

The Sagamore

Literary Magazine



*Masconomet Regional
Middle School*

Boxford, Massachusetts

Spring, 2017

Greetings, Masco friends,

We are nearing the end of our school year together, and what a creative year we have had! Our recent **art show** was a tremendous hit, with every middle school student participating by submitting at least one piece of artwork from his or her portfolio (pages 6-11). The last **writing contest** of the year focused on our current students offering advice to next year's incoming seventh graders (pages 12-15). Perhaps most exciting, though, was the middle school's recognition by Barnes & Noble - Peabody when one of our students wrote the **winning essay** in their "My Favorite Teacher" contest (page 4). Even more impressive was the fact that it was about one of our own school's teachers. This was a giant feather in our cap, and once again shows that nurturing our students' writing skills pays off in talent and accomplishment. Masco continues to be proud of being leaders in the Massachusetts educational system and of producing students who know how to use both sides of their brains.

Also throughout the school year, faculty members have been incorporating into their lessons the "superpowers" from the Tri-town community read book, ***Life is Good*** (page 5). In April, we had the good fortune of having John Jacobs, the book's co-author, come to speak to the entire student body. His philosophy of how to live a successful and happy life inspired all who heard him. Masco's focus on these ideas culminates in June's superpower, courage, a trait which we hope to develop in our students – whether through singing in front of their peers, reading a book that they thought might be above their level, entering a painting contest, or talking to adults who might be fun to get to know. We look forward to watching our students take academic and creative risks, and then to seeing their success. All year long, we've given them the roots they need, and we've watched them grow their wings. Now they are going to fly.

Writer Hodding Carter, in his book *When Main Street Meets the River*,
quotes a very wise woman who once said to him.
"There are only two lasting bequests that we can hope to give our children—roots and wings."

J. M. Barrie, author of *Peter Pan*, said,
"The moment you doubt whether you can fly, you cease forever to be able to do it."

Welcome to the new issue of *The Sagamore*, the literary magazine of Masconomet Regional Middle School. Our students are nurturing their writing and aesthetic skills, and you will see some of the products of their creative juices here on the pages of our magazine. If you look at either mainstream or social media, you will see that creative writing is not a subject that gets a lot of attention, nor does artwork or photography, but we at Masco value those pursuits and are so proud to showcase the talents of our students and staff.


If you would like to submit work for the next issue of *The Sagamore*, please contact Ms. Coburn at jcoburn@masconomet.org.

CONTRIBUTORS:

 = writing,  = artwork,  = photographs


Mrs. Amsler 
Art Teacher

Mrs. Green
Beach Reads

Every student 
Art show piece

Jordan Carey 
Advice


Paige Gross 
Advice

Emma Spofford 
My Favorite Teacher

Ava Cavallaro 
Advice

Ainsley Gruener 
Advice

Paul Sylvestre 
Advice

Brennan Donnelly 
ABCs of Masco

Mrs. Malinowski 
Art Teacher

Vanessa Velasquez 
Advice


Beach Reads

Mrs. Green says that these books are great to take to the beach. They are not too heavy – in size or in content – and they will make you smile.

 *Framed* by Frank Cottrell Boyce

 *No More Dead Dogs* by Gordon Korman

 *Beauty Queens* by Libba Bray (mature theme)

 *The Toilet of Doom* by Michael Lawrence

 *The New Adventures of the Mad Scientists Club* by Bertrand Brinley

 *My Life in Pink and Green* by Lisa Greenwald

 *Quiz Whiz* by National Geographic Kids

 *Invasion of the Road Weenies* by David Lubar

 *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul* by Jack Canfield

 *New Kid* by Tim Green

 *Slacker* by Gordon Korman

 *Weird But True* by National Geographic Kids



Emma Spofford's Winning Essay in Barnes & Noble's "My Favorite Teacher" Essay Contest

Eight Red student Emma Spofford won the Barnes & Noble bookstore's local essay contest, entitled "My Favorite Teacher." Both she and Seven White English teacher Mr. Morris, about whom the essay was written, were recognized for their efforts during a celebration held at the Peabody store on April 27, 2017. Aspects of the festivities included Emma reading her essay, and Mr. Morris making a wonderful acceptance speech which acknowledged all who helped him to achieve his success. Mr. Ocock and some members of the eighth grade chorus performed and were enjoyed by the Masco students and staff, relatives, and friends who attended. The store also ran a book fair to benefit the middle school's library.

The following is the text of Emma's essay:

Dear Mr. Morris,

Thank you. Those two words are words we hear a lot; words that get thrown around on a daily basis. And although they are always nice words to hear, there is more to them when I say them now. I thank you for not only what you taught me, but the effort and care you put into your teaching and the way you make everybody feel welcome and like old friends.

I can clearly remember walking into your classroom on the first day of seventh grade, nervous and terrified. I didn't know most of the kids in our homeroom because they came from different towns. When I sat down and looked around at everyone, I realized most people looked as anxious as I felt. But the moment you started talking; telling us your name, a little bit about yourself, and asking *us* about *ourselves*, everybody calmed down quickly. There was something about the calm, caring, and almost fatherly way you spoke that let us all know that you were already an ally and a friend for all of us in our new school. Everyone instantly relaxed when you spoke that first day, and throughout the year, you still had that same effect on me. You made everyone feel at home, no matter what. In one hundred eighty days in your homeroom and your classroom, I can't remember one time when you were angry, or when you had to raise your voice. You always exuded a sense of patience and calmness toward *everyone*, whether they gave you that respect back or not. I think that may have been why, by the end of the year, everybody had grown to respect you and most students enjoyed your class.

Though you may not have known it at the time, you were a huge help when I needed it the most. When you were teaching, I always felt comfortable enough to ask questions or admit that I was having trouble with a subject. Outside of English class, I always knew that if I needed something or if I just had doubt in my mind that you had to help anyone who didn't speak up, you reached kindness goes far beyond Masconomet, and even pleasure of knowing you.

Your students, friends, and mere acquaintances - fortunate to get to know you. You have touched my heart thank you for everything that and *our* world a better



something I needed to talk. There wasn't - and still isn't - a would've given everything you asked for it, and even if they out to them. Your care and your classroom, far beyond beyond those who have the

coworkers, family members, myself included - are very and the love that you exude. and changed my life forever. I you've done to make *my* world place.



Life is Good by Bert and John Jacobs

This inspirational, motivational, and educational book was chosen as the Tri-town's community read. Here at the Middle School, each staff member read the book and incorporated its ideas into their lessons and policies. By working the Jacobs' ten "superpowers" into everyday classroom life, they hoped to further an important part of the school's mission – to create a culture of kindness for all.

The Superpowers

CREATIVITY, GRATITUDE, COMPASSION, AUTHENTICITY, LOVE,
FUN, HUMOR, SIMPLICITY, OPENNESS, AND COURAGE

Inspirational Quotations

"Optimism is not just a philosophical viewpoint. It's not irrational cheerfulness, and it's not blind positivity. Optimism is a powerful and pragmatic strategy for accomplishing goals and living a fulfilling life. By acknowledging obstacles and opportunities – but focusing on the opportunities – optimism enables us to explore the world with open arms and an eye toward solutions, progress, and growth. It also makes life...a lot more fun."

"The Life is Good superpowers will help you overcome obstacles, drive forward with greater purpose, and enjoy the ride of life."

"Optimism...enables us to access the ten most important tools we have for living a happy and fulfilling life. We call them the Life is Good Superpowers."

"Eventually we became conscious of the fact that joy doesn't come from your circumstances. It comes from your disposition...She [John and Bert's mom] showed us that optimism is a courageous choice you can make every day, especially in the face of adversity."

"...it takes conscious effort to step outside of your comfort zone to experience new things. Whenever you take that step, you're good to grow."

"'I have a lot of setbacks,' she [Bert and John's sister Berta] says, 'but I try to look at them as things that may ruin my hour, but not my day, or my week. Put 'em in the rearview mirror and keep looking forward.'"

