



SUN TIMES

NEWS FROM SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI SCHOOL

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

Volume 8, Issue 7

Roberta Harvey, Principal

Denise Mulcahy, Assistant Principal Mar 2007

Dear Parents,

It is hard to believe the Lenten season is already upon us. Our parish Lenten theme is *Change Your Heart*. Great resources have been planned to assist our families in their spiritual journey these forty days of Lent. We hope you find the booklet, "Making Room for Jesus," a wonderful source on a daily basis. At school our students are studying selected scriptures and how they relate to our lives as Catholic Christians. We have planned Lenten prayer services,, reconciliation services, and other activities throughout the next weeks as well. Lastly, we can't forget the purple bands provided for each of us as reminders of treating and acting towards others as Christ would want us to do, as *we* would want done toward us. That purple band is indeed a good reminder. And once again, this concerted effort binds us closer as a community. May our Lenten journey bring us closer to Christ and unite us more deeply in service and commitment in word and deed.

This letter would be incomplete without special thanks and affirmation of the highly successful, first-ever SFA Gala. Even though I was aware of events for the evening, I was so thoroughly in awe as the night unfolded. The silent auction items, the live auction activities, and raffle items guaranteed excitement and busy activity among the guests. The night was filled with attention to details, all enhancing a *Tuscan Night to Remember*. The refreshments, live music, band, and gathering of friends will long be remembered and appreciated. Thank you for the creative, laborious efforts from all the giving folks, especially Amy and Phil Doud, Jeanine and Larry Laughlin, Mary and Dan Buscher, Sue and John Bethel, Jolene, and John Lensing, and Kelli and Dave Fini., There were many other committee members too numerous to mention here that worked with as much love and devotion. We thank you all from the bottom of our hearts. Future galas will, no doubt, be eagerly supported and awaited! And thanks to

their efforts, we have already acquired a new digital piano for our music education program. We had been using a borrowed one up until now, and are most appreciative of this quality instrument to enhance vocal instruction and music performances. If you get a chance, stop in and see it when class is not in session. I know Mrs. Randall will be proud to show it to you.



It was so good to see you at conferences last week. I am still getting totals, but from preliminary counts, attendance was strong. We are all very thankful for your input, insights, and support as we work as a team to provide the best possible education for our students. Thank you for completing registration for next year. This allows us to prepare orders and plan for a successful year in 07-08. But more importantly, thank you for entrusting your child to St. Francis School. We know how important they are in your lives and we enjoy our working partnerships as our students develop into the strong persons God intended them to be. We promise not to ever take that for granted.

March activities find us busy and focused on learning. Remember to go online for the rest of your packet to get all the information needed. You are welcome to attend our Lenten prayer services. They will be at 2:45 PM on March 3, March 12, March 26, April 1 and April 6. Most will be in the gym, except Good Friday's Stations of the Cross which will be in the church.

*"Change my heart, O Lord, I pray.
Help me to love You more each day. Amen."*

Lenten Blessings, my friends-

Roberta Harvey

Roberta Harvey, Principal



BOOK BUDDIES!

If you have been thinking of joining a Book Buddies discussion, but just haven't made it yet, you have one chance left! We will hold our last discussion on E. L. Konigsburg's Newberry Award Winning The View from Saturday on Tuesday, March 6 from 7-7:45 pm in the Media Center.

This book is about four children who compete for the Academic Bowl state championship. The story of how and why Mrs. Olinski chose these four kids to form the team is told with humor. Through a series of tangled, but funny circumstances, these kids become great friends.

The format for Book Buddies is low key and snacks are served! What a great way to spend an hour with your son or daughter! Join us at Book Buddies on March 6!

Try a Three Minute
Daily Meditation!



● www.findingGod.org

Transportation Reimbursement Reminder!

Deadline for second semester reimbursement is May 1, 2007.

You will find reimbursement information and forms on the front page of the website. You must submit a form to your local school district's transportation office in order to receive your reimbursement. Mileage requirements may apply.

As always, call the school office if you have any questions, 457-7167.

MIDDLE SCHOOL DANCE

for Grades 7th & 8th
St. Theresa School

March 9

7pm-9:30pm

\$6.00

School ID's **REQUIRED**





Book Nook by Mrs. Mary Head

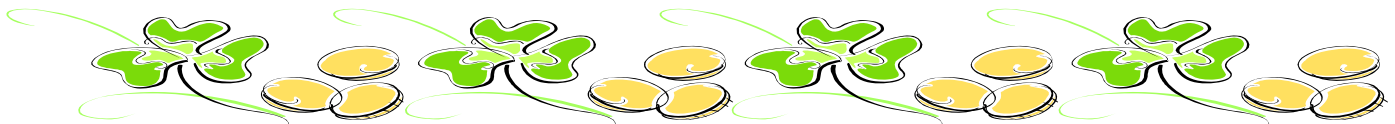
The media center is pleased to announce that \$1,299.61 was donated on our "100th Day of School" celebration! Wow! – what a wonderful windfall for our library.

Thank you to all students and parents who participated in this fun day.

I also want to extend my appreciation to West Bank for their professionalism, courtesy, and understanding in dealing with jars and jars of change! It took the teller 20 minutes to pour all that change into their coin counting machine and turn the change into book buying dollars!

The Iowa Children's Choice vote was taken on February 12th. Voting were students in grades three, four, five, and six who had read at least two books on the list. The winner at St. Francis this year is Wenny Has Wings by Sue Corbett with 24 votes. The second place vote went to Three Days by Donna Jo Napoli with 15 votes. Our votes were sent on to the coordinator of the Iowa Children' Choice books who will tally votes from all the schools and declare a state winner.

A reminder that there are no fees for overdue books, but if a student has three or more books that are past the due date they will not be allowed to check out until books are returned. Thank you for cooperation and understanding!



¡Noticias en español! by Mrs. Shelly Power

Sixth and Eighth grade students continue to learn how to communicate using basic vocabulary and structures. Students have learned to tell time, use numbers in simple math equations, introduce themselves, and greet one another all in Spanish. Students should expect to have a short (15 minute) written homework assignment each Spanish class covering topics and vocabulary practiced in class. These are designed to help students master spelling and simple grammar. Students should be able to complete these assignments independently with materials in their Spanish folder.

Fourth and Fifth grade students learned to tell time and continue to practice numbers 1-100. We have begun a unit on body parts. Students should be able to identify at least 15 vocabulary words and will learn to describe their hair and eye color and other simple descriptions. Ask your student to sing one of the songs we sang in class to learn vocabulary.

First, second, and third grade students continue to discuss weather and calendar expressions. Students are learning how to discuss the weather for a given day and to give the day and date. We dressed a bear for various months and weather, learned new weather songs, and will continue to practice simple greetings and introductions.

READING RECOVERY/READING SUPPORT

by Mrs. Mary Anne Conway

Writing Activities Your Child Can Do at Home

- * Write a thank you.
- * Make a card for someone and write a message.
- * Keep a journal at home to write about special events.
- * Write a story with a beginning, middle and end.

Early writers are able to compose messages of one or more sentences about a single idea. The sentences will include some conventionally spelled words and some approximate spelling of words.

At home, parents can help their children write sentences. Following are some suggestions:

- * Have your child decide what he or she is going to write. Let your child say the sentence several times to be sure of the exact words (While revising is an important component of writing, for this particular step, don't let your child keep changing the wording of the message). You want to encourage your child to remember his/her message while they're spelling words.
- * Have your child write the letters and words he or she can without help.

When your child comes to a word that is difficult for him/her to spell, offer your support by trying these ideas:

- * Have some blank scraps of paper on hand.
- * Have your child say the word slowly.
- * Next, have your child write down the beginning letter sounds, as well as any other letter sounds heard. Parents can fill in the missing and/or silent letters.
- * For longer, more complex words, just write the word for your child in his or her sentence.
- * Have your child reread the sentence after writing **each** word. Doing this will help your child to remember what word comes next in the message.

Once your child has written his or her story, you can rewrite the child's sentence on a sentence strip. Cut it apart and have your child rebuild their own sentence.

As your child goes through the process of putting their own message back together, he or she has to look very carefully at the words. Rebuilding their own sentence requires the children to search for particular words in sequence. As they search, they need to use visual information and notice the details of the words.

The list of five tips for helping your child write sentences is adapted from "Supporting Writing at Home" (page 107) from: HOMELINK - Home Activities for the Emergent Reader - a publication from Dominie Press, Inc. 1997

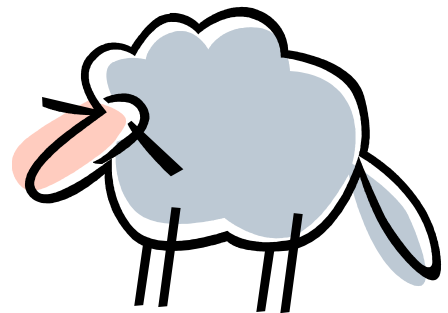
Happy Reading & Happy Writing!



MONTH OF MARCH!

In like a lion...

...Out like a lamb.



MUSICAL NOTES by Mrs. Lee Randall

Recorder Update!

The third, fourth, and fifth grades have been working to earn their "Recorder Karate" belts. For each level or song they pass, they get a belt for their recorder.

The third grade has earned its very first belt for the two-note song "Raindrops." They will be working on "Hot Cross Buns" as their next song.

The fourth grade has earned three belts for "Hot Cross Buns," "Gently Sleep," and "Merrily We Roll Along." These are all three-note (BAG) songs. Now we are working on four and five-note songs.

The fifth grade is playing two songs to earn each belt. They have earned their first belt and are halfway to the second belt. Since this is a higher level of playing, some play the recorder harmony and some sing while we are learning the songs.

All of the students practice both playing and singing.

These three grades are doing a great job on learning to read music and play their recorders!



March Missions ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE

ARL Mission: To promote animal welfare, the human/animal bond, and prevent the overpopulation of pets.

"The Animal Rescue League of Iowa Inc (ARL) is Iowa's largest non-profit animal shelter, caring for many thousands of pets each year. The ARL serves people and pets from across the state of Iowa through its programs, which include pet adoption humane education, pet behavior training, spay/neuter, animal cruelty intervention and much more.

The Animal Rescue League is a nonprofit organization dependent on individual and corporate contributions to care for its animals. The ARL receives no state, federal or United Way funding. The ARL has cared for Iowa's homeless animals since 1926."

From the ARL website: <http://www.arl-iowa.org/>



Watercolor by Brooke R., Grade 5

ON OUR PALETTES

by Mr. Jason Southward

A few house keeping items...

First, I want to thank all the volunteers who have been coming in a helping in the art room this school year. Your help has been invaluable. I would like to mention a little change that has caused some confusion in the scheduling of the Kindergarten volunteers. My schedule for the second half of the school year has changed. The new Kindergarten times are as follows: Crandell AM-A days 10:05-10:40, Carmichael-E days 10:05-10:40, and Crandell PM-E days 12:40-1:15. Sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused.

Second, as you may have heard, the art room has been blessed with some fresh talent. Ms. Sarah Anderson has been here as a student teacher since our return from Christmas break. She is a student at Grandview College and will be leaving us February 22nd. She has brought many new ideas to the art program here, many of which will be continued after she leaves. A highlight of her stay here is a life size rendition of Leonardo da Vinci's work The Last Supper. Seventh graders have created unique sculptures, which will be on display outside the art room during parent/teacher conferences. Come and take a look!

Attention Parents: Summer Enrichment Opportunities Offered at Iowa State University.

This summer, Iowa State University is offering summer classes for grades 3-8.

“**CY-TAG**” is for grades 7-11 for students with exceptional scores on their SAT or ACT tests. Some of you have taken the opportunity to have your child take the ACT test through the Belin-Blank Institute in Iowa City. If so, you will need those test scores in order to apply. (One session offered this summer.)

“**EXPLORATIONS**” is for grades 7-10. Test scores of above 97% on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills or the Iowa Tests of Educational Development. (Three sessions are being offered this summer.)

“**ADVENTURES**” is designed for students completing grades 2-6 if they score above 90% on the ITBS scores or are teacher recommended especially for the art portion of the program. (Two sessions are being offered this summer.)

Within each program are a wide variety of courses from which the student may choose. There are science, math, language arts, history, foreign language, reading, art and technology in varying forms and concentration.

Cost varies per program. Cy-Tag and Explorations can also be a residential experience with additional fees. Some financial aid is available.

If interested, please go on-line, to <http://www.opptag.iastate.edu/summer/> where you will find additional information as well as application forms. As always, if you need assistance with test scores, please email me at cjoslin@dowling.pvt.k12.ia.us.



ENRICHMENT by Mrs. Chris Joslin

February has brought some changes to the SFA Enrichment program. While taking a class on "Practices and Policies of Gifted Education", I have been reflecting on the programming needs of the students at SFA. In conjunction with the class, I have been meeting with grade level teachers, seeking input and suggestions as to what would fit their needs the best. At this point, I see the changes that are needed as three-fold. I will be planning more with classroom teachers to develop differentiated units as needed. I will be preparing whole class enrichment in grades K-2 with small groups in 3-5th grade and working with Middle School teachers in both whole-class and small group activities. I will be encouraging more participation in extra-curricular activities such as Mock Trial, photography, National History Day, Future City and DCHS speech competition. This will not mean changes for the small groups I already meet with grades 4-7 except for the 7th grade Extended Language Arts group which will rejoin Mrs. LeWarne until further notice.

In the news: Three 6th grade students presented their findings on the Future City program to interested parents and students in late January. This program is designed to sharpen architectural and engineering skills with working with SimCity software and building a city of the future. Nick B, Nick D. and Jon W. under the guidance of their coach, Tony DeAngelo gave the audience a very comprehensive account of their work and what they learned. This competition will be open to all 7th and 8th graders next year in teams of 3 with parent-volunteer coaches. It will begin in early September so watch for news on it beginning early next school year.

Third grade finished a unit on the rain forest and I was able to be a guest speaker for them on the complexity of biodiversity found there.

I am just beginning a group of 4th graders who will be involved in Mystery Locations around the world. We will be looking for clues by comparing photo-periods at 10 mystery sites located around the world with the photo-period (hours of sunlight) in Des Moines. It will challenge their math as well as build logical thinking.

In 6th grade, Mr. Shea, social studies and Ms. Sprung, language arts, and I have worked on a unit on China. I presented information about China to the students using photos and items that I purchased when teaching there. I received letters from Chinese students who are learning English with a former Chinese student of mine from Dongying #1 High School and Ms. Sprung is having the students write replies to these letters. A small group of students then worked with me to take photos of the school and to write captions for the photos to send to China with the letters. It is rare to have this opportunity to correspond with students in China and our goal is not only to learn about the country but to encourage sensitivity to the culture.

Eighth grade Photography Group One has completed their program with each having a photo hung in the Diocesan Art Fair during Catholic Schools Week. These photos are on display in the hallway at school now. They are being encouraged to submit photos for an photography competition in Ankeny later this month. I will begin Photography Group Two soon for 8th graders.

Thank you for your continued support and, as always, if you have questions please contact me by email:

