



Tiger Traditions

January/February 2016 - Volume 16 • Issue 3

Two MACS Seniors Sign Division I Letters of Intent



Mexico High School Senior Kennedy Lamb signed a Division I National Letter of Intent, committing to the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC), in the Hungerford Library, at Mexico High School, on November 13, 2015. In the fall of 2016, Kennedy will study scientific journalism at UMBC and play softball. Kennedy started on the MACS varsity softball team when she was in the eighth grade and has continued throughout high school. Kennedy is the daughter of Rich and Terri Lamb, of Mexico.

Mexico High School Senior Theodore Powers signed a Division I National Letter of Intent, committing to Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, in the Hungerford Library, at Mexico High School, on October 13, 2015. In the fall of 2016, Theodore will study mechanical engineering at Brown University and he will wrestle. Theodore has wrestled on the Mexico High varsity wrestling team since seventh grade and he was named NY State Champion in 2015 for the weight class of 113. He is the son of Theodore (Jr.) and Heidi Powers, of Mexico.



MACS National Honor Society Induction Ceremony

Spelling Bee Winners



Mexico Middle School announces the 2015 Spelling Bee Champion Jade Windey, pictured right. The school spelling bee contest was Friday, December 11, 2015. The school also announces three finalists, from left to right: Ethan Rhodes, Jason Johnson, and Carolyn Zedack. All four students will go on to the next level of the spelling bee competition in Syracuse in January.

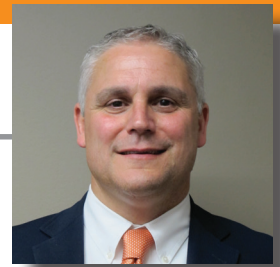


Mexico High School National Honor Society (NHS), held the 60th NHS Induction Ceremony on November 23, 2015 at the Mexico Middle School. The inductees are, front row, left to right: Parker Howell, Gretchen Arnold, Emily Blunt, Abigayle Garrett, and Caprice Yost. Second row, left to right: Jose Balaguar, Abigale Weber, Becca Saya, Anna LaBouef, Marteen Arena and Alissia Seeburger. Third row, left to right: Ashton McCormack, Justin Gardner, Tyler Stever, Benjamin Pelow, and Sean Heagerty.

For district information including a calendar of events, MACS Board of Education meeting dates and times, contact information and more, visit the district web site at www.Mexicocsd.org



A Message from the Superintendent



I hope this issue finds you and your family well! It's hard to believe that 2015 is quickly coming to a close! In the last few months, I have been able to attend and participate in many events in our schools and our community. I continue to be impressed and amazed by the talent of our students, the dedication of our staff, and how wonderful a community we truly have! I thank you for being so warm and welcoming! You have truly made Mexico feel like home! During the last four months, there has been much progress at our schools, in our community, and in New York State Education.

BOE Goals

Last issue, I informed you of the goals that our Board of Education members set for our district.

1. MACS will be in the top 10% of the school districts in New York State.
2. At the conclusion of grade 3, 100% of students will be reading on grade level.
3. MACS will achieve a 95% passing rate for Regents exams.
4. MACS will achieve a 60% proficiency rate for grades 5-8 testing in ELA and Math.

I'm happy to report that each building and department have developed action plans with annual achievable goals to support yearly progress toward these goals. The principals for each building presented their plans to our Board of Education at the past several meetings. Department leaders will be presenting their plans at our January meeting.

Entergy

I would like to formally thank all who have participated in our efforts to support FitzPatrick's continued operation at full capacity. We have successfully developed and implemented a multifaceted approach to gain the attention and support of our elected officials. I'm truly impressed with, and very thankful for the support of Assemblyman Barclay, Senator Ritchie, Oswego County Legislature Chairman Kevin Gardner, and all of our local elected officials! I also appreciate Governor Cuomo's and Senator Schumer's announced support for FitzPatrick to stay open. It is important that we continue to communicate the importance of this issue to them until FitzPatrick's continued operation at full capacity is confirmed. I strongly urge you to visit our website and participate in our letter writing campaign. While I certainly appreciate the over 573 people who have participated so far, we need the participation rate to reach into the thousands! I also encourage you to ask friends and relatives who live anywhere in New York State to participate. Although they may not live in our community, they represent valuable New York State voter support.

Additionally, there has been some progress related to this topic that I would like to convey. The New York State Public Service Commission (PSC) voted to further its Alternating Current Transmission Proceeding which will now advance to a competitive process managed by the New York Independent System Operator (NYISOPSC). During the discussion, PSC Commissioners mentioned numerous times the need to get excess Upstate NY power Downstate and to build a grid system to eliminate the Marcy constraint. The commissioners' vote formally established a public policy need for new towers and high-voltage lines to ensure reliability downstate by channeling more power from the north. The transmission upgrade plan includes replacement and upgrading of existing lines within existing rights-of-way, and adding new substation facilities.

The below excerpt is taken from the PSC's press release:

"Much like a traffic jam on a crowded highway, our existing system of antiquated transmission lines are simply too congested to allow electricity being produced upstate to

move to where demand is greatest," said PSC Chair Audrey Zibelman. "Improving the transmission system will reduce this problem. The state-of-the-art improvements proposed for 156 miles of high-voltage transmission lines, representing the backbone of the State's electric transmission system running west to east and north to south, will provide numerous benefits including reducing grid congestion and allowing lower-cost electricity and renewable electricity being produced in upstate New York to flow to millions of downstate customers."

NYSED

As you may have heard, Governor Cuomo created a taskforce to study frustration with education in our state and make recommendations for improvements. The taskforce has finalized their recommendations and presented them to our Governor as well as Commissioner Elia and our New York State Board of Regents. These recommendations have resulted in changes to the New York State Common Core Learning Standards and annual professional performance review (APPR) for teachers and principals. Please see below for summary information taken directly from the recommendation presentations. More detailed information can be found on our website or the New York State Department of Education website, www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2015/2015-12/p-12-education.

APPR

The APPR changes will provide for a four-year transition period while the State completes the transition to higher learning standards.

For teachers and principals, the Emergency Regulation would ensure that there will be no consequences for teachers and principals related to 3-8 ELA and mathematics state assessments and no growth score on Regents exams until the start of the 2019-2020 school year.

During the transition period, transition scores and HEDI ratings will replace the scores and HEDI ratings for teachers and principals whose HEDI scores are based, in whole or in part, on State assessments in grades 3-8 ELA or mathematics (including where State-provided growth scores are used) or on State-provided growth scores on Regents examinations.

Common Core

New York State Education Commissioner Elia and her department will continue analyzing feedback and work with stakeholder groups throughout 2016 until they finalize draft standards to present to our New York State Board of Regents for approval at their December of 2016 meeting.

Additionally, Commissioner Elia has announced her support to improve state testing in grades 3-8. She has announced that the 3-8 tests will be shorter and more developmentally appropriate for this and the coming school years. As of yet, there is no specific information on the actual changes, but this is the right thing to do for our students. I look forward to the actual changes meeting our expectations.

I wish you a happy holiday season and a happy New Year - May this be your best year yet! I hope you and your family enjoy a relaxing winter break.

As always, I welcome your comments and suggestions. I thank you for your continued support.

Sean Bruno,
MACS Superintendent of Schools

Contact me at:
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The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Jeremy Belfield, 16 Fravor Road, Suite A, Mexico, NY 13114, 315-963-8400 x5407 or 315-297-7780. Inquiries concerning the application of the Mexico Academy & Central Schools non-discrimination policies may also be referred to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), 32 Old Slip, 26th Floor, New York, NY 10005, telephone (646) 428-3800 (voice) or (800) 877-8339 (TTY).



Proud to be MACS

Corey Davis, Mexico High School English Teacher, was selected as the November 2015 Proud to be MACS honoree. Corey grew up in Mexico and graduated from Mexico High in 1990. She earned a bachelors degree in English literature from SUNY Brockport in 1995, and earned a masters degree in secondary education from Syracuse University in 1999. After teaching in Onondaga County, in Fairfax County (VA), and in Oswego, Corey began at Mexico High in 2008. In addition to teaching freshmen and senior level English classes, she serves as the Friends of Rachel Club adviser. In 2010 a Friends of Rachel Challenge presentation was given at the high school and in January of 2011, Corey and a co-worker started the Friends of Rachel Club. When asked how she feels about her job, Corey says, "Oh I love my job. I know how lucky I am to work at Mexico High School. I feel really blessed to work with such talented and dedicated people every day." Considering the MACS award Corey says, "I feel both grateful and humbled." Corey and her husband, Kevin, are parents of two children; Olivia and Paityn. The family makes their home in Oswego.



Sue Hewitt, MACS Custodial Worker, was chosen as the December 2015 Proud to be MACS honoree. Sue grew up in Pennellville, NY, and graduated from Phoenix High School in 1977. She began her employment in the Mexico School District in 1988 as a substitute cleaner. In 1989 she was hired full-time in the same position, and worked at Palermo Elementary School for the next seven years. During the following years she worked in all five school buildings and has been at Mexico Middle School for the past ten years. Sue's duties include cleaning the school, supervising parking at events, and setting up for games, concerts and other events at the school. This past summer Sue supervised a painting crew that worked in four of the schools in the district, the one-room schoolhouse, and the bus garage. When asked about her job she says, "I love my job - interacting with the kids, interacting with the people I work with, and the administration. They're all wonderful, including the board members." Commenting on the MACS award she says, "I feel there are others more deserving than I am. We have teachers that go above and beyond. I feel honored." Sue has one son, Travis, who is married with two children; Ethan and Chole. Sue makes her home in Mexico.



Our Deepest Sympathy
for the family of Hunter Fox

Elementary Schools Fall Enrichment Clubs



The Mexico Muralists painted a mural outside the gymnasium at Mexico Elementary. This club was taught by MACS Art Teacher Patty Brooks.



The Basketball Club at New Haven Elementary was coached by MACS School Monitor Bill Truax.



The Cursive Writing Club at Palermo Elementary School was taught by Palermo Elementary Teachers Assistant Deb Reuter.

All three elementary schools in the district held engaging enrichment clubs during the months of November and December. Students stayed after school twice a week, for four weeks, to participate in activities that are not offered during the typical school day. The clubs included, but were not limited to: poetry, comic strip writing, Lego robots, cooking, fitness, library media, basketball, and helping hands.

MACS Making the Holidays Bright For Others With Holiday Community Service Projects



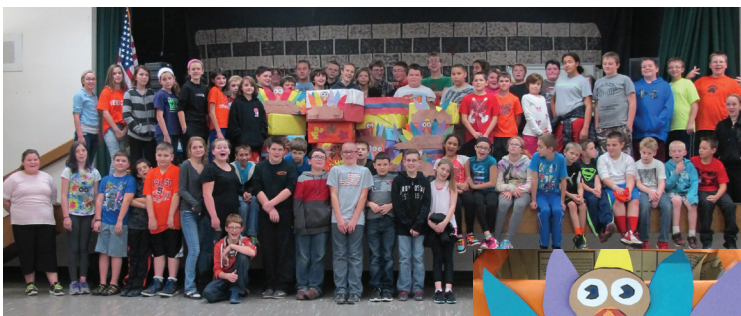
MACS Friends of Rachel Club Donates to Operation Reindeer

The Mexico High School Friends of Rachel Club presented a check for \$125 to Operation Reindeer Representative Dick Niles, center, at Mexico First Presbyterian Church on Thursday, December 10, 2015. The Friends of Rachel Club members baked Christmas cookies and sold them, for a suggested donation, during Christmas in Mexico on Saturday, December 5, to raise money to support Operation Reindeer, a ministry that provides Christmas presents to children in need within the Mexico School District. This season the presents went to 407 children. The students presented the check during the Operation Reindeer packing event. Over 30 Mexico High School students, from eight high school clubs and groups, assisted in the packing event.

Spanish Honor Society Pack Shoe Boxes for Less Fortunate

The MACS Spanish Honor Society students packed eight Operation Christmas Child shoe boxes in mid-November. The shoe boxes were filled with small gifts such as toothbrushes, pencils, crayons, toys, balls, and stuffed animals. From the high school, the shoe boxes were added to others in the area to be shipped to a Samaritan's Purse processing facility. From that facility, shoe boxes are sent around the world to children in refugee camps, orphanages, and poverty stricken areas.

ASAP Thanksgiving Food Boxes



On November 17, dozens of Mexico Middle School After School Activities Program (ASAP) students posed for a photo with the boxes that they created/decorated to hold the Thanksgiving dinner fixings for 21 families in need in the community. The Thanksgiving food collection for the boxes was coordinated by the Mexico Middle School Student Council. Teachers and staff contributed to the collection.



Christmas in Mexico



Many MACS students and staff participated in the Christmas in Mexico events in the village of Mexico on Saturday, December 5, 2015. The Mexico Middle School Marching Tigers marched in the Christmas parade. Mexico Academy and Central School Faculty Association (MACSFA) members gifted new books to children all day long outside Mexico Elementary School while a bazaar was held inside the school building. Mexico High School chorus students sang Christmas carols throughout the village and MACS sophomores Wesley Akley and Dustin Barck volunteered community service hours during the gingerbread house workshop for children at Mexico Public Library.



“The People of the Longhouse” Interactive Program Comes to Mexico

The Merry-Go-Round Playhouse, of Auburn, NY, brought an exciting, interactive program to the fourth grade students at Mexico Elementary on Tuesday, December 15. “The People of the Longhouse” actors simulated life in the Five Nations of the Iroquois and drew the students into interactions by creating the five tribes, singing, dancing and playing a hunting game. Speaking about the program, Mexico Elementary Principal Robert Briggs said, “It’s a perfect fit into our fourth grade curriculum.” Both New Haven and Palermo Elementary Schools hosted this program as well.



Solar-powered Scoreboards Installed

MACS Operations and Maintenance Workers Arlen Halstead, left, and Carl Santschi neared completion of the installation of one of the two new solar-powered scoreboards located on the sports fields at Mexico Middle School on November 19. One scoreboard is on the middle school baseball field and one is on the soccer field. Both of the score boards are completely wireless, and energized by solar power. The lighting on both boards is LED and the soccer field scoreboard is equipped with a horn as well. The scoreboards were donated by Mexico Sports Booster Club (the solar power systems were purchased), approved by MACS Board of Education, and installed by the MACS Operations and Maintenance Department. The use of solar power reduced the cost of the installation and will reduce the cost of operation, while district employee installation reduced the overall cost.



Palermo Elementary Band Holds Educational Concert



Many parents and family members attended the Palermo Elementary School Fourth Grade Band Educational Concert on Monday, December 7, 2015. During the educational event, a parent sat next to each musician and became familiar with what, and how, the student was learning to play their particular instrument. The Palermo Elementary band is directed by MACS Music Teacher Glen Gagnier. The educational band evenings were held at all three elementary schools during December.

MACS 3rd & 4th Grade Chorus Sings at Syracuse Crunch Game



On Saturday, December 12, 2015, 70 choral students from Palermo, New Haven, and Mexico Elementary Schools sang “O Canada” and “The Star Spangled Banner” on the ice before a Syracuse Crunch Hockey game. The Crunch lost 4-3 to Toronto Marlies, however, the 3rd and 4th grade chorus students represented Mexico Academy very well and enjoyed singing in a public arena. MACS Choral Directors Glen Gagnier, Gina Giufre, and Keith Himes were proud of the students’ musical performance.

Mexico Middle School 5th & 6th Grade Holiday Concert Held



The Mexico Middle School 5th & 6th Grade Holiday Concert was held on Tuesday, December 14, 2015, at Mexico Middle School. The 5th & 6th Grade Chorus sang holiday songs under the direction of Mexico Middle School Choral Director Laura Washburn. The 5th Grade Band and the 6th Grade Band both performed under the direction of Mexico Middle School Band Director Julie Raner.



Palermo Elementary School First LEGO Team paused for a photo.

FIRST LEGO League Challenge *Trash to Treasure*

The FIRST LEGO League Trash to Treasure Challenge was held at Mexico Middle School on Saturday, November 14, 2015. Twelve teams from schools across Central New York were in attendance, with upwards of 120 students. The teams practiced in the morning and competed in timed events in the afternoon. The competitions were held on three 'Trash to Treasure' theme-related tables labeled: reduce, recycle, and reuse. The day was another step in "Building life's journey one brick at a time!"

Palermo Elementary School Honors Veterans for Veterans Day



US military veterans were honored during an assembly at Palermo Elementary on Tuesday, November 10, 2015. The MACS Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps Cadets presented the colors and performed during the event. Through spoken word and patriotic song, the third and fourth grade students, under the direction of MACS Music Teacher Glen Gagnier, honored and thanked the many veterans present. Mexico Elementary and New Haven Elementary Schools also hosted programs to honor veterans.

Book Bingo at Palermo Elementary School

First-grade Palermo Elementary School student Philip White enjoyed an evening of Book Bingo with his grandmother, Rebecca Bowman, at the school. Whenever a student shouted Bingo, they were able to select a book as a prize. This event, sponsored by the Palermo Elementary School Parent-Teacher Club, encourages the goal that has been set at the school for students to read five out of seven days a week.



Remodeling Nearly Complete in New Haven School Library



The students at New Haven Elementary School are enjoying the two-room remodeled library. One room boasts new bookshelves and new furniture and the second is a new computer lab.



Mexico High School Music for the Holidays Concert

The Mexico High School Music Department presented their "Music for the Holidays Concert" on Tuesday, December 8, 2015, at Mexico Middle School. The concert included performances by Mexico High School: Jazz Ensemble, Women's Choir, Jazz Choir, Chorale, Combined Choirs and Symphonic Band. The choirs were directed by MACS Director of Choral Studies Hope Greco-Gaham, and the bands were directed by MACS Director of Bands Brian Carnes.



Halloween Parades Held in All Three Elementary Schools



Mexico Elementary School



Palermo Elementary School



New Haven Elementary School



New Haven Students Are Readers From Birth

MACS District Superintendent Sean Bruno was the guest reader at the Readers from Birth event at New Haven Elementary School on Tuesday evening, October 27, 2015. Finger - plays, a craft, and snack followed. Readers from Birth, which is sponsored by the New Haven Elementary Parent Teacher Club, is offered to encourage reading to children from birth on. Readers from Birth is held once a month and children of all ages in the district are invited.

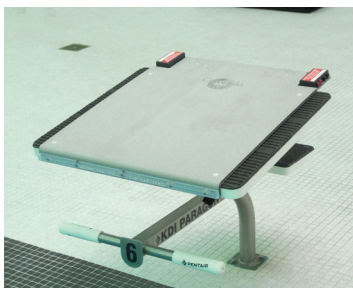
Fall Play Pride @ Prejudice



Mexico High School Drama Club presented the play "Pride @ Prejudice on Thursday and Friday evenings, October 29-30. The engaging and entertaining play, directed by Bill Coughlin, was a based on the classic novel "Pride and Prejudice", by Jane Austen, with modern day interjections by narrators.

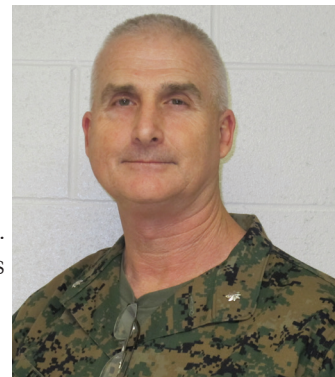
New LED Relay Judging Platforms

Mexico High School's pool now has LED Relay Judging Platforms (RJP). The LED (light emitting diode) RJP is a system that clips onto the swimmer's starting blocks and hooks into cables which power lights that run across the front of the blocks. The lights enable the swimmer, in the starting position, to 'see' the start vs 'hear' the start. The LED RJP system allows hearing impaired swimmers to start in the same position as their competitors when traditionally the hearing impaired swimmers would need to turn their head to look at a strobe light located in the sound box beside the pool. MACS new LED RJP system is the only complete and fully compliant system in Section III. The system is transportable and will be used at the Section III Swimming Championships this year. The new system also means that the US Deaf Swimming Competitions and the Special Olympics may be held in the Mexico High pool.



