Language Arts Classes & Computer Lab

Library activities for the month of October include:

- Use of the "Reading Level Search" feature on our online catalog.
- Use of advanced search methods on our online card catalog.
- How to search and place holds on "CAT"
- The students participate in the online game "Locating Library Books". This helps the students with the terminology that we use in the library and makes it easier for them to find materials.
- Students become familiar with the computer codes.

Computer Lab Use

The Computer Lab was used for many great projects during September. These included:

- Miss Hartman's Math Project
- Mrs. Post Creative Writing Project
- Mrs. Muth—Elements of Literature
- Mr. Foster—Jamestown Project
- Mrs. Sullivan—Personal Living Project

Service Is Our Business

When black cats prowl and pumpkins gleam, May luck be yours on Halloween.

App Awareness

"With apps, it's important to keep abreast of what's available and be able to discern what makes one app a better choice than another for a particular task. While each category of apps requires its own criteria for evaluation, there are some constants to bear in mind."

Platform

"This might seem like a no-brainer, but is the app available for your operating platform? For iOS compatible devices, does it work on both the iPhone and iPad? If so, are there differences in how the app performs from device to device? For instance, sometimes an iPhone app used on an iPad doesn't convert well and the look and feel just doesn't work on a larger screen."

"Similarly, are there different versions for different operating systems, and if so, what are the distinctions between versions? For example, there might be both iOS and Android versions of an app, but a great application on the iPhone might not be so great on an Android device."

Price

"Is it worth spending $100 on an iPad or smartphone app? Maybe, maybe not. The adage "You get what you pay for" doesn't always apply. There are a lot of different apps that do the exact same thing, but at a cost of anywhere from free to hundreds of dollars. Free apps can often be just as good as their counterparts with a price tag. The key is to evaluate the differences between the free app, the $9.99 version, and the $100 one."

Reviews

"The app stores (Android and Apple, for example) provide reviews by real users. Pay attention to these. Look for reviews of products that answer the kinds of questions you have about your particular needs. And, look for

> "October is crisp days and cool nights, a time to curl up around the dancing flames and sink into a good book."
>
> Unknown author

Word of the Month

Pathos (PAY-thahss)
noun

1. an element in experience or in artistic representation evoking pity or compassion
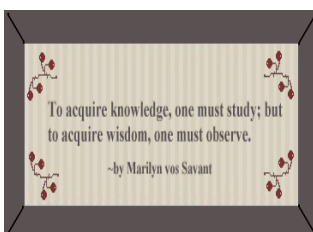
2. an emotion of sympathetic pity

EXAMPLE

Our knowledge of the hero's tragic end adds an element of *pathos* to the story of his early success.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Greek word "pathos" means "suffering," "experience," or "emotion." It was borrowed into English in the 16th century, and for English speakers, the term usually refers to the emotions produced by tragedy or a depiction of tragedy. "Pathos" has quite a few kin in English. A "pathetic" sight moves us to pity. "Empathy" is the ability to feel the emotions of another. Though "pathology" is not literally "the study of suffering," it is "the study of diseases." You can probably guess at more relatives of "pathos." "Sympathy," "apathetic," "antipathy," "sociopath," and "psychopath" are a few.

Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary

To acquire knowledge, one must study; but to acquire wisdom, one must observe.
~by Marilyn vos Savant

App Awareness continued

reviews that assess the range of capabilities of apps within a particular category (writing, media creation, and so on). See what reviewers say about the customer service of the company behind the app. If something isn't working, do the developers address problems promptly, or do they take a long time to push out a new update with a fix?"

User interface

"We're getting better and better at understanding what makes a good user interface for apps. Tools such as the recent Nielsen Norman group report on iPad usability help define what makes for a good experience. As you look for apps in a particular category, think about your own needs. Would you prefer opening a menu by swiping across the screen or scrolling horizontally or vertically to access content? Can you easily adjust the font size?"

Updates

"How often is the app updated? Does it matter if that's not very often? In the life of apps that have a social component, such as uploading to YouTube, it's important that they be updated regularly in order to take advantage of new methods users have to interact in mobile environments. Sometimes updates are required to maintain   interest, as with game apps, for example, which commonly add new "levels." Look at the list of features added, changed, and refined in a recent update to get a sense of how the app developers respond to user needs and the ever-changing digital environment."

"There are a lot of apps available for carrying out a variety of tasks, from media creation to productivity. A great way to keep up with what's new is to read technology blogs such as Mashable, ReadWriteWeb, and *School Library Journal*'s own app review blog, Touch and Go. (Why not subscribe to one or all of these by using one of the personalized magazine apps ? By reading just one of these on a regular basis, you'll learn about apps that aren't always specifically geared toward librarians, educators, or students, but might have a lot of potential for supporting the needs of children and teens in your greater community."

