



Sun Times

*News from Saint Francis of Assisi School
West Des Moines, Iowa*

Volume 7, Issue 8

Trisha Lenarz-Garmoe, Principal

Denise Mulcahy, Assistant Principal

April 2006

Dear Parents,

We continue our observance of Lent during this month of April. Our theme is "We Are Called, We Are Chosen" and it is our hope at St. Francis School that you have found time as a family to serve others in a way that you had not previously done prior to Lent. There are so many opportunities for this service that we can all learn and grow from. During April we will also celebrate the Easter Season! What a joyous time as we are reminded of the coming of spring with the new life we have growing and coming around us!

NCEA Convention: The week following Easter, some staff members will be attending the NCEA (National Catholic Education Association) Convention in Atlanta. The convention is a great time for teachers and administrators to attend workshops that will enhance skills needed each day in our jobs. This year, Mrs. Garmoe and I will attend the convention along with Mr. Southward and Mr. Tallman. At this year's convention our own St. Francis Home and School will be recognized as a top Home and School organization by NCEA. Kudos to this group!

Professional Development: As the school year begins to wind down, we take time to review the professional development that is offered to the teachers at St. Francis. One of the greatest assets that St. Francis offers its teachers is quality professional development. This past school year we have focused on articulation of subject areas. What does this mean? This means that we have looked closely at each subject area and what concepts are being taught and how those concepts look in each grade. Each grade level team has had much collaboration time with the grade level

above them and below them to look at what is taught and how. These meetings have taken place on each early dismissal we have had this year and through the meetings the teachers have completed charts to look at possible gaps or overlaps in their grade levels. The teachers have also looked at projects and other aspects of the curriculum. These meetings have been beneficial to the teachers, but also to your students who are reaping the benefit from professional collaboration and conversation between teachers. We are lucky to have teachers who make it a priority to continue to grow and improve their teaching for the students.

Sincerely,

Denise Mulcahy,
Assistant Principal

Congratulations!

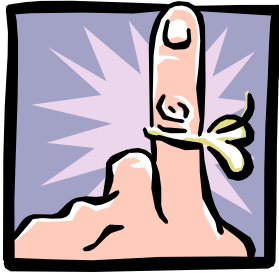
Kudos!

Way To Go!!



**St. Francis Home and School
Association...
Winner of the NCEA
Distinguished
Home & School
Regional Award for 2006**

**SFS Home and School will be
recognized at the NCEA annual convention in
Atlanta, GA., Apr 17-21**



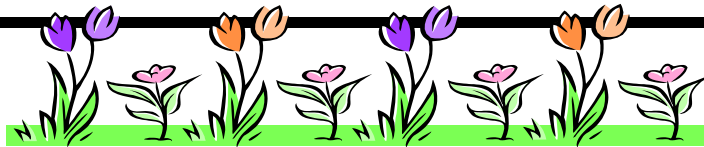
From Ms. Garmoe. . .

FORGOTTEN ITEMS

Please do not bring forgotten school day items to school for your children. We ask/recommend that our students have the opportunity to learn the lessons of life while in the protective environment of your loving homes and their parish school.

In addition, when families are reminded of this on the phone or in the office, it is my expectation that our office staff be treated with the reciprocal courtesy to which I believe they afford students and families each and every day.

Thank you so much for the blessing of your children in all of our lives and for the friendly family voices and smiles which so often grace our day.



On Our Palettes by Mr. Jason Southward

I was reading through some old Art periodicals when I ran across this little gem. This is only a portion of the article, but it gives a brief glimpse into the minds of our young ones and how the little things that kids say make being a teacher such a wonderful thing. Enjoy!

"The art room appears to be a magnet for the unique. It is a place where interesting projects abound, smells are musty, walls are colorful and the cabinets hold an array of equipment ranging from the usual paint and brush, to unusual metal washers, clay tools, plastic lids, cotton balls, buckets and an old hat full of real and artificial fruit.

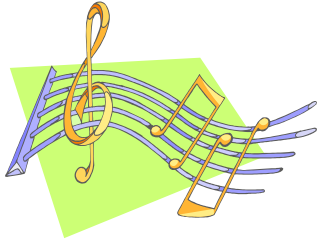
In this room, children are allowed to be spontaneous with their imaginations. They are encouraged to experiment while holding to a discipline or guideline. Here, activities challenge both their right- and left-brain quadrants, while building confidence and esteem. But the art room also holds many humorous and rewarding adventures.

During our sixth-grade art class, I was giving a demonstration on clay mask making. I assured my students that although it looked easy, they needed to be patient in creating proportionally correct faces. As the class began the project, I was impressed by how well they were doing and their lack of frustration.

I was drawn back to reality, however, when in the quiet of the class I heard a young man announce, "No wonder God waited 'til the sixth day to make us. This is really hard!" "yeah," responded a voice from the back, "and we're just mortal kids with only an hour and a half."

Smith, G. L. (2002). Humor in the art room - expect the unexpected. *Arts & Activities*





Musical Notes by Mrs. Angie Murphy

With only 2 months left in school the music room is busy with activity!

Kindergarten:

We are working hard at getting our Spring concert ready for the parents. The concert will be in the music room during the students regular music class period on Friday, May 26. We hope you will mark this on your calendar and come see us sing!

Polzin: 9:50-10:15

Carmichael AM: 10:15-10:40

Carmichael PM: 2:45-3:15

First grade:

The first grade classes are also working hard on their musical "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" If any on the parents would like to help with the set please contact me and I will let you know what I still need. The play will be in the large meeting room on the church side during the students regular class time on Friday, May 26.

Murphy: 1:15-1:45

Badding: 1:45-2:15

Dante: 2:15-2:45

We hope you will mark this time on your calendar.

Second Grade:

The second grade will be presenting the musical "Glow" on April 25, at 6:30 p.m. in the gym. If any parents are interested in helping with the set please contact me for the details. We hope you will join us Tuesday, April 25th.

Third and Fourth Grade:

The third and fourth grade classes have been working very hard learning their songs on the recorder. We will be presenting our concert on Thursday, April 20, 7:00 p.m. Come listen to our recorder songs as well as our singing songs. We hope you will mark this on your calendar.

Seventh grade:

I meet with the seventh grade three days a week. I am glad to finally see this class. We are learning how to read a score of music as well as prepare for our "Coffeehouse" talent show. The students will be selecting a theme after spring break. I look forward to this performance. Please mark May 23, at 7:00 p.m. on your calendars. If any parents would like to help with set, please give me a call and I will let you know our needs. Thanks so much for your support!

Have a great spring!



TECH TALK

by Mrs. Diane Nitzel

Can you believe the school year is almost over? As usual things seem to speed up at the end of the year, which has caused the Computer Lab to be quite busy. The month started off with the 5th Graders coming in to do a research project on the Solar System. Along with that project we had a mini-lesson on Copyright Laws and Intellectual Property. We wrapped up the I-Safe program with students in K-5 this month. I hope they have all shared what they learned with you. Mr. Hazel brought the 6th Graders in to type up rules and draw diagrams for the new games they created, and Mr. Tallman's homeroom completed their ten days of the Typing Refresher.

7th Grade spent a lot of time in the lab this month. In Language Arts, they researched and typed their reports for their Career projects. In Social Studies, they researched Central and South America to become "Travel Agents" for their particular country. In Math, Mrs. Westholm brought them down to create a to-scale diagram of their bedroom using the Drawing Tools in Publisher.

As the school year winds down, we start looking forward to summer. I wanted to use this opportunity to let you know about a Technology Summer Camp that I am starting this summer. This camp will be for students in 3rd - 8th Grade (06-07 School Year). The camps will be one week long and held in the afternoons. Each week will showcase a different Technology project. Students will build on skills that they have learned during the school year, as well as learn new skills. I have also incorporated time to work on keyboarding skills. Groups will be kept small to ensure more one on one attention. Students will be encouraged to be creative and the projects can be tailored to each student's skill level. I am hoping to make this an enjoyable, relaxing time for all. Registration forms will be going home the first week of April and will be available on the School's website on the Technology Page. Registration will need to be back to me by April 14th.

I hope Spring Break was a time of renewal for everyone, and left everyone refreshed and ready to finish out the rest of the school year.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY!

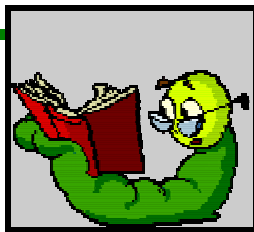
Want to be a MENTOR?

Volunteers are needed to serve as mentors to families new to St. Francis School.

Please see the flyer in the April Packet for more information.

Thank you!





Book Nook by Mrs. Mary Head

Congratulations to all the students who voted for their favorite Iowa Children's Choice book in February. The favorite book at St. Francis was City of Ember by Jeanne DuPrau with 55 votes. The second place vote went to Escaping the Giant Wave by Peg Kehret with 26 votes.

"The favorite book at St. Francis was City of Ember..."


At the state level – 292 schools participated in the voting with a total of 29,674 votes. The winner at the state level was Escaping the Giant Wave by Peg Kehret with 3,859 votes; second place went to City of Ember with 2,802 votes.

There may be changes in our promotion of the Iowa Children's Choice books for the 2006-2007 school year. The books will be available in our library and students who read two or more of the books will be invited to vote for their favorite in February as well as nominate books for the following year. The incentive for reading all the choice books is being discussed by reading teachers and the Building Literacy Team – updates will follow.

