



# Wood Road Times

Wood Road's School Newspaper

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# The beat goes on

### Wood Road students find a new face in the band room this year

By Abby Bednarzyk

When students arrived at their first band lesson this year, they were surprised to see a new person behind the stand. Miss Hillary Soulia came to Ballston Spa from Plattsburgh, to teach fourth and fifth grade students in Ballston Spa how to play instruments. Miss Soulia took the place of Mr. O'Shea who took a position in the Burnt Hills Ballston Lake School District.

Students seem to be warming up to Soulia very quickly and find her demeanor very entertaining.

"She is very funny," says Lauren Wodzinski, a fifth grade flute player. "I love her jokes."

Soulia said she had a taste of the area when she student taught in Saratoga years ago.

"At that time I fell in love with the culture of the area,"



Miss Hillary Soulia works with Wood Road band students twice a week.

she said, which helped in her decision to move.

In Plattsburgh, Soulia taught general music, chorus and band. This is her sixth year teaching music. Soulia said she decided to be a band teacher at just three years old.

"I knew I absolutely loved music," she said. "I played with my older siblings' instruments when no one was looking, which included flute, saxophone, violin, trumpet and piano."

The trumpet was the first instrument Miss Soulia played, but her favorite instrument is the euphonium.

"It has a beautiful sound and at 18 years old, I practiced five hours a day," said Soulia.

Despite the euphonium being her favorite, Soulia said she currently plays any and all instruments.

"Too many to count," she said.

Madalyn Wilson, a fifth grade band student says she enjoys when Soulia plays the

instruments with students during the lesson.

"It's nice to hear the same sounds that we have to play," said Wilson. Soulia said she enjoys playing all kinds of music, but she has the fourth grade students playing folk tunes for their first concert.

"Then we will branch out into longer pieces of music for the last concert," she said. "Fifth grade is going to play pieces of real

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# Wood Road staff takes over holiday parade

Not a creature stirring, not even a mouse – until Wood Road arrived!

Wood Road staff livened up the Ballston Spa Village Parade with a Christmas rendition of “Run Run Rudolph” and “Uptown Funk.” The crowd went wild for the group as they twisted, turned, and boogied in the middle of Milton Avenue.

“After attending the parade last year, we thought that it would be great to have Wood Road teachers participate since

so many of our students attend the parade,” said Michelle Montanye.

The group of 15 dancers practiced every week from October through the end of November.

“We are definitely planning another event for next year, hopefully with even more staff and surprises!,” Montanye added.

-School Newspaper Staff



Wood Road staff shakes up Milton Avenue with flash mob.

## Students move on in PTA Reflections program

The theme for this year’s PTA Reflections program is “Let Your Imagination Fly”. Out of 17 finalists from Wood Road, two students will move on to the regional competition - Payton Messina and Emma Jones.

The PTA program allows students nationwide to focus on a common theme by creating original works of art in the categories of dance choreography, film production, literature, music composition, photography and visual arts.

The student’s artwork is judged at the school, regional, state, and national levels as they advance.



Emma Jones’ winning PTA Reflections piece

## Wood Road Times



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Payton Messina’s winning PTA Reflections piece

# Beating bullying with words

## Author brings bullying message to Wood Road

By Madalyn Wilson

Susanne Garvey, an author from Australia, came to Wood Road on Oct. 21, to talk about bullying and her famous book "I am Jack," the first book in a series about a boy who experiences bullying.

Garvey was in Ballston Spa as part of her book tour in an effort to show kids that it is possible to put an end to bullying.

Students in third, fourth, and fifth grade enjoyed listening to Garvey share her stories about her family and her books. Kid's eyes were peeled on Garvey and giggles were often heard throughout the crowd, especially when she brought out a giant pair of purple glow in the dark underpants and a set of false teeth, both props from the "I Am Jack" story.

"She was very funny" said McKenna Szmaz, a third-grader in Mrs. Lovett's class.

Garvey's goal is to spread the anti

bullying message across the world.

"I was bullied when I was a little girl, and my son was bullied," she said. " 'I am Jack' books invite you into my home."

Garvey hopes that her books will show kids that they are not alone and give them the confidence to speak up.

In awareness of national bullying prevention month, Wood Road students also created and posted anti-bullying signs throughout the school.



Children's Author, Susanne Garvey came to Wood Road during National Bullying Month to promote anti-bullying through her children's books.



## Robotics Team brings home two trophies

Wood Road's robotics team, Motors In Action, took home two awards from Saturday's FLL Qualifying Tournament, which took place at the Ballston Spa Middle School.

This year's FLL challenge required students to design a LEGO robot programmed to operate independently on the competition table and accomplish several waste management-related tasks. The teams are judged based on the robot's performance and design. Additionally, the team is judged on core values and a project that asked them to redesign how we manage our waste. Awards are given for Robot Performance, Robot Design, Core Values, Project and Team Spirit. Wood Road's team won for their robot performance and robot design.

