

Science News

October 2006

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Dear Parents,

It was great to see you at Back-to-School Night. If you did not make it, I handed out the syllabus and grading scheme for the course. Also, I requested that each parent fill out a contact card with email address and phone number. If you did not fill out the card or did not make it to Back-to-School Night, please be sure to email me with this information at jpaton@nysmith.com. Thank you in advance.

It is hard to believe that we are already in our sixth week into the school year. Over the past month, we finished our unit on thermodynamics. Students built solar collectors to see how much heat they could capture from the sun. We had one solar collector heat up 53°! We also attempted to make ice cream using our knowledge of phase changes and heat transfer, but we won't get into the details of how that turned out. Let's just say that some students were drinking very cold lime-green heavy whipping cream.

Currently, we are studying the forces of flight and Newton's Laws of Motion. We have worked it out with one of the third grade teachers that the eighth graders will have a chance to teach two third-grade classes Newton's Laws of Motion in the spring. We are very excited to have the students become "teachers" for a day. With this activity, and many of our activities, we are trying to get students to describe the concepts of Physics in their own words – to test their own understanding of the material. We hope that this will prepare them for the caliber of thinking they will be expected to do in less than a year, when they are enrolled in high school.

At the end of this month and the beginning of November, students will have a chance to visit the Udvar-Hazy Center in Dulles and the Challenger Center in Alexandria where they will simulate a mission to Mars. These are two very exciting trips for us to look forward to. So, we look forward to having another productive and exciting month with your students!

Jacqueline Paton & Luba Presnetsova

HOMEWORK:

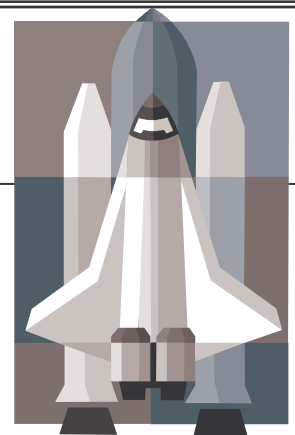
Students have homework assignments every week. Because these make up the bulk of their grades, we encourage you to be on top of your student's work. It is also each student's individual responsibility to see us if they have missed work or are having difficulty with the material.

Upcoming Events

- 10.09 Columbus Day (No School)
- 10.11 High School Fair
- 10.16 Science Fair Proposals Due
- 10.23 8A to Challenger Center
- 10.24 8B to Challenger Center
- 11.02 Udvar-Hazy Center Trip

Science Fair:

As a reminder, students are required to present an independent science fair project. Students should not have projects that include anything that could not be brought onto school property. For this reason, students should not bring their projects until their proposals have been approved. Written project proposals must be submitted by October 16th. Our policy for late work is that students will only receive half-credit for work turned in after the due date. This policy holds true for any Science Fair due dates.



Contact Information:

Please feel free to contact either of us if you should have any questions or concerns. We look forward to hearing from you.

Phone: (703) 713-3332 ext. 1137

E-mail: jpaton@nysmith.com or lpresnetsova@nysmith.com