

October 2010

DEAR FAMILIES OF MS. NIXON'S ELEMENTARY CLASS:

The first several weeks of the elementary class are very important times for the students who are new to our class. The first-years are orienting to a new and exciting environment where they are the youngest rather than the oldest as they were at the end of their primary class. They have had the first 3 great stories: "How the Earth Came to Be", "The Coming of Life", and "The Story of the Human Beings." These stories are followed by many geography and science lessons, including lessons on plants and the functions of their parts. Collecting plants and observing their margins, shapes, petioles, bases, etc., and then producing watercolors of them is a favorite choice.

Students of all ages are drawing and painting creatures from our Timeline of Life. Many posters of the Cambrian, Ordovician, and Silurian periods have been created as the children study this fascinating material.

In language, the younger students have learned about nouns and articles while the others have been working with simple and perfect verb tenses as well as linking verbs. Students are writing summaries of novels they have read together. It is fun to hear them disagreeing about what happened in a chapter and referring to the book until they get it straightened out.

Fraction equivalence, long division, checkerboard multiplication, squaring on the pegboard are some of the math activities in frequent use these days. We are also focusing on addition and subtraction facts and knowing how to line up your categories for addition and subtraction. Many students have learned to count in non-decimal bases. The oldest group has been converting numbers from base five to base ten.

The students recently had the chance to learn from James Akerson, National Park ecologist. They were delighted by his knowledge of the flora and fauna of our woods. In addition the older students assisted Mr. Akerson in removing invasive plants from the park. Nature classes at Blandy Farm have also begun.

Please join us for a morning or afternoon observation. I'm sure you will be delighted.

Sincerely,

Mona Nixon