

21 November 2021

Dear Parents, Teachers, & Friends,

COVID news –COVID continues to be a danger lurking nearby for all of us. We have heard that at least one of the public schools will close in-person classes for the remainder of the year due to COVID. I'll admit that I am concerned since I know many families will travel and be in groups over the holidays. **Please, please, please be careful.** Please wear masks, preferably N95 masks, and please stay at a safe distance from others. If you have any reason to think you or your student were exposed, please be tested. You may want to wait at least 4 days after the exposure to allow time for the disease to appear. **We are very happy that most of the students have already received their first shot of the vaccine,** so we hope that we can start scheduling field trips starting in January. **When your student is fully vaccinated we would like to make a copy of their vaccination card to put with the rest of their permanent record.** When we schedule field trips we will require that the students be fully vaccinated so we can know we are not putting them or other people at risk by taking them to public places

Book fair – Scholastic Books sent more titles, allowing us to have a successful book fair. We sold more than \$1,000 worth of books so we can “buy” \$500 worth of the Scholastic books for the use of our students. Thanks for your support.

The **Las Cruces Bulletin** is again running the contest, **Best of the Mesilla Valley**. Anyone can vote now that the nominations are in. We were successfully nominated for several categories, best private school, best middle school principal (LEK), best middle school teacher (Elizabeth Brasher), best elementary school principal (LEK), and best elementary school teacher (Arielle Lane). Go to <https://www.lascrucesbulletin.com/bulletins-best/#/>.. **Anyone can vote** in any number of categories **once each day**; frequent voting is a key determinant of the results. Thanks!

Family get-together – December 10th - Let's enjoy each other's company and also help us jump-start our Annual Fund with an LCA giving event. Weather permitting, join us for an outdoor snack get-together and a holiday sale, featuring gifts for children and adults. As we spend time with our school families and friends, celebrating the year and renewing important connections within our community, consider making your donation to the annual fund. This fund is important for the growing success of LCA. The giving event will also formally conclude a school-wide non-perishable food drive to benefit Casa de Perigrinos. It is so important for students to give back to the wider community, especially when so many around us struggle with food insecurity. Help us to make this giving event a success!

After-school clubs:

Lego and Engineering Clubs – Ms. Elizabeth & Dr. Jessica Houston

Students enjoyed building and programming with the WeDo kits. Lego engineering club will meet again on the Monday after Thanksgiving break.

Math Club – Wednesdays, 4:10 – 5:10 pm, 3rd – 5th grade students Dr. Wei Tang

This week we played some interesting [matchstick math puzzles](#) including both shapes and numbers, which exercise [lateral thinking](#). The students really liked this topic and we enjoyed quite a few problems together.

Theater Club- Friday, 4:10 - 5:10, older students Ms. Elizabeth

During theater club, actors met in small groups to work on lines and rapport. Theater club will meet again on the Friday after Thanksgiving break.

Schedule for the 2021 – 22 school year:

Monday – Friday, 22 – 26 November, 2021: Thanksgiving Break, no classes

Friday, 10 December: End of semester get together, with snacks and a gift sale, immediately after school

Monday – Friday, 20 December – 7 January: Winter Break, no classes

Monday – Friday, 21 – 25 March, 2022: Spring Break, no classes

Friday, 15 April, 2022: Late Spring Break, no classes

Monday – Friday, 18 – 22 April, 2022: Scholastic book fair

Friday, 27 May, 2022: Last day of school

We fully intend to have several field trips, assuming that they are allowed and that museums and such are reopened. We are planning that once the students have been fully vaccinated it will be safe for all of us to go on field trips. If you have any suggestions please let us know. Several have been suggested; thanks to those of you who shared ideas.

Donations

Wei Tang, parent and master teacher of the Math Club, donated a stunning levitating globe, which we hope you all see when the students come to school on Monday; the **O'Donnell/Dooley** family donated books for use by the students

Illness:

Several of our students were ill, but none seemed seriously so.

Reports from teachers:

Report from Katie:

Handwriting, reading, math, kindergarten:

- Students reviewed the letters of the alphabet.
- Students learned new sight words 'day' and 'down'.
- Students worked on spelling activities to practice their spelling words in the -ig family, on pl/bl blends and reviewed past sight words and word families.
- Students worked on addition and subtraction problems.
- Students worked in their Singapore math workbooks.
- For science, students learned about how maple syrup is made and where sap comes from. Students learned about how football was invented and invented their own games.
- In art, students started learning about form and made a paper town community out of paper bags. Students also used Play-Doh^(R) to make turkeys.
- For music, students used rhythm sticks to make up their own rhythms.
- For writing, students listened to Thanksgiving Day read-alouds and then drew and wrote sentences in their primary journals.
- Students were called up individually to read with me with their reading folders, which included 3 readers focusing on their sight words and word families for the week.
- Students had a spelling quiz on Friday.

