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## From the Desk of the Director

Spring of 2011—we live in amazing times, do we not? As this school year winds to a close, I am struck by recent events, some of them historic in proportion, that have touched the lives of all of us across the United States and, indeed, around the world. I wonder about the impact world events, national disasters of epic proportions, political wrangling, and revolutions will have on our young people. Our five-year-old granddaughter asks pointed questions far beyond her years—“Papa, is that war in Libya still going on? When will it be over?” Even as I am challenged to come up with answers to those questions, she comes back with, “I have a friend in school whose name is half of Libya—Libby!” I smile, assured that though she is troubled by the things she hears swirling around her, her innocence is still intact, her fresh view of the world evident. It is my wish that, though members of National English Honor Society, both students and Advisors, have a broader view of the realities of the world in which we live than our granddaughter, there remain in all of us a hope for the future, a belief that the dreams that are nurtured in our homes, schools, and communities will come to be realized.

This is the time of year for reflection as well as anticipation. For NEHS chapters, spring often marks the induction of new members, the election of officers for the coming year, reflection of past chapter accomplishments, and the initial planning of new projects. In most schools, this is also the month for the arrival of yearbooks, a time of nostalgia and laughter as pictures and stories unfold in the annual reviews. Such is the case with the publication of this year’s *Museletter*. With the introduction of monthly newsletters going to chapters, *The Museletter* has “morphed” into more of an end-of-year summary, not unlike a yearbook, reflecting some of the highlights of the past year, praising those whose efforts have won them recognitions, and spotlighting chapter activities that demonstrate the best intentions of our honor society.

Several key steps have taken place over the course of the year to enhance the stature and effectiveness of National English Honor Society. Some of those items are:


- We launched NEHS Connect, our new data management system, that we hope will support chapters with an easier process to enroll members, manage chapters, and pay fees. We will continue to improve the system as it becomes more established, and we welcome any suggestions you would like to share.
- As mentioned earlier, we now produce a monthly newsletter, NEHSXpress, bringing more timely information to each chapter.
- We are now approaching 450 chapters of NEHS across the country and this year welcomed our second chapter in China. While our “international” presence is limited, along with our two chapters in China, we also have one in Turkey.
- The identification and promotion of a common reader program, not only as a basis for scholarship essays but also as an effort to link chapters and communities, continues to be successful. Many schools are adopting the NEHS selection as part of summer reading programs and as an addition to established curricula. The common reader for 2011-2012 is *Old School* by Tobias Wolfe.

We hope that this new “yearbook” format for the *Museletter* meets with your approval. We would love to have chapters share their outstanding efforts impacting the literacy lives of those in their schools and communities; please consider submitting an article for next year’s publication.

In closing, let me express my gratitude to each of you for the dedication and commitment you provide National English Honor Society each year. From its fledgling beginnings, NEHS has grown to one of the largest subject-specific honor societies in existence. Amazing things are happening as students and their advisors reach out to others to share their passion for the English language arts. It is so evident to me that all of you believe in and model our motto every day—“Gelast Scael Mid Are—Duty Goes with Honor.” It is an honor for me to work with all of you—I wish you a peaceful and wonderful summer.

Dave Wendelin, NEHS Director

# Scholarship Winners



Scholarship applicants this year were asked to respond to prompts based on *Enrique's Journey* by Sonia Nazario. This non-fiction account of the harrowing journey that Central American children attempt to make to reach the United States elicited many fine essays. Winners for this year are listed below; we have also included a few edited segments of background information from each of their scholarship applications.

**Anisha Gururaj**  
**Parkway Central High School, Chesterfield, MO**  
**Chapter Advisor, Jason Lovera**

Ms. Gururaj is the recipient of the \$3,000 William C. Johnson NEHS Scholarship. Anisha is secretary of her NEHS chapter. In her background essay, Anisha wrote, "There is a famous anecdote of a big fish in a little pond, who believed that he was the greatest fish of all time—until he visited the ocean. Instead of seeking power or environments that give me the appearance of greatness, I, like every other "fish" on this planet, must strive toward the potential epitomized in higher education."

