

A Day on the Board of Health By Harleigh Becotte

On Monday March 15th at approximately 9:30 am, I was sworn into the Board of Health at the Acushnet Town Hall. The students joining me were Sydney Harris and Halle Berger. We started off our day in the Board of Health office. Mr. Medeiros and Mr. Urban pulled out my house plan and showed us where everything was located on my family's lot. They taught us the requirements needed for a house to be built and what you needed to pass an inspection. They also explained what would cause you to fail an inspection which is any critical violation. An example of a critical violation is having a rodent problem. They also told us what they do in addition to inspecting restaurants and buildings. They deal with animal control, do loads of paperwork, handle the vaccines we receive and anything that everyone else doesn't want to or know how to do. Just recently we had the H1N1 clinic at the school; it was the Board of Health who arranged everything. Mr. Medeiros showed us the refrigerator where they store the serum for the vaccine. We each got to hold the vile and get a close look at it; although, we could not touch the top because it would contaminate the serum. We also saw the boxes that contained the needles. I got a little bit queasy because I am not big on shots. Then Mr. Green joined us, and we went off for a little field trip.

Our first stop was the restaurant Surf and Turf. Mr. Medeiros and Mr. Urban wanted to show us the process of doing a food inspection. First we introduced ourselves to the manager and explained that we were there to inspect his business. Then we looked at the places where they kept drinks, chips, and other snacks. Everything was very clean. We also looked at his display of meats and seafood. They were in different cases, as they should be. All of the trays were clean with no traces of blood, which shows he replaces his paper often. We did find a little spill on one of the display glasses on the outside, but you will rarely find perfection. Mr. Medeiros explained that he had never given anyone a perfect. All of the other frozen things were clean, and everything was at the right temperature. Then we went into the back and looked at the kitchen. Everything was in the right place and all surfaces that touched food were

clean. Mr. Medeiros gave the manager an A-Okay. He then asked us if we wanted to go to Dunkin' Donuts to do another inspection or go to PJ Keating to see the quarry. It was unanimous; we wanted to see the quarry.

Our school used to take field trips to PJ Keating but my graduating class never got to go. So, when Mr. Medeiros gave us the opportunity, we took it. For those of you who do not know what PJ Keating is; it is a huge hole in the ground, its deepest part is a little over 300 feet. That is more than a football field! Mr. Medeiros took pictures for Halle, Sydney, and I of machines, trucks, and a 12-foot-tall tire. It is amazing how small you can feel compared to those giants. We were driving around trying to find a spot where we could see the quarry but we couldn't. Also, the weather prevented us from going into the quarry, so we did not get to see it. Mr. Medeiros did not think that was fair to us, so he said he would set something up to show us what it looks like. I would imagine most of us know what they do at PJ Keating, but for those of you who don't, there is a huge hole in the ground that the workers take giant rocks out of. They put those rocks into machines to grind them up to make really small rocks, almost like sand. Some of the products they produce are asphalt, crushed stone, and mason sand. They produce the materials for all the roads from Springfield, in western Mass, to Provincetown, on the tip of Cape Cod. It was really cool to see everything that the Board of Health does, and I was glad I was chosen for that job.