

Kids Korner

Fifth Grade Art Project On Permanent Display

LINDA WILLIAMS
Bedford Co. Correspondent
BEDFORD (Bedford Co.) — Walk through the halls of Bedford Elementary and you might think you are in an art museum. Each year, students in grades K through five are involved in fantastic art projects under the direction of Lisa Miller.

While art is a highlight for all of the students, fifth graders are extremely enthusiastic. These students will participate in making an art project that will become a permanent fixture at the school.

During the first year of the new school's existence, Lisa led them in making large papier mache' sculptures inspired by the Renaissance.

In 2000, they did large mural paintings inspired by the Impressionist painters and local artist, Kevin Kutz.

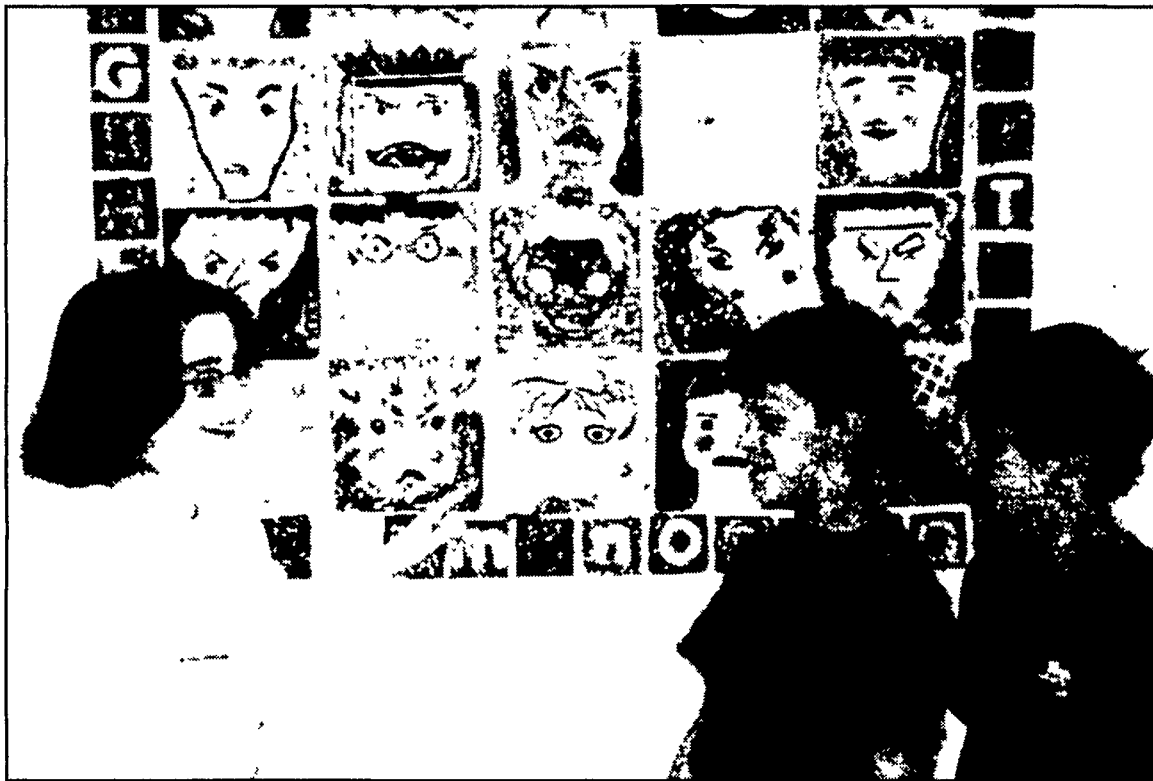
But 2001, may well be the "pie'ce de' resistance." Since the origin of the permanent projects, Lisa had thought about doing ceramic tile murals above the bathroom mirrors and elsewhere throughout the building.

Dr. Pat Crawford, Bedford school superintendent, gave her permission to write for an "Artist in Residence" matching grant through the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art.

"This meant that the Pennsylvania Council for the Arts would provide half of the funding and the school district the other half. Upon receiving the grant, it was the Council for the Arts who suggested the expertise of Jim McDowell, a potter and ceramic artist from Johnstown. Lisa also took a three-day intensive workshop on creating tiles with the Moravian Pottery and Tile corks.

Professional artist McDowell told Lisa what materials she would need. Each of the fifth grades was responsible for one theme and through a democratic process arrived at: funny faces, under the sea, night time sky, wild designs and textures, butterflies and flowers and Pennsylvania birds. Some of the designs involve single tiles while others took the cooperation of several students to design a large bird or flower including several tiles.

Some classes totally designed the murals in advance, others, just parts of it, and one group



Students admire their work on the face tiles.

was totally under Jim McDowell's direction.

All of the art students at Bedford Elementary had the opportunity to see a professional at the potter's wheel. Kindergarten through 4th grade made a small 1 by 3 inch tile.

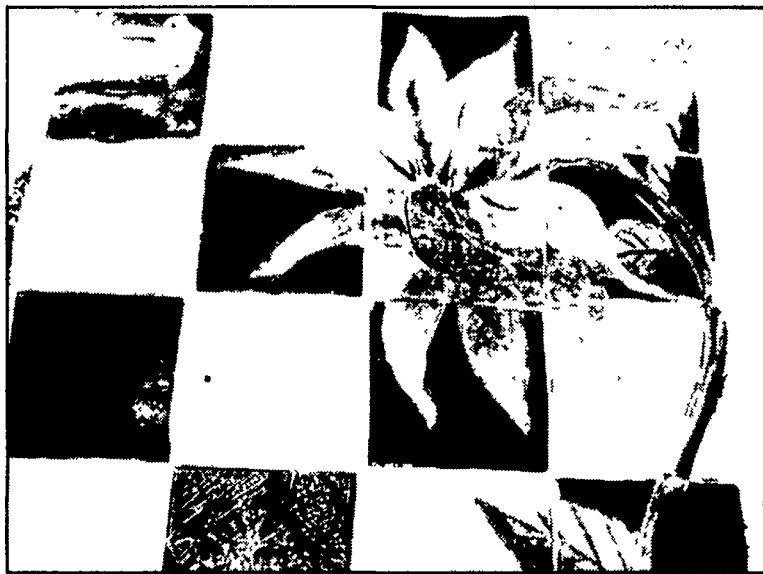
After observing Jim, the young

students made a potato head or ugly jug mug. Parents and grandparents were invited to participate and approximately 250 were on hand to try hands on creating from clay.

Lisa bisque fired all of the finished products. The children glazed them and Lisa returned

them to the kiln for glazing. Kim McGee, a fifth grade teacher, was Lisa's right hand friend volunteering to help organize the project and glaze fire the tiles.

"But there was still the prob-



Some students composed a Pennsylvania flower using several different varieties of tile.

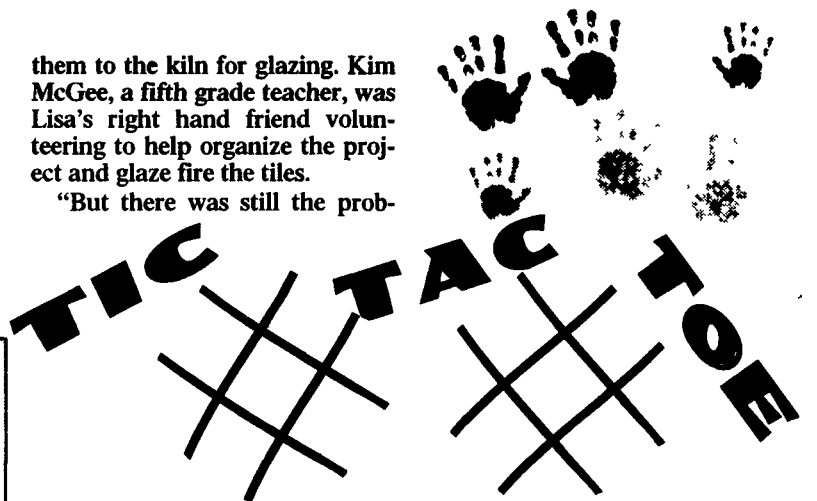


Proud of their work, these students point to the wild design and texture pattern located above the restroom mirrors.

lem of how to get the finished fifth grade tiles on the wall to become permanent," Lisa says. "I called on the skills of one of our mentors, a retired ceramic tile contractor, Jay Williams. He donated both his time and skills in making Lisa's dream become a reality. "I learned a great deal about tile installation," Lisa admits.

All of the panels will now have to be hand grouted due to the unevenness of the tile surfaces. When totally finished, Lisa hopes it will be a project which will be visited by the students through their adult years and into their children's or even grandchildren's school years.

Lisa is a 1983 graduate of Bedford High School. She is the daughter of William and Charlotte Schaeffer of Friends Cove and is married to professional artist Brice Miller. They reside in Morrison's Cove.



Smart Stuff with Twig Walkingstick

Dear Twig: When my Dad mows the lawn, he cuts it real short. It looks like the haircuts he gives me in summer! My Mom read it's better to cut the grass longer. Can you explain? Can you keep me from getting any more buzzcuts?

I can't help you with those haircuts. As you can see, I'm no style-setter myself. Plus I'm the one who gives Bob the Bug his haircuts. But I can help you with your lawn. The answer is Yes, in most cases, it is better to cut your grass longer. Research by Joe Rimelapach, an Ohio State scientist who studies the best ways to grow turfgrass, bears this out. He found that cutting a lawn short almost always leads to more weeds—something most folks don't want—because a short lawn lets more sunlight reach the soil and that helps weeds grow. On the other hand, cutting the grass longer—say, two and a half to three inches high—makes for thicker turf and keeps most weeds from getting started. It's also nicer to play on! Short grass does have fewer diseases, but Joe says the diseases of longer grass tend to come and go and aren't too much of a problem. So, let it grow—a bit longer, at least!

At length,

Twig

