



Roger Sherman Elementary

November 2009

Principal's Corner

L. Moss

We have had a busy beginning of the year. I have enjoyed meeting the students of Roger Sherman and their families. The Staff and I have focused on preparing an instructional program to meet the needs of all learners. As a Reading First School, we have analyzed data for every child and worked to plan for each individual's needs. There have been many meetings where Staff has the opportunity to share best practice in teaching with each other.

I have enjoyed meeting parents at the TPT meetings, at school functions and in parent conferences. Thank you for your support and for all you do to make our school a special place for our students.

During the next month, you will have the opportunity to meet with your child's teacher at parent conferences. WE look forward to seeing you there! If you have any questions about your child's educational program, please call your child's teacher at any time. I look forward to seeing you during conference week!



Pre-K and Kindergarten

S. Conway, M. Rarey,
K. Nitkowski, R. Nutcher

The preschool classes have been studying all about our bodies this month. It has coordinated with our study of letter Mm for Me, and letter Ff for Feelings. We are learning lots of new vocabulary such as: spine, nostrils, and taste buds. We have learned how to keep our bodies healthy and about visits to the doctor and dentist. We have done lots of experimenting with our 5 senses using our listening ears to determine matching sounds, using our smelling nose to figure out different smells, and using only our sense of touch to identify mystery objects inside a "touch box". We have talked about our feelings and appropriate ways of handling the more uncomfortable ones like anger and sadness. This went along very well with our Second Step lessons about how to identify our own feelings as well as those of others. Mrs. Conway and Mrs. Rarey are looking forward to meeting with all the parents at parent/teacher conferences after Thanksgiving to talk about all the wonderful things the children have been learning.



Julianna Curtis' mom was a brave patient while being taken care of by Doctors Gurshan, Ilannis, and Cody. In the background: Dr. Julianna Torres examines a baby's x-ray.

In Kindergarten we are implementing our reading strategies in guided reading groups. We have encouraged children to 'check the picture' and 'get their mouth ready' when they come across a word that they do not know. In doing this, comprehension and detection of unknown words is aided. We still encourage the use of browser boxes at home and to have children point to the words as they are reading to you so they are not deleting or adding words.

In mathematics, we have been working on the numbers 4, 5, and 6, and more verses less. Students have had the opportunity to use various manipulatives to understand these numbers and concepts. We have been reading many books that involve food, so in writing we have been concentrating on writing recipes. We have been listing

ingredients and listing steps to follow. Mrs. Nitkowski's class will be using their applesauce recipe that they created in class to make applesauce before Thanksgiving.

First Grade

A. Weaver, W. McKay,
B. St. John, K. Kalber

50 school days and counting by 2's, 5's and 10's! Just ask us what numbers are odd or even and we will be glad to tell you. We are practicing fast facts everyday and we are getting better and better. We are trying to do 25 facts in five minutes. A little extra practice at home would help some of us get up to speed.

We completed our writing prompts about playing with our friend and the teachers will be sharing them with the parents as they come in for report card conferences. We tried our best and were surprised at how many sentences we could write on a topic.

Mrs. Kalber's class has been very busy during the month of November. First the animals escaped from the classroom and caused all sorts of problems in the school and then there was the report of bats seen in her room. What will be next?

Mrs. St. John challenged her students to read for the March of Dimes and is hoping that many of them are completing their reading at home and writing down the books that they have read. The list will be due soon.

Parents, be sure to check out *Tumblebooks* on the school web sight. It's really fun to read the books along with the story teller and it helps us with our fluency as we read.

Second Grade

K. Baransky, A. Jensen,
J. Crouse, A. Sharnick

In Language Arts we have continued to work with non-fiction elements, such as captions, headings, table of contents, and have practiced listing details, and summarizing information using the non-fiction text. Students have been focusing on locating information in the non-fiction texts and being able to express it in their own words. Students really enjoyed learning about frogs and other amphibians in Science. In Social Studies students have been learning about maps and map features. Students have been expected to use a map key to tell about their map.