Reading, 1st and 2nd grades:

- Students worked on their *Charlotte's Web* book study by drawing what was happening in the chapter and writing down vocabulary and definitions from the chapter. Students continued working in their sight

word binder and reading binders where they read short stories and answered comprehension questions after their readings. Students listened to a Thanksgiving Day poem and made story bracelets to remember the poem.

Music, 1st and 2nd grades:

Students played the card game “memory” with music notes.

Report from Arielle:

Math, 1st grade and up:

This week students worked diligently in their math books. Some also took unit tests when they were done with a unit in their math book. Small group lessons were given on angles, fraction word problems, decimals, and fractions.

Spelling, 1st & 2nd grades:

All students had the same spelling list of Thanksgiving related words. Spelling words last week were: corn, dinner, harvest, pie, stuffing, together, gather, family, friends, Fall, Thursday, and Thanksgiving. Most of the students did a great job and got all their words correct!

Social Studies, 1st & 2nd grades:

Social studies this week focused on creating our class government. Students made campaign signs, wrote speeches and presented their campaign to the class. We held elections for the different offices. The winners of each class government position will be posted on ClassDojo.

Cursive, 1st & 2nd grades:

Students were given a Thanksgiving phrase to write in order to practice cursive writing and connecting letters within the words.

Science, 1st & 2nd grades:

Students did simple experiments with physical changes this week. Experiments involved creating a cube and dissolving sugar. They learned about different ways to create physical changes and how these changes occur.

E.L.A. (English Language Arts), 1st & 2nd grades:

Our classes this week focused on learning about synonyms and using a thesaurus. Students played a synonym game and practiced using a thesaurus.

Report from Elizabeth:

Social Studies—3rd Grade:

Students were busy this week, finishing their little books of geography terms and reviewing for a test over maps and the 50 states. On Friday, many students corrected their tests and submitted their revisions. Students have until Friday after next (December 3rd) to turn in their revisions.

Social Studies—4th and 5th Grades: Students continued to learn about Alexander Hamilton’s plans for the early U.S. economy and about the political parties that developed in response to his plans.

Social Studies—6th - 8th Grades:

This week, students finished their hand-drawn maps of ancient Mesopotamia and answered follow-up questions about their reports.

English—3rd and 4th Grades:

This week, each student received new spelling words, worked on spelling activities, and took a spelling test on Friday. Students answered written questions about their assigned books and met with their discussion groups. They completed an activity about adjectives.

For next week,

- Students reading *Number the Stars*, by Lois Lowry, should read the first few chapters over the break.
- Students reading *Hatchet*, by Gary Paulsen, should read the first few chapters over the break.
- Students reading *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, by Scott O'Dell, should finish the book.

Please remind your student to complete his or her assigned reading by the scheduled day and help your student to study his or her spelling words at home.

English 5th -8th Grades:

This week, each student received new spelling words, worked on spelling activities, and took a spelling test on Friday. Students answered written questions about their assigned books and met with their discussion groups. They completed an activity about adjectives. Our eighth-grade student continued to develop her essay on the theme of adversity and coming-of-age.

For next week,

- Students who were reading *The Liberation of Gabriel King*, by K.L. Going, will receive a new book after the break.
- Students reading *Illegal*, by Francisco X. Stork should finish the book.

Please remind your student to complete his or her assigned reading by the scheduled day and help your student to study his or her spelling words at home.

Music:

On Monday, students learned about rests with different values.

On Wednesday, students learned the notation for staccato and fermata. Their written homework is due on Wednesday.

P.E.:

Students continued learning about soccer this week, practicing dribbling, short passes, and shooting, and learning two positions on offense. Students in 5th-8th grades practiced making passes around defenders. Students who were present for Friday's P.E. class have written homework that is due after the break.

1st and 2nd Grade Writing: This week, students practiced writing about parts of a story, including the setting, character, problem, and solution.

Report from Paul Bowman:

This week the 5th-graders learned about automotive maintenance. We talked about all the fluids, where and when to check them, and what a tune-up means. Then we changed a pretend flat tire on the big white Mercedes. The 3rd- and 4th-graders got to look over a 1963 Lincoln and then finished dismantling their lawnmower engine. We opened the crankcase and removed the piston. We then discussed the entire process of how the machine converts fuel into cutting grass.

