



Birchwood Clipboard

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Class News

1-2 Language Arts

The first graders continue to model stories in creative writing. They read *When I Was Young in the Mountains*, a Caldecott book and used it as a model to write stories of their own childhood for their future children. They were also introduced to prompt and response writing.

The second graders have been learning cursive handwriting. We are now almost through the lower case alphabet. If you haven't yet seen your son or daughter's cursive, they are usually glad to give you a sampling. The creative writing assignments continue to improve and the children enjoy sharing and listening to one another's stories each week.

1-2 Math

We spent the last few weeks learning to tell time using analog and digital clocks. It was challenging to determine elapsed time, but many of the children were able to get the hang of it. We also looked at calendars and schedules and learned to calculate elapsed time in days, weeks and months.

On Thursday, February 7th, we will celebrate the 100th day of school! First graders will make a project using 100 items and share it in class. We will also have a pizza lunch. The pizzas have 100 pieces of pepperoni.

1-2 Reading

The first and second graders are finishing up a unit on Caldecott books. The Caldecott Medal is given yearly to the American picture book with the best illustrations.

1-2 Science

This quarter we are learning about health and the human body. We began by talking about the five senses and the organs that we use for each. We have done some fun class experiments related to the senses to see how they actually work together to heighten our awareness of the world around us. In one experiment we tried to recognize sounds simply by hearing, without seeing the source of the sound. It was
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fun to identify the source of the sounds without actually seeing it.

1-2 Social Studies

The first and second graders finished their unit on Native Americans. They finished their books showing what they learned about tribes from different regions. They also created winter counts using picture writing and designed their own burden baskets.

We are now learning about things that are special to our country - national holidays, monuments, songs and our flag.

1st Spanish

The first graders worked on memorizing the objects in the classroom, vocabulary, and completed exercises in the Spanish book. They also learned a song and played the game called "Sobre el Puente de Avillon". This song is about different professions.

2nd Spanish

The second graders learned about foods. They memorized new words and participated in a competition. Together with the first grade, they made Mexican pottery using a lot of creativity. The pottery was displayed in the Fine Arts Night.

3-4 Language Arts

The students continue to write, write, write—creative stores, how-to paragraphs, and journal entries. All this practice makes them fearless when it comes to contests, and once again their efforts have been recognized in a national competition. The November *Cricket* contest asked for a story that told about the origins of something. Winners will appear in the February 2008 issue. Jorgen K won first place honors for his story about the origin of Old Faithful entitled *Faithful Sneezes*. Dhweeja D took second place with *How Dussera Came to Be*, while Darius Z's *How Leaves Became Green* tied with Alexis H's *Why Humans Love Dairy Products Today* to earn third place. Honorable Mention winners included Boshy D
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for *How the Parrot Got Its Colors* as well as Nizar D for *The First Snowfall*.

3rd Reading

The third graders were busy readers during our Beverly Cleary Unit, trying to read as many books as possible. You wouldn't believe how many books they read! We kept an ongoing chart in the classroom, so that students could keep track of all the Cleary books they read. Once students finished reading a Cleary book, they took a comprehension quiz on the computer to see how well they remembered what they read. Many students improved their score each time they took a quiz! While students were reading Beverly Cleary books at home, in the classroom we were reading *Hello, Mrs. Piggle Wiggle*. Students were required to go back through each chapter and find proof in the text for their answers to questions. We just started a new biography unit, where students will have the opportunity to learn about admirable and important people from the past.

I am so proud of the 3rd graders for the excellent job they did on their color poems for Fine Arts Night! Who knew that we had so many talented poets in the third grade room!

4th Reading

The fourth graders have been working hard in order to complete their very own Lincoln book. As students read a biography about Lincoln, they were required to write down important facts in paragraph form. They also created their own illustrations to include in the book. You will be very impressed when you see their final book, and amazed at how many interesting facts the fourth graders learned about President Lincoln. We even found out why President Lincoln decided to grow a beard! Our next reading unit will be world historical fiction, where students will have the opportunity to read books that take place in all sorts of interesting places from the past.

I am very proud of all the fourth graders for the wonderful job they did on their animal poems for Fine Arts Night! We will be writing many more poems throughout the year.

3rd Social Studies

Having gotten through their very first set of midterm exams (mostly with outstanding scores, I might add), the third graders have been studying movable communities such as Native Americans of the Plains
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who followed the buffalo, pioneers traveling in wagon trains, and Scandinavian herders of reindeer. They will soon begin two very fast-moving, hands-on units on Native Americans and Pilgrims. The Native American unit will culminate in a field trip to the Natural History Museum on Feb. 21.

4th Social Studies

This class is well into its study of Ohio history. They are currently exploring life on the Ohio frontier and learning about the roles played by men, women, and children—roles that kept everyone busy from sunup until sundown to increase the family's chances of survival. We played a pioneer game called *Going to Jerusalem*, which got everyone moving and gave the students a taste of the simple kind of games that people enjoyed when they had the opportunity to be together. The class will tour the Shaker Heights Historical Society on Feb. 20 to learn about a religious group that established a prosperous community right here in the Cleveland area.

3rd and 4th Spanish

The students learned about how many Spanish speaking countries are in the world. They placed the countries in the map and they heard their popular traditions and culture. They also chose their favorite country and made the flag of that country.

In addition, they also worked with the calendar and seasons. They talked about their birthdays and the festive events of each month. They also shared their preference of the seasons, and completed activities in the Spanish book.

3rd and 4th Thinking Skills

3rd and 4th grade students learn and practice real life problem solving as they plan for the school's Harvest for Hunger campaign. They submitted ideas for slogans, badges, and different events and then groups of students decided on badges and slogans to use. They put together a calendar and will type and send home a letter to their parents and then to the school. They plan to begin "H 4 Hunger" the last week in February and will conclude after the first week in March.

6th Language Arts

While working on expository essays this quarter, we have spent a great deal of time learning parts of speech and how to diagram sentences. It took a long time to sort out direct objects, indirect objects, predicate

adjectives and predicate nominatives, particularly when we just finished figuring how and where to diagram prepositions and prepositional phrases.

5th Math

Most of the students began work on ratio, proportion and percentage. Parents can feel free to ask their children a few questions the next time your family heads out: “If we are traveling 65 miles per hour how long will it take us to get to Pittsburgh? If we get 22 miles per gallon, how many gallons of gas will we use and how much will it cost us at \$3.00 per gallon?” If you go to a restaurant, let your child figure out the tax, the tip and the total bill.

6th Math

After studying square roots, perfect squares, and perfect cubes one group worked on reading graphs and measuring distances by using scale drawings. In the meantime, another group worked on complex word problems involving ratio, percent and average.

5th Reading

The fifth graders just finished reading *Amos Fortune: Free Man* by Elizabeth Yates, as well as many other biographies about important people from our past. After reading *Amos Fortune*, students were able to identify how Amos was able to stand tall amidst his situation. The text was chock-full of new and interesting vocabulary words that the fifth graders not only defined, but also learned. Using a timetable, students identified important dates and main events from the story. We just started a new animal fiction unit, where student have been enjoying classics such as: *Where the Red Fern Grows*, *Gentle Ben*, and *Big Red*. The fifth graders have been reading these books in small groups and have been discussing main character qualities and changes along the way.

I am very proud of all the fifth graders for the wonderful job they did on their winter poems for Fine Arts Night! We have many talented poets in the fifth grade class!

5th Science

Students created Earth Day posters and are actively working on their science fair projects. Back in October students participated in a chemistry contest as part of the National Chemistry Week celebration. Fifth through eighth graders used red cabbage juice indicator and used it to create a pH scale with various solutions. They then used the pH scale to determine

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the pH of other solutions. Trevor, was chosen as the winner for the 5th – 6th grade level of the contest! He and his family are invited to an awards dinner in April. Congratulations!

6th Science

Students submitted Earth Day posters and are getting ready for the science fair on February 28.

The 5th –6th grade projects will be on display during Science Night on February 28th from 7 – 8 pm.

5th Spanish

The students were very busy making piñatas. Each grade was divided into four groups, and they made total of eight piñatas. Each grade will receive one of these piñatas. We saw a lot of creativity, enthusiasm, and team work. What a fantastic job. The piñatas were displayed at Fine Arts night. Later, the piñatas will be filled with candy, and at the last day of the school year each grade will break their own piñata in the park.

The 5th and 6th grade girls also helped on Friday during gym class “showcasing” the bakery, eating the cracked cookies, packaging the popcorn, making signs, putting the piñatas on the table, etc. They had a wonderful time, were laughing, giggling and had SOOOOOOOO much fun – were as happy as can be! All were great and said they had a fantastic time.

7th Math

There are three Algebra1 groups in this class. The first group just completed a unit on solving quadratic equations learning how to complete the square and use the quadratic formula. Another group has begun learning various forms of factoring including identifying the difference of two squares and perfect squares. The third group learned to add, subtract, multiply and divide fractions with variables. We also have a pre-algebra group that has just finished a unit on writing algebraic sentences and another unit on geometry vocabulary.

8th Math

The Geometry group continues to work on geometric proofs. The past few weeks they focused on applying theorems related to triangles. The Algebra1 group worked very hard to complete a unit on algebraic word problems, always a difficult chapter for students because it requires a great deal of logic to translate words into equations. One set of students is reviewing

the entire pre-algebra book while working through their Algebra 1 course. This will provide them an excellent foundation for high school mathematics.

7th Reading/Fine Arts

It was a quarter to read, write and think. After reading books of choice in historical fiction of the American Revolution, students discussed - then wrote - on the plot conflicts and characterization. Taking it up a notch, they read *Johnny Tremain* with a view to follow the complex interweaving of the effects of setting and personal interactions on the growth of the main character. Students then constructed 5-paragraph essays in step-by-step fashion to learn how to convey and articulate their analysis.

In the fine arts strand, students studied the poetry of Longfellow and wrote original poetry, submitting two pieces to two contests. There was much ado about fine arts night too – practicing songs, raps, and instrumentation and experimenting with improvisation. They also designed an art project employing perspective drawing to an autobiographical room in a surrealistic style.

See also leadership comments from this class elsewhere in this Clipboard edition.

8th Reading/Fine Arts

Students continue to practice the fine art of discussion with JGB stories by William Saroyan and Amy Tan and two short novellas by John Steinbeck. Probing a story's meaning involves multiple perspectives, and this entails courage on the part of every group member to speak out agreements, disagreements, propositions and simple comments. So, we practice! This was an emphasis with our unit on author, Madeleine L'Engle. Her themes can be interpreted on deep and philosophical levels by persistent and thoughtful readers. Discussion proved again to be the key to enlightening and meaningful discoveries.

Eighth graders also submitted original poetry for publication. You can view all poetry in the hallways during parent conferences. Art projects included a still life drawing of their gym shoes and a chalk pastel reproduction of a bird. Overall, this class demonstrated outstanding leadership in support of the music portion of Fine Arts Night.

See also leadership comments from this class elsewhere in this Clipboard edition.

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7th Science

Students submitted Earth Day posters. Since this is the International Polar Year, students created web pages that highlighted some of their research. This quarter they study motion, force, and energy. Last week they graphed their heel toe shuffle and speeds for balls with different masses.

8th Science

Students submitted Earth Day posters. Do you know what an Extremophil is? Maybe you'll be able to see their power points during Science Night. They were introduced to dissection techniques by dissecting a dill pickle. Next, they dissected a preserved Annelid (earthworm). Their study of mollusks will lead them to dissect a clam in the coming week. Cait and Lina were able to build towers out of two sheets of newspaper and 20 cm tape that withstood a blast of air from a hair dryer 1 meter away.

7th Spanish

The seventh graders learned the subject of Mexico City. They took a virtual tour to Teotihuacan, the ancient capital of the Aztec Empire about 500 A.D. They saw the Pyramid of the Sun and the Pyramid of the Moon, the Road of the Dead, and the Citadel.

They used the verb "ir" (to go), "comprar", (to buy), "visitar" (to visit). They planned their own tour. They also learned the Mexican technique of Paper cuts. They made flags, banners, masks, and we used to decorate the stand of our Baking sale.

8th Spanish

The students learned about schools in Spain, activities in school and after school, places, school equipment, and excuses. They also researched about the festivities in Spain that will be the theme of the "2008 Spanish Program". In addition, they learned the past-tense of the verbs ending with AR, ER and IR verbs.

Recent Contest Winners

Trevor L (5th grade) and William L (2nd grade) were selected as winners of the Cleveland Section of the American Chemical Society's National Chemistry Week 2007 chemistry contest. The American Chemical Society is a congressionally chartered independent membership organization which represents professionals at all degree levels and in all fields of chemistry and sciences that involve chemistry.

CONTINENTAL MATH LEAGUE AWARDS CONTEST #3

Gold Awards (Perfect score):

2nd: Vinny K

4th: Nate C, Dhweeja D, Phillip H, Kavya R, Cameron S, Naomi W

5th: Amir F, Alexander I, Trevor L, Sanjana R, Susmita R, Brad S

6th: Lu lu S, Ben W, Carlf C, Deepak K, Munim, Zaeem M, Brian O, Clare P, Shawki A, Nathan C, Grant F, Jocelyn L

7th: Jacob B, Serena C, Sam J

8th: George B, Anirudh D

Silver Awards (Five of six):

