

In The News

from the Director

New School Preparatory takes pride in being an outstanding school that offers the highest level of education to our children. At re-enrollment time it is always important to understand that our choices for our children make a difference in their future. Consider this poem by Charles Osgood:

PRETTY GOOD by Charles Osgood from the Osgood File

There once was a pretty good student
 Who sat in a pretty good class
 And was taught by a pretty good teacher
 Who always let pretty good pass.
 He wasn't terrific at reading,
 He wasn't a whiz-bang at math,
 But for him, education was leading
 Straight down a pretty good path.
 He didn't find school too exciting,
 But he wanted to do pretty well,
 And he did have some trouble with writing
 Since nobody taught him to spell.
 When doing arithmetic problems,
 Pretty good was regarded as fine.
 5+5 needn't always add up to be 10;
 A pretty good answer was 9.
 The pretty good class that he sat in
 Was part of a pretty good school,
 And the student was not an exception:
 On the contrary, he was the rule.
 The pretty good school that he went to
 Was there in a pretty good town,
 And nobody there seemed to notice
 He could not tell a verb from a noun.
 The pretty good student in fact was
 Part of a pretty good mob.
 And the first time he knew what he lacked was
 When he looked for a pretty good job.
 It was then, when he sought a position,
 He discovered that life could be tough,
 And he soon had a sneaking suspicion
 Pretty good might not be good enough.
 The pretty good town in our story
 Was part of a pretty good state
 Which had pretty good aspirations
 And prayed for a pretty good fate.
 There once was a pretty good nation
 Pretty proud of the greatness it had,
 Which learned much too late,
 If you want to be great,
 Pretty good is, in fact, pretty bad.

Morrie Sorin

Dates to Remember

March 6 (Friday)
 Parent Conferences
 Non-Student Day

April 6-10 (Mon-Fri)
 Spring Break
 School Closed

May 2 (Saturday)
 Dinner & Silent Auction
 Church Street Ballroom



KINDERGARTEN

Animals, Animals, Animals!! The **Kindergarten** is in the midst of a unit investigating animals and how to identify by class. We began by listing on the chalkboard "all the animals in the world". The children then classified them into groups by the physical characteristics they had in common. We used the classroom library and reference books brought in by the children to learn about the various groups we created; mammals, reptiles, birds, amphibians and even an invertebrate were all on our list. Through our research we were able to study the traits they had in common. The children are excited to know they can identify any animal by it's physical characteristics; hair or fur for mammals, feathers, wings and beaks for birds, etc. They know which lay eggs and which have live babies. They know about warm blooded and cold blooded animals and the difference between the scaly skin of a reptile and the scales on a fish.

The children each did an in depth study of one animal. Each child chose an animal from the list of animals seen by Marco Polo. They researched the animal on the computer and printed the information. The children created a folder about their animal with their research material, preliminary drawings and pictures from the computer. From these materials, each child created a book about his/her animal. It is amazing to hear them discuss herbivores and carnivores and differentiate between the forest as a habitat and the grassland!

With this great store of knowledge, the children decided they would like to share what they learned with their families and a program for parents was planned. The children learned poems to recite and songs to sing; both in English and Spanish. They read their animal research book to their families. Each child painted a shoe box as a habitat and made the animal out of quick drying clay

to display as an animal refuge. The children made paintings on the easel of their animals to display.

As a class, the children wrote a play about two reptiles looking for their home. The reptiles approach animals of different species and habitats to see if they can find a place to live. The children take their acting responsibilities very seriously and eagerly help one another if they are looking for words. They are excited to see that you can learn and teach through all types of medium and are sure their acting will give information to parents and guests that they didn't know before.

The children also prepared snacks to serve to the parents. They took into account what herbivores and carnivores might like to eat!! The baking experience provided practice in working with fractions, measurement and equivalent amounts. The children each brought in a different type of fruit that he/she cut up and added to a fruit salad for the herbivores! For carnivores, we baked animal cookies.