The media center has been a busy place with the 5th grade students researching the topic of space and the 7th grade students studying careers.

We are looking for a great spring here in the library.



 **STRIKE UP the BAND!** By Mr. Rick Purviance

St. Francis of Assisi band students participated in solo and ensemble contest at Norwalk Middle School on Saturday, March 11. Students competed for a ratio of 1+ (Highly Superior), I (Excellent), II (Good), or III (Fair). St. Francis had 44 entries and received 30 division 1+ ratings, 14 division I ratings and no division II or III ratings. All of the students who participated did an outstanding job.

In each performance center, approximately 70 entries performed. A judge also had the opportunity to give 2 outstanding performance awards for that center. St. Francis performed in 2 centers, and received 3 of the 4 outstanding awards available. Those went to McKenzie L. for her clarinet solo, Cecilia V. for her alto sax solo, and Eddie A. for his snare drum solo.

A special thanks is extended to Mrs. Murphy and Mrs. Schliesman for their fine job as accompanists.



ENRICHMENT by Mrs. Chris Joslin

Bom dia! Or "good day" in Portuguese! As I write this my mind is full of a great many things but one of the most urgent is packing for my 'retreat' to Goiana, Brazil with Father Kirby and 20+ Dowling High School students. I hope that I will be able to share my experiences with the whole school once I return as I am sure it will be an enriching experience for all of us.

One of the ways, I will be sharing is to send a postcard to the 4th grade class. They are studying regions of the USA and one of my groups has instigated a postcard mail in. They will be categorizing the cards and developing activities to share with the rest of the class.

Thank you to all of you who have sent cards already OR who have shared the request to family members or friends. We have received cards from all around the US, but mostly from Minnesota (Is there a connection here?) and from Mexico, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway (do you know they have moose there?) and Tanzania.

My other fourth grade group has decided to tackle global warming in connection with individual areas. One will research the melting of the glaciers, one the decline of polar bears, one the increase of hurricanes and one will research a connection to the avian flu outbreak and its spread. Our goal is to produce a documentary or power point which will be shared with the 4th grade and perhaps to other grades.

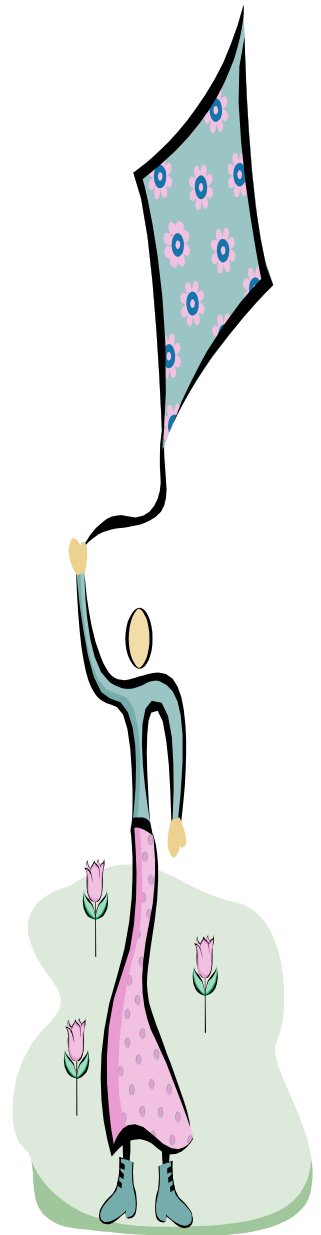
A fifth grade group is preparing for a balloon launch that may or may not get off the ground. First we have to finish gluing it. Second we have to have a nearly windless and very cool day for it to work. It may be one of those things that is postponed to next fall! Who would have thought we would have such a mild winter?! As we work through that we are also preparing for Canstruction, a 5th grade whole class project where students will use canned goods from a Food Drive for DMARC Food Panty to build a structure. One group has already agreed on the design and now we are working on numbers and colors of cans to ask students to donate. This will be scheduled sometime in April or May. This fits into the architecture unit they are exploring in Talking Canvas.

Four 6th graders made it into the AEA 11 Math Bee. They will be hearing soon if they will be invited to participate in the state contest. They are Meredith H., Megan B., Chris K. and Cecilia V.

Five 6th graders are participating in the National History Day competition the end of March. They are Megan B., Megan B., Ben A., Presley T. and Nathan F. Their theme is Ruby Bridges and the impact she has made in desegregating schools in the south. If you haven't heard of her, you may be familiar with the Norman Rockwell painting of her, as a 6 year old walking to school in her white dress between 4 US marshalls. We all agree she was a VERY brave little girl.

Our third grade unit on the Olympics was a great hit even in the upper grades as we watched the competitions and toted up the metal wins.

April will bring Fine Arts day and Earth Day...can you believe it is almost April?!





