



January 2013 Edition

Willis Elementary Newsletter

A HAPPY  
NEW YEAR

Volume 8, Issue 1

# Gecko Gazette

## From the Desk of the Principal

### Dates to Remember

1/8 - Student's Return

1/11 - Fri. - Dress Down \$2.00 and  
Red Elephant Spirit Day 11:00AM-  
11:00PM

1/18 - Fri. - No School

1/21 - Mon. - No School

1/22 - Tues - SAC Meeting 6:00PM

1/28 - Chili's Spirit Night 11:00AM -  
11:00PM

1/30 - Wed. - Student Planned Meal

1/31 - Thurs. - Superbowl  
Celebration in Cafeteria

Dear Willis Families,

**Happy New Year! We hope everyone had a great Holiday Season and enjoyed the Winter Break with family and friends. It is hard to believe we are about to begin the second half of this school year! We have had a busy and exciting year so far and there is much more to come. We really appreciate all of the support we have received from the Willis families thus far this year and look forward to continuing that partnership for the remainder of this school year.**

**In addition to the opportunity to teach our students every day, we also have some exciting events coming up for the second half of the year. Please check out the exceptional PTO website at <http://www.williselementarypto.com/> for the latest up-to-date event information. This month's newsletter features our Fine Arts team and highlights all of the special learning that is happening in those areas. You are also welcomed to visit your child's classroom website to learn more about what is happening in the classroom.**

Until next month,



Principal, Bill Stenger

# A Brand New Look!

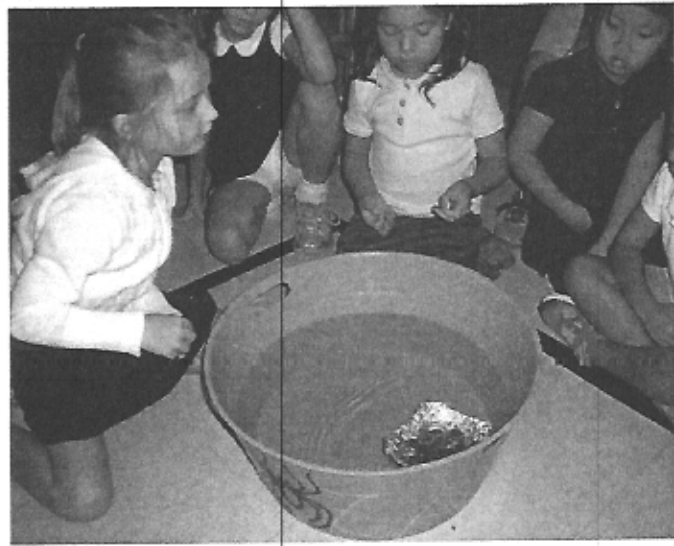
This year our newsletter is getting a makeover!

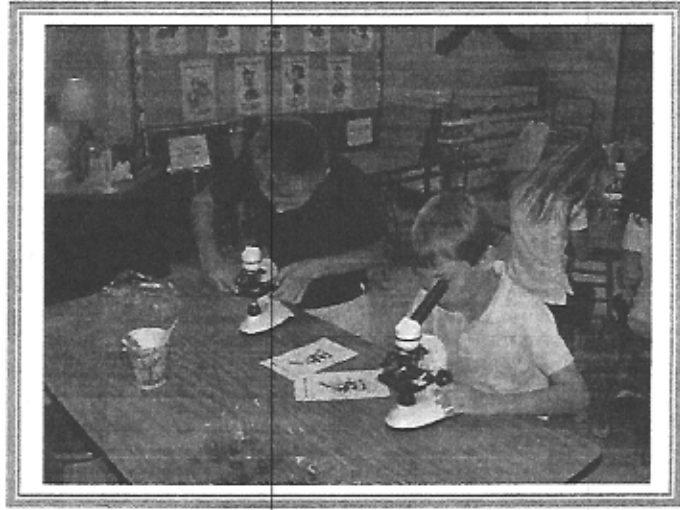


The newsletter will now focus mainly on the Specials areas, Office news, The Nurse and the Cafeteria. To streamline the Newsletter, you can find information about classroom news from each teacher's website. And don't forget the Willis PTO website has a wealth of information to offer our parents [www.williselementarypto.com](http://www.williselementarypto.com)

## Science Lab News

- What's Happening in Our Science Lab?
- The Science Fair was a great success and now the Science Lab is humming with experiments at each grade level.
- Our Kindergarten is learning about the Sun and Moon. We've read several good books, watched some entertaining videos, and have drawn pictures to understand that the Sun appears during the day and the Moon appears during the night and only sometimes during the day. We've also talked about planets in our solar system and how these planets relate to each other.
- The first grade was amazed at how gravity affects objects the same regardless of their size and composition. We also spent quite a bit of time on force and motion. Using a marble track to show up, down, zig zag, straight, forward, and backward was great fun! Another great activity was trying to design a boat out of aluminum foil that could float the most pennies.





• The second grade is starting their unit on Earth's materials. We examined igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic rocks as well as read about the rock cycle. Prior to this, we learned about our skeletal system and some of our body's organs. We are very lucky to have a skeleton model that is actual size and a smaller sized model to show all the organs in our abdomen and chest.

• The third grade has spent the last few weeks working with our microscopes to examine different types and parts of plants. We are very lucky to have enough microscopes that each student can use their own while in the science lab. Our third grade also spent some time learning about different animal habitats and how plants and animals are classified.

• The fourth grade has spent the last few weeks finishing up on their Science Fair presentations and learning about animal and plants. Owl pellets are the regurgitation of fur and bones that owls cannot digest. It helps us to understand habitats and food chains/webs.

• The fifth grade has also spent the last few weeks finishing up on their Science Fair presentations. We then moved on to matter and its properties. We've reviewed how to use a pan balance and graduated cylinder correctly and how to calculate density.

• Our students are doing a great job with the activities that are reinforcing what they learn in their regular classroom. Keep up the good work, Geckos!

*Amy Ross Bradl*  
*Science Enrichment*



• The art room is exploding with creative vigor. Students are working on a variety of new and improved lessons that focus on the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. As a result, 10 phenomenal works will be on public display in the First Manatee Exhibit Building at the Manatee County Fairgrounds, January 17-27, 2013. Congratulations to Sarah E. (5th), Katie D. (5th), Daniel H.(1st), Ava C.(K), Connor K.(5th), Tyler S. (5th), Campbell L.(3rd), Joseph C.(3rd), Hope M.(4th), and Morgan R (4th).

• "While students in art classes learn techniques specific to art, such as how to draw, how to mix paint, or how to center a pot, they're also taught a remarkable array of mental habits not emphasized elsewhere in schools."

• —Lois Hetland and Ellen Winner (Educational researchers at Harvard's Project Zero)

• Until next time, draw on your creativity.



Ava C.



Campbell L.



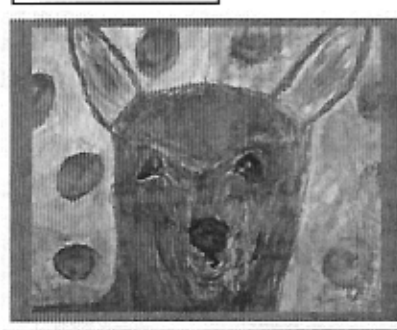
Connor K.



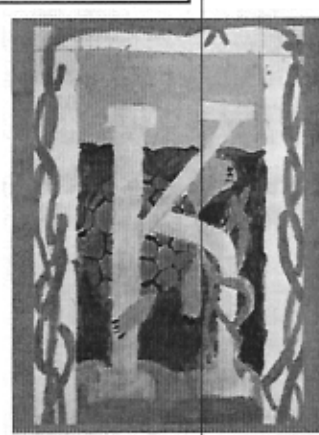
Joseph C.



Daniel H.



Hope M.



Katie D.



Morgan R.



Sarah E.



Tyler S.

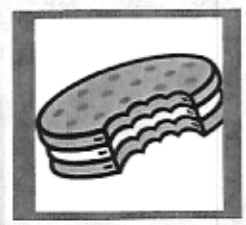
ART IS FROM THE HEART



## CAFETERIA

On Wednesday, January 30 we will be having the "**Student Planned Menu**". The menu was planned by Mrs. Leake's, Mrs. Nadeau's and Mrs. Riker's 3rd grade classes. The menu will be as follows:

Popcorn Chicken w/roll  
Pizza Bagels  
Corn on the cob  
Potato Smiles  
Applesauce  
Ice Cream Sandwich

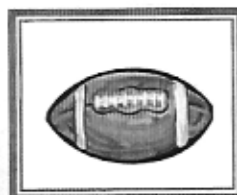


...as well as fresh fruit, delis and salads



On Thursday, January 31st we will be having a "**Superbowl Celebration**". The menu will be as follows:

Hamburgers  
Cheeseburgers  
Hot Dogs  
Baked Beans  
Baked Fries  
Fresh Fruit Cup  
Chocolate Chip Cookie



...as well as fresh fruit, delis and salads.

We hope everybody will buy lunch and enjoy the two days!



## MUSIC



- The music room has been seeing a lot of activity lately! First, a very warm congratulations to our third graders who just completed their performance of 'Twas **One CRAZY Night Before Christmas!** It was an evening filled with crazy relatives, zany antics, and fun, family entertainment! Up next, our fourth graders will be learning some exciting folk dances, and fifth graders will be starting work on their end-of-the-year performance.
- Our students in the primary grade levels continue to develop into budding musicians as we dive further into the Manatee County Core Curriculum for Music. Every day the students come to class we experience music through singing, playing, moving, and listening! It's an exciting time to be a musician at Willis Elementary!

Musically yours, Mrs. Orban



# 3rd Grade Play

Congratulations to all the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> graders that completed the Presidential Fitness Test. We tested the students in five areas of fitness (shuttle run, 40 yard dash, sit-up challenge, sit-n-reach flexibility test and the 1 mile run). We recently had first ever 1-mile Runoff at Willis Elementary. I'm very proud of the way the students ran and competed against each other. The competition was great and they almost all helped improve their times, some by as much as almost 30 seconds. Look forward to doing it again next year and improving those times!!!!

