowing down Main Street for certain!

In school year 2019-2020, Port Washington and its schools will witness a slew of new administrators including a superintendent, an assistant superintendent, elementary and middle school principals, high school and elementary assistant principals, and an assistant director of Pupil Personnel Services—I'll need a score card for the administrative retreat in August! My colleagues in the other six schools, along with central office administrators and even the Board of Education, have been reviewing resumes and interviewing candidates in order to find strong leaders to continue our tradition of excellence.

We wish our own Dr. Kimberly Licato the best as she begins her tenure as principal of Guggenheim Elementary School; she has been a terrific addition to Port Washington and we look forward to her continuing contributions to the district for many years to come. As I finish my third decade in Port, I am grateful for the chance to continue working with the very best students, staff, and community a (principal) teacher could ask for!

2020—here we come!
Dave Meoli

Dr. Michael Hynes Named Port Washington Superintendent

Dr. Michael Hynes has been appointed as the new superintendent of the Port Washington School District. Dr. Hynes will start on July 15, replacing Dr. Kathleen Mooney, who is retiring.

Dr. Hynes spent five years as superintendent of the Patchogue-Medford School District before taking the Port Washington job. He was selected following a five-month long search process.



STEAM Meet and Greet

STEAM was in the air in the Sousa all-purpose room at the STEAM Meet and Greet organized by school district Technology Director Ryan Meloni. The showcase of tech advances at all levels featured The Ed. Foundation grantees demonstrating everything from dancing robots to stereomicroscopes to specialized graphing calculators and an embroidery machine. Through the creativity of these many talented educators, Port students at all levels are exposed to the cutting-edge world of STEAM, before school, after school, and in the classroom. We are so grateful to Mr. Meloni, his team, and the amazing grantees for their ingenuity and devotion to their students, constantly pushing our district forward in so many ways. Thanks to everyone who participated, and special thanks to Mr. Meloni for putting the event together.



District Art Faculty Exhibit and Music Faculty Recital

Some of our very talented Port Washington Art and Music teachers put together a wonderful exhibit and recital for parents and students to enjoy. It is always interesting for the students to listen to their teachers play an instrument and to visualize their artwork. Looking forward to next year!



John S. Gurney Visits Sousa

Students enjoyed a visit by author/illustrator John Steven Gurney. Mr. Gurney is the creator of Dinosaur Train and Fuzzy Baseball as well as the illustrator of the A to Z Mystery series, among others. He shared his creative and editorial process and gave a cliff hanging book talk and viewing of Fuzzy Baseball. The program ended with a fun and engaging group draw along! As one kindergarten student said, "what fun to meet a "real author!"

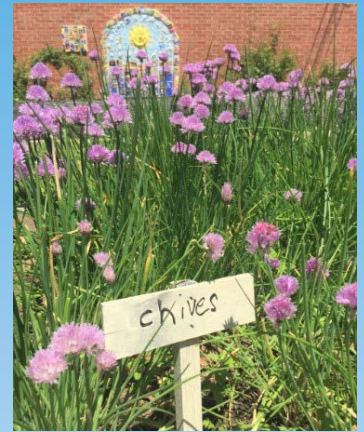


The Garden Update

The gardens at Sousa are looking great, thanks to all the children in every grade! Adjacent to the traffic circle, the Kindergarteners planted yellow and orange Marigolds in the sunny garden under the office windows, while the 1st graders planted herbs and flowers that attract butterflies and their caterpillars in the Butterfly Garden.

In the main garden, the 2nd graders planted rows of vegetable seeds (kale, beets, radish, carrots, spinach, lettuce), potatoes. The 3rd graders created bamboo pole structures and planted sugar snap peas which will climb the structures. The 4th graders planted the Native American tradition of the "3 Sisters" (corn, beans and squash) and the 5th graders planted flowers that attract beneficial insects and pollinators to our organic garden.

