

A publication of the Great Oak Waldorf School Journalism Class

2023 -2024

The 8th grade projects are quickly approaching. The 8th graders of Great Oak School have been working on their projects for 6-8 months. These projects require a research paper that is ten to twelve pages long which consists of the history of their topics, including where the topics originated. In addition, they must research what their topics are like now in the modern age, how the topics have evolved over time, and finally, discuss their experiences with their projects.

The 8th graders also have to make an artistic representation of their projects that could be a clay model of their projects or a diagram. In March, the 8th graders will present the verbal portion of their projects which is ten to fifteen minutes long and includes the more important aspects of their projects, as well as questions from the audience. For these 8th graders, this is currently the most important thing in their lives.

Last year Braddock Brossa, an alumni of Great Oak School, experienced some trials during his project.

Eighth Grade Projects Quickly Approaching

by Logan Beatty



Braddock with Hans Neidig. Hans will be presenting his 8th grade project this spring.

Braddock's original project was going to be a dramatic representation of a person from history. But about half way through the year, Braddock changed his project to the history of magic. Even through all that, Braddock prevailed and delivered one of the best 8th grade project reports I have ever seen.

The story of how Braddock revised his report serves as an inspiring story for me as I enter the last weeks of my project. Braddock's success encourages the current 8th grade class during this busy time of year.

Feature Articles, pages 2-5

Overcoming the Fear of Public Speaking

by Sylvia Schnell

The lights dimmed and the audience fell silent. Back stage, Wyatt Holden paced back and forth, thoughts rolling into his mind uninvited: thoughts of missing his cues or forgetting his lines, thoughts that made him feel sick to his stomach. Before time issued its warning, his cue was told like a story waiting for the next chapter. Wyatt stepped on stage and the room fell silent.

He thought he might vomit his lines all over everything, but he looked out over the audience, and froze. His chest tightened as if he was being squeezed; he took a deep breath trying to control his heartbeat so the story could continue. Then the room filled with light and the chattering sprang back to life; the curtains closed.

Maybe he skipped a few lines or maybe he stuttered, but the audience didn't know the story. They didn't know that he slipped up; all they did was look at the actors as the story ended. And then it was all over. Wyatt would not have to deal with the fear of public speaking until his next performance. He could walk away knowing it was done and relief filled his chest. No one was squeezing him any longer.

Wyatt Holden has a common fear known as Glossophobia, a fear of public speaking which affects up to 75% of the population. Those who suffer from this condition report that they feel as if everyone is judging them, even if they don't say it out loud.

There are ways to address Glossophobia. One way is to talk to a therapist to help you identify the root cause of your fear. Wyatt visualized his performance, like a movie playing in his mind. But this time, it went perfectly and exactly how he wanted. That helped calm his breathing, knowing that it could go exactly as he rehearsed. Now he knows how to deal with future speeches. Maybe it won't be perfect, but it will be him. The audience will simply be sitting and listening to his story.

Wyatt and the rest of the 8th grade class are getting ready for their 8th grade project presentations, which will be held on Thursday, March 21.



Wyatt Holden as Robert Falcon Scott in the fall production of Peter and the Starcatcher

The North Face

by Hans Neidig

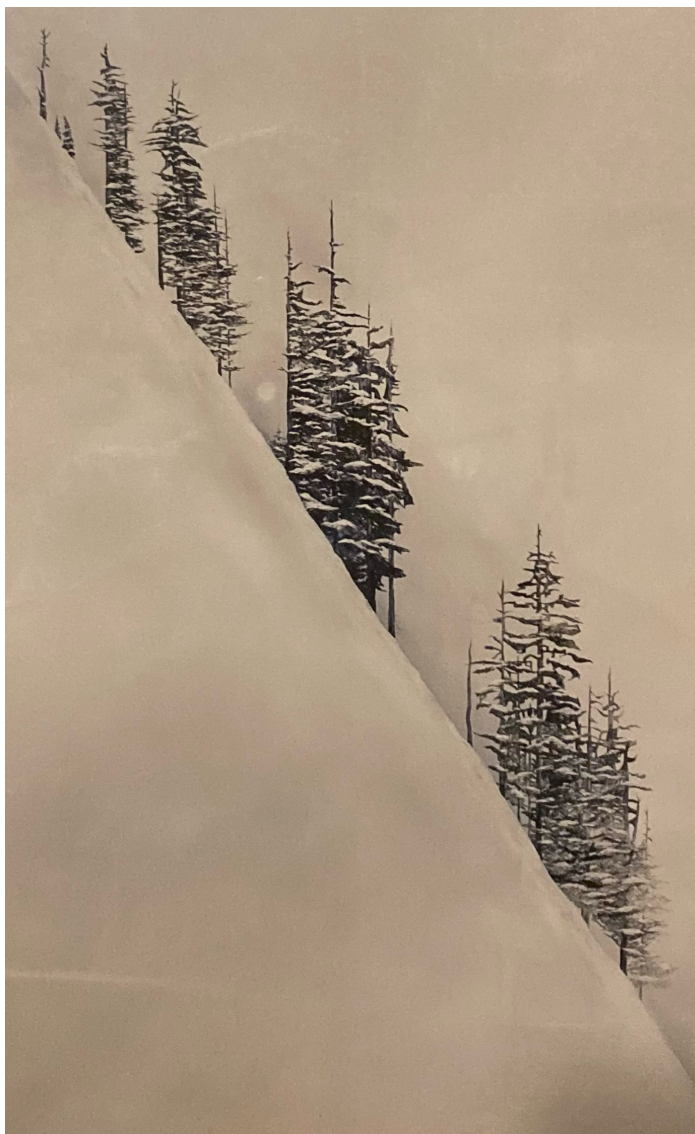
I have been skiing for over a decade. I was born and raised in Alaska and spent my weekends in a local ski town called Girdwood. My parents also grew up skiing on mount Alyeska in Girdwood, and had the joy of teaching me how to ski to the point where I can out-ski both of them combined, in my sleep.