**Rachel Burns**  
**Red Bank Regional High School, Little Silver, NJ**  
**Chapter Advisor, Andrew Forrest**

Ms. Burns is the recipient of the \$2,000 NEHS Advisory Council Scholarship. Ms. Burns has been an active member of her NEHS chapter, noting how memorable it has been that her Chapter Advisor starts each society meeting by reading a poem. In her remarks, Rachel references *Enrique's Journey* and says, "Next year I will be attending Williams College, majoring in Political Economy with a concentration in International Studies. My goal is not to lose sight of the human stories hidden beneath every political debate, glossed over with generalizations, abstractions, and statistics. I hope to continue with this mindfulness throughout my career."

**Vanessa Pereira**  
**W.T. Clarke High School, Westbury, NY**  
**Chapter Advisor, Richard Heller**

Ms. Pereira is one of the recipients of a \$1,500 scholarship provided by Sigma Tau Delta. During the 2010-2011 school year, Vanessa served as president of her NEHS chapter. Writing about her chapter, she shares, "In the philanthropic aspect of our honor society, we have been teaching students how to Braille so that we can continue to send brailled children's books to the blind in Malawi, Africa." Vanessa hopes to major in International Business, with a minor in French language and literature.

**Claire Landsbaum**  
**The Woodlands High School, The Woodlands, TX**  
**Chapter Advisor, Janet Emmons**

Ms. Landsbaum is also a recipient of a \$1,500 scholarship from Sigma Tau Delta. Claire has been active in her NEHS chapter since her sophomore year, tutors fellow students after school in English, and participates in the "Reading Buddies" program for elementary students at the local library. She writes, "In college, I plan to major in English. I hope to attend Northwestern University or Washington University in St. Louis and to immerse myself in higher literature and analysis."

**Nicole Schulz**  
**Geneva High School, Geneva IL**  
**Chapter Advisor, Katharine Hertz**

Ms. Schulz is the third of four winners of the \$1,500 Sigma Tau Delta scholarships. Nicole was the only sophomore inducted into NEHS during her school's charter year, and as a senior, she served as president. She shares this about her chapter's service project: "Our officer board decided to read to elementary school children and to construct a writing lab for our service projects. I campaigned for and devoted time to the successful implementation of this project due to my strong belief that inspiring the love of reading in young children sets the stage for life-long enjoyment of literature."

**Gail Gustavson**  
**Notre Dame de la Baie Academy, Green Bay, WI**  
**Chapter Advisor, Stefanie Jochman**

Ms. Gustavson is also a winner of a \$1,500 Sigma Tau Delta scholarship. Gail was "thrilled to be able to participate in 'English Club,' as their NEHS chapter was nicknamed." One of the highlights of the year was the planning of a meeting with the local college chapter to discuss "What Can One Do with an English Major?" Gail hopes to incorporate writing into whichever career she chooses to pursue.

# Scholarship Winners



## Cambridge College Programme Scholarship Winners

### **Rachel Hand**

Seminole Ridge Community High School  
Lesahatchee, FL

### **Marina Louis**

Tabb High School  
Yorktown, VA

In December 2010, NEHS began a partnership with the Cambridge College Programme, seeking to award scholarships to NEHS members who might be interested in and qualified for a summer study program at Cambridge University in England. The two scholarships, each valued at \$6,200, were graciously offered to NEHS members by the director of the college program, Ms. Taryn Edwards. Special application forms were created and made available to NEHS members across the country. By the deadline in March 2011, five applications were received. After careful review of all application materials, two students were awarded the scholarships. The other applicants were encouraged to contact Ms. Edwards who was offering each of them, along with any other NEHS member, a \$500 scholarship to help defray some of the costs of the program.

