



These students play a little air guitar along with the music.



First grade teacher Kate Chapin gives her students a hand after hearing the song her students created, titled "I am Kind".



Students anxiously await the start of the next song.

PHOTOS BY: TANYA MITCHELL

An 'edu-taining' experience at Nickerson School

By Tanya Mitchell
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SWANVILLE — After working on songwriting with local mime and musician Scot Cannon for a few days throughout the month of March, students at Kermit Nickerson School finally saw — and heard — the fruits of their labor.

The school hosted Cannon at an all-school assembly Tuesday, March 22, where Cannon unveiled the compact disc containing songs he co-wrote with each class at the school.

Nickerson School Principal Abigail Frost said the musical program with Cannon, which she described as 'edu-tainment,' started after Cannon performed at the school. After the performance, Frost said Cannon approached the school about working with the children to create a CD featuring songs they would help write themselves.

Cannon spent a full day at the school March 9, and worked with each class to write lyrics and music to be recorded when he returned to the school March 15 and 16.

"All of the songs are based around one word, like 'friendship' or 'leadership,'" said Frost, noting that Cannon's teachings fit well with the school's ongoing anti-bullying lessons.



Scot Cannon belts out a tune, with a little help from his friends at Kermit Nickerson School.

Prior to the assembly, Cannon explained through the use of the computer program known as Logic Express, he was

able to record the students' voices and all of the different portions of the music in separate tracks, and blend the tracks to

create the songs in their entirety.

Cannon, a graduate of Berklee College of Music, taught music at a Massa-

chusetts middle school for 12 years and has worked as a mime for 25 years. As a mime and a musician, Cannon said he provides character education centered on bullying, boosting self-esteem and promoting tolerance.

"All of the work I do deals with a speech problem I had as a kid," he said.

Once the children had gathered in the cafeteria, Cannon unveiled the CD, playing songs that each class created under his guidance. As each track played over the sound system, the students laughed, congratulated each other and offered applause as each song came to an end. Through the use of an overhead projector, the lyrics of each song were displayed on a screen at the front of the room so all of the children and teachers could sing along.

At the end of the show, Cannon distributed a CD for each of the students to bring home and share with their families.

"With this, we weren't trying for performance quality," he said. "What we were going for was recording something that they will enjoy."

Overall, Cannon said he hopes the project will help each child appreciate art, in all forms.

"Hopefully, something like this would get them interested in the arts as a way to express who they are," he said.

Geographically speaking, Gale knows her stuff

By Tanya Mitchell
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SWANVILLE — Kermit Nickerson School fifth-grader Macy Gale knows a lot about the world around her, and that

knowledge recently earned her a first-place win at the RSU 20 geography bee.

The district-wide bee, which took place at Captain Albert Stevens School on Wednesday, March 16, included the winners

of the elementary school geography bees that took place in February.

Gale is too young to compete in the regional contest this year, as that portion of the competition is open to sixth-graders, but she said she'll bring her worldly knowledge back to the competition as a sixth-grader next year.

Gale recalled some of the questions were multiple choice, including one that asked students which country has coral reefs, offering the choices of Canada and Australia. The answer to that one, said Gale with a smile, is Australia.

Other questions posed to contestants during the hour-long competition, said Gale, were not so easy.

"For some of them we had to give our own answers, there were no choices," she said.

The daughter of Ruth and Gary Gale of Swanville said she is interested in learning about the histories of different places around the world, and knowing where different attractions around the world are located.

If given the choice to visit anywhere in the world, Gale said she would most like to go to Sweden.

"My grandmother is from Sweden," said Gale.



Macy Gale is all smiles while holding the trophy she earned as the first-place winner of the RSU 20 geography bee. PHOTO BY: TANYA MITCHELL

Fifth-graders take track-finding trek on Sears Island

SEARSPORT — How many tracks in the snow can you identify? A group of fifth-grade students from Searsport Elementary School enthusiastically slipped snowshoes on over their boots recently and set out to find some answers on Sears Island paths. Leading the group was Jake Maier of J.M. Forestry, and accompanying the students were Searsport Elementary School Principal Erin Woodsome, parents Joe Dubois and Harold Merithew, and Friends of Sears Island members

Bob and Marietta Ramsdell.

The hikers learned to tell how many deer were traveling together, which way they were going, and talked about why. A circle of old tracks in one area raised many questions until it was decided that people who were walking on snowshoes had left them. Newer snow and blowing winds had covered the usual patterns.

There were also discussions about the differences among dog, coyote and cat tracks, why squirrels nip off tips of evergreens,

what animal might have hunkered down in a depression under the branches of a large bush, and what, besides animals and birds, can make tracks on snow.

Reflecting on the afternoon's activities Woodsome said, "Having this jewel of an island only a 10-minute ride from Searsport schools gives students the perfect opportunity to learn about the natural world through hands-on adventures."

Friends of Sears Island members Bob and Marietta Ramsdell contributed this story.



Searsport Elementary School fifth-graders gather for a group photograph during a recent visit to Sears Island. COURTESY OF: BOB AND MARIETTA RAMSDELL