

school notes

COMPILED BY SUSAN BRAUN JOHNSON

Capitol Hill Day School

As you read this, the memory of the double blizzard of 2010 is probably already dimming. At Capitol Hill Day School, however, the students will not soon forget the unprecedented number of snow days that followed the announcement of Arctic explorer Matthew Henson as the subject for our school-wide Black History Month study and discussion. Talk about raising experiential learning to new levels!

Black History Month

Matthew Henson, an African American, accompanied Robert Peary on various expeditions, including the 1909 expedition that claimed to be the first to reach the Geographic North Pole. Henson was an expert dog and sled handler, as well as fluent in the Inuit language of the polar region. This fluency allowed him to learn from the native Inuit about how to live in that extreme and hostile climate – lessons Henson shared with the members of the Peary expedition. Historians agree that Henson's skills and knowledge were critical to the success of the 1909 expedition.

Throughout February, teachers integrated information about Matthew Henson into their daily classroom lessons in history, science, literature, art, and music. Lisa Sommers, CHDS Field Education Coordinator, worked with teachers to make sure that the weekly field trips each grade enjoys tied into and supported their



CHDS Future Explorers [credit: Venuta Carulli]

classroom studies. The month culminated in an all-school assembly during which each class presented some aspect of their study of Henson.

Beginning in 2001, CHDS students have celebrated Black History Month with a school-wide study of a prominent African American. Past honorees have included poet Langston Hughes, artist Romare Bearden, dancer/choreographer Katherine Dunham, physician Ben Carson, track and field legend Wilma Rudolph, astronaut Mae Jemison, the Pinkney family of children's book illustrators, and Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund. - Jane Angarola, janea@chds.org, 210 South Carolina Ave., SE, 202.386.9919; www.chds.org.

Sock Hop at River Park Nursery School

Dance away the winter blues at River Park's Annual Sock Hop! Wear your poodle skirt or leather jacket and jitterbug over to RPNS on March 13th from 4-7pm. Food, old-fashioned root beer floats, hot popcorn and more will be on hand and for the old-timers, there will be a cash bar selling beer and wine. Enter the dance contest, learn to hula hoop, or get your face painted. There will also be a silent auction with some fantastic items to raise money for the school. Tickets are \$20 per family if you reserve a spot beforehand or \$25 at the door. Contact Kristy Dechambeau at mb_plant@mac.com for more information. Suzanne Nelson.


212 East Capitol St. www.riverparknurseryschool.org or call 202 546-7767.

Payne Elementary is a World Cultures School

Payne is one of thirteen DC Public schools selected to transform into a theme-based catalyst school and their theme is World Cultures. Students engage in several activities and experiences that expose them to

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7th Grade analyzed the organic matter in Chesapeake Bay during an overnight trip.





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For the more mature ones, Discovery Adventure Camps offers a full array of exciting offerings from cruising the Potomac and the Anacostia Rivers aboard the Half Shell, our historic Chesapeake Bay buy boat, to daily escapades which include rock climbing, canoeing, swimming, biking, and more. Camps at Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens will inspire your young Explorers and Adventurers to let their imagination run wild. An Adventurer camps favorite, Marooned, is back by popular demand! Campers will have a chance to explore the local flora and fauna, and hike Kingman Island for some treasure hunts. Please visit www.livingclassroomsdc.org/SummerCamp often for updates on registration and to find out more about camp offerings. Make sure to also visit our family program's page for a sneak peak of the activities and events going on at our sites until the camps start!

If you wish to receive a brochure of our 2010 camps, please contact Anne Zuk, Director of Camps
AZuk@LivingClassroomsDC.org or 202-488-0627 ext 236



Payne Elementary students learn how to use chopsticks as part of the school's World Cultures theme.

various cultures to develop an appreciation for diversity.

The Preschool students created "passports" and traveled on an imaginary airplane to China where they experienced the country through a variety of hands-on adventures. The dramatic play area was transformed into a traditional Chinese home. Students built the Great Wall of China in the block area. They dressed in traditional Chinese clothing, listened to stories, sang songs, played games, completed art projects and celebrated the Chinese New Year. The students were especially excited about watching the panda bear web cam at the National Zoo as Tai Shan was prepared for his move to China. Visitors who had the opportunity to live in China shared their experiences and pictures with the class.