Report from Vince:

Computer programming CP-1A, Thursday, 8:30-9:05 AM.

Six students are finishing the disassembly of a defunct laptop computer. We picked out the DVD drive to see its structure, though this is deferred until we can break into its case. We looked at how data of any type is written onto a CD or DVD as laser-readable “pits” burned in by the laser operating at higher power. We looked at how data are stored in bits, then bytes.

Computer programming CP-1B, 3rd grade, Friday, 10:35-11:10 AM

Six students got quickly into Scratch programming. Rates of progress among students remains varied. I consulted with each student to suggest some work-arounds as well as to celebrate accomplishments.

Computer programming CP-2, Tuesday, 2:35-3:10 PM.

Seven students jumped into projects, puzzles, and the Hour of Code as they desired. They are all fast at getting online and working effectively. I looked in on each student’s work, offering a few suggestions, and, for one student, suggesting a big recasting of a project from keystroke cues for action to fully automated action control; she began work quickly and with clear understanding.

Computer programming CP-3, Python, Thursday, 9:05-9:40 AM.

Four students are expanding a program that converts a date (year, month, day, hour) in Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) to Mountain Standard Time. We have to subtract 7 hours, but this can give us negative hours and other problems, so we are developing a logic series to take care of these problems.

Math 8, Thursday, 10:00-10:35 AM. Samantha continues to work at a steady rate in Singapore math book 8A.

Science6-8, Monday, 2:35-3:45 PM. Monday, 2:35-3:45 PM.

We began with examining samples of a number of metals - copper, iron, gallium zinc, tin, zirconium, lead, silicon (semi-metal), bismuth, and sodium. We then discussed experiments – measuring the heat of neutralization of a strong acid by a strong base, and the dramatic burning of magnesium metal to the unusually dense and incredibly white magnesium oxide. We began looking at organic chemistry, from the simplest hydrocarbons as they are modified with functional groups such as hydroxyl to make alcohols; these include the triol, glycerol, occurring in fats and oils. I gave a quiz on basic numerical tracking of atoms in compounds.

Tuesday, 3:10-4:10 PM. We did the combustion of magnesium wire, with all due precautions, including for parents who were gathered outside for picking up their children. We found a huge loss of MgO products a super-white mist. From the use of a propane torch to light the Mg wire we got into the structure of propane and of other hydrocarbons – those with double or triple bonds, those formed in closed rings, those that are “aromatic,” being benzene and its derivatives or related compounds. I gave a quiz on more tracking of where the atoms are and how many there are. **Thursday, 2:35-3:45 PM.** We examined a lot of common chemicals for their formulas, molecular structure, uses, and precautions – first, four common household chemicals: sodium chloride, sugar, starch, and glycerin; next, a selection from our science supplies: individually the nitrates of sodium, potassium, and calcium, then sodium hydroxide, sodium bicarbonate, potassium perchlorate, cupric sulfate, potassium iodide, potassium phosphate dibasic, ammonium chloride, ferrous ammonium sulfate, and a molecular sieve.

Tennis A, 3rd grade, Thursday, 10:35-11:10 AM.

Seven of the eight players were available. They are still improving their aim on the bounce serve. Much of the fun was for the three players rotating out of doubles to chase down balls! I coached players on using sufficient power in the serve and on pursuing the ball for returns.

Tennis B, 4th grade, Friday, 10:00-10:35 AM.

Six players turned out to play doubles. Several players now have more reliable serves, while I continue to work with others on the toss. The group is getting some good returns and some rewarding rallies. Some players are getting to the level stroke on returns.

Tennis C, 5th grade, Wednesday, 9:05-9:40 AM.

Seven players turned out for doubles. This week the play was at least two notches up from last week's! Servers did well as a group, and the teams had real rallies. I kept up my coaching, focusing on adequate power in the serve and charging the ball for returns before it bounces too high or low.

Tennis D, 6th grade, Friday, 9:05-9:40 AM.

The three players rotated into 2-vs.-1 play. They continue to show incremental progress toward low and hard serves, as well as on returns with better control of placement.

Tennis E, Wednesday, 10:00-10:35 AM.

Students A and B and I rotated into singles play. As ever, it is fast-paced and involves a lot of good pursuit of the ball. The students told me that my advantage on the serve is pure speed (they are very good at placement and consistency), so I will help them gain speed.

World culture 5-8, Wednesday, 2:35-3:45 PM.