News from the Lunchline

by Mrs. Barb Wisnieski

Hello from the SFA School Lunch Program. Hope everyone had a great Spring Break ...the end of the school year is just around the corner!!

At the beginning of March, we added a new staff member!! Mr. Robert Garrett joined our staff as our dishwasher. Welcome Robert!!

Please remember to pay the balance on your lunch account(s) on a timely basis. Middle school children who do not have lunch accounts paid in full will not be able to participate in the A La Carte Program. Our lunch program is a "small" business operation that has monthly bills to pay...your attention to this detail is greatly appreciated.

Also, when sending in money for your child(ren), please make sure to send it in in an envelope, clearly marked "**LUNCH MONEY**". As our school has grown, you would be surprised to know how much money comes through the school office for a number of different reasons. Sorting these funds out alone could be a full time job for the secretarial staff.

The challenge of operating a school kitchen in a school that is constantly growing in numbers and changing is that every year, in some ways, is like starting new all over again. This year, we welcomed 4 new employees to our staff. Next school year, we will be "growing" our staff again to accommodate an extra grade of students. If any one is interested in a part-time job in our kitchen, please let us know. The benefits of working where your children go to school are many. Plus, we are known to have a little fun in the school kitchen (working hard, but having fun, too!)

By the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year, the federal government had mandated that all schools establish a School Wellness Policy which addresses nutrition and physical education issues. I was fortunate to be a member of the Diocesan Wellness Policy Committee that was responsible for developing this policy. Next year, each individual school will be responsible for implementing the policy at the local level. We will be establishing a school wellness committee to do this...more on this issue to come in future months.

Thanks for your continued support of our program!!



REMINDER!

Transportation reimbursement forms for 2nd semester are due in your public school district office by May 1. A form for 2nd semester is provided as part of this month's packet.

If you are due a reimbursement, please fill out the [Transportation Form](#) and mail it to your public school district. **YOU MUST RETURN A FORM TO YOUR DISTRICT TO RECEIVE A REIMBURSEMENT.**



Student Council News

Second semester reps have started meeting and include the following students: Chris K., Elizabeth V., Hannah V., Patrick K., Allie K., John J., Maria B., Jake H., Elizabeth M., Mary Kate W., and Maddi S.

Student council has helped to publicize and collect for the DMARC monthly food bank collection and are working on plans to recognize students and staff on their birthdays. They are also working on some special activities for Earth Day.



Try a Three Minute Daily Meditation!



• www.findingGod.org

Take Me Out to the Ball Park!!

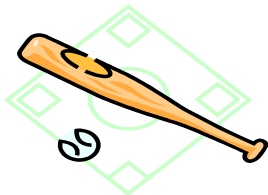


St. Francis School Night at the Iowa Cubs
Friday, May 26

7:05 PM

I-Cubs Vs. Nashville Sounds
(AAA team of the Milwaukee Brewers)

FIREWORKS after the game!



Tickets will come home on April 28th



7th Grade Dance
St. Anthony's School



Friday, April 28

7:00-9:30PM

Cost: \$5.00



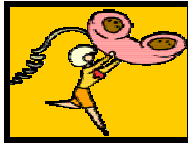
Don't forget
your student I.D.

IMPORTANT REMINDER

Give us a call!

As a safeguard for our students, parents are asked to notify the school before 8:30 AM if their child will be absent or tardy that day. Parents may leave a voice mail message, if necessary. If the school has not been notified, the office will contact the parents after 9:00 AM.

Please help us keep our students safe. Thank you for your assistance and your cooperation!



Achoo!

Time for spring cleaning!

Office Wish List

- Swiffer Dusters Refills
- Dish soap

Thanks for your
donation
to the school office!



FOR YOUR FAMILY SAFETY!

- www.familywatchdog.us/search.asp
Choose State
Enter zip
Click on SHOW MAP
- www.iowasexoffender.com
Click on search
Click on "I understand and agree..."
Enter city
Choose county
Enter zip
Click on SUBMIT



APRIL MISSIONS \$1.00 Jeans Day

St. Joseph Emergency Family Shelter

Thursday, April 6

St. Joseph Emergency Family Shelter is the only shelter in Polk County where the entire family unit can stay together. Located at 1535 11th St. in Des Moines, St. Joseph's is large enough to provide safe, clean housing for five homeless families. St. Joseph's welcomes children and whomever children bring.

Our mission is to honor the humanity of each person by acknowledging the emotional and financial crisis involved when a family finds itself without housing or funds. We offer housing for a limited stay, three meals a day, laundry facilities and case management to assist guests in returning to self-sufficiency.

The shelter is staffed 24-hours a day.

Services

Donated furniture & household items are available for guests moving into permanent housing

Provides all meals, infant & personal hygiene items

Sponsors parenting classes