

February Newsletter

Dear Parents,

- January Highlights -

Our New Year and new month began with our big **trip to the California Academy of Sciences** to see and better understand the uniqueness of our particular part of the earth, Northern California, and why there are so many "Giants of Land and Sea" here. Experiencing what the 1906 and 1989 earthquakes actually felt like, seeing the skeleton of the enormous blue whale stretched out above you, walking through dense fog, standing next to a cross-cut from the trunk of a giant redwood and realizing how much bigger it is than you - that would make for a pretty awesome trip, which it did. But it turned out that that was simply not enough to satisfy all the very inquisitive Rm 5 minds because they wanted to visit *everything!* And we did. Coral reefs, tide pools, a very humid rainforest, a swamp, penguins, sting rays, and on and on. Even the most reluctant writers wrote pages in their journals the next day reflecting back on their experiences. Thank you so much to all the parents who accompanied us and made a trip like this possible.

This past month our **Cultural Studies** have been a very looked-forward-to part of our day. **Botany** saw the continuation of our **study of stems** - both those we can see above ground, and those special ones that live underground. Children have been making sections to add on to the 3 types of **aerial stems** on our wall - erect, climbing, and crawling - and we will see where they all end up. Then a most exciting day happened last week when Sebastian announced he had checked our planter boxes, and he saw some of the **underground stems** we'd all planted earlier poking up through the soil! Their progress is being watched carefully each day as we await the glorious day we see tulips and daffodils. Outdoors, though, is not the only place where something is growing. We "planted" (in a bowl of rocks with water) Paper White Narcissus bulbs at one of our windows. Within a week roots were visible among the rocks and leaves began to shoot up from the bulbs which became markedly taller every day. We began taking a daily measurement and discovered growth of about 1 inch every 24 hours! A number of lovely white flowers have now opened up, and needless to say, everyone is very excited. We will keep you posted.

Who would have thought all this excitement from an odd shaped brown stem that prefers to be unseen...

Our other major study has been of the **Egyptian Civilization**. We have become steeped in pyramids, hieroglyphics, and pharaohs, just to name a few. The children have really taken to these activities and discussions. Next week we will cap off our study with an "Egyptian Feast" of barley, flatbread, peas, dates, and real Egyptian chamomile tea. You might want to include any of the above in an upcoming meal at home. For a terrific family weekend excursion, you can visit the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum in San Jose (off 880 near the airport). It houses the largest collection of Egyptian artifacts in the U.S. besides those in New York and the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. Visitors can even go into a life-size replica of an Egyptian tomb. Visit their website for more information.

Our main January writing project has been our **Personal Timelines**, telling about an important event from each year of our lives. We now need only to make corrections, and then the Years will become joined into one whole Lifetime. We'll have these on display for a number of days so everyone can read and learn even more about each other. Then you will be able to enjoy them too - a real keepsake. Thank you so much for sending all the information so they could create this work.

In **Poetry**, we began our winter poem, *Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening* by **Robert Frost**. It's a longer and more challenging poem, but already more than half the class has memorized it and are now most anxious to get on to the art part of it.

- February Events -

February is such a short month, but so much goes on. In **Botany** as branches start to blossom, we will study **buds**. We have already noticed the beautiful white flowering pear blossoms out our window along Gading Rd. You and your child can watch their progress as you exit our parking lot each day.

In **Math**, we will be adding a new Friday assignment - a worksheet of **Word Problems**. It's one thing to be able to add, subtract, and multiply, but quite another to be able to apply that skill to specific concrete situations. The math is kept very simple, but we emphasize that the format is what is essential now. Then as the

problems become more complex, the children will know just how to proceed. The 2nd Semester math homework book for 3rds will also focus on Word Problems.

In **Language** we will move on to new parts of speech and learn the Montessori grammar symbols that go with them. Seconds will learn **Verbs** and Thirds will learn **Adverbs**. After these lessons, they should begin marking those parts of speech in their Spelling homework sentences.

Asian Lunar New Year, 4717 Year of the Pig, begins on February 5th, and our room will become quite festive-looking with many artifacts from China. We will be making paper lanterns for our desks so the good spirits will find their way to them. A big dragon will hang from our ceiling to scare away any evil spirits. This should ensure a great semester ahead! We will also begin our observance of these special days with our **trip to the Fortune Cookie Factory**. It is great fun to discover how they get the fortunes into those cookies, and to also taste them when they are still warm. Of course everyone will be looking forward to the Big Event, the **Dragon Parade!** We will, as always, be the "noisy" end of the kindergarteners' long Dragon (wear red on that day if you can). Also, as has become our tradition, everyone is looking forward to the **Chinese Luncheon** which we'll have in the Social Hall afterwards. It will take place on Friday, February 15th. The Lunar New Year Parade in San Francisco will be Saturday, February 16th and is always broadcast live on KTVU Channel 2 from 6 to 8 p.m. If you're home, we know your child would enjoy watching. Could be a Chinese take-out dinner night!

Our other always-looked-forward-to event will be our **Valentine's Party on Thursday, February 14th**. On this day, the children should bring a valentine addressed to each child in the class. Attached to this newsletter will be a list of all the children's names. After passing out our Valentines, we will enjoy some valentine treats. *If you would like to send something, please let us know ahead of time so we can coordinate.* The children may have free dress on that day if they wear red, white, pink, purple, or something with hearts on it. Of course it's always ok to just wear your uniform... We will also have some special writing projects connected with Valentine's Day.

Our literature and library areas will focus on **Black History Month** with many books and stories about important individuals in the Civil Rights Movement and also African American scientists, explorers, and in particular the beautiful poems of Langston Hughes.

To honor **George Washington**, we will be treated to a special presentation about our first president and the early days of our country done by David Zimring, a professor of US History (and Jo's son-in-law). Last year he came and gave a terrific talk/"show" on Abraham Lincoln which everyone greatly enjoyed, so we are looking forward to his visit once again.

Our first semester has now come to a close. With that, you have received your child's **Report Card** and work samples. We hope you look carefully at the *Criteria for Evaluation* that was enclosed with the Report Card so that you can better understand why each grade was given. As we evaluate your child's work, behavior, and study habits, these are the questions we ask ourselves before we decide upon the grades. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Report Card, please contact us. We would like the Report Cards back by Monday, Feb. 11th. The work sent home you may keep except for the current Math Operations book, Timed Test record sheets, Journal, and Language book. If any of you would like to come for an observation visit to further help you know just what your child is doing, we would be happy to have you. Please contact us so that we can schedule a mutually convenient time.

Sincerely,

Mary Anne and Toni

Calendar: (hold on to your hat!)

Thursday, Feb. 7 - field trip to the Fortune Cookie Factory

Friday, Feb. 8 thru end of month - Sharing - bring a photo of someone you love
(we'll have them on display for February);
Book Orders due

Monday, Feb. 11th - Semester Report Cards due back

Tuesday, Feb. 12th - Orders and money due for Chinese Luncheon;
Observing Abraham Lincoln's birthday (free dress if you
wear red, white, and blue or something with a flag on it)

Tuesday, Feb. 14th - Valentine's Day Party
(free dress if you wear red, white, pink, purple, or something
with hearts on it)

Friday, Feb. 15th - Chinese Lunar New Year Celebration, 4717 Year of the Pig
Dragon Parade 11:30 a.m. in the courtyard,
Chinese Luncheon immediately following in the Social Hall
(free dress if you wear red);

Monday, Feb. 18th - Presidents Day - no school and no Day Care

Thursday, Feb. 21st - President Washington (Mr. David Zimring) comes to visit

Friday, Feb. 22nd - Observing George Washington's birthday (free dress if you
wear red, white, and blue or something with a flag on it)

Please have your child bring a Valentine addressed to each of the following children on Thursday, February 14th

Andrei An

Kishan Maharaj

Alivia Black

Melody McDowell

Aarush Chandra

Lucas Mitchell

Nixon del Rosario

Logan Pereur

Mehak Dhindsa

David Pimentel

Jayden Feldstein

Shyla Reddy

Betty Ghirmay

Joy Rodriguez

Giancarlo Guerra

Fiona Saavedra

Elias Gutfeld

Isaiah Tomas

Margaret Kennedy

Sebastian Vasquez

Marlee Maghanoy

Abigail Voong