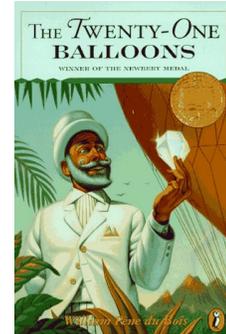


April 12, 2014

Parents,

This week in 4th grade saw us reach the explosive conclusion to William Pène du Bois' Newbery-award winning "The Twenty-One Balloons". I hope the students enjoyed this story and learned a little about world geography, geology, aeronautics, and international culture – but most of all I hope that my reading this book aloud over the past month served to spark their intellectual curiosity and enhance their passion for reading. Why this exciting book has never been turned into a movie I can't imagine!



Curiosity has certainly been aroused this week in Hot Wheels! I brought my own children's collection in to help students connect with our unit on Motion and Forces, and now the track and cars get pulled out every recess – inside or outside. A select few cars have successfully negotiated the daunting "Triple Loop", and some have even jumped over a foot and landed back on the track! Whether or not this helps them remember the definition for inertia, I hope the students have learned that science and play are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

The students' passion for theater continues unabated – I found a readers theater piece on the Constitution called "Unite or Die" that they constantly ask to perform. We don't have time every day (although they are welcome to practice at home!), but I have promised them we will read it again on Monday as part of our review for Tuesday's unit test. The most hilarious part of the piece has to be when Ella has an argument with herself (roles were assigned randomly, and Ella represents two states that get into a spirited discussion).

Check out the web site for the students' "Legendary" stories – they have almost all been published now. Feel free to read the stories of children other than your own – many of the stories detail adventures of multiple class members!

Finally, ask your children about manatees, an "umbrella species" with "marching molars". Along with Ella's excellent daily news reports, we've been listening to "Pulse of the Planet" <http://www.pulseplanet.com/> this week during our morning meetings.

As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions, comments or suggestions. Have a wonderful weekend!

Mr. Mac