



# THE CURRENT

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The Newsletter of The North Branch School

## Multitudes Queue Up for Auction, Nourishment and Dancing

By Reed Martin

In December, we held an NBS fundraising event at the Town Hall Theater in lovely Middlebury. We students were more than excited to go.

When I walked into the back door of the theater, I thought that I had entered a reception for a wedding. The organizers had outdone themselves with lots of round cloth-covered tables and beautiful place settings. The lights all around the walls cast multicolored patterns floating across the upper walls and ceilings.

Many of the NBS students, including me, reported for duty in the lobby and got ready to sell balloons. These balloons were filled with gift certificates to a local business. This was one of the many creative ways we raised money for our school. We skipped around asking people in the crowd if they wanted to buy balloons.

The hall slowly filled with noise as more and more people came into the theater. Meanwhile, downstairs was the silent auction. Hanging up all around the walls and sitting on the tables were hundreds of items for sale. Some were concrete objects, such as cards, sweaters, furniture and paintings, while others were things like dog-walking, skating lessons and art lessons.

Back upstairs on the stage, a huge buffet table groaning with food was starting to come alive as everyone queued up for nourishment. Then a slideshow came on of North Branch students, both alumni and current students. This created a lot of sighing and laughing among the crowds.

After this, the live auction began with a rousing speech by Jeff Pratt, father of Kiley. The bidding started. Paddles were raised and shouts rang out, followed by applause for the brave bidders. Many things were sold, including paintings, Red Sox tickets, Italian dinners, island vacations and science camp in Colorado. Things got exciting as bids got higher and higher.

Then it was time for the contra dance. All of the fancy table and chairs were cleared away, and Atlantic Crossing came onto the stage. There were many hours of dancing and it seemed like it could go on forever. People of all sizes and shapes danced until their shoes broke apart and then we danced barefoot. Our headmaster, Tal Birdsey, told his students that we better be dancing, but strangely, Mr. Birdsey was spotted sitting on the sidelines. He claims that he suffered a knee-cap injury at one of his book readings...Hmmm.

After the dancing, people cleared out, leaving in hordes. Downstairs the auction was done, things (money!) were getting counted, and a table was covered in filled out bid sheets. Upstairs, the clean-up crew was cleaning madly. Even though a couple of plates were broken in the frenzy, by the time the clock chimed eleven the floors and tables shone.

The last few items were loaded into muddy Subarus and driven away. All in all, this was a very successful event, and we can't wait until next year!

### Almighty Wreath Sellers Sell Mighty, Shiny, Holiday Wreaths

By Rider MacCrellish

This year and every year we the annual wreath selling fundraiser. This fundraiser helps a bit with the scholarship fundraising efforts. It is also the only one completely relying on the young scholars attending the North Branch School to earn the money. In this case, to sell the wreaths.

So all (or at least most) of the loyal NBSers take to the trusty telephone, email or face-booking machines to sell wreaths.

After two weeks of phoning, bribing, consulting, crying, scratching, clawing, forcing, fighting and most of all being very polite, we brought our wreath order forms back to school, leaving them strewn about the big room table. Some of them sadly scribbled on, with numbers like \$75 and \$82, all but one...one shining light in that pile. One shining piece of paper neatly placed in front of Tal's messy piles, with the number 372 under the total amount of dollars made. That shining piece of paper, that holy grail of

numbers and names, that utopian sliver of a tree, happened to be mine. Oh yes, Rider Cady MacCrellish, the proud writer of this article and, most of all, the great, heroic champion wreath seller. With a total of 21 wreaths and \$372, I was the champion, the almighty contact-er, begger, wheedler, and most of all, the politest of all.

So you might ask what was my drive for this money that I made? You might think that I wanted to be noticed. Put in a great spotlight that only shone on the shiny people. If you think this you are correct. Very correct.

But you do not know the whole of my pursuit. I made this money not for myself, but for the school. For the beautiful place that I come everyday to learn, see and grow. I come here to be a greater person. The least I can do is to give back. I care about my school. I care about it a lot. I care about what I do here and what everyone does here. I want it to be a place that everyone cares about and that everyone loves.

So this was my small way to say thank you. Thank you for what you have given me North Branch.

I also want to acknowledge Yared for making the second highest amount of money. Yay Yared!

# Three Projects: An Overview

*For Aylee's project on "Fruitlands," the Transcendentalist Commune started by Bronson Alcott, she asked the following questions and got the following answers:*

**Do you think you would be happy living in Fruitland's? Why? Why not? What did it have and what was it lacking?**

"I think I would love to be free of society and the life that I led here. It would be a chance to live away from the world, but together with people who wanted to be free too. To try to try to be different and to step away from the earth for a while, to know how to live with nothing, but to try to find what is in that nothing. To find truth in the smallest, hardest things is actually what I want to find." ~ Bryn

"It was lacking a work force of people that actually wanted to work and grow food. I think I either would have liked or hated it." ~ Miles

"I think that even if work is hard, that somehow you can find beauty in it. Maybe they found beauty in laziness but I certainly wouldn't." ~ Anna

**Why, spiritually, do you think Fruitland's failed?**

"We are all humans yet different enough to have different ideas of what greatness is. And there isn't one right way. The world isn't peaceful because there are 6.8 billion minds with different ideas." ~ Henry

"If you want to succeed, you have to learn to love what is hard and you have to learn to find the beauty in words. I think they came close to that but not close enough." ~ Anna

"I think they ran into the complications of putting thought into words. The boundaries of thought and action. Their intentions, their devotion to their intentions, was admirable. Their willingness to try to live out their intentions, the risk involved, the possibility that a great goal can fail, is an important lesson." ~ Tal

"It is probably easier to be utopian as an individual- within a single human heart." ~ Rose

"Maybe in a utopia you still have to work. You still have to have something to strive for, some universal goal that you are continually working towards. If people were coming to Fruitlands to eat and talk and not work they were defeating the purpose of utopia. They were no longer striving towards their common goal." ~ Cassie

"To live with simplicity, you must first master complexity, and create a greater complexity in your mind, to simplify the complexity around you." ~ Jesse

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*In Kiley's Utopia Project on the Quakers, she asked the following questions, including our attempt to have a "Quaker meeting":*

**What did you think about when you were doing the silent meditation? Was it related to the Quakers or Utopia? If you had something you wanted to say, or if you said something, was it hard to speak out of the silence, or to try and make you speak out of the silence?**

"I thought that the silence filled me, warmth was inside of me and I didn't have to think or if I didn't want to think I didn't have to. I had a strong feeling that seemed to take me over and I felt my heart and mind trying to make myself jump up and start yelling and talking and maybe even laughing for something, the thing that was flowing through me and the thing I could barely control. It was exhilarating to almost see the words flowing above us and almost merging as we said the words. It hung in the air and those words wanted nothing from us, just to fill us up and that's all I wanted to do." ~ Bryn

"I had a million things I wanted to say. Things that I would never say under normal circumstances. So many things, the best part of me that not a soul in the world knows but me. The very essence of myself

that I wish I could show easily. As I was contemplating talking, my heart was beating so fast, maybe faster than it ever had beat. I felt truly alive, I felt a feeling that I can't describe that was just purely amazing. After we stopped I felt a different feeling, I started shivering. Maybe because in my thought before, I had been thinking so much as if I was on fire, and that made me immune to the bad. Or maybe it was something else. I don't know." ~ Anna

"I was thinking about Ellen, and I was listening to everyone and thinking about how I felt the same way, and I was feeling the tears in my eyes and I was wondering why my tears wouldn't break and fall away but they were just suspended there, barely out of reach." ~ Jesse

"I loved it. There's something about the silence that actually made me feel closer to everyone because even though nobody said anything I knew that they were all thinking something relatively significant. I had so many things to say and I was afraid to break the silence and leave my thoughts out there, hovering in the air." ~ Hannah

"During the silent meditation, for most of it I was thinking about how I didn't want to say something because I was afraid of the silence that would come after it. And I didn't want to break the silence because that idea didn't feel right. The silence felt right. I wanted my thoughts to be my own. I didn't want to open myself up and share. I wanted to have something that was private, that people didn't know. The silence felt comfortable." ~ Isabel

**Pick one of the quotes, or part of the project, and describe how it made you feel and how it relates to Utopia:**

*"Right is right, even if everyone is against it, and wrong is wrong, even if everyone is for it" - William Penn*

"In 1984 Winston believes that there is a reality, there is a truth, even if no one in the whole world believes in it. O'Brien says he's wrong. He says that reality can not exist outside of ourselves. I believed

Winston, but I didn't know why. Maybe it was just that I wanted him to be right to find Utopia, to see the light of God, we need to believe in a truth that is separate from us. We need to believe that there is always a right thing to do even if no one else does it." ~ Cassie

"Rooted ideas of feelings are what they are, unaffected by who believes or objects to them. The commodities or materials attached to the idea only disguise and disfigure it on the surface. The inner part, the meaning, and the honesty will always be able to shine through the layers that so often interfere." ~ Henry

**Think about the people in this project and pick one. How did they think they were creating Utopia? How far did they go and what sacrifices were they willing to make for their beliefs and Quakerism?**

"I think it is like what we were talking about today, about how if you work so hard for something, if you put your whole heart into it, then you will feel great. I think this is what we want here, we want to find a single purpose and go to it together, to the Great Place, and put our whole hearts into it, our soul into it, and try to give ourselves to each other." ~ Sophie

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***For Sarah's project on Thoreau, she asked the following questions and got the following answers:***

**What do you think of when you think of religion? Who comes to mind when you think of Utopia? Who or what do you think of when you think about Freedom and Revolution?**

"When I think of Utopia I don't necessarily get a picture in my mind, but I get a feeling that I can't explain, like the one I got in Saint Johns. I get the feeling that I think is freedom. I don't know. I guess I see waves, and the horizons over the ocean, or trees and warm air, or simply the sound of birds and the wind."

"No one comes to my mind because I think the most important thing connected to those things are ideas. I think utopia, god or religion should make ideas, not images of people. The meaning lies in the ideas they inspire, not the desires that are created."

"I think religion is a group utopia. It is a way of finding freedom. If you have no culture or religion, then you have no freedom, because you have no sense of self, or place."

***Sarah also sent everyone outside to meditate. Then she asked:***

**What were you feeling when you were concentrating on something outside? What was provoked in your mind? Why did you pick it as the thing to focus on?**

"I was thinking about when I was looking at a dried up flower, so small, that seemed like it didn't matter, but did. It matters to something, and maybe it mattered to me, sitting on that cold rock with the sun shining warmer than the wind on my back. I looked at the lines on my palm as a map of another part of me. And I could see more clearly the deep lines that made me up, forcing me to see myself. Even when I can't, and don't want to see myself, looking at the palms of my hands makes me."

"I was looking at a clover with a tiny drop of dew on it, and it reminded me of the book we are reading, and a coral inside a glass ball. It is like the world, we are trapped inside this world, but somehow we can leave. And when we are outside we are in Utopia, and it is just not meant for us."

"I had a small berry that I picked from the tree beside the big rock by the soccer field. It was shriveled and wrinkly and I was thinking about why things grow old. And why life goes on and the "human" race survives. And what separates us from animals and plants? Are we really as different as we seem? Why do humans have thoughts, and do not live simply by instinct?"

"I looked at a plain piece of gravel. The gravel was plain, but when I looked closer I saw all the different parts of it, and thought of all the different things inside me. How

sometimes I may look like one thing, but I am many things, many emotions."

