



Birchwood MARCH 2007 Volume 13, 4 Clipboard

Class News

1-2 Math

The first and second graders have been doing an awesome job on Wood Math. Although it sometimes gets monotonous, as they plow through the packets they are mastering basic skills that become the foundation for more advanced skills. Many of the children are working at levels ahead of their grade-level expectation. It is very encouraging to see them progress in this way.

1st Math

We just completed a unit on measurement – weight, length, capacity, and temperature. The children were introduced to inches, feet and yards, Fahrenheit and Celsius, cups, pints, quarts and gallons, and a lot of other units of measurement. Through this unit, the children realized that we make measurements every day. For this reason, there are specific tools that are used to make specific measurements. For example, a ruler would never be used to measure the outside temperature, nor would a scale be used to measure a person's height. We need the right tool for the right job, so we practiced reading rulers, scales, and thermometers.

2nd Math

We have been learning about graphs, data, and probability. The children discovered that graphs can be used to display lots of different kinds of data in different ways. Bar graphs, picture graphs, and line graphs all display data in ways that make it easier to understand.

1-2 Reading

The first and second graders have started an author study of Dick King-Smith, the write of *Babe*. They enjoy listening to the current read-aloud book, *Martin's Mice*, which is about a cat that keeps mice as pets. They also read *All Pigs are Beautiful* and made their own animal fact posters entitled "All _____ Are Beautiful".

1-2 Science

At the beginning of this quarter we put on our space suits and took off for an exploratory trip around the solar system. We began at the sun, our nearest star, and started working our way toward the outer planets. We've learned some interesting facts about each of the planets along the way, and had a couple of visits from some guest speakers. Mr. Stewart (Cameron's dad) brought a neat video from NASA and showed us some space rocks, and Katherine's grandfather came to talk about stars and how to identify constellations. After we reach the farthest planets, we will take off for the stars, the next nearest of which is 24 trillion miles away. Not to worry, every day we've been able to make it back by dismissal time!

1-2 Social Studies

"On to Oregon!" is the cry of the first and second graders as we study pioneers, focusing on the ones who took the Oregon Trail. To help us experience what these brave men and women did, we have packed bags with things that we would take if we were pioneers, made trail rules and signed our names to a replica of Independence Rock.

1st Spanish

They practiced vocabulary drills including a game to identify various clothing items. A new song was learned about a little train and every body enjoyed playing a game with the song. The next subject is the face and to learn words describing the parts of the face.

2nd Spanish

They're learning words that describe the parts of the face and body. One student had his body traced on paper and the class then labeled each part. They sang a song about which different body parts are used to plant flowers.

In this issue

Class News

2006

Earth Day Winners

Math Initiative for
Elementary Students

St. Ed's Math Contest

MathCounts Winners

3-4 Computer

Second quarter found us excited to learn about Microsoft Word. The third graders wrote a story about their typical school day including what they do for each class. Afterwards, and during the first part of third quarter, the students copied and pasted the text from Word into a Power Point document. Once all of the slides were full, students began the basics of animating their slideshows. Fourth graders also progressed through Microsoft Word, creating documents, trying new functions in various menus, and learned some advanced text manipulations. They worked with the drawing tool bar and inserted a picture from the Internet into AutoShapes for a creative look. Next the fourth graders created a PowerPoint using information learned in science or social studies. We've seen topics ranging from the Solar System to National Parks. Everyone enjoys watching the hard work come together in the presentations and we look forward to the upcoming MicroWorlds programming unit.

3-4 Math: See Math Initiatives For Elementary Students

3-4 Science

Up, up, and away – into space – the world beyond. Students went there second quarter by researching several sources to learn about a planet. Some students decided to research comets and stars or constellations. All had to take notes, compile the notes, transfer them to index cards for presenting, record bibliographies, and present with a visual aid. Wonderful work was the result. All benefited from each one's effort. Students practiced listening skills by taking notes during classmates' presentations.

After coming down from space, students examine the water on earth and then “plant their feet firmly in the soil.” The fourth graders fill out a weather calendar daily by observing from the window and choosing the best symbols to represent the day's weather. Both classes broke into groups to read short articles on the Cuyahoga Water Shed. Students highlighted interesting facts about the information: soil erosion and sedimentation, streams and watersheds, riparian corridors, urbanization, wetlands, and how to protect drinking water. These topics came in handy when we set up our Don't Muddy The Water experiment. The objective was to test which soil system yielded the cleanest water. The three different systems were one with no plants, one with 1 plant and soil covering (Spanish Moss), and one with 3 plants. If you stopped in the hall by the fourth grade room during Science Night, you might have seen the results: plants and soil covering together maintain soil and thwart erosion.

From that conclusion, students will put to task what they've learned. The next experiment will be to Protect Our Farmland (miniature farmlands) from water damage and soil erosion by strategically placing available soil covering, plants, and boulders. We'll publish the results in the next Clipboard . . . stay tuned.

3rd Social Studies

The students have just completed an interesting unit on Native Americans. This unit focused on how different groups adapted to living in their respective regions of the country. They learned about Native Americans in Ohio, on the Great Plains, in the Southwest, and in the Pacific Northwest. The students made rattles, drums, and drumsticks, which they used to perform two Native American dances. They also practiced weaving, played a Native American game, and enjoyed cooking slapjacks, a cornmeal pancake central to the diet of several tribes. Our study culminated in a visit to the Cleveland Museum of Natural History where we enjoyed a tour by a guide who clearly loved his subject. He had hands on experience with building wigwams, tanning animal hides, and reading a 350 page book on the wearing of buffalo robes! The wealth of his knowledge was a great capstone to our Native American study.

We also enjoyed a fascinating presentation on the ancient country of Egypt by Birchwood's own Nermin El Sady (Kareem's mom). She told us about the geography and history of her native land and brought in many different toys, clothes, shoes, hieroglyphics on genuine papyrus, and other artifacts from Egypt. The children each received a bookmark made of papyrus, a pen that moved like a snake, and a couple of delicious chocolate chip cookies. We are most grateful for this “slice of Egypt” that Mrs. El Sady so generously shared with us.

4th Social Studies

The fourth graders are well into their exploration of Ohio history. They have learned about the important role our state played in Native American history. Tecumseh, Pontiac, “Mad” Anthony Wayne, and Little Turtle are all significant characters in what played out as a mostly tragic drama for the Native Americans. The students enjoyed learning about some “medical” ideas and superstitions that the pioneers on the Ohio frontier believed: if you have a cold, sniff a dirty sock nine times. If you have warts on your hands, hold them to the moon. They also made “Ohio haystacks,” a delicious cookie that resembles a miniature version of the real thing. In addition, the class drove to the Shaker Heights Historical Museum to learn about a religious group called the Shakers that once owned much of today's Shaker Heights during the 19th Century. Finally, the class has had some practice working with primary source documents to learn about the need for local government, the three branches of state government, and the four factors of production.

3rd Spanish

Students learned words to identify food and clothes. The “Spanish Bee” game was played to practice translations from and to either English or Spanish. Reading books out loud was a good practice to improve pronunciation.

4th Spanish

Their task was to learn numbers and use the words to explain addresses, telephone numbers, and math problems. They worked with a crossword puzzle requiring Spanish number words. Reading out loud and finding known words in the books allowed them to practice pronunciation.

3-4 Thinking Skills

The fourth graders, together with the 3rd grade class, are running the Harvest for Hunger campaign for the whole school. They kicked off the campaign with a bake sale on science night and ran several booths that raised nearly \$300 for Harvest for Hunger. They orchestrated everything by themselves. Thanks to all who contributed - you’ve given them a real boost!

5-6 Computer

After reviewing the basics for Microsoft Word, students worked with tables (5th) and formatted a mock Mail Merge letter (6th). Students then dove into PowerPoint. They were instructed to create a slideshow using information learned in science or social studies thus far and the results are fantastic! We’ve seen presentations about rocks and minerals, eco-columns, Japan, Japanese automakers, Egyptian gods, etc. We’re looking forward to finishing the presentations and moving on to Excel.

5th Language Arts: See 7-8 Language Arts

5-6 Math: See **Math Initiatives For Elementary Students**

6th Reading

Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH! This has been a fascinating fantasy with a story within a story. But, unlike other fantasy’s in which authors create fantasy worlds, in this book the setting is a barnyard and a cave. It’s what goes on inside these curiously intelligent creatures that captures our imagination. Students drew pictures throughout to depict what they were able to envision through the exciting and unusual plot.

Reading class has been a support to the Language Arts class in depth immigration project. Library and research skills acquired over the past two years in reading class are put into practice on a major project – stage by stage. In the next phase the Social Studies class will support more advanced research techniques.

Students sent off original poetry on the theme of winter to a Cricket competition . . . and did we tell you that Sam J took second place in the fall contest? His poem about spiders is printed in the February issue. You can see it hanging in the hallway by our room.

