



Birchwood FEB 2007 Volume 13, 3 Clipboard

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1-2 Gym

These amazing athletes completed a baseball unit and are starting to play kickball. Great work everyone!

3-4 Language Arts

Although we do much more in language arts class than enter and win contests, I am certainly very proud of the students who won honors for themselves and for Birchwood in the December *Cricket* contest. The prompt was an interesting one: *Tell what happens when an unexpected guest comes to your home.* As you can imagine, the students had a multitude of creative ideas, and the judges seem to have loved them. Samir M won first place, and will have his story published in the March issue. Jorgen K took second prize honors, and we also had three students whose stories earned an honorable mention: Dhweeja D, Naomi W, and Hassan S. Congratulations to these published authors!

The students are currently working on a longer project in which they have the opportunity to write a longer story without the hindrance of a word limit. After deciding on a creative idea, each one will write, illustrate, and publish a book that can become a treasured part of their personal library to be saved as a sample of their writing efforts in third or fourth grade.

3rd Reading

The third graders have started reading Charlotte's Web. While reading this wonderful book, we have been paying attention to the change in seasons, how Charlotte is a friend to Wilbur, how Wilbur has grown, and big words. Each day we have class discussions and are able to take a closer look at the theme of friendship that is interwoven throughout the story. Students also pinpoint portions of the story that depict the style of the author including humor, rich vocabulary, and use of similes.

We have recently started Junior Great Books, where students practice slow reading skills and employ note taking and questioning strategies. Then, after reading the story at least twice, students practice shared inquiry and interpretive questioning with the entire class.

4th Reading

The fourth graders have started reading books by Laura Ingalls Wilder, including Little House in the Big Woods. While reading this book students pay attention to details such as: setting, plot, and important characters. Everyday in class we have discussions where students think about similarities and differences between then and now, as well as important events that occur in each chapter. As students read they write down unfamiliar vocabulary words that can later be identified in a dictionary. Students are also learning how to retell important sequences and procedures using correct order and accurate detail.

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5-6 Girls Gym

In the second quarter we wrapped up fast-football. Watch out, these girls can definitely play well! Now they are finishing kickball and will soon begin soccer.

5th Reading

The fifth graders are currently reading, Amos Fortune: Free Man by Elizabeth Yates. As students read this book, they note details in the author's writing in order to comprehend plot, theme, and characterization. We are also learning how to interpret elements of style such as figurative language and special vocabulary. Every Thursday, the fifth graders learn

how to use important reference books such as: dictionary, almanac, encyclopedia, atlas, etc. We also read Time For Kids on a weekly basis to learn about and discuss important current events.

We have recently started Junior Great Books, where students practice slow reading skills and employ note taking and questioning strategies. Then, after reading the story at least twice, students practice shared inquiry and interpretive questioning with the entire class.

6th Reading

The theme in our class has been “setting makes a difference”. Place, time and culture in world historical fiction books directly affect the plot. Through small group discussions we found myriads of examples and decided that no way could the author write the same story if the setting were different! We continued this idea in the next unit through our reading of *The Big Wave* by Pulitzer Prize winning author Pearl Buck. Setting affects not only plot, but theme, mood, and character growth as well! We saw that we could even draw a plot map because the connection to setting was so graphically depicted. We put all these startling conclusions on - what else?! – **wavy** blue paper.

5-6 Science

Students are busily experimenting and have turned in their review of literature for the science fair. Most of them have written and had their procedures checked and okayed. The science fair is still a month away, but there is still a lot to accomplish before then.

A handful of sixth grade students created Recycling Posters to submit to the annual Cuyahoga Solid Waste Earth Day Poster contest. The theme for the posters is “Make It A Habit, Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle”.

7-8 Computer

On the way to creating a fantastic Yearbook issue, the seventh and eighth graders put together their rough drafts and begin designing using PageMaker. They take pictures of various classes with the school’s digital camera and piece together the wonderful pages we all see at year end.

7-8 Girls Gym

The school is fortunate to utilize the nearby basketball court at the activity center on Puritas. The girls are enjoying basketball basics and have all shared the joy of making a field goal!

8th Reading

Through the reading of three short stories from Junior Great Books we solidified the ability to read slowly and reflectively noting important connections throughout these stories. In this way we experienced deeper understandings of more complex stories by Graham Greene, Mona Simpson, and Ivan Turgenev (we decided that the Russians take the cake on complexity!). Honing shared inquiry discussion skills brought about further enlightenment. See also the article on the speech contest in this issue.

7th Science

Students received a commendation from the Globe Program in Washington D.C. They, along with last year’s 7th graders, passed the 1,000 mark. That means that they have entered more than 1,000 pieces of data. That’s quite an accomplishment.

Friday they dressed in boots or bags on their feet, gloves, and hats and went outside for fifteen minutes to learn how to use the GPS units to measure velocity.

8th Science

In the past few weeks students learned how to dissect both a dill pickle and an earth worm, along with how to write a lab report. They also drew imaginary characters that illustrated the major characteristics of mollusks and echinoderms as a way for them to remember the characteristics.

Reading Classes

The poetry show went on the road to area preschools and senior centers. Students experienced how the quality delivery of poetry can be a gift to serve to others.

Speech Contest

On January 25, the seventh and eighth graders held the Sixth Annual Birchwood Speech Contest. Each student chose a great American speech in history. For four weeks, they practiced their speeches using the seven aspects of vocal delivery: projection, diction, force, pause, pitch, rate, and fluency. Listed below are the outstanding awards the students received at the Speech Contest. Judges for the contest were parents Emily Dennis, Jill Levin, and Bruce Wiebusch.

Speeches are in the Order of Presentation

- 7-1 Harry Truman's speech on dropping the atom bomb -Jacques D, **Impressive Understanding**
- 7-2 General Eisenhower issues his "Order of the Day" to the men who will storm the beaches of Normandy -Tim C, **Honorable Mention**
- 7-3 Herb Morrison reports live as the *Hindenburg* explodes and crashes into the ground-Forde R, **Impressive Vocal Variety**
- 7-4 Nixon's farewell speech to White House Staff -Sahar A, **Outstanding Overall Effectiveness**
- 7-5 Frederick Douglass's Independence Day speech at Rochester -Shulamite C, **1st Place**
- 7-6 "A Day of Infamy" by Franklin Delano Roosevelt -Anirudh D, **Outstanding Delivery**
- 7-7 Lou Gehrig thanks his fans and considers himself the "Luckiest Man on the Face of the Earth" -Caitlin S, **Distinctive Pace and Poise**
- 7-8 Mark Twain reveals stage fright -Riza M, **Outstanding Interpretation**
- 7-9 Harry Truman addresses a nation grief-stricken by the death of Franklin Roosevelt-Ryan M, **Exceptional Stage Presence**
- 7-10 William Lyon Phelps praises the owning of books -Sarah L, **3rd Place**
- 7-11 Frederick Douglass's speech to the National Convention of Colored Men-Lina W, **Distinctive Smooth Speaking**
- 7-12 The Four Freedoms -Stuart F, **Most Earnest Delivery**
- 7-13 Vince Lombardi orders his team to "make any sacrifice to win"-Chris H, **Distinction in Clarity and Enunciation**
- 7-14 Martin Luther King, Jr. "I Have a Dream" -George B, **2nd Place**
- 8-1 Abraham Lincoln rededicates the Union at Gettysberg -Sam B, **Honorable Mention**
- 8-2 Robert F. Kennedy calms a mostly black crowd of 1,000 after informing them that Martin Luther King, Jr. has just been assassinated -Eileen J, **3rd Place**
- 8-3 Susan B. Anthony argues for women's rights -Henna T, **Outstanding Delivery**
- 8-4 Holocaust Survivor Dr. Hadassah Rosensaft describes the day she was liberated from a Nazi extermination camp - Annabella L
- 8-5 General Eisenhower issues his "Order of the Day" to the men who will storm the beaches of Normandy -Nik R, **Most Earnest**
- 8-6 Chief Joseph surrenders -Jack T, **Honorable Mention**
- 8-7 Abraham Lincoln's 2nd Inaugural address -Chloe P, **Distinctive Gestures and Poise**
- 8-8 Baseball Great, Lou Gehrig thanks his fans and considers himself, "The Luckiest Man on the Face of the Earth"-Ben G, **Excellent Poise**
- 8-9 Jane Addams offers an impassioned tribute to George Washington on the Anniversary of his birthday -Briana K, **Impressive Understanding**
- 8-10 Patrick Henry "Give Me Liberty, or Give Me Death" -Nicholas B, **2nd Place**
- 8-11 Vince Lombardi orders his team to "make any sacrifice to win" -Tarek J, **Excellent Stage Presence**
- 8-12 Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech -Margret E, **1st Place**

Power of the Pen

It was January 24, a Saturday morning, a non-school day, but students spent the entire morning writing narrative essays. It was a Power of the Pen district competition. Our students competed against students from twenty other area middle schools in Parma.

Representing the seventh grade were Sahar A, George B, Tim C, Shulamite C, Jacques D, Sarah L, and Ani D as an alternate. The eighth grade team was represented by Sam B, Ben G, Margret E, Eileen J, Chloe P, Henna T, and Nick B as an alternate.

Their performance was impressive. The eighth grade team received the first place trophy and the seventh grade team placed fifth. In addition several students received individual recognition

Seventh Grade:

Jacques D – Best of Rounds (first prompt)

Sahar A – Best of Rounds (third prompt)

Tim C – seventh place

Eighth Grade:

Sam B – Best of Rounds (first prompt)

Henna T – third place

Margret E – fifth place

The majority of these students will continue on to the regional competition on March 10.

Leadership

The last issue of the *Clipboard* reported some feedback from the 8th graders concerning the leadership program. The 7th graders as leaders-in-training are featured in this issue:

Sahar A: *The school store helped me develop a little business mind. I learned that there are so many steps to getting something running.*

George B: *In helping with indoor recess I learned to interact with others and that helping others gives me a strong feeling of satisfaction.*

Tim C: *Reading to 1st and 2nd graders at the end of the day helps me realize not only that I like spending time with little kids, but I am good at it.*

Shulamite C: *You have to be a good role model so younger kids will think they should listen to you since you're setting a good example.*

Jacques D: *Being a hall monitor gave me a chance to get to know the younger students a little better and also gave me a chance to help other classes.*

Ani D: *Reading to children during character class taught them virtues of good people and they were interested. I learned that I like to read stories to little children.*

Stuart F: *Doing computer maintenance helped me to become a more responsible and trustworthy person. We follow the code that we made whenever we are using the computers.*

Chris H: *Being a computer maintenance assistant helps the teachers because they can have more time to teach their classes instead of worrying about the computers. I learned that it's important not to forget to do my job.*

Sarah L: *I learned I love trying to help people. I also learned how to organize things better than what I already know.*

Ryan M: *I like helping with the school store and learning to work together.*

Riza M: *As a librarian I help others by giving them a nice library to get and read books from. I am learning to be patient because shelving books is not always fun.*

Forde R: *In my job of reading to little kids, I learned to be nice and loving to them.*

Caitlin S: *In my lost and found job I learned to be more neat and organized than I was before.*

Lina W: *I understand more what it means to be a good role model. If you are going to tell kids not to talk you can't talk while monitoring and you have to be patient.*