



Vol. 26
Issue: 09
May 2011

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District News:

~A word from Board of Education President, Todd McFee: At the last regularly scheduled meeting, the Board of Education unanimously accepted the 2011-2012 proposed budget. With the loss of over \$800,000 in state aid this year, coupled with increased costs of maintaining our business, the Board has had some tough decisions to make regarding next year's budget. After several months involving meetings, local input, and recommendations from our administrators, the board has realized a budget that reflects fairness to the students and the taxpayers. With increased costs of operation and state shortcomings, this budget shows lowered spending from last year's budget by \$400,000. The board elected to cut several positions (which negatively affects programs), raise the tax levy by 2.75% and plan for use of over \$700,000 of fund balance in this next budget. These decisions did not come easy and everyone involved worked very hard to make such a fair budget possible at such a difficult time.

~District Wins Safety Award: Fort Plain Central School recently received Utica National Insurance Group's "2011 School Safety Excellence Award." The Safety Excellence Program helps schools to enhance building, grounds and transportation safety. The award program features three levels, which schools may reach by meeting specific criteria. Fort Plain attained the Titanium Level (the highest level) for the 2010-2011 school year. Along with a certificate, the district was presented with a check for \$500, to be used to further safety efforts.

~Relay For Life Team Raises Funds: Students in the Tex-nology club at Fort Plain Junior/Senior High School built an Adirondack style chair for the Relay for Life team at the school. Students constructed the chair, made with white cedar and black walnut pegs, every Wednesday for five weeks. The chair along with a hand-made quilt will be raffled to support the team. Raffles for the two items will run until June 8. Raffle tickets are available at the Jr./Sr. high school. In addition students and staff are creating "theme baskets" to raffle. Themes include: movie night, chocolate lovers, spa retreat, Union College sports package, fiesta basket, book lovers, and others. Baskets are displayed at the school. Tickets are \$1 each. All proceeds will benefit the Relay for Life team. Raffle for theme baskets will be held from April 25 to May 13. The Relay for Life event will take place at Park Terrace Elementary School in Gloversville on June 3. Relay For Life events celebrate cancer survivorship and raise money for research and programs of the American Cancer Society. During the event, teams of people gather at schools, fairgrounds, or parks and take turns walking or running laps. Each team tries to keep at least one team member on the track at all times.

~FPCS Community Health & Wellness Fair: The district's Child Nutrition Advisory Committee's Health and Wellness Fair April 2 in the Jr./Sr. High School featured 30 vendors with information booths and a popular Zumba demonstration in the gymnasium. Health professionals provided basic screenings, and there were presentations designed to help the community become aware of the many health, wellness, and nutrition-related programs, services and providers located in the surrounding area. The fair also featured demonstrations at the new fitness center, which is open for public use.

~Mock Trial Team 2011: The High School Mock Trial team made a strong appearance at the Montgomery County Courthouse at recent county competition, winning one case and narrowly losing the other. This year's fictitious case was Pat Parker vs. Village of Empireville and the Board of Trustees of the Village of Empireville. The case involved a civil lawsuit brought by a former student of the Excelsior High School who argued that the village violated constitutional due process by enacting a parking ban on the four streets bordering the school without following proper procedures for its enactment. Therefore, "Parker" argued, the parking ban is void and illegal. Students, divided into defense and plaintiff teams, were scored by a judge on how well they presented their case. Team members took on different roles like defense attorney, plaintiff's attorney, defense witness and plaintiff witness. Each school competed twice, once as plaintiff and once as the defense and scored points on technical issues such as opening and closing arguments, witness testimony, objections, arguing objections, introducing and using evidence & citing case precedents.

~Essay Winners: Seniors Avery Johnson and Tory Stella are local winners in the Dream Job Program essay contest sponsored by USA Today and Bryant & Stratton. Students in Kathie DeKalb's money management class chose a career, conducted in depth research on it including educational requirements, job prospects, potential salary, and created a career portfolio. Then they wrote a 500-word essay explaining why they chose that career as their "dream job." A group of



Fort Plain teachers judged the essays and selected five to be sent to Albany for further judging. Those judges selected Johnson and Stella to represent Fort Plain at a recognition dinner in May. One student from the ten schools chosen for the program will be selected for a deluxe job shadowing experience. All students in DeKalb's class will shadow someone locally who works in their "dream job." Johnson's chosen career is dairy farmer and Stella's is school psychologist.

~Cakes Fit for a King: Students in Maria Burton's Fascinating Foods class made Mardi Gras style "King's Cakes" as part of their study of Creole foods from the Louisiana region. The cake, which is more like a yeast bread, is made with cinnamon, sugar, pecans and other ingredients and is shaped like a crown. It is decorated in purple, representing faith; gold, representing power, and green, representing justice.

~Newspaper Writing Award: Sixth grade student Julia Stockwell has won first place in the Student Gazette writing competition sponsored by The Gazette newspapers, Schenectady. Julia won in the news/feature category for her story about a fire in Fort Plain teacher Patrick Hanifin's garage. Contest winners, parents, grandparents, and teachers have been invited to a reception at The Gazette on April 27 where prizes will be awarded. The Student Gazette which includes Julia's story will be inserted in The Daily Gazette of May 13.



~Tea and Cakes: Mrs. Angus' class celebrated spring by making and decorating Easter cakes. With the help of volunteer, Jamie Norton, each member of the class worked to decorate a bunny cake and several egg-shaped cakes. They served the cakes at a party with Mrs. Close's class. In another activity, Mrs. Angus' class learned about manners and etiquette in conjunction with their social studies lessons about the English colonists.

They held a tea party, sampling various flavors. The students decided to dress up for this formal event. Rules such as sit up straight, chew with mouth closed, asked to be excused, and help clear the table were all reinforced. After such a good time at the tea party, the students decided to carry their good manners over to everyday living.