We have learned about structures in the first three months of school. We made them out of straws and paper clips and tested them with washers and a spring scale. The Pine Crest 5th grade students have also been making index card structures and have tested them with dictionaries, yes a dictionary! The 5th grade tested this experiment with folded cards, a tube, a rectangle prism, and a truss (triangular prism). We found that the compression on a little shape can hold the weight of a big dictionary.

Interview Session with Ms. DeBernardis by Melanie

Ms. Debernardis is one of our very own 5th grade teachers. She started teaching this year but last year she was a student teacher.

Ms. DeBernardis was born April 9. She became a teacher because she really liked the idea of spending an entire day with kids because you get to learn new things from students and they get to learn new facts and ideas from her.

The advice that she gave to us “was to be involved in your child’s work just as the teacher is.”
This is the 5th grade. We’re going to talk about a drug free and smoke free school so we really want you to consider talking to your kids about not smoking. One way you can talk to your kids is in your weekly letters or you can just talk to them at home.

A Novel Learning Experience: Fever 1793 by Laurie Halse Anderson

By Peter

Fever 1793 is a heartbreaking young-adult book, by Laurie Halse Anderson, about the horrendous yellow fever epidemic of... you guessed it, 1793! A 14-year old girl named Matilda Cook is the daughter of a temperamental widow who owns a coffeehouse. The family is devastated when the mother gets yellow fever (spread by a mosquito that is now rare) and Mattie and her grandfather have to travel away to a farm. The book makes you care about the Cook family, even though they are not real! Fever 1793 also introduces many real and famous characters to let you ponder and find out about them, but also includes a scary plot!

The doctors in this book, like Benjamin Rush, were very quick to judge, and kill most of their patients by taking their blood out by the ounce! Only the French doctors, like Jean Deveze, knew what they were doing. Shocking truths that are fictional or historical are all included in the exciting book! By showing things like the deaths of the time period, the book furthermore makes you understand what has happened in the book without getting bored.

In Mrs. Chinn’s class, we are reading this book in discussion groups and immensely enjoying it, while getting new incites out of the book! Emily Middendorf’s Dad, Dr. George Middendorf, a Professor of biology and ecology, came in to talk to us about diseases, especially the ones spread by mosquitoes, like yellow fever. Since Mr. Middendorf visited us, we could understand the book better (there were little anecdotes in Fever 1793 that we could finally comprehend)! The book really shows me and my classmates what was happening in 1793 in a vivid way.

“The book makes you care about the Cook family, even though they are not real!”
**Writing Lab: 5th Grade Center Story Critique Class**

By Peter A

Have you ever had to sit in front of the whole class while they critique your five to fourteen page narrative story? In Writing Lab, Mrs. Chinn's and Ms. Wagner's classes are doing a story critique class at the college level! We are learning how to revise our own stories based on our classmates' comments. Mr. Tinney, the Writing Lab teacher, has given us a sheet with the Six Traits of Writing and the six Story Elements (these are the basic parts that make up a good story). We have also read and evaluated several succinct stories by famous authors, like Edgar Allen Poe's *The Telltale Heart*. Now we are setting due dates for our stories and are filling out critiquing sheets for our classmates with three strengths on one side and two weaknesses on the other.

All in all, our critiquing sessions, with a thoughtful thirty minute discussion for each story, let us learn about how you would be edited in real life if you were an author. Mr. Tinney took this third year college class himself, and was the only one not planning on becoming a writer, so you can imagine how he felt. Mr. Tinney gave us very narrow guidelines for our first draft to give to our classmates, just as his professor probably did to him. However, with the published version, we were given more freedom with the format of our story. We have learned that it is hard to revise and critique, but that you need to do it in life!
The fifth grade class newsletter has taken on a new look developed by a small group of 5th graders this month. The writers began by brainstorming ideas for articles and titles. They looked at samples of newsletters and enthusiasm grew. They thought about the audience and the purpose of informing parents while encouraging discussion at home. Students learned and practiced digital photography and caption writing to add to their information and capture the reader’s attention. And ultimately, students learned the editing process of moving and cutting articles and pictures to fit into a limited space. We hope you enjoy this inaugural issue!

Upcoming Events

* November 9 & 10 Early release conference days
* Nov. 16 Info meeting for Takoma Park Middle School Magnet Program, 7:30 p.m. @ TPMS
* Nov 17 Info meeting for Eastern Middle School Magnet Program, 7:00 p.m. @ EMS
* Nov 24 & 25 Thanksgiving Holiday - no school
* Dec 1 Family Game Night
* Dec 12 Magnet application deadline
* Dec 16 Philadelphia trip

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5th grade news by Mrs. L

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