

Science News!!!

I can't believe the year is over already! It has been a wonderful year with the students expanding their scientific knowledge and skills. I'm already looking forward to next year and thinking about new ways to approach the curriculum.

Summer time is a great time to show your students how science is everywhere! Here are just a few suggestions of how you can continue your child's science education this summer.

- ➡ **Go to the beach!** Surfing, swimming, boogieboarding, looking at tidepools all get kids in touch and aware of their surroundings and the marine environment. Have them pay attention to shells that they find, differences in weather, wave patterns, learn to identify some of the local birds, and keep an eye out for whales, dolphins, otters and sea lions. Don't forget to take a garbage bag and spend a few minutes at the end of your visit doing a family beach clean-up. Imagine what the beaches would look like if we all picked up a few pieces of garbage as we walked along the shore!
- ➡ **Enjoy our local state parks!** Yes, I know they are talking about closing them, but they are still our best, and cheapest, source of family entertainment. Whether you are hiking, mountain biking or horseback riding, take some time to look at the local plants and animals. Try to learn some of the native birds and plants, or do a "poop hike" where you look for animal scat and try to find out what the animals were eating. Look for local fossils or different rock types. Castle Rock is a great spot for this as is Nisene Marks. Henry Cowell and Big Basin are great for longer hikes that go through different ecosystems, and I highly recommend the Skyline to the Sea day hike. You will see some of the best parts of our Santa Cruz Mountains including old growth redwoods, beautiful waterfalls and some spectacular views.
- ➡ **Grow a vegetable garden!** Not only is it a tasty field trip, it's a great way for kids to see where their food comes from. It's still not too late to plant many varieties of vegetables that you can harvest well into the fall.
- ➡ **Visit a local zoo or marine park.** The San Francisco and Oakland Zoos are wonderful, award winning facilities that do a tremendous amount of work in education and preservation of many animal species. Marine World is a fun (and wet!) way to experience some amazing marine animals. The Monterey Aquarium and Longs Marine Lab are amazing facilities and we are so blessed to have them in our own backyards. The California Academy of Science in San Francisco has recently re-opened and I hear it is an incredible facility!

- ➡ **Cook! Bake! Eat! Everything we cook and eat has to do with chemistry. Measuring ingredients reinforces fractions and following a recipe models following procedures for a lab activity. Read those labels and calculate daily sodium, fat and sugar intakes for just one day. I bet it will be an eye-opening experience!**
- ➡ **Start thinking now about a Science Fair project idea for next year. It's never too early!**

I hope you all have a fun, restful and creative summer! Take care and I'll see you next year!

Grace be with you all.

Pat Garske