The Garden Committee is looking for volunteers to help maintain the garden during the summer months. If you are interested on helping weed, water and harvest the garden, please contact Kate Walz at kmwalz@hotmail.com. No Gardening Experience Necessary!



Staff Appreciation Luncheon

Every year, the Sousa HSA honors our great educators, administrators and staff by organizing a luncheon to show our appreciation for all that they do for our Sousa community. This year's "rainbow" theme was incorporated into the decorations, baked goods and favors, contributed to the festive atmosphere. Thank you to everyone who made a donation and a special thank you to the Sousa HSA Luncheon committee Liz Hochman Mak, Jessica Malloy, Halona Gropper Jaffe, Candace Sciortino, Denise Paredes for organizing a fantastic luncheon for our teachers.



Sousa Helpers



The fifth grade Sousa Helpers have been hard at work during the month of March creating Meta Moment Monday Lessons for the school. Each classroom had a Sousa helper come in and present a lesson in person. We called them "meta moment mentors." The Sousa helpers wrote and executed a lesson on being present and looking deeper at things because what we see on the outside of people is not always the entire story. The teachers and students loved the lesson!

Fake News?

How do we know when news is true? How do we look for evidence to be sure? What is the difference between a news story and an ad? These were just some of the things discussed when the entire fifth grade class participated in a presentation by former Editor of Newsday, Howard Schneider, who now runs the Center for News Literacy at StonyBrook University. He discussed how to be an educated news consumer and how to identify reliable sources when searching the internet. The students participated with enthusiasm and asked great questions.



New Sensory Walk

Ms. Biblowitz, with the help of her intern Samantha, installed a new sensory walk in the hallway by the main office. This interactive walk will provide fun movement breaks for students. It is also in both Spanish and English so children can learn a new language while moving through the sensory walk. Next time you are at Sousa come and check it out!



PortFest

Thank you, Port Washington, for another great PortFest! All proceeds from PortFest benefit HEARTS' mission to support and enrich the arts in the Port Washington School District. Thank you to all dedicated and tireless volunteers, and special thank you to Kathleen Straus who was leading Sousa's Terrarium activity booth.



Colonial Times with Benner's Farm

As part of the fourth-grade curriculum, students learned about Colonial Times and traveled back in time with a visit to Benner's Farm. Benner's Farm, a historic and authentic homestead in Setauket, allowed children to experience colonial skills and hobbies. Students painted with stencils and stippling brushes, ground corn on a metate y mano and practiced writing with quills and homemade vegetable ink. The children also combed and spun wool to make a piece of yarn and built wooden spinning tops by cutting and sanding dowels and then hammering the dowels into the tops. The yarn and spinning tops served as souvenirs to make the visit more memorable. Not only did the children get to make souvenirs to take home, but they also all practiced weaving on a loom to create a tapestry that will be hung in the classroom. To round out their experience, the children sampled johnny cakes served with a choice of maple syrup or honey.

Johnny Cakes Recipe

1 Cup Cornmeal
1 Tbsp. Butter
1 Tbsp. Sugar
1/2 tsp. salt
1 Cup Boiling Water

Milk as needed to thin to desired consistency
Measure first four ingredients into bowl.
Add boiling water and stir. Add milk if necessary, to thin the consistency of pancake batter.
Drop onto hot, greased griddle and fry until golden.
Flip and brown other side. Enjoy!



Billy Goats Gruff Play

Mrs. Anzalone's class delighted their audience with their rendition of the classic fable, The Three Billy Goats Gruff. From scenery and costumes, to acting, singing, and dancing, the students did it all. Their hard work and enthusiasm over many months, under the patient guidance of Mrs. Anzalone, was evident in this adorable production.

