

The Bear Essentials

Principal's Monthly Bulletin

December 2003

Our Parent Teacher conferences will take place on December 17th, 2003 and your appointment letters will be sent home with your child next week. We are looking forward to sharing your child's first trimester report with you.

- Items of school uniform that have not been claimed by Friday 19th December will be donated to an orphanage in Kifissia, so please check the lost and found box in the reception area on Teacher Parent Conference Day.
- This year, again, we will support the "Make a Wish" Children's Foundation by selling Stars for our Christmas Tree. Our tree will be ready for decoration on Tuesday.
- I thank you for the most generous donations to our Helping Hands appeal. Mr. Scott MacRakon will be speaking to our students in grades 3, 4 and 5 on Tuesday, December 9th about the plight of refugees in Athens and the humanitarian aid available in the city. You are warmly invited to join us for this presentation.
- Sunday 14th December: Christmas Fair at the TASIS High School from 11.00 am to 4.00 p.m. Please join us for this special fundraising event.
- Classes end at 3.35 p.m. on Friday, December 19th and re-commence on Wednesday January 7th, 2004. If your family is leaving for vacation before December 19th please let us know as this assists our planning. Some parents have kindly done so already - Thank you.

Now read on for this month's news from the Intermediate classrooms...

Grade 3: 'The Opni Bridge', 'The Bent Tower', 'The Friendly Mouse Trap' 'Safelander Parachute', 'The Topsy-Turvy Clown Hat' and 'Wild Numbers' are the new inventions the 'mad inventors' of third grade created during the 'You Can Do It, Too' unit of inquiry! To do so, of course, they had to follow the *Invention Process* by defining their *problem*, stating their *idea* to solve the problem, doing *research* to gain knowledge to help them, then creating their invention. Finally, they had to *test* it and *patent* it. It made a challenging and creative experience for all.

Third grade, their parents and I are proud of the wonderful documentary they produced about Alexander Graham Bell, which premiered on Back to School Night! It will soon be available for viewing at home. It was a new and exciting experience for all. They children researched using various resources, and then they had to create an informative and entertaining documentary to teach others about A.G.B. and how he impacted the world.

In the unit 'Declaration of Human Rights,' students created models of various types of communities. After examining characteristics that exist in all communities *i.e.* caring, *interdependence*, *trust*, *common resources and sharing* they included these in their models in very creative ways. For example, the model of the local community had a *small park* as a *common resource*, and the school community model showed the *caring* of the teachers towards their students.

The children are very excited now as they are working on their narrative writing which will be in the form of a comic titled, 'A School Without Rules'. They have been studying elements of commercial comics such as the layout, effects, illustrations etc. and working on their cartooning skills while creating their characters. The published comics will be posted on the bulletin board soon so you're welcome to come by and learn, while being entertained, how a school community cannot function without rules.

So, what exciting, fun and challenging tasks will the third graders do next? Well, you'll just have to wait till the New Year to be dazzled once again!

Ms Nancy Salaounis

Grade 4: A lot has been going on in the 4th grade since the beginning of the year. During our All Systems Go unit we worked in groups putting together a presentation, which was both informative and fun. "I loved it very much" - "Amazing how it all comes together" - "Some real cool facts" These were only some of the comments from Juliette Rombotis!

After our enlightening and exciting Science unit, we are now into our second unit, titled Myths and Legends. We began this unit with our story maps of a Myth or Legend we read, and are currently working on our story writing. We are well into our writing and are planning on putting together a collection of short stories, which will be available in our school library.

Our study of the stars is also a part of this unit in science. We discovered that constellations are stars shaped like different pictures and these were used to write most Myths and Legends from all over the world. In the next couple of weeks we will be visiting the Planetarium and getting a closer look into space!

In math we are well into proper and improper fractions. I am pleased to report that the children find the work challenging and fun! That's all for now from the fourth grade.

Irene Katsiotis

Grade 5: Time has moved so quickly in 5th grade. It's already the end of November and the end of our second unit! Soaring into Literature has given the class a special appreciation of books and authors and the difficulties involved in writing a book. This unit is under the theme How We Express Ourselves and we've been looking into the criteria for the Newbery Award winning books. Each child had selected a Newbery Award book to read and has made observations in their reading journals. Some of their thoughts about literature are:

- It makes me have different feelings - Isabel
- It's a part of my life because it helps me relax if I'm angry or sad. It gives me a clear vision in my mind. - Frederick
- It gives me information about something. - Roman
- It influences me to learn more. - Risako
- It opens me up into a different world. - Ian
- It makes me think that I'm a part of the book. - Erika

Their creative stories are in the final stages and we are all anxious to share them with you. Come and visit the grade 5 classroom and we will be happy to share them with you.

The attitudes we focused on during this unit were creativity, commitment, cooperation and independence.

A special thanks goes to Mrs. Bear who was our guest speaker and who shared her favorite books and authors with us!

We are ready to delve into our third unit: Money Makes the World go Round, under the theme How We Organize Ourselves.

Pamela Tagas