

CLASS NOTES

NAME THAT BOOK - A LITERARY SUCCESS!

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Coming Events

Montessori Nights
6:00 - 7:00 pm

Mon., Jan 31
Erasmus & Galileo

Tues., Feb. 1
Erasmus, Copernicus & Descartes

Thurs., Feb. 3
Copernicus, Galileo & Descartes

Tues., Feb. 22
Alberti, Bellini & Gutenberg

Wed., Feb. 23
Bellini & DaVinci

Thurs., Feb 24
Alberti, DaVinci & Gutenberg
(students arrive at 5:45 pm)



Renaissance students were neck in neck in competition at the 2010 Name That Book Contest. One hundred 4th-8th grade students divided into twelve teams for the competition to become the first semester champions.



The contest actually kicked off in September when students began reading this year's selection of novels comprised mostly of award winning historical fiction. At Renaissance we have a three year history cycle and this year's focus is ancient times so most of the books were based in that period. After four months of



meeting in small reading groups participants became experts on the novels they read and, importantly, on life during the ancient times.



The first semester reading program culminates with the educational and terrifically fun Name That Book contest. Students help compile hundreds of quotes from the books, then, after being divided into multi-age teams, they work to identify quotes to earn points for their team. Student knowledge and skill really shined.

This year the contest was held at the Clarion and after the two hour event a delicious luncheon including spaghetti, meatballs, salad and garlic bread was served to all the contestants. Yum!



Coming Events cont.

Saturday School

Saturday, February 5

K-3 9:15-12:15
 4-8 9:30-12:30
 Family Pick-Up 12:45

Field Trip

Descartes Art Trip
 Friday, February 11
 Purdue North Central &
 Lubeznik Center for the Arts

Parent Conferences

Student Half Days
 Wed., 2/16 & Thurs., 2/17

Presidents' Day Holiday

No School
 Fri., 2/18 & Mon., 2/21

Swiss Valley Ski Trip

Jones, Michigan
 Friday, February 18
 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
 \$17/student - includes:
 skis, lift ticket, & lesson
 Advance Reservation & Fee
 required by Friday, February 11

MIDDLE RENAISSANCE - GALILEO CLASS

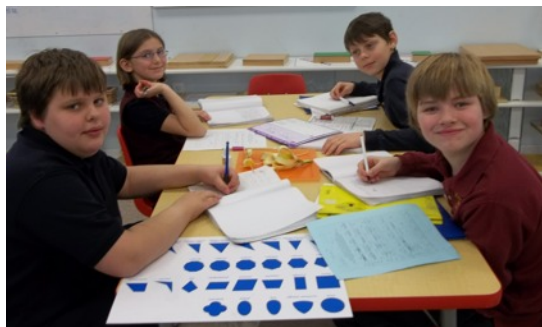
January brings snow and ice, but Galileo Class is staying warm and cozy in our beautiful classroom. We started in full gear after holiday break working on perfecting the important skill of writing a five paragraph essay.

We will be writing at least one per week. We have also been spending time researching ancient civilizations such as Mesopotamia, and ancient Egypt. Some of us have already been reading about ancient Egypt in our reading groups. And speaking of reading groups...



Wow! Did we have fun at Name That Book first semester! Everyone in Galileo did a great job helping their teams come up with the titles to match the quotes and we all loved the competition. Everyone also loved traveling to the Clarion Hotel in Michigan City and enjoying a terrific lunch after the contest.

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EARLY RENAISSANCE - DAVINCI CLASS

The daVinci class would like to start off by thanking all the parents for making it possible for them to attend Renaissance Academy where they are having such a successful academic experience. We are off to a great start to the 2011 part of our year. We are focusing our history study on the continent of Africa. We have learned to count to 10 in Swahili and have also learned that the Sahara Desert is as big as the state of Texas. We are also focusing on the importance of the Civil Rights Movement. We are all participating on making posters for the "Black History Month Poster Contest".



We are working hard on completing our weekly work plans. Reading groups give us a sense of accomplishment. We are able to expand our vocabulary and focus on reading comprehension. Reading is a large part of our daily studies.



