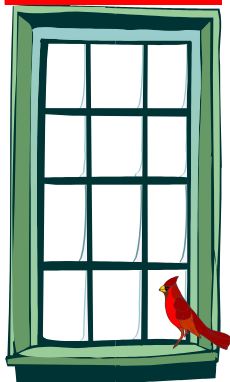


March
2011



MATOAKA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Bird's Eye View

From Our PTA President, Leanne Conrad

One of the goals of the PTA at the national, state and local level is to promote family involvement at school. Research has shown a direct link between parental involvement at school and a child's educational success. It was a pleasure to see 600 people show up for the Matoaka Science Fair and PTA-sponsored dinner. A special thanks to all of the teachers that stayed late to work during the Science Fair and all of the volunteers that worked during the dinner!

The PTA formed a Cafeteria Task Force in December. The task force has put together a survey for parents at our school and will be sending it out this month. The goal is to communicate your survey responses with the county nutrition experts and offer

positive suggestions to them. We hope you will take a few minutes this month to complete the survey and return it to school. Your opinions are both welcome and needed to influence positive change!

The 4th annual Matoaka Walkathon will take place on Friday, March 25th. We encourage parents to participate by walking with their children or cheering them on from the sidelines. This is a big fundraiser for the PTA and we believe that we can reach a goal of \$7000. Pledge sheets will come home with students soon. We hope that each student can work toward a goal of at least \$10 in pledges. Prizes will be given out to the students that obtain the most pledges. Walk-A-Thon

funds go toward PTA sponsored events, like the Science Fair dinner last month. It also funds cultural arts assemblies, like the Theatre IV performance of *Mulan* coming to the school March 22nd. Look for more Walk-A-Thon information coming home with your children this month.

Finally, the next PTA meeting is March 17th at 7 pm in the Media Center. A nominations committee has been formed to seek out parents who may be interested in serving as a PTA officer next year. If you are interested in getting more active in the PTA next year, please join us for our meeting in March.

Sincerely,
Leanne Conrad,
PTA President

Calendar of Events

March	17:	PTA Meeting, 7 pm (Nominations Committee formed)
	18:	Hospitality Breakfast Cart for Teachers
	22:	Cultural Arts Program, <i>Mulan</i> , 9:45 AM
	22:	Deadline for April Bird's Eye View Newsletter
	25:	Matoaka Walk-A-Thon
April	19:	Matoaka Fine Arts Night
	19:	PTA General Membership Meeting (PTA Officer Elections)
	22:	Deadline for May Bird's Eye View Newsletter
	27:	Hospitality, Secretaries Day Lunch

Walk-a-Thon Coming!

This year's Walk-a-Thon
will be held on
Friday, March 25th.

Our Walk-a-Thon provides students an opportunity to raise funds for all of the programs that the PTA uses to support the school, without having to do catalog sales or ask you for money all year! Our goal is to raise \$7000.

Monies raised go straight to the school by way of purchasing math and reading computer programs, student plays, professional plays and music performances, school garden structures and supplies, the Veteran's Day lunch, natural science items for the Living Wedge science area, and Teacher Appreciation Day to name a few!

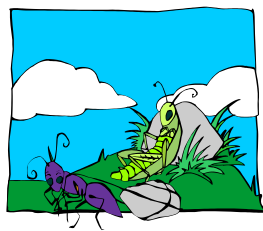
We could not do all of these wonderful programs without your support! We have some great prizes for the top fundraising students and classes, as well as tons of other goodies for spirited walkers and fundraisers. We hope that you will think about family and friends who might like to contribute to your child's Walk-a-Thon pledges, and consider coming to join us on that day to support our walkers by cheering or walking with your student. For information contact Christian Dunn at 903-4130 or DunnCLeigh@yahoo.com



Newsletter submissions can be made via email at loralee13@verizon.net. The deadline for the monthly newsletter is the 22nd of each month. Don't miss the opportunity to spread the word to family, school, staff and PTA members about what's going on in and around our school.

Character Trait of the Month: **Perseverance**

Perseverance means working hard and not giving up. I show perseverance when I stick with something until it is finished. I show perseverance when I do not give up.



Bird's Eye View

Attention Matoaka Families

Do you have "gently" used Matoaka Spirit Wear T-shirts that your kids have outgrown and you just don't know what to do with? You can donate them back to the PTA so we can sell them at a reasonable price.

A drop-off box will be located in the front office. We greatly appreciate your donations in support of our PTA programs!



Counselor's Corner

March 18th is Matoaka's School-Wide Career Day!

There are many ways that parents can help promote their child's career awareness and exploration.

