

Mandala News

December 9, 2012



Fire of Learning

No wonder the ancient Greeks thought of fire as a basic element; it *is* elemental. We are warmed by its heat and have our days lengthened by its light.

Great questions of life have been discussed around fires as its nature has energized our nature. Heraclitus stated long ago: *The only constant is change*. A fire symbolizes the dynamics and mysteries of life with all its dichotomies. We welcome its warmth yet fear its destructive powers.

Images of fire abound in our language: *fired up, spark of life, fire in the belly, fight fire with fire, burning desire*. In religions we find *the lord thy God is a consuming fire* and the practice of burning the dead. A bookshelf might hold the recent Hunger Games trilogy with *Catching Fire* alongside the ancient story of Prometheus.

Moment to moment at Mandala we find metaphorical versions of fire. Sometimes there will be a bonfire of activity and excitement; other times will show the quiet embers of contemplation.

Most importantly, there is always change. We change as we learn; we change as we age. We change as we move through the social realm, the life of literature, or the relentless news of the world.

As parents and teachers we do our best to guide, support, acknowledge, and celebrate those in our care, ever knowing that *everything gives way and nothing stays fixed*.

Dr. John



Happy Birthdays

Erin December 9
Chris December 15
Tino December 19

This week saw us: writing more on our novels, reading Shakespeare sonnets, studying algebra & trig, forming copper oxide from coins, playing at Hamlin Park, discussing *Perks of Being a Wallflower*, taking two field trips, and interviewing a neighbor

Versions of Visions

Creating and enjoying art is an important part of Mandala. Our students have art class with Ms. Jeannet for twice the number of hours as classes at a local middle school. Students also use project time to paint, build, sculpt, construct, and draw.

Every year, sometimes twice a year, we visit the Albright-Knox Art Gallery for a tour then exploration. Last Wednesday we heard about Clifford Still and his abstract expressions of emotion. Nobody in our group chose his work as their favorite. The best part is exploring on our own, critiquing what we see, and dising that which seems lacking.



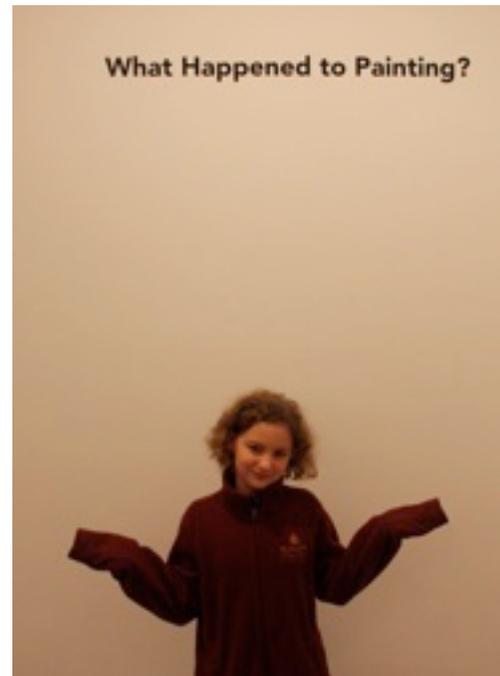
*Our eleven-year-olds minus Ethan.
What standard curriculum would work for them?*

Things are heating up

Over Thanksgiving break Ms. Barb's cousin Tom installed a new, 95% efficient furnace to keep us warm. We hope to recover some of the \$2400 from the NYSERDA program. Check it out at www.nyserderda.ny.gov for ways to save money on your energy use: appliances, furnaces, insulation.



Art class this week involved cooking and decorating. This cookie was made by Lydia.

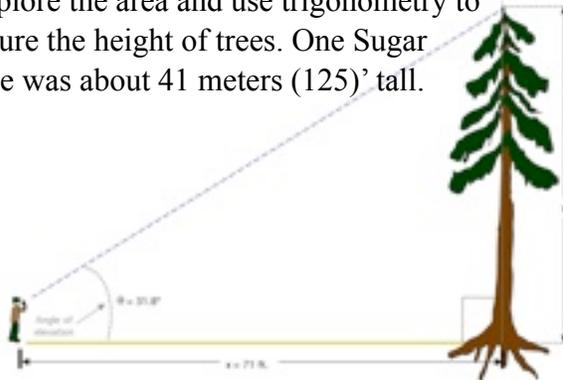


Whenever a certain person gets the camera, photos of feet appear.



Nature Nurturing

On Friday we visited the West Falls Park to explore the area and use trigonometry to measure the height of trees. One Sugar Maple was about 41 meters (125)' tall.



www.tiem.utk.edu/~gross/bioed/bealsmodules/triangle3.gif

As usual we studied the geology of the area. Ethan is standing next to many layers of shale. As the land rises back from the weight of the glaciers (It's still rising!), the erosion of the stream tends to cut down rather than sideways. This makes steep banks with only small ledges for walking. This is known as a "fit" stream.

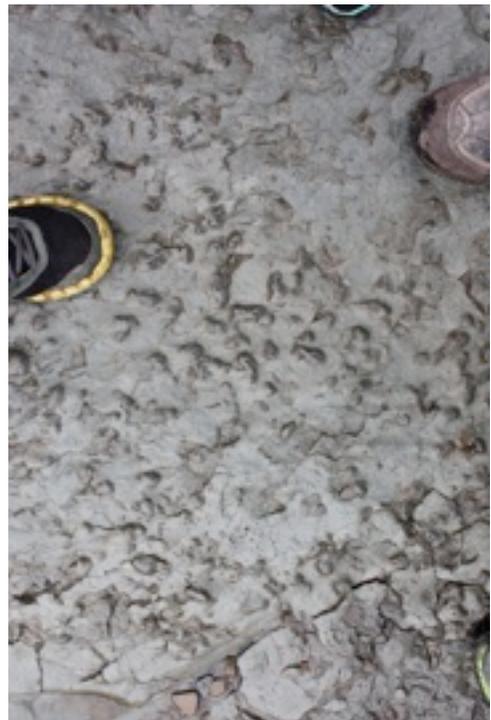




Resistant rock creates the stair-step topology of southern Erie County. A resistant layer makes flat areas with steeper areas on either side. Notice this the next time you drive up Center Street.



The pressure of colliding continents that created the Appalachian mountain chain 300 million years ago was released when the Atlantic Ocean was being formed about 130 million years ago. As the Atlantic basin spread, the almost-parallel cracks in the bedrock were made by the decrease in the pressure.



These pebbles were deposited in an ancient ocean about 350 million years ago. The pebbles, in turn, were eroded from even more-ancient bedrock. Maybe their age could be determined with radiometric dating.