

February 28, 2020

Dear Grader families,

We are excited to welcome the New Year and bring you our first classroom newsletter. January brought a flurry of activity as we returned to class after the holidays. We celebrated Chinese New Year, the Year of the Rat. The graders practiced their Chinese calligraphy and created scrolls with special good luck messages. We made colorful red and yellow lanterns for the festive lantern parade, frightening away the evil spirits with light and the popping sound of noisemakers. The third graders hid inside the dragon head and led the children in the traditional dragon dance. The festival ended with a delicious feast of rice, dumplings, noodles and other favorites.



Isabel and Isla dressed for Chinese New Year

During writing workshop we read together several mentor texts on opinion writing. The children created their own opinion pieces on various topics (e.g. the best pet, homework on weekends, school uniforms). They produced some well thought out and convincing arguments to support their ideas!

This month the children created lovely world maps. They used templates to draw and label the continents, oceans, and seas on large posters, showing their understanding of the composition of the world globe.



Teddy's World Map

In Science, we studied atoms, molecules and the periodic table of the elements. The children began creating their own periodic tables, using poster board and small paper squares. We sang element songs, learned fun facts about each of the elements, read poems, and created models. As we move into March, we will continue more with this study. And remember, you can't trust atoms...they make up everything!

February was black history month. We studied the courageous Harriet Tubman and learned about the Underground Railroad. We will head into March learning about Frederick Douglass, George Washington Carver, and Phyllis Wheatley. We will learn about Langston Hughes and read his beautiful poetry.

Our class read-aloud was "Nancy and Plum", which had us all laughing and sympathizing at the adventures and struggles of these two spunky girls. Our next whole class read will be "A Midsummer Night's Dream", with a study of Shakespeare and the Globe Theater.

The first graders spent their month cracking the code of the analog clock. After learning how to tell time to the hour and half hour, they were very excited when they realized they would be able to figure out when lunch was! In order to learn more about time we read "Just a Second" by Steve Jenkins, which taught us mind-blowing facts about what can happen in a second, minute, hour, and beyond. We also read other books such as "A Second Is a Hiccup" by Hazel Hutchins and "How Do You Know What Time It Is?" by Robert E. Wells. In reading, the first grade reading groups were very excited to finish up the "Reading Street" readers they were working on and move onto the next new ones. Each new "Reading Street" comes with 5 stories for the children to read and discuss as a group, and they approached the new books with great enthusiasm.

Second graders worked on addition and subtraction with larger numbers. They practiced estimating and counting large collections of cubes, beans and other objects. During math number talks the children solved problems using mental math with two and three digit numbers and shared their strategies.

Currently, second graders are enjoying reading "My Father's Dragon". They worked in discussion groups to share their thoughts and construct appropriate responses in their study guides. They drew maps of Wild Island, painting pictures of dragons, and making graphs of the animals that inhabit the island.

In math class third graders continue their work with multiplication of large numbers using the distributive property of multiplication and the ratio table. Working in pairs to solve challenging problems, they created posters to record and demonstrate their thinking and strategies. They continue to have daily opportunities to practice their multiplication facts through a variety of games.

Third graders finished reading "Find the Constellations", by H. A. Rey. They learned about star magnitude and became familiar with many constellations and star names. They each invented a new constellation, and wrote imaginative stories of how they came to be. To culminate our study, the third graders met one evening at Devereux Beach to look to the southern sky and view Orion, Big Dog (Canis Major), Little Dog (Canis Minor) and the Gemini twins. They located the first magnitude stars Betelgeuse, Sirius, Rigel, Procyon, Castor and Pollux. Thank you to Teddy, Audrey and Juliette for bringing their telescopes - allowing us a "wow moment" looking at the moon. Thank you also to Stephanie for the hot cocoa and tea which was much enjoyed on a chilly winter evening.

Third graders' current novel is "Stone Fox", a beautiful story of a resourceful boy and his faithful dog.

Now that we are all back from our restful and well-deserved week off, we are ready to see what the month of March will bring us!

-Hannah and Beth



Inside Recess Creations



Favorite Reading Spot



Hearts to decorate the school on Valentine's Day

Last Night

By Eleanor Russell

I threw the snow into the air.

The headlamp illuminated the tiny ice crystals.

I looked up to see Cassiopeia and Orion.

I felt at home-

Outside,

In the snow,

Under the stars,

Last night.



In The Night Sky

By Elizabeth Bedrossian

Stars dancing in the shimmering

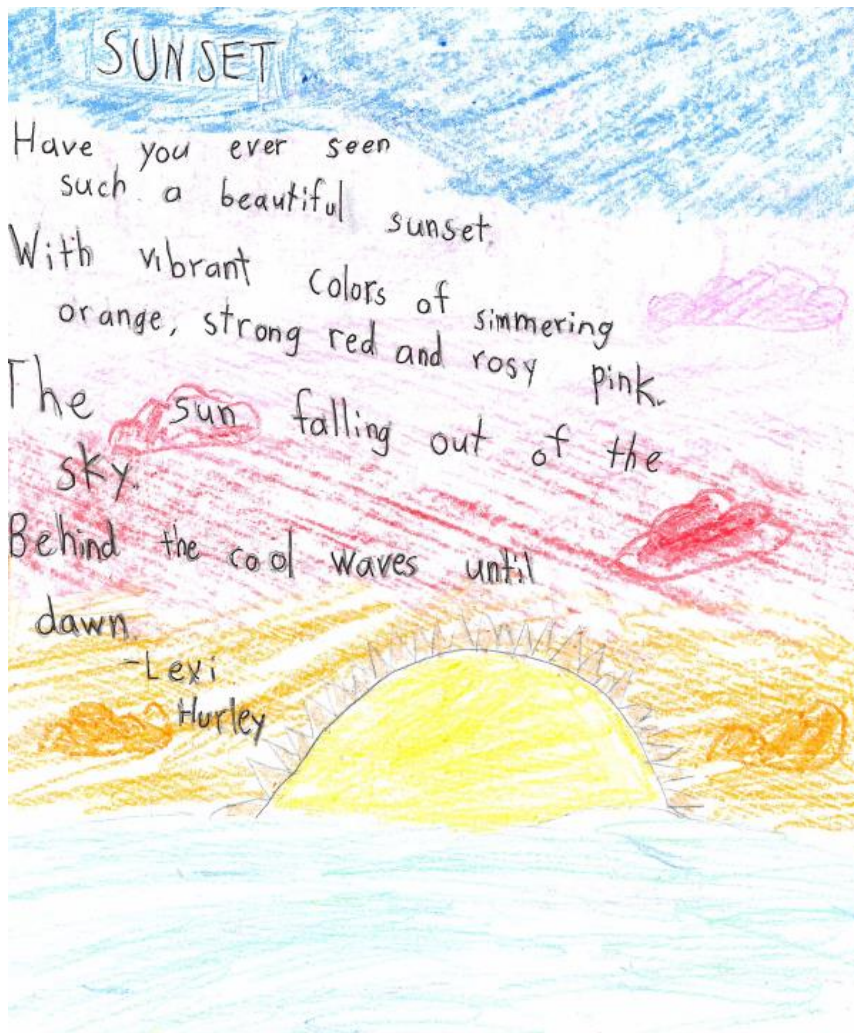
In front of the moonlight.

And from my window

It was beautiful.



Ryder's Abraham Lincoln



The Night

By Audrey

In the navy blue sky the stars are dancing
in the gleaming moon light.
The sea waves rushing against the soft,
glittering sand. And owls hooting
while hunting for prey.