**What is your idea of living simply? How well do you live simply already? What could you do to live more simply? Is simplicity a meaningful goal for you?**

"Henry David Thoreau said that there are four essential facts of life; sustenance, shelter, clothing, and company — humans, animals and plant. These are the only things we need to live. The tip of a fern that I chose to meditate on, that was from such a big and complex place. It didn't know. It only knew itself, but in a way it was still there for other beings to do something to, it is still at their mercy, but it doesn't know they exist. It doesn't know it comes from chaos, it simply knows itself, and its elemental needs. The other day I was reading *The Life of Pi* about zoos and animals. It was talking about the people having an idea of what an animals life in the wild was like, and they made it seem like a simple utopia, but it wasn't really like that, living wasn't that perfect for them, it was just about survival. Living simply is like living without little pleasures, so you're forced to get pleasure from elsewhere. And that's how life used to be for humans too, but than we made it simpler in a different way, so we don't need to be constantly fighting for survival. It's simpler, but not the bare essence of life, which I think is truly living simply."

"I think that I am trying to sort out my thoughts, to organize them, and analyze them. I think this is my way of trying to live more simply, more organized, and the organization leads to a beautiful chaos. In the silence there will be noise, and in the simplicity there can grow beautiful patterns of thoughts and ideas."

"Simplicity could mean simplicity materialistically, or spiritually. Simplicity materialistically is 99% useless, so get rid of that and make room for thoughts, ideas, and feelings. I don't think we should live simply spiritually, because we will become feeling-less, stone-like, and boring."

# North Branch Jeopardy Gamesters Challenge Each Other With Skill, Cunning and Ruthless Treachery

By Sarah Miller

It was the final event in a series of very satisfying competitive events: first Skating at Middlebury College, then Toothpick Bridges, and then the Annual Jeopardy Game. By that time all the loser-y people who failed at toothpick bridges were declaring that they would win, and that their team would succeed, et cetera, and so on. And so, on that note, we began.

No professional photographers were on hand to record our failings and misdeeds this year around; we simply had Tal, who at times, seemed more interested in his crumbly sandwich than our resounding triumphs.

It started off with some interesting enough categories, such as 'On Top of their Game,' 'The Good Place,' 'You Can do it if You Tri-,' 'The Only Thing that Stays the Same is Change,' and 'Going to the Mountain,' all topics related to things we have studied this year. Some students submitted questions such as " $a^2+b^2=c^2$ " (what is the Pythagorean theorem?) by Rio; "A word meaning three symbols, from the Greek words for *three* and *write* (what is a tri-graph?) by Isabel; and "To make capital, capital must be spent" (who is Adam Smith?) by Rider.

The third round got harder, when it turned into Double Jeopardy, with some tricky ones such as, "This element's atomic number is 26" (what is iron?) submitted by Simon, for a whopping 1,000 points, and "This war began to expand with the placement of 16,000 military advisors in this region" (what is Vietnam?) and "This fruit ends the tale about the search for an American Eden" (what is a lemon, in *The Red Pony*?), and "PPM of atmospheric CO2 at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution" (what is 275 parts per million?)

Round 4 turned into Triple Jeopardy, with the Blue Team in the lead, then Yellow, then Red, than Green with only a couple hundred, though they had a large opportunity to bounce back, as the largest amount

you could get was 3,500. There were a couple hard questions like "This playwright wrote *Death of a Salesman* and dated the blond celebrity once known as Norma Jean" (who is Arthur Miller?) and "The amount of money used to build Thoreau's cabin on Walden Pond (what is \$28.12?) submitted by Lydia, and "The reason Leonardo DaVinci wrote in his notebooks right to left, and backwards" (what is because he was left handed and didn't want to ruin/smear his writing/sketches?) submitted by Henry.

Finally it was time for the final question. The Blue Team bet all but 146 points, Yellow bet all but 147 points, Red bet all but 100 points, and Green bet it all.