1. Teach and demonstrate productive work habits at home:
 - Encourage children to do their best on tasks and assignments and to complete them on time.
 - Participate in problem solving and creative thinking activities.
 - Speak positively about work and education.
2. Encourage family responsibilities:
 - Give children age appropriate chores and home responsibilities.
 - Assist them in maintaining an organized room and school materials.
3. Help children understand how school subjects relate to careers:
 - Emphasize that school subjects are valuable for success in a variety of occupations; discuss the skills you use in your current career.
 - Basic skills such as math, reading, and oral and written communication are useful in all careers.

Helpful websites:

Virginia Career VIEW - www.vacareerview.org

Virginia Education Wizard - www.vawizard.org

SAVE THE DATE:
NATIONAL TAKE OUR DAUGHTERS AND SONS
TO WORK DAY
Thursday, April 28, 2011

Matoaka Cafeteria Task Force Survey

In early March you will receive a one-page survey from the Matoaka Cafeteria Task Force. The task force was formed in response to the high number of parents' comments the PTA receives about cafeteria food offerings. It is our hope to enhance the communication between parents and the school system regarding parent preferences for offerings and communication. The information you provide will help us shape our focus and ensure that we are accurately representing our parents and students. The anonymous survey will come home in your child's folder, and can be completed quickly and then returned to school with your child.

For any questions or comments, please feel free to contact Christian Dunn at 903-4130 or DunnCLeigh@yahoo.com



In Good Health from your School Nurse Mrs. Chandler, RN

We had a busy month in February which was Heart Health Month. Did you know that 9 staff members at Matoaka are currently CPR certified? We also have an AED for any cardiac emergencies. The staff wore red on 2-11 to recognize Women's Heart Health.

February was also Dental Health Month. Grades K-3 got a visit from a dental hygienist to talk about good oral health.

On another note...Check out the clinic site on our Matoaka Web page (under school-clinic) as there is important parent information about health issues and clinic procedures.



Come see me at Family Fitness Night for the "Fruit and Vegetable Race"

Offer Suggestions for Children Who Don't Like Recess

For many kids, recess or P.E. is their "favorite subject." But some kids dread this time of the day. It's when they get teased, left out or picked on. If your child complains about recess and not having anyone to play with, suggest that he:

1. Seek out someone to play with. Look for someone else who is also alone. Choose a game, then ask the person to play.
2. Join games. When kids line up to play and take turns, get in line.
3. Start early. Try to get involved in a game at the start of recess. It's more difficult to join in once a game gets going.
4. Bring something fun from home to play with at recess (if the school allows this). Then ask someone to play with it with you.
5. Pick the right play partners. Watch other students to see which ones play without teasing or fighting. Then play with those people.
6. Steer clear of troublemakers. They may let others play with them, but then everyone gets in trouble.
7. Keep out of trouble. Don't climb fences, grab balls from kids or do other things that shouldn't be done.

If these ideas don't rescue recess, get some help. Ask a teacher or school counselor to watch what happens on the playground. Your child or you can explain how your child feels about recess and ask for suggestions for making recess better.

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Progress in the Wedge



Thank you so much
to Christian Dunn
and all of the
volunteers who
helped make this
transformation
possible!

Family Time

Print this list, add to it, or make your own—just get out there and see the signs of Spring with each other!

Bring a nature journal or a sketch pad and see what is your favorite. Bring along a tree, a bird, or a mushroom identification book—what else can you find? What new discoveries can you make?

SPRING SCAVENGER HUNT LIST:

1. BUD ON TREE *
 2. BIRD'S NEST *
 3. COCOON *
 4. ANT *
 5. ANTHILL *
 6. INSECT (other than ant) *
 7. STEM WITH BUD SCAR *
 8. YOUR STATE FLOWER *
 9. DANDELION
 10. FLOWER GROWN FROM A BULB *
 11. SEED *
 12. STAMEN *
 13. PISTIL *
 14. DEW *
 15. POLLEN *
 16. SPORE BEARING PLANT (mushroom) *
- *LOCATE, BUT DON'T PICK OR TAKE



How to make dandelion petal sorbet



Pick a small basket of dandelions, around three pints in quantity (roughly), from a pesticide free area and away from a roadside.

Snip off the petals as soon as they have been picked, not too close to the bottom (as the white at the base of the petal is very bitter in taste) so leave that attached to the green calyxes and put in your compost bin! You should have about two cupfuls.

Heat in a saucepan five cups of water, half a cup of local honey and one cup of natural sugar.

Once the syrup comes to the boil, stir in the petals, cover and simmer for an hour.

Sieve through muslin or small-weave cheesecloth into a container and stir in three tablespoons of lemon juice.

Pop in the freezer, stirring every couple of hours until frozen.

Serve in small glass dishes with a dandelion flower on top!

Adapted from The Herbfarm Cookbook: A Guide to the Vivid Flavors of Fresh Herbs by Jerry Traunfeld (Scribner, 2000).