"Keeping up with a wide variety of apps will also give you the chance to provide reviews and recommendations to the children, teens, and adults with whom you work. So when someone's in search of an app for note taking, photo editing, or blogging, you'll have just the right information to provide them. And that user will be a bit happier and better able to function in her digital environment."

From: "*The Enablers*" by Linda W. Braun, in **The School Library Journal**   September 2011

Writing & Research Apps

"From doing research and taking notes to crafting a blog post and sharing photos, apps help you get the job done no matter where you are. These handy tools serve double duty in supporting the day-to-day work of educators as well as the activities of students, both in and out of school. The best part - there are a lot of choices out there."From: "*The Enablers*" by Linda W. Braun, in **The School Library Journal**   September 2011

Blogging with WordPress   http://wordpress.org/

"Anyone with a WordPress blog will appreciate the companion app, which lets you write and update posts, and check in on comments and stats remotely. While the app (available for iOS, Android, and Blackberry devices) doesn't offer every feature of the Web-based WordPress dashboard, the iOS and Android versions include a number of functions that make it easy to post and maintain your blog wherever you are. These include drafting, publishing, adding media, reviewing and moderating comments, and viewing stats."

"It's easy to link the app to one or more WordPress blog accounts—whether or not its hosted on the Word-Press.com site or on one's own server. Any activity that you do within the app is immediately available in the soft-ware's   Web-based dashboard. This ease of access makes the WordPress app a great tool for bloggers who, let's say, draft a post at home and want to revisit it once they get to work. Or perhaps a brilliant idea pops into your head while you're away from your desk—simply enter the notes on your smartphone using the WordPress app and refine the post later via the full site on the web or within the app."

Journaling with Momento   http://www.momentoapp.com/

"Imagine having a diary accessible 24/7, yet completely secure from prying eyes. That would be tween bliss, wouldn't it? The Momento journaling app makes it all possible. No need to hide the diary and key under a mattress or in a far corner of a closet. Momento (iOS only; $2.99) safeguards

Writing & Research Apps continued

your content with a digital passcode and makes it easy to add photos as well as social network posts to chronicle every significant event. "

"A snap to set up, Momento includes a variety of ways to view and add content. The interface is fairly intuitive, using many of the same conventions found in other apps. In calendar mode, you can click on a date to see all of the day's posts. Or scroll day by day through journal entries in the agenda view. Add a Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Flickr, Foursquare, or blog feed to the app, and any time you post on one of those social sites it will automatically appear as an entry in Momento. You can also add tags for events, people, places, and images by clicking the tag icon in the bottom button bar. Click on the paper and pencil in the top right corner to start a new entry.
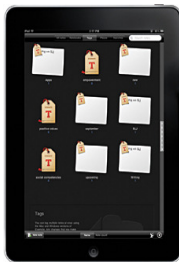
While Momento is designed for the iPhone, it scales well on an iPad. There's a flaw, however: you can't sync a Momento diary between devices. So you can't, for example, record your thoughts at an event on an iPhone and be able to access that entry on an iPad when you return home so you can revise and add content. It's possible, however, to export and import content from one device to another, but that's a lot of extra steps in order to keep copies of the same journal on two devices."

Citing with EasyBib and QuickCite http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/easybib/id436768184?mt=8

Scan a book's barcode using a mobile device camera with either EasyBib or QuickCite and voilà, a citation is created in the format of your choosing. EasyBib uses the OCLC database to retrieve citations, while QuickCite uses a selection of online databases to build a citation. Both apps generate citations in MLA, APA, and Chicago formats. EasyBib is only available for Apple devices, QuickCite for both Apple and Android platforms.

There are other important differences. With EasyBib (compatible with iPhone, iPod touch, and iPad, requires iOS 4.0 or later) you can scan barcodes one after another in order to build a bibliography. Once the list is complete, you can email it to yourself or share it with others. On QuickCite (Android ($1.01) and iOS (99 cents) devices running version 4.0 or later), you can't build a citation list within the app, and each scan is emailed individually to the address set in the app settings. With EasyBib, it's possible to change the citation format after a scan is made—not so with QuickCite. The EasyBib app also enables you to upload the bibliographic information to an EasyBib account once the citations are received in email.

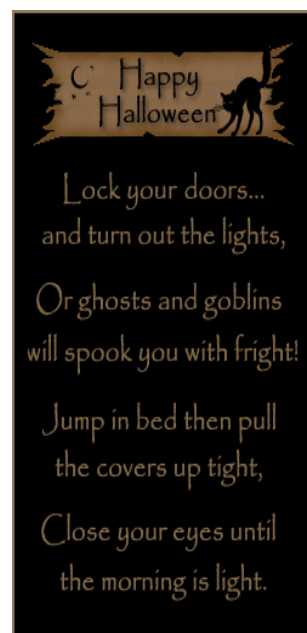### Notetaking with Evernote   http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/evernote/id281796108?mt=8

For many digital workers, the note-taking platform of choice is Evernote (the app works with Android, Blackberry, and devices running iOS 3 and higher). It's used for a wide variety of purposes, from taking photos of business cards to create a digital rolodex, to recording notes for a research project while reading articles and books. Entries are tagged and saved in "notebooks" (Evernote's term for folders). An added advantage is that the app allows for syncing between platforms and devices.