The answer was "The Welshman under the apple boughs sang the last three lines like this," and the answer was:

*Oh as I was young and easy in the  
mercy of his means,  
Time held me green and dying  
Though I sang in my chains like the sea.*

Sadly, not one team fully understood it, and all got it mostly wrong, resulting in a hasty annotation for a the final question from Tal, which ended up being: "This Harlem Renaissance poet believed that when he became a composer he would compose songs about this time and this place," and the answer was: "What is Langston Hughes and Daybreak in Alabama?" Three teams answered it correctly, though not the Blue team, which meant the score ended with Yellow: 25,547 points, Red: 18,032 points, Green: 16,265 points, and old Blue: 146 points. Thanks to Eric for designing the whole game!



*Students scrutinize the digital Jeopardy game board in a challenge of wit and wisdom.*

# Toothpick Bridges Over Troubled Teens

By “Fast Eddie” Edgar Sherman

This year we were asked by Rose to make tooth pick bridges using only flat tooth-picks and glue. We had to span a gap of 10 inches clear of supports. It could be no longer than 18 inches and could not weigh more than 85 grams (3oz.).

All the bridges were weighed before the testing. We had all kinds of bridges, most were truss bridges but we also had arch bridges, Pratt truss bridges, Pennsylvania truss bridges, and a bridge in the shape of an equilateral triangle, and more. There were also log-type bridges, such as Claire’s bridge, which held up more than expected. There was also a “Meskie’s last minute” bridge that held up “Diddily squat,” which was the bucket.

The strategy was to have the lightest bridge, because the weight is measured by

weight-to-mass ratio. It was very suspenseful watching the bridges hold up the bucket because we didn’t know how much our bridges could hold. Oliver’s didn’t even hold up the bucket.

Then there were the bridges that went over the weight limit: Miles’ bridge, Rio’s bridge and Lydia’s bridge all weighed over 85 grams. Miles was the heaviest because he literally used all of the schools wood glue; he just poured all of it over his bridge, encasing it in a tomb or yellow goo.

After much suspense, the three bridges that won were: “On the Edge,” which was mine and took third place; “Felix,” Cassie’s Bridge, in second place; and the winner was “Equality,” Nathan Wulfman’s bridge, holding a total of 35 pounds of sand in the bucket.

In the end many dreams were crushed along with the bridges, but the three winners all received some comfort cookies made by Sarah — first got the biggest cookie, second got a medium sized cookie, and third got a small cookie.

Later, Tal told me to find out what the bridge-building was all about. “What was the Philosophical, emotional, and/or intellectual meaning of the bridge building competition?” he asked. So I asked some others and here’s what they had to say:

**Henry:** “I think it is a project that is supposed to be for all of us together. Normally we are



*Calder preps his bridge for competition.*

in individual groups of ninth, eighth and seventh grade, but we do this all together.”

**Luke:** “Building bridges is like me and my brother trying to be together and show our compassion for each other. It helps connect the two of us.”

**Rose:** “Well, one way to see a bridge is as a way to get back and forth between two places, two states of mind, two ways of being. We have our practical sides; earthly, sensing, enmeshed in the details of everyday, reactive. Then we have our loftier sides, our source of intuition and insight, which is peaceful and all for the good. Another way to see a bridge is as a means of real connection/selfless love with others and the ability to go back to ourselves for renewal and reflection, to be alone. Whichever way you look at it, both sides are imperative. You want to build a strong, accessible bridge that can hold up under stress, not overburdened by its own weight. This is the work of a lifetime.”

**Tal:** “A chance to ‘reach’ across to the other side, to advance boldly in the direction of our dreams across the chasm of futility, the hope of reaching the unwritten future of the golden country”

**Isabel:** “Building bridges connects us and builds memories.”



*Nate and Reed make some final tweaks.*

# In Fantasy Land, We Manage Our Gridiron Greats

By Reed Messner

For the last eight weeks, we have been doing fantasy football in math class. Every Tuesday and Wednesday we tabulate the scores, and we are always hearing, “Yes, Ben Roethlisberger Rocks!” and “Ahhh come on! My team stinks,” and “Thirty points. Dang it!”

Each team consists of a quarterback, two running backs, three wide receivers/tight ends, one kicker and one defense. For those who haven’t already helped your children make their teams, each kid gets 25 million dollars to start with, and each player has a number of points that can be spent in order get the players on a team to keep the teams even. Better players cost more points, not-as-good players cost less. Then every week we look back at the last week to see how our players did in the games. If they do well, you score well. If they do not, then you don’t either.

I have learned my tricks to building a great team over the last few years, and now that I will be leaving this year, it is time to pass on the advice. I always pick my running backs first and spend the most money on them, as they are most important. Then I buy rookie wide-receivers, because rookies are always the cheapest players on the chart and they can be very good. Then I pick an expensive kicker, because they are never



*Ever studious, “Fast Eddie” Sherman takes an opportunity to get ahead on his science.*

over 2 million points, and they score fairly well. Then I pick my defense — it doesn’t really matter which one you pick because each one will only score you about 6-12 points the entire season. Finally, I use my remaining money to buy the most expensive quarterback who I think will play well.

As of now (and as of the entire season)

Bryn Martin, with the “Gallivanting Truffles” has been in the lead, with an incredible start, over 110 points! Her sister, Reed, with her team “Vegan, Tomorrow!” has been in close second for about the entire season also. So she’ll hope to jump in the lead during these last final weeks.

But as the fantasy football season is

coming to a close, young North Branchers need a new way to exert their football obsessions. We call it Revolution Football, and it is played on the frozen tundra of the North Branch driveway. It is normally about 8 kids ramming into each other, arguing, calling random penalties and occasionally throwing snowballs. We call going all the way around the driveway a touchdown. We only play during the winter as it is only fun whenever people are sliding and falling down. Sadly, or happily, I am usually one of them.



*Time out for some music. Yared is teaching Reed to play guitar.*

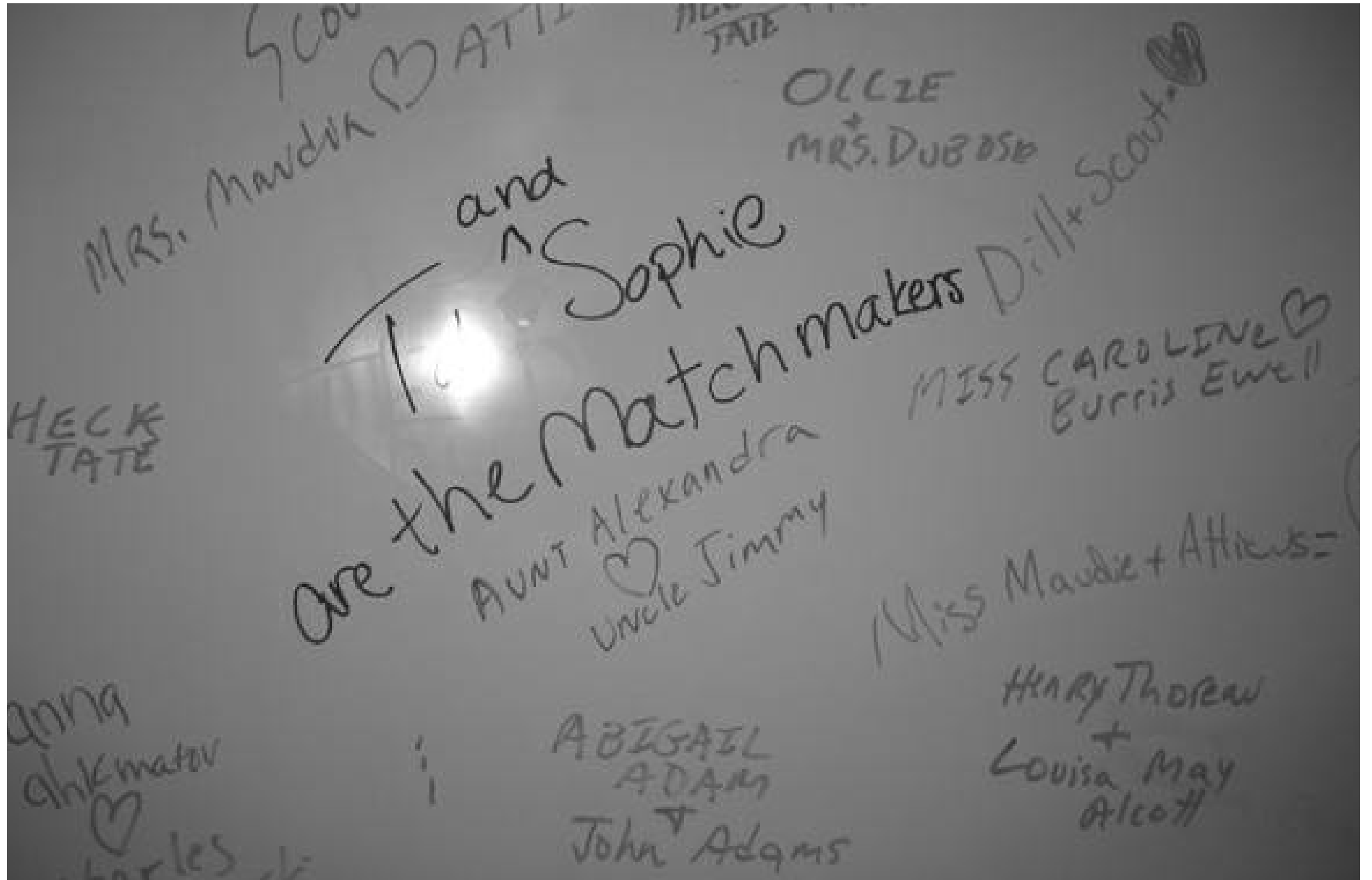
# NBS Blotter: Where Belly-Dancers, Streakers and Mala-Propisms Abound

