

Walden School

Middle School News

THINK MORE SNOW!

February 11, 2008

Points of Interest:

- “Alice in Wonderland” videotapes and DVD’s, cost is \$10 funds to Ms. Russell for skiing!

Skiing

We will be skiing, snowboarding and snowshoeing two more times. The next dates are coming soon!

- February 12-Tuesday- Early Release
- Thrilling K-8 student performance with Taiko Drumming on Friday, February 15 at 6:30PM. Come watch your children! There is a Pizza Dinner before the performance at 5:30PM. THIS IS A MIDDLE SCHOOL FUNDRAISER FOR SKIING AND END OF THE YEAR TRIPS

Exploravision invention projects and commercials will be set up for all to check out that night!

- February break begins February 25th and runs through Town Meeting Day, March 4th

Come support the budget.

- Good news– we have enough Campbell’s Soup labels for the overhead projector! Thanks to everyone who sent in labels.
- Silent reading every night 30 minute minimum– please help encourage your child to read and emphasize the importance of reading. Share your favorite book with your child!

Taiko Drummers visit Walden for a week long Residency

With the power of an elemental force of nature, men and women play with the passion of complete abandon, fully committing their bodies and spirits to the beautiful, precise choreography and powerful, surging rhythms expressed by taiko. Using a background of thunderous drums, graceful movement and colorful pageantry, Burlington Taiko provides a unique opportunity for entertainment and education.

Taiko - Japanese for “big drum”- is a relatively modern revival of ancient Japanese drumming traditions. The drums originally developed in India, where they were used in religious ceremony to represent the voice of the Buddha. Moving across China and Korea with the spread of Buddhism, taiko arrived in Japan around 500 AD.

Taiko quickly became part of Japanese culture; spiritual healers played taiko to dispel evil spirits and drive insects from the rice fields; Samurai employed taiko to instill fear in the enemy and courage in themselves; villagers used taiko to in their prayers for rain and in thanksgiving for a bountiful harvest. Over time, many areas developed unique choreography and rhythms celebrating festivals or recreations of historic events.

In modern times, taiko has emerged as a performing art. Groups such as Osuwa Daiko led by Grandmaster Daihachi Oguchi and O Edo Sukeroku Daiko of Tokyo pioneered the way in the early 50’s collecting local festival rhythms and transforming them into stage performance pieces.

In the early 60’s groups such as Ondekoza and Kodo began astonishing world audiences, showcasing an almost superhuman style of taiko fostered by living a disciplined communal life dedicated exclusively to taiko. Taiko was introduced to North America over forty years ago by Grandmaster Seiichi Tanaka, a student of Oguchi Sensei and founder of the San Francisco Taiko Dojo. His seminal leadership and passionate style of play are largely responsible for the popularity of taiko in North America today.

~Social Studies~ ~7th grade~ ~Literacy~

Language Arts: In Literacy this week students are reading Chapters 3 & 4 of The Outsiders. They have made fabulous progress in literal comprehension and analysis. Students are weaving in and out of the Junior Great Books: Best of Friends and making connections to the characters in, The Outsiders with deep analysis and higher-level thinking.

Social Studies: The Bill of Rights– The first ten amendments of the Constitution will be investigated and acted out to show understanding and comprehension. Students will memorize the Bill of Rights and start to work on the second Essential Question of the unit. I have challenged the students to memorize the Preamble of the Constitution within the next two weeks. Please help your child to meet this challenge.

~Math~ ~7th grade~ ~Science~

Math: The portfolio problem we are working on in groups this week is “Barn Storm”. This problem is a nice kick off for the geometry unit we are beginning with measuring length, perimeter, area and volume. The “Barn Storm” problem starts with surface area and unit price for paint.

The homework this week for the algebra group will be in the algebra book and will vary based on individual student pacing and where students are starting, check your child’s planner. The expectation is that they should work 20-30 minutes a night on their math homework.

See your child’s planner for specific homework each night.

Science: We are kicking off our study of heredity, digestion and respiration. We will be watching more of “The Miracle of Life”, configuring our family trees and continuing to collect data about digestion with our food log.

The homework will be written in your child’s planner each night. Ask them to see it. Please help them fill in their family tree sheet as completely as possible.

~Social Studies~ ~8th grade~ ~Literacy~

Literacy: This week in literacy students will continue with investigating the gods, goddess, historical figures, and philosophers. We have decided on holding a Greek Press Conference on March 6th which is going to be fascinating! Students are going to speak out on major issues such as Global Warming, Poverty, Politics, Education, and many more important issues that affect the world. We will begin by researching the important figures and finding out their views and opinions on the related topics. Students will also dress like their chosen figure and parents and mentors will be invited to the conference! Mark your calendar!

Social Studies: In social studies students will discover two main topics this week: Athens and Sparta. They will use a Venn Diagram and sort the information making comparisons and finding differences among the two places. We will continue with Geography Oral Language and grammar hunts throughout the text.

~Math~ ~8th grade~ ~Science~

Math: Students are continuing working in the Algebra textbook this week. We are continuing to work to wrap up chapter 2 this week. Students are working to understand the distributive property where $a(b+c) = ab + ac$. Students have received their math skills assessments back and are working to master all skills for the end of the year reassessment.

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