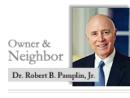


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Tualatin third-graders piece together history

Created on Thursday, 21 February 2013 02:00 | Written by Saundra Sorenson |



At an age when most students are just starting to learn their own addresses, the third-graders at Tualatin Elementary School had a unique opportunity to truly get a sense of place while celebrating their city's centennial.

Working together in groups of two to three, students from the classes of Alison Heath, Katheryn LePore, Janell Cooke and Janine Emken were asked to create a timeline of Tualatin's history from 1800 to present day. Each group was assigned a specific event, and as students researched their piece of history like the opening of Tualatin's first high school or the 1996 flood that was well before their time — they quickly connected street and park names to the events they were illustrating.

Students were then asked to look at a series of large, high-resolution satellite photos of Tualatin in order to locate and mark their residences. The twist was that Tualatin's original land grants were also outlined on these maps, with landowner names prominently displayed. Students were fascinated to learn whose land they were living on from a historical perspective.

"The kids just get this really amazed look on their face," Heath said.

"I learned the person who owned the part of land I lived in," Summer Green said after the presentation. "John something."

After some debate with friends, she recalled his name was John Sweek.

Chatting about the project after class, it was clear that Green and classmates Braquelle Blanchard, Dakota Bradley, Nathan Haines, Roman Olivarez and Cara Boyer absorbed some valuable town trivia: Floating logs downriver was actually an efficient way to transport timber. In 1948, a dog food plant was opened on Nyberg Road. Susquehanna Drive translates to "street of dreams."

"I think about Tualatin a lot now," Boyer said.

Learning from history

The timeline unit also teaches students valuable concepts like sequence and chronological order, Heath explained.

"They started a timeline of their own personal history," she said, "which moved into a partner project, which was a story timeline. The culmination of that is the Tualatin timeline.'

And the culmination of students' research, writing and artwork was a chance





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2013



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to present their project to local historian Loyce Martinazzi, who with Karen Lafky Nygaard co-wrote "Tualatin from the Beginning," the history book many groups turned to for research.

Martinazzi visited Tualatin Elementary School with retired longtime teacher Evie Andrews on Feb. 7. The guests looked on as the third-grade class presented a slide show of its 40 illustrated events.

That meant Martinazzi was on hand to answer questions about the city's history, and also to correct a couple of minor inaccuracies in some of the student summaries.

"I don't think millions of people died in the 1970 flood," she said. "You may have been thinking about Noah's Ark."

But Martinazzi said she was impressed by the effort and interest the students displayed.

"I think it's good for kids to learn something about the area they live in," Martinazzi said. "A lot of these kids have moved around a lot. They need to feel they have some roots here in Tualatin."



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