It was a dull Thursday afternoon in the science room. Three NBS student were studiously cleaning up the science room. Then one of them yelled and jumped up onto one of Science tables, rolled up his shirt, and started belly dancing! The two other workers stared at this juvenile delinquent. But they could not tear their eyes from this disgusting sight. Neither could the crowd that had gathered. Then came the most saddening moment of all, the immature sevie finished with his “dancing” of sorts jumped off the table and, with a loud moan, landed on the recently mopped floor.

Will the teachers try to enforce a dress code to make sure that this “dancer” would never harm any eyes again? Will they rally for a “no belly dancing policy”? Many NBSers are asking, “Are we going to have to wear uniforms?”

These people are really worried! But who is to blame? Is it the teacher to blame for not being in his room? Or is the clothing to blame, for its ability to be pulled up to show the belly? Who knows how long it will take for all of these people to forget such a disturbing and disgusting sight.

There is a horrid rumor circulating around the school. Apparently one of our students has allegedly taken to watching streaker videos on YouTube down in the dark and gloomy basement. Rumor has it that he/she/it has hidden in locker/cubbies



NBS-style gossip...Anna Ahkmahtova loves Charles Bukowski!

to watch streaker videos on his/her/its laptop. Why the good ol' NBS school has fallen so low we do not know. Must we blame the design of the lockers to be able to fit a human male/female/things body and laptop? Should we blame the lax security of this school? What kind of school allows its students to hide away in a dark corner to look at disturbing videos of streakers? Guilty Party? Tal and the School Security Forces, of course.

Recently, the following sentences were actually written by actual students with no irony whatsoever, and with a little help from lazy spell-checkers:

**“Reed and I started to laugh historically.” (A memorable and hysterical occasion.)**

**“I was memorized and I couldn’t take my eyes off of him.” (He was so hot!)**

**“I think Winston Smith is another one of those Gundi types (Our hero of 1984, sort of Like Gondy, or Gandhi.)**

**“My grandmother and I are emotionally and fiscally close” (He plans on getting a huge inheritance.)**

**“Scout got mad at Walter when he poured malaises all on his dinner.” (A sickness worse than molasses!)**

**“When I am around Anneke, I feel exited.” (Pushed right out the door.)**

**“The African-Americans were going on a great gurney.” (Down the halls of the hospital they rolled.)**

**“O’Brien is like a money sucking son-of-a-BEACH!” (Arch-villain O’Brien spent much time in the Bahamas.)**

## ***Notable email to Tal from Donna:***

Your office has chairs. I think they are uniquely, wonderfully weird, so I had to buy them. They are low and for small-butted people. I found them on Craigslist (much more fun than eBay). They are from France. I’ve been on the lookout for low wooden varieties. They were very cheap. They were in Moretown. We drove through the beautiful backwood mountains to get them and thought we could live there. Many of the houses there are early and untouched. The seller is home-schooling his kids and connected to a group in Montpelier. We talked about schools. I asked for information about the chairs. He said they were too low for their table. Later he sent me the following:

*“I don’t know much about the chairs, but they are peasant style prayer chairs from the early 1900s. They have probably survived both the great wars, and heard many heartfelt prayers. They were probably stored in a barn at some point, because there is a little bit of wormy wood in them, which adds to their character. I got them from a woman in East Dorset, whose husband brought them over from France. I hope they work well in your situation, and see many more years of service!”*

# 18 Good Reasons to Get on the Nordic Skis and Race

By Lydia Allen

The Nordic ski team this year needs your help. We have three kids racing: Rider, Oliver and me, and then about 15 kids just skiing for fun. Which is great, but not as cool as racing.

When you go out for North Branch Nordic, you take on a very intense training plan. The coach, my mom Mia, has us go for a run to Lucky Seven down the road. It takes about a half an hour to get there and back. Then we go inside and do abs with ridiculous workouts with names like Penguins, TV Watchers, Cherry Pickers, Russian Twists, Chair Dips, and a favorite among Nordic nerds, Wall Sits. Mia claims we should watch TV while doing TV Watchers, but since we are on the floor holding up our weight with our elbows it is a little hard to see the television.

Sometimes we roller-ski on black top., which is dangerous because if you fall you don't not land in soft fluffy white stuff but on hard gravelly road. We also went hill bounding one day, which is like leaping up a hill with ski poles attached to your wrists.

We've only lately been able to hit the snow, since before vacation only a couple inches of wimpy flakes were on the ground. No matter what the conditions, we always find a way to do something active.

Consider this. If you join the Nordic Racers: 1) you get to wear awesome colorful spandex. 2) you get to go out and ski and get better. 3) You get to get good at going down hills really fast, and then you can go off of little dips in the trail like jumps. 4) You have an amazing time training, and then racing and then finding out you did really well. 5) You get to make more and

more friends, and you also get to become one of the cool people!

Until people finally understand how much fun racing is, we will have to make due with what we have. No matter how deprived the ski team numbers are, there will always be a few of us hard core types skiing around the grassy soccer fields.

***On a recent no-school-snow-day, Science teacher Eric emailed the following assignment: Try and read between the lines to see what it means.***

Additional Science Assignment — Do one or more of the following:

- \* Study the density, rigidity/fluidity, and temperature of snow by packing it into a ball and throwing it at a target
- \* Study the human body's reaction to temperature changes by exposing some part of your body to cold for brief periods of time.
- \* Explore the difference in the coefficients of both kinetic and static friction by sliding some object on snow or ice.
- \* Find out how the human body's respiratory system is affected by changes in atmospheric temperature and humidity by exerting yourself outside for a sustained period of time.

***Savvy North Branchers figured out what he meant. Can you?***

The North Branch School, founded in 2001, is a non-profit independent school serving middle school age children (grades 7-9). The school is officially recognized by the State of Vermont and meets or exceeds all licensing standards. The school is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt entity.

**Non-Discrimination Policy**  
 In hiring, admissions and administration, The North Branch School does not discriminate on the basis of physical ability, gender, race, national or ethnic origin, creed, socio-economic status, sexual orientation or religious affiliation.

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