

October 26, 2013

4th grade parents,

This past week we started new units in Math, Science and Social Studies; we talked about ways to measure length and perimeter, environmental changes and extinction, and pre-Colonial Native American cultures. Our National Chemistry Week field trip to Eastman was a great success, and we've already made many connections across all subjects with the many things we learned there! This coming week we have a field trip to Knoxville on Wednesday to see the Symphony and the East Tennessee History Center, and of course Thursday is Halloween with costumes all day (no masks) and our class party at 1:45.

We've almost completed reading "Little House on the Prairie" and will have our unit test on the book this coming week. We'll then devote two weeks to an autobiographical fiction writing workshop unit before beginning our next literature selection, "The Landry News" by Andrew Clements (one of my favorite authors!) Please ensure that your child has a copy of "The Landry News" by November 18.

The temperature dropped this past week, but as long as it's dry I'd like to let the children blow off steam outside at recess. As you know, I'm originally from Canada - give me a coat, hat and gloves and I'm good to sub-freezing temps! If you like, send an extra hat and gloves along to the classroom - we'll keep them here for whenever your child needs them.

Your child has brought home information regarding a November poetry competition put on by the Monday Club of Johnson City. Ashley middle school students have a long history of winning awards in this optional competition, and I'd love it if some of our 4th graders decide to participate this year. My son won a few years ago with an ode to his grandmother's baking - I tried to inspire the class by showing them the YouTube video of his poem, but I think it mostly made them hungry! <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iHKsOjJr95I>

Conversations starters:

- what does "fighting fire with fire" mean, and how did Pa use it to save the "Little House on the Prairie"?
- what does pizza look like under a microscope?
- how can you estimate distances by using your steps?

Stay warm this weekend!

Mr. Mac