

Garden School News

October 31, 2008

Volume 5 Issue 8

Headmaster's Column

As we continue with the process of applying for the international baccalaureate, one constant theme emerges from their literature and their primary objective: international-mindedness.

International-mindedness emerges as a way of thinking that results from studying and thinking in a more international way. A few years ago, there was talk about eliminating the study of foreign languages in the United States.

Some schools and programs actually accepted the idea because of what they termed the ineffective way of teaching foreign languages in the US. My thoughts run exactly in the other direction. Studying languages, researching the culture of other societies, reading literature from other traditions, knowing the history of another country—all of these contribute to the idea of international-mindedness.

In our own political discourse, such as it may be, candidates have begun pointing out how many foreign countries opponents have or have not visited. While this can become 'cheap politics,' it also, at least, has raised the idea that an effective leader needs to be aware in some detail of the existence of other societies and traditions.

My belief is that international-mindedness is the thinking of the future. To be a complex thinker in our interconnected world, requires an educated imagination that recognizes and embraces the international community.

Congressman Crowley Visits Garden School

On Thursday, October 30, 2008 Congressman Joseph Crowley, who represents New York's 7th Congressional District of Queens and the Bronx, visited Garden School to address the student body on the topic of Citizenship. He came at the invitation of the PTA's Citizenship Committee. Mr. Crowley has his roots in Queens and represents a very diverse constituency. This was illustrated poignantly by our students in their display of recipe cards depicting the various ethnic delicacies that can be found in Jackson Heights.



Introduced by Mr. Ciaran Staunton, a Garden parent and long time friend of the Congressman, and welcomed by Dr. Marotta, Congressman Crowley spoke about the opportunities afforded him and the contributions of immigrants to this great country. He explained his role in the political process through the various committees on which he serves, such as Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Foreign Affairs. He also urged that we all get involved in the political process by way of voting, serving on juries and keeping abreast of all current events. He applauded one particular Garden twelfth grader who will turn 18 just in time to participate in this year's presidential election and reminded us all that there is no better way to be a "good citizen" than to participate in the democratic process.

Mr. Crowley then took questions from the student body and viewed "Crowley's Wall", a compilation of student created flags, and political posters and glossaries. He spoke about those who influenced him as a young man and inspired him to become politically active and find his future in government service. Who knows, maybe some day he will be "the President who came from Queens!"

Upper Division

The Mock Debates were held on October 30th. Upper classmen representing both Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates and student moderators presented a program for Grades 6 through 12.

Each surrogate presented a statement of the candidate's beliefs and then were questioned by the moderators and students.

In presenting their positions on economic issues and foreign policy, each candidate hoped to capture a majority of the votes

and win the upcoming "Garden" election.

Students will vote on Monday morning, November 3rd. The results will be published by the afternoon. Statistical breakdowns will be available on the Wednesday after Election Day.



Lower Division Highlights

The nursery children have been learning about Halloween. They painted plates orange and glued on black jack-o-lantern faces. More fun was had when they made witch hats, bats, and tissue paper ghosts. The children enjoyed watching as the teachers carved a class pumpkin. The insides felt cold and slimy. They all decided it looked like spaghetti. They were surprised to learn how pumpkins grow on vines and not trees. Manners were practiced as the children were reminded to say "thank you" for the Halloween candy they receive.

To celebrate Halloween, the Pre-K children have done numerous art projects and read many books. Their art projects are displayed around their classroom. Scarecrows are hanging from the strings, along with two class jack-o-lantern chains. A Halloween singing and movement song, *The Spooky Walk*, was enjoyed by all. This is their favorite song so far.

"On a town called Calabria, way across the Atlantic Sea, lived a witch named Strega Nona and her friend Big Anthony." This tune is sung enthusiastically by the Kindergarten students as they explore the *Strega Nona* series by author and illustrator Tomie DePaola. The children have been dramatizing the *Strega Nona* story and using their culinary skills to create the pasta scene from the story. Also in Kin-

Lower Division Highlights Cont....

Lower Division Highlights Continued ...

ergarten, the children have been preparing for Halloween by learning the origin of the customs.

Fire safety has been a Pre-K and K topic during October, Fire Safety month. Through class discussions, reading books, participating in fire drills, and singing songs, safety issues are reinforced. The Pre-K enjoys the movement song, *Firefighters*, and the Kindergarten children are still talking about their trip to the local firehouse

The early childhood department, along with grades 1,2,3, participated in a "Fall Festival" on Halloween Day. The field was set up with different stations containing fun, festive activities for all to enjoy. Each class went from station to station where they stuffed a scarecrow, made candy apples, pinned the face on the pumpkin, painted pumpkins, ate pumpkin seeds, tasted witches brew and did leaf rubbings. We could not have had such a fun, festive day if it weren't for the wonderful parent volunteers that helped at each station.

First second and third grade have been preparing for the Presidential election and the voting process. First grade has researched both candidates on weekly reader.com, discussed why it is important to vote, and had their own secret ballot to decide which version of the *Three Little Pigs* is real. The Wolf of Jon Scieszka's *The True Story of the Little Pigs* won by a vote of 8 to 4.

The second grade has held class elections. They began by watching a film titled *Please Vote for Me* in which a third grade class in China experimented with democracy by holding class elections. Each second grader had a

chance to run with a running mate, debate, campaign and vote. Their speeches included the environment in school, kindness, and the homework policy.

Third grade also read their Weekly Reader to learn about the voting process and the differences between the political parties. Then they took a poll to see which candidate the class would elect and compared it to the nationwide poll held by Weekly Reader. They also imagined what it would be like to live in the White House as a child of a President.

Fourth, fifth and sixth graders have been studying local government and its functions. On October 19th, the fifth and sixth grades visited City Hall. Students were given a tour of the building which included the Assembly Room and the Green Room (which houses Fiorello LaGuardia's desk). This visit to City Hall took place right before last week's city council vote to extend term limits, so students had a chance to sit in the very room where city council members voted!!

Councilmember Gervin (D-Manhattan) spoke with the students about the impact of laws on daily life. Next, Helen Sears, (D-Queens) spoke about the process of city government. The real treat of the day was when Mayor Michael Bloomberg greeted our students. Thank you to Ms. Joan Povolny who works as a political analyst for the NY City Council. She took time out of her very busy schedule to come out and personally greet the class on the day of the trip.

Dates to Remember

- Monday, 11/3—College Night for Juniors
- Tuesday, 11/4—School Closed for Election Day
- Thursday, 11/6—Upper Division Trip to Radio City
- Wed.—Fri. 11/5,6,7—NYS AIS Head of School Conference at Mohonk
- Friday, 11/7—Bronx Zoo Trip—PK, K & Grade 1
- Friday, 11/7—Report Cards Distributed
- Monday, 11/10—Report Cards Due Back
- Monday, 11/10—Senior Raffle Drawing
- Monday, 11/10—PTA Food Drive Begins
- Tuesday, 11/11—School Closed for Veteran's Day
- Wednesday, 11/12—PTA Meeting
- Thursday, 11/13—Trustees Meeting
- Saturday, 11/22—Merit Scholarship Exam

Garden School Dining Room Menu for the Week Beginning November 3, 2008

Monday

Baked Buffalo Wings w/ Ranch Dressing
Mashed Potatoes and Mixed Vegetables
Salad: Arugula, Tomatoes and corn bits
Dessert: Sugar Free Brownies

Early Childhood Snack: String Cheese w/crackers
And Juicy Orange Boats

Tuesday

**ELECTION DAY
SCHOOL CLOSED**

Wednesday

Vegetable or Pork Dumpling w/Dipping Sauce
Vegetable Fried Rice
Crisp Spring Rolls
Dessert: Fresh Fruit in Season

Early Childhood Snack: Vanilla Yogurt w/ Fresh Fruit
Or Baby Carrots & Celery Sticks with Ranch Dip

Thursday

Italian Style Pizza
Salad: Baby Greens, Cherry Tomatoes, Cucumbers & Carrots
Dessert: Italian Ices

Early Childhood Snack: Cheerios, Milk & Bananas

Friday

Breakfast for Lunch
Scrambled Eggs, Sausage Links and Tater Tots
Or Waffles w/Syrup and Fresh Fruit
Dessert: Marble Pound Cake

Early Childhood Snack: Sliced Apples & Pears
Mini-Muffins

AVAILABLE DAILY

*Soup and Choice of sandwich on whole wheat bread A variety of drinks
and snacks*

Music in our Curriculum

by Tom Heineman

Pre-Kindergarten has had a fun time learning new songs, incorporating movements, and performing body percussion with music. Participation has grown steadily in both Pre-Kindergarten 3 and 4. Pre-Kindergarten 3 students have grown bolder, and all have contributed when we have used small percussion instruments. Melody bells were the first melodic instrument introduced in class and will be a part of an expanding repertoire of instruments used by the students. *My Favorite Things*, the Rodgers and Hammerstein song, is being learned in Kindergarten. Students are discovering how to both count and feel songs in 3/4 time through participatory exercises playing instruments, and we will compare these songs to those we have learned in 4/4 time. Additional opportunities for Kindergarteners to learn portions of songs on classroom instruments, both rhythmic and melodic, will arise during the next few weeks.

First graders have been engaged in learning about marches, through singing, listening, and consequently marching to marches. We listened to John Philip Sousa's *Washington Post March*, *Semper Fidelis*, and *Stars and Stripes Forever*, and students were able to demonstrate the concept of maintaining a steady beat through movements, body percussion, and playing small percussion instruments. Students will be comparing music with a discernible beat to music in which the beat is not even or readily apparent, and will experience the difference through improvisations on classroom instruments. Theme and variations and Medieval hocket are two topics that the 2nd grade will explore with the emphasis on applying the ideas to simple arrangements. They will also be engaged in creating rhythmic compositions in a small group setting, recognizing the many options they have as composers. Third graders are investigating blues form and learning to play basic patterns on classroom melodic instruments. They are working on retaining their independence when split into groups and will be exploring the Major scale and chord formation.

In 4th grade, students have been learning how to accurately read and perform 16th note rhythms as found in various forms of popular music. In analyzing the underlying rhythms of songs, they will have the opportunity to develop their own variations and instrumental parts in the spirit of the songs. Additionally, students are engaged in part singing and canons of various complexity, including those by Praetorius, Di Lasso, and Mozart; canons of a more basic nature will be performed on melodic instruments. Students will be listening to choral music from the Medieval to the Baroque periods to help expand their knowledge of this music. Fifth graders have been busy learning about the common roles and rhythmic patterns of percussion instruments in Latin Music through active participation. They will experience various styles from Cuba

(Rhumba and Son) and Brazil (Samba and Bossa Nova) over the coming month. This is an area that the 6th grade will learn about as well, having just completed a study of blues form through listening and performing on classroom instruments. Selections in class centered upon early Rock and Roll music. This week, the 5th grade will be listening to *Danse Macabre* by the French composer Camille Saint-Saens and identifying both the themes and instrumentation.

Seventh grade completed the study of the elements of music, knowledge they will use to discuss and analyze American music during the rest of the term and beyond. They have also begun learning about the origin and evolution of Jazz music. Their continued discovery of this great American art form will be cultivated through numerous recordings, photographs, historical documents, articles, and quotes from performers, and criticism. Students will examine a specific Jazz musician or composer of their choosing and develop an understanding of his or her music and life by taking into account the time and place in which he or she lived.

How music helped guide the resistance movement in South Africa and brought about the eventual liberation of its people has been the focus in 8th grade music. The class also examined how the forces of history shaped the music. Now they will be studying and experiencing the music and culture in parts of West Africa. For their next project, students will individually examine aspects of a West African country (its history, geography, literature, philosophy, politics, or arts outside of music) and, working in groups, make connections between their findings and the music of the region. The course is being conducted in an interdisciplinary fashion in conjunction with the Social Studies and English departments.

