

# A Very Busy December At AE/MS

By Jane Slayton  
Principal, AE/MS

To say that the month of December was busy at Andover Elementary/Middle School would be an understatement. December was packed full of activities between the academics. When 2:45 came on December 22, staff and students were ready for a much-deserved winter vacation.

The first Saturday in December found the gym overflowing with 350 wreaths waiting for decorations. PTO members began decorating in the wee hours of the morning while it was still dark. In record time, pine cones, berries, and bows were attached and the wreaths were waiting to be picked up by townspeople.

Wreaths were also delivered to area businesses and to Proctor Academy and now can be seen adorning doors and buildings throughout Andover. The PTO decorates and donates wreaths for all of the Town buildings in Andover and East Andover.

Wreath decorating ended in the early afternoon, and then it was time for the children to arrive. The PTO sponsored a Festival Of Fun On The Fourth to provide a safe, supervised, fun setting in which to leave children while parents took care of holiday errands or just had an afternoon for themselves.

Children aged four to 12 were left in the care of PTO members and AE/MS staff. Children enjoyed an afternoon of playing Giant Candyland in the gym, decorating and eating cookies, making holiday crafts, and watching a holiday movie. The children all enjoyed themselves and the parents were appreciative of having this childcare option during the busy month. It was a great afternoon and an event the PTO will offer every December.

The Andover Middle School bands and the Andover One Wheelers were also busy in December. The One Wheelers began the month by participating in the Christmas Parade in Merimac, Massachusetts. The beginner

and advanced bands then teamed up with the One Wheelers and took their holiday shows on the road. The groups performed for appreciative audiences at both the Salisbury and Webster Elementary Schools in December.

The bands performed many musical favorites in addition to demonstrating and teaching about the different instruments. The One Wheelers performed their newest production, The Polar Express.

Meanwhile in December, kindergarten through grade five students and the bands were busy rehearsing for the Winter Concert. The Winter Concert was performed for a standing-room-only crowd on December 9. Over 300 chairs had been set up, but still it was not enough. First and second grade students were adorable dressed in matching holiday garments. All the grades delivered an enjoyable performance. As always, the Andover Middle School bands continue to impress.

The traditional Holiday Shoppe was held on December 17 for all students in kindergarten through grade eight to make holiday purchases for family members. The quantity and quality of the donated items were unbelievable.

The Andover Middle School Student Council spent the month collecting canned goods to be delivered to Bread and Roses, a social service organization in Franklin. Staff and students all brought in items to donate. The Student Council has had a relationship with Bread and Roses for a few years now. In addition to donating food items, the students also help to serve and clean up at Bread and Roses throughout the year.

In December, the second grade classes contributed to the Heifer International Foundation this year rather than exchange presents. Approximately \$70 was raised to help feed those less fortunate.

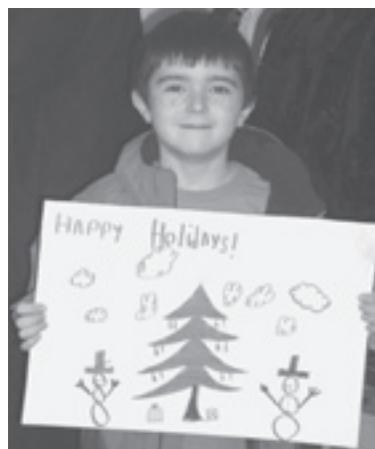
December has always been a busy month at AE/MS. Students and staff will return to school on January 3 well-rested and ready to tackle 2005 academically. January will bring with it State Testing for grades five and eight as well as our own writing assessment administered in grades one through eight.



AE/MS Student Council with food collected for Bread & Roses. Front: Abigail Lance, Tenzin Dickinson, advisor Melinda Siranian, Krystin Corliss. Back: John Bridgmon, Kellie St. Jacques, Allegra Zimmerman, Lizzie Rego, Amanda Gilchrist, Elizabeth Stearns, Brianne Graham. Photo by Gretchen Hildebrand



Nick Barton and Lisa Callum present the Pom Malai to Ms. Slayton. The Thai custom expressing thanks and respect was taught to students by Mrs. DeMinico, who used to teach in Thailand. Photo by Gretchen Hildebrand



Riley Anderson with his winning entry in the Andover Service Club's poster contest. Photo by Sharon Darling



Finalists in the Lions Club Peace Poster contest - Meredith Cline, Jen Connor, and Joshua Bennett - with their art teacher, Mrs. DeMinico. Missing is Shawna Barton. Joshua won the top prize. Photo by Ben Severance

## Letter from page 24

One school in every state is contributing letters handwritten by their third and fourth graders and addressed "Dear Mr. President." The mission of The World's Longest Letter project is to encourage America's young to think – and write – about their hopes, dreams, and concerns for the future of our country.

Gail Fitzpatrick, a fourth grade teacher, is coordinating the letter writing at AE/MS. As thanks for its participation, AE/MS and the schools selected in the other 49 states will each receive a donation of 500 pens, compliments of Pilot Pen.

The World's Longest Letter – containing the contributions of each of America's 50 states and the District of Columbia – will be delivered to Washington in February at which time the scroll will be publicly unveiled.

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