

February 2, 2014

Dear 4th GradeParents,

Word for the week – discombobulated!

dis·com·bob·u·late (dĭs'kəm-bŏb'yə-lāt')

tr.v. **dis·com·bob·u·lat·ed**, **dis·com·bob·u·lat·ing**, **dis·com·bob·u·lates**

To throw into a state of confusion.

The weather delays and snow days made for quite an interesting week as far as our schedule was concerned; I believe that I've now gotten the Jupiter calendar adjusted so that it reflects my new estimates for test and assignment dates, but please email me if you notice anything that looks awry. Our twice-rescheduled field trip to Asheville is now set for Feb 25th – weather permitting!

We did still manage to pack a lot of learning into the short time we had together this week. Here are a couple of extra-curricular items that will not appear in the textbooks or journals: Ask your child about ...

- The volcano Krakatoa and how it affected sunsets around the world for years (this came up when we were talking about water vapor condensing around dust and ash particles in the air)
- The Winter Olympics coming up Feb 7-23 – I've been trying to briefly profile a sport each day before P.E. so the students will understand what they may be hearing and seeing from Sochi

We've come to the end of January, which means that rent and utilities are due! Since we started our Classroom Economy midway through the month, expenses have been pro-rated accordingly. In addition to their weekly salaries, students have had many different opportunities to earn extra money: for exemplary graded work, completing Mr. Mac's Challenges, volunteering to present book reviews to the class, and for completing MobyMax practice questions.

The end of the month also means our first Classroom Economy Monthly Auction! Once their expenses are paid, students may use their savings to bid on items donated for our auction. These include: books, games, craft kits, Pokemon paraphernalia, etc. There are also coupons entitling the winning bidder to priceless privileges such as preferred seating, choosing our Friday lunch-time entertainment, zoo-keeper privileges in Ms. Ferrell's room, and Tori-baked cookies for a week,

Of course, students always have the option of saving their money until next

month. The bank pays 10% interest per month on the lowest daily balance for the month – the students all maxed out their deposits on Friday to make sure they started February with a significant balance just in case they decided to defer on the auction. It will be interesting to see how the bidding goes!

Once the students' Newbery Book Report Project Final Reports are submitted, we will begin to read and study our next literature selection in Language Arts. **Students will need their own copy of Jerry Spinelli's "Maniac Magee" each class starting Feb 10th.** The book is available from Scholastic for \$4.00, on Amazon for about \$6.00, or you can check local bookstores.

Earlier in the year, several students expressed interest in staying after school a day or two each week to help out children from lower grades. The first and second grade teachers are excited by this prospect, so I have decided to discontinue the extra DEAR time each day and we will try out a program of "Math Buddies" and "Reading Buddies" sessions. Please bear with us while we work out the details – watch this space!

Special thanks to Peggy (and her kids) for donating auction items this week, and to Lisa for bringing in extra snacks for the class.

Punxsutawney Phil, Chattanooga Chuck and Wireton Willie (Canada) all forecast 6 more weeks of winter today – let's keep our fingers crossed that we don't have any more weather weeks like the one just past!

Enjoy the Super Bowl – I don't really care who wins as long as it's a good game, but I would like to see Richard Sherman get burned a few times by Peyton!

Mr. Mac