

Dear Parents,

There has been a flurry of activity this week in K/1. We had lots of things to accomplish in a limited amount of time. We wanted to finish our novel study, *Mr. Popper's Penguins*, before the break and watch the movie based on the novel. We figured out that in order to finish the novel, we would have to read, on average, two chapters a day. We found time throughout the days and finished on Tuesday. Everyone seemed engaged and interested in this classic tale and it led to all kinds of discussions and predictions.

We discovered that the book was published in 1938. We did the math to figure out how many years ago that was and the children were astonished that it has been around almost 80 years. This led to a discussion about the years we were born and how the 1900's turned into the 2000's, and how all of them were born in 2010 and 2011. That seems incredible to me how young they are (but also so bright and wise)! When I showed them on a whiteboard what the years we were born looked like in numeral form, they were surprised that I wasn't born in the 2000's like they were. A side story: On my birthday this week, I had as the question of the day, "If Ms. Leslie is _____ today, how old was she 10 years ago?" Many of the students figured out the correct answer, but for some reason two of them came up with 12. One other student saw that and said, "That can't be right. She'd be a teenager!" Too funny! At least none of them added 10 years to my current age.

Our busy week included working on a secret project. The students worked very hard on their writing/spelling/decorating and I am proud of them for their perseverance. We took a little walking field trip to complete the last step of our project. Hopefully you all will receive a special surprise soon and can enjoy and appreciate your children's handiwork.

Going along with our rock exploration, we were fortunate this week to have two rock collectors/experts come in to do a presentation and question/answer session with us. They brought in rocks they had collected from all around the world and let the children see and touch many of them. They also answered the students'

questions and examined rocks from the children's collections in order to help identify them. I had each child write a question on a notecard and read them to our experts. The questions were very interesting and well thought out. Some of the questions: How many rocks do you have? Did you collect any quartz? Which is your favorite rock? Did you ever collect rocks from caves? Is chalk made from rock? How do rocks change shape/color? I think our visitors reignited our excitement about rocks and when we come back in January we will continue with our exploration. Speaking of rocks, we have been listening to a lot of fun holiday music in our room recently and found a wonderful song called "Box of Rocks." The children requested to hear it daily and would do a sing along in class. I'm sure they'd be happy to perform it for you at home if you ask about it. :)

We finished our short week watching the movie version of Mr. Popper's Penguin. It was very different from the book and we created a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast the book and the movie. I think most everyone enjoyed the movie but some of the students were disappointed that specific characters or scenes from the book were not in the movie. We definitely enjoyed our special movie snacks and a big thank you to Ms. Dionysia for providing "safe" popcorn and rice krispie treats for us.

A few more notes: Our Scholastic book order arrived earlier this week but a few of the free books that the children picked out were not included in the box. They assured me that they would send them with expedited delivery so they would arrive by today. Unfortunately the order did not arrive today so I will pass out the students' free books in January when all of them have arrived.

Have a wonderful winter break and very happy holidays! As I told the children today when I said goodbye to them, "See you next year!"

Ms. Leslie