



Birchwood JAN 2007 Volume 13, 2 Clipboard

Class News

1-2 Music

See: **CLIPBOARD of MUSIC CLASS**

1-2 Spanish

1st: The students learned the words for the classroom objects like mesa (table), silla (chair), lapis (pencil), libro (book), puerta (door), etc. We played riddles and Spanish Bee for translation of those words. Also, we are learning food words and talking about what we like and do not like to eat. Every two weeks they learn a new song. The new song for this week is “Invierno”, which means winter.

2nd: The students worked with the Spanish words for the days of the week. They recited the words and made a schedule of their after school activities. Another topic was clothing. They pronounced and recited names of clothing. Another activity was to copy sentences in Spanish and write their English meaning.

3-4 Language Arts

Writing is at the core of the Birchwood language arts curriculum, so the students have been busy writing stories, which they model after those of a professional author. They have also continued to enter a number of writing contests, and we have celebrated together as more published authors have emerged from among them. In December, Sebastian D and Sarah D became our first paid authors. Boshy won the grand prize for his story *My Winter Wonderland*, which was published in Fandangle, an Internet magazine. He also earned a \$25 gift certificate for amazon.com. Sarah was the runner-up and received a \$10 gift certificate to amazon.com for her engaging *Winter Wonderland* story. Over Winter Break, three third grade students had their holiday stories published by the west side *Sun Herald*. A woeful but creative tale of an ill Santa who was forced to ask his brother Atnas (read that name in reverse) for help, captured the judges’ attention and won Jorgen K first prize among the five schools that submitted entries. Alex H and Sebastian D’s stories were printed in the following week’s paper and earned them Honorable Mentions. Alex took his readers on a fantastic tour of Santa’s workshop, including “a gigantic machine that is big enough to cook a full-grown adult woolly mammoth inside.” Boshy’s story told the tale of Crooky, a very short elf whose bravery ended up saving Christmas. Remember to ask these students for their autographs when you see them next.

3-4 Math

3rd: The first CML (Continental Math League) Contest for the third grade will be at the beginning of this month. There will also be two more contests in February and March. I am looking forward to seeing what our third graders can do!

4th: See: **Math Olympiads Contest #2, and Continental Math League Contest #2**

3-4 Music

See: **CLIPBOARD of MUSIC CLASS**

3-4 Science

Students have been busy studying the sun, moon, and earth. Of course the rest of the (now eight) major planets cannot be overlooked. Nor can we skip discussions on the planets classified as “dwarfs”. We continue to discover, as scientists do, that there is more and more to learn of, study, and explore in this vast universe! They are fantastically taking notes from my drawings and diagrams on the chalkboard to construct a Solar System Packet. In addition, this quarter adds part of the JASON: Mysteries of Earth and Mars expedition curriculum to the menu. Students have compared earth and mars and begin to study their similarities and differences. For instance, students noted that each planet has weather, but due to the tilt of earth’s axis, its rotation, and distance from the sun, we have more diverse weather in different hemispheres throughout the year. To supplement and introduce our next unit on the earth’s atmosphere, weather, and water on the earth, the Great Lakes Science Center visited with a wonderful “Wild Weather” out reach program. Students read the current day’s US weather map, made clouds within bottles, and watched what occurs when hot and cold water meet. The representative even brought an electromagnetic static generator to simulate lightning. Needless to say, a “blast” it was!

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Clipboard of Music

Each third and fourth grader has access to the TJO (Team Jason Online) digital labs which always prove to be educationally fun. Plans to start individual research projects on planets are in the works.

3-4 Social Studies

3rd: The students have completed their study of Cleveland's interesting history. On December 14, they capped their exploration of Cleveland with an in-school field trip presented by the Western Reserve Historical Society. The students used primary source documents to learn about actual families who had lived in Cleveland and were listed in the 1850 census. They also played a board game, which helped them to realize what difficult and dangerous lives children their own age had to endure about 150 years ago. Please remind them that they learned how child dock workers, street sweepers, and garbage pickers often did not live into adulthood, should any of them try to tell you that school life is just too hard! Before Winter Break, the students also completed their first research projects. Each of them chose another city in the U. S. or the world to study, wrote a short paper, and then presented their research findings to the class.

4th: Having completed their study of the Midwest region of the United States, the students have shifted gears (and textbooks) and are now well into their study of Ohio history. The *Into the Woods* program that we had planned at the Western Reserve Historical Society had to be rescheduled and will now take place on January 8. It will fit perfectly with what the students are studying as they learn about the conflict that Native Americans and Ohio pioneers experienced as settlers began pouring into the Ohio Territory. Along with the third graders, these students enjoyed a fascinating program sponsored by the Holden Arboretum, in which "George Washington Carver" visited our classroom for an hour and talked about this amazing scientist's contributions to humanity and how he helped to develop agriculture in the Southeast region of the United States after the Civil War.

3-4 Spanish

3rd: They learned the numbers up to 59. Also did a cross word puzzle finding the numbers spelled out and used mathematical skills to say the sum in Spanish. We worked on the alphabet, I read the letters out loud randomly and the children wrote the letter. They enjoy reading storybooks in Spanish because they recognize words that they have learned. Currently, we are learning the months of the year. With flash cards, they match the holidays with the correct month. We also incorporated their birthdays with the corresponding months.

5-6 Math

See: **Math Grades 5-8, Math Olympiads Contest #2, and Continental Math League Contest #2**

5-6 Music

See: **CLIPBOARD of MUSIC CLASS**

5th Science

Students study electricity on Monday through Wednesday and will work on their science fair projects on Thursday and Friday. They have jumped from static electricity to current electricity and are taking notes about their science fair topics. They will bring books to school when they return and use class time for note-taking.

6th Science

Last week was exciting because Grant's guppies had babies. Now all the eco-columns have gone home except for the class eco-column (which is still alive). After the break students will finish their study of the cell and will bring books for note-taking on their science projects.

7-8 Math

See: **Math Grades 5-8, Math Olympiads Contest #2, and Continental Math League Contest #2**

7-8 Music

See: **CLIPBOARD of MUSIC CLASS**

7th Reading

After a wonderful performance at the Poetry Show, the 7th graders had another chance to perform Hunches in Bunches for the residents of the Ascension Manor apartments. Both the students and the residents enjoyed themselves. The seventh grade's next major "performance" will be the speech contest, held in January. Students chose their speeches right before break, and are working hard to deliver inspired, polished speeches. We are also wrapping up our unit on Johnny Tremain, and will be working on several Junior Great Books selections in January.

8th Reading

The 8th graders each read a biography on a world famous person in history and took notes on qualities of leadership that were exhibited in the person's deeds. The purpose of this exercise was to learn to observe pertinent information in a

narrative type of nonfiction book. Students learn to take notes in other types of reference books in Science and Social Studies classes, but to select salient notes within the biography genre takes another kind of reading. Following the note-taking they were given guided lessons on adding context information from an encyclopedia and on constructing an introduction and structured essay. After all that Seuss fun, we wasted no time in getting back down to business! Next on their list is the Speech Contest in January.

7th Science

If you're outside and you hear one student yell: "11:15", another student shout: "20.5° C", and you see one student frantically recording, another using the infrared thermometer and a final student recording the cloud types in the sky, you might have stumbled upon a group of students taking cloud-surface data for the Globe Program. (All this takes place 9 times within a minute!) The group then returns to the classroom to send the data.

8th Science

The Wisconsin Fast Plants are fast approaching the pod stage—those that remained alive that long. Sam and Jack devised flotation collars out of Styrofoam and floated their fast plants in a tub of water to survive winter break. For optimum growth the plants need 24 hours of constant fluorescent light, a temperature between 75-80° F and a constant water supply. Needless to say, weekend temperatures and power outages don't contribute to optimum growth – as well as students who forget to give their plants enough water for the weekend.

Leadership Class

The 7th and 8th graders are young leaders in training. Once per week they have a leadership class with Mrs. Debelak. Alongside sessions on the traits and concept of leadership, students solve problems and implement plans for chosen realms of real responsibility. Before the winter break these students were asked to reflect on their experience so far this year. Look for the 7th grade reflections in the next issue of *The Clipboard*.

