THE FACULTY CORNER

A WORD FROM THE ANACAPA SCHOOL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT. . .

This year, Anacapa science is all about applications—what is happening in science today and how is it being used?

UPPER SCHOOL: CHEMISTRY

The Upper School is well into its year of studying chemistry. Students can now make sense of the periodic table and use it to make predictions about how elements will interact. Through our unit labs, students in the Chemistry class can now comfortably use measuring instruments, such as balances and graduated cylinders, and they have experienced the classic chemistry tool, the Bunsen Burner, in order to test the strength of ionic and covalent bonds. This year also marks the beginning of a new aspect of Anacapa science classes called "Science Friday" after the NPR radio show. On Fridays, the students and I discuss current science research and its potential applications in our lives. Some topics we have discussed so far include Graphene, a carbon-based material thousands of times stronger than steel, yet only one atom thick, PKMzeta, the chemical in our brain responsible for maintaining memory (and the emerging ability of scientists to alter that chemical), and the ongoing saga of the faster-than-light neutrinos creating controversy at the Large Hadron Collider.

LOWER SCHOOL: PHYSICAL SCIENCE

The Lower School just finished its semester-long exploration of chemistry and is well into their second unit on climate science. During this past summer, I served as a teacher advisor for the Stanford University Climate Change Education Project, an ongoing effort in which a team of climate scientists and teachers are working together to create meaningful and effective curriculum to teach the relatively new topic of climate change to middle and high school students. Anacapa Lower School students are playing their role in this project now by experiencing the curriculum and giving their own feedback. This unit, which bridges the Lower School study of chemistry and physics, introduces students to the basics of the complicated world of climate science and encourages them to think about how it might be relevant to their lives. The students are developing their own opinions about what to believe and what should be done, while practicing the important skill of supporting ideas with evidence. Coming up next, we will start our investigation of physics and motion, during which I'm sure the Lower School students will enjoy building some simple (and maybe some not-so-simple) machines.

It's been a great year for Anacapa science so far, and I look forward to the rest of it! If any Anacapa parents want to share how chemistry and/or physics apply to their lives, either professionally or personally, please contact Megan. The more connections we can find to science in our own lives, the better!

~ ~ Megan Nesland

MEGAN'S OFFICE HOURS:

- Tuesdays at Lunch
- Wednesdays 3:30-5 pm
- By Appointment