Masconomet Regional Middle School's Annual Art Show
featuring the work of every student in the 7th and 8th grade
coordinated by Mrs. Amsler and Mrs. Malinowski
Spring, 2017



"The artist is not a
special kind of person;
rather, each person is a
special kind of artist."
--Ananda
Coomaraswamy



Art Show 2017



Vintage
Anatomical
Drawings-
Inspired
Gruesome Art



Incan-
Inspired
Paper
Weavings

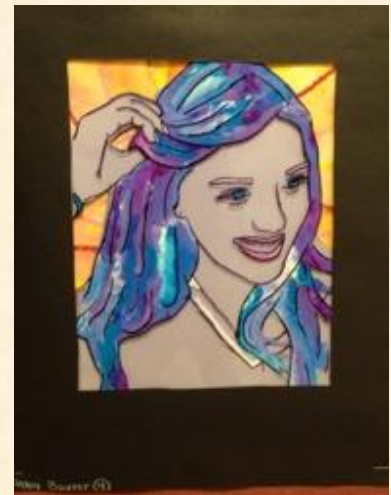
"Every artist was
first an amateur."
--Ralph Waldo
Emerson



Art Show 2017



Jeweled
Bugs



Contour
Line
Drawings



Art Show 2017



Fauve Landscapes inspired
by Wassily Kandinsky



Art Show 2017



Gyotaku
Japanese Fish
Rubbings



“Every child is an artist.
The problem is how to remain an
artist once we grow up.”
--Pablo Picasso



Art Show 2017



“A picture is
a poem without
words.”
--Horace



“Creativity
takes courage.”
--Henri Matisse



ADVICE TO INCOMING SEVENTH GRADERS FROM SEASONED MASCO STUDENTS

Dear Seventh Graders,

When I came to Masco, I felt happy because I met new friends. I met Ava, Sara, Nate, John, and Annie. At Masco we have Masco Buddies. My Masco Buddies are Mak and Declan (I like to call him “DDP”). I met my new teachers, Mrs. Hume, Mrs. K., Mrs. M., Mrs. D., Mrs. G., and Mr. T. at my new school. In the cafeteria for lunch I like to eat pizza, fruit snacks, tacos, cookies, and pies. Masco is an awesome school to study, work and have fun!

Paul Sylvestre

Dear incoming 7th graders,

May I just begin by humbly welcoming you to Masconomet Regional Middle School! As the year winds down, you may be thinking of your new adventures that will begin in your summer. Even though the fun times will be flurrying around you, the idea still lingers in the back of your head: going to middle school. Starting a new school with new people, having to find your way around, and being the ‘newbies’ in school may seem like such a scare to you but is it really? I was once in your situation, thinking how could I possibly find myself in such a crowd. However, as the year progressed, I made new friends from other towns, started fun projects, learned and explored through the great experience of Masco.

If you get on White team, you’re going to have great teachers. If you get on Red team, you’re going to have great teachers. If you get on Blue team, you’re going to have great teachers. Whatever your chosen team is, you are going to be with some of your close friends. Eventually you will meet new friends in each of your SEVEN classes, each with different materials. With that you are going to be going to your OWN locker, even having your own locker combination. As you continue around your year, lunchtime may be the greatest surprise of all: choosing your choice of what you want on your plate, AND getting treats after lunch at Java. No more ‘one- choice lunch’; now you can get something different every day, or the same thing. So now I say to you, “With great power, comes with great responsibility.”

Despite all the fine and dandy things you’ve heard, you have to be careful and make sure you are doing the right thing, at the right time. You don’t want to be giving your locker combo to your friends, unless you want your lock flipped. You also don’t want to be late to class, so make sure your locker is tidy, that way you can quickly grab your things and your locker won’t get jammed. Finally, maybe most importantly, **don’t disrespect your teachers!**. It may seem like such a default input of advice, but just be careful in your choices.

With just these few rules, you can be gliding through the school year, with little to no stress. So incoming 7th grader, be on your way and enjoy your new year. Have fun and enjoy while it lasts. Just focus on being ready for the moment and you will succeed.

Vanessa Velasquez

“Beginning today, treat everyone you meet as if they were going to be dead by midnight. Extend to them all the care, kindness, and understanding you can muster, and do it with no thought of any reward. Your life will never be the same again.”

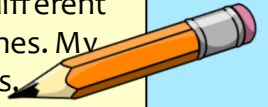
–Og Mandino, author



Dear Incoming Seventh Graders,

When I was a sixth grader, I felt nervous because I was worried that I wouldn't meet new friends at Masco. When I came to Masco, I made lots of friends. I met my friend Allison at Masco. I also love the cafeteria and Java. In the cafeteria you can buy different lunches. Everyday they have pizza, salad bar, taco bar, sandwiches, and hot lunches. My favorite lunches are the hot lunches. At Java, you can get treats such as brownies, cookies, and ice cream. In our classroom we make breakfast. I like to make waffles! Also, Masco has an after school cooking class. In cooking we make milkshakes, English muffin pizzas, and salads. In our school we have the best teachers! They help us with our work. Finally, at Masco we have Masco Buddies. Masco Buddies are people that do fun stuff with me after school and on the weekends! Be ready for next year, it's going to be great!

Ava Cavallaro



Dear Future Seventh Grader,

People tell you no matter what, be yourself. But they also don't say how hard it can be to do that, particularly in middle school. It can be super hard to feel confident enough to put aside your own insecurities, and walk in the halls with pride, and it takes real courage to do that. One of the greatest things about Masco is that there are so many people, and a great amount of diversity that your differences are welcomed, through a club, team, project, or group of friends, or all of them! Masco allows for that to happen.

In elementary school, if you were different, maybe you would feel left out, or excluded and it would seem that no amount of teaching on inclusion would change that. The greatest thing is that you find your people, the people that raise you up, bring out the best in you, and you can leave feeling better about yourself than when you first walked into the room. These people can be one person, or several, it doesn't really matter. But they should be there.

The summer right before middle school was, in a way, amazingly calm.

I knew I was terrified. The challenges seemed insurmountable, and I had no idea how to deal. That summer, I realized this wouldn't affect me until September 1st. I could relax until that day, because I couldn't change it. After realizing that, I was able to enjoy my summer and could stop freaking out. So over this summer, here are three big things to keep in mind so you can have a super positive time at Masconomet!

Beware of drama. This can be super difficult to navigate, especially in middle school. So a little drama can be fun, as long as it isn't hurting anyone and it's all meant for a good time. But there can be a ton of drama and most of the time it just causes misery. What I did was have a few friends who are absolutely drama-free. They were also my people, but they don't have to be. Just a few friends who honestly try to keep a no-worries attitude, and you can be smiling and feeling good fast!

Keep an eye on social media. Over the course of the year, my friends have been in tears over something someone said on Snapchat or Instagram at least once. I find that using these websites hasn't given me anything and only causes me and the people I know a bunch of pain. I am so not saying that middle schoolers should give it up for good, I'm saying it's really good to take a break, and relax without having to see what is going on every 5 minutes in a place that doesn't have to exist outside of your screen.

It gets better! Honestly, the first trimester was a little rough, but by the 2nd, things got easier. There are still going to be bumps, but once you get there, it's pretty much all downhill. Enjoy it, because you have this great opportunity to do something amazing and have a little fun enriching your life! What are you going to do with it?

Good Luck!
Ainsley Gruener



The ABCs of Masco

by Brennan Donnelly

Dear Incoming 7th graders,
Here are some things to remember:

Algebra is not going to kill you.

Breathe!

Chorus is fun.

Don't worry!

Extra credit is important. Take advantage of it.

Four minutes for passing time is longer than you think.

Get good grades!

Have fun!

Imagine yourself doing well and you will!

Join activities!

Kids from the other towns are not evil. Talk to them!

Locker combinations are really not that hard once you get the hang of it.

Make new friends.

Navigating the building is really not a problem.

Optimistic mindsets are the best ones.

Powerschool is a great resource, but you'll make yourself crazy if you check it every five minutes.

Questions are okay.

Relax!

Stay on top of your work!

Try something new!

Understanding teachers are available for help.

Voice your opinions, but respect others' opinions, too.

Work your hardest in everything you do!

Xtra help is available after school if you need it.

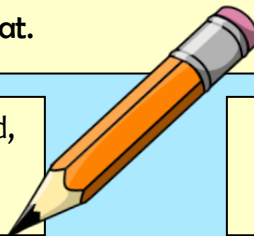
You can do this!

Zero complaints about lunch. It is great.



"If you can't explain it to a six year old,
you don't understand it yourself."

—Albert Einstein



"I've always believed that if you put in
the work, the results will come."

—Michael Jordan

Quick tips from teachers:

- "Always bring a pencil and notebook to class."
- "Take notes about the material being covered, even if the teacher doesn't tell you to."
- "Stay after school as soon as you realize that you need some extra help. If you wait, you'll get too far behind."
- "Talk to your teachers if you have something going on in your life that prevents you from doing your school work. Your teachers care about you, not just about your work."

Dear Incoming 7th Grader,

Middle school might seem scary. I know. I was once a 6th grade coming into Masco. Trust me, it's really not that bad. The first day you are confused, but there are teachers all around to guide you. Homeroom is the best time to meet new friends. The first day in homeroom, you get all of the information you really need to know: your locker combination, classes, and the rules. If you follow the rules, your year will go smoothly.

The first day is full of information, mostly the different rules each teacher has, but it's also really fun because you get to meet new people. The first tip you need to know is meeting new people isn't bad. I personally was hesitant about meeting new people but now it's like I've known them my whole life. Maybe when you pick partners in class to pick someone you may have talked to a little bit so you can learn more about them.

Secondly, you need to know that there is a lot more work than last year. This year you have 6 classes of work. (excluding gym, chorus, 21st century, or band) You don't want to fall behind on your classwork or homework because later on, you will have more work and less free time. Another thing about your work is when your teachers tell you to study, study. Yes, I know you're probably thinking, studying I'd rather not. But take my word on this, studying is the best thing for you. You will get an automatic A if you study ahead of time. I'm not saying this to scare you, but the study guides you will get are a lot of information to just look over in one night. If you don't study for the tests you won't get an A.

Third, don't worry what anyone thinks about you. I have seen one person care a lot about what people think about her then she changed into a completely different person based on others opinions. Be you. Not anyone else. Worry about your schoolwork and grades, that's what most important. To be honest with you in the beginning of the year I did care what people thought of me because of new people, you want people to like you. Then I realized stop caring and be yourself because the only opinion you need is yours.

Lastly just have fun! Middle school is a whole new chapter of your life. You have way more responsibility than last year, you're becoming more independent and think about of it all of these years are leading up to adult life. Middle school is supposed to be full of fun, don't let anyone get to you. Masco is full of fun, even when you aren't having your best days because your friend will find some way to cheer you up.

I hope you learned a lot from this and will use it every day of 7th grade!

Paige Gross

(P.S. Mrs. Bridgeo's health class is so fun! You will love it!)

More advice from the staff and students:

- "Challenge yourself to try something new, something you wouldn't have done in elementary school: student council, drama, sports, or striking up a conversation with someone you don't know. It could turn out to be the best thing you do all year."
- "Don't compare yourself to other students. Remember that everyone has unique talents, as well as challenges."
- "Get a minimum of eight hours of sleep every night, and make sure that you have breakfast every morning. It really makes a difference."
- "Turn in your homework. Don't give up. Try your best the whole year. Ask questions when you have to; don't just guess. Be kind and respectful to all the people you meet." – Jordan Carey

The Sagamore was made possible by the generous effort and support of the following individuals:

Dr. Dorothy Flaherty

Dr. Kevin Lyons

Ms. Meagan Hildebrand

Ms. Ursina Amsler

Ms. Yvonne Malinowski

Mr. Michael Morris

Ms. Diane Green

and the students and staff of

Masconomet Regional Middle School

20 Endicott Road, Boxford, Massachusetts 01921



**Masconomet Regional Middle School
Core Classroom Values**

M

Mutual Respect

A

Arrive Prepared

S

Speak After Thinking

C

Carefully Listen to Others

O

Offer Kindness