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MACOMB ACADEMY OF ARTS & SCIENCES

MA²S Moments



Breaking News

Beginning with the 2007-2008 school year, grades at the Academy will be weighted in order to reflect the Honors level status of classes taught here. Please refer to our website and to upcoming newsletters for more information regarding this change in grading policy.

From the Director's Desk.....

We are well into the second semester at MA²S, and our students and staff continue to work at optimal levels as the year progresses. As I write this, it is time for preparation of research reports for the year, the Motorola project continues with research on Bluetooth and new cellphone technology, and the seniors are working hard at integration of the three sciences. The film project, provided by a grant from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs and The Art Center in Mt. Clemens, and the LEGO robotics project, with new components funded by the Four County Community Foundation, are in full swing in the computer science class. The science teachers are revamping our curriculum for next year to more closely follow the new Michigan Merit Curriculum Course/Credit Requirements. Former students from MA²S assure us that their background in mathematics, science, technology, and especially research, is among the best in the state, if not the nation. Prospective new students for the fall of 2007 are being tested and will be chosen soon. And our Board of Education, at their February 20 meeting, approved the bids for the enhancements in our building, which will give us an upgraded chemistry lab and a new physics lab for starters. As always, our focus on learning and good teaching is foremost, and we continue to look at research in education to guide our growth and learning as a staff. We look forward to seeing all of our parents at the Student Research Presentations and Defense in April and May (dates listed elsewhere in the newsletter), and you are welcome to stop by anytime to visit. Thank you for your support this year. Your continued interest and commitment to MA²S are welcome and appreciated.

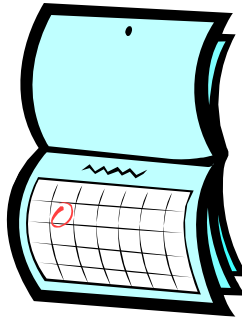
If your student will not be in school, please remember to call us and let us know. You can leave your name, your student's name and the reason for the absence on our attendance line at (586) 784-2151.

Thank you!

10th Grade Computer Science Class

The students in Mrs. Carlson's Computer Science class have been working throughout the semester on developing, designing, and coding video games. An easy to understand and user friendly programming language called Blitz Basic is used to write the detailed instructions (code) to the computer. This is an enjoyable and challenging course that requires a great deal of problem solving. The final video game project was due at the end of the 1st semester and by all indications the students are turning in some very sophisticated video games that rival the 1st generation of games that started the whole video game explosion back in the early 80's.

Second Semester Calendar Information



March 15	Parent/Teacher Conferences 1/2 day Afternoon students attend Academy	
	(Parents: Please contact individual teachers if you wish to set up a conference appointment)	
March 19	Teacher In-Service	No Classes
March 30	End of 3rd Quarter	
April 5	Spring Recess begins after last class	
April 16	Classes resume	
April 18	Senior Research Presentations	
April 25	Junior Research Presentations	
May 2	Sophomore Research Presentations	
May 9	Freshmen Research Presentations	
May 11	Teacher In-Service	No Classes
May 28	Memorial Day	No Classes
June 8	Last day of school	

Final exam schedules will be posted at a later date. Please consult our online calendar for up-to-date information!



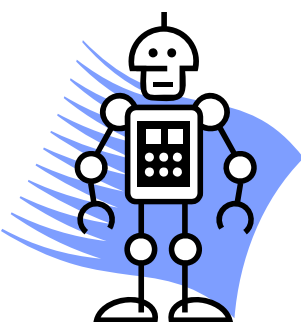
Intro to Robotics Class Presents New Challenge

