



Andy Levin photos

Clockwise from top left: Brittany Ruiz's dragon. Keri Lemoine's oil painting of Steven King. Kaylee Olson's mixed media boot. Emily Roxo's assemblage of a squirrel. Devin Doppler's pen and ink drawing of a rodent. Keegan Neeland's ceramic plate.

Uxbridge schools showcase the arts

BY ANDY LEVIN
TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

UXBRIDGE — Schools here were alive with the arts last week.

"Celebrating the Arts" was held across the district Tuesday, March 11, culminating a lengthy effort by students and staff. The events concluded with a dinner and performances by bands from Whitin Middle School and Uxbridge High School.

"Nationally, it's a month-long event; we combined them here," said Kathleen Penza, music, curriculum and instruction leader and the middle school's band director. "We prepared this for about six weeks, though some of the artwork is from earlier in the year."

"Celebrating the Arts" featured an art show at the middle school that featured drawings, paintings, sculptures, assemblages and integrated works by students in grades K-12.

"The focus is to celebrate the importance of the arts in everyday life," said Diane Henries, art teacher at Taft Elementary School. "I think [the arts] are valued in this district."

The school district's four art teachers each chose 30 pieces for the exhibit, which was judged by School Committee Chairman Ernest Esposito.

"Some kids were shocked that I chose

their pieces," Henries said. "They were thrilled. This is the first time we have presented K-12 together."

Henries emphasized the importance of art instruction in school, noting that it caters to the needs of many students.

"Some kids learn this way because they are visual learners," she said. "Art teaches them higher learning skills."

Middle school art Lisa McNeill said the show offered "the kids a chance to showcase their work."

The dinner and performances at Whitin served as a fund-raiser for a school trip in May to the Great East Festival in Agawam.

The show featured numbers from the Whitin Middle School Jazz Band, the Uxbridge High School Jazz Band, the UHS Monday Rock/Blues Band and the UHS Thursday Rock/Blues Band. Penza and Robert Hammerton directed the show.

Concerts earlier in the day included vocal numbers from the fifth-grade classes of Mr. Burton and Mrs. Fraine and small group, solo and recorder performances from other fifth-graders. Jeanne Rapoza directed the show.

Taft students also chimed in with musical performances directed by Gretchen D'Andrea and Nick LaPete.

ATHLETE of the WEEK



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