

Mandala News

April 2, 2013



Welcome Anastazja!

Stacey and her family have joined Mandala bringing with them their musical abilities as the bluegrass band Anastazja. In addition to the occasional concert, they are helping interested Mandala students practice instruments and singing. We are so glad to have them with us.

Stacey has taught us how to make soap. We started with pork fat that we rendered into lard, a fatty acid. This was combined with lye, a strong base, which causes soap to be created. Coconut oil was added for smoothness.

Mandala is growing!

Starting with a pilot program this spring, we are welcoming K-8 grades. Alyce Thorp is joining our staff to help make this happen. Please see the website for the brochure and registration information. MandalaSchool.org

With more people becoming aware of how the nationwide testing mania has interfered with education, they are seeking more robust, positive programs for their children. Rather than put their children in a school where curriculum and testing determine the activities, families are seeking sound, kind alternatives. That's what we offer.

We will maintain our small, personal approach so registration K-8 will be limited to 20 students. Encourage anyone interested to apply early.

Mandala School is also an "opt-out" site for those families choosing not to have their children take part in the testing. If a satisfactory alternative is not provided by schools on the many days of testing, please call us. We will provide some enjoyable opportunities for learning. Just reserve a spot by emailing: DrJohn@mandalaschool.org



Chestnut Ridge had great snow for sledding and starting a family.



Trading cards showing goods available

What is the World Game?

We watched “World Peace and other 4th Grade Achievements”, a simulation game designed by a teacher. It looked like fun but we wanted to improve on it.

Our version started with a lengthy discussion about the game and the possibilities. When asked, “When can we start?”, Dr. John responded, “You’ve been playing for half an hour.” This has been the

nature of the game all along: *The game is created as we play it.* Kind of like real life, huh.

In the beginning, 7000 years ago, the players had to imagine they had just emigrated from their homeland for some unknown, catastrophic reason. They were split into three groups by the “gods” who sent them to three regions: coastal, upland forest, and arid. Their first task was to survive by finding essentials and creating shelters.

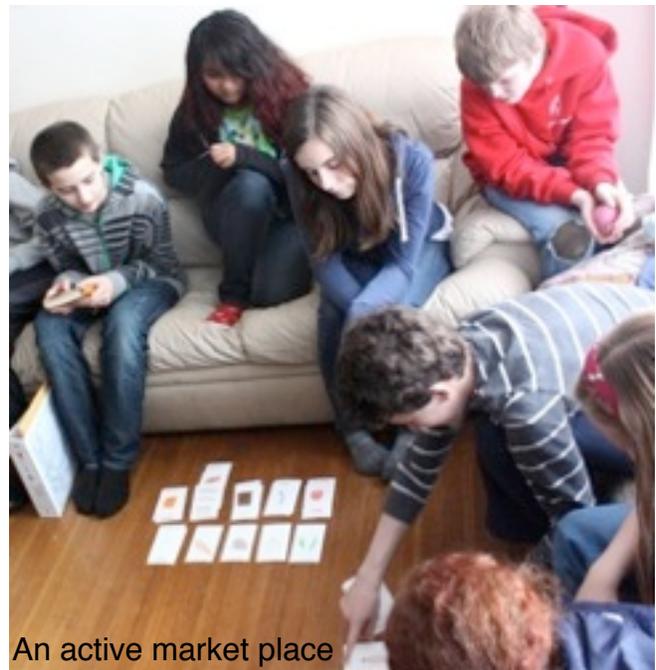
Their next challenge was to find natural resources they could use to improve their lives. In the arid region they found clay for pottery, gold & silver for jewelry, and oil for burning. In the forest they made all manner of objects from wood. They also domesticated a wild goat. On the coast they learned to make paint from sea shells.

Governing themselves A significant aspect of establishing the communities was determining how they would make decisions. Long discussions were held and each group chose different ways of governance. One group works on consensus where everyone discusses issues until they all agree on a path forward. Another group was challenged by a member who wanted to dictate how everything was going to be.

Fickle gods Just as communities seemed settled in, the gods issued another decree through their oracle. The coastal region was subjected to a tsunami, the forest people to a five-day blizzard, and the arid region to a gentle rain followed by a drought.

These were major tests of their shelters, inventions, and community decisions.