Visit the Early Childhood open house March 3rd from 9 to 11 a.m. to get an inside look at the program. You will be impressed with what's on offer. -Juanita Stokes, Pre-school Teacher, Vielka Scott-Marcus, Principal. 305 15th St. SE. 202-698-3262; vielka.scott@dc.gov.

Tyler Elementary's Outdoor Classroom

This past fall, Tyler Elementary School completed construction of its Outdoor Classroom which provides a playground area for the younger grades, reduces storm water runoff from the school by creating more pervious surfaces, and provides en-

vironmental education opportunities for teachers and students. As the snows melt, and spring approaches, plans are underway to plant native trees, shrubs and plants in the Outdoor Classroom.

Tyler recently received a \$14,500 grant from the DC Public Library and the Institute of Museum and Library Services for an Environmental Storytelling project that will provide environmental education training for the teachers, establish an Environmental Resource Center in the school's library, and provide environmental-themed classroom opportunities for all students at the school.

Jeanette Stewart, founder and President of the non-profit organization Lands and Waters, provided a two-hour environmental education overview for the teachers this past October. Stewart is now working with each class at Tyler to do an age-appropriate environmental project. For example, the first-graders have worked with the story My Roommates are a Bunch of Worms, and have set up worm compost bins in their classrooms.

In addition to the teacher training, and classroom projects, Tyler is establishing an Environmental Resource Center in the library that will contain environmental-education themed books for the classroom teachers, and environmental-themed books for the students. This Environmental Resource Center will allow the Tyler librarian, Audrey Duff, to

provide a continuing source of inspiration and ideas for the teachers to help them incorporate the Tyler Outdoor Classroom into their curriculum. -Catherine Jouet. 1001 G St. SE; www.tylerelementary.net

Brent Families Hold First Ever Bird Count

On Jan. 20, Brent Elementary School held its first New Year's Bird Count for Kids. The event was organized by Brent's science teacher Mike Mangiaracina and is part of the school's ongoing commitment to involving children more with the natural world.

Bird Counts for Kids began in 2007 and are modeled on the National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Counts. Brent's event is the first of its kind in our area, and one of the first in the nation.

Despite a heavy snowstorm, more than 60 families came out for the event. Brent's students recorded 20 species of birds at Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, the U.S. Nation-

White-Throated Sparrows, and an American Crow standing out stark against the snow.

As part of the celebration, Brent families enjoyed a show of live birds of prey put on by Alita Dusk of the Virginia Raptor Conservancy. Mary Deinlein from the Smithsonian's Migratory Bird Center displayed several varieties of bird specimens. Alicia King helped prepare the young bird watchers with a slide-show on bird identification. Lunch was donated by RE/max Realty.

"This event was a huge success," said Mangiaracina, "both children and adults came away with a new appreciation for birds and the world around them."

Brent students currently share information on migrating birds with a sister school in Jardin, Colombia through the Smithsonian's Migratory Bird Center, students track butterfly migration through a partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, and an after-school bird club submits data to Cornell University's Celebrate Urban Birds program..



Brent's students recorded 20 species of birds at Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, the U.S. National Arboretum, and Haines Point during a blizzard!

al Arboretum, and Haines Point. Bird-walks were led by local and nationally recognized birding experts. Leaders included the American Bird Association's Paul Baicich, Alicia King, from the U.S. Forest Service, and Sidwell Friends School environmental science teacher Dave Wood. Highlights for the students included a Bald Eagle, a flock of

Brent's Taste of the Hill is Coming

"Brent's Taste of the Hill" will be held April 17 at 6p.m. at St. Mark's Church on 3rd and A St. SE. Please contact Julie Santoboni at jsantoboni@gmail.com for ticket information. - Angie Lundberg

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Capitol Hill Cooperative Nursery School

The Spring PJ Party

Save the Date: the CHCNS welcome you to the spring fundraiser on April 30. It's a Pajama Party! You can drop-off your children for an evening of fun and frolic while you take off for the evening. Planned activities at the pajama party include a storyteller, live children's music, food, crafts and games. Children (ages 2-7) are asked to attend in their pajamas. Older siblings are welcome and hopefully willing to assist a little with babysitting -- especially alumni. This year they will be offering an online payment option for pre-payment or for those willing to make a donation. To RSVP, please check the school website at www.chcns.us or contact Tara Flakker, at tara@flakker.com or 202-558-2478. Please RSVP by April 15th. The PJ party will take place on April 30 from 5-10 p.m. Prices are: \$35 for 1 child; \$50 for 2 children, \$75 for three or more. St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 3rd and A Sts., SE.