Feeding Ourselves, Feeding the Earth



Eating in-season, local foods are a wonderful way to celebrate healthy eating and sustainable agricultural practices. It is also a great learning opportunity for children: What fruits and vegetables grow and are harvested in the Spring?

- Artichokes
- Asparagus
- Beets (small, young with greens still attached)
- Fiddleheads (a favorite of mine, growing up in Maine)
- Garlic Scapes (the flowering garlic stalks pulled to promote bulb growth)
- Lettuces & Spinach & Nettles (which taste like Spinach when cooked)
- Peas
- Radishes
- Strawberries

If you are interested in learning more, here are some book suggestions:

Food Rules by Michael Pollan
 Animal, Vegetable, Miracle by Barbara Kingsolver
 In Defense of Food by Michael Pollan
 Fast Food Nation by Eric Schlosser
 Food Matters by Mark Bittman
 Slow Food Nation by Carlo Petrini
 Ecoagriculture by Jeffery McNeely and Sara Scherr
 Food For All: The need for a new Agriculture by John Madeley

And some websites:

eatlocalchallenge.com
treehugger.com/files/2008/03/green-basics-eat-local-food.php
lifebeginsat30.com/elc/2006/04/10_reasons_to_e.html
sustainabletable.org/shop/eatseasonal
whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=faq&dbid=28

Some special coupons

This coupon entitles you to a picnic anywhere you choose.



This coupon entitles you to an afternoon of gathering flowers for a bouquet.



(These coupons are a great candy-alternative to stuff into eggs in an Easter basket! Make your own and share the smiles!)

National Wildlife Week March 14-20, 2011

For more information and free activity ideas, journal pages and other downloadables, visit:

www.nwf.org/Get-Outside/Be-Out-There/Events/National-Wildlife-Week.aspx





Earth Corner: How to Build a Bee House

Before we know it, the air will be abuzz and flowers will be springing up! (Pun intended.) Why not give those pollinating cuties a place to hang their hats...er, wings. Check out this simple project from National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service.

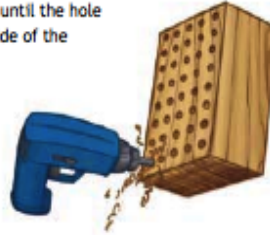
Honey bees may be getting all the press, but they're not the only pollinators in town. The United States is home to almost 4,000 native bee species (honey bees are non-natives brought here from Europe). One way you can help protect pollinators is to build a home for them.

Mason bees lay their eggs in tree holes made by woodpeckers or insects, and you can replicate these holes by building your own bee condo. Nesting starts as early as February in lower states and as late as June in colder areas. Mason bees can be found throughout North America, are very gentle, and are much more efficient than honey bees at pollinating plants.

This simple project is well-suited to youth programs and family activities.



1. Starting at one corner of the block's face, drill a hole in the block. Drill until the hole is about 1/2" from the back side of the block – the hole should be 5" to 6" deep but can be as deep as 10" (longer holes encourage the female bees to lay more eggs). Do not drill all the way through the wood.



2. Drill a second hole 3/4" from the first one and continue to drill holes horizontally and vertically across the wood until the block is covered with holes.

3. Attach the shingle or light piece of wood to the top of the block using finishing nails. The roof should overhang the side with holes in it to keep rain out of the holes.



4. Hang the bee house from a piece of string/wire (hammer a finishing nail into each side of the block and tie the string/wire to the nails) or nail it to a tree, pole, or the side of a building. Look for a spot facing east (bees are stimulated by the morning sun) located as close as possible to flowers or flowering plants. For a list of native wildflowers, trees, and shrubs that support bees, visit <http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/nativebee.html#mason>.

Materials

- Untreated wood block (You can use any piece of untreated wood, even a dead tree limb or scrap of firewood, but the wood should be free of cracks)
- Drill
- 5/16" drill bit (tip-and-spur/brad-point drill bit preferred)
- Shingle or thin piece of wood larger than the wood block
- Finishing nails
- Hammer
- String or wire (if needed)
- Scissors (for cutting string or wire)
- Safety glasses

REQUEST TO READERS

If you build a project based on this or other Outdoor America articles, or if you have an idea for a good conservation project, please e-mail us at oa@wla.org.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BOB DRY/WWW.DRYSPOND.COM

Some helpful tips from the National Wildlife Federation:

You can cover the holes with chicken wire to help keep birds away from the bee house.

Securely place the bee house on the South side of buildings, fence posts, or trees.

DO NOT move bee houses after they are in place until at least November.

Crafty Spring Kids!

Homemade St. Patrick's Day Card

I made this card with just a little watercolor paint and my favorite gold paint marker. The gold markers cost a few bucks, but are so much fun to use I think they are worth it.