Trading Interest grew in exploration and perhaps finding new goods. Emissaries were sent in hopes of establishing contact with others. Upon meeting others, they negotiated a trading treaty with great attention being paid to security. After all parties agreed to the treaty (posted at Mandala), trade commenced.



An active market place

To learn more, attend a special event on April 22. [For details click here.](#)



The annual tapping of the trees has resulted in about a gallon of syrup. Just last week we used the remains of the 2012 harvest.



Gravity studies at Chestnut Ridge were great fun. This community is so tight they even sled as a group.

Being Active Defines Us

Think of the children in many other schools. How many of them took a field trip in March, made something by hand, or even worked with others not their age?

Mandala students took several walking trips, sledded at Chestnut Ridge, sketched at the Albright Knox, made books, made soap, boiled sap into syrup, and cooked their own soup from scratch.

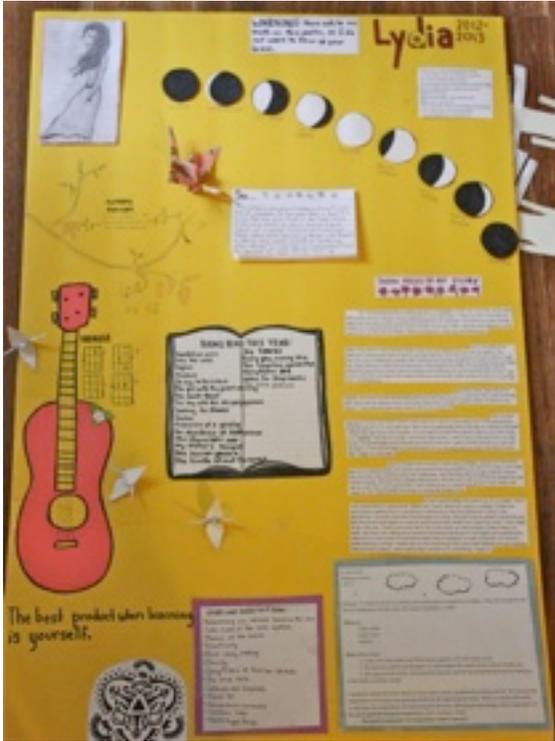
They also wrote stories, studied math, puzzled over plate tectonics & earthquakes, created a treaty, and developed trade with neighboring regions.



The lye and lard are being stirred resulting in soap. The liquid was poured into molds where it hardened. We now have our own sweet soap to use.



Several of us noticed this black & white scene as we hiked to Sinking Ponds on March 1. Despite the wintry look, we saw a White-Breasted Nuthatch, Bluebirds, a Pileated Woodpecker, the first Red-Winged Blackbird, and a Red-Tailed hawk.



Open House

We were so happy to host our largest turn-out ever for Open House. Guests heard from students and staff at the beginning then toured our house to meet with students.

They saw posters summarizing student accomplishments, 3-D representations of Greek temples, models of ancient coins, paintings, stories, World Game artifacts, and slide shows.

Treats included a Greek cheesecake made by Josie and Dr. John. Yum! There were also cookies, baklava, and drinks.

Visitors are welcome anytime. Just call or email to make sure we are here.

Progress Reports

Trimester reports were sent home with students on March 15. Did you see one?

Please contact us if you would like to have a conference to discuss progress and goals. We enjoy having regular communication with families so please try to meet with us.



Volcanoes!



Visiting Vulcanologists

Eliza Calder & Joaquin Cortes shared their knowledge of volcanoes and earthquakes with us. Fascinating!

When oceanic plates subduct (go under continents), they carry a great amount of water within them. As the plate heats up and melts, the water vaporizes leading to massive explosions.

The rock foam that is created solidifies as it cools forming ash and pumice.

The heat from the volcano can melt snow and ice on the mountain very rapidly causing “lahar”. This combination of mud, water, ash, and pumice has the consistency of wet concrete. Lahar travels very fast and causes many of the deaths and destruction associated with eruptions.

One of the regions most in danger from an eruption is Mt. Ranier in Washington.



Dr. Eliza demonstrating how water can cause lava to foam into pumice.



Notice diagram behind Giacomo drawn by Drs. Calder & Cortes to help explain volcanos.