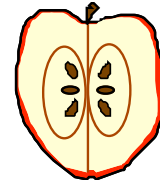


Slice of the Apple



February / March 2010

Winter Months in Lower School

Tally Lent
Lower School Head

January was brought to a delightful close with our fifth graders' radio play of *It's a Wonderful Life*, and February has arrived, bringing anticipation of much activity. The groundhog saw his shadow this week, so we know we will have six more weeks of winter. More importantly, Groundhog's Day is the midpoint between the Winter Solstice in December and the Summer Solstice in June. We are poised in the middle of the seasons, in the midst of change. Similarly, we are just past the midpoint of the school year, immersed in tremendous growth, learning, and change. In the life of the school, we adults are fully present in this year, yet looking forward to the next, ensuring that our students will be ready for the challenges and triumphs that lie ahead. While I am reveling in the solid and spectacular progress of your students right now, and enjoying their plays, songs, reports, athletic prowess, and good citizenship, I am looking ahead to next year, and planning for opportunities in the changes that are part of school life, just as they are part of the seasons.

As we anticipate a smaller school, we have the opportunity to house our fourth grade classrooms in the Marshall Building. The large, airy, and nicely equipped rooms in Marshall allow great room for projects and growing bodies,

and having more of the division under one roof helps strengthen cohesiveness and community. I welcome having more of our Lower School family in the same house! As the teachers and I plan for next year, I have begun speaking with the third graders about their remaining in Marshall for fourth grade. I welcome their questions and thoughts and am listening carefully. For instance, I know that they have had their stint with stacking chairs after lunch and would prefer not to have two years with that same responsibility! I also know that they feel very good that their Kindergarten, first, second and third grade teachers will still be around them and present in their day-to-day lives. Our fourth graders earn greater independence than they had as first, second and third graders, and we will make certain that milestone remains intact. We adults in school are enjoying and invested in these wonderful days of this school year and are planning proactively for next year, always working toward strengthening our already strong and vibrant program. As much as I welcome your children's questions and comments, I sincerely invite yours. Please feel free to give me a call, a visit, or an email if you have any questions or comments.

Beyond Groundhog's Day, February and early March are filled with plenty of holiday celebrations, widespread learning, and excitement. We started the month with Parent – Teacher Conferences, and will move on

to Valentine's Day, WinterFest, a fieldtrip to space, and community service work throughout the Lower School. We'll end the season with more minutes of daylight and new adventures under our belts.

You received in the mail a packet of progress reports, with a checklist from your child's homeroom teacher, or the grade card in fifth grade, and checklists and comments from special subject teachers. These were mailed home so that you had an opportunity to read over the packet prior to your conference with your child's teacher. I hope your time with your child's homeroom teacher was informative and interesting. Conferences are wonderful opportunities for parents and teachers to share information about children and to discuss their strengths and any areas of needed work. Our home-school partnership is a major factor in our students' successes in school and their positive feelings about school.

We will celebrate Valentine's Day and each grade level may be taking different approaches to this celebration. In some classes, each child is asked to bring a Valentine card for each and every classmate; in other classes, there may be a "Secret Valentine" where one card is handmade for one child whose name is drawn out of a hat. In all cases, we stress the importance of every individual being included. Of course, we never want any child left out. In all celebrations, please keep in mind our peanut/ tree nut and nut-product prohibition. Many candies are made in plants that also use nuts or peanuts in their production; this makes a dangerous cross-contamination risk and we cannot allow those candies on campus. I appreciate your support of this policy and encourage us all to make our class celebrations both healthy and fun.

Presidents' Day allows us an opportunity to explore the important

contributions these citizens have made to our country and our world, and is a great element in our division-wide theme, *Applewild to the Core*. Fourth and fifth graders will enjoy WinterFest after school on February 18 (with a snow date of February 25). We hope to have good sledding on the front lawn of the Crocker Building and then pizza for supper afterward. Fifth graders will head out to the Christa McAuliffe Challenger Space Center in Framingham on the next day, February 19. More information will be forthcoming about both events.

We will celebrate the 100th Day of School at some point in late February (perhaps the 23rd). We will wrap up the month of February with our first graders heading over to Head Start to read books to the preschoolers there. Our second graders will see their "grandfriends" at Highlands, and the third graders will meet their ARC buddies for socialization and a project.

March 2 is Dr. Seuss' Birthday and we will celebrate that day with our annual Pajama Day in the Lower School. All students and teachers are invited to wear school-appropriate pjs – collars are not required! The second and third weeks of March are Spring Break, and bring the first day of spring and the start of daylight saving time.

February and March will certainly deliver us a flurry of activity, a blizzard of learning, and clear skies for growth and achievement. We will wait to see what Mother Nature brings us!

A February Slice of Kindergarten

Ginger Sauer

Sharon McGowan

What happened to January? It has zoomed by, and from past years we know that February moves at even greater speed, with many exciting stops on the way.

We celebrate Valentines Day with all the hoopla it deserves. Reading and

writing often get a boost this month as children write each other's names on cards, read their cubby labels to accurately deliver messages, and try to decipher messages on cards. Our rule is that if you give a card to anyone in class, you must give one to each child (and adults welcome these delightful missives, too!), so that there are no Charlie Brown hurt feelings. These messages of friendship, whether homemade or store-bought, show that you have been thought about in an extra-special way, and we will make some cards in class.

Our 100th day of school is also approaching, and should be towards the end of February, depending on snow days. Stay tuned for the exact date. For that day, we ask each child to bring in a collection of 100 items. These can be similar items put together to make a project, or they can simply be 100 items counted out and bagged. The whole grouping should take up no more space than a standard grocery bag and must be able to be carried by the child. That day we will have a 100th Day snack, which includes ten different snacks, of which they must take ten each. Whatever cannot be eaten by each child will go home in a baggie. Counting by 10's -- who knew it could be so yummy?! Please remember to check ingredients lists if you are sending in treats; foods prepared in a facility that processes tree / and or peanuts can be life-threatening to some. It is vital that we adhere to this standard!

I either have enjoyed conferences or look forward to talking with you about your child. I marvel at the distance each has come at this mid-year point. Even looking at pictures from early in the year we see that the changes are vast! I relish sharing my perspective and observations and hearing yours; I find this taking stock often helps to refocus on strengths and areas for work.

Children are becoming adept at naming letters given individual sounds; now we will work in a more focused way on segmenting words in order to increase our skill at encoding all sounds in each word. (E.g., the word blue has three sounds: /b/ /l/ /oo/--and at the Kindergarten level that last sound is 'correctly' represented by -ew, -oo. or -ue. The reverse of this skill involves blending, which calls for saying each sound represented by letters in a word, and 'smooshing' them together to name the word, e.g., /c/ /a/ /t/ is cat! We will also work on syllabating.

In math we continue work on place value, tens, and play around with addition. Dice, cards, and dominoes all come in handy in this pursuit, and most table games you play with your child offer practice at this skill. We will also work with concepts of measurement prior to the March break.

Have a great month—short though it is, and enjoy the longer daylight each day offers!

First Grade News

**Milissa Cafarella
Pamela Meehan**

In our new math unit, "Counting to 100", we will count with groups of tens, and find number patterns, as well as, skip counting. We will estimate how many objects are in a group, what number comes "before, between, and after", and recognize even/odd numbers. A math activity to do at home is gather about 30 small objects, such as pennies or buttons. First, ask your child to estimate, or guess, how many objects you collected. Then help him or her count out groups of 10. With your child, count the groups by 10s. Then count on any objects that are left over. Repeat this activity often with different-sized groups of objects. With practice, your child will get better at estimating. Reading math stories reinforces

concepts. Books you can read together are *Monster Math* by Anne Miranda, and *A Fair Bear Share* by Stuart J. Murphy.

In Language Arts, we will change our focus from sounds to syllables by spelling two-syllable words with closed syllables. We will also practice segmenting these words between syllables. We will continue to learn to spell new Trick Words. Trick Words are phonetically irregular and are taught as words to be memorized. They are high frequency words used in both reading and writing. Therefore, it is important for students to master each for both reading and spelling since they are quite common. Guided reading groups will continue to provide students with strategies to decode words and gain meaning from texts. These strategies are necessary to help students recognize words quickly and automatically, which aids in the development of fluency. But fluency must also encompass phrasing and expression. Fluent reading is an essential reading skill necessary for comprehension. Classroom Literacy Centers will continue to provide students with opportunities to practice and reinforce skills. Parents can help children develop and strengthen comprehension skills by reading to children on a daily basis and encouraging children to re-tell the stories in their own words, which increases their understanding.