During math we have been working on money and practicing our math facts. Students used pennies, nickels, and dimes to make and count different coin combinations. Students need to be able to identify how much those coins are worth and be able to count mixed groups of coins. You can help your child out at home having them practice counting some of your coins that you get in change or have around the house. Students have also been practicing their addition and subtraction math facts by taking math fact quizzes where students are given 3

minutes to answer as many math equations as possible accurately. By the end of second grade it is expected that all students know the math facts up to 18 quickly, without using their fingers to find the answer. Please continue to have your student practice their addition and subtraction math facts at home.

Third Grade

B. Higley, A. Bryers,
K. Wilson, B. Cabell

During the month of November, third graders continued to learn about **character traits**. Students are learning how to prove or show evidence that someone has a physical or personality trait. Sometimes students have to "***infer***." Ask your child what this means. In addition, students learned about **word relationships**. Request your child to define a **synonym**, **antonym**, and **homonym** for you. You'll be pleasantly surprised! Students read three stories from their anthology... *Balto, the Dog Who Saved Nome, Little Grunt and the Big Egg, and Rosie, a Visiting Dog's Story*.

For math, students are practicing their basic facts. We want to see how quickly they can add and subtract numbers in three minutes. Can you believe that some students are completing 40 facts within three minutes? **WOW!** Have your child practice his/her basic facts (up to 18) at home. It will strengthen their math skills. Children are learning **double**

digit and **triple digit subtraction** with regrouping too. This can be difficult for some of us!

In the area of writing, students are composing **fictional narratives**. They need to include all the story elements. We have been teaching third graders to **"hook"** their readers by writing a **Bang of a Beginning**. We want students to include verbs, adverbs, adjectives, and sensory words in their writing. Doing this will help the reader create a mental image of the story. Additionally, one important ingredient that students need to use when writing fictional stories is **IMAGINATION**.

During November, Mrs. Higley's class created **turkeys** with apples and gumdrops. This was their PBS activity.

Miss Wilson's class is working toward a **Pajama Day** for Wednesday, November 25th.

When children read at home, they should be applying a variety of reading strategies to decode longer words. **Remind them to:** Look for *word parts/syllables/chunks*. This strategy has been taught at school and should be used at home! Make sure your child reads every night.

Remember... conferences are Tuesday, December 1st, Wednesday, December 2nd, and Thursday, December 3rd. Your child's teacher is looking forward to every conference. PLEASE be on time as every conference is only 15 minutes long!

Fourth Grade

A. DiGennaro, K. Fedora, F. Wagner

Over the last month, a lot of exciting things have been going on in fourth grade. Students visited with Representative Chris Donovan in the House of Representatives while visiting the state capital.



Mrs. Fedora and Mr. DiGennaro's classes at the state capital.

Students also had a chance to participate in the costume parade, which was a PBS reward. Students dressed in school appropriate costumes and marched around school grounds and through the building. It was amazing to see all of the creative costumes students thought up!

In Math, students have recently completed units on tables and graphs. Stop by the fourth grade hallway and check out the huge bar graph that Mr. DiGennaro's class made. They polled the entire school, hoping to find out students' favorite ice cream

flavors. Looks like chocolate chip cookie dough won by a large margin! Students are currently working on numeric and geometric patterns. Next, we will begin a unit on multiplication. It is very important that students practice their math facts at home on a regular basis. This will really help them both currently in math as well as in their future. The quicker students can recall their facts, the more time they have to spend on the rest of the problem.

You may also hear fourth graders discussing character traits. We are striving to identify appropriate character traits and personality descriptions for characters that we read about. Students are looking back into the text to find two pieces of evidence to support the chosen trait. We will continue to focus on this into next month.

