

A closer look inside our schools
from the students' perspective

WILLIAMSPORT SUN-GAZETTE
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Sixth-grade takes field trip to the Sun-Gazette

By NICHOLAS FISCHER
Grade 6

On Nov. 18, the sixth grade class of St. John Neumann Regional Academy went on a field trip to the Williamsport Sun-Gazette to witness with our own eyes how a newspaper is made from start to finish.

This helped us with our school newspaper, The Little Knights' News, to learn about some of our own jobs, such as editors, interviewers, reporters, sports editors and reviewers.

We also talked to some of the people who work there, including editors, layout designers, press operators and others.

It is truly amazing how much the way of making a newspaper has changed over the last forty years.

We learned that about 50 years ago, most of what they do today with computers, was done by hand.

Having to do all of that work by hand took much longer than it does today. In fact, what took hours do back then only takes about 20 minutes to do today.

We also learned how the machines work, including the printing press, how many newspapers are produced per day, how long the Sun-Gazette has been in business and how sales have been affected due to the newspaper being made available online.

Did you know that the Williamsport Sun-Gazette can produce 27,000 to 30,000 newspapers a day? We also learned that the machines used to put together the Sun-Gazette are more than 40 years old. If one machine was to break completely, and was not able to be fixed, it would cost more than \$10,000 to replace!

Another popular question was how long the Sun-Gazette has been in print. The answer to this is 260 years, although it was not printed at its current location until the early 1900s. Another fact that we learned is that metal plates are used to transfer ink onto the paper, and that it only takes 20 minutes to make a metal plate.

The odd thing is that 20 years ago, it took half the time it does now because the paper was only printed in black and white. Today many pages have color pictures.

In color printing, they use only four colors, but each color has to be run separately. That is why it takes longer to make some of the metal plates.

Our class also learned that one roll of paper used to print the newspaper weighs about 1,500 pounds! The rolls are placed on giant holders. When one roll is nearly finished, another one begins, so the press does not have to stop running.

The staff of the Sun-Gazette works in shifts, running around the clock, seven days a week.

We thought our trip to the Sun-Gazette was fun, educational and useful.

Now that we have learned so much about how a newspaper works, we can use some of the information and apply it to our school newspaper here at St. John Neumann Regional Academy.

We all enjoyed our visit to the Sun-Gazette. It was a wonderful experience to witness the making of a newspaper and all of the hard work and effort that goes into it. We thank the Sun-Gazette for having us and teaching us how a newspaper is created.

Ellora Figured wins book contest

Ellora Figured, a sixth-grader at St. John Neumann Regional Academy, recently won the 2008 Carile Brown Young Author Award Contest for Grades 5 and 6, held this past fall at the James V. Brown Library.

Students were asked to write and illustrate a children's book portraying both a theme and a lesson.

The sixth-graders at SJNRA took on this project in their art and language arts classes.

Figured's book, titled "Save Us," is about going green and helping the environment. Along with a gift certificate to Otto Book Store, Figured's book will be spiral bound and placed in the library's main collection for one year.

Her book was chosen out of all entries in the area.



FISCHER

By TYLER DANNEKER
Senior

I am a senior attending St. John Neumann Regional Academy and am currently enrolled in Spanish II.

Recently, I had the privilege to sit in on a preschool Spanish class at the St. John Neumann Regional Academy Early Childhood Center on Sheridan Street. During my visit, the 4-year-old preschool class of Mrs. Susan Kaiser and Mrs. Judy Maggs were being instructed by Ms. Dana Weiser, the Academy's preschool and elementary Spanish teacher.

On this particular day, Ms. Weiser was teaching the children the names of various colors in Spanish.

In a hands-on project, the children were coloring in a coloring book, in which the directions were written in Spanish.

The students had to match the Spanish words in the book with the correct color of crayon.

I was amazed that all of them had mastered the task, and were actively coloring. As Ms. Weiser traveled around the classroom, she spoke entirely in Spanish to the children, saying things like "muy bueno" as she encouraged them on.

These 4-year-old children simply amazed me; they all knew their colors, numbers, and some phrases like "How are you?" came very naturally to them.

Ms. Weiser has implemented new and fun ways for youngsters to apply Spanish to their lives by teaching them how to say hello and good-bye. The children could understand what the teacher was saying in Spanish so quickly and at such a young age.

Ms. Weiser also teaches the children about the Spanish culture. For example, the children learned that the Spanish celebrate Christmas and Halloween very differently from our customs.

I asked Ms. Weiser if she thought it was easy to teach the



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preschoolers a new language.

She replied, "Yes, they are more accepting to the language. Also their minds are so prone to learning at a young age. They soak up the information, and are a delight to work with."