Rachel Hand received a wonderful congratulatory letter from her state Senator, Lizbeth Benacquisto, as well as extensive coverage of the award in her local newspaper, *The Palm Beach Post*. In a note to NEHS, Rachel said, "I'm thrilled at this life-changing opportunity you've given to me and I can't say enough about how grateful I am. I'll do my best to represent the National English Honor Society while at Cambridge." Ms. Hand plans to take courses in cognitive neuroscience while in England.

Marina Louis, too, was thrilled with her award. In a thank you note, she writes, "It has given me, my family, NEHS members, and Advisor great pleasure to know that I have received this great honor. I am completely unable to express my delight and gratitude for this prestigious opportunity that NEHS has trusted me with. I will never be able to thank NEHS enough." Ms. Louis also plans on taking a course in cognitive neuroscience as well as a class in biological neuroscience at Cambridge.

# Chapter Project Grants



For the first time, NEHS chapters were invited to submit applications for project grants, funds that would help the chapters launch or complete projects that meet the service expectations of the honor society. Each of the chapters selected received \$200; brief descriptions of their projects are provided here. Two of the chapters were able to provide further information about their efforts. Grants will again be available for the 2011-2012 school year; visit [http://www.nehs.us/nehs/project\\_grants/](http://www.nehs.us/nehs/project_grants/) for information.

## **Covington Catholic High School, Park Hills, KY** **Chapter Advisor, Diane Ruth**

The Covington Catholic Chapter of the National English Honor Society is sponsoring a grade school essay competition, now in its second year, to promote literature and writing. The eighth graders in the feeder schools were given prompts on censorship, and members of the NEHS chapter judged the essays on creativity, style, technique, format, and grammatical correctness. The goal of the project was to impress upon the younger students the importance of “embracing, upholding, and spreading the benefits of literature.”

## **James W. Robinson, Jr. Secondary School, Fairfax, VA** **Chapter Advisors, Nancy Frenck and Nancy Lowry**

The grant will help purchase materials to be used in the Robinson Writing Center, a place where all students will be able to receive tutoring with writing assignments in all subject areas. The center will be led by student tutors who have received “intense training in the Advanced Composition elective course.” NEHS members serving as writing tutors may earn community service credit.

## **McLean High School, Fairfax, VA** **Chapter Advisor, Farris Gale**

The McLean NEHS Chapter is also developing a writing center at the school. “Through this grant, the NEHS students will be more prepared to tutor as well as will have a dedicated room to successfully run this center. This center will not only aid students in English, but in all disciplines. . . . As a long term goal for this center, I [Farris Gale] hope to see that for a senior year Capstone project, NEHS members could try to incorporate some of the skills they have learned through the writing center into a Capstone project.” (Please see page 5 for accompanying article.)

## **Carnegie Vanguard High School, Houston, TX** **Chapter Advisor, Rachel Davis**

The Rhino Chapter of National English Honor Society will be holding a writing competition for underclassmen of Carnegie Vanguard to cultivate a desire to become leaders in NEHS. The writing competition will be a prose composition available to all underclassmen. “While our students [at Carnegie Vanguard] have many opportunities to join math and science clubs, NEHS is one of the first chances for English-minded students to explore the leadership and career possibilities in English. . . . With the ‘Future English Stars Writing Competition,’ we can raise interest in NEHS and encourage the pursuit of English activities in the student body.” (Please see page 6 for accompanying article.)

# Chapter Project Grants

## Project Grant Used to Develop Writing Center



"My tutor helped me go more in depth in my essay and explained a better method of analysis, improving my commentary," junior Hardy Cox said. Students are gaining individual insight, and teachers are appreciating recent student improvement.

"My tutors have been great; it's always good to have a fresh set of eyes and it's nice that there are kids who've had me, so they know the expectations," freshmen and junior English teacher Lori Wagoner said. "They're very dedicated, and [they] understand what it takes to make good writing; I'm very grateful."

The Writing Center is striving to provide students with a basic, solid foundation in the subject of English on which they can further advance and improve their abilities while also emphasizing the effectiveness of student mentoring.

"Students are more receptive to feedback and constructive criticism from their peers rather than from teachers," 9th grade English teacher Heather Stiegler said. The Mclean High National English Honor Society also aspires to begin a tutoring program for after-school hours, yet for those students who cannot come before or after school for help, the society will offer aid during lunches starting next fall. A top priority for the center is exposing members to a vast array of writing styles and techniques in an effort to have tutors well-versed in all types of writing, from poetry to analytical to opinion or

scientific. The society not only wants to help nurture students and help them enhance their skills, but also increase the appreciation for English as a whole and the importance of it throughout life. All 60 of the McLean NEHS members are motivated to help their peers, recognizing the importance of their role as a tutor.

"My job as a tutor is important because I help kids understand better ways to achieve what they want to express," junior tutor Thomas Van Wazer said. "It's something I wish I had when I was younger because it's easier to communicate with someone who has gone through the same process as you." McLean is excited and enthused for the development of its program and the positive effects it will have on our student body in the near future.

**Allison Wilhelm and Mackenzie May  
McLean High School, Fairfax, VA**

**Photo left to right:**

*Top Row: Bryan Kress, Brian Roy, Erin Mundy, Elle Choi, Rebecca Fulp, Johannah Gehman, Oskar Op de Beke, Louis Gruber, Marie Thomas, Maria Lu, Andrew Ramadan, Bijan Peters. Middle Row: Kristina Choi, Allen Krieg, Allison Wilhelm, Michael Dong, Mary Spulak, Zachary Pottanat, Mari Buttarazzi, Sameer Essa, Stephanie Lind, Almila Kakinc, Kourtney Eskins, Shannon Ball, Anum Malik, Zhina Kamali, Claire Chretien, Daniela Canedo, Robby Koch, Katie Capp, Will Thompson, Asli Uyanik, John Nguyen, Yasmine Panah, Thomas Van Wazer, Michaela Lovejoy, Ellen Loftis, Christy Toledano (faculty sponsor), Farris Gale (faculty sponsor). Bottom Row: Anika Crone, Ally Templeton, Mackenzie May, Linda He, Reaa Chadha, Ali Roule, Nuha Naqvi, Whitney Fritz, Kylie Donohoe, Meryem Ok, Nikki Kaul, Faith Lee, Melanie Ta, Farah Albani*

# Chapter Project Grants



## Rhino Chapter Uses Project Grant to Stage Writing Contest

Freshmen and sophomores at Carnegie Vanguard High School have been busy writing an essay over this spring. Many underclassmen are participating in a new writing competition this year: the NEHS Writing Challenge. Competitors must write an essay of 600 to 1,300 words in which two characters from separate novels interact. The topic allows creative and scholastic latitude for the up-and-coming underclassmen writers.

On May 17, the officers of the “Rhino Chapter” of the National English Honor Society gathered to judge the writing submissions. Carnegie Vanguard High is in the top 30 high schools in the nation per the *Newsweek* rankings, but its “Rhino Chapter” of NEHS is in its first year. The new honor society is staging a writing contest for underclassmen to exhibit their English skills and to increase interest in NEHS.

“The writing contest has been met with such excitement,” says NEHS’s president, Alexandria Kirkland. “In a school where robotics and computer programming are frequently rewarded, we are thrilled with the interest our underclassmen have shown in English and writing.”

The writing contest has been made possible by the National English Honor Society’s grant. Twenty-six percent of the students at Carnegie are on state-provided free or reduced price lunch. The monetary prize offers a chance for underclassmen students to purchase next year’s textbooks or enroll in extracurricular enrichment courses over the summer.

For the past several weeks, Carnegie’s NEHS chapter has met to plan the writing prompt, organize contest advertisements, and coordinate prize giving. Posters and flyers for the competition were stationed around the school’s campus. Over the school’s televised announcements, NEHS broadcasted the contest opportunity to all of the freshmen and sophomores on campus.

The Rhino chapter of NEHS has finished its first year, one filled with writing labs, poetry exhibitions and writing contests. Applications for next year’s membership are numerous, partly as a result of the continued support of the National English Honor Society. At a school with a history of successful honor societies, the Rhino Chapter of NEHS will continue to cultivate interest in English and provide extracurricular opportunities in English fields.