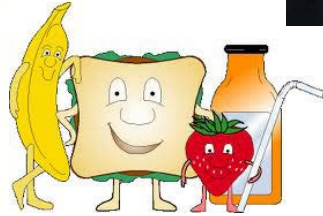


Nutrition Week

This year's nutrition week theme was "eat the rainbow." We encouraged students to make healthy choices by eating smart, adding color, moving more and being more mindful. Each morning an announcement reminded the children of a rainbow lunch item to look out for, e.g. red peppers on Monday. Students also received a "mindful ball" and teachers gave presentations in the classroom including how to use the ball to relieve stress. Even the elementary nutrition mascot ACE came to visit the students!



Earth day Event in the Cooking Lab



Ms. Szillus's students had some great conversations about conservation, recycling and how to take care of our earth. They of course also made some yummy treats!!

Sousa HSA Meeting

During our last meeting of the year, the Sousa HSA discussed all the events coming up in the last few months of school and then were part of a question and answer session with Dr. Mooney, superintendent of schools and Mary Callahan, assistant superintendent of business. They explained the proposed district budget and then took time to answer our questions. It was a wonderful opportunity to be in an informal setting with this group of people. The HSA holds meetings every month so if you haven't been come swing by next year and become involved!



Spring Concert

Sounds of music filled the gym when the fourth and fifth grade orchestra, band, jazz band and chorus had the chance to show their skill and talent. Each group performed a few numbers and of course the night was ended with everyone's favorite, the "Sousa Song." Congratulations to all the students who performed and their teachers who have worked so hard to teach them throughout the year. A truly talented group!



Family Yoga

Ommmm. Family Yoga Day was a beautiful blend of relaxation, fun and exercise. Yoga Jen once again brought families together in the cold month of March and warmed them up with yoga positions that could be done individually or with your child. Everyone left the gym a little more flexible, re-energized and at peace. Thank you Yoga Jen Schiffer. Namaste.

Sousa Book Exchange

Who doesn't like to pick out a book to take home? The Sousa Book Exchange was a huge success this year. Boxes and boxes of books were collected and displayed for students to peruse and choose. It's a great time to clean out a bookcase and donate and at the same time find a new book that you've never read. Sousa loves reading and it showed! Thank you to Erin Mastronardi for collecting and storing books for months and then running the event. Looking forward to next year!



Successful Blood Drive

Our fourth grade Little Doctors were on call for the annual Sousa Blood Drive. The Little Doctors helped welcome and register all donors and created thank you cards for them. We collected 46 pints of blood saving 138 lives - We are Sousa Strong! Thank you to the Community Outreach committee volunteers for their help with the blood drive, as well as with the annual spring clothing drive, which served families in our community.

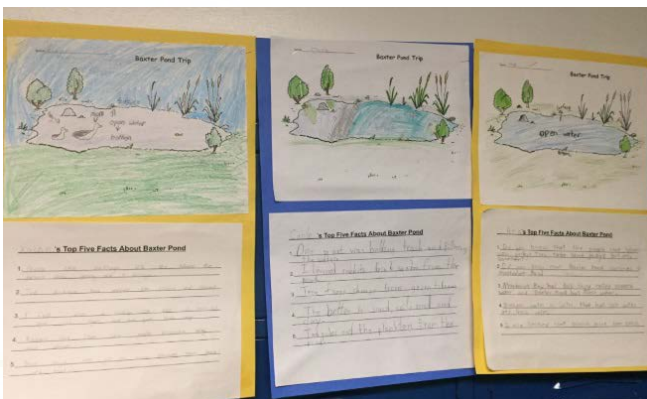
Teachers Update:

Kindergarten just completed their ladybug studies. The children created ladybug habitats in preparation for the ladybug arrival. They observed the ladybugs, recorded their notes and were very excited to release their ladybugs in the Sousa Garden.



First graders were looking forward to Wednesdays. That's when their visiting artist from the Nassau County Museum of Art comes and teaches them how to connect with nature through art. They also connected this learning with two trips to the museum (fall and spring) where they did hands-on learning and sketching.

Second grade visited Old Bethpage Restoration as a kickoff to our Then and Now social studies unit. Second graders wrote their non-fiction books on penguins. They took a walk to Soundview Cinemas to see the Disney movie Penguins. Second graders have been working on time and money in math.



Third grade has made their way to South America. Students are learning about Brazil and the Amazon Rainforest. During their exploration of this amazing place, each student researched a rainforest animal. The unit on Brazil will culminate with Brazilian cuisine in the cooking lab. Students went to the Festival of Cultures at Alley Park for a great field trip experience learning about different cultures around the world.

The **fourth graders** have been busy in their electricity unit. They have been creating all kinds of circuits, including series and parallel. In addition, we are currently learning about New York in the American Revolution. They are learning about all of the events that led to this revolution. In math, they finished up their unit on fractions and geometry. The next two units are decimals and measurement.





Fifth Grade has been exploring social issues and how they affect people and those around them. They have been using books in our book clubs that handle social issues. They have explored social issues closely reading argumentative essays and will soon be writing their own. Students are exploring our government and those of the other countries in the Western Hemisphere. They found an enlightening website that shows just how “free” citizens of each country are. Students will start our official “Weberizing” in early June.



Physical Education Update

We recently finished our successful event of ACES and are now practicing for the next big event, Field Day! This special day will take place on Thursday, June 6th. In Physical Education, we are preparing the classes for the variety of events where we promote positive sportsmanship and team work. All students have received their team colors and parents will be sent home a reminder of what team color they are on in the near future.



Library Update

Sousa students enjoyed our visiting author/illustrator John Steven Gurney. The school was able to fund the visit, and the HSA's assisted with the book orders.

April was National Poetry Month. All grades celebrated poetry in class and on Poem in a Pocket Day, a wonderful Sousa tradition.

Kindergarten began a Keiko Kasza author /illustrator study. The kick-off was identifying my toy stuffed opossum (no, it's not a rat), comparing non-fiction opossum books to fiction, and enjoying Kasza's opossum story, Don't Laugh, Joe.

First graders were sharing and discussing various types of non-fiction books, (information, how-to, biographies...) and the text features of non-fiction.

Second grade students were practicing their dictionary and alphabetizing skills. Soon they will examine the amazing world of Caldecott author/illustrator David Weisner.

Third graders created thoughtful color poems based on Mary O'Neill's Hailstones and Halibut Bones. Soon they will move onto an examination of multicultural folktales.

Fourth grade is wrapping up an extensive animal research project culminating in the creation of a hybrid creature. We hope to design and print our creations on the 3-D printer.

Fifth grade is just wrapping up their 3-D printing and Google slide presentation. Look to find that on the library website very soon!

All classes will end the year with Kamishibai - a form of Japanese street theater and storytelling.



Strike up the Band & Choral Groups!

The Annual District Night of Jazz took place at the Schreiber Auditorium in May. Sousa's Jazz Band (comprised of fourth and fifth graders under the leadership of Mr. Viavattine) was the only elementary school that performed. They opened the night and performed two flawless numbers, Cool Bean and Funky Monkey. They were followed by the Weber eighth Grade Jazz Band, choral groups from the High School and the Schreiber Jazz Band. It's so wonderful to see the progression of these talented musicians. We are so fortunate to be in a district that supports the arts! Go Port!



*Do you have any photos from
Sousa class trips or activities?
Show off your child's artwork,
accomplishments, prizes won, etc. in
the Sousa Notes. Please send any photos,
articles to Rod at rodn29@gmail.com
or Mat at lanfant@msn.com.*

Mother's and Father's Day Fair

It's May which can only mean one thing...the Mother's Day/Father's Day Fair! This year over two days on May 9 and May 10 nearly 600 kids shopped for their nearest and dearest. They picked out mugs, jewelry, pens, plants, footballs, stuffed animals and much more! Hopefully all the recipients had (and will have) a blast opening them up and feeling the love. Thank you to our co-chairs, Christina Byers, Zizi Otmann and Candace Sciortino for organizing and working tirelessly and to all our volunteers who wrapped and helped shoppers. It couldn't have happened without you!

