



SUN TIMES

NEWS FROM SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI SCHOOL

"Prepare the child for the path, not the path for the child."

Volume 8, Issue 6

Roberta Harvey, Principal

Denise Mulcahy, Assistant Principal Feb 2007

Dear Parents,

First, let me say, "Thank You!" to all of the families for the gifts at Christmastime. All of the gifts that you shared with me were appreciated and your generosity is a great blessing. Thank you, everyone!

Our Catholic Schools Week celebration continues through Feb. 2. Our theme this year, *"Catholic Schools: The Good News In Education"* reminds us that while Catholic Schools are often known for their high academic standards, we continue to strive to be known for spreading the Good News just as much. Our mission is much more than teaching students how to read and do math, but it is also to help them learn to be people who reach out to others in need, share our gifts and talents with the world, and to come to love God in what we say and do. These lessons are taught as much at home as they are at school and that is one reason why our Catholic schools are so successful – parents who work everyday to be sure the Good News is alive in the home.

During Catholic Schools Week this year we will spend extra time focusing on Math skills. Many different Math activities have been planned for us to share in throughout the week. A few of the highlights for Catholic Schools Week look like this:

- Sun. 1-28 Open House from 11:30-1:30
(Pizza order forms were sent home)
- Mon. 1-29 Measurement Monday in school
- Tues. 1-30 Estimation Tuesday in school
- Wed. 1-31 Spirit Wear Day; Early Dismissal @

11:30; Faculty Mass at St. Pius X

- Thurs. 2-1 Mental Math Day; Speakers in each classroom
- Fri. 2-2 Liturgy (2C) @ 8:45; School-wide presentation

Lent begins toward the end of this month. Once again there is another Church season set aside to give us a chance to grow closer to God and others through a renewal of our hearts. More information regarding different Lenten activities will come home as Ash Wednesday approaches.

It is hard to believe, but the time for registration is nearing. Information was sent home with the conference sheets (which you should have already received). Registration begins on February 12 for those who can stop into the office during school hours to complete the process. We will also be available, in the Media Center, at conference time for those who do not get the chance to complete the process during the school day. ALL registrations are due on February 22. (Parents with incoming kindergartners will have completed their registrations on Kindergarten Information Night.)

God's Blessing be yours,

Denise E. Mulcahy

Denise E. Mulcahy,
Assistant Principal



EXTREME WEATHER NOTIFICATION!

KCCI has a service that is popular with parents for communication about weather-related school delays and closings.

You can go to the following website and sign on to receive email notifications of delays and closings. Once the delay/closing information is called into KCCI, it is linked to the KCCI website: <http://www.kcci.com/closings/index.html>

Once you reach the website you will be asked to provide your email address. You will get a drop down menu of schools. Just click on St. Francis of Assisi and you're set.

LABELS for Education~

Please continue to send in your Campbell's Soup labels and Box tops for Education.

Labels may be sent at anytime to your child's homeroom.

Thank you for supporting SFA!

Directory Corrections!

Brian and Shelly McCarthy
20706 350th St.
Adel, Iowa 50003
834-2287
Emma, K

Mike and Kathy Ketcham
1690 SE Bell Drive
Waukee 50263
987-4513
Kelsey, 6th
Michael, 3rd



MIDDLE SCHOOL DANCE for Grades 7th & 8th

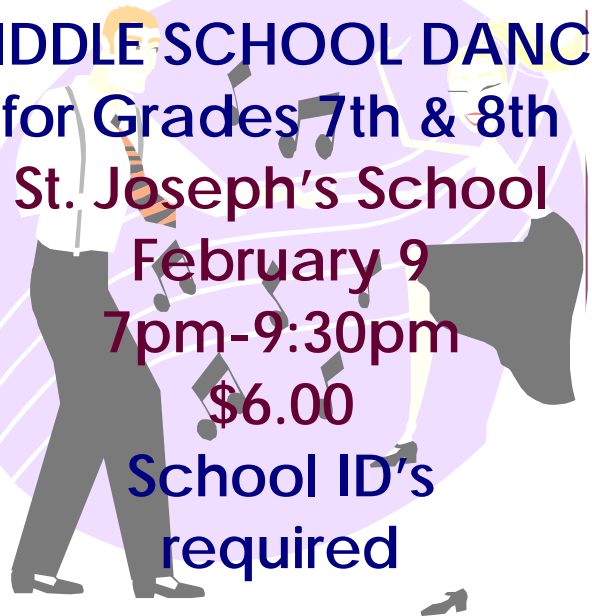
St. Joseph's School

February 9

7pm-9:30pm

\$6.00

School ID's
required





Book Nook by Mrs. Mary Head

We have enjoyed many great days in the media center this month. New books purchased with book fair money are arriving and are being processed. I am anxious to get them on the shelves for our students to enjoy.

Third grade students are working on finding subjects, titles, and authors in the card catalog and then locating the book on the shelf. They are doing a great job. In addition, they are researching the rain forest and rain forest animals. This authentic use of the media center gives students the opportunity to use the table of contents and index of nonfiction books, discover information in encyclopedias, take notes, read and organize information and then write what they've learned - citing sources - in their own words.

Second grade has started an animal research project that will incorporate many of those same skills at an age appropriate level.

Using the media center in this way is an important learning experience these students will use the rest of their lives.

A sincere thanks to all the families who made contributions to the monetary Christmas gift for teachers and staff in December. Your kindness, generosity and support are treasured.



iNoticias en español! by Mrs. Shelly Power

Sixth and Eighth grade students began Spanish classes second semester. This month, both grades will learn to greet one another and conduct beginning level conversations in Spanish as well as learn Spanish basics such as numbers to 30, colors, the alphabet, and calendar information.

Fourth and Fifth grade students will complete a mini-unit on calendar and weather expressions. Students will participate in matching games, *pictionary*, and weather comparisons to Spanish-speaking countries to learn these concepts.

First, second, and third grade students continue to discuss weather and calendar expressions. We will compare weather and clothing needed in Iowa and Mexico for various months of the year.

READING RECOVERY/READING SUPPORT

by Mrs. Mary Anne Conway

Focus on Fluency With Book Activities

We can encourage fluency in young, developing readers by the language we use. Another way to support fluency development for readers is to do some reading activities with the books your child brings home from school. The four activities that follow can be done at home. Use as much expression as you can so that your reading sounds like talking. These activities encourage children to read smoothly and with expression:

Echo reading: You read one line, and the child reads the same line after you. As your child's reading improves, increase the number of lines you read at one time.

Choral reading: You and your child read the same text aloud together.

Partner reading: You and your child take turns reading. Start by reading one sentence and asking the child to read the next sentence. As the child's fluency improves, you read a page and he/she reads a page.

Repeated reading: Read the same book or story more than once in the same week.

*The Reading Teacher December 2006/January 2007
Family Involvement in Fluency Instruction*

Thank you to all of the families who contributed to the Christmas gift for teachers and staff! Your gift was very generous and your thoughtfulness was appreciated.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the parents of the first round Reading Recovery students. Thank you for your partnership and support! I do appreciate the time you've given to consistently listening to your children read the books that they have been bringing home on a daily basis since last September.



GYM SHORTS by Mr. Mike Hazel

It has been awhile since my last newsletter entry. It has been a challenge to keep up with over 600 students this year! I would like to present a re-cap of some of the activities your children were engaged in during the fall semester PE classes.

Middle School: football, speedball, lacrosse, ultimate and ultimate can-jam, volleyball, basketball, circuit training, Hoover ball, and other games and activities.

Grades 3-5: Frisbee, football, soccer, parachute, bowling, volleyball, mat ball, Hoover ball, dodgeball, and other games and activities.

Grades K-2: Scooter activities, tag games, fundamental locomotor skills, balancing activities, body awareness, volleying skills, rhythm and dance, bowling, Frisbee, and other games and activities.

The second semester looks to be just as fun with many more learning experiences in movement, including great lifetime activities like racquet sports. Be sure to encourage your child to be physically active everyday, and model for them what that means by being physically active yourself!

Calling all Book Buddies...

Book buddies will meet again on Tuesday, February 6th from 7:00-7:45 PM in the Media Center. We will be discussing **Maniac Magee** by Jerry Spinelli. Please join us for the discussion.

New comers are always welcome!

Sign up sheets will be outside the Media Center beginning Monday, 1/29/07.

Please Call Nancy Foley at 225-0962 with any questions.



MUSICAL NOTES by Mrs. Lee Randall

Greetings All!

Now that the elementary concert season has ended our classes are all working on something new in music class. Here are the highlights:

Kindergarten – more music basics (beat, rhythm, singing, moving)

First grade – learning about the staff, matching pitches

Second grade – locating notes on the staff, identifying rests, matching pitches

Third grade – learning to play recorder

Fourth grade – reviewing recorder and learning songs for Recorder Karate.

Fifth grade – reviewing recorder, singing and playing in two or more parts.

The Middle School students are also working on different things in preparation for our upcoming concerts in May.

Sixth grade – Guitar unit and the language of music

Seventh and Eight grade – Writing raps, rhythms, and performing on percussion instruments and found items (boxes, buckets, etc.). Beginning preparation on concert materials.

The Sixth and Eighth grades will present a concert on **May 15th at 7:00 p.m.**

The Seventh grade will be presenting a musical on **May 21st at 7:00 p.m.** This is a change in concert date so please change your calendar. Keep watching the newsletter for more information!

Please come and support our musicians for these concerts!



Tech Talk by Mrs. Diane Nitzel

The computer lab was very busy again this past month with several exciting and engaging projects. Mr. Southward brought the 6th and 7th graders in to show them how to use a program called Adobe Photoshop Elements. Students learned how to use some of the filters and effects within the program to create some very cool artwork. Sixth grade also sharpened their keyboarding skills this month using our new keyboarding program Type to Learn 3.

Mrs. Joslin's 7th grade TAG group completed their Wizard of Oz commercial they created for their persuasive unit. They learned how to use the "green screen" effect in Adobe Premiere Elements to put themselves into realistic-looking backgrounds. I also showed them a few things in Adobe Photoshop Elements that I learned from Mr. Southward that they incorporated into the project.

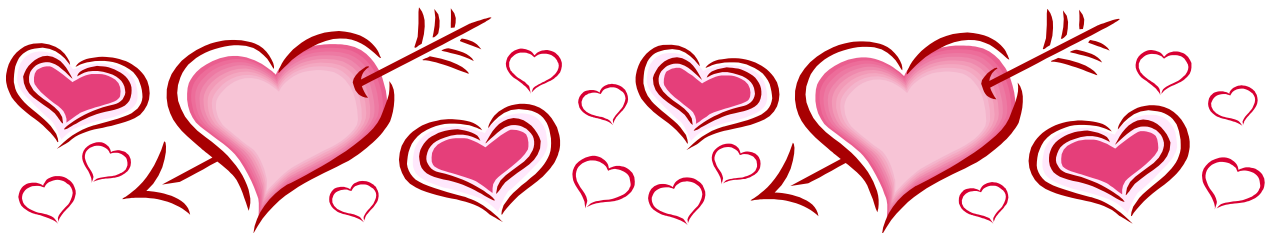
The seventh graders were busy in the lab this past month creating a Power Point on the sacraments for Mr. Tallman. I also showed them how to create timelines using Excel and Inspiration, and then they were able to choose between several programs to create their timeline for Mrs. Wallace. Mrs. Wallace also had the 7th graders use Inspiration to create a graphic organizer for their topic on Latin America to teach to the rest of the class. The 7A class also worked on their keyboarding skills.

Eighth grade students worked with Mrs. Wallace to create Power Point presentations on their assigned section of their text book. They then used the Power Point to teach the rest of the class about what they had learned. A couple of the 8th grade classes also came in to complete their "raps" with Mrs. Randall.

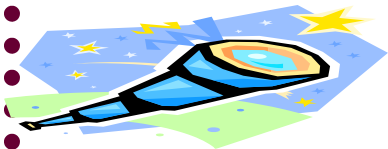
The first grade students created their Penguin reports using Kidspiration, while second grade created book covers for their Nate the Great project. Third grade came in to type a descriptive paragraph, as well as started researching their rainforest animal for a Power Point slide in February.

I would like to mention a contest that I-Safe is sponsoring. Last spring, Mrs. Heckle and I taught a unit on Internet Safety with all of the students using the I-Safe curriculum. They have a website where teachers, students and parents can go to learn more about Internet safety. They periodically sponsor contests and activities that the students can get involved in, incorporating an Internet safety theme. I strongly encourage you and your students to get involved with this program. It is constantly updated with the most current things your students may be involved in or exposed to. It would be well worth your time to check out this site.

I do have one request. If anyone was fortunate enough to get a new video camera for Christmas, and you are not sure what to do with the old one, please consider donating it to the St. Francis Tech Dept. It would be very helpful when doing video projects to have more than one video camera available for the students to use. We are also in need of digital cameras. If you have one you are looking to donate, please contact me at school. I appreciate your consideration! Thank you!



The State of Iowa and the Catholic Diocese requests that you to check the
Sex Offender Registry List regularly to keep your family safe.
www.iowasexoffender.com



ENRICHMENT by Mrs. Chris Joslin

- Since our winter break, enrichment continues on a steady pace.
- MIDDLE SCHOOL: Keaton B. , 6th grade, has completed the written portion of the Geography Bee. His answer sheet has been sent in to National Geographic Society for grading. If he is in the top 100 scorers for Iowa students, he will be invited to participate in the State Geography Bee in March.
- In March, SFA will be represented by two Middle School teams competing at the Regional History Day Contest also. Both teams have decided to produce documentaries on this year's theme, "Triumphs and Tragedies". One group is focusing on the polio epidemic and the other on the Irish Potato Famine. These two teams are in need of contacts with people in Iowa who were affected by either of these. Please contact me if you have a personal story to share.
- Three 6th grade boys; Nick B., Nick D. and Jon W. and a parent volunteer, Tony DeAngelo, have been working hard on a project that involves the Sim City computerized game, called Future City. They will travel to Cedar Rapids to the state competition later in January. They are not eligible to compete but are acting as scouts so we can decide on whether this competition is something to offer next year for all 7th and 8th grade students. Each team of 3 students will need their own volunteer engineer or architect in order to compete. A preliminary competition will be held at SFA as only one team can go on to the State competition. ALL interested students and parents are invited to an informational demonstration on Tuesday, January 31st in the Media Center at 7:00 PM. The students will share their work and their experience. Their coach will be able to answer questions concerning the program also.
- Some of you may have been asked about playing cribbage over break. We are continuing to meet on Wednesdays during study hall to teach 6, 7 and 8th graders how to play the game. We had hoped to have held a cribbage tournament during Catholic Schools Week but that will be rescheduled for later in the year to allow for more students to learn the game and to be better prepared for it. My thanks to all the volunteers who share with the students as their busy schedules allow, Mary Bernabe, Patricia Hoffman, Steve McLuen and Jonna Wisnieski!
- Fifth Grade will be beginning their annual "Exchange City" project. During that time, the 5th grade enrichment groups will be focusing on their roles there. Once that is completed they will begin preparing for the 4th ANNUAL SFA Canstruction Project. This is where all students donate canned goods that are then made into structures. In the past, the structures have been a replica of the SFA bell tower, the SFA initials and a mural of three crosses. The team will be in charge of design, promotion, collection and sorting as well as organizing of committees as the entire 5th grade will be involved in the construction as well as many other aspects of the project.
- Fourth Grade will begin pull out groups shortly. The students who qualify for this program meet the following requirements: top 15% scores on ITBS using the Iowa percentile ranking, scores of over 125 on the Test of Cognitive Abilities taken in 3rd grade and teacher recommendation. From this pool of students, the top 7-14 students will be invited to meet with me for a 6-8 week session. Because their 4th grade ITBS scores are not available, we will employ the Renzuli model where up to 20% of a class could receive pullout enrichment. After more test scores are available, in 5th grade, specific groups will be formed. There is a 5th grade math group and a 5th grade language arts group with some students that participate in both.
- In first grade, I have traditionally met with the top reading group in order to give them more reading time. Children at this age mature at very different speeds. Early reading, while it certainly can, does not necessarily indicate advanced logic and thinking skills. I will be meeting with the first, second and third grade teachers to discuss where we want to go with this and the possibility of beginning a 2nd and 3rd grade short-term grouping in the future.
- I will be presenting whole class enrichment to the 3rd grade next week as they work on their rain forest unit. I will be assessing class participation as well as completion of in-class work at that time. Prior to this I did a whole class presentation to the 2nd graders on China and to the kindergarten classes on winter religious traditions.

● Chris Joslin
● St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School