Character education is a daily part of our curriculum. We direct our focus on specific character traits each week. We have focused on the traits of respect and responsibility. We use these for discussion at morning meeting time and for our journal topics.

EARLY RENAISSANCE -

BELLINI CLASS



“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world,” – Maya Angelou.

In preparation for Black History month, your young scholar has learned about many influential African Americans, especially honoring those people who have influenced change in our country in a peaceful and positive manner. Not only have we studied a variety of influential figures, we are commemorating them in the Black History Month poster challenge where your child meshed their own creativity with an idea that changed the world then and now. Keep your fingers crossed for these students as they complete their masterpieces and compete with other children in the area! Encourage your student at home by discussing what they have been working on and why this is meaningful to them.



The Bellini class has stepped into the New Year with our best foot forward by continuing to challenge ourselves to learn new things. In Language Arts many of our friends are enjoying chapter books daily as well as meeting in small groups. Some of the books we have read books are Who is King Tut?, All-of-a-Kind Family, The Tale of Desperaux, Mummies in the Morning and Day of the Dragon King. Other friends are meeting in small groups where they continue to practice phonetic awareness to achieve mastery. The Bellini class is making great strides and fostering a love of reading.

While deep in Language Arts, we also spend plenty of time honing mathematic skills, working on addition into the thousands with the Addition Bead Frame, multiplication facts with the Multiplication Bingo Game and division with Division Test Tubes. All students in this class have grown so much as mathematicians since the beginning of the year!

Way to go, Bellini!

GIVING THANKS

Renaissance’s 12th year celebration and wine tasting at Shady Creek Winery in November was a barrel of fun...so much fun, partygoers wanted to know when we could do it again. Plans are already ripening for next year’s event.

A bunch of thanks to all of R supporters, especially Alberti 1st grader Kyle Casey’s parents for the bountiful veggie tray and Descartes 7th grader Livia Gazzolo’s parents for the lavish and delicious Cafe’ Gulistan hors d’oeuvres and very generous cash donations!

A robust thanks to board president Joe Merrion for his hours and hours of volunteer time working on R computers and for the \$2000 donation from Merrion Foundation, This is the 3rd annual donation made by the Merrion Foundation to support the school financially and in an effort to encourage others to give generously as well.

“Wisdom begins in wonder.”

- Socrates



R Supporters (\$100+)

Elmer & Jemma Cabela

Frank & Kathy Gazzolo

Thomas Hartigan

Carol & Edward Hogan

Eleanor Juby

Keeley Family Foundation

Chris & Nita LaFollette

Jack McHugh

Doug & Rebekah Nelson

R Friends (\$250+)

Matthew & Tamara Ohl

R Family (\$500)

Cafe’ Gulistan

Michele Gazzolo

Patty McHugh

R Leaders (\$2000)

Merrion Foundation

Ongoing Activities

Sports & Clubs

4th-8th Basketball

Mondays & Wednesdays
3:40 - 5:30 pm
MC Naval Armory

Games Club

Fridays in February
3:30 - 4:30 pm

Chess Team

Feb. - March Practice
Wed. & Thurs.
3:30-4:45 pm

Regional Tournament
Sat., February 19
Hammond, IN

*“And what, Socrates,
is the food of the
soul? Surely, I said,
knowledge is the food
of the soul.”*

- Plato

PRE-RENAISSANCE - MARCO POLO & GUTENBERG

Hello again from the Marco Polo & Gutenberg Classroom! Our busy little students are having fun, working hard, and learning new things every day! We are quickly finishing up our study of Asia. The kids were super excited to try out the Japanese art of Karigami and even learn our 'Good Morning' song in Chinese! As we near the end of the grading period, we will get ready to begin learning about the Jungles, Ancient Egyptians, and all the countries and people of Africa!! What a great way to stay warm in these chilly winter months!

Speaking of warm and cold, the G/MP kids have gotten to experiment with temperature and it's effects on water. We have watched snow melt and become water, water freeze into ice, and before we're through, we will even get to watch water vapor form in our very own classroom! The kids know a great song about all the stages of the water cycle too! Ask them to sing it for you!