This week we went to Australia. I prepared for two days by scanning many more slides from the 6 visits that Lou Ellen and I made, 5 with David, in 1980, 1984, 1991, 1994, 1995, and 1996. The class and I dove into the history of Australia, geological, biological, demographic, and political. I showed 200 images from our travels as well as a number of cultural artifacts we brought back. As ever the student questions and comments were voluminous, and I was surprised and pleased that many students knew many things about Australia. I gave a quiz, which included one question asking for each student's choice of which animal they'd like to see in person. Answers ranged from dingo to koala to wombat and beyond.

World culture 3-4, Friday, 2:35-3:45 PM.

Today we went to Costa Rica. We talked about its natural riches – not gold or oil but plants, animals, renewable energy – and its unique social contract with full citizenship for everyone and its abolition of its army in 1949! It's noted among all nations for having the greatest fraction of its land protected as reserves. I showed 103 images from the trip that Lou Ellen, David, and I took in 2011. I gave a quiz at the end.

Report from Yulin:

The Quizlet link to the vocabulary that students have been learning was posted on ClassDojo. Please ask your child(ren) to practice at home.

Kindergarten:

Students reviewed some vocabulary for fruits. They learned Thanksgiving words this week.

Yellow Group:

Students learned Thanksgiving words and wrote the names of what they are thankful for on the Thanksgiving "plates."

Green Group:

Students reviewed some prepositions and Thanksgiving words they learned before. They learned more Thanksgiving words this week. Students wrote the names of what they are thankful for on the Thanksgiving "plates."

Blue Group:

Students learned Thanksgiving words and wrote the names of what they are thankful for on the Thanksgiving "plates."

Purple Group:

Students reviewed the vocabulary for seasons, some adverbs to express the degree of how they like a person, pet or thing. Students also reviewed Thanksgiving words they learned before and learned some more Thanksgiving words. They wrote the names of what they are thankful for on their thank-you letter.

Red Group:

Students reviewed the sentence structures they learned last week. They also briefly reviewed Thanksgiving words, and wrote a thank-you letter.

Golden Group:

Student A briefly reviewed Thanksgiving words and wrote her thank you letter.

Report from Yolanda:**Spanish, kindergarten:**

The class reviewed previously learned vocabulary and worked with Thanksgiving vocabulary using art and games to reinforce the new words.

Spanish, 1st – 2nd grades:

The students practiced saying the date and previously learned vocabulary words; they also worked with the Thanksgiving vocabulary using art activities for reinforcement.

Spanish, 3rd – 5th grades:

Students practiced saying the date and the vocabulary used to express feelings. Students also worked on Thanksgiving vocabulary and did art activities to reinforce learning (they drew a cornucopia and then "filled" it with harvest items).

Spanish, 6th – 8th grades:

The class members worked on Thanksgiving vocabulary; they drew a cornucopia and did an art activity to reinforce the vocabulary.

Report from Lou Ellen:**Math, 1st grade and up:**

Ms. Arielle and I are teaching math together. Most of the students are working very diligently, taking tests when necessary and learning to consistently show their work and write down the units of the problem.

Science, 3rd – 5th grades:

All the students watched the video about the nano packaging for the mRNA COVID vaccines that allows a very good immune response in our bodies. This TED talk by Kathryn Whitehead (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O16Pfv6nd7M>) had far more to understand than most videos that the students have watched, so we watched it several times, with lots of stops to discuss the meaning of words and the importance of individual topics. The 5th-grade students also watched a Crash Course video about DNA and RNA.

Reading, 1st & 2nd grades:

In this class we spend about half the time with me reading to the students and the other half with the students reading silently to themselves. There are two groups of students, so we are reading two different books, *The Year of the Dog*, and *Where the Mountain meets the Moon*, both books by Grace Lin. Both these activities help the student build their vocabularies and get experiences without having to live them.

Thanks due to:

Sandy & Kimberly Cichuniec, Kristian Finlator, and Todd Sibley, for watching over the students during lunch period so the teachers could get together for a meeting; thanks also to **Paul Bowman**, for designing and gathering the materials needed to teach a wonderful course on mechanics for the students; to **Jessica Houston** for running the Lego/engineering club for the younger students; to **Elizabeth Brasher** for organizing and running both the Lego/engineering club for older students and the Theater Club; and to **Wei Tang** for organizing and running the Math Club. Many, many thanks are due to **the teachers** for all their hard work, teaching and keeping the students safe, and to **Vince Gutschick** for his teaching and doing all the numerous financial dealings (invoices, payroll, taxes, insurance, etc.) and other jobs required to keep the Academy legal and functioning. Thanks also to **David Gutschick** for all his IT advice, to keep our computers and other technology functioning. Vince thanks **Lou Ellen** for teaching and doing all the dozens of little jobs that keep the Academy running, including compiling this very newsletter every week.