

The Bear Essentials

Principal's Monthly Bulletin

May 2004

It's a pleasure to include in this month's bulletin a special poem by Pamela Economides, which touched the hearts of all of us, especially at this time when many students are facing the transitions associated with the end of a school year.

A TRUE FRIEND

People think that friendship is a game,
But that's wrong
If you know you have a true friend,
Then friendship is strong.
When friends leave,
It's a sad thing to hear,
But for me,
They stay in a safe place . . .
Right in me,
Right here. **By PAMELA ECONOMIDES**

- Congratulations and best wishes to Ms Tania Ensign, our music teacher, who will be married this month!
- Our annual end of year Brigance Screening for students in grades 1,2,3 and 4 will take place as follows: Monday 17th - Grade 2; Tuesday 18th - grade 1; Thursday 20th - grade 3 and Friday 21st - grade 4. Grades 5 and Kindergarten will be screened in June. Students will be screened in math and language arts to assess their individual academic growth. Please be sure your child brings a pencil, an eraser and a book to read between sessions.
- Our fifth grade students are surpassing their wildest expectations in their rundown to our exhibition! They truly are ambassadors for our school and all we believe in. On their behalf I am thanking everyone for their generous donations so far . . . check out the diary dates for reminders of all our events still to come!

Diary Dates for May

- **Thursday May 13th: WALKATHON**, organized by grade 5. Parents are welcome to walk too, just get a sponsor form from Ms Dimitra or a fifth grader.
- **Friday May 14th: COMPENDIUM Bookshop BOOK SALE** in the Dining Room all day from 9.00 a.m. Our scheduled parent coffee morning will not take place, but the Resource Team will be sending out an evaluation form and asking for suggestions for topics for next year's program. Thank you to our faithful followers this year!
- **Friday May 21st**: Fifth grade parents are invited to attend a Coffee morning to meet the Middle School Principal, Mrs Corsi, and her faculty and to learn about the Middle School programs.
- **Tuesday May 25th: The PYP Exhibition** will be open all day for parents and visitors. Our Middle School students will be attending, as will representatives from the High School administration.

- **May 26, 27 and 28th are Portfolio days** when students will be sharing their work with parents in a student led conference. Letters for appointments will be sent next week.
- **Friday 28th May**, our fifth grade will spend an afternoon at the Middle School to meet teachers and take a tour of the Middle School. **Fifth grade students will, therefore, be dismissed from the High School building at 3.50 p.m.**

NOW READ ON . . . This month's news is from our single subject teachers

Physical Education: With fine weather and summer just around the corner, our P.E. lessons have been a blast! Right before Easter break everyone was involved in softball. From 1st to 5th grade, students learned all about pitching and batting and how to make a home run. Pre-K, Kindergarten and 1st grade are still working on Gross Motor Skills. Catching, throwing, jumping and running are some of the skills they are mastering. They are also working on dance and movement to music.

The 2nd and 3rd graders have completed their handball training and have moved on to soccer exercises and drills. They are also learning the first steps of the Tango dance - and quite successfully I might add! After completing their handball training, 4th and 5th grades are now working on basketball and track and field events.

After-school activities have started this trimester. Track and field for the boys includes long jump, sprinting distance running, high jump and relay racing. The girls are doing rhythmic gymnastics, using ribbons, balls, hoops and skipping ropes. It is so wonderful to see them working together and choreographing their own routines; this is what they mean when they say, "The student has surpassed the teacher". We will soon start working on our Mini Olympic routines for our special event when you can all come and see what we've been doing all year.

I'd like to remind all parents to start sending their children to school with a sun hat and maybe an extra water bottle as the weather is getting warmer and the sun brighter. I would also like to thank Isabel in 5th grade for the help she has given me with the Tango.

Ms Stephanie

Greek News: So many things have happened in Greek class since I last wrote as we have had a very busy time indeed. From the beginning of February till the third week of March, the Native Greek students were practicing for the celebration of Independence Day. They have to be commended on the extra effort they put into their presentation. I think they have enjoyed the process and the variety of the roles they were called to perform; they have surely learned quite a lot about personalities and incidents of the Revolution.