And what are the benefits of learning so early? She answered, "The students will be prepared for junior high school, where now the basics of Spanish are being taught. These young students that are being taught at St. John Neumann will be very well-prepared for their advanced Spanish classes at the junior high and high school levels."

At St. John Neumann, we are fortunate that all students in grades Pre-K through 8 have mandatory Spanish classes.

At the high school level, Spanish and French I, II, III and IV are offered. This is a great benefit to Academy students.

I wish the young preschoolers "buena suerte!" (good luck) as they continue to expand their knowledge of the Spanish language and culture.

'Tales of Terror' an enjoyable horror

By NEIL FORQUER
Junior

On Nov. 7, St. John Neumann Regional Academy Advanced Placement English and sophomore English students attended the matinee performance of "Tales of Terror" at the Community Arts Center.

Tales of Terror comprised a one-man show starring the Shakespearean-trained actor, Joshua Kane. It consisted of Mr. Kane performing in dramatic fashion a few popular Edgar Allan Poe poems and short stories.

When I entered the Community Arts Center with my fellow students from St. John Neumann that morning, the diverse scenery surprised me.

A towering black curtain formed the backdrop, while in the front of the stage stood a walnut-stained podium with a black, hardcover edition of "The Complete Works of Poe" on top.

On a black coat holder sat a golden and red lined robe next to a gold wingback chair, while a plain, wooden table and chair completed the left side of the scenery next to the chair.

A gold Victorian-style table rested in the middle of the stage, with a clear vase filled with what I presumed to be red wine intended for the performance.

Actually, Mr. Kane later explained that it was only vitamin water, which aided him in clear-

ing his throat.

All this scenery worked well in Kane's performance, in that a certain portion of the scenery would serve as the setting where a particular poem or story would be told.

For example, when Kane performed the "Cask of Amontillado," he used the robe and the wingback chair to create the effect of the viewer being in Poe's study, listening to him tell the story.

Regarding "The Raven," Kane read it from the podium as if he was making a presentation to a large group. Overall, the scenery effectively complemented Kane's adaptations of Poe's works.

When Joshua Kane first stepped onto the stage, his appearance surprised me.

He wore a Victorian-style black suit with green lining, along with a black ascot.

His hair stood up straight (which is an odd style for even today), but later he explained that styling his hair that way allows the audience to see more facial expressions for any emphasis he might provide.

Kane possessed that deep, defined speaking voice that I commonly hear during the narration of horror stories. However, I eased into his appearance as the performance progressed.

Once Kane introduced himself,



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he established a relationship with the audience, sharing some information about his profession in Gothic Romance, why he entered his profession, and some background on the life of Edgar Allan Poe.

Kane's interaction with the audience proved beneficial for him because he identified with the viewer, recalling high school experiences of being stuffed in a locker and how trivial family matters bothered him in his teenage years.

Kane's candid anecdotes aided his audience in clearing any prior skepticism about the play. Kane presented information and analysis before every work of Poe's, and its importance to his life, Poe's life, and each viewer's life.

Kane performed three of Poe's works including the "Cask of Amontillado," "The Raven," the "Tell Tale Heart," and an excerpt from "Annabel Lee" (the latter of which he sang at the behest of an audience member).

He acted each part well, taking on the persona of the narrator and the other characters within the stories. Kane seemed comfortable and focused for each tale, showing his mastery in the Gothic Romance field. Before "The Raven," Kane revealed the source of his mastery; he worked and learned from Hollywood horror

legend, Vincent Price.

This made sense, because I recognized similarities between the styles of Kane and Price, such as the established tone and the deliberate and the certain cadence of his rhetorical ability to switch between different characters, the narrator, Montessor and Fortunado, in "The Cask of Amontillado."

I thought the lighting played just as significant a role in the performance as Kane. When Kane explained the upcoming story or poem, the regular lights remained on the house seating as if he were merely lecturing or teaching a large group of people.

I neglect to advocate leaving the lights on for a play or event because of the frequent distractions, but in this case, it complemented the eeriness of Poe's works. During a performance of a story, the theater became pitch black, with the only spotlight beaming on Kane.

The black backdrop turned a dark purple with faint, cloud-like figures representing the creepiness of the midnight sky.

The lighting helped to set the mood, allowing for Kane to enforce it through his interpretations of Poe's works.

If "Tales of Terror" returns to the Community Arts Center, or anywhere nearby in the region, it should rank as a top priority for any lover of gothic romance.

Learning Spanish is as Easy as Uno, Dos, Tres



PHOTOS PROVIDED

In the top photo, preschooler Ben Stoetzel works on a coloring page with Spanish teacher Ms. Dana Weiser, and above, preschooler Grace Persun shows a page from her Spanish coloring book.