1. I drew several clovers lightly in pencil, following the steps shown in my diagram, filling up the paper as much as possible.
2. Using a small watercolor brush, I painted the outline of each clovers leaf and filled them in with paint.
3. I then added more water to the paint and filled in the background with the lighter green, leaving a halo of white around each clover.
4. When the paint dried, I traced the stems and veins with my gold paint marker.



—www.artprojectsforkids.org

Yarn Eggs

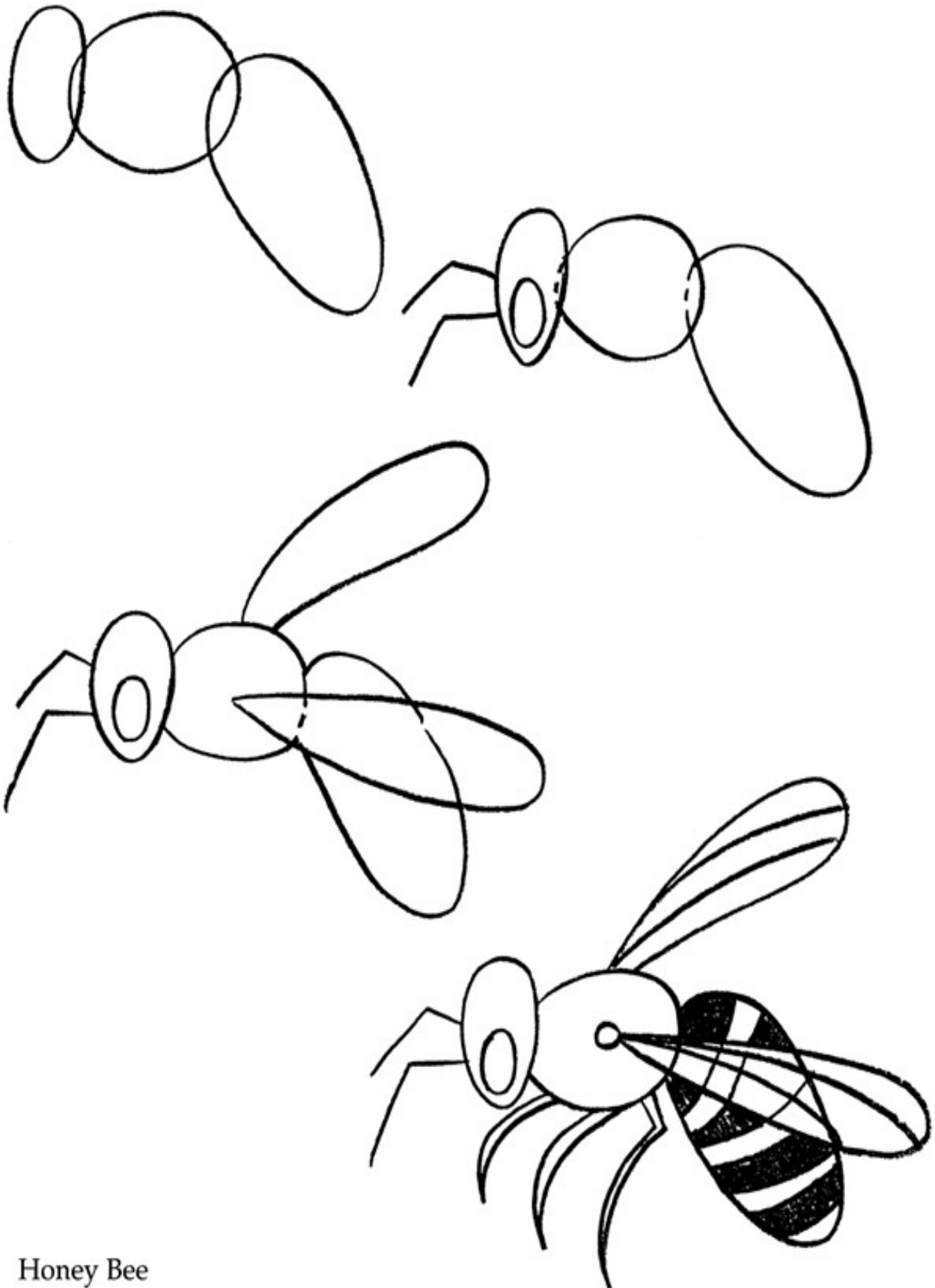
- Yarn of various textures and colors
- Glue
- Paintbrush
- Balloons
- Newspapers
- Clothespins



Cut a few three-foot long (or so) pieces of yarn, tucking them into a pot of watered down glue. Then wrap the yarn, willy-nilly, around a blown up balloon. Hang the wrapped balloons by its knotted end with a clothespin & let it drip awhile.

When they begin to firm/dry, squeeze them into more of an oval shape & let them dry overnight. In the morning, pop the balloons & peel away from the yarn.

—Picture from www.ordinarylifemagic.com



Honey Bee

Bird's Eye View