The students' interest in that period was encouraged by our visit to the National-Historical Museum. They had the opportunity to see what simple and limited means people were fighting with at that time. They were impressed by the enslaved Greeks' knowledge of ancient history, evident in the names and decorations of their ships, and were touched by the personal sacrifices that many fighters had made. This entire emotional load was channeled into the third and fourth graders' letters to the dead heroes. The little ones, on the other hand, on their visit to the Hellenic World Foundation learned about the achievements of the Ancient Greeks in mathematics and athletics, and were delighted to have a 3-D tour of the city of Miletos.

During our class sessions, the **Pre-Ks** have been engaged in various singing and playing activities, which aim at encouraging co-operation and competition. Their pre-writing skills have progressed a great deal! The **Kindergartners**, apart from getting familiar with the Greek alphabet, have been inquiring into concepts related to their "Homes & Shelters" unit.

1st Graders have started working more systematically on grammatical structures through their new book and their first dictation assignments. **2nd Graders** were also given a new book, their second novel, which will keep them busy till the end of the academic year. And what a pleasant surprise that has been, since it reminds them of their favorite animated movie, Nemo! After a few weeks, they will get their first "independent reading" assignment. In the meantime, they are working on sentence building techniques and singular/plural forms of nouns.

3rd Graders have been reading some of Aesop's fables, getting acquainted with humorous and metaphorical language, and have been practicing the use of verb tenses. They have made commendable efforts on their Book Reports. The **4th Graders'** Book Reports were a delight to read, with their intelligent remarks and emotive expression! They have done a wonderful job with their presentations of Homer's epics and are currently studying stories from Ancient Greek tragedies. The **5th Graders**, on the other hand, will be working on refugee related topics for their exhibition. Their scores in a grammar test were encouraging.

Finally, our **HLC** classes have been busy with their written assignments. The little ones, after having heard numerous Ancient Greek myths and having discerned their patterns, have attempted to create their own Greek-type myths that would explain certain natural phenomena. You will be able to see the results shortly on display outside our classroom. The older HLC students have been learning about Classical Greece and have written impressive essays, diaries and stories about that time.

Keep up the good work, everyone!

Dimitra Dimakopoulou

Art room: As we are moving closer towards the end of the school year, Kindergartners have been observing different types of homes and shelters and have been very imaginative with the variety of places we could use as our homes in different parts of our planet. We all created different types of shelters using paints and sticks.

First Graders worked very carefully in order to complete their place mats. They all followed step-by-step directions on how to sketch farm animals and worked very hard in coloring in. We are going to be very proud of our work when we eat our first breakfast on them and we are so looking forward to it! As second graders walk by their rainforest mural (displayed right at the entrance to our building), they will be accompanied by their rainforest animal sock and glove puppets, which they will use in their special puppet theater with Mr. Drivas.

4th graders have been looking closely at different types of animals and are preparing their visuals for their presentations. Huge crocodiles, flamingos, seals and other living creatures are already coming to life in the art room. In Grade 5, everyone has been very busy preparing for the Helping Hands visit planned for May 7th. One of the surprises of the visit will be the colorful piñatas the 5th graders made and filled with all sorts of candies. We all worked collaboratively and will be completing our fat pig piñata and our rainbow-feathered bird piñata very soon.

That's all from the Art room. Enjoy the rest of spring!

Mata Bardis

Library News: Since I last wrote, I have had the pleasure of listening to the **1st Graders**, who read me Jack and the Beanstalk, set in play form, as the culmination of their unit on 'Traditional Tales'. The progress they have made is astounding and I was captivated by the expression they used as they read aloud.

Exploring How Things Work and *At the Airport*, two of the CD-ROM's we have installed on all four computers in the Library, have enhanced classroom unit work on 'Machines' and 'The Airport' for **2nd Graders**. In addition to maintenance of location skills, they are currently taking the Magic School Bus to the Rainforest!