FIRST GRADE



Fairy tales have always held a special fascination for children as well as for adults. The listener escapes to a world of fantasy. The characters are simple- either good or bad. Usually some type of magic is used to right the wrongs. In the end, the good are rewarded and the bad are punished. As we immerse in this rich genre's environment, our first graders will experience language in all its modes, oral, written and visual on a daily basis. They will be provided with high quality literature books for extensive personal reading (or listening). They will have opportunities to explore, develop and refine their reading, writing and oral language abilities. We will study the classics by The Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen. We wish to extend you an invitation at the end of our unit so you can be a witness to the learning that takes place in a language rich environment.

In Social Studies, we include units that provide experiences for the study of people. To make the study more meaningful to our students, the people we chose this month have a connection to fairy tales- they are Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm and Hans

Christian Andersen. The students will go back 2 centuries and develop questions such as: what influenced these great writers growing up, their learning and their perceptions? What influenced their behavior? What was their environment like? How did their experiences shape their writing? They will explore these questions that are central to the study of how individuals develop from youth to adulthood.

In Math we are understanding solid figures by sorting and making models, placing positions on a grid, identifying, making, reproducing and extending patterns, counting on to 12, doubles to 12 and adding three addends. We also have a student working on place value and trading in two-digit addition. These are the many levels of skills our first graders are currently working on at their own pace and level. They all continue to work on math their facts for speed and accuracy.

Work has to have force and motion and simple machines were created to make work easier. These are the main concepts we will explore in physical science this month. To develop understanding and provide opportunities that are meaningful to the learning process, we will use fairy tales. The students will participate in hands-on discovery experiences and describe the experiences in their own words. They will have the fairy tale to provide the opportunity to apply their new understanding to new situations.

Integrating subject areas with a common theme doesn't always work, but when it does it complements the learning with meaning while introducing an element of fun. We would like to show you by inviting you to share our experiences on the afternoon of Thursday, April 2nd in the afternoon. More details will follow. Mark your calendars!

SECOND GRADE

Fresh off our voyage of curiosity **Second Grade** has begun their voyage to the New World, learning about the colonies and colonists in North America. We will be comparing the different colonies and looking for what made some more successful than others. Our main focus will be on Roanoke, Jamestown, and Plymouth as a class. Each student will also have their own Colony to research and report on to the class. The students will be paying particular attention to why people took the chance on moving to the New World. We will compare the colonists to those who later traveled west in hopes of a better life.

In math **Second Grade** will continue to work on measurement and geometry. We will be applying these concepts throughout our unit on the colonies. The class will work on making their own quilt squares, and following recipes from the time period. As well as using old journals to compare the size and shape of the buildings in the different colonies. I would like to remind everyone that while our focus on concepts changes in math it is still very important that your child is practicing their math facts every night as part of their homework. We still use addition and subtraction throughout our measurement and geometry unit!

The class has begun reading Charlotte's Web. We will be exploring the major themes of friendship and life cycles. We will be looking at what friendship is, how friendships can be different, and how friends treat others. We are also reading the journals and diaries of several colonists and comparing their experiences. I feel it is important for students to read first-hand accounts of what life was like during that time period.



THIRD GRADE

Science

The Biolab is up and running! **Third Graders** have begun their first experiments including observing how the presence of phosphates in soil effects seed germination, hydroponic seed germination, examining soil samples, and much more. **Third Graders** are concentrating on the science skills such as recording observations, measurement and comparison of data, etc. In the coming weeks we will explore the effects of salt on plant growth, examine how vermiculture changes the chemistry of compost as well as identifying the

adaptations made by plants in varying habitats. The children are really excited about the Biolab and each day they come up with more questions to answer!

Math

In math the **Third Grade** is discovering the wonderful world of fractions. They are practicing finding the Greatest Common Factors and the Least Common Multiples. They know how to add and subtract fractions with like denominators and are just now learning how to add and subtract fractions with unlike denominators. They have been introduced to the concept of improper fractions and how to change them into mixed numerals. So we are moving along!

Social Studies

Third Graders are continuing their study of ancient Asia by focusing on Japan. Concepts revolve around how people organize themselves, and the 3rd grade case study of Japan includes the intricate and sometimes precarious relationships between daimyos, samurai, and the shogun. Daimyos controlled

large tracts of land as well as private armies made up of samurai ("those who served"). Samurai controlled the peasant population and were bound by bushido, the samurai code of honor, to their daimyos. Students will learn that human-generated social ordering systems have a great influence on both government and culture.

Language Arts

In Language Arts, students will continue their genre study of folklore with American tall tales including Paul Bunyan, Pecos Bill, and John Henry. These stories give fantastical explanations for various phenomena using exaggerated detail that students enjoy. Students are also becoming experts at identifying the parts of speech in Social Studies texts. Being able to identify nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives allow students to begin to understand the function of words and how they are joined together to produce meaningful communication. It is also a big help when it comes to learning the grammar of foreign languages.

FOURTH GRADE

Science

The Biolab is up and running! Our brilliant **Fourth Graders** have begun their initial experiments including studying the influence of acid rain on plant propagation, how acidic soil effects plant growth, and determining pH levels and primary chemical compounds in soil samples in addition to documenting the experiments. In the coming weeks we will examine the effects of soil buffering (through limestone), set up a hydroponic mini-farm and compare the differences to traditional farming, as well as testing the theory of global warming and its effects on plants and insects. It is my intention to develop a permanent classroom lab in which the students can run their own experiments and graph and share their results. In time we will even write articles to explain our findings, just like adult scientists do. The children are really excited about the Biolab and each day they come up with more questions to answer!

Math

The **Fourth Graders** are finishing up their unit on the addition and subtraction of fractions with like and unlike denominators and next up will be multiplying and dividing fractions. They have become quite good at identifying prime and composite numbers and determining the GCF and the LCM. It is vitally important to have a good, solid understanding of the math facts in order to be successful in this endeavor. Each week we practice with two-minute drills in order to become more proficient. Many of the children need practice with addition and subtraction facts still, though they are getting better with multiplication and division, especially with the lower numbers. It would benefit them to practice at home.

Social Studies

Students are applying their knowledge of the Middle Ages to understand how the Renaissance came about. Events such as the Black Plague, the invention of the printing press, and the onset of exploration to the New World all assisted in changing the way people saw themselves and the world they lived in. Students will learn that western civilization as we know it has its roots in this amazing time period where the arts and sciences of ancient Greece and Rome found new application in Europe.

Language Arts

In Language Arts, students are continuing their study of Shakespeare by reading "Twelfth Night". Like many of Shakespeare's comedies, this one is built around mistaken identities and complicated subplots. The joy and pain of love is a recurring theme in the play - one that students are becoming increasingly more interested in. They are also entertained by the theme of illusion and reality that is apparent on many levels.



Noticias en Español

Kindergarten

We are working on family members; we will start learning and practicing sea animal words, such as *el delfin* (the dolphin), *la ballena* (the whale), *el conejo* (the rabbit), etc; the students will write a book containing short sentences using the words they have learned and relating them with the sea animal names.

First Grade

This month we will start using "action" words, such as *comer* (to eat), *hablar* (to talk), *caminar* (to walk) and using them with the expression *me gusta* (I like), *no me gusta* (I do not like), *quiero* (I want), *puedo* (I can, I am able to). We will continue working with the mini-book related with this action-word topic.

Second Grade

The students will start learning the vocabulary related with food and using expressions with what they eat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. They will write a book about this topic. We will review expressions learned last month, such as *me gusta* (I like), *no me gusta* (I do not like), etc.

Third Grade

We will begin learning about food words and food-based expressions as well as the places we go to buy and order the food. We will also work on the pyramid food and its different layers. We will read "*Voy al supermercado con mi abuela*" (I am going to the supermarket with my grandmother), a short story of a kid who goes to the supermarket with his grandmother and asks her to buy him what he wants to eat.

Fourth Grade

A visit to Colombia has been planned this month; we will learn about the Colombian culture; we will also start talking about the different sport activities; what sport activities they like using new adjectives that in contrast with English have gender and number.

Fifth Grade

We will continue working on the present tense of verbs ending *-ar* and *-er*; we will learn adjectives that illustrate objects in Spanish; we will also work on reading comprehension of a story entitled "*El cuento del gato*"; then the students will have to write their own story.

Sixth Grade

The students will begin working with the plural form of nouns and adjectives as well as the present tense of verbs ending in *er*, such as *comprender*, *ver*, *leer*, *recoger* etc. They will also learn the use double pronouns, for example *Juan and yo* (Juan and I) are double pronouns that can be replaced by *nosotros* (we). The students will be asked to compare and contrast eating customs in Spanish countries and the United States.

Seventh Grade

We start working on home activities; the students are asked *¿Que haces en la casa?* (what do you do at home?); the students will be introduced on chore-related vocabulary and the forms *poner* (to put, to place, to set) and *hacer* (to make, to do) follow by the pattern of other *-er* verbs in all except the *yo* forms, *pongo*, *hago*. They will also learn the verbs ending in *-ir*.

Eighth Grade

The students will learn the preterite tense of verbs ending in *-er* and *-ir* to tell what happened in the past. We will continue working on the stem-changing verbs, such as *poder* (can, to be able to), *pensar* (to think), *pedir* (to ask), etc. We will be working on the reading of *Chilemania*, a description of the Chile ingredient in the Mexican food.

FIFTH GRADE

Language Arts

Classic literature at this level requires a re-examination of beloved fairy tales. Many students either have little memory of their early introduction to the tales or know only Disney versions. It is often a shock for students when they read the original Brothers Grimm or Hans Christian Anderson stories. Most notable, for example, is the *Cinderella* story in which the step-sisters have their eyes eaten out by birds for having looked on Cinderella with jealousy.

The language in these tales is part of our culture and important for students to learn. The phrases we use daily refer to these tales. “The Emperor’s New Clothes”, “The Goose that Laid the Golden Egg”, “a rags-to-riches tale”, have become part of our daily conversations in our descriptions.

While learning these tales, students are being introduced to the art of writing a summary. This is a very difficult task that requires few words and the ability to extract a main idea from many details. Students are enjoying the exercises that aim to limit the number of words used and yet tell a story fully.

Social Studies

In **Fifth Grade** we wrapped up our studies of medieval cartography with a research project and computer slide show presentation. Each student focused on one place Marco Polo was purported to have visited, and examined the culture of that area to present to the class. We also searched for evidence of Marco Polo's influence on later European explorers, such as the dog-eared copy of Marco Polo's journeys that Columbus owned. The next maps we examine will illustrate the various claims European powers staked out in the New World and their reasons for doing so, and the difficulties they faced in establishing permanent settlements.

SIXTH GRADE

Language Arts

The study of classic literature at this level requires an exciting move from a concrete understanding of a good or exciting tale, and begins to look at the many different layers a story might have. The classic short story is the core of this study.

There are surprise endings in O. Henry’s tales of *The Gift of the Magi*, *The Last Leaf*, *The Furnished Room*, and *The Ransom of Red Chief*. But, there are also different layers to these stories that allow students to see that authors often have something to say about life and how to live it. Students are also reading *The Necklace* and *My Uncle Jules*, stories by Guy de Maupassant. Edgar Allen Poe, O. Henry, and de Maupassant will be used as models for art of good writing.

Work on writing essays and developing a point of view will continue through the end of the year. This kind of writing demands discipline and focus, a challenge for all young writers.

Social Studies

We’re finishing up our unit on the Saami reindeer herders of Scandinavia, with each student trying to maintain a herd in the face of modern encroachments like hydroelectric dams, superhighways and nuclear fallout from the Chernobyl disaster. Next we’ll focus on the Aborigines of Australia and the Maori of New Zealand. We’ll use movies like *Whale Rider* and *Rabbit Proof Fence* to take a look at the pressures these cultures have faced and are still facing. We’ll also examine the recent concessions that Aborigines have won from the Australian government. We’ll end our study of indigenous cultures with a look at the drafting of the United Nations’ Indigenous Bill of Rights.

SEVENTH GRADE

Language Arts

Our **7th Graders** are becoming quite adept at analyzing literature. They’ve written one essay examining the psychology of Edgar Allen Poe’s “The Telltale Heart,” and another discussing the role of ancient Greek and Hebrew traditions as reflected in the contemporary farming community portrayed in Shirley Jackson’s “The Lottery.” Now we are reading Ray Bradbury’s “The Veldt” and will be ferreting out what it has to say about a future that is both dystopian on a societal level and dysfunctional on a family level.

Social Studies

Our **7th Grade** class is finishing up a unit on the Mongols. In our next unit we’ll study the concept of feudalism and how it was necessitated by the horrendous attacks of groups like the Mongols and the Vikings. We’ll even simulate a little feudalism of our own as we divide the classroom into petty fiefdoms and struggle with the intricacies of intertwined loyalties when our fiefdoms must come to each others’ defense. Finally we’ll see how trade routes opened by the Mongols allowed a wealthy merchant class to develop and signaled feudalism’s slow dissipation.



EIGHTH GRADE

Language Arts

Our 8th Graders are writing process essays and will be working to turn them into oral presentations with style. This is a good chance for them to move beyond the standard essay format. The process essay does have a clear-cut structure, but it allows for more freedom of development and expression than a typical 5-paragraph theme. In fact, to avoid sounding dry and dull, students must work to find their authorial "voice" and bring life to what would otherwise be rote processes. This will help them when they move their processes into the arena of oral presentation, in which a live audience must be engaged as well as informed.

Social Studies

In **Eighth Grader** Social Studies we have been examining the varied viewpoints people held toward slavery in the years leading up to the American Civil War. We have examined historical news articles and anecdotal evidence of the mid 1800's as a basis for written and classroom discussions of the moral, legal, and economical justifications of slavery. We will follow this up by examining slave narratives to compare with the views of the white slaveholders and abolitionists. Moving forward we will examine Lincoln's views on equality and the American Union.

MATHEMATICS

On Saturday February 28, five students from New School participated in MATHCOUNTS. MATHCOUNTS is a competition sponsored by the Florida Engineering Society and the girls did a great job. Representing NSP were Maddi Hill, Monica Joyce, Patricia Rivera, Ana Rodriguez and Christina Fishers.

In preparation for MATHCOUNTS, the Algebra students just finished a chapter on radicals. They learned how to simplify them, rationalize their denominators, perform all operations with them and solve equations that contain them. Now they will finish the year solving systems of equations in several different ways. The Pre-Algebra students have been focusing on solving more difficult equations and inequalities. The **Sixth Graders** are still learning Geometry, focusing now on finding the area and perimeter of different shapes. The **Fifth Graders** have just finished learning about the American and Metric systems of measurement. They all decided that the Metric System is much easier to learn and to remember.

COMPUTERS

In computer classes **Kindergartners** have been using online games to reinforce addition and subtraction skills, letter and sound recognition, and fine motor skills. **First Graders** have made progress with typing home row keys. **Second** through **Sixth Graders** continue to improve their typing skills with short drills. **Second** through **Fourth Graders** practice locating information on the Internet and transferring it to a document, formatting their notes and attributing their sources. The **Sixth** and **Seventh Graders** are being introduced to the world of coding HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language) documents, more with the hopes of gaining a basic understanding of the detail-oriented nature of coding and computer programming. The **Eighth Graders** have been *playing* with spread sheets and manipulating data collected from an online database of U.S. census data from the antebellum period, comparing free and slave populations in the North and South.



COACH'S CORNER

Physical Education

Our "Wear Red for Women" campaign raised \$210. Which helped in exceeding our Jump Rope for Heart goal by raising a total of \$6148. Students SLIMED Coach" at the Pep Rally with great enthusiasm. On behalf of the AHA New School Prep again gives our heartfelt thanks to all who supported this great cause.



President's Fitness Council Test is approaching for grades 3-8th. Starting on March 3rd we will test their flexibility, strength and endurance.

Athletics

Tennis and Track season are upon us and our athletes have been training very hard. Check out our schedules on line and stop by a match or meet and root for your favorite Knight.