We have many exciting events to look forward to during February and March, such as, Groundhog's Day, a Valentine's Day celebration, President's Day Holiday, and 100th Day of School Celebration, our second Head Start visit, as well as Spring Break.

Second Grade News

Kathie Grzewinski

I am always amazed to come to the point in the year when we have been in school for 100 days! This year, weather permitting, this landmark day

will fall in late February. It's a time of pride for the children and for me, to examine where we began and how far we have come. I can tell already that this has been a year of tremendous development in second grade. I feel so fortunate to have such a wonderful, eager group of learners with whom to spend my days. I am pleased with how far the children have come and I'm looking forward to their continued growth during the remainder of the year.

As I mentioned during Curriculum Night in the fall, one of the primary skills taught in second grade mathematics is regrouping. With the acquisition of their math facts, the children have proven their readiness for this big step. They will be working hard learning how to "carry" in addition up to the hundreds, and even the thousands place. The children will also be introduced to "borrowing" in subtraction. The children enjoy the challenge of this new concept, as it is, to them, a rite of passage in second grade. They are also continuing with their math fact practice in the classroom, completing their "Rocket Math" facts individually while timing themselves with a minute timer. The children then chart their progress with the facts. Continued support at home with the acquisition of math facts, addition and subtraction 0-18, is greatly appreciated. We are also working on problem solving activities in addition, subtraction and now multiplication.

In reading, we will be finishing up our month-long unit on Aesop's Fables. As a culmination, we will be reading and acting out versions of several of the fables we have already read, this time in play format. We are hoping we will then be able to perform them at a future Common Time! For our Aesop unit, the two reading groups were of mixed levels. Next, we will return to our small, achievement level

reading groups. All three groups will be reading chapter books suited to their individual reading level.

In Foundations, we are using the phonetic rules we have learned so far this year and applying them to more complex, multisyllabic words. We are also learning new concepts such as vowel-consonant-e syllables, vowel-consonant-e exceptions, open syllables, y as a vowel, and syllable division rules. We are also expanding our spelling ability with new "trick" words.

Language Arts is as busy as ever. In Writing, the children will be writing their final drafts of their "Tacky" stories, typing them up, and then illustrating them. We will then put the stories into a book, as well as read the stories to the third graders. Next, the children will be writing their own fables, based on the Aesop's Fables we have been reading about. Each fable is based on a real moral of Aesop's creation, but the stories are all their own! We will also spend time in Writing, as well as in Social Studies, working on teaching the necessary skills for writing a research report, since the Biography projects are upon us. Much of the project is done at home, but we are modeling and practicing many of the necessary elements of a well-written report in our class. Now that we have completed Unit 2 in our G.U.M. (Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics) program, we will go back and work on Unit 1: Sentence Structure. We will stop there, as the children's G.U.M. books will follow them up to third grade, where they will complete the book.

In Social Studies, the children are working on our Junior Atlas program. In addition, and related to the biography projects, we are reading and studying famous leaders. This ties in nicely with President's month and African-American History month celebrated in February, and Women's History month celebrated in March. As

in Writing, class time is being spent helping the children learn the necessary skills for success with their first real research project. The children are excited about their project, and we are all looking forward to the culmination of this assignment with the Living Wax Museum. This is a tradition that is enjoyed school-wide and is a source of great pride for the second graders. I thank you, in advance, for your support of this challenging, yet fulfilling, project.

We are also finding time to focus on our Lower School theme for this month-Compassion- as well as continuing our Community Service project with our monthly visits to the Highlands Adult Day Care Center. The children and their "grandfriends" both anticipate these visits with great joy. We all continue to be touched by the caring and generosity the children show during our visits.

With the Groundhog seeing his shadow, we still have six more weeks, or even more of winter! Thank you for continuing to remind the children to bring the necessary cold weather gear to school, as well as their sneakers. Please be aware that even if it is too cold for outside recess (below 20 degrees F), the children do have to travel outdoors for P.E. and Performing Arts.

Thank you for your communication and partnership during our mid-year conferences, and, as always, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me for any questions or concerns.

Third Grade News

Jenn Buck

Michelle Janoschek

We are now into the second semester of the school year. It is, in many ways, hard to believe. Time certainly flies when you're having fun! However, when we look back to September and assess the personal and academic growth each child has made,

we can see where the time has gone. We continue to be proud of this very special group of third graders.

In math, we enter February continuing to work on multiplication facts. The students are diligently working to learn all of their tables from 0-12 both at school and at home. Thank you for your partnership in this important undertaking. The value of the acquisition of these facts will become clear in the second half of February, when we introduce division concepts and facts. Knowing their multiplication facts with automaticity will allow the students to acquire their division facts with much more ease.

Reading and Social Studies will be closely tied in the coming months. A presidential unit will be the focus. In Reading, each group will be focusing on a presidential biography. The presidents covered will be Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln. While learning about the life and times of these great American leaders, we will also be focusing on the skills necessary for reading non-fiction text successfully. At the end of the unit, each group will make a presentation to the others about what they learned. In Social Studies, each child will be assigned a president to study and on whom to complete a research project. Research skills will be taught in both Library and Social Studies, as well as in the Reading groups. Children will make a timeline of their president's life, as well as complete a culminating project. All work for this project will be done in school.

In Writing, our focus will be on the "Voice" trait. This trait can be difficult; as it is less concrete than the previous ones we have covered. Voice in writing is described best in this quotation from John Jakes: "Be yourself. Above all, let who you are, what you are, what you believe shine through in

every sentence you write, every piece you finish." Our goal will be for the students' true selves to come through in their writing. Voice takes writing from the mundane to the extraordinary. We will use well-known authors of children's books to illustrate this concept, including Patricia MacLachlan, Patricia Polacco, Eve Bunting, James Marshall, Mem Fox, and Anthony Browne. Voice can also be illustrated in non-fiction text, including biographies. This will be a good tie-in to what we are doing in Reading and Social Studies. We will also continue writing in our journals and our reflective journaling.

In Language Arts, we will continue with Foundations, Wordly Wise, and G.U.M. In Foundations, we will review open syllables, discuss the schwa in an open syllable with *a* and *i*, and open syllable exceptions. We will also continue to learn our cursive letter connectives. The children are excited to be connecting their letters, as cursive now seems "real" to them. Soon, they will be able to write their own names. Looking ahead, our goal is that, by May, students will be able to write a large part of their schoolwork in cursive. How exciting! In Wordly Wise, we will continue our weekly lessons and assessments. We are pleased with how well the children have adapted to this program. They are recognizing Wordly Wise words everywhere they look and are eager to point them out. Finally, In G.U.M., we will move on to Unit 4 and will cover subject and object pronouns, and the proper use of *I* and *Me*.

Our ARC buddies will visit us later this month. Our focus in February will be on friendship. We will read *Toot and Puddle* by Hollie Hobbie, a wonderful picture book that focuses on the importance of friends. Then we will make friendship bracelets. These activities will also fit in well with our Core Value of Compassion.

Sometimes “boy/girl” issues come up during the second half of the third grade year. We have noticed some lack of focus and heard some talk of “crushes” in school lately. We spoke with all the children together and let them know that this behavior is not acceptable for third grade. It might be a good time to have a conversation about this at home as well.

Finally, a reminder about Valentine’s Day. We will have our class Valentine’s Day party on Friday, February 12. Mrs. Janoschek’s class is responsible for bringing in goodies. Please remember our school policy that, if you choose to send in Valentine’s cards, you should send them in for all 29 third graders.

Here’s to another wonderful semester!

Fourth Grade News

**Nanci Shepardson
Stephanie Syre-Hager**

We’re off to a fun-filled February and a marvelous March!

In Social Studies we will continue our unit on the Civil War. Students will investigate the Underground Railroad, slavery, and the impact the Civil War had on our nation’s history.

In Language Arts, we will continue to enrich our vocabulary through our Wordly Wise list, and we will continue to learn about the orthographic and phonetic rules in the English language in Spelling. In GUM, we will complete a unit on sentence structure. In writing, we will complete our Oreo cookie essays, and then move onto writing persuasive essays with an emphasis on the trait of voice.

To establish better keyboarding skills, students have had the opportunity to work on Type-to-Learn in school. In math we will complete units on division and geometry. The addition to Geography to our

curriculum has elicited delight from our fourth graders. They enjoy learning about the world in spatial terms and the places and regions in our country. Along with their exposure from GARP, students are becoming prepared for our highly anticipated States and Capitals Extravaganza that will begin in March. During this unit, all fourth grade students will master the name and location of every state and the name of each state’s capital.

Fifth Grade News

**Kevin Brodeur
Mike Mullins**

We all had a wonderful experience working on our class radio play, and we are now ready to get back into the routines that are familiar to us.

In math, we will be working in Chapter 7 on Fraction Concepts. We’ll learn the importance of equivalent fractions and greatest common factors. We will compare and order fractions and mixed numbers and figure out the relationships between fractions and decimals. In history, we will finish our work with the Egyptians and set out to explore Ancient India where we’ll learn about the people of the Indus and Ganges River Valleys. We will read about the beginnings of Hinduism and Buddhism, and learn about the Golden Age of Maurya India. We’ll be visiting the Fitchburg Art Museum to see their Egyptian exhibit on February 4th. Our language arts lessons in Wordly Wise and GUM will continue, and we will find out what is in store for young Bonnie and Sylvia as we read more of *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* by Joan Aiken.

Physical Education News

Diane Toolin

The sport of cup stacking has been used as a warm-up activity in physical education classes. Depending

on the grade, we have learned to perform 3 stacks, 3-6-3, and cycles. Each child was timed on a special timer mat and recorded. At the end of the unit, each grade worked as a team to create a building using all of the cups. I took a picture of their final products with the proud builders and have a fine picture on our "Cup Stacking Wall of Fame"!

We are learning a game called Kin-Ball, which originated in Quebec, Canada. A five-minute video of how Kin-Ball is played was shown to help students understand and visualize this complex game. The ball is four feet around and requires two hands to serve.

We practiced serving and being in a strong triangle formation under the ball as a team when preparing for the server. The games involve three teams of four players. The Fourth Grade will end the unit with a tournament blending the two grades and playing the game in the Simond's Gym. More games are played using the Omni-Ball, like Indiana Jones, tag, and volleyball, because the students enjoy playing with the huge, lightweight ball.

Fifth Grade PE and Health

Bob Whitelaw

We have started off very strong in the second semester. We finished our basketball unit with some great games and strong individual performances. We will now pay tribute to the Olympics during the rest of the classes before the March break. Each student will represent a country and learn some information about that country. We will look at what the Olympics means to not only individuals, but also to teams. The students will participate in a variety of events to test their body and mind. This will be a fun time for the students so please ask them how they are doing in PE. Students have also been working on various exercises and stretches in preparation for our fitness challenge in

the spring. Since we are now in the winter season, please remember to have your child walk down with his/her sneakers for class. For safety reasons, we don't want to bring in water, snow, sand, or salt onto the gym floor. You do not need to go out and buy a new pair of shoes, just send their sneakers in a bag on PE days. The PE days for both fifth grade classes are Wednesdays and Thursdays, and on Fridays there will be LS Sports. Again if you have any questions please feel free to contact me at school.

In health class we continue our journey in health and how it relates to our body. We are about to finish our current unit on nutrition. The students have learned about foods and how it helps their body. We have also discussed variety and how important that is to a healthy lifestyle. We will finish this unit in mid-February and move onto our next unit called Love Your Lungs. Students will also find out what the spring health project will be later on this spring. The students have done a wonderful job coming prepared for each class and being active participants during group discussions. I encourage you to talk to your child about what is going on in Health class, and if you have any questions please feel free to contact me here at school.

Mark the date for our Jump Rope and Hoops for Heart event for the American Heart Association. The date will be March 26th during the Friday sports period for all fourth and fifth grade students. Further information will be coming home in the future.

La Classe de français, février 2010

Mme. Katy Niose

Mme. Liz Blake

<<Bonnes fêtes (respectivement) de la Saint Valentin, des Présidents et de Mardi Gras!>> (Happy Valentines Day,

Presidents Day, and Mardi Gras - all taking place this month!)

Kindergarten will learn the days of the week, the months of the year, practice counting and greeting vocabulary, and continue to discuss weather and winter clothing. They will be introduced to prepositions and new vocabulary through song, in collaboration with the music curriculum.

First grade will learn about prepositions, reinforce expressive vocabulary, and engage in "Mardi Gras" craft activities, while continuing to explore weather terms, winter clothing and sports.

Second grade will delve more deeply into clothing vocabulary, making booklets to reinforce gender words in writing. We will also continue to focus on the five senses, in correlation with the science "rocks and minerals" curriculum. We will practice using pronouns, and continue to strengthen our conversational and writing skills.

Third grade will continue working with pronouns, verb conjugations and grammar usage, both in conversation and in writing. We will be focusing on the verb "avoir," as we learn to express ailments connected with anatomy, tying into the science curriculum.

First through third grades will also be introduced to "Valentine" and "Mardi Gras" vocabulary and customs. The children have been learning songs and making masks to wear during our "Mardi Gras" parade, after which each class will celebrate with the traditional <<gâteau du roi>> (king cake).

As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions, concerns or suggestions at kniose@applewild.org.

In fourth grade French we are finishing our working on a unit on the French Revolution. We studied a brief history of France leading up to the revolution. We are exploring the time

period by reading a journal written as a series of newspaper articles. We are comparing the French Revolution to the Revolution that took place in the United States. We have just finished watching an animated version of the classic "A Tale of Two Cities".

In fifth grade French we have finished working on vocabulary that centers on how to tell time. This included a review of numbers in French and how to ask and give the time.

We also covered units on vocabulary regarding daily routines. We learned how to give relative information on times we perform such daily routines. We are now working on a unit that covers clothing and how to ask for prices and purchase articles. We will then begin a new unit on the "Marché" and how to purchase food.

Music and Drama Notes

Mrs. Schlesinger

Upcoming Performances:

Appleseed Play

Thursday April 8, 7 p.m.

Friday April 9, 9:45 a.m.

Arts Open House

Thurs. April 22, 6:30 p.m.

The Appleseed Chorus is bubbling over with excitement, because we have begun working on the Appleseed Play! Our play this year is entitled **THE HUNDRED YEAR SNOOZE** by Dave and Jean Perry. In **THE HUNDRED-YEAR SNOOZE-The Story of Sleeping Beauty**, there lives a princess who possesses gifts bestowed upon her by the kingdom's Seven Graces: beauty, wit and charm, grace and elegance, song, dance and good math skills! However, her parents who are the king and queen of the castle and a court full of fun characters, all fall under an evil spell given by the ignored and forgotten Old Grace. With a charming frog who can foretell the future, six wise and "interesting" Sages, a handsome Prince, and a memorable

cast filled with song, our show will be no snoozer! Stay tuned as we begin to bring our story to life.

Fourth Grade has begun their in-depth study of the instruments of the orchestra and around the world. We have been focused on the Aerophones in January. Along with learning to understand how an Aerophone works, students have used their recorders and their ears to experience what it is like to perform on an Aerophone. Next up, Chordophones!

The Fifth grade curriculum for the year is an in-depth study of Blues and Jazz. Through the use of the Orff instruments, the students study the difference between a swing rhythm and a straight rhythm, the Blues scale, 12 Bar Blues structure, walking bass lines, reading harmonic and melodic lines, basic chord structures, key signatures, time signatures, and intermediate melodic lines. We have just finished working with call and response over a Blues riff, and we will now be heading into 12 Bar Blues songs with Orff improvisation.

It's an exciting time here in Performing Arts!

Fourth Recorder Ensemble & Fifth Grade Band

Frank Bonanno

In the Recorder Ensemble we are working on increasing the range by learning new notes. The students have had the challenge of covering the holes properly so that the notes come out easier. Recorder students are reminded of their hand position so that their fingers will be able to cover the holes.

In the fifth grade band, the Brass players are working on the high register. This involves playing certain warm up exercises, which will help build their range. The Woodwinds are working on hand position and mouth position for a more controlled sound.

The percussionists are working on playing more independently of each other by trusting their counting abilities. The Bass players are working on tuning their basses and to focus on the music and not to watch their fingers on the fret board.

In both Recorder Ensemble and Fifth Grade Band we have started rehearsing music for the spring concert. These compositions are 3-6 part musical arrangements so the students need to trust their musical reading abilities and not speculate on what the music is telling them.

Shop News

**Ed Thomas
Jack Bowen**

In the first grade the students have completed their balancing toys and brought them home for you to enjoy. The toys were very colorful and, with a few minor corrections, they all balanced. The students are now working on their second project, the basketball game, which they will finish with stain.

In the second grade the majority of the cruise ships have been assembled. The students are now touching up the paint and adding portholes to their ships before they take them home. For their next project they will have a choice of the rubber band-powered car or paddleboat.

Most of the students in the third grade have completed the painting or staining of their glockenspiel frame. They are now in the first phase of the assembly, which is the frame, and they will be adding the wooden dowels and pipes to complete their instruments. Some have chosen to apply stencils or paint stripes on the frames.

The four sides of the electrical skill game have been assembled along with the base. The fourth grade students are now adding the electrical circuit to the cover that will be attached to the box using hinges. The projects

have been painted or stained, and many students are adding stencils and stripes.

Our fifth graders arrived back from our winter break eager to put the finishing touches on some step stool painting. Other members of the class have been expressing their talents by creating birds, pigs, rabbits, elephants and smiley faces. Many of the fifth graders are developing great hand tool skills while others are enjoying using our scroll saws. The fifth graders are a very enjoyable group of young artisans to work with.

Lower School Art

Sara Sanford

The Lower School Art studio is bursting with fabulous children's work! We have projects in progress as well as many creative pieces waiting to be displayed during "Applewild About Arts" night on April 22.

Kindergartners have been studying primary colors and have worked their way into secondary colors. We have been creating "purple burples". These charming monsters are many tints of the color purple. We plan to move into the lovely world of green next! Some of our literature connections include, *Harold And The Purple Crayon*, *Mouse Paint*, and *Little Green And Little Blue*.

First graders have just finished up their study of the rainforest and Henri Rousseau. We had many thought-provoking conversations about the animals and beauty of these areas of our planet. We plan to leave the genre of landscape and move into the world of design, looking at the works of Carlos Meidera, Joan Miro and Paul Klee.

In second grade, we are in the process of glazing our clay relief masks and putting the finishing touches on our paper sculpture masks. We have researched the use of the mask as well as enjoyed looking at many masks from different periods of time.

Grade three artists have been learning all about the history and folklore of dragons. We are in the process of creating ink drawings of dragons in black and white. We plan to look at cityscapes next. We will talk about the work of both contemporary as well as artists who created cityscapes in the past. We will use these examples as jumping off points for our own ideas.

Grade four artists continue to work on their Paper Mache masks. The art room is alive with their elephants, monsters, cats, mice, and robots. This is a long-term project, and fourth graders have done a beautiful job with it.

In grade five, our plaster human sculptures are ready for display. They are as unique and as special as the children who created them! Fifth graders will take a trip to the Fitchburg Art Museum this week and we will study the Egyptian canopic jars. In the next few weeks, we will create our own writing and jars from clay. This will end our study of sculpture this year.

In art class, we value the process first, the product second. By doing this, we have the courage to try new things, take risks and experiment!

"Last-Few-Weeks-of-Winter" Library News

Erin Daly

In just a few short weeks we'll have our March break and when we come back it will officially be spring! I can already see a new brighter sunshine coming in through the library windows. Since February is Black History Month and March is Women's History Month, this is a great time for studying biographies. I put some of our brightly illustrated picture book biographies up for this month's display.

In Kindergarten and first grade, we'll be welcoming the coming spring by reading one of my favorite books for this time of year, *Welcome Back Sun* by

Michael Emberley. It is set in northern Norway, where they have darkness all day long for several months and finally, in one village, folks climb up into the mountains to greet the returning light.

The second graders are beginning their research for the Living Wax Museum, coming up right before the break. I will be supporting this project with stories, NetTrekker-supported web research, and help with citing sources.

In third grade, students will be dividing their time between presenting the 2010 Winter Olympic Games to the Lower School in the form of a VoiceThread and researching American Presidents.

The Fourth Grade is completing our long look at the programming language, Scratch by creating video games. We will showcase these by creating a gallery where students can share their games with teachers and classmates on February 19 in the Ansin Library computer lab. Parents are welcome to join us!

This month's fifth grade book report is free choice. That means I can booktalk any number of things. I will certainly be presenting our fifth graders with my hearty endorsement of this year's John Newbery Medal Winner, *When You Reach Me* by Rebecca Stead.

I hope you are all enjoying the sunshine and the renewed feeling of energy that comes at this time of year!

Science in First through Third

Tracy Reardon

First graders have been exploring solid items and thinking about the properties of those items. They have been using vocabulary such as: flexible, rigid, soft, hard, smooth, rough, colored, pointed, flat, transparent, and opaque. They have been making structures out of various items and have been encouraged to think about how certain properties allow them to configure

things in certain ways. This week students worked with liquids discussing properties of liquids and investigating various types of liquids. Now that we have discussed properties of solids and liquids and have had a chance to work with both, students will learn how to separate different sized solids out of a mixture using screens. After they have learned how to sort with the screens they will explore how solids materials react to liquid.

Second graders are finishing the **Pebbles, Sand, and Silt** module with a bang! Volcanoes erupted this week. After our eruptions we will move on to the **Balance and Motion** module investigating how to make unstable items stable. Second graders are sure to become one balanced bunch.

Third graders have moved into the **Magnetism and Electricity** module. The beginning of the module focuses on Magnetism and the children have been exploring with test objects and using magnets to go around the room and see which objects attract them. They were surprised to learn that magnets do not "stick" to all metal objects. We have been discussing the force of magnets and have done investigations to see what it takes to break the force. Soon we will be moving to the Electricity portion of the module.

Fourth and Fifth Grade Science

Maura Lyons

Wow! We are cruising through the New Year and are off to a good start with implementing some green initiatives for the school community. On Jan. 21 we had the Compost Inaugural Lunch. Fifth grade Compost Captains are doing a stellar job with this endeavor and many CCIT's (Compost Captains in Training) have been recruited. With everyone's support we shall have some great gardener's gold soon.

Recently, students had an “ear-opening” experience as they compared how sound travels through water, solids, and air. Working in collaborative groups, students recorded and discussed their observations and explored Go Further challenges. They will incorporate their understanding of sound’s ability to travel through different mediums by discussing whale and dolphin communication, how bats navigate, and how different animals send and receive sound.

Students continue the exploration of sound by exploring their own sound receiver, the human ear. The ear’s anatomy is covered in depth as students draw, label and record the function of the structures that make up the ear. Ways to protect their sound receivers from injury are discussed.

As we wrap up this unit, the sounds of music will truly come alive as we explore concepts such as pitch, amplitude, and frequency. Students are challenged to design and create their own musical instruments to play a “recognizable” song on! Finally, after March break we return to our final unit, IDEAS AND INVENTIONS.

Fifth graders continue to prepare for their Voyage To Mars adventure at the Challenger Center. Job applications and letters of recommendation have been submitted and a Crew Manifest will soon be posted. Through NASA resources and excellent, updated online sources, we have generated many facts about Mars and explored the past and fascinating future of the Red Planet! We watched “Eyes On Mars”, an amazing movie about our ongoing quest to fully understand the mysteries that are Mars. Bonus features included commentary by guest experts and other short films about Mars explorations.

Students have organized much useful information, which will be used in many exciting activities such as Mission Survival, Who Should Go To

Mars?, Designing a Spacesuit, Navigating a Spacecraft, Is There Life On Mars?, Mars Geological Mapping. We will practice building critical skills necessary for teamwork, effective communication, reading and following directions on task cards, and operating under pressure, as we approach our departure date (field trip: Feb.19). Please do ask your child about the Egg Drop activity that is scheduled to take place just prior to our trip!

When we return from Mars, we will explore the rest of the solar system. With a partner, students will conduct a research project on an assigned planet and develop a Travel brochure to be presented to the class. Stay tuned for the findings from our “Martians”!

Important Dates

February 12: Valentine’s Day celebrated

February 15: Presidents’ Day; No School

February 16: Professional Day; No School

February 18: WinterFest, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

February 19: Fifth Grade to the Challenger Center, all day.

February 23: ARC Buddies to Third Grade

February 24: First Grade to HeadStart

February 24: Second Grade to Highlands

February 25: Snow Date for WinterFest

March 2: Dr. Seuss’ Birthday: Pajama Day!

March 3: Second Grade to Highlands

March 6- 21: Spring Break

March 8 – 12: March into Summer Program in Marshall; please see Applewild website.

March 22: Welcome back to School!

March 25: ARC Buddies to Third Grade

- We are offering a **March into Summer Camp** with lots of fun and activities during the first week of our March Break. You can find registration information on our website.

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