



A.R. MacNeill Secondary School

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Principal: Ms. C. Sakata, Vice Principals: Mr. M. Charlton & Ms. L. Collins
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Parent Newsletter – December 2010

The cold weather and certainly the snowfall in mid-November brought an early winter and the spirit of the holiday season upon us. The Student Leadership class decked our Lounge area with festive decorations. On December 1 the Leadership class hosted the Senior's Breakfast in our Lounge and on the last day of school before the holidays, Friday, December 17 there will be Breakfast with Santa. December is a time of celebration – Hanukkah, Christmas or Kwanza. This time of the year also marks the end of the first term of school and **students will be taking home First Term Report Cards on Wednesday, December 8**. Please look for the report cards. We hope this will be an opportunity to have your child talk to you about their learning and celebrate the results of their first term effort.

You will note in this newsletter the numerous seasonal activities and events are happening in the month of December, several which we invite family and friends. The basketball season is in full swing and with games in our gym almost every other day. On December 3 and 4, MacNeill will be hosting the MacNeill Classic Grade 8 Basketball Tournament. Everyone is welcome to come and cheer on the POWERful MacNeill Ravens. Before we know it the last day before our winter holiday will be here and with such a busy fall at MacNeill everyone will welcome the time away from our school day routines.

SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM THE MACNEILL SCHOOL STAFF

We wish everyone in the MacNeill School community a healthy, safe and joyous holiday and all the best in the New Year. We truly do look forward to our work with you to continue to develop a supportive and engaging learning environment for your children in 2011!



REMINDER OF DISMISSAL TIMES

Wednesday, December 15th will be a regular day – Dismissal at 3:10 p.m.
Friday, December 17th will be an alternate day – Dismissal at 2:00 p.m.



Snow Days – What to Expect

Snow days cause inconvenience for all of us. Closing schools is a difficult decision for the school district – trying to weigh the safety of all with the repercussions for working families. To assist families, we would like to outline what you can expect from us on a snow day.

The following things will happen:

1. Schools will be **OPEN** unless conditions reach civic emergency proportions. Radio announcements will only announce those schools that are **CLOSED**. Most of these will be private schools. Listen to radio CKNW 980AM, NEWS 1130AM, CBC 690AM, 1470AM, CHQM 103.5FM or watch on television CBC, BCTV, City TV and CTV. **Please do not phone the school.** Staff will be too busy planning the day and ensuring students are safe and may not be able to answer the phone.
2. It may not be a regular school day as many students and teachers may be absent. We will ensure that the students that do arrive to school are safe. In some classes, alternate activities may be planned so that students who are absent will not miss any work.
3. School will remain open until 3:10pm and in the event that we have to close early, students will be instructed to contact their parents.

You have some choices:

1. Students are not required to attend school on a snow day if you feel that their safety or your own safety may be at risk. You may keep them home.
2. Make plans in advance for what you and your family will do on a snow day.
3. You may send students to school knowing that they may be participating in alternate activities for the day.

So, plan that schools will be open in the event of snow. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us at the school before the snow begins to fall.

MACNEILL CELEBRATES MS. PHILLIPS

In mid-November, the MacNeill School community had another reason to celebrate. The A.R. MacNeill Secondary School community is thrilled and proud of our multi-talented school librarian, Ms. Wendy Phillips. On November 16, 2010, it was announced that Wendy Phillips was the recipient of the Governor General's Award in the category of Children's Literature – Text, for her novel, Fishtailing (Coteau Books; distributed by Publishers Group of Canada). The Governor General's Literary Awards are Canada's oldest and most prestigious award for English and French Canadian literature. The finalists for the awards are chosen by peer assessment committees appointed by the Canada Council. In a press release by the Canada Council, Fishtailing is described as:

In this highly-inventive, poetic narrative, four compelling characters take the reader on a wild ride through the danger of friendships threatened by manipulative acts. Deftly switching voices, Wendy Phillips creates a powerful momentum in Fishtailing that leaves the reader breathless.

Two MacNeill students had this to say about Fishtailing:

Fishtailing was a marvelous book. The first time I read it, I had no idea that it wasn't non-fiction. Miguel's memories of his home village are chilling and believable. Ms. Phillips has portrayed each character in such a way which attaches you to them, whether their actions are "good" or "bad". In all, I loved Fishtailing. Comment by Mads Jensen, Grade 11.

The second I cracked open Fishtailing, I was hooked. I loved the characterization and how she explored the backgrounds of each character. Ms. Phillips' choice of wording and the verse-like structure of the novel gave a different appeal compared to other books. I thought the novel was an amazing read, which brought up many issues prevalent in today's teenage society. Comment by Jennifer Liu, grade 11

We are sure you may have read about Ms. Phillips in our local newspapers. The Richmond Review video taped our red carpet welcome for Ms. Phillips in the school lounge. This tape is still available through the Richmond Review website.