Fifth Grade

S. Owen, A. Abbott, R. Tellez

The students in the fifth grade classes have been working really hard on mastering all of their math facts. Daily practice drills have increased their speed and accuracy. Many of the students have put personal challenges on themselves to continue making growth on a daily basis. All successes are celebrated daily. We have worked our way through addition, subtraction, multiplication and division this term. The students (and the teachers) are looking forward to taking a break from

computation to work on upcoming units on geometry, graphing, and fractions.

As a grade level, we have been practicing how to summarize what we read effectively, and also how to utilize text features to increase our comprehension. Students have been working on determining the importance of ideas, choosing between the facts that are "need to know" versus those facts that are "nice to know". We have looked at multiple examples of text features including charts, diagrams, tables, timelines, etc. The students have begun to realize that those visuals are necessary in order to comprehend what is being read.

Fifth grade students want to be star readers! We have been documenting what we are reading, and how long we are reading, in honor of the March of Dimes. Students have found family members and friends to pledge money for the March of Dimes. There is a pretty serious competition to see which fifth grade class can read the most books and read for the longest time, for the month of November. We all want to read to raise money for the March of Dimes to help save premature babies.

The fifth grade classes will be holding a basket raffle fundraiser during conference week. Each of the classes was assigned a theme for their basket. Miss Abbott's class is working on a chocolate filled basket. Mrs. Owen's class is

looking to fill their basket with books and games. Mrs. Tellez's class is creating a coffee/tea basket. We need more support! The money raised from this event will go towards fifth grade activities this year! New donations are being welcomed every day, up until the Thanksgiving break. Tickets for the baskets will be sold during conference week. Please help us raise money for our fifth grade students!

We are looking forward to seeing parents on December 1, 2, and 3, for conferences. We can't wait to share all the wonderful work and progress your child has been making this first term.

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday and we will see you in December!

PBS

PBS Team



Our October PBS costume parade activity was a huge success.



Falon and Gillian during the parade.



Giovangy and Kenny during the parade.

Our November PBS activity is a Pow-Wow celebration of Native American crafts, food, and games. Students who choose to participate paid 30 of their yellow tickets to attend. Students can make a sand art picture, play some Native American games and learn more about the Native Americans.

We are really focusing on being respectful to others and how to deal with frustration and anger this month. All classes had a lesson by a PBS team member about how to deal with feeling angry or frustrated at school. Students reviewed what steps to take to calm themselves down if they were to feel these emotions at school. Students are to: 1) Recognize that they are getting angry, 2) Silently calm themselves, 3) Think about how they can respectfully solve the situation, 4) Use a strategy, 5) Ask themselves, "Did it work?" Remember our three main expectations: Respect for Self, Respect for Others, and Respect for School. Don't forget to review with your child how to show positive behaviors at school.

Our December PBS activity is coming up soon! We will be having a Holiday Store again this year. Please consider donating small gift items that students can purchase with their yellow Sherman Star tickets. Remember that students earn these tickets for showing positive behavior at school. Students have been saving up their tickets for this activity and with your support and donations we know that it will be a success!

MLT, Art, Music, Media, PE

M. Muir, M. Ferazzi, B. Kaplan,
B. Starrett, K. Davis, B. Poggio



Grade 1 has now learned all about **free form** shapes and how we use them when we draw. We are still practicing to increase our fine motor skills – lots of tracing and cutting. Students drew a **free form** shape on oak tag, cut it out, and then traced it in 4 sections on another piece of paper, using markers to create a **pattern** of color. We then traced our hand 4 times on 2 different colors of paper, cut the hands out, and glued them on another piece of paper, again creating a **pattern** of color. Our most recent lesson combined both **geometric** and **free form** shapes to create a turkey.

Grade 2 is continuing to work on their chameleons and they are just about completed. We began by discussing what we already knew about chameleons. After reading a non-fiction book about chameleons, we discussed what we learned. Students then had to trace a chameleon on paper and cut it out. This was no easy task and you will understand why when you see the chameleon. We re-read Eric Carle's **The Mixed Up Chameleon** and talked about how he creates his art work. We are using the technique of **collage** to complete our chameleon.

Grade 3 is now able to identify a **still life** as a piece of art work that shows an arrangement of non-moving objects. We arranged a **still life** in class, making sure that we overlapped our objects. After drawing their still life, students have the choice of adding color with chalk pastels or oil pastels.

Grade 4 is working hard on the concept of design, first by creating a design using **geometric** shapes, and now by creating a design using **free form** shapes. Both designs also incorporated creating a **pattern**.

Grade 5 has begun yet another complex lesson involving **1-point perspective**. They are doing fabulous and I am so proud of them! Students are now able to identify and define **perspective**, **horizon line**, **vanishing point** and **1-point perspective**. Although we are

just practicing right now, students will have the choice of creating a landscape or a city scene using **1-point perspective**.



Internet Safety is an important component of safe computer usage. In MLT, there have been age appropriate lessons to guide students in what information they should be exploring or sending out over the Internet. However, parent guidance in this area is essential. Just as you talk to your child about what to do if someone asks for information over the telephone, or if a stranger appears at the door, children need to understand that the Internet has potential dangers. You need to set guidelines with your children about what they can share, and when they need to come to you for permission before going onto a site. If you develop this routine early, it will just become part of the culture of your home. You can establish a list of appropriate sites that your child can visit, just like you set boundaries for how far your child can walk from the house without an adult. Information has come home with your child, but if you want to check out the site for yourself, please go to <http://www.cybersmartcurriculum.org/>

There are several other sites which look at these issues.

You can preview them and see if they have information that you want to share with your child also. Just as you know that most places and people are safe for your child, most of the internet has wonderful activities for children. However, being proactive, and letting your child know that they need in order to develop a sense of what is appropriate is important. We actively do this in school, and the students are aware of the guidelines in this setting, but as in all things, you are your child's best teacher. Clearly, computers are a significant part of the life that our children are entering, and as with all life skills, we need to guide them in developing the tools with which to deal with them.



Mrs. Kaplan is practicing songs with her Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 classes preparing them for a concert, "Winter's in the Air" which will be held on Wednesday, December 17. The AM Kindergarten will perform at 9:30 & the PM Kindergarten classes will sing at 1:30. Grades 1 & 2 will perform at 9:30 AM & 1:30 PM.

Volunteer Information

**B. Higley, B. Poggio,
N. Murray, A. Edson**

Any questions about the Volunteer Program can be directed to Mrs. Edson at (203) 238 - 1286.



TPT

Executive Board

**Dawn McCarthy (President)
Ashley Ramos (Secretary)
Carrie Milslagle (Treasurer)**

Sign up to be a member of the TPT. It is only \$3.00 per family. You can send in a note to your child's teacher to receive another form for membership.



From the Nurse's Office

Please feel free to call the nurse's office with any questions. 203 - 639 - 5533.



Math Minute

The Roger Sherman Math Team

For the month of December Kindergarten will be continuing to learn about money and also working on the numbers **6** and **7**. Students in grade 1 will be learning subtraction strategies during December as well as exploring Place Value in numbers. Second graders will continue through the month practicing adding 2-digit numbers. In third grade, students will be

studying multiplication and relating multiplication to division. Third graders are expected to know multiplying by 0, 1, 2, 5 and 10 by the end of the year. Fourth grade will be continuing to master all their multiplication facts 0-12. Fourth grade will begin basic division facts and finish with month by learning about probability. In fifth grade, the focus of study includes geometry and pictorial representations of fractions. Students in grades 1-5 are learning their facts and still need practice to master them. Many students will benefit from extra practice of their facts at home. Parents are encouraged to assist their children with basic facts. Basic facts are the building blocks to higher level operation (add, subtract, multiply, divide) practice. Flash cards and many websites are great ways for students to improve their recall of facts.

Here are a few websites to try:
<http://www.mathfactcafe.com/>
<http://www.wildmath.com/>
<http://www.aplusmath.com/>



This newsletter brought to you by the Public Relations Committee of Roger Sherman School.