Last week we finished up learning about amphibians and have now moved on to reptiles! The kids LOVE all the neat dinosaur works in the classroom:

they even have the opportunity to go on their own 'fossil dig'! In the coming weeks we will move into learning how to measure, the properties of 'sink' & float', and magnetism! That should keep our little scientists busy, and move us closer and closer to spring!

All the kids are working hard on language skills: learning letter sounds, reading Bob Books, and reading Mac & Tab books! The Kindergarteners have also been doing a great job with their Spelling Words each week!! Keep up all that good work Moms, Dads, and care-givers!

Keep an eye out in your 'in-box' as info will be coming home soon regarding Parent/Teacher Conferences, Montessori Nights, and our BIG 100th Day Celebration!! It's a great time to be in the Gutenberg & Marco Polo Classroom! Looking forward to the next few months!



WINTER REMINDERS

When it is 17° or above, all students go out for recess. Please send your child with labeled outerwear appropriate for the weather. Students must have boots to play in the snow and snow pants are required for sledding.

With Renaissance in the limits of LaPorte and in the Michigan City Area Schools district, we must follow both school systems weather closings.

School Closings - If Michigan City or LaPorte Schools are closed for bad weather, so is Renaissance Academy. Do not bring children in at all.

School Delays - Doors will not open until 8:30am. No AM Camp Attendance will not be taken until 60 minutes after regular start time, no tardies.

MIDDLE RENAISSANCE - ERASMUS CLASS



Greetings from Erasmus! Winter is upon us and sledding has become our favorite recess activity. After studying the fundamental needs of the Sumerians, the Babylonians, Egyptians, Persians, and Phoenicians, we have begun to look into the world of the Roman and Greek empires. It is wonderful to see students make connections among the needs of

the ancients and the needs of current day families. It is also great to see students realize that many of our customs, languages, and governmental policies have roots in the past.

In December we finished our studies of animal characteristics, functions, and habitats. We have begun our studies of the Solar System, planetary objects, and the moon! During Saturday school we conducted experiments proving Newton's Laws of Motion.

On any one day students work with Montessori materials to learn how to divide fractions, multiply decimals, create



histograms and pie charts, calculate the area of a regular polygon, and solve algebraic equations.

This month we made an extra special effort to learn the rules of In addition, and to learn the rules of syllabication, homophones, and commas. We are making an extra effort to become good writers. Everyone has practiced writing the 5 paragraph essay, and two of our



students entered a "Celebrating Black History" essay contest.

Reading groups are enjoying a variety of topics including space, Greek mythology, and Harry Potter. Again, it is magical to hear children share their insights about the books they are reading. One student shared that she went home and and asked her parents if they learned about light speed and the



differences between astronauts and cosmonauts when they were in school. She said, "They looked at me and said, "We didn't even learn about the things you are learning in high school!" Imagine that?"



"Not to unlearn what you have learned is the most necessary kind of learning"

- Antisthenes

"First say to yourself what you would be; then do what you have to do."

- Epictetus

“The mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be kindled.

- Plutarch

“The greater the difficulty, the more the glory in surmounting it.”

- Epicurus

MIDDLE RENAISSANCE - COPERNICUS CLASS

Copernicus students are ringing in 2011 with renewed commitments to learning. Students kicked off the new year with a writing project about three resolutions they wish to make. Our Language Arts focus this month is on essay writing. Students are becoming proficient at planning, editing, and revising their written work.



We all enjoyed wrapping up our first semester of reading groups with the "Name That Book" competition that was held in December. It was very impressive to see students recall their knowledge of so many works of literature. We are busy preparing for a second match at the end of the school year.

Our focus in math groups has been on working with fractions and decimals. Students are learning to add, subtract, multiply, and divide fractions. We are also working with improper fractions, equivalent fractions, and converting fractions to decimals.

Our study of Ancient Civilizations has moved on to Ancient Egypt and Ancient China. Students made papyrus and played the Egyptian game of Senet at a recent Saturday School. We will focus on Ancient China over the next few weeks.