The day was December 21, 2023; my best friend and I were at the top of the north face waiting for ski-patrol to open the run. They hadn't opened the north face yet, because believe it or not, we had gotten 18 inches of snow the day before.

Ski-patrol had been cherry-bombing and shelling the run all morning so it was safe to ski. When ski-patrol finally finished opening the gate and stepped aside to let us pass, my friend and I launched full speed onto the mountain. We instantly sank about a foot into the snow; immediately both of us compensated for this by leaning back in our bindings, putting all of our weight on the tails of our skis. This lifted our tips about six inches above the snow, helping us float on top of it rather than sinking into it. Skiing in powder that deep is often referred to as floating on a cloud.

We were about half way down the mountain when we ran into a problem; the fresh powder had created a big 15-foot cliff where there didn't used to be one. This wouldn't normally be a problem, but the part of the north face we were currently on was bordered by what we call "last chance cliffs." A row of cliffs that are un-skiable without a parachute, they were currently about 30 yards away from the landing of the cliff.

It was going to be hard to stop without getting dangerously close to the edge. But we were confident in our ability and we are teenagers. I went first. I skied off the side of the cliff that had the most powder on the landing. I got a face full of snow when I landed, and it rendered me unable to see for the split second it took me to wipe the snow off my goggles. Once I had done this, I immediately threw on the brakes and safely slid to a stop about ten feet from the edge of the un-skiable cliff. My friend followed my lead and pulled up safely alongside me. We skied to the bottom of the mountain and lived to tell the tale.



Art by Alaskan artist Annjannette
Larsen-Vainio

A Bone to Pick

by Fisher Allen

Do you have a bone growth? What is a bone growth? This is my story...

It all started in third grade. Fisher Allen was growing...but something was wrong. His leg was growing another bone. This happens when a medical condition causes your bones to have too much calcium, so your body has to put the calcium somewhere else. That somewhere else was Fisher's leg.

The pain that this bone growth causes feels like someone punching you with a pencil with every step you take, and Fisher takes about 10,000 steps each day. On February 1, Fisher's bone was removed and the suffering came to an end after four years of pencil punching.

I woke up from the surgery feeling lost and confused. I had no idea where I was. I looked around at my family and said, "I feel weird" and fell asleep.

February 2: I felt pain, but a different pain. This felt like a rough massage with a slight throb. I was stuck on the couch for four days.

February 5: I went back to school. I am now able to walk and run. Now I have a beautiful scar on my thigh. *Adios*, pencil punching!

YOUR AD HERE

If you are a family member of a GOS student, we invite you to consider supporting our final issue of Above the Oaks with an ad for your personal or small business.

Please contact

mrs.harris@greatoakschool.org for more information and for rates. We appreciate your support!



X-ray of Fisher Allen's leg

Above the Oaks

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Local News

Logan Beatty

Ava Howell

Elena Stokes

Community Service Reporter

Logan Beatty

Advice

Fenix Godfrey

Art

Wyatt Holden

THE DEPOT

by Jack Batek



Mr. Dave with young Jack Batek

I started going to the depot when I was around eight or nine years old. We had moved to Tomball after Hurricane Harvey and we were looking for something to do on weekends.

At first there wasn't much in the depot—just a small bit of train layout. But when I went back, there was a whole model train that was about as big as the room.

