



Zach working on the addition strip board

Classroom News

I just finished reading "Charlotte's Web" to the afternoon children. I took a tissue with me to group because I know myself. I could barely get through the final part when Wilbur discovers that three of Charlotte's daughters will stay behind with him in the barn cellar to live out their days. It goes on to say that although generations of Charlotte's descendants will be his friends throughout his long porcine life, none will ever take the special place that Charlotte will forever have in Wilbur's heart. That resonates especially with me today because that is how I feel about my beloved dog, Sophie. I have other pets and I will again adopt a dog, probably soon, but Sophie was unforgettably dear. I told the children that if one can read the same book year after year, dozens of times and it still arouses strong feelings, then that must be very fine writing. I do believe that Charlotte's Web is one of my favorite books and E.B. White must be one of my favorite authors. I remember "Stuart Little" as being wonderful, also.

As you know, we are studying Mexico. Coincidentally, when we began the unit, President Obama was paying his first state visit to the Mexican president, Enrique Pena Nieto. I told the kids that our president was thanking their president for being one of our most important trade partners. Mexico imports our beef, potatoes, toys, automobiles and interestingly, lots of Tabasco sauce, which is amusing considering how much hot sauce they produce themselves. I explained that our country needs other countries to buy our stuff so that we can make money just as our

school needed people to buy things at our auction so we could make money. This flies in the face of earlier lessons we have given about the importance of buying things made locally, but nobody called me on it. Likewise, nobody challenged me when I got my facts mixed up regarding the volcano Popocatepetl that was erupting around 40 miles from Mexico City and the

earthquake that struck 200 miles away, but was felt in the city itself. I mistakenly entwined the two geological events when they were, in fact, separate. I will correct myself at the next group I lead. It's a good example to set for the children of possessing the famous Montessori "friendliness with error" and it keeps me humble. The news of the volcano prompted some of the children to tell the group how they could tell an ordinary mountain from an active

volcano! Evidently, to the children, all mountains are white and volcanoes are black. Mountains are cold and volcanoes are hot and volcanoes have a crater whereas mere mountains do not. So there you have it!

My mother, who will be 77 in June, just returned from bumming around the Yucatan Peninsula for 2 months with a friend, so she had many stories to tell. You know how recently returned travelers find ways of inserting their experiences into the most unrelated discussions! She is so eager to share tales of her adventures and then I pass them on to the children. One thing that struck her was how well-behaved the children were in public, just as she observed the children in Ecuador to be when she travelled there the previous winter. They do not cry, fuss or whine. They



Cian working on writing with Doni



sit quietly while the adults gossip. They also are carried about on their mama's backs for several years longer than most of our kids are. She also observed that most homes are so small and simple as to not have a full kitchen and no refrigeration nor much room for storage. People buy already prepared foods from street vendors as a matter of course for their family meals. This resulted in a lot of plastic trash being dumped here and there and flying about in the wind. That is terrible, of course, but I can totally get on board with the take-out!

We have regaled the children with tales of the Mayans and the Spanish Conquistadors and the influence of the Spanish culture. Prior to reading "Ferdinand," written by Munro Leaf back in 1936 (a very sweet story about a bull who would rather smell flowers than fight) I was very heavy-handed about the cruelty of bull-fighting, so I have to give up any pretense of looking at other cultures objectively and without judgment, I guess. I haven't yet told the kids about the villages my mother visited where the Mayan bloodline was still very visible in the flatter features, shorter stature and longer arms of the inhabitants. She was, incidentally, treated warmly and like a favorite aunt wherever she went. We told the children about the ancient Mayans' ritual use of unsweetened chocolate and read a wonderful book about how the sweet chocolate we adore so much is made. Sometimes we play a language game with groups



in which we ask them to think of all the examples they can of a certain category. For example, how many kinds of furniture they can name, how many different insects, vegetables or places. I believe they have never, as a group, come up with more to say than when asked to name all their favorite chocolate treats! The list went on and on! Later that day, I sat with two older boys who might have had trouble staying on task without me and we wrote some of their favorite chocolate treats with the Moveable Alphabet. This afternoon, we got out the puzzle map of North America and identified various land and water forms such as the Yucatan and Baja peninsulas, the Bahamian archipelago, Hudson's Bay, the Gulf of Mexico the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the fact that all of central America is an isthmus connecting the Americas.



And, of course, we are speaking Spanish! I know just enough Spanish to give me the foolish confidence to make many mistakes! We have had mini conversations that go like this: "Por favor, deme el libro." "Gracias." "De nada." (Please give me the book. Thank you. You're welcome) Also, "Me llamo Doni." "Me llamo Mica." "Encantada, Mica!" (My name is Doni. My name is Mica. Nice to meet you, Mica!)

We are singing songs in Spanish including the popular "De Colores," one about a sick burro who is given a stocking cap, a white scarf and drops of lemon juice to cure his ills, "Los Animales de Carousel" and "Somos El Barco," a song in Spanish and English promoting unity.

The population of Mexico City provided us with an interesting comparative mathematics exercise. One day I announced that the population of Mexico City and surrounding area is 22 million people. Pauline really put that in perspective another day when she compared it to the population of the entire state of Oregon, which is only 4 million! (I'm so glad I live here!) Our afternoon kids can perhaps visualize those numbers as we recently had a lesson on the quantities of 10,000, 100,000 and 1,000,000 with our grand Wooden Hierarchy Materials. It is proving to be a wonderful unit of study. To continue the enrichment, consider visiting a Mexican store or restaurant with your child.

As we draw toward the end of the school year, we are working on academic areas that need strengthening in each of our soon-to-be graduates, continuing our demonstrations of Grace and Courtesy and guiding the children toward peace with our Conflict Resolution. We are enjoying the garden and starting seeds and we love all the insects and birds that are flocking to our little patch of paradise. Thanks to all who have made these vast improvements in our Outdoor Extension this year! I wish all of you what I wish for myself this summer – ease and peace and sun




Our new outside garden area


and rain in proper proportions and only happy surprises. Thank you for a truly wonderful school year and all the expressions of love and support I have received. I am so grateful for all of my friends here at PhMS.

Best regards, Doni 

Newsline

- Please join us for our **End-of-the-Year Potluck** on **Saturday, May 8 from 5pm to 6:30pm** in our school yard. If the weather is inclement, we will meet at Mary's River Park (just south of the Philomath Library on 11th).
- If you would like to **keep your current year-round job** for the 2013-14 school year, please let us know soon.
- Our last day of school is **Tuesday, June 13** No full day or extended care.
- Please be sure to mark **Saturday, August 24 (9am – noon)** on your calendar – our **Parent Work Day**. We will need you!! 

Art Fridays

We studied Kandinsky's study of color and shapes by painting on canvas with acrylics in circular shapes with colors that receded and came forward based on what was next to it. With the donation by Jasmin of dyed fleece, we went into making felted balls and then felted bowls to hold treasures found. The class felted a larger piece, with bare feet moving and agitating the fleece in order to felt it. Jessica brought in succulents to plant in this felted container to go in the garden. We have started on baskets with willow and dyed reed, beginning with the gods eye ends to the baskets and will proceed with weaving, all incorporating the skills learned so far this year in weaving yarn and paper. ~Jennifer Smith 



Kandinsky canvases



Felted bowls and bag



Jai working on a flower puzzle



Kaden bead stringing

Thank You

Gift Book Parent

- **Amber Kenoyer** is our new Gift Book Parent

Outside

- Yard work party volunteers: **Shawne Johnson, Andrea Myhre, Heather Gerding, Allan Rack, Christian Petrovich, Chris Kenoyer, Matt Junge, Lua Siegel, Liesl Tavano, Jasmin Woodside, Joy Ueng**
- Moving soil and blueberry bushes: **Shawne Johnson**
- Preparing yard for open house: **Shawne Johnson**

Donations

- Winding flashlight for earthquake preparedness: **Jamin Woodside**
- Dragon fruit: **Lua Siegel**
- Tires for tire tree: **Begg's Tire**
- Scones at our spring break work party: **Shawnde Bausch**
- Soil & woodchips: **Christian Petrovich**

Grant Writing

- Continuing work on grants for the outdoor extension of our classroom: **Shawne Johnson**

Gift Books

- Alligator at Saw Grass Road: **Jacoby Kenoyer**
- The Other Side: **Hugo Ueng**
- Crab Moon: **Nate Bedford**
- Sockeye's Journey Home: **Jude Williams**

- Ladybug at Orchard Avenue: **Mia Walker**
- Lobster's Secret: **Cedric Petrovich**
- Into the Sea: **Ben Boysen**

Classroom Cleaning

- **Anzinger/Petrovich, Kenoyer, Johnson & Splan/Walker, Bausch, & Lohr Families**

Restaurant/Wine Fundraisers

- Special thanks to **Nina Erlich-Williams** for organizing our Spindrift Give-Back Night, and Restaurant Nights at Evergreen Indian Restaurant and McMenamins. Delicious!

Open House Hosts

- **Jenny Braxton, Amber Kenoyer, Shawne Johnson**

Mentor Families for 2013-13

- **Lohr & Kenoyer**

Our sincere and humble thanks for the many things you do for us and give to us!! We are so fortunate. 📖