Student Council News

Students' Council is hosting MacNeill's annual Breakfast with Santa Fundraiser on Friday, December 17, from 7:30 – 9:25 am. All profits from this event will be donated to the local food bank.



Enjoy the planned festivities and presentations with a breakfast of pancakes, eggs, sausages, fruit and a beverage of choice! Tickets will be available for purchase for \$5.00 in the lounge at lunch for students **beginning December 13**. Each non-perishable food item brought will reduce the cost of your ticket(s) by 50 cents. Members of the community, parents, teachers, and staff are welcome to purchase tickets **at the school's office** or through the **order form** that will be sent home with students in early December. As well, tickets will be sold **at the door**. We hope you can attend!

Winter Concert

Monday, Dec. 8 - 7 pm MacNeill Gym

All of our bands and choirs will be performing in this evening of music. Many styles of music will be featured from Classical to Pop to Jazz. The concert is free and for the first time we will be using the large gym as our concert hall.



THANK YOU MACNEILL PAC! At the last PAC meeting on November 16, there was \$21,000 of PAC funds disbursed to support students' extra-curriculum activities, resources and events. THANK YOU!!

RAVEN ATHLETICS

The Winter Season is now underway!!! Basketball and Table Tennis are the sport teams available for this season. Congrats to all those students who took the risk to try out for these teams. Exhibition games are now scheduled, and league games start as soon as next week. MacNeill hosts the Grade 8 Boys Basketball Tournament this weekend--Dec 3 & 4. Go Ravens Go!!!

MacNeill Ski Club

Dec. 10th Deadline is fast approaching



Students wishing to be a part of this year's Winter Ski/ Board Club have until December 10th to hand in all forms and money. Trips to Cypress Mountain for afternoon & evening skiing (Wednesday Jan 26 & Feb 16) plus a weekend adventure to Big White in Kelowna (May 11-13) have all been booked. Trips include all transportation, lessons, lift passes, equipment rental & accommodation. Fantastic opportunity to create great memories, plus build skills & knowledge in a sensational recreational pursuit which can be enjoyed for a lifetime. Please contact Mr. Charlton if you have any questions.

Health & Safety Reminder

All schools in the Richmond District are SCENT FREE. This means that no student or staff member can wear strong perfumes, scented deoderants, body sprays or scented lotions to school. We have many students and staff members who are allergic to these scented products. Please cooperate with this District Policy by not using these scented products before or during school hours.

LIBRARY NEWS

RAVEN READERS BOOK OF THE MONTH Raven Readers met November 30th @ lunch to discuss "Dr. Franklin's Island" and share book-related snacks. The book received a resounding thumbs up from members, scoring 4 ravens out of a possible 5. Watch for the next readers' club meeting January 18th at lunch in the library.

LIBRARY VOLUNTEER NEWS - Thanks to the display team for the great displays this year. Anthony Deogracias, Theo Tan, Kevin Garcia and Rij Sarmiento are working on a winter celebration display, and the Hallowe'en display garnered many comments. Library monitors have been keeping books shelved and keeping the library tidy; volunteers are reminded to sign up for their shifts a week ahead.

RAVEN REVIEW - Watch for the Raven Review's first issue, to be published before Winter Break. Thanks to the Parent Advisory Council for helping support the school newsmagazine.

NEW LIBRARY WEBSITE – Check out our new library website at <http://sites.google.com/site/armacneilllibrary/home>. You'll find links to library searches, databases, news, events, activities and research help. Thanks to Lisa Hercus for her design help.

MACNEILL'S ANIMAL RESCUE CLUB

MacNeill's Animal Rescue Club is up and running, in fact, the club has already staged five fundraising events and have plans for many more. The monies raised during these fundraisers have resulted in food donations being made to various animal rescue shelters here in Richmond. The club is now working towards assisting one of the needy cats, Mr. Bojangles, who resides at the Richmond Cat Sanctuary. Upon hearing and witnessing some of the struggles being encountered by this lovely and precious animal, club members are making a concerted effort to raise money for his much needed operation. Mr. Bojangles' has a severe breathing problem which is not allowing him to experience life to its fullest. The fact that this operation is very expensive, has not discourage members of this club, in fact it has made them even more determined to see this through. Donations to assist the club with this goal would be gratefully accepted and can be brought to the office and deposited into the Animal Rescue Club account. Club members are learning that it is more important to give to others than it is to secure things for oneself.



Dates to Remember

Dec. 1 Seniors Breakfast @ 9:15 a.m.
Dec. 8 Term 1 Report Card taken home
Dec. 8 Winter Music Concert @ 7:00 p.m.
Dec. 15 Weds. Full Day Bell Schedule-Dismissal @ 3:10
Dec. 17 Friday, Last day of classes – Dismissal @ 2:00
Dec 17 Schools closed for the Winter Break through Jan.3
Jan. 4 School reopens – classes begin @ 8:45 a.m.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS