Music at Montgomery
By Martin Kral
The purpose of this newsletter is to provide a short account of the musical experiences and offerings that your child has had this year.

March is national Music in Our Schools Month, which I believe is the perfect time to let you in on the musical happenings at Montgomery.

The students here at Montgomery are a complete pleasure to teach. I run a very free-form classroom where students work a lot with partners. This type of structure does not work without focused and responsible students. They are a credit both to you and the staff here. Please take a moment to ask your child about their music class at Montgomery.

I was recently selected by the State Music Association to present a clinic about our 5th & 6th grade student guitar players. I was able to speak to hundreds of music teachers about the accomplishments of the students at Montgomery Elementary. It was truly a wonderful experience. You can view my presentation as well as find links to various music resources at: www.kral.edublogs.org

Music Research Has Shown*…

- **Music is a basic building block of intelligence.**
- **Playing music develops critical neural connections.**
- **Music aides in better math skills.**
- **College music majors are statistically better readers.**
- **Music can boost social skills.**
- **Children taking music lessons improved more over the year on several memory skill tests than did children not taking music lessons.**
- **On the SATs, Music students score an average 57 points higher in verbal and 41 points higher in math.**

*Statistics taken from NAMM, MENC & www.supportmusic.com
What Have our Students Learned in Music This Year?

**Kindergarten:** The Kindergarteners are learning through song and movement. They have learned about the days of the week, brushing their teeth, letters, numbers & sign language, all through their music class. Music can be an exciting way for children to learn.

**First Grade:** In 1st grade, the music students continue to learn through song. They begin to see graphic representations of musical concepts such as steady beat & rhythm. Students continue to learn with singing & dancing, and by using different classroom instruments.

**Second Grade:** In 2nd grade the students are learning more about reading “real” music. They learn what actual music notes look like, and how to use them. They are willing to try anything, and generally love performing for their classmates.

**Third Grade:** In 3rd grade, the students started off the year learning historical aspects to music, such as the origin of certain patriotic songs. They are currently experimenting with guitars.

**Fourth Grade:** 4th grade is historically the “recorder” year. The students have been learning music through performance on the recorder. We have combined with percussion and keyboards to make ensembles.

**Fifth Grade:** The 5th grade students are learning musical concepts including history, theory, and performance through the use of guitars. The students learned quite quickly that playing the guitar is nothing like playing Guitar Hero. They are definitely up to the challenge of playing the guitar each week.

**Sixth Grade:** The 6th grade classes are continuing their studies on guitar. Most recently, they are completing an art/music project based upon the Grammy Awards. Look for the product of this unit at the spring Art Show.

“GE hires a lot of engineers. We want young people who can do more than add up a string of numbers and write a coherent sentence. They must be able to solve problems, communicate ideas and be sensitive to the world around them. Participation in the arts is one of the best ways to develop these abilities.”

- **Clifford V. Smith,**
  President of The General Electric Foundation

Additional Musical Experiences Available For Students

**Montgomery Choir:** The Montgomery Choir gives students in grades 3 – 6 an opportunity to sing outside the school day. The choir traditionally presents 2 concerts a year, as well as a patriotic performance for Veteran’s Day.

**Band:** The band is available to all students in 5th & 6th grade that are interested in becoming proficient on a band instrument. They perform up to 3 times a year for the community.

**Orchestra:** The orchestra is another fine example of an instrumental opportunity for students. Any student in grades 4 - 6 that is interested in performing on an orchestral string instrument is welcomed to join. They also perform at various concerts throughout the school year.