

The Kino Connection

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Rodeo Round Up

The day before rodeo vacation is always special for Kino primary students because it's the day of the rodeo cookout. Students stay at school until seven o'clock. Out under the palo verde trees, as the sun goes down, they do a little square dancing and a little roping, and roast marshmallow over the bonfire. This year they also made quesadillas, ate chips and salsa, and drank some sarsaparilla. After listening to stories in the twilight, they traditionally end the night howling at the moon.



Rodeo inspires two weeks' worth of primary Language Arts activities before the cook out. Mary Jane says,

"We started this year by reading western stories, like **The Cactus Hotel** and **Cowboy Big and Cowboy Small**. We took a field trip to Old Tucson, and then wrote about our experiences in our journals. Our music teacher, Lisa Otey, sang western songs with us. We learned about western folklore, clothing, customs, and food."

Libby has a collection of hats, chaps, vests, scarfs, serapes, and boots so everyone can dress up in character.

If we needed to list the academic areas touched on by these two weeks, it would go on and on: listening to and reading stories, writing in journals, lots of drawing, dancing, music, cooking, history, folklore, the desert ecology, local heritage and other cultures. But there are also ineffable and unmeasurable lessons: relating, cooperating, taking turns, enjoying each other's company, a firmer sense of the world and one's surroundings, a sense that school is not only a welcoming place, but a magical one as well.



Bookman's Concert: Music students are giving a concert with Lisa Otey at the Bookman's at Thorneydale and Ina tomorrow -- March 6 -- at 6 pm.

Clean Up Day: Also tomorrow, March 6. We'll be working mostly outside, so bring your favorite tools and work gloves. But there's work to do indoors as well if that's your thing. We'll be at it from 9 until 1.

OPEN HOUSE MARCH 7, FROM 2 TO 4.

People who would like to learn more about Kino can drop in for a tour and a chance to talk to some of the teachers. If you know anyone who might be interested, please let them know!

A Bit of Italy

March 13, 6 - 9

Everyone plan to attend and enjoy our biggest fundraiser of the year, with good food and the opportunity to bid on lots of bargains and treasures. Please invite friends and family so it will be the biggest success possible.

Admission is \$20, which includes an Italian dinner (with vegetarian options) catered by Caruso's Restaurant. Admission for children who are 10 and under is only \$10. You can also look forward to cannoli from Roma's, tiramisu homemade by Io's mom Elena, and cupcake making for the kids.

Some of the treasures to be auctioned off are a 1997 U of A basketball autographed by retired coach Lute Olson! Themed baskets assembled by each homeroom! Original art! Hand crafted jewelry! Cookies by Marjie Kosky(always a favorite)! Weekend retreats at San Carlos, Mexico, and the Chiricahuas! A behind the scene tour at the Arizona Sonoran Desert Museum! Plus scores of gift certificates and tickets for restaurants, bookstores, museums, services, and performances!

There's still time to make a donation! Talk to Lisa Watmore if you have something to donate or are interested in helping on the night of the auction.

NEWS FROM THE BOARD: NO TUITION INCREASE

The Kino Board of Directors voted last week to keep tuition for the 2010 - 2011 school year at the same levels as this year's.

We are already accepting registrations for next year. Current students will be receiving registration forms in the mail soon. As always, our students will receive a break in the registration fee if you send it in by the mid-April deadline.

Author Eleanor Davis talks about Kino in a March 4 interview at writeclubpodcast.blogspot.com. Eleanor's latest book, which was dedicated to Kino, received a Cybil award for being the Best Graphic Novel of 2009 for children.

Glib Communication in Sign Language Class

I had a great time this Thursday interviewing Sarah Waegh, who comes up to Kino on Tuesdays and Thursdays to teach Sign Language. It was fun because Sarah herself is friendly and interesting, but it was Maia's and Ariel's fluency in interpreting for Sarah and me that made our conversation particularly memorable.

I learned that American Sign Language, or ASL, is a language in itself. It has its own rules and grammar, as other languages do. The difference is that one uses one's hands and facial expressions to communicate. Ariel explained that they have been using a text book, memorizing vocabulary, and doing grammar exercises, just like other language classes. ASL is recognized as a foreign language by colleges when they are evaluating applicants' transcripts.

At this point in the year, three students are in Sarah's class. (Zoë wasn't in class this week because she is on the Creative Writing retreat.) In addition to completing the textbook lessons, they do a lot of conversing and they play communication games, like Apples to Apples and telephone.

I put Ariel's and Maia's vocabulary to the test by asking if it was an immersion class. That's when I noticed that ASL can be augmented by spelling out words with fingered symbols. Sarah explained, "It's important to learn to sign the alphabet before anything else." She said at the beginning of the year they would write to each other on the white board, but after a month or so she told them she didn't want to rely on that any more.

Sarah grew up in California, but she has been living in Tucson for seven years. This class at Kino is her first experience with teaching a sign language class, but she has been, and continues to be, a sign language tutor at Pima College. Her husband, who is hearing, did not know any sign language when he met her. Sarah described some of her experiences at Pima College, and how people sometimes assumed she was arrogant because she would not reply when they said hi. She is anything but!

