

High-tech field trip takes students to Philadelphia

By KYLIE SHAFFERKOEETTER
Post Staff

DALLAS - Dallas High School French 3 students participated in a technological feat that until a few years ago would only have been possible on The Jetsons, when they took their first field trip via the Distance Learning Lab, to the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

In the converted garage that once housed tractors, students discussed specific French painters with Danielle Rice, the educational coordinator for the museum. Rice was at the museum in Philadelphia and the students never left the high school.

After watching a short video on Impressionism presented by Rice, students analyzed and discussed Cezanne, Degas, Cassatt, Toulouse-Lautrec, Van Gogh and Charlemagne (who was not an impressionist painter).

Although she believes hands-on field trips are beneficial, Candice Fike, French teacher, thinks the stationary trips allow for more time to be spent on education. "I used to take field trips to New York. It took a lot of time on things that had nothing to do with actual learning. With this, we can concentrate on education," she said.

"I think Rice was impressed by the sophistication of their answers."

Candice Fike
Dallas teacher

The windowless room painted a serene blue provides few if any distractions and facilitates teachers' and students' concentration on the topic at hand.

"I thought it was fabulous. A lot of times you get myopic in the classroom and forget there's a whole world out there. Rice really brought the French painters to life," said Fike.

The students wrote special reports on each painter before the trip. They were prepared with intelligent questions and answers, said Fike. "I think Rice was impressed by the sophistication of their answers," she said.

The Distance Learning Lab was completed last spring. The Dallas district was one of 100 districts in Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey that received the Project New Visions Grant, a federal grant to buy the equipment.

A video camera is set up on both ends and each can scan



POST PHOTO/KYLIE SHAFFERKOEETTER

Students watched a television on another wall as Danielle Rice, educational coordinator at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, conducted a class on French painters. From left, Nick Seidel, Nicky Nackley, Katie Weiss, Brenda Karavitch, Lacey Popson. Mrs. Keiper stood behind the students.

around the room to zoom in on specific people or items, or pull back to give a broad view of the entire class. The audio and video are sent through high-speed phone lines known as ISDN wires.

Michael Speziale, assistant superintendent, said Dallas is currently meeting with Lake-Lehman, Wyoming Valley West and other area schools to plan inter-school classes. "We are planning

for September of next year to share classes," said Speziale. Classes that may be underenrolled or only offered at one school can be taught at more than one school.

Connie Keiper, technology/distance learning liaison, said field trips to the PA State Museum in Harrisburg and wetlands in New Jersey have already been set up for Westmoreland Elementary students.



Native American folklore at Montessori

Wyoming Valley Montessori School Upper Elementary Students recently enjoyed a presentation by Betty Yedinak. She is a storyteller and historian specializing in Native American folklore and local Native American history. Dressed in specially-designed, authentic attire, Ms. Yedinak shared her extensive collection of artifacts with the children. The program was a highlight of the American history unit the students are currently exploring. They are also creating a "Museum" of Native American history in their classroom which will be open to the other WVMS students as well as families and friends of the Upper Elementary class. Under the direction of guest musician Mary Elizabeth Knysh, the students learned Native American chants and rhythms. They are crafting drums which will be used to accompany their singing as part of the museum experience. From left, Sean Shadle, Scott Henry, Chelsea Yenason, Betty Yedinak and Dee Balice, teacher.



Dallas K of C installs officers

The Dallas Knights of Columbus, Father John J. O'Leary Council 8224, recently installed officers for the 1997-98 fraternal year. Pictured, from left, front row; Jeff Carter, Warden; John Filip, Grand Knight; Tony Blazo, District Warden; Jack Cacoza, Treasurer; Ed Raver Jr., Recorder. Second row; Joseph Sallitt, Outside Guard; Ron Mosca, Financial Secretary; Ron Mackiewicz, Deputy Grand Knight; Carl Masick, District Deputy.

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