8th graders:

- Nicholas B - second grade pack-up, safety patrol, recess. *I realize that I need to conduct myself as a good role model, for example I should not fool around in the hallway because younger students will be influenced by my actions.*
- Sam B – safety patrol/hall monitor. *I believe that my job helps others such as Ms. Samarin who cannot be two places at once and also the teachers who are trying to conduct classes while students are in the halls. My job helped me realize that in order to get response from others; I must be nice and have some tolerance while still being strict enough so that I don't get taken advantage of.*
- Margret E – librarian. *I've learned that good leaders especially have to be patient and forgiving. When students randomly stash books all over the school, it takes patience to find them and re-shelve them, and it takes forgiveness to keep myself from getting mad. I know now that I like working with books.*
- Ben G – safety patrol/hall monitor, school store, 3rd grade end-of-day helper. *Working on the school store has taught me organization, work ethic, and time management. It helps raise some money for competitions which we benefit from. At the end of the day, I like helping the 3rd graders and Mrs. Alicea.*
- Eileen J – hallway inspiration, 1st grade end-of-day helper. *I learned that I really like taking care of little kids. I learned while helping the kids that I love to be with them in whatever way.*
- Tarek J – hallway inspiration, recess helper. *The hallway board helps others in the way that it opens the eyes of children to find something inside them and let a good trait work inside them. INSPIRE! I must be diligent to find attractive yet pertinent pictures to display the theme of the quarter.*
- Briana K – school store and 3rd grade end-of-day helper. *Helping the 3rd graders helps things get done a little quicker at the end of the day for Mrs. Alicea. This time has taught me to be more patient.*
- Annabella L – librarian and 1st grade end-of-day helper. *I love helping little children get books in the library. I love being with the 1st graders, I love helping them, I love their presence.*
- Chloe P – librarian, third grade end-of-day helper. *I learned that I enjoy working with younger children and serving the school in keeping the library well organized and prepared for use. As a librarian... sometimes I tend to be overbearing... right now I'm working on being more diplomatic and less critical.*
- Nik R – safety patrol/hall monitor. *Before I started this job I was like all the other kids; if the teachers weren't around I acted out. Now I realize that the teachers really appreciate how we help. Because of leadership I realized how much the younger kids look up to us. So when we act like a good role model they don't act out and it really helps the teachers.*
- Jack T – safety patrol, hallway bulletin board, school store, homeroom helper. *I learned that I like helping people. One mistake I made is that I often act like a young kid.*
- Henna T – copying before school. *My job is helpful because teachers can be in their homerooms when their students come in and they didn't have to find time to do the copies. I learned to be more reliable because I realized that some of the teachers really did depend on me in the morning. I learned more about patience and helpfulness. Some of my copy jobs are complicated, so I had to be patient with myself to do what the teacher wants with the copies.*

Mathematics Grades 5-8

Enthusiasm and hard work marked the month of December. We spent a good deal of time in geometry with the fifth and sixth grade classes. We graphed points on a coordinate plane, and made translations, rotations and flips using our protractors, compasses and rulers. Now we are in the middle of learning a variety of formulas for finding area, perimeter, volume, and surface area. In the seventh and eighth grade, in addition to regular course work, we took time to learn how to graph linear equations, quadratic equations and equations for circles. We started this unit using a fun piece of software called *Green Globes* where students have to develop equations to match lines, circles and parabolas on a coordinate graph.

December was also a great month for student success in math contests. We finally got results from the American Mathematics Competition and our students excelled. Five students – Margret E, Nicholas B, George B, Tim C and Ani D – each received an Award of Distinction; they finished in the top 1% of all students nationally. The school as also received an Award of Excellence, finishing in the top 5% of all schools.

On a school-wide level, in the fifth and sixth grade, Jacob B received first place, Serena C, Nathan C, Oliver D, Jacob D, and Isaac Y tied for second place, and Shawki A, Trevor L, and Thomas W tied for third place. In the seventh and eighth grade, in addition to the Awards of Distinction, Sahar A, Jack T, Tarek J, and Sam B received honorable mention.

Math Olympiads Contest #2

Gold Award: 8th – Sam B, Margret E. 7th – Shulamite C, Ani D. 6th – Isaac Y, Jacob B, Sam J. 5th – Trevor L, Shawki A, Arthur E, Jocelyn L, Lu-Lu S.

Silver Award: 8th – Nicholas B. 7th – George B. 6th – Thomas W, Serena C, Jacob D. 5th – Grant F, Ben W, Clare P.

Bronze Award: 8th – Nik R, Henna T. 7th – Sahar A, Jacques D, Stuart F, Forde R. 6th – Oliver D. 5th – Nathan C, Carl F C, Deepak K, Miranda M, Zaeem M, Miguel P, Nina R. 4th – Hannah Y, Alexander I, Vikas N, Hassan S.

Continental Math League Contest #2

Gold Award: 8th – Sam B, Margret E. 7th – George B, Ani D, Tim C. 6th – Thomas W, Isaac Y, Serena C. 5th – Nathan C. 4th – Bradley S.

