

Smack Dab in the Middle!

A Monthly Newsletter serving the Middle School Families of St. Francis Xavier School

Bringing Technology to Life

Middle School has wrapped up another fun project in computers! The *Mi Familia* iMovies are awesome! I am so proud of the work that was put into them. We still have some tweaking to do with pronunciation and spelling, but as soon as that is cleared up, each student will bring home a copy of their project.



With the addition of Tech. Ed. this quarter, our computer time is cut in half so we will have to utilize every minute that we have together. Some of the things that we

will be focusing for third quarter are: keyboarding and spreadsheets.

Fourth quarter will bring back the 8th grade iMovie about their time at St. Francis Xavier School. Please encourage your eighth grader to start looking for those pictures! Sixth and Seventh grade students will be making commercials in Spanish.

Mrs. Yakesh

Sharing our Faith

Grades 7 and 8 are beginning Unit 4: The Church. We will be looking at the first disciples, church teachings, and the Church as the Body of Christ. Sixth graders will have a test on Unit 3 on Monday, February 1st. The eighth graders had the opportunity to participate in the Right to Life Rally in St. Paul last week. They said they were astonished to see so many people at Capitol voicing their shared opinion on the rights of the unborn.

We also had the chance to provide relief to Haiti in our mission collection last week, raising over \$900.00. Wow!

All Middle School students have completed their service hours. Most of them were well above and beyond the required number of hours. I am gratified to know that the students are all learning the value of service so early in their lives. What a way to glorify God!

For our Lenten project this year, the middle school students are bringing \$5.00 to buy an iPod to raffle off. Our project is called iCare. Students will sell raffle tickets here at school for \$1.00, and the proceeds will go to benefit Feed My Starving Children and Sharing & Caring Hands.

Mrs. Lenczewski

Looking for a Good Book?

The dwarves and the hobbit, along with the sixth grade, are waiting at the edge of the Lonely Mountain to see what will happen next in *The Hobbit*. Bilbo has found courage, as he becomes a most unlikely hero. Sixth graders will be writing their own adventure stories this week in place of their journal assignments. Students continue to work on weekly spelling and are studying adjectives.

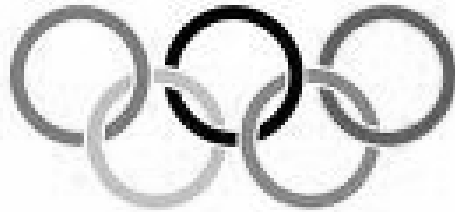
The seventh graders are into Act 2 of *The Miracle Worker*, the story of Helen Keller and her teacher, Annie Sullivan. As we read the play, we are also discussing conflict, the Battle of Vicksburg, and how children acquire language. Students are also working on writing paragraphs and diagramming sentences. Students continue to study Latin and Greek roots weekly.

Students in eighth grade are reading *Huck Finn*, and discussing Huck's choices and his conscience and how they are at odds with his society. It is a great discussion with many examples from our lives today. It is exciting to see the connections students make between their lives and the book we are reading. We will continue to study prepositional phrases and sentence diagramming.

Mrs. Lenczewski

Social Studies

Social Studies classes are jumping this quarter! 6th Grade is just finishing up a study of ancient China and their three main philosophies and great civilization. We will soon embark upon a trip to ancient Greece to read about life in



this part of the world long before the birth of Christ. We'll study architecture, democracy and the first Olympics. That's fun stuff.

The 7th Grade started the second half of the year off with a bang. Specifically the War of 1812. How many people out there know that the British invaded, captured and burned down Washington DC? There were epic naval battles on the Atlantic and the Great Lakes.

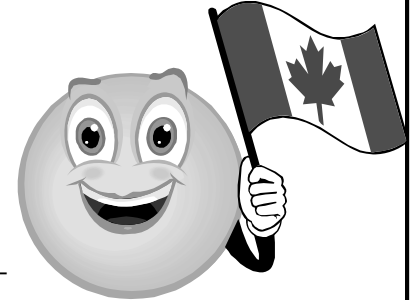
The dream of Native Americans stopping the westward push of settlers ended with a bullet when their great chief Tecumseh died in battle.

The Battle of New Orleans was a decisive American victory, but was fought after the war was over!

8th Graders have been hiking north to our friendly neighbor Canada. It's amazing how little we know about

this country (myself included).

It's fun to learn about a country that seems so far away, and yet is so close to us. We can learn a lot from them. We will be doing a term paper in conjunction with Mrs. Lenczewski in Language Arts in February.



The 8th Graders will be reading Anne Frank in February, and we have two outstanding speakers planned. Margot De Wilde was a prisoner at Auschwitz and has agreed to talk to our kids about this nightmare. Larry Tillemans was a soldier present for the Nuremburg Trials at the end of the war, and he'll talk to us, also. This should take place in the latter part of February. Please stay tuned for more details.

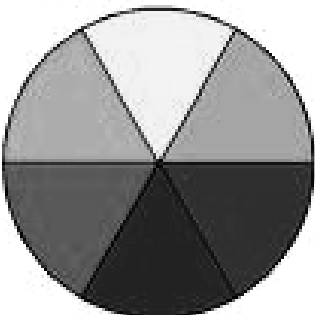
Mr. Muller

Coloring Our World With Art

The middle school artists have expanded on the color wheel.

The 6th graders created a craypas design using warm and cool colors. The 7th graders created monochromatic paintings using various shades of one color, while the 8th graders designed a low base-relief in white. They also carved stencils and printed them using ink and brayers.