4th: Peter A, Hajira A, Christine B, Evan F, Jorgen K

5th: Nicholas J, Vikas N, Hassan S, Hannah Y

6th: Miguel P

7th: Oliver D, Jacob D, Thomas W, Isaac Y

8th: Sahar A, Shulamite C, Caitlin S

Bronze Awards (Four of six):

4th: Jamie S, Kareem T, Nathan W

5th: Marla B, Sarah D, Max L

6th: Iman G, Hannah K, Nina R

8th: Jacques D, Stuart F, Sarah L, Lina W

MATH OLYMPIADS AWARDS CONTEST #3

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL

Gold Award (Perfect score):

4th: Christine B, Nate C, Dhweeja D, Evan F

5th: Hannah Y

6th: Munim, Deepak K

Silver Award (Four of five):

4th: Hajira A, Kavya R, Naomi W

5th: Nikola D, Trevor L, Sanjana R, Susmita R

6th: Ben W, Deepak K, Miguel P, Clare P, Shawki A, Grant F, Jocelyn L

Bronze Award (Three of five):

4th: Jamie S, Cameron S, Kareem T, Nathan W

5th: Marla B, Vikas N, Bradley S

6th: Lu lu S, Carlf C, Hannah Y, Miranda M, Nathan C

MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL

Gold Award:

7th: Jacob B, Isaac Y

8th: George B, Anirudh D

Silver Award: 7th: Jacob D

Bronze Award:

7th: Serena C, Thomas W

8th: Sahar A, Shulamite C, Lina W

Midyear Comments from the 7th & 8th Graders

Concerning Leadership Jobs

Seventh Grade

“It has been beneficial to me to do leadership jobs because I learn how to be responsible and reliable.”
– Sam

“Gardening has been a good experience for me because it has taught me that things we want (like a clean garden) take hard work.” – Oliver

“Organizing the songs teaches me to know how to organize things fast and efficient, and be responsible to the songs every class.” - Isaac

“I have enjoyed helping the younger kids because it has taught me to be responsible and has been fun to be with the little kids.” - Nathan

“It has been good for me to do the Lost and Found because it has helped me become more creative and committed.” - Jacob D

“I have enjoyed my job because it helped me gain more responsibility. It also helped me gain determination.” – Grant

“Being the leader of the boy’s Cambell’s labels and box tops has taught me organization and leadership”
– Jacob B

“Doing indoor recess for the third grade class has helped me become more responsible” -Shawki

“I have enjoyed working at the school store because it gives you a sense of accountability.” – Thomas W

“I have enjoyed Hallway Inspiration because it makes me more creative in putting things up on walls, making paper decorations, and picking suitable poems to go with the decoration.” – Lu lu S

“ Being part of the Box Tops Team helps me be a better person because the job requires organization and patience to get it done.” – Serena C

“I have enjoyed being a member of the Box Tops Team because it helps me be someone who is reliable to count, cut, and sort labels efficiently so that we can get our job done on time.” – Jocelyn L

“Doing Hallway Inspiration has made me a more mature and responsible person, and also enhances your creativity.” - Ilona K

Eighth Grade

“Accounting for the hall monitor system has been beneficial to me because it has helped me mature in dealing with and helping other people.” – Anirudh

“It has been beneficial for me to do Computer Maintenance because it helps take the load off of what the teachers have to do and it helps me become a more responsible person.” – Chris

“I have enjoyed Computer Maintenance because it has taught me to be a more trustworthy and responsible individual” – Stuart

“Assisting with the song books has been extremely beneficial to me because it has taught me dedication and perseverance. Also, I have been exposed to new music.” – George

“Managing the Safety Program has assisted me in acquainting myself with more students throughout the school as well as making me more responsible.” - Jacques

“Managing the school store has helped me become a more responsible leader and given me a sense of responsibility.” – Forde R

“Being a school librarian is a very enjoying task because being around books helps me relax and also the school benefits by my organizing of the library.” - Sarah L

“Copying has developed a better attitude in me because it takes responsibility to get all the papers and copy them.” ~Caitlin S

“I have enjoyed helping the first graders and the end of the day because it has helped me develop better leadership and responsibility skills, and I like helping them because they are fun to be around.” ~ Lina W

“Every day I do library whether it is in leadership class or during break, I enjoy shelving the books. Doing library really helps teach me responsibility because I always have to shelf and even if I want to shirk my duties I can’t because then the library will be worse next time.” – Riza M

“As the leader of the hallway inspiration group, I have developed my responsibility, commitment, and leadership skills from my job.” – Shulamite C

“I love organizing the box tops campaign because it helps me learn to plan goals for a long term project.” – Sahar A