Twelve FLL teams competed in the tournament as well as five Jr. FLL Teams. Seven of the teams participating were from Ballston Spa, including Gordon Creek, Wood Road, Malta Avenue, Milton Terrace and the Ballston Spa Middle School.

(Left) Two of Wood Road's team members discuss scoring with a referee after the robot performance.

# Celebrating Together

## Ballston Spa celebrates fall with a festival

By Sarah Lewza

In October, the Ballston Spa School District celebrated fall with a family festival at Ellms Farm.

The event was a way to bring the district together for seasonal fun. The day brought families from all four elementary schools, the middle school and the high school to the local farm.

Students enjoyed bouncing on the giant jumping pillow, circling the track with pedal carts, getting lost in a maze themed around racing in Saratoga.

Information and exhibits were

provided by each school with teachers and students on hand at each table.

Mrs. Osinski, a fifth-grade teacher at Wood Road, volunteered at the Wood Road table.

"It was a chance to meet new people and get new ideas," she said. "I also liked it because I was able to see old students."

Osinski brought along her two sons who couldn't keep their hands off their candy apples covered with chocolate and rainbow sprinkles.

One of the more popular activities is



Wood Road students enjoy a fall day at the district's annual Fall Family Festival at Ellms Farm.

the zip line, a cable line where kids can slide across. Osinski's sons, Jayden and Austin, said they had fun flying down the cable on the disc.

"It went fast, and it was fun," Austin

said. Austin's brother Jayden said he also enjoyed zipping down the line. Austin also had a good time on the big slides and added that he was hoping to stay for

the chicken show but after many hours, it was time to go.

The event helps fund Ballston Spa's Partnership for Innovation in Education Fund.

## Students participate in Hour of Code

Students at Wood Road spent an hour coding as a part of a global movement in more than 180 countries.

Hour of Code is a one-hour introduction to computer science where students all over the world participate in a coding activity, in celebration of Computer Science Education Week. The campaign is designed to make students realize that coding is something that kids of all ages can learn.



# Students give back with candy

## Wood Road students collect Halloween candy to give to local troops

By Mia Bedell

Troops all over the world are enjoying the Tootsie rolls, Snicker bars, and Kit Kats collected by the Wood Road students once again this year.

After Halloween, students begin bringing in to school any “extra” candy they may have. Once all the candy is collected, it is packed up and brought to local dentist, Dr. Dreher, who then sends the care packages to local soldiers currently deployed and serving overseas through the local organization, “Treats for Troops”. The candy is combined with cards, toiletries, and other small items in the care packages.

“I think it is important that we give candy to the Navy because they never get treats,” said Julianna Cater, a third-grader.

The school’s service learning project started five years ago by third-grade teacher, Mrs. Van Volkenburg after she saw an article in “Time For Kids” magazine. The article was about a candy buyback program that a number of dentists do during Halloween. The idea was close to her heart because she has family in the military.

“I have a brother and brother-in-law who are in the military and have served overseas,” she said. “My brother Martin loved the Halloween candy that I sent him in one of his packages.”

Mrs. Van Volkenburg decided to contact Dr. Dreher’s office and set up the Trick or Treat for Troops drive.

“It has grown significantly since the first year. Last



Third graders pack up the candy to send to troops overseas.

year Wood Road’s donation total was 300 pounds! We filled about 15 boxes of candy! The grand total last year was 1,890 pounds,” said Mrs. Van Volkenburg.

This year, with Mrs. Van Volkenburg on leave the other third grade teachers took over in her absence.

“I thought it was very important to give back to the military,” said Mrs. Damico, a third-grade teacher.

On Nov. 13, 20 boxes were packed and sent from Wood Road to troops everywhere.

**BAND** - From Page 1  
band literature with higher-level concepts.

This includes playing in different keys, new notes, new symbols and new rhythms.”

Soulia said she has enjoyed everything about Wood Road so far and looks forward to working

together with the students as a team and “making great music.”

“I love that all the band students love coming to band to make music, I love that students have so many opportunities,” she said.



## Kindergarten goes Around the World

The kindergarten classes spent two mornings learning about customs and traditions in several countries.

Passports lead them along the way.



# Holiday cheer brewing

The holidays are no joke at Wood Road

By Cameron McKay

When the air turns crisp, students and staff at Wood Road celebrate the season.

Halloween brought many activities, but one of the most popular was the Halloween obstacle course.

Students spent an entire gym class finding their way through Wood Road's annual Halloween obstacle course. They balanced on a balance beam, hopped from hoop to hoop in a pumpkin patch, swung over a snake pit, climbed over a mummy tomb, crawled through a bat cave and spider nest, crawled through a tunnel, climbed high over monster mountain, darted through graveyards and ran through the witch's den.