COLOR WHEEL



Moving away from color, the students are learning about perspective and techniques to create depth in a picture. They drew

the same object from various viewpoints, worked with a vanishing point in the distance, as well as balance and symmetry. The 8th graders are sketching beautiful winged dragons similar to those found in fantasy books, and will complete their project in water colors. The other students will be learning about the proper proportions of the human body and how to capture different poses, as well as doing self portraits.

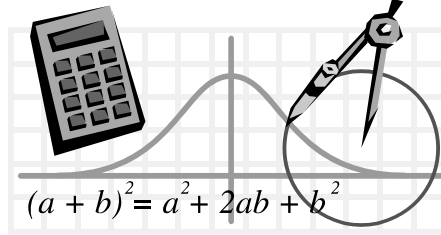
Mrs. Mahon



Constructing A Congruent What?

Students in sixth grade have transitioned from the addition and subtraction of fractions and will end the Second quarter by multiplying and dividing fractions. Third quarter begins with a continuation of dividing of fractions. Once mastered, we will quickly move on to ratios and proportions.

The Seventh graders have moved quickly through percents and are now exploring geometry concepts of lines angles and circles. The beginning of Third quarter finds them tackling the task of constructing congruent line segments and perpendicular bisectors. We will then move onto Chapter 9, which focuses on patterns.



Eighth grade mathematicians have climbed out of the hole dug by solving multi step equations with a good understanding of what to do and have moved onto the topic of Geometry. We didn't leave the algebra behind as we will definitely need to use these skills as we manipulate formulas to solve for area of polygons. Third quarter begins with students in Eighth grade, like those in Seventh grade, learning how to construct with compasses and protractors. They will be constructing congruent angles and parallel lines.

Mrs. Marsyla

What's on *Your* iPod?



What's your favorite kind of music to listen to? Who is your favorite group or singer? What's your favorite song about? These are some questions that we have been asking in the middle school music class.

Students have been doing some research to learn more about the music they listen to. As we grow older, we are all faced with more choices and decisions about what we listen to, purchase and put on our i-pods, MP3's and CD players.

Each student presented a report about one of their favorite artists. Along with information about the groups performing history and personal journey, the students also looked for information about their efforts in social justice. Many musical groups help to raise funds, awareness and support for various charities like victims of Hurricane Katrina, Breast Cancer, Aids and most recently, victims in Haiti.

The students also had the opportunity to listen to samples of music from each report. It was great to learn about the musicians and listen to new music! Many students were introduced to new artists and perhaps even broadened their musical choices!

Mrs. Swearingen

Studying Spanish

Hola!

Here is what is happening in Middle School Spanish:

Students are learning fruit items in Spanish and using these names in conjunction with forms of the verb "gustar" (to like), such as "me gusta" "no me gusta". As well as incorporating other vocabulary and forms (such as gender and quantity relation) to create a paragraph describing their favorite fruit.



We will continue building from "las frutas" (fruit) incorporating other verbs and actions in Spanish. Developing more vocabulary, eventually I plan on having the middle school students make a fruit salad following direction ONLY in Spanish, such as washing, measuring, chopping, slicing, etc.

During third and fourth quarters, middle school students will create a commercial IN SPANISH promoting the eating of fruits as a healthy alternative (kind of like the milk or cheese commercials) and creating their own slogan in Spanish of a particular fruit or group of fruits (similar to: "milk, it does a body good" or "got milk?" slogans). This is to be completed (written, developed and videotaped in Spanish) for the end of the year (4th quarter).

Mrs. K (Señora K)

STFX Middle School Team

Nancy Lenczewski:	MS Religion MS Language Arts
Erin Marsyla:	MS Math MS Health
Al Muller:	MS Social Studies
Carol Fiedler:	MS Science
Joy Swearingen:	K - 8 Music
Lyn Fantauzza:	4—8 Band
George Mead:	K - 8 Phy. Ed.
Rachel Yakesh:	K - 8 Computer
Gina Kowalczyk	K - 8 Spanish
Mary Mahon:	MS Art
(long term sub):	MS FACS
Don Soupir:	MS Tech. Ed.

Middle School Topics of Interest

Wright County Presents:

- **Sexting** by Sergeant Eric Leander, Juvenile Division.
- **The Truth About Energy Drinks** by Joel Torkelson, Public Health Coordinator



Date: Monday, February 22

Time: 7:30pm—8:30pm

Location: Maple Lake High School Auditorium

Target Audience: Students 5th grade & older, along with parents & interested community members

Playing Beautiful Music

Now that the Christmas Program is in our back pocket as our first public performance, the students are well into 8 new songs for the Mardi Gras dinner on February 16th.

The students have increased their playing time at home to accommodate the amount of songs we will need to have ready for that evening.

We are also planning more challenging music for our spring concert. That date and time for that is to be announced!

Mrs. Fantauzza



Staying Healthy Through Choices

With the menu projects taking up most of the Second quarter, students in sixth grade found time to focus on two other topics. We covered a chapter on physical activity and why it is important for everyone. We also discussed our personal health from protecting our eyes and skin to health care in our community.

The Seventh Graders had some great discussions regarding alcohol and drugs. They also did a project on six influences that keep them drug free. We will finish Health for the year with a discussion on personal health and consumer choices.

Students in Eighth grade finished the semester of Health with a great review of Nutrition and an awesome discussion on body image. Our conversation included dialogue about the different eating disorders and how they negatively affect our health triangles.

Finally, an update on the heart rate monitors: Students didn't like wearing them because they were uncomfortable and they often forgot to turn them on when they were playing the game. What we did find is most heart rates stayed pretty close to the same each day. I hope to use them more effectively and for a longer period of time next year.



Mrs. Marsyla



**Congratulations on your first grandchild,
Mrs. Fiedler.**

You will be a SUPER GRANDMA!