



Birchwood MAY 2007 Volume 13, 6 Clipboard

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Each child completed a slide show using Kid Pix, a multimedia art program that allows children to create their own art using drawing tools, stamps, and paint commands. The slide shows were a product of the science unit on space and included fun facts and drawings on the Milky Way and our Solar System. They will be on display during the open house on May 10.

1-2 Language Arts

The children spent the better part of a month, from mid-February to mid-March, writing and illustrating their own stories for the WVIZ Reading Rainbow Young Authors and Illustrators Contest. We are proud to say, "Congratulations!" to Prathna K (2nd grade) and Grace C (1st grade) whose stories won Honorable Mention in this year's contest. Be sure to look at all of the wonderful stories on display during Open House.

1st Math

The first graders went through a unit on geometry called "Shapes Around Us." The children learned to name and identify common 3-dimensional shapes. It's always fun to see how many shapes—cones, prisms, cubes, pyramids, cylinders, etc.—are all around us. They also spent time identifying fractions of a whole, using an imaginary pizza. They decided that, unless the "pieces" are the same size, someone would not get a fair amount. Hence, when dividing something into parts, or fractions, the pieces must be the same size.

2nd Math

The second graders have been spending more time on problem solving strategies and calculation using division. We also reviewed the meaning of fractions and learned to compare fractional units.

1-2 Music

The following are highlights of the third and fourth quarters:

- John Kanaka is a working song sung by dockworkers in California to keep the rhythm while they load cargo, which is one of the welcome songs for all grades. The students sang in many ways such as question and answer, group and solo, and with working movements. They also enjoyed singing the "School Day" with solo, group, and with instruments.
- Sing Spanish songs with the instrument ensemble, creating the lively musical sound and movements.
- Enjoy one of their favorite songs: Singing and moving with the "Dinosaur Dance."
- Due to the weather, they enjoyed singing "I can hear the falling rain" by playing the percussion instruments on the raindrop.
- They have done a wonderful job of learning the notes from middle C to A and sing the sofeqy with hand sign.
- They sang "Way Down Yonder in the school yard" to reinforce the notes on "Remember me?" (mi, mi, re, do)
- Listen to and watch the video of "Peter and Wolf" while drawing the picture of instruments connected to all the characters. It's really fun and enlightening!
- Learn how to play glockenspiel and apply the notes they learn to the instruments.

1-2 Reading

The first and second graders have been diving into quality literature through the Junior Great Book program. They are practicing their comprehension and interpretive thinking skills through oral and written work. The first graders enjoyed making up creatures to live on the Quangle Wangle Queen's hat. The second graders had an interesting discussion about *The Mermaid Who Lost Her Comb*. Together they probed questions such as "Why was Haskeir the ideal place for both the young man and the mermaid to live?" and "What would the children of the man and mermaid look like?" They come up with some interesting interpretations!

After completing a poetry unit, the second graders wrote and polished their own poems. Their best pieces are displayed in the hallway. They also wrote poems about the sun for a *Spider* magazine contest. Spider wrote to our class to tell us how much he enjoyed all the poems. Katherine B and Pheby L will have their poems published in the June edition of the magazine. Congratulations!

1-2 Science

After our journey around the galaxy, we safely landed back on Earth. Now we are spending time to more closely observe some of the features of our planet. We spent two weeks learning about Earth's atmosphere and the "ingredients" that go into making our weather. We also had an interesting lesson about the water cycle. We learned that the water that we use today is the same water that our ancestors used. New water is not made—the old is just filtered and recycled through an ingenious process of nature. Now we are studying the various natural landforms that give our planet its unique beauty. Our Earth is surely special!

1-2 Social Studies

After studying about some of America's past (colonial and pioneer times), we turned our attention to our neighbors near and far. We learned about Canada, making Mountie puppets and participating in a lumberjack relay. We are now wrapping up a quick tour of Europe. We made three-dimensional models of the Eiffel Tower and German castles. We also enjoyed listening to three guest speakers who spoke about their native countries. A big thanks goes out to Mr. Sergio Marconi for sharing about Italy, Mrs. Anita Balic for sharing about Croatia, and Mr. Robert Bartlett for sharing about Great Britain!

