



5 Going On 50

Bethlehem UMC Preschoolers Learn about Smith Mountain Lake

Ten preschoolers from the Bethlehem UMC Preschool in Moneta will forever remember facts about how Smith Mountain Lake was formed. These four year olds were assigned a “project” called “5 Going on 50” SML Project, which entailed interviewing a fifty plus year old adult in the community who could tell them about life before the lake.

The April focus for lessons was transportation, with weekly emphasis on railroads, cars/trucks, boats/ships, and airplanes. This allowed their 50+ friend to share pictures of old (vintage) cars, trucks, and boats that were taken before and during the construction of the lake. Children reported about various bits of local history that their older generation friend thought was important to celebrate about the lake.

One child spoke of the goat who the construction workers could not relocate. Another child shared how the home of his (50+) friend’s house was flooded and left at the bottom of the lake. One child’s great grandparent had a dairy farm before the lake, and now has beef cattle and chickens on a hill above the lake. One child’s grandfather helped build Smith Mountain Lake State Park, and one child visited the spot where his parents were married on the lake. One child shared a picture of a wooden bridge and said it was now under water, but this bridge (pointing to Halesford Bridge) “is the bridge I cross on my way to school everyday”. Each child came with a different story and reported what they had learned. They created posters, took pictures, brought

photo albums, and one child had newspapers of the 25th anniversary of the lake.

“As an educator, no matter what age, our goal is to find a fun and exciting way for children to learn and then remember what they learned. The impacts were way beyond my wildest dreams”, said Billie Jean Elmer, teacher of the 4 year old class. “I had them bring in their projects and share their story during class one day, and the next Preschool day we had a family picnic at Smith Mountain Lake Community Park in Franklin County, where they again shared their findings in front of their families and guests.”

These children displayed tremendous poise and confidence as they shared the stories. “We enjoyed counting to 50, laughing at the old cars and trucks, looking at clothes 50 years ