

April 7, 2016

Dear Susan Lindgren,
Welcome back!

A week ago Sunday Mrs. Johnson and I packed up the Subaru and drove south for 12 hours, looking for sunshine, warmth, and flowering trees. We found it all. It was 70 degrees and sunny in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Yes!

We stayed at a lodge in Magazine State Park. The forest was translucent shades of green accented by flowering white dogwood and dark pink redbud trees. The forest floor was covered with purple, white and yellow wild flowers. I learned what a toothwort looks like. We hiked to the top of Mt. Magazine where we could see for over 20 miles in all directions.

Thursday was the best ever. We drove to Ponca on the Buffalo National River. We rented a canoe, put on our sunscreen and trail hats, and paddled down ten miles of aqua marine water. Lots of rapids. Pools full of small mouth bass. And gray bluffs 400 feet straight up. That's over 20 times as high as this gym. Pretty spectacular.

Friday we took what was called a canopy tour on ziplines. They've stretched half inch steel cables from the tops of tall towers all the way down a mountain. A guide hooks you up in a harness like a rock climber, clips you up to a pulley on the cable, tells you to jump, and then you race down the cable to the next platform. There were eight towers. The longest cable was over a block long and up in the tops of the trees.

I read the newspaper every day, two books book about schools, and *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. I read Harper Lee's new book before vacation so I decided to read *Mockingbird* again. The book is about legal justice and how unfairly Black people were treated in Alabama in the 30's.

Anyway, my vacation was good. Hope yours was too.

Sunday I came to school to make sure everything was ok. Dave, Adam, and Jeremiah did some serious cleaning while we were gone. The building looks good. The tulips by our new addition are coming up and it looks like all the daylilies we planted in the parking lot last fall made it. They'll look great in a month.

The end of our year is looking great.

Carole Humphrey will be teaching art lessons again. We've missed her since she broke her hip. I can't wait to see your newest creations.

The Imagination/ Inventor's fair is a week from today. What a great chance to learn about something

and share it with all of us in the high school lunchroom.

Kindergartners will be performing for us at the end of the month, and parents are already organizing a great end-of-the-year Jamboree.

I'm not sure what you know about our fifth grade exhibition, but in IB schools all over the world, 5th graders present a final demonstration of their best learning. Our fifth graders have been learning about Sharing the Planet and on May 12th they will show us and our parents what they have learned. It should be extraordinary.

You've been doing a great job learning how to read. Keep up the good work. Reading makes you knowledgeable you know. The more you read the more you know. The better you read, the harder the stuff you can read. The more you know the more knowledgeable you get. Read at school. Read at home. Read at soccer. Read at the swimming pool. Read before supper. Read after supper. Read before bed. Read when you wake up. You'll be the knowledgeablest (sic).

You have done a great job of being good friends too.

Since I wrote in January, we have sponsored two events that show how much we are a caring community. We jumped rope for heart in physical education and raised almost \$16,000 to support the Minnesota Heart Association. Just before vacation we collected over 484 pounds of food for STEP, St. Louis Park's emergency program for families who don't have enough money for food. Great job to all of you and your parents for being so caring!

Only one more fire drill and one more lockdown practice to go. The Twins started Tuesday. Life is good.

Talk to you in June.

Sincerely,

Mr. Johnson