Each spring the 10th grade MA²S Computer Science classes are allowed to choose whether to take an Intro to Robotics course or a videography course. Those who opted for the Intro to Robotics section have already been challenged to build and program a mini-security safe with two drawers built from Lego bricks that can only be opened with a specific UPC code that is designed by the student, unique to each individual safe's drawer. Having accomplished this with pre-canned programming Lego blocks of code the students are now learning how to control the Lego hardware with line by line programming using Not-Quite-C (NQC) programming language. They are teaching their motorized, tracked robot to move forward and back, make a perfect 90 degree turn, and respond to light and touch sensors that allow the robot to manipulate motors and gears in order to maneuver, pick up things and move around obstacles. Later this spring students will be challenged to build, program and complete a task with no preliminary build or programming instructions. In the past each group of students working as a team has solved the problem in a different manner. The task changes somewhat from year to year and students are required to use their learned programming and building skills to solve the problem. Now here's a hint for this spring's problem: Have you ever tried to push, roll or pull an oval plastic Easter egg in a straight line?



Videography Class

The 10th grade students in Mrs. Carlson's videography class, under the guidance of Mr. Norm Fankell, Emmy Award winning videographer, are busy developing and writing their scripts for this year's film project on documentaries. This is the 3rd year the school has had the opportunity to bring in professional artists in the field of film and related media. Matt Brunn, a professional video editor, is also working with the students throughout the semester. The students are working in small groups, similar to how a real-life movie crew would work. They will be using many of the surrounding community resources to produce their final videos. In addition to this, the students are participating in an extensive semester long lesson utilizing the Mac computers in our school's Mac Lab. Students completing this course will be multi-platform computer users: in other words, being proficient in both PC and Mac computers. Final Cut Pro HD, Live Type, iTunes, and iDVD software programs will be used to edit and produce the students documentaries. An Academy Awards evening will be held in mid May at which time all of the documentaries will be shown. Please watch our website and your mail for further information on this project.



Robotics Team

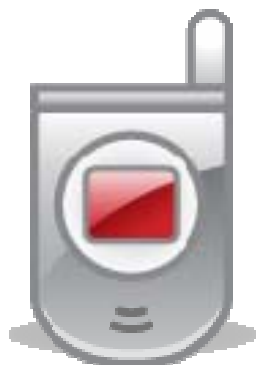
Team 1718, The Fighting Pi (FIRST Robotics Team at MA²S) has just finished building their robot and are preparing for competitions. They are hoping to build on the successes of last year. This year they built their robot at the Ford Romeo Engine Plant. The robot shipped out on Tuesday, February 20th, after the six-week build season. It is currently stored with other FIRST robots awaiting their 1st competition. The Fighting Pi will be competing at the Detroit Regional which will be held at Wayne State University on Friday and Saturday, March 16-17. Their next competition will be the West

MI Regional held at Grand Valley State University on Friday and Saturday, March 30-31. Competitions are free to public and a lot of fun to watch.



Motorola

Beginning in January, our 11th grade students began working on the physical testing of Bluetooth headsets for Motorola, Inc. This is the second project for Motorola that the 11th graders have done this year. For the Bluetooth research, students collected a variety of market research on the use of the device. Once the physical tests are finished in approximately two weeks, students will analyze both the market and physical testing research to design their own Bluetooth headset. They will then put together a written analysis of their research and findings in addition to a proposed new design. This will be combined into one large written report with the seniors' research on cellphones. The research will begin in early arch. Both groups will then present their reports in May to Motorola, most likely through our distance learning lab.



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Macomb Academy of Arts and Sciences

Visit our website at

www.macomb.k12.mi.us/armada/armada/ma2s/

We're already working on next year... ..

We will be sending out registration forms for the 2007-2008 school year in April. Please complete the forms and return them to the Academy office by June 8, 2007. Thanks in advance for your cooperation in returning the forms in a timely manner!

Partners in Education

TWA Floor Covering is offering an opportunity for residential carpet customers to support Armada Schools. One dollar per yard purchased will be donated in the customer's name to the Armada school or program of their choice. Contributions will be adjusted for other floor covering materials. For information, contact Tim Adams at 586-784-8022.

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