3-4 Language Arts

The results of the March *Cricket* contest about meeting a famous person from history are in, and once again we can be very proud of our young writers. Alexander I won second place honors and will have his story published in the June edition. Eight other students won honorable mention awards. They are Brad S, Nathan W, Dhweeja D, Kavya R, Boshy D, Samir M, Nikola D, and Sarah D. Wow! Considering that this is a national contest, we can be more than proud of these students' creative efforts. In addition, the students have been using graphic organizers to write logical and structured responses to both narrative and expository prompts. This will immediately benefit the few students who are taking the Ohio Achievement Tests, but in the long run it will help all of the children, who will use these important composition skills for the rest of their lives.

3-4 Music

The following are highlights of the third and fourth quarters:

- They enjoyed singing "I'd like to teach the world to sing" and "How lovely and green is the earth." I helped them with the basic singing technique for singing nicely and beautifully. They also reviewed songs such as "The song for children," "John Kanaka," "Blue birds," and "Bought me a cat" with motions and instruments.
- Through listening to the "Dance" by Beethoven and the Aquarium from "The Carnival of the Animals" by Saint-Saens. With a listening map they learned about musical form, melodic contour, dynamics, and different rhythmic patterns.
- They can read the musical notes from middle c to higher c by drawing, singing the notes, moving hand signs and playing the glockenspiels.
- They learned more complex rhythmic patterns such as sixteenth notes with different combination of quarters and eighth notes and clapping and playing on hand drums.
- Studying the character, instruments, tone colors; and making small projects by watching the videos of "Peter and Wolf" by Prokofiev, "Magic Flute" by Mozart and "The Carnival of the Animals" by Saint-Saens.

3-4 Science

Our last unit of the year is Rocks and Minerals. The students started this unit off by hunting for their favorite rock out in the school yard. After finding numerous rocks they liked it was hard to pick just one to bring in to the school. Once the rock was cleaned, each student made a description sheet for his or her rock including size and shape (traced), color(s), height, width, diameter, and texture. Finally there was a small challenge. The third graders tried to match all the fourth graders' rocks with their descriptions while the fourth graders did the same with the third graders' rocks. Happy to report, both classes completed the matching with 100% correct. Great work!

Students have also learned to identify various minerals by testing the color, scratch, streak, hardness, acidity, and cleavage. We will do a similar activity when identifying rocks.

The third and fourth graders have been busy working on a Geology Log in which they are working extremely hard to be neat and accurate. They will display their work at Open House. Don't miss these gems!

They will finish up the year with several experiments and then study 100 vocabulary words learned throughout the year. The ability to remember words from the very first month of school is quite impressive! Great job guys!

3rd Social Studies

The students have been studying a variety of topics in a brief way, including the settling of the American Southwest by the Spanish, the moving into the Plains region by some very tough and determined pioneers, and school days for children in a one-room schoolhouse. Although such a school experience may seem like ancient history, the children read a primary source account of teaching in just such a school during the early years of World War II. This interesting story was written by none other than Mrs. Kufahl's mother, Marie Oja. The children are currently involved in learning about Washington, D. C. Each has chosen an important building to research, and the brilliant and creative models that they construct of their monuments should be on display when you visit us at the spring Open House

4th Social Studies

The fourth graders have been studying the American West and Southwest. Spanish missions, cowboys, the California gold rush, and the transcontinental railroad have all been topics of discussion. The children have recently started a simulation called Transcontinental, in which each has been assigned to either the Union Pacific or Central Pacific Railroad. They will earn points for their team by studying about and doing short research projects not only on the transcontinental railroad, but also on other forms of transportation such as canals, steamboats, the Butterfield stagecoach line, the National Road, and the Pony Express, all of which opened the way for westward expansion. May the best researchers reach Promontory, Utah first!

4th Thinking Skills

Students have considered trees and their benefits to us. They came up with so many ideas that they filled two chalkboards and still had more ideas that wouldn't fit! Next groups of students looked at various trees and decided what kind of tree would "fit" a given landscape (shape of tree, growth requirements, benefits provided, etc.).