The idea was one of Coach Dayton and Coach Cornell's about seven years ago.

"We always have done an obstacle

course but wanted to do something special for Halloween," Coach Dayton said. The course has a few changes, and we try to improve it each year. We think about what obstacles kids like the most and keep those the same and try to think of new ones to replace the ones that kids may not enjoy as much." Dayton said he enjoys watching kids enjoy the course.

"It's fun to watch kids enjoy something that you made and the excitement on their faces when they enter the gym," he said.

New this year, all classes in Wood Road participated in a pumpkin decorating contest. Classes were given a pumpkin and the challenge of decorating the pumpkin. The winning pumpkin was decorated by Mrs. Tetu's fifth grade class and was inspired by a book



On Friday, Dec. 11, Santa made an appearance at PTA's Holiday Workshop.

they read, "Esperanza Rising". The creative pumpkins were displayed in front of the beehive, for all to see.

For thanksgiving, many students participated in Wood Road's annual Turkey Shoot. Students have the opportunity to play basketball games in the Wood Road gym as a part of an annual food drive to provide local families with food for Thanksgiving. To participate, students must bring at least one non-perishable food item to be donated to a local food bank.

When December approaches, WoodRoadians

enjoy taking a break from their normal routines and celebrate the holidays. A door decorating contest has brought out the creative juices amongst the staff. From reindeer barns to Santa's Workshop, Wood Road doors tell it all. Gingerbread hunts and ornament parties have filled the hallways with Christmas spirit.

On Dec. 21 and Dec. 22, kindergarten teachers separated their classes into groups. The group travelled to each classroom in kindergarten to learn about holidays "Around the World." Students

made crafts, sang songs, and played games that originated in England, Mexico, Israel, Germany, North Pole, and United States.

"We wanted the children to experience and understand that many of the things we do as traditions started a long time ago in other parts of the world," said Mrs. Hodgson, a kindergarten teacher at Wood Road.

On the before break, students will come to school in their pajamas and gather in the cafeteria to sing Christmas songs led by Mr. Bailey and different grade levels.

## New but familiar face in front office

### Mrs. Jacobs joins the Wood Road family

By Maia Bianchi

The addition of walls and doors are not the only change this year at Wood Road. A new face can be seen just behind the window in the main office. Mrs. Jacobs took over as the attendance secretary after Mrs. Millington's retirement.

Mrs. Jacobs is no stranger to Wood Road. She has been working in the district

for a number of years as a recess monitor as well as substituting in Wood Road's main office for the past five years.

In her new position, one of Mrs. Jacobs' responsibilities is to make sure all students are accounted for each day.

Every morning each teacher will send an attendance folder down to the office. If students are absent, Mrs. Jacobs

is the person who will call the student's home. If the student is absent, she enters the student's excuse and keeps track of how many times students are absent every school year.

Mrs. Jacobs explained how substituting in the position gave her an opportunity to learn all about the importance of the job and how to be a great secretary for Wood Road.

"Subbing gave me



Mrs. Jacobs began this school year as Wood Road's Attendance Secretary

the experience I needed," she said.

"I love getting to see the kid's everyday and enjoy spending my days at

Wood Road," Mrs. Jacobs said. "I love the job, I love the school and I am so happy to be part of the Ballston Spa School District."

## Settling In

### Students and staff enjoying renovated school

By Lauren Wodzinski

After undergoing an extensive remodel, Wood Road Elementary School re-opened on Wednesday Sept. 2, with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

In the last few months, students and staff have had a chance to settle in and enjoy some of the new improvements

including classrooms with walls, a new computer lab and new humanities rooms.

"I like having four walls and a door. The new SMART Boards are nice too," said Amy Taylor, a third-grader.

Fourth-grader, Elizabeth Hoffman said the walls make noise levels much better.

"I love having walls because I cannot hear the other classes," she said.

Fifth-grader, Aidan Fletcher added that he

feels safer as a result of the changes.

"I like having a closed classroom, because it now looks like a real classroom and it is safer now that you have a door," said Fletcher.

The gym is also a welcome improvement.

"I love the gym," Fletcher said. "It looks like a real gym now that it does not have plastic tile."

Coach Dayton,

Wood Road's gym teacher said, "The floor is the best. It looks nice and it is safer. The basketballs bounce better on the new floor too."

In addition to a new floor, the gym received new doors and a new screen to separate the two sides of the gym.

According to Dayton, the gym had many problems before the remodel.

"The biggest thing was the old floor; it

was plastic and it was not safe. There were lots of spots where the floor was loose," said Dayton. "And last year the folding doors did not work."

Additions to the playground have also received big reviews.

"I love the new playground, because it has more equipment and has more color," said Taylor.

Everyone is happy to have a newly renovated school.