## 1-MILE RUNOFF- (2012-13)

### 3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE

SEBASTIAN FRENCHMAN- 7:34- 7:23

DYLAN KATCHEN- 7:40- no time

LANDON ANTRITT- 7:40- 7:42

HOLDEN COAKLEY- 7:55- 7:40



### 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

TYLER KATCHEN- 6:48- 6:35

ITHAN ASH- 6:50- 6:42

OWEN CATLETT- 7:11- 6:36

EMMA DECASTRO- 7:19- 7:14

DANIEL HOFER- 7:37- no time

CAMDEN MARTIN- 7:38- 7:13

SEAN BOUDARGA- 7:39- no time

STEPHEN MARKOWSKI- 7:40- no time

ALEX EASTMOND- 7:41- no time

CHRIS HELLER- 7:47- 7:10

ALEXANDER TALBOT- 7:48- 7:20

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

New times

JOSIE CURTIS- 7:11- 6:45

CHASE YNIGUEZ- 7:20- 6:53

THOMAS DANZIGER- 7:26- 7:14

NICOLAS HADAD- 7:30- 7:08

CAMERON PEENS- 7:30- no time

AARON COMBS- 7:30- no time

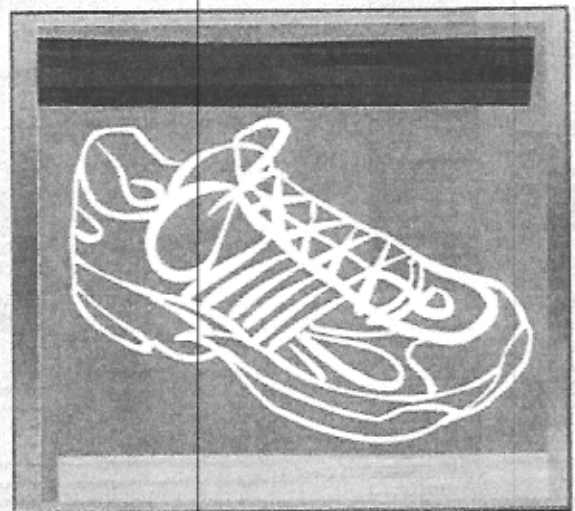
ZACHARY SWEDENBURG- 7:30- no time

AVA KLEIN- 7:30- 7:19

DYLAN SPOFFORD- 7:31- 7:03

EMMA BROOKS- 7:50- no time

MATTHEW HANSEN- 7:59- no time



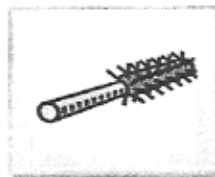
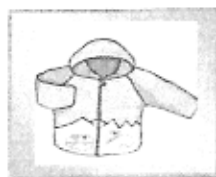


### From the Nurse

A few reminders for your health as we start the new year. We stressed handwashing during December's annual Handwashing Awareness week and hope that all continue to "Spread the Word, NOT the Germs". Sanitizers are good when soap and water is not available, but good old soap and water is best to wash those hands to get germs off. Also, try not to touch the "T zone": eyes, nose and mouth, as this is where those pesky germs like to enter our bodies at.

We also want to remind you that during the colder months, when we tend to wear hats and hoodies, the dreaded head louse uses these items as a means of transportation. Lice **DO NOT** jump or fly but are very fast crawlers. We stress children not share jackets, hats, hair ties, hair brushes/combs, etc. Without a "host", they die within 24-48 hours and are temperature sensitive.

Here's to a Healthy year!



Hi!  
Mrs. Catena!



### From the Office

A new year brings with it new responsibilities. Parents, please be sure to Raptor yourself in EVERY time you enter the building and Raptor yourself out when you exit the building. Please make sure that you have your license with you at all times, we may need to ask for ID. Willis is a large school and your child's safety is our first priority. Please be patient with us as we add new security measures to safeguard the school.

School Releases at 2:50 every day, please make sure that your student is picked up promptly.



If your child is changing their mode of transportation, please write a note in the agenda.



Did you know that there is a ½ hour rule of picking up your student? You cannot pick up your student after 2:30, as the students are getting ready for release. If you are calling to make a change in your students transportation, it must be by 2:30. Please do not wait until dismissal and call in.

If you are coming into the school during school hours, please do not park in the drop off lanes. You will be parking in the Fire Safety Zone. If there were to be a fire incident at the school the Fire trucks would not be able to park. Please park in the parking lot. Thank you for your support.





## The 8 Keys Of Excellence

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### **INTEGRITY** – *match behavior with values*

Demonstrate your positive personal values in all you do and say. Be sincere and real.

### **FAILURE LEADS TO SUCCESS** – *Learn from mistakes*

View failures as feedback that provides you with the information you need to learn, grow, and succeed.

### **SPEAK WITH GOOD PURPOSE** – *Speak honestly and kindly*

Think before you speak. Make sure that your intention is positive and your words are sincere.

### **THIS IS IT** – *Make the most of every moment*

Focus your attention on the present moment. Keep a positive attitude.

### **COMMITMENT** – *Make your dreams happen*

Take positive action. Follow your vision without wavering.

### **OWNERSHIP** – *Take responsibility for actions*

Be responsible for your thoughts, feelings, words, and actions. "Own" the choices you make and the results that follow.

### **FLEXIBILITY** – *Be willing to do things differently*

Recognize what's not working and be willing to change what you're doing to achieve your goal.

### **BALANCE** – *Live your best life*

Be mindful of self and others while focusing on what's meaningful and important in your life. Inner happiness and fulfillment come when your mind, body, and emotions are nurtured by the choices you make.