Lt. Col. Freda Honored

Lt. Col. (Ret.) John Freda was honored at the MACS Board of Education Meeting on November 12, 2015, the day after Veteran's Day. Lt. Col. Freda is the MACS Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) Senior Instructor. He served in the US Marine Corps for 20 years and, in addition to the number of medals and honors earned while active, he was



presented with the Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award this past summer. Lt. Col. (Ret) John Freda was nominated for this award, and received it in recognition of being selected as the state teacher winner, in his grade level category (high school), in the state of New York. The purpose of this annual contest is, as explained by the VFW, "to identify and recognize American's best educators who instill a sense of national pride in students." They look for teachers, "who promote civic responsibility, flag etiquette, and patriotism."

Construction Corner

Bids for the Mexico High School Auditorium renovation, Mexico High School building and exterior work were awarded during the November 12, 2015 MACS Board of Education meeting. The project team is currently finalizing contracts in order to mobilize for the auditorium renovation work over winter break. In the spring, once the weather is warm and clear of snow, contractors will mobilize to begin work on the exterior of the building which includes the east and west wings, front portico and clock tower.



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Mexico Elementary Holds Synergy Summit Assembly



K, 1st and 2nd Grade Leaders: Front, left to right; Nataleigh Smith, Asher Mattice, Alexis Jackson, Annalise Hogan, and Brody Bogart. Back, left to right; Tyrone Dix-Cornell, Camron Wood, Sammy Britton, Cayleigh Taylor, Ryan Mahoney, Jack McAuslan, and Ian Bigelow.

Mexico Elementary School held a Synergy Summit Assembly on Thursday, October 29, during which leadership certificates were presented to students from kindergarten through fourth grade who exhibited exceptional leadership behavior this year.



3rd and 4th Grade Leaders, left to right: Zariaya Rivera, Emily Bennett, Sage LaFlamm, Ainsley Bigelow, Kameryn King, and Sarah Marsden.

Mexico Elementary School is currently in its first year as a Leader in Me School, focusing on "The Seven Habits of Happy Kids". At the close of the assembly all students repeated after Mexico Principal Robert Briggs in saying, "The leader in me will be respectful, responsible, and safe in every way, in all I do and all I say."

Mexico High School JROTC Home Drill Meet

The Mexico High School Junior Reserve Officer Training (JROTC) Home Drill Meet was held on Saturday, October 31, 2015 at Mexico High School and Mexico Elementary School. Ten schools participated in the drill meet and Mexico High JROTC took 2nd Place Overall in the meet. The Mexico High JROTC is instructed by Lt. Col. John Freda and 1st Sgt. LaShaun Benjamin.



Palermo Elementary Aquatics

Fourth grade students from Palermo Elementary School enjoyed a lesson in the pool at Mexico High School on Thursday, October 29. During the fall, each fourth grade class in the district had nine, 30 minute, swimming lessons in the pool. These lessons included water safety, five strokes, floats, underwater swimming, and free swim time. On this day, the students learned the breast stroke and also had an underwater competition. Shawn Parkhurst is the MACS Aquatic Instructor/Coordinator.



Calendar of Events

Jan. 14	MACS Board of Ed. Meeting, 6pm
Jan. 18	Martin Luther King Jr. Day, No School
Feb. 4-6	Mexico Middle School Musical, 7pm
Feb. 11	MACS Board of Education Meeting, 6pm
Feb. 15-19	Winter Break - No School
Feb. 26	Dollars for Scholars Application Deadline