

OnTop November Newsletter

Bobby Riley (Principal)

As a school we rely heavily on the larger community to provide the best experiences to our students. In the spirit of thanksgiving I wanted to extend gratitude to these community partners. We are fortunate to have so many talented and nurturing people interested in our success. I am overwhelmed daily at how so many members of Burlington, and beyond, are invested in our schools.

Thanks for making this a great place to be a part of:

Stern Center
Inclusive Arts Vermont
Howard Center
Flynn Theater
Hoehl Foundation

A Look at Novembers Classwork

ONTOP

Lauren and Ben

Students recently completed reading *Copper Sun*, which proved to be an engaging read for all students. It spurred an organic, student-led discussion about what books/genres they would like to read next. They also brainstormed many "outside the box" project ideas they can do as culminating activities. It has been really exciting watching the students grow and push out of their comfort zones so far this year and we can't wait to see what the next quarter brings.

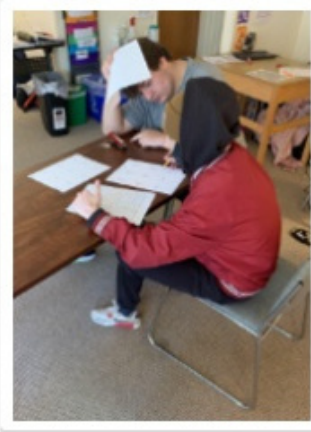
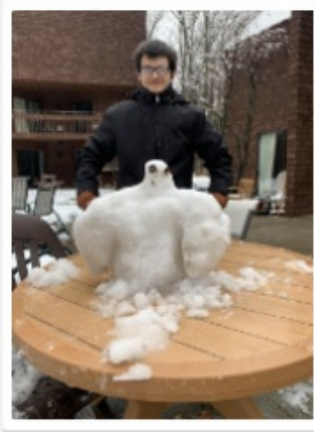
Jessie and Steve

Our class read the book, *Copper Sun*, which was well received by everyone. While it was a hard topic, it was an important one to explore and better understand. The intention of reading this historical novel

was an important one to explore and better understand. The intention of reading this historical novel was to support the class reading of *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You*, which we will be restarting next month. We have continued to explore ourselves, our interests, and possible career paths by using various tools that help by aligning our interest with careers. We have started an ecology unit and have plans to work with Echo, starting next month.

Roz and Michael

Since the defamation lawsuit against Alex Jones led to the biggest monetary award in history- nearly \$1 billion- for the plaintiffs, the students have been learning about and discussing the 1st Amendment. They have opted to continue learning about the Constitution and the complexities that accompany its interpretation and enforcement. Each student has also been working on independent projects of their choosing and/ or looking at learning opportunities outside of the classroom.



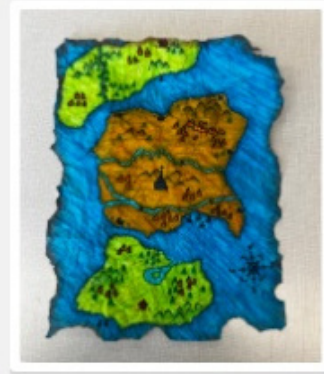
HORIZONS

Sam Comai

In quarter two, students in *The History of Lake Champlain and Vermont* explored the origins of the American Revolution and the importance which Lake Champlain held in building a nation. Students showed particular interest in the strategic decision-making required for the Colonists to win The Revolution. In the spirit of student-centered learning, I provided students with a fictional decision-making activity in which they were to "solve" a national conflict that I had created. One piece of the assignment was to draw a map of the nations involved, while the other was to create a written action plan on how they would address the crisis. The first picture is an example of a student's map! The final project for Q2 was an independent study into any aspect of Vermont/Lake Champlain during the American Revolution. Students chose a variety of topics from Molly Stark to Fort Ticonderoga.

Quarter three has been all about industrialization and commerce. We kicked off the unit by running with an apparent excitement with maps. Students created "maps on the fly" where they started with a single road and slowly added elements until they had created a small industrialized city. This starting point allowed students to understand the ways that industrialization and commerce shaped communities. These ideas and skills lead us to write LEAF paragraphs that answer the question "How did industrialization change America?" Through a variety of sources, students generated a specific claim and defended it with concrete evidence (the basis of argumentative writing). As we move forward, we are

going to “zoom” back in on Vermont and answer questions like: Did Vermont experience the Industrial Revolution? What did commerce once look like on Lake Champlain? And what industries existed or still exist in the Green Mountain State?



Sam P.

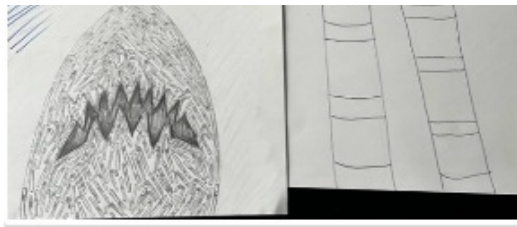
TRIG/STATS: We wrapped up trigonometry, learning about all sorts of cool applications, from stock market predictions, to the nature of music, to attempts in the 1900's to stop the nuclear arms race before it even began! We now have turned our attention to statistics. We are building a solid foundation of probability that will allow us to access important core statistical concepts, with a goal to finish the semester off with our own experimental analyses!

CONCEPTS OF ALGEBRA II: We have worked our way up from lines to quadratics, learning many useful techniques for solving such equations. We now put those skills to use and have begun studying polynomials in their entirety. We will finish the semester off with a look into the world of functions!

Jada

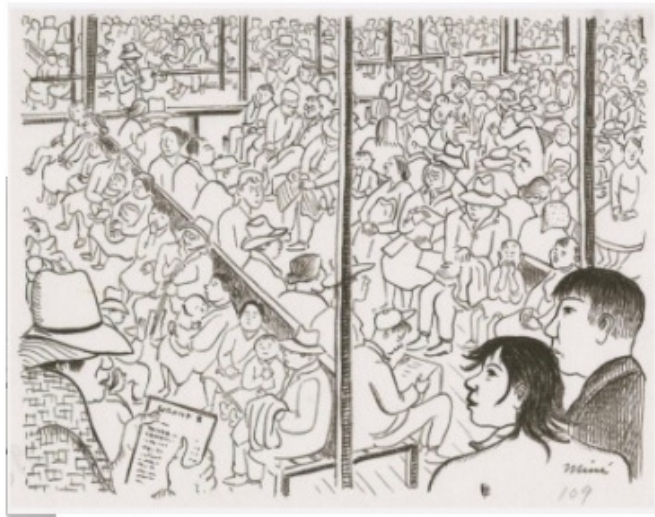
Natural Science students moved beyond our rocky foundation and began exploring external natural hazards that have the potential to lead to disasters with lasting, life-altering outcomes for so many. Looking at Hurricane Katrina, how it was handled, and who was impacted the most. Students are understanding how natural disasters have a disparate impact on the economically disadvantaged, as does climate change. Yet, climate change IS something that ultimately will harm all living things, regardless of status. They created protest posters to increase awareness, and focus on an aspect of climate change that concerns them most.





Genevera

Contemporary Lit & Culture classes recently finished reading [*They Called Us Enemy* by George Takei](#). In mid-October, through the generosity of a [JANM Bid for Education grant](#), all Horizons students were able to experience an interactive virtual visit to the Japanese American National Museum, and—through creative depictions by both visual artists and everyday people—get a glimpse into what life was like for Japanese Americans in incarceration camps in the 140s. During this unit, we explored the ways in which precise language matters when we talk about history, and learned about euphemism as a way of attempting to soften harsh truths. We continued to develop our visual literacy skills. Finally, students created one-page graphic novel-style depictions of their learning. We're now wrapping up a mini-unit on digital citizenship, communication on social media platforms, and strategies for identifying the creator/author's objective or primary purpose when we encounter pieces of information in multiple contexts. Going into break, we watched a [PBS documentary called *TikTok Boom*](#).



Ann

Applied Math:

We continued our study of personal finances with a focus on understanding savings. We created some questions about our personal interests when it comes to our finances and we reached out to banking specialists to get answers. No banking specialists had time to meet with us due to understaffing. These questions are going to be the foundation our our semester end projects. Stay tuned for more about that!

Concepts of Literature:

We unpacked the vocabulary of [*The Fifth Wave*](#) by Rick Yancey. We also continued our read aloud of the book which was very intense! Students couldn't wait until we got through the reading and they all watched the movie on their own time. Let's just say there were many spoiler alerts! Our next work will

watched the movie on their own time. Let's just say there were many spoiler alerts. Our next work will move into Theme/Scene projects. Stay tuned!

Advisory: Our advisory is about to complete the MAPs process which will provide an excellent resource to draw from to create our individual learning plans. We will start small and then try a semester long plan. Here are a few pictures of our school wide Pumpkinator Catapult Challenge!