Offering many of the same features as Momento (reviewed previously), Evernote could even be used to keep a journal. But the app is capable of much more. One parent volunteer in Oklahoma City, for example, is using Evernote to create a database of evidence for the school debate team. Evernote can also be used collaboratively, as notebooks can be shared. Students working together can add and revise notes related to research and project planning and organize them without having to meet face to face outside of school.

Halloween Origins

We can trace Halloween back to Celtic festivals which celebrated the new year on the 1st of November (not 1st of January). One thread that runs through all Halloween legends is the belief that the night of October 31st was the time when ghosts of the dead returned to earth. The ancients name for this festival Samhain** and its role was to mark the boundary between the old year and new. With the spread of Christianity, the Church emphasised All Saints day on the 1st of November. This date was also known as All Hallows and gradually, the name for the night before All Hallows changed to hallow's eve, then hallow e'en and finally Halloween. **Samhain - In medieval English 'mh' was pronounced 'w', hence: Sow-en.

Compared with our Pagan ancestors, today we trivialise Halloween. Today in the UK and USA we don't even get a holiday on the 31st of October or the 1st on November, whereas, to the ancient Celts this was one of the 4 most important dates in the year. Druids or ancient priests claimed that on this special Halloween night, they could communicate with the spirits of the departed. Furthermore, far from being threatening, the ghosts of the ancestors could assist the druids in foretelling what was going to happen in the year that was about to begin. To appease the spirits of the dead and to encourage them to appear, the Druids arranged for a communal festival on the night before Samhain. The precise details of the Halloween celebration varied from region to region, and from era to era, but a constant theme is of bonfires and animal sacrifices. Many Halloween festivals lasted for 3 days. When Christian influences curtailed pagan beliefs, Samhain was replaced with All Saints day on the 1st of November, and All Souls day on the 2nd of November. This is a classic example of an ancient, essentially pagan festival being taken over and sanitised by Christian beliefs. Yet, aspects of the ancient festival survive, for example worship of the spirits of the dead of Halloween.

South Amherst Middle School Library

The purpose of our Library News Letter is to further the goals of the Library Media Center which are to support the curriculum, teach successful research strategies, and foster lifetime literacy.
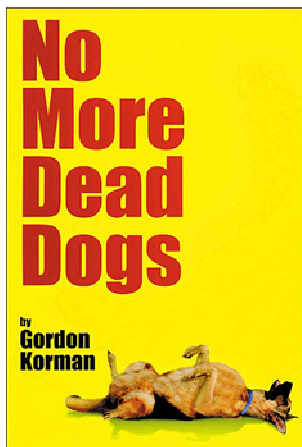
If you have any suggestions for the library staff please let us know. We hope you will find this and future issues helpful.

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HAPPY HALLOWEEN

Book Reviews

Review

Korman has this genre perfected: the funny story about middle school, with sort-of-bad kids—smart and sassy ones anyway—prevailing. Wallace Wallace is our hero. He was the hero of the school for coming off the football bench to win last year's championship for the school; this year he can't play football because he is in detention for refusing to write a positive book report about Old Shep, My Pal for English. He cannot tell a lie, he says. So he is hanging out after school where his English teacher is directing the drama club's production of a play based on this same book. His football friends are furious because the team is losing and they feel he could save them. Wallace ends up suggesting all kinds of changes in the play, to the horror of the English teacher and Rachel, the president of the drama club—but his changes in fact make the play much livelier, and it is a wild success. That's the bare outline of the plot. What makes the book fun are the zany characters and the crazy ideas. For example, Wallace's best friend is Rick, a football player's version of Mrs. Malaprop, spouting mangled versions of clichés on nearly every page. Then there is the ditzy girl with a crush on Wallace, and her chapters recounting the events as she sees them. Lurking around is the school newspaper reporter who manages to get every detail wrong—not exactly inaccurate, but with the wrong interpretation, and these hilarious articles are reproduced in the novel, adding another level of humor. Rachel is writing her heart out to Julia Roberts; someone is trying to sabotage the play and put the blame on Wallace; the dog doesn't die at the end of the play after all; well, sort of.Witty fun—and we can certainly use more humorous books for this age group, especially those with appeal to boys as well as girls.

Reviewed by Susan Alan in Voya.

AR

Interest Level	MG
RL	4.5
Points	5.0
Test Number	48259

No More Dead Dogs

By

Gordon Korman

Beware