St. Peter School

The St. Peter School Green Club is saving the planet, one step at a time! The club kicked off the school year with

a trip to the Solar Decathlon, witnessing the amazing developments twenty college and university teams displayed during a competition to design, build and operate the most attractive and energy-efficient solar-powered house. Inspired by the college students' energy and commitment, club members launched a school-wide composting program. The entire school community learned about composting food and two solar cone composters were installed in the school garden. In the coming weeks, the club will become a member of Cartridges for Kids®, a program that helps protect the environment by keeping electronics out of landfills. The club will be collecting and recycling used cell phones, empty laser, fax, copier, and inkjet cartridges as well as, laptops, Palm Pilots, iPods, video games, GPS Systems, DVD's and digital cameras. Not only will the collection effort help preserve the environment, it offers a way to raise funds for St. Peter School!

School Nurse Grant

Once again, St. Peter School has received a generous grant from the Robert Earll McConnell Foundation/Citigroup to help fund the school nurse position. St. Peter School is fortunate to have Mrs. Ester Ackerman, a former St. Peter School parent, serving as school nurse. The entire school community appreciates

the generous grant aimed at helping keep our students healthy! -Sally Aman. St. Peter School is located at 422 Third St. SE; 202-544-1618, www.stpetersinterparish.org.

Maury Elementary Maury at the Market

Maury at the Market, a silent auction, is the school's biggest fundraiser of the year. Every Maury student in every grade will benefit from the proceeds of this fun event for grown-ups. Some of the great items for bid include brunch at the Four Seasons, a sunset schooner ride party, and a private tour of National's Park.

Advance tickets are \$20 per person (\$25 at the door), and include admission, two drink tickets and heavy hors d'oeuvres. Pre-purchase tickets at the March 18 Maury PTA meeting. Discounted baby sitting for Maury at the Market will be offered at the Family Room on 8th St. SE. To purchase tickets, please ask a Maury family, or go to www.mauryelementary.com for more information.

Maury to Get Green Roof

Last March, Maury PTA's School Improvement Committee submitted a grant application to DDOE for a green roof retrofit over the entrance of the school. A green roof is a great way to transform an unused space



Maury at the Market Fundraiser will be held Mar.20, 7 to 9:30 p.m. at Eastern Market's North Hall, 7th & North Carolina, SE.

into a potential learning resource for the school while helping to reduce storm water runoff from the school site as well. OPEFM kicked-off the design of the green roof and confirmed that installation should occur over the summer. When staff and students return to school in August, our green roof will be in place. To learn more about the project, contact Committee Chair Kristina Vidal at darthcurlus@yahoo.com.

Maury 5th Grade Creates a Living Classroom

Maury is one of five DC public schools participating in Living Classrooms' Schoolyard Stewards program, a greening program funded by NOAA. 5th grade students will work to install a terraced pollinator garden on the school's Constitution Ave. hillside. Living Classrooms staff visit the 5th grade at least 5 times over the school year to teach lessons about the Chesapeake Bay watershed, storm water runoff, erosion, and worm composting. During each class students spend time preparing the garden site for planting. The program also includes field trips, including exploring the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers by boat and Kingman Island nature hikes. - Maury Elementary PTA.

13th and Constitution NE. www.mauryelementary.com, 202-698-3838.

Strong John Thomson Elementary

Thomson Elementary celebrated Family Reading Night in style! With the generous support from friends

St Peter School Green Club installing composters. Photo Credit: Ian Roberts.



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kidfamily|school notes



Strong John Thomson Elementary Celebrates Family Reading Night

at NAESP (National Association of Elementary School Principals), MetLife, and Scholastic, they had a standing room only event. The night began with a PTO meeting translated into our three main languages (English, Spanish and Chinese) and lots of pizza. Children then went to one of eight different "country" classrooms to read around the world. Teachers and volunteers read traditional stories from various places around the globe such as Cameroon, China, Venezuela, and Vietnam. Some of the readers wore traditional dress from the chosen country or spoke the country's native language like Spanish. Children listened to the folk tales of the selected country, learned some facts about the region and then engaged in lively chats about the books.

While the children were engrossed in story time, adults had a guided discussion about literacy. They broke into small groups to discuss the importance of reading and family traditions surrounding literacy and discussed the methods Thomson uses to create lifelong readers.

Children also made their own book and browsed the Book Fair. Because of the generosity of Thomson's sponsors, children left with a book they created and one brand new book of their choosing. While Family Events are always well-attended, special thanks goes to the sponsors who truly made this a night to remember. Go Thomson Tigers! -Liz Daley.

1200 L St. NW;
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Ludlow-Taylor Introducing Ms. Derick, Arts Integration Coordinator

The recent production of "The Rough Faced Girl," a Korean Cinderella story by Ludlow-Taylor's 2nd and 3rd graders, provides a glimpse of the vast possibilities of arts integration. Students began by reading a series of Cinderella stories from various cultures and learned how to identify unique aspects of different cultures in each story. They then focused on the Korean version. A specialist came to help them make headbands with Korean symbols and teach them a song and dance. The projected culminated in a school-wide performance in February.

The arts program has just gotten a tremendous boost with the hiring of Ms. Eliza Derick as the full-time Arts Integration Coordinator, a major step forward in the process of LT's conversion into a full-fledged arts catalyst school. Ms. Derick comes to LT with a M.A. in Special Education with an emphasis in the arts and five years of classroom teaching experience, including stints at the Lab School and Key Elementary School. She has also served as the dance instructor at LT through the Fillmore Arts Center program.

Ms. Derick will begin with a planning phase, focusing on staff development, identifying materials, and creating a budget. She hopes to get the students working on a series of indoor and outdoor murals and mosaics soon. Ms. Derick envisions connecting such projects to science and math lessons, with students identifying the best materials to use and quantifying the square footage and materials for each project. Building on the ties with the

parents, community, local businesses, and institutions such as the Atlas and Kennedy Center is also high on the priority list.

Ms. Derick believes using the arts and multiple learning styles "allows the child to access the information in a way that comes more naturally thus giving them personal ownership over their educational experience and leading to concept mastery." - Donny Kirsch. 659 G St. NE, www.ludlowtaylor.org.



Ms. Eliza Derick, Ludlow-Taylor's new Arts Integration Coordinator



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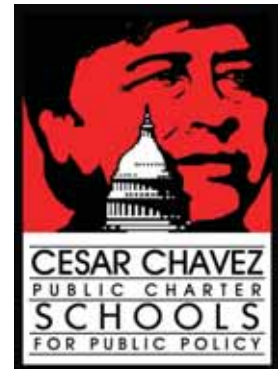
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Jefferson Middle School Students Learn to Sail with DC Sail in SW

Youth Sailing on the Southwest Waterfront!

DC Sail, the sailing division of the National Maritime Heritage Foundation, is in the midst of planning some great youth sailing programs for 2010. DC Sail is a community based non-profit sailing organization, dedicated to enhancing the lives of both children and adults through maritime experiences. It is located on the Southwest Waterfront on Water St. and offers many affordable ways that people of all ages can learn to sail or continue to expand their sailing knowledge.

In the fall of 2009, DC Sail added a new, fully grant-funded, after-school program called Learn to Swim and Sail. It partnered with Jefferson Middle School to safely introduce students to the marine environment around them. Their popular Kids Set Sail summer day camp for youth ages 7-14. KSS offers eight one-week sessions from June 21 - August 13, Mon- Fri. KSS gives participants the skills to be successful beginner and intermediate sailors and seeks to increase their knowledge of science, technology, engineering and math concepts related to sailing. It also engages youth in physical fitness, teaches leadership, teamwork and decision-making skills, but students hardly realize they are learning because it is fun and engaging! Need-based scholarships are available for all of the youth programs. Please contact Sailing Director, Blair Overman at boverman@nmhf.org or 202-547-1250 with questions. Read more about sailing on www.nmhf.org. -Emily Rodegast. ★



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