After going there for a little while, I was invited to test some things out by Mr. Dave (David George). He built, owns *and* operates the layout.

When I was nine, Mr. Dave let me join the Golden Black Hawk and Central City railroad crew. At first I just railed train cars and railed trains, but now I know how to fix wheel bases on the train cars. I'm 13 now and I still go there sometimes, but still pretty often his layout is a scale called Z-scale. It's the smallest scale you can buy.

Field Tripping

by Logan Beatty

On Thursday, February 1st, the 8th grade class traveled to Burton, Texas, from Tomball, Texas, to see the Texas Cotton Gin Museum. When they arrived, the 8th graders went into the gift shop and cotton museum. In the museum, the students saw several different cotton products in addition to the different stages of the cotton boll as it was being de-seeded. After observing the cotton products, the 8th graders watched a fifteen-minute video of the cotton gin and then a three-minute time lapse on cotton growth.

After that, the class went outside to tour the actual cotton gin. The cotton gin was originally made in 1914 and eventually transitioned to a 1925 Bessemer type-IV internal combustion engine that weighs fifteen tons. A tube is lowered into the farmer's wagon that holds the raw cotton. The cotton gin uses a series of saws to pull apart the cotton bolls and separates the seeds from the soft, white fluff. After that, it is compressed into five hundred pound blocks of cotton. Then it is rolled back into the farmer's wagon.

On April 20th, there is a celebration of the Cotton Gin where they run the Cotton Gin and have a get together and a farmer's market. This trip showed the 8th graders what it was like to bale cotton at the Burton Cotton Gin at the turn of the twentieth century.

by Ava Howell

Oil painting. I've never actually experimented with that particular technique of painting but I do appreciate the dimensional beauty of it. On January 5th, the 6th, 7th, and 8th graders of Great Oak School went to a new exhibit at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts. Señora Hilda orchestrated this field trip since art is her field of expertise. The line of paintings being displayed was one of a kind with a limited showing time in Houston; most of them were painted in oil.

A specific religious oil painting caught my eye. This painting hailed from the collection *Rembrandt to Van Gogh: Masterpieces from the Armand Hammer Collection*.

The oil on canvas was *Salome Dancing before Herod*, painted in 1876. Among the rest of the solemn, darkly lit paintings, this one struck me as a luminous piece with what looked like an interesting story to tell.

According to the description next to the painting, the painting depicts a scene from the New Testament which illustrates the religious story of Salome dancing before her stepfather, King Herod. King Herod is shown sitting on his throne with an executioner next to him in the left of the painting.

The painter Gustave Moreau was so intrigued by this story that he made fifteen paintings of the subject.

Community Service Corner

by Logan Beatty

On Thursday, February 1st, the 8th grade class went to Plant it Forward to continue their year-long community service work. They started by getting ready to sort produce. The 8th graders were given the task of picking out certain types of vegetables including: rainbow radishes, cabbage, onions, parsley, and more.

Plant it Forward supports immigrants and refugees to the United States, small businesses, and suburban farmers with growing and selling their products.

After sorting the produce, the 8th graders packaged the produce into home delivery crates for community deliveries. For a reasonable cost, Plant it Forward will deliver fresh produce to a place where you can pick up your order or they will deliver it right to your door.

When the 8th graders were done with packaging the produce, their next job was to clean out some newly donated crates. The crates were donated by a farm from North Texas; the 8th graders started by spraying the crates down, then with the addition of soap, scrubbed the crates to get the dirt off them. Then they ran them under the hose one more time before drying the crates.

For the last part of their work at Plant it Forward, the 8th graders made short videos about what they had learned for Enterprise Programs Manager, Loyce Gayo.

The 8th Grade will return to Plant it Forward in late March.

Fenix's Splendid, Spectacular Advice

by Fenix Godfrey

Q: What do I do when I have run out of music to listen to?

A: Ask your parents or friends. They should have good recommendations.

Q: What do you do when you can't sleep?

A: Avoid sugar!

Q: What do you do when you are surrounded by hungry monkeys and you have a banana in your hand?

A: Throw the banana into a glass box, shut it, and run! If for some reason there are no glass boxes, then spend a year or two training them using the banana to reward them.

Q: What do I do if I haven't done my homework and it's due that day?

A: To be frank, there is truly nothing you can do. You'll have to prepare yourself for ruthless fury. The abyss of fear is only the first phase of the realization of forgetting your homework. It only descends to further bleakness. So, **DO YOUR HOMEWORK!**



Plant it Forward, 2/1/2024

Did You Know?

