



Mattole Valley Charter School

Newsletter

To Share and Celebrate our Vision

May 2008

Happy Spring!

The last couple of months I received LOTS of submissions; thank you all for your participation. Without your input, the newsletter doesn't really serve its function.

Cathy

WASC – The WASC visiting committee seemed impressed and pleased with Mattole Valley Charter School. While we won't find out our status officially until summer, the final report left us with a positive feeling.

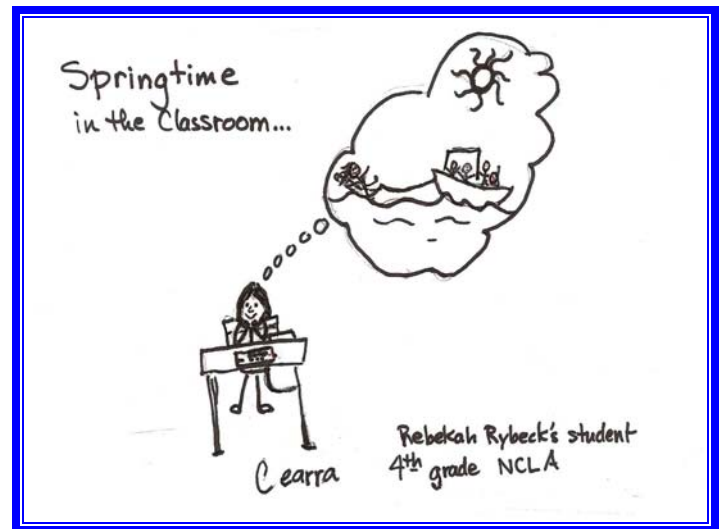
Thanks so much, Gwen for leading us in this extremely important task, and for doing the almost impossible job of keeping our diverse and independent folks on the right track.

STAR – Testing has been progressing smoothly under Lynda's direction (with help from Tess). It looks like there has been better than 95% participation rate. This year we will begin a testing incentive program for the students. A certificate and an entry into a prize drawing will be sent out to all 2nd-11th graders who took all parts of their STAR tests. Medals will be ordered and presented next fall to those students who showed improvement and went up from one level to the next or higher.

This month's newsletter is dedicated to showcasing our students and some of the great things they've been doing.



WASC Introductory Meeting 3/30/08



Gwen's Monday Class

As part of a year-long look at Humboldt County's diverse natural history, "Gwen's Monday Class" embarked on a field trip to the Trees of Mystery to see the redwood forest from the ground and the canopy. The six students in this weekly class used their cameras to put their understanding of light and

optics to practical use. They were able to practice photographing in the dark undergrowth of the redwoods, the filtered light of a rainy day at the top of the trees, and the bright sun-filled open areas after the storm passed.

April 14 turned out to be a historic day at this popular tourist location. Babe the Blue Ox's nose was replaced five months after it fell off the large monument to this folk tale character. Participants in this field experience enjoyed watching the slow, tedious work as they ate their picnic lunches.

Here are a few examples of the photographs taken during this trip.



View from the Top – Gwen Neu



Babe getting a new head – Gwen Neu



Trillium – Brittany Frost



Fork in the Road – Camille Hayes



Forest Green – Camille Hayes



Bridge - Brittany Frost

Teachers in the Teaching American History project (TAH) have been invited to take students from their schools to Washington D.C. in January of 2009 to witness the Presidential Inauguration.

Not only will this be history in the making, but it will be an opportunity of a lifetime for many students. Julie Smith and Gwen Neu, both TAH teachers, invite qualifying MVCS students to participate in this educational opportunity.

Obviously, the cost is not cheap, **\$1,300.00 per student**. However, this covers all costs except food and any extra goodies. Given the fact that students have many months to earn this money, students could easily offset much of the cost through fund raising.

Interested students who meet the following requirements must contact Julie Smith at River Valley Learning Center, 725-7979 or Gwen Neu at MVCS Resource Center, 476-8406 **no later than May 9.**

Requirements:

1. Be able to pay the full \$1,300 cost in three installments - \$100 by May 15, \$600 in October, and \$600 in November.
2. Have a letter of recommendation written by student's ES.
3. Participate in a personal interview with Julie and Gwen.
4. Have, or be gaining, a basic understanding of American History, especially as it relates to the Inauguration of the President.
5. Be in Middle or High School.

This is a WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY FOR MVCS STUDENTS, and we would love to share with as many as possible. We MUST hear from interested students by May 9 due to the May 15 deadline, which is non-negotiable.

(Sorry - the deadline has passed, but if you need more information contact Gwen or Julie)

River Valley News

Students have been busy at River Valley Learning Center. Not only have they been participating in "hats for the homeless," a project that they chose to involve themselves in, but several others were involved in Cesar Chavez Days at HSU. This symposium was very empowering for those students who attended. Issues that are currently affecting Humboldt County youth were discussed, but as one of my students noted, it was extremely exciting to discuss ways in which we can really make a difference in these troublesome issues. Students

have stated that they want their voices heard, and this was an arena that provided this opportunity.

Equally important to the health and happiness of RVLC students is the fact that recently we splurged and went on an overnighiter to Prairie Creek/Fern Canyon. This experience was wonderful for the students, for bonding with them on a level outside the classroom is an important aspect of good education. We have Joe McKinzie, our wonderful, dedicated Americorp worker to thank for this wonderful experience.



Different Ways to Raise Babies

There are many different ways to raise a child. I learned this when I was only six years old and had to raise my little brothers. It was rough being a child and a parent at the same time, but I learned a lot and now I raise my son the same way.

Some children are given too much responsibility when they are very young. That's what happened to me. I never got to go play with friends due to the fact that I was a mother to the boys. Some people don't get to have a childhood, while other children do. I learned a lot from my experience, but still, I wish I had had my childhood, and I am making sure my son gets his.

All parents do things in different ways. Some spank, while others put their children or child in timeout. I personally put my child in timeout. On certain occasions, he would get a spanking if it is a particularly dangerous situation, such as breaking glass. All children do things to make their parents upset or agitated, but it's important to stay calm anyway. I get agitated sometimes with my baby. Don't worry; we all do.

All children get into things and do not listen. I know; I have a two year old. They are hyper and their voices are loud. They need their parents to set limits, but in a way that also sets a good example. When Landen gets out of control, I put my hand gently on his shoulder and say, "Landen, no, " and he listens and quiets down.

All mothers need a break sometimes. We need to get out and have some fun and relax and let the dad take over once in a while. I'm sad to say that most of the fathers I've met do little or nothing to help. The mothers do all the cooking, cleaning, and deal with the children while these men do nothing. We need the fathers to take on more of the responsibilities of parenthood.

We all have things we need to improve. I have a hard time managing my anger. I am doing much better than I was, so I now know that people can always make things better if they are willing to work on themselves.

Thank you for reading this. I hope what I have learned gives you some things to think about and helps you be better parents. Let me leave you with a few tips:

- 1) Breathe when your child is being a hyper little kid.
- 2) Always be prepared for anything.
- 3) Think before you act with your children.

4) Make a good but not too hard punishment on the child.

5) Say you love them a lot, or they might feel like you don't.

Good luck to you in the long life you have ahead of you.

Thank you, Lacey Aragon



Lacey and Landen

North Coast Learning Academy Lorraine Lindley's Art Classes Produce Pieces for our Community

NCLA Kindergarten through eighth grade classes put together great murals for the Redwood Logging Conference contest held in Ukiah this year. First grade placed fourth in their age group, and 5/6th grade combination class received an honorable mention. This is the second year we have participated, and placed! It's a great opportunity to learn about our local resources.

Art met science when all NCLA students submitted representational drawings of local birds to Godwit Days. Arcata Friends of the Marsh juried the competition, and two of our students received awards. Jason Paiva in eighth grade and Robbie Bollman of the third grade both took home honorable mentions.

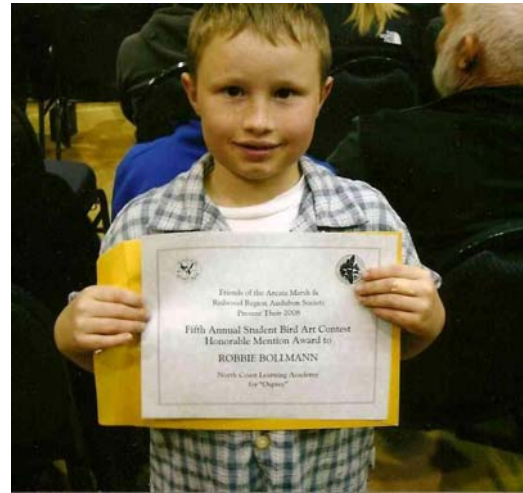
Congratulations to all!



Fifth – Sixth Grade Honorable Mention



Third – Fourth Grade



Robbie Bollman



Eighth Grade



Second Grade



First Grade Fourth Place!

GRADUATION PLANNING MEETING



This Friday May 9th - 1:00 pm
Cutten Resource Center

Graduation is June 7th

All Graduates need to be at the Adorni Center by
12:00 for set up and rehearsal

Ceremony begins at 1:00

We need your involvement and help – please attend!

Our theme this year is:

“The Freedom to Reach Our Potential”

Bring 5 pictures of yourself that we can project during the ceremony.

If you cannot attend please give your E.S. five pictures to send to me – or send them to me by e-mail at: bebeautybejoy2003@yahoo.com

Untitled

A back alley in forlorn middle California where the big flowers of sun cut along brick sidewalls and dirt. It's a shady afternoon of why not? and you can sit beside a wino or two, maybe a dog. They share their wine and you share looks to tell all we all share time we have. Right here, you'll pass California farmboys, lone streetsweepers, dumpster sleepers, all lost the way home. America is homesickness. And tall sun bends down with joy. It's tired. And slowly alley shadows hide chimney soot faces, fearful of ghosts, fearful of life fearful of strife. On the east end of the lot behind the great ancient theatre old man crawls, walking hunched and weathered. He's all knowing. He knows Paradise is soon calling. He gives all himself to the world. Where does he come from? Where going why? He's got no kitchen no appetite no food. He's had his share he's satisfied: And as I sit with torn brown shoes, dirty feet, tragic hope, a much stared at girl with shy eyes, short Jeanne d'Arc hair and mouth of a statue, of a saint. How many doors have opened to her how many beds creak low groan broken heart and still she is stared at by me and everyone. Then she's gone turned that corner and what does her hand feel like. And who is that boy she thinks that big still boy sitting on the alley's joints among cement crack weeds, cigarette ends, he doesn't belong to this world she thinks. I know it too. She'll forever smile at parties and later become quiet and comfortable. But I will remain among pure sweet desolation, aching loneliness.

RolandWu

Eleventh grade., Mattole Valley Charter School, Humboldt County Suza Lambert-Bowser, classroom teacher; Daniel Zev Levinson, poetry teacher.

From the CALIFORNIA POETS IN THE SCHOOLS ANTHOLOGY

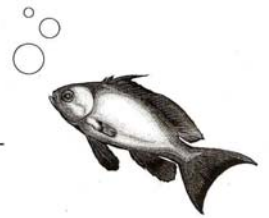


My Goldfish

My Goldfish swims gracefully
through liquid air
and sees his reflection
everywhere.

by

Alexander Ehret



Dandelion

You look like a sun
on the ground
You look really pretty
but smell really icky
when you get old
you turn into a puff
and fly away like a bird
without making a sound.

by

Alexander Ehret



Two Poems by Cathie Shermer's Student Alexander Ehret

Excerpted from the Mattole Valley Charter Star Herald:

Students speak at Yreka Lions Club

by Chelsea Schuler

On February 13, Mattole students Kyra Bedell, Jackson Wijtman and Amber Smelt of Barbara Giacomelli's integrated English I/World History class gave speeches on the topic of "Immigration-My Solution," in front of the Yreka Lions Club.

After a month of research, writing, and practice the students were ready to give their speeches. They had a lot of support from their parents, teachers and fellow classmates Brian Perkins and me, Chelsea Schuler.

Earlier that morning Kyra and Amber practiced their speeches and Jackson was at home preparing by himself.

Finally it was time to head over to Denny's where the contest was being held. When we got there you could feel the tension of Kyra and Amber's nerves. A few minutes after we arrived, Jackson showed up with his parents and Kyra and Amber's parents came too. It was time to begin.

Jackson gave his speech first, then Amber second and Kyra last. After a speech was given there was a three minute intermission before the next student speech. During those three minutes it was very quiet in the room and I was very nervous for my friends because they all had very good speeches and I wanted them all to win, but only one could.

After the speeches were done the judges took a few minutes to go over their notes and decide on a winner. Jackson Wijtman took first place and will go on to compete in the next round at Denny's in early March. All the contestants got a check made out in their name.

"During the speeches and after the judging there was such a feeling of pride and accomplishment throughout the room," said Mrs. Giacomelli.

"Families were there and were so proud of their children.

Members of the Lions Club were complimentary to the students who spoke, everyone was proud." I was very proud of my classmates, and hope for the chance to compete next year myself. "My expectations were met above and beyond", said proud teacher Giacomelli, "What a wonderful day it was to sit there and listen to those ideas unfold."

A View from Ahead by Kyra Bedell

On February 13, 2008 Amber Smelt and I went to Barbara Giacomelli's English/History class to practice our speeches in front of family, friends, and most importantly, the judges.

It was the Yreka Lions Club 71st annual speech contest, and three students from Mattole were to give their speeches in front of judges from the Lions Club. The students were Jackson Wijtman, Amber Smelt, and me. The contest was held at Denny's in Yreka.

The rules of the contest were: (A) the speech had to be a minimum of five minutes to a maximum of ten. The closer you got to ten minutes without going over, the more points you would receive; (B) No one could enter or leave the room while the speeches were being presented; (C) The presenter could not wear a watch, nor any other time telling device; (D) No signs could be given to let the students know the amount of time they had left.

The rules of the contest were strict, which made the challenge to write a great speech difficult. The topic for the speech was "Immigration: My Solution." Each student had to come up with their own solutions for immigration. There were many ideas.



Jackson Wijtman

After four weeks of research, writing, and revising, the speeches were finally completed and ready to be presented. As time flew by, the students were becoming more nervous.

As we arrived at Denny's I noticed that there were not many cars in the parking lot. The feeling of

butterflies in my stomach was gone now. I was ready to go in, give my speech, and be done with it!

We walked into the back room of Denny's, expecting a lot of people to be there. I was surprised to see that there was not that many. There were approximately 12 people in the room. I was psyched. Then 11:45 came, more, and more people came into the little room at the back of Denny's. The butterflies were back.

Lions Club Leader, Mark Smith, asked the students who were presenting their speeches to come sit up front; Jackson, Amber, and I did so. We sat down on the three chairs behind the table, in the front of the room. The air became heavy and the silence was sudden.

Mr. Smith had three folded yellow papers in his hand. They were numbered. He asked us to pick one. Jackson got One, Amber got Two, and I received three. This was the order in which we were to present our speech.

Jackson's speech was very informative and very interesting to listen to. It was long, but the information caught the attention of many people.

It was then that the leader asked for speaker number three to present their speech. It was me. I rose from my chair and walked over to the podium. I looked forward; the view from ahead was blinding. It looked like there were more people in attendance than what were actually there.

I became nervous, but then thought of all that my mom, Amy, and my teacher, Barbara, had taught me; plus I could really use the \$25 (check given to students just for presenting their speech).

I began to speak. The further I got into my speech, the more confident I became; before I knew it, I was done; the last question was asked and I was sitting in the chair once again. It was when I looked over to my left and saw my dad smile and Brian doing his double thumbs up hand gesture that I knew I had done it. There was a three minute silence, which I might add was very awkward. The leader, Mr. Smith, started speaking again. Thank goodness, the silence was over!

He then announced how well all of the students had done on presenting their speeches. He was about to announce the winners (For once though, I didn't want to win. I had strong confidence in myself, sure, but if you won, you would have to present your speech again, and for the first time in my life I didn't want to be the center of attention.) I was okay with coming in second or even last, I just didn't want to come in first. I whispered to Amber that if Jackson didn't win, I was going to be very upset. Then

he announced the winner; it was Jackson!!!

Congratulations Jackson!

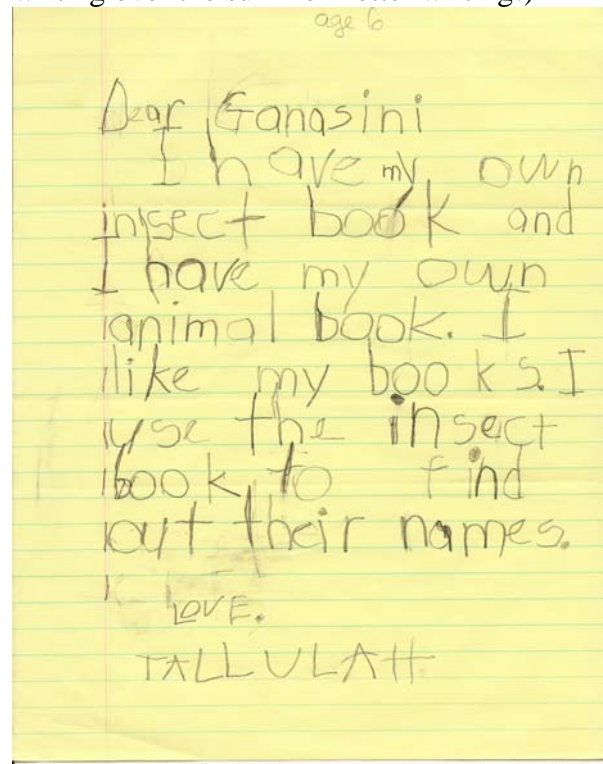
As I walked out of Denny's, I felt nothing but pride.



The Ladies at the Records Office celebrating Roxy's Birthday. Left to Right – Linda Huddleston, Patty Chapman, Terri Heady, Roxy Kennedy, Pam Lane

A letter from Ganasini's student and her response.

(Editor's note – What a great idea to keep kid's writing over the summer Letter writing!)



Dear Tallulah,

Thanks for the great letter. You remind me of the main character of the book, The Girl Who Looks Under Rocks. Have you read it?

What is your favorite insect? Mine is the ant. I am impressed by its strength.

Love,

Ganasini

Book Review by Kylee Tupes (grade 7)

The Lightning Thief

Percy Jackson, age twelve, is about to be kicked out of Yancy Academy Boarding School, a private school for troubled kids, the sixth school in six years. And that's the least of his troubles. Lately, while finding out that he is a half-blood or demigod, mythical monsters and the gods of Mt Olympus seem to be walking straight out of the pages of Percy's Greek Mythology book and into his life. Even worse, he's angered a few of them. Zeus's master lightning bolt has been stolen, and Percy, son of Poseidon, is the prime suspect.

Now Percy and his friends Annabeth and Grover have just ten days to find and return Zeus's stolen property and bring peace to Olympus. But to succeed on his quest, Percy will have to do more than catch the true thief. He must come to terms with the father who abandoned him; solve the riddle of the oracle, which warns him of betrayal by a friend; and unravel a treachery more powerful than the Gods themselves.

This is one of the best books I have ever read; if I were to recommend this book to someone, it would be to someone who likes to get the breath caught in their throat by the sheer action and intensity of force in this book.

(Kylee is Ganasini's student)

LOCAL STUDENT KODY DENNIS RECEIVES NATIONAL HONOR

Mattole Valley Charter High School student recognized for superior academic achievement by the National Society of High School Scholars

ATLANTA, GA - MAY 9, 2008 - The National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS) today announced that Mattole Valley Charter High School student, Kody Dennis from Arcata, CA, has been selected for membership. The Society recognizes top scholars and invites only those students who have achieved superior academic excellence. The announcement was made by NSHSS Founder and Chairman Claes Nobel, ~ senior member of the family that established the Nobel Prizes.

"On behalf of NSHSS, I am honored to recognize the hard work, sacrifice, and commitment that Kody Dennis has demonstrated to achieve this exceptional level of academic excellence," said Mr. Nobel. "Kody Dennis is now a member of a unique community of scholars – a community that represents our very best hope for the future."

"Our vision is to build a dynamic international organization that connects members with meaningful content, resources, and opportunities," stated NSHSS president James Lewis. "We aim to help students like Kody Dennis build on their academic successes and enhance the skills and desires to have a positive impact on the global community."

Membership in NSHSS ~entitles qualified students to enjoy a wide variety of benefits, including scholarship opportunities, academic competitions, free events, member-only resources, publications, participation in programs offered by educational partners, online forums, personalized recognition items, and publicity honors.

(Kody is Devora Kaufman's student)