*Alexandria Kirkland, Chapter President  
Carnegie Vanguard High School  
Houston, TX*



# Chapter Activities



## Harborside Academy, Kenosha, WI Chapter Advisor, LuAnn Underwood

The first year as a National English Honor Society chapter at Harborside Academy has been a busy one indeed! LuAnn Underwood, Chapter Advisor, reports on a series of activities that have energized her students and made an impact in the school. The chapter attended two productions—*Young Frankenstein* and *Hair*—traveling to Milwaukee for those events, and attended Chicago’s *Read-Out* in celebration of Banned Books week. Poetry Month was celebrated with a weekly poetry contest, while “Shakespeare Week” brought a contest based on Shakespearean quotations, a birthday cake, a fundraiser that included the creation and delivery of Shakespearean insults, and a Renaissance dress-up day.

Along with tutoring foreign exchange students in English, chapter members also are taking on the development of a writing center in their school. While at the beginning phases of this project, the chapter is researching writing centers and visiting local college writing centers to get ideas. The chapter will undertake training of students who will staff the writing center.

Quite an amazing first year—congratulations, Harborside Academy.

## West Islip High School, NY Chapter Advisor, Virginia Scudder

Virginia Scudder, Chapter Advisor at West Islip High School, reports on the various activities her chapter has been involved in this past year. In January and early February, students began collecting over 400 gently used and new books for students in Haiti, with the goal of doubling that number by the end of the book drive.

Each year at West Islip, students put together an evening “book gala” based on a novel for which they voted. This year, the gala had an amusement park theme centered on the novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* by Mitch Albom. The gala is a night for sharing the love of the text and its themes. All money raised from the event will be going to “Ride for Life,” an organization that raises money for those who suffer from ALS.

## Florida Virtual School, Orlando FL Chapter Advisor, Mary Swenson

Our chapter consists strictly of virtual school students. We are from all over the state of Florida and communicate, operate, and run solely from the internet. This year we have offered over 300 hours of free tutoring to our virtual school students! Our chapter has provided special skill set sessions for students to pinpoint their trouble spots and help them improve their English skills. We have also conducted mid-term reviews for three middle school language arts courses and four high school English courses (English I, II, III, and IV). In addition to our tutoring center, we have assisted the Sunshine State Young Reader’s Committee in hosting online discussions of two of their books. We have also participated in virtual “walk-through sessions” to help students with *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Crucible*. In February, we hosted an online African American Read-In for the third year in a row. We also participated in our school’s Virtual Shakespeare Festival in April.

Additionally, we host author chats every year. This year we were delighted to have Sergeant Major (ret.) Eric Haney and Sonia Nazario agree to speak with us about their novels! While Mr. Haney spoke to us in April about book *Inside Delta Force*, Ms. Nazario joined us in March to discuss *Enrique’s Journey*!

Finally, for the second year, we are conducting a book drive for the Books for Africa Organization. We hope to beat our previous record of 300 books by May! If any additional chapters are interested in participating in our book drive, please contact our Club Sponsor, Mrs. Mary Swenson, at [mswenson@flvs.net](mailto:mswenson@flvs.net).

*Shannon Keefe – President  
Florida Virtual School*

**CHAPTERS IN THE  
SPOTLIGHT**

# Chapter Activities

## “Never Walk by a Red Dress”

“Son, in this life, you don’t ever walk by a red dress”—Buck O’Neil. This was advice given by the legendary Buck O’Neil to Mr. Joe Posnanski. While one would expect words of wisdom about baseball and life, Mr. Posnanski said in his visit to Smithville High School that it is advice for all of us on how to navigate a well lived life.

Mr. Joe Posnanski, sports writer for *The Kansas City Star* and current writer for *Sports Illustrated*, was Smithville High School’s NEHS featured author in December. Mr. Posnanski spoke with students and community members about his book *The Soul of Baseball: A Road Trip Through Buck O’Neil’s America*, sports writing, and athletes he’s met and events he’s attended. Posnanski spoke of Buck O’Neil’s class and joy as he traveled with Buck during the writing of the book. Posnanski said Buck wanted him to write a book about the Negro Leagues as Buck saw them—fun.