5-6 Science

This year the science fair was a learning experience for 5th graders. Next year they will know more what to do, as evidenced by this year’s 5th/6th grade class! A lot of hard work went into each project as students encountered and overcame many problems. Below are the students who placed in each category:

<u>5th Grade Physical Science</u>	1 st place: Brian O	2 nd place: Carl F C
<u>6th Grade Engineering</u>	1 st place: Arthur E	2 nd place: Oliver D and Ryan W
<u>5th Grade Life Science</u>	1 st place: Munim	2 nd place: Clare P and Miranda M
<u>6th Life & Environmental Science</u>	1 st place: Lu lu S	2 nd place: Ben W and Issac Y
<u>5th Grade Chemistry</u>	1 st place: Miguel P & Zach I	2 nd place: Nabil J
<u>Food Science</u>	1 st place: Jocelyn L	2 nd place: Jacob B

There were several “special” awards. The “Bull Dog” award was awarded to Thomas W and Serena C who encountered many problems in their experiment, didn’t quit, and found a way to work around them.

A big thanks to our judges, Mrs. Dennis, Mr. Wiebusch, Mrs. Manimbo, Mr. Lavisky, Dr. Oldenburgh, Dr. Dasarathy, and Mr. Schilling (thanks to Mr. Stewart).

5th Spanish

They learned the Spanish words for the inside and outside parts of a house. Each student gave an oral presentation describing his or her own house. They learned the Spanish verb “to have” and then wrote sentences using the verb.

6th Spanish

Two important Spanish verbs were learned: “to go” and “to be” which start the learning of basic conversation skills. They learned these with a partner by asking and answering questions.

7-8 Computer

Keep it up! This class has accomplished great things in Yearbook. All the pieces are falling into place. Each student’s work is right on schedule because of diligence every week. The eighth graders biggest task right now is to bring personal pictures for their pages. The seventh graders are placing the pictures they’ve captured from classrooms and various events. From here on out, we will focus on using PhotoShop to make pictures page-ready according to each design and editing will be our best friend until the deadline arrives.

7-8 Language Arts

Switching from all the narrative writing, students are focusing on expository essays this quarter. They craft their essays starting with the rudimentary elements of topic sentences, details, and concluding sentences, and theme statements with older students. Many of the pieces have covered aspects of cultural prejudice since this is the topic of the qualifying problem for Future Problem Solving and that of Mrs. Haghighi’s speech last Tuesday. Many of us were able to incorporate the content of her lecture in our writing, delving into a fascinating aspect of diversity and cultural prejudice in the special health care setting.

We greatly appreciate parents who were able to take the time to share their expertise with the upper grades for Future Problem Solving:

Mrs. Carol Pruitt in the fall discussed various fundraising strategies and the structure of her organization to dovetail with the topic “Charity Giving and Fundraising.”

Ms. Marie Kittredge gave us a peek into her career and how she used the problem solving process in her position as director of a Slavic Village community project.

Mrs. Katherine Haghighi spoke of her experience as a project consultant at the Hospice of Western Reserve. She enlightened us about the complexities and issues involved in the training of staff and meeting patient needs.

Each talk helped clarify many of the research topic students were grappling with, providing us a scaffold into the everyday issues outside our classroom walls. Thank you.

7-8 Math: See St. Ed’s Mathematics Contest and MathCounts Winners

7th Reading

Creativity seems to be the theme of this month. The seventh graders recently went to the Playhouse Square to participate in theater workshops on Acting, Dancing, and Improvisation. We all had a wonderful experience. Talents emerged that we had not yet seen in class! They are very talented performers. They are putting their newly discovered skills to good use in our latest unit. We are finishing up a survival unit, enjoying some exiting survival novels set in the future, Nazi Germany, and in the fantasy world of Hobbits. Capitalizing on their talents, the class is showing off its creativity, completing timelines, dramatic reading, puppet shows, and dances based on the books we’ve covered. Their creativity has expanded to include poetry. Reading some of the work of Dickinson, Whitman, and other poets has inspired some of our original work. Our best efforts will be submitted to a poetry contest. We finished our class read aloud Hope Was Here, which we thoroughly enjoyed. We have started another, Things Not Seen, about a teenager who has the unlikely experience of becoming invisible. It promises to be as engaging as our first read-aloud.

8th Reading

Students read two works by John Steinbeck. In *The Pearl* it was cool to see the allegory running parallel to the story and how, on close observation, the reader can find imagery on every page, paragraph and word! And is the pearl a symbol of good or of evil? Too bad you were not in on that lively debate. In *The Red Pony* we were “wowed” even further to see how four seemingly different stories were connected by the theme and seen through poetic imagery and that, through it all, a young boy transitions to becoming a young man. We are on to another style-master, Shakespeare, to examine *Romeo and Juliet*, a play known for its imagery and word play. Puns are fun! O loving hate! (that’s an oxymoron).

All students have participated in the discussions for the current Future Problem Solving topic concerning cultural prejudice. Mr. Debelak has come in to lead discussions as students examined this important topic.

7th Science

This is the quarter to study motion, force and energy. This is the unit that is full of “moving” experiments. They produced some creative Power Point presentations with some of the vocabulary words in the chapter Work and Simple Machines.

8th Science

They’ve progressed from the low life (one called critters) to warm blooded vertebrates. They did some research and presented Power Points that compared and contrasted the circulatory systems and respiratory systems in invertebrates, cold blooded vertebrates, and warm blooded vertebrates.

7th Spanish

They are studying Mexican culture and completed the Chapultepec Park chapter. They searched the Internet and took a virtual tour of the park. They celebrated the chapter ending with a lunch prepared by them. The main menu item was “tacos”.

8th Spanish

Students learned about the current event topic of the Spanish Immigrants and how it is influencing the culture of the United States. They learned about the existence of Spanish radio and television stations in large Spanish speaking communities like Miami and New York. They started using past tense verbs in their conversations as well as direct object pronouns.

Congratulations to Chloe P & Clare P for winning last year’s Earth Day 2006 Art, Poetry, and Essay Contest contest!

Earth Day 2006 Art, Poetry, and Essay Contest Winners on Display

In 2006 students were asked to share their thoughts and feelings on “How Kids Can Help by Recycling” through drawings, paintings, photography, essays, or poetry. Each winner received the acclaimed Hope and Stanley Adelstein Award for Excellence presented by Cleveland dignitaries at the EarthFest 2006 Welcoming Ceremonies. Forty-four students from the diverse Northeast Ohio communities were honored for their outstanding contributions.

Cleveland, Ohio

Work from Earth Day Coalition’s 17th Annual Art, Poetry, and Essay Contests are being displayed at:

**Rockport Branch
of the Cleveland Public Library
4421 West 140th Street
Cleveland, OH 44135**

Library Hours:

Mon, Tues, Thurs

Wed, Fri, Sat

Sun

9:30 am – 8:00 pm

9:30 am – 6:00 pm

1:00 pm – 5:00 pm

**Display available for viewing from Monday, February 26 through Sunday, March 25, 2007
Stop in the library to see their work. P.S. It’s right across from the school!**

Math Initiatives For Elementary Students

Recently we instituted three different math programs to accommodate a growing body of enthusiastic “mathletes” at Birchwood. Mini-Mathlete Club (grades 3 & 4) and the Junior Math club (grades 5 & 6) meet after school. Students in the Math Training Program (grades 3, 4, 5, 6) meet during school. The primary purpose for these extracurricular math programs is to provide students with ample opportunity to advance or enrich their math skills. Depending upon a child’s interest and/or ability, students can pursue math topics to their hearts’ delight.

If parents wish to know more about these programs they may contact Mr. Debelak or Mrs. Samulak.

St. Ed’s Mathematics Contest

Congratulations to the seventh grade students who came in second place at the St. Ed’s mathematics contest. The team was composed of seven students: Sahar A, George B, Tim C, Anirudh D, Jacques D, Caitlin S and Lina W. A special congratulations goes to George B who came in first place.

The eighth grade team of Nicholas B, Sam B, Margret E, Ben G, Briana K, Annabella L and Chloe P came in third place.

More than 30 schools and 200 students participated.

MathCounts Winners

Eight of our students competed at the chapter level of MathCounts, a nationally sponsored mathematics contest: George B, Nicholas B, Sam B, Shulamite C, Ani D, Jacques D, and Margret E. The team of George, Nicholas, Ani and Margret came in third place and will compete at the state level in Columbus on March 10. In addition, on the individual level, Ani came in first place and George came in fourth place.

As a fun follow-up to the competition, the first place MathCounts team from Brecksville-Broadview Heights (they outscored us by four points), will visit Birchwood on March 5 to spend the day together preparing for the state bowl. All MathCounts participants will join in.