Silver Award: 8th – Nicholas B, Ben G, Tarek J. 7th – Shulamite C, Chris H. 6th – Jacob B, Oliver D, Jacob D, Sam J. 5th – Trevor L, Shawki A, Arthur E, Grant F, Lu-lu S, Ben W. 4th – Samir M, Alexander I, Nicholas J, Nikola D, Hannah Y, Hassan S, Alex P.

Bronze Award: 8th Eileen J, Nik R, Jack T, Henna T. 7th – Sahar A, Jacques D, Sarah L. 6th – Miranda G. 5th – Jocelyn L. 4th – Amir F, Sean F, Ishan P.

Clipboard of Music Class

(by Esther Chu)

The learning process of the music class:

- i. Study the fundamental theories and techniques.
- ii. Listen to the composition (music) of great composers.
- iii. Study their characters and their techniques.
- iv. Compare the difference between different composers and their music works.
- v. Develop their own ideas.
- vi. Create their own work. (Masterpiece)
- vii. Share their work with the class and learn from each other.

I. The most joyful time of the music class was the singing time. The students all enjoyed singing “the song for children” (using 9 languages to say hello). First to 3rd graders sang “Hello to the Morning” and “Hello World” and opened up their heart joyfully to meet the day. This past November, they sang mostly patriotic songs related to the important events that have happened in November historically. They were so excited to sing the Thanksgiving songs, especially the Turkey song. First to 3rd graders made a Turkey craft to show their thankfulness for their parents, teachers and all related people in their life. Fourth to 6th graders composed their own Turkey songs or poetry to express their gratefulness for the people they need to thank. In December, they enjoyed singing the “winter fantasy” in two parts (1st to 3rd graders sang in one part, one easily section only) and some Christmas songs (Amazing Grace, Joy to the World, Deck the Halls, We wish You a Merry Christmas, Silent Night, etc.) for celebrating the winter season. The 6th graders especially enjoyed singing the “Joy to the Lord” with echoes.

II. They enjoyed the ensemble –by putting the singing and different instruments with different rhythms together. They completed two ensemble pieces, “Blue Bird” and “Who’s that tapping at the window.”

1st to 3rd graders

They reviewed the notes from middle C to G by singing the jelly beans song. They sang sofegey (do, re, mi, fa, sol) and moved fingers from 1 to 5 and played keyboards and glaspells. Those who were familiar with the keyboard continued to study the chords for accompanying others.

- Listening and playing musical games for exploring the musical elements and expressions. (*Peter pater, sing smoothly vs. lively. *pass beam bag.)
- Children’s folk dance (Polly Wolly Doodle), Children’s game (Statues, Musical Chairs)
- Listen and watch the DVD of Peter and Wolf by Prokofiev, for understanding the functions and tone colors of different instruments.

III. They learned from great composers and applied the lessons to their own life by listening to the masterpieces and studying their biographies.

3rd to 6th graders

They studied the family of instruments and understood the tone color, the particular functions, and the range of sound produced by different instruments.

3rd and 4th graders

They discovered the dramatic effects and recognized different instruments and rhythmic patterns in same melody, by watching and listening to the adventure of Peer Gynt by Grieg, and made their own adventure book based on Peer Gynt.

4th to 6th graders

They studied the time travel journey by listening to and studying the key composers and their music in different periods. I covered the Renaissance, Baroque and Classical periods in 2nd quarter. They listened to the music of Gabrieli, Bach’s organ Toccata and Fugue in d minor, Mozart, and Beethoven’s Symphony.

5th and 6th graders

They studied the life and music of Beethoven along with the historical events in his time and the influence of his composition, and they finished their project of Beethoven. They learned that even though Beethoven’s upbringing environment was so difficult, he remained joyful, and even took good care of his younger brother and his children. He was not defeated by his complete deafness, and composed far surpassing masterpieces beyond a normal and healthy composer. He brought in the new style to the Romantic period and influenced contemporary composers and those who came after him.

4th to 6th graders

They learned the composition technique from Brahms’ ideas: “Never begin working out a composition before the whole thing has taken definite form as an outline either on paper or in your head....” through listening and moving hands, following the listening map with Hungarian dance #5. They really got into the dynamic and tempo change of music.

Dear all students, please email me your musical background, including how many years you’ve learned any instruments for further ensemble study. My email address is: chu@birchwoodschool.org