Students have also been exploring the field of astronomy for their science research. Topics of interest have included black holes, galaxies, and planets. We look forward to hearing student presentations on their findings.



NET NEWS

It's basketball season and the games are on!

Renaissance Lions are roaring into play. So far the Lions' girls' teams have had several challenges, going up against St. John's, St. Mary's and Resurrection.

These games were huge learning experiences for all the players. Many players on the 4th-6th grade teams are new to basketball this year and so the game time gave them a whole new insight into what skills they have to work on. They will continue to have the opportunity to try out those new skills as the season progresses.

The 7th and 8th grade girls played a great first game at St. Mary's and an even better game at Resurrection, which included our three junior high boy teammates. The co-ed team worked well together and showed a lot of promise for the rest of the season.

All of the 4th - 8th grade boys are still preparing for their upcoming games and the fans are excited to cheer them and all the players on!

Go Renaissance Lions!!

LATE RENAISSANCE - DESCARTES CLASS

In Descartes, we have been focusing our attentions on India and China over the past weeks. In addition to our investigations of kings and dynasties, we have been learning about cultural topics, including the origins of some of the religions from the Far East, technological innovations from the ancient world, and even some of the oldest games that humans have played. During our Egyptian studies, students learned to play Senet, a racing game similar in some ways to Parcheesi, and possibly the first board game ever invented. Recently, we have been studying the Chinese game of Go. Considered by some master players to be even deeper than Chess despite its simplicity, Go is a game of capturing territory. As an abstract representation of military conflict, it dovetails with our reading of the Chinese philosopher Sun Tzu and his treatise and the role of military aggression in government.

Our science studies have been focused on extremes. In December, we considered the very biggest entities in the universe during our astronomy studies: blue supergiants, black holes, spiral galaxies, nebulas, and quasars, among others. Some students even created superheroes who personified these astronomical features. Now, we are turning our eye towards the smallest of life forms, bacteria and protists, before wrapping up the year with an in-depth study of animals in the Spring. Stay warm out there!



EARLY RENAISSANCE - ALBERTI CLASS



The members of Alberti class returned to school refreshed and rejuvenated earlier this month after winter break. Our class often takes time to journal. Several students volunteered before winter break to share with the class one of their journal entries. Greeting them after their return from winter break was the latest issue of "Alberti's Authors". Each child received a copy to take home. During group, our authors read aloud their stories. Everyone enjoyed hearing and sharing their creative thoughts and stories.

As always, our class keeps a sharp focus on math and language skills. This month we explored measurement and the relationship between gallons, quarts, pints and cups with the construction of "Gallon Guy". This paper super hero has a torso represented by a gallon and arms and legs by quarts, pints and cups. Some students took their hero home, while others chose to leave their colorful creations hanging in our room for all to see.

In January we take time to focus on some of the major black history historical figures and how their efforts changed America for all Americans. The children have used their knowledge of history to design historical posters to be entered in Michigan City's Black History Poster Contest. Best of luck to all of our students. I am sure we'll have some winners!



*"Big results require
big ambitions."*

- Heraclitus

Renaissance Academy
Experience the Joy of Learning

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Class Times:

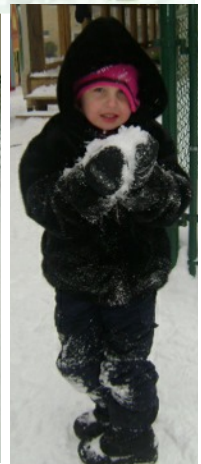
- 8:15 - 11:15 am AM 3-6 Class
- 8:15 am - 2:45 pm Full Day 3-6 Class
- 8:30 am - 3:00 pm Early Ren. (1st - 3rd)
- 8:45 am - 3:15 pm Middle Ren. (4th - 6th)
- 8:45 am - 3:30 pm Late Ren. (7th-8th)

Daily Extras:

- 7:00 - 8:30 am Before School Camp
- 11:15 - 11:45 am Lunch Time Fun
- 2:45 - 5:30 pm After School Camp

We're on the web:
www.rschool.net

LET IT SNOW....



“What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others.”

- Pericles