Mr. Posnanski spoke of how Buck O’Neil would put in very long days of public appearances. One day in particular was in New York and Buck was so tired he was going to skip dinner. Posnanski said he noticed a woman in a red dress and turned around to point her out to Buck. O’Neil was gone and when Joe turned back towards the woman there was Buck O’Neil talking, laughing, and hugging the woman in the red dress and her companion. It was after this encounter Posnanski said, “Buck had been revived as if he’d had a ten year nap.” Buck asked Joe later if he’d seen the woman in the red dress and Joe said he had. It was here that Buck imparted his wisdom of never walking by a red dress. Mr. Posnanski said he thought that what Buck was telling him and everyone else to take advantage of opportunities to meet and talk with people, make connections, and be positive in all ways.



Those qualities would be all apparent when Buck O’Neil did not get inducted in The Baseball Hall of Fame. Joe spoke of the disbelief and anger of people when Buck was not voted in, yet Buck showed grace in this hurtful moment and was still positive. Buck spoke at the induction ceremony even though he was denied a spot in that very place. It was here Posnanski said he saw the best example of Buck O’Neil’s positive attitude and grace.

If you’re a fan or are interested in reading more of Posnanski’s works, check out his website <http://www.joeposnanski.com> where you can access his blog, archived articles, and his two other books, *The Machine* (about the 1975 Cincinnati Reds) and *The Good Stuff*, which is a collection of Joe’s sports columns.

*Smithville High School, Smithville, MO*  
*Chapter Advisor, Stephanie Robertson*



# Chapter Activities

## Fundraiser based on Original Limericks

**Hereford High School, Parkton, MD**

**Chapter Advisors, Mary Beth Stuller and Rachel Mays**

On March 17th, the Hereford High School NEHS sponsored an Irish-themed fundraiser. Students and faculty ordered limericks and chocolate gold coins which were delivered to friends and colleagues in class. Much like singing telegram performers, costumed NEHS members recited original limericks they wrote based on details provided by the senders.

In the few weeks prior to the holiday, students advertised limerick sales with posters, web-postings, and morning announcements. For one week, NEHS members sold limerick orders to customers who provided details about the recipients such as physical looks, personality, and what class period the limerick was to be delivered. The NEHS continued to promote the event with sample limericks about faculty members on the morning announcements. Next, members drafted limericks based on the information provided on the order forms. They typed the poems on green paper, organized costumes, and wrapped the gold coins in bags with green ribbon.

On St. Patrick's Day, the school was abuzz with limericks and leprechauns bearing good luck.



# Chapter Activities

## “Students Collaborative Efforts Produce Creative Coloring Books”



Throughout the month of March, the Bards chapter channeled its inner Dr. Seuss as it composed, illustrated, and bound children’s books for over one-hundred-and-fifty first grade students. The students, equipped with construction paper, markers, and innovative minds, composed coloring books or grammar books in groups of five. The coloring books’ storylines appealed to the younger children, with topics ranging from tooth fairy visits to a student’s first day of school. The grammar books also pertained to the first-graders through the parsing of simple sentences and the identification of nouns and verbs. Students delved into their projects, staying after school for several days a week in order to finish their books and brainstorming plots with the most appeal. After the compilation of the books, the club laminated and bound the books themselves, forming an “assembly line” of student-helpers. Next month, they will present their projects to the first grade class at University School, who is anxiously awaiting the arrival of the hand-crafted books. Through these coloring and grammar books, the Bards chapter will illustrate the importance of the English language and instill the enjoyment of literature into students of an early age. Future plans include sending copies of the books to underprivileged children in the countries of Uganda and Rwanda.

*Stephanie Straus, President  
University School of NSU, Fort Lauderdale, FL  
Chapter Advisor, Minerva Morris*