

*Our 5th Anniversary!*  
**Andover Beacon**  
 AndoverBeacon.com    October 2009    \$2.00



Local Proctor students sailing aboard the schooner *Westward* for the fall term are (l-r) Sophie Viandier, Madison Koenig, Jackson Bicknell, and Story Southworth.  
 Photo: Chuck Will

## Local Proctor Students Head Abroad For Learning Experiences

By Chuck Will  
 Proctor Academy

Proctor is well known for its experiential education programs, and six local students are taking advantage of off-campus learning opportunities this fall. Andover's Jesse George is one of four Proctor kids studying at The Country School in the Pacific coast town of Tamarindo, Costa Rica. While there, she is tackling American literature, geometry, Spanish, US history, and an environmental science class that visits everything from active volcanoes and dense jungles to beaches where leatherback turtles hatch millions of eggs! One of her teachers reports, "Jessica has been on a rafting expedition, visited a

sustainable farm, and enjoyed a sunset bonfire on the beach."

Josh Bennett is studying at Proctor's language immersion program in Segovia, Spain. Living with a local family, he is gaining a whole year's credit in Spanish language while attending classes taught by Proctor teachers. In addition, he is earning credits in English literature and history. One of nine Proctor students in the program, Josh is enjoying weekend excursions across Spain. The toughest part may be adjusting to local cuisine, which includes roasted baby pig, squid, and octopus!

Jackson Bicknell, Story Southworth, Sophie Viandier, and Madison Koenig  
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Sy Montgomery, a famous nature writer, enthralled AE/MS students and staff during her recent visit.  
 Photo: Gretchen Hildebrand

## Global Adventurer and Author Visits AE/MS

By Jane Slayton  
 AE/MS Principal

Sy Montgomery, an author of books for children and adults, shared her talents with Andover Elementary/Middle School students on September 18. Among her award-winning books are *Journey of the Pink Dolphins*, *Spell of the Tiger*, *The Snake Scientist*, *The Tarantula Scientist*, *The Good Good Pig*, *Search for the Golden Moon Bear*, *Walking with the Great Apes* and her newest book, *Saving the Ghost of the Mountain: An Expedition Among Snow Leopards in Mongolia*.

Sy has had extraordinary experiences which totally enthralled the students and staff. Sy has traveled to Peru and Brazil to study and swim with the pink dolphins of the Amazon. On other expeditions, she was chased by an angry silverback gorilla in Zaire; bitten by a vampire bat in Costa Rica; undressed by an orangutan in Borneo; and hunted by a tiger in India.

She also worked in a pit crawling with 18,000 snakes in Manitoba; handled a wild tarantula in French Guiana; and swam with piranhas  
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## AE/MS Expands Curriculum With Free Online Classes

By Jane Slayton  
 Principal, AE/MS

There is something new and exciting at AE/MS this fall. AE/MS has partnered with the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS) to help expand our curriculum. This allows AE/MS to offer further enrichment opportunities for students.

One of our students is using VLACS to accelerate his math program while still remaining with his classmates. Although this student is only seven years old, he taking an accelerated middle school math course.

The pace of the course is determined solely by the student. The student has a  
 See VLACS on page 51

## Merrimack Valley High News

By Mike Jette  
 MVHS Principal

Merrimack Valley High School progress reports were given to all students to take home to parents on September 30. We no longer mail them because the information is available online to all parents and students.

Congratulations to Kevin O'Brien for being named the Class I Athletic Director of the Year by the New Hampshire Athletic Directors Association. Mr. O'Brien puts so much time, energy, and attention into the daily co-curricular programs of our school. The MVHS community recognizes how tremendous his contributions are for our students. Thank you, Mr. Kevin O'Brien!  
 Our school recently received a check

from Target for \$289.24 through their Partners in Education program. To help our school, please designate Merrimack Valley High School as the school linked to your Target REDcard. Up to 1% of your purchases charged to this card will be donated to our school to help support teachers and students with things not covered by the budget.

Did you know that Merrimack Valley High School is perhaps the only New Hampshire high school that has an actual person answer every incoming phone call? Other schools leave parents surfing through a maze of options to reach a person (perhaps). This is part of our commitment to strengthen partnerships between our school and community.



Andover's Long Tail Monkeys got the school year off to a rockin' start with a performance in AE/MS' newly-renovated gym. (L-r) Logan Marcus, Sam Barrett, and Tyler Holman. Inset: Max Barrett.  
 Photo: Jane Slayton