5-6 Music

- They enjoyed singing "Hymn of Joy" and "The Lord bless you and keep you." They worked on more advanced singing techniques, with which they sang the words connected with the vowel sounds of five basic vocal sounds and sang with dynamics, good rhythms, and even sang in two parts.
- They also enjoyed singing the difficult Spanish songs with nice phrases and dynamics.
- They listened to the "Eccossaises" by Beethoven and the Aquarium from "The Carnival of the Animals" by Saint-Saens. With a listening map, the 5th and 6th graders learned more advanced musical forms, rhythmic patterns, dynamics, different instruments with different sounds and expressions. They studied the biography of Mozart and watched his video; they learned more about Mozart's compositional styles and the singing melody throughout the music especially in the operas. They enjoyed "Magic Flute" and some important chamber music and Symphonies.
- Mozart was such a genius and a spontaneous composer who was very different from Beethoven. They also studied the brief biographies about some contemporary composers such as Saint-Saens. Later we will introduce them to the American folk songs, blues, musicals, and their composers.

5th Science

Plant Pride Day (April 1st) the 5th graders donned garden gloves and cleaned up the leaves in front of the office building. In their regular class time these stellar students are studying the stars.

6th Science

Poster winners: Not only was Serena the local National Chemistry Week Poster winner, but her poster was sent on to the national level . . . and she was the First Place National Winner. Six students entered the Earth Day poster contest sponsored by the Cleveland Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District. Jocelyn won first place in the 5th grade division and Miranda G was a runner up in the 6th grade division; both posters were featured on the calendar published by the Solid Waste Division. Ben and Lu Lu were in the top nine 5th grade finalists.

On Plant Pride Day (April 1st) the 6th graders weeded the front of the school building and picked up sticks on the lawn.

7th Science

The 7th grade science class carried out the Zero Waste Challenge. They not only made cardboard bins for recyclables and waste but they also saved fruit cup containers and yogurt cups for Mrs. Kutis, recycled anything recyclable, and weighed the leftovers. After almost two weeks of practice, they submitted Birchwood's results . . . and we won another bench for being the school with the least amount of waste! The 7th graders also helped on Plant Pride Day.

8th Science

On Plant Pride Day (April 1st) the 8th graders swept up the loose gravel on the parking lot/playground where the snowplow piled the snow and picked up loose papers. They are still studying human anatomy during this quarter.

5-8 Future Problem Solving Program Highlights

Three intermediate teams and one junior team were invited to the Ohio State Bowl at Nordonia High School on April 27 and 28. Congratulations to these finalists who advanced to this level:

Nicholas B
Sam B
Forde R
Nik R

Ani D
Margret E
Chloe P
Henna T
Alt. Tim C

Sahar A
Jacques D
Sarah L
Lina W
Alt. Shulamite C

Deepak K
Miranda M
Miguel P
Nardine T

Thank you very much to all these parents who coached the skits, drove back and forth, provided food, gathered mementos, and a myriad of other activities: Mike Ripich, Carol and Dan Pruitt, Razan Abbass, Nermine El Sady, Dr. Taleb, Marie Kittredge, Lorraine Vega, Prabha Kumar, Michelle Manimbo

In conjunction with the FPS topic of Care for the Elderly, upper grade students heard from Carole Calladine of the Rocky River Senior Center, Lynn Wieland from the Cuyahoga Adult Protective Services, and John Bouman, the Director of the National Center for Poverty Law. Because of the change in demographics with the increase percentage of senior citizens, students need to think of trends and challenges related to healthcare, finances, physical and psychological health, caregivers, and sundry other issues. In language arts students are also composing essays based on some of these concerns.

Recorder Lessons for 4th-6th Graders

We signed a contract with every students and gave everyone a folder with assignment sheet, study repertoire, and practice calendar for each week.

- The 4th grade students began with the very basic technique of how to hold and blow the recorder and learn notes step by step. By the end of 4th quarter, they are able to play the simple folk songs.
- The 5th grade students have progressed from the beginning stage to the next and learned more notes to play long folk songs.
- The 6th grade students worked on more advanced techniques, such as using slurs and different tonguing to produce nice tone quality. They are able to play famous folk songs with nice phrasing and dynamics. Some of the students worked on the duets playing in two parts together.

The Ensemble Practice

Some of the 3rd and 7th graders, and all of the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 8th graders have great experience with the ensemble rehearsal. Wow! The whole class 12 to 16 students formed an ensemble with different instruments, such as recorders, percussions, violins, flutes, clarinets, guitars, glockenspiel, and xylophone. They learned to work on their parts precisely and listened to and cooperated with each other and followed the right rhythm and paid attention to the conductor's direction and signs.