It was no surprise that after writing their own wonderful storybooks for young children, **3rd Graders** were able to accurately determine the criteria a librarian needs to consider when selecting literature for a younger audience! To link with their current unit on 'Time Detectives', they are exploring a virtual archaeology site on-line, which challenges students to select the best place to start looking for a potential ancient civilization in a riverside location. They can submit their reasons for choosing their site, as well as read other students' comments, before turning to the experts' view on it. You can check it out on www.educ.sfa.sa/archaeology/ There are also amazing artifacts to uncover at Catalhoyuk on www.smm.org/catal/toc.htm. Both sites are excellent for helping students understand the work of an archaeologist and the observations and inferences they need to make from the artifacts they unearth.

4th Graders learned how to use a glossary to help understand unfamiliar keywords in a text and the information to be gleaned from the copyright page of a book, in addition to exploring the Dewey Decimal Classification System. The subject/topical term feature of the Winnebago Spectrum5 was used to find the genre of fiction books, which in turn were located on the shelves. A quick scan of the text and/or blurb often gave clues as to the genre of the book- realistic, fantasy, historical, and science fiction for example. Research on Ancient Greece proved relatively easy, as there are abundant sites full of relevant information; 'Animal Adaptations' is proving equally productive.

5th Graders have learned about the information to be gleaned from various types of atlases and their indexes, and familiarized themselves with the *Eyewitness World Atlas* CD-ROM. Choosing fiction books from the shelves and scanning the text and/or blurb for clues led students to determine the genre of the book. An online site, 'Let's Dew It', supplemented discussion and work on the Dewey Decimal Classification System - a fun, informative site, which also includes evaluation puzzles and quizzes. I anticipate working closely with the 5th Graders as they prepare for their Exhibition, using the library-media center to its fullest potential.

Finally a word of thanks for lots of lovely book donations! Lara has generously donated books, as have Sarah, Tiana, Ismini, Risako and Ken, and Riena. *Pygmy Seahorses* is the topic of a wonderfully illustrated book donated by Evanthia. Jason and Daniel donated outgrown Sesame Street videos, plus *The Little Engine That Could* (Great for our 'Traditional Tales' unit!) The Monahan family, Nancy and Harrison, donated many novels and early readers, which are constantly being checked out. Lincoln's birthday book donation, *Island of Horror*, isn't as scary as it sounds! Ms. Julie donated an Art book and Ms. Dimitra a book on Taming Toddlers (a cert. for our Parents' Section!). Mrs Kursumis very generously donated a computer, which allows more students to research in our center at a time. Once again I am indebted to my volunteers for the invaluable help and support they give to the Library. Tara Daskalakis, Sydney Miller, Sarah Monahan, Nina Zinn and Marina Linardou – many thanks!

Rosalyn Psallidas (Library-Media Coordinator)

EAL NEWS: Firstly, I would like to **CONGRATULATE** Mary Grace Leyesa and Christine Kjaergaard, two hardworking and well motivated students, for graduating from the E.A.L Intermediate Grade 2 program with outstanding effort! **BRAVO!**

Back to our busy **Pre-Kindergartners** - each child created a lovely **2D-shapes booklet**. The group has learnt how to match, color and trace identical shapes and patterns.

Next, the **Kindergarten EAL group** has been enjoying working from the *Letters and Sounds* workbook, while learning and writing the uppercase-lowercase letters of the alphabet. During each lesson the students learn that each letter represents a sound, which is accompanied by rhyming poem.

Grade 1 Beginners group has been exploring where food comes from and the people who work to produce it. The focus has been on identifying and categorizing, as well as describing, various foods.

Grade 2 Intermediate group has been boosting **grammar skills** while working from the *Back to Basic English* workbook. Also the group is continuing to practice the use of Irregular verbs in the Present and Past tense.

Grade 3 Intermediate group has become familiar with the "**Recount text type**" of writing. This involves the stages of orientation by retelling events and incidents in a chronological order through using time and action words. This time around the students are developing their own '**TIMELINE**' using the most important family events in their life.

Finally, Grade 5 Intermediate group has learnt the use of the '**Present Simple**' tense through negative and positive question/answers. The students have also been learning the language features of interview writing.

Miss Venetia