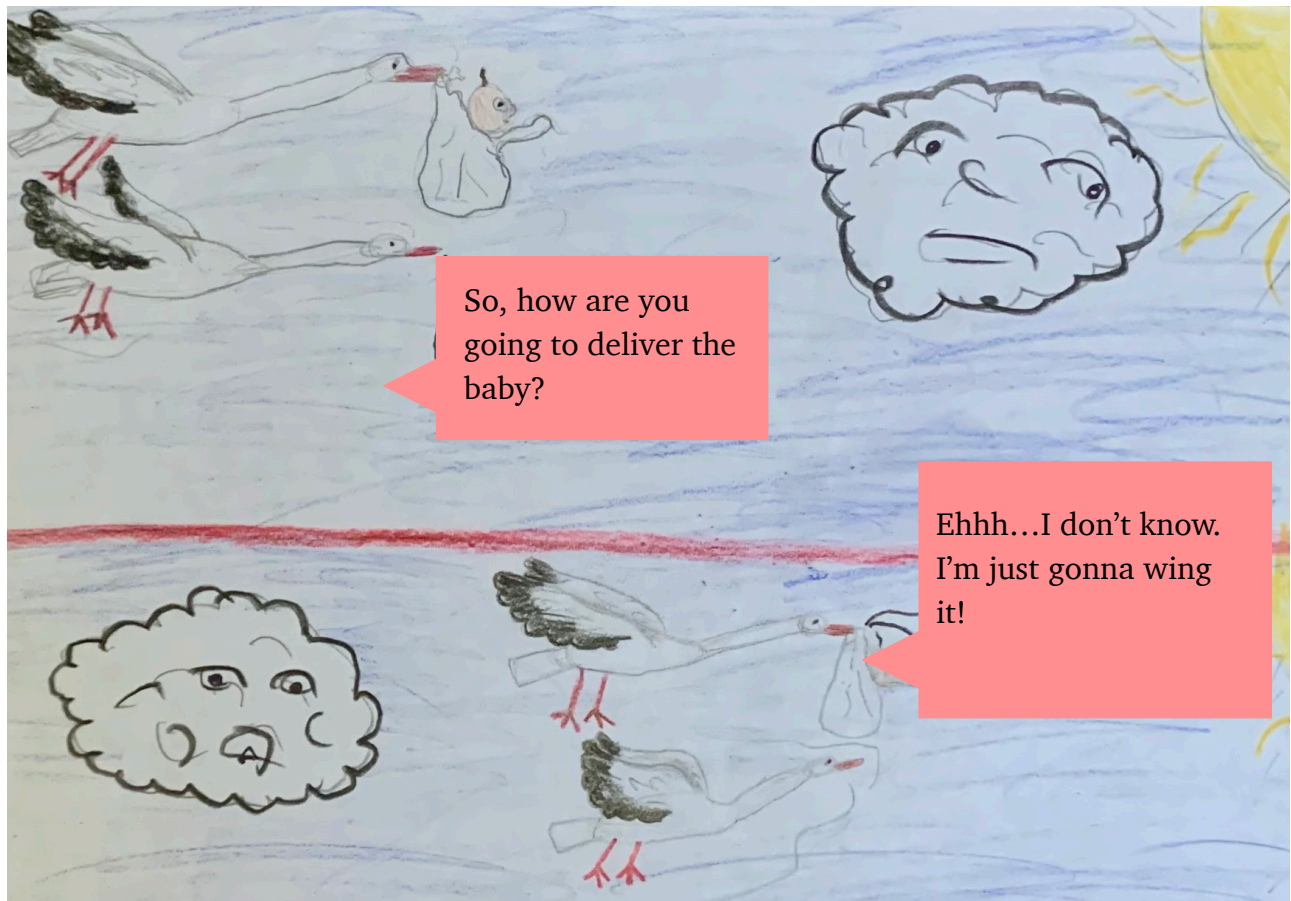
The History of the Ukulele by Elena Stokes

The ukulele came from Madeira, a small island located southwest of Portugal in the North Atlantic Ocean. Music is very important to the people of Madeira. In August 1879, some of the Madeiran people sailed to the Hawaiian Islands looking for a better life.

On this ship was a man named Joao Fernandes who came off the ship singing and playing the ukulele. Everyone was very impressed. Word of a new instrument quickly spread across Hawaii.

Also on the ship were the makers of the ukulele. The king and queen of Hawaii were musicians as well. The king loved the ukulele and so he started learning it himself. He put the ukulele in the Hawaiian culture and in the music of the islands.

Thanks to him, the ukulele is now known around the world and many people enjoy playing it. In Waldorf schools, it is common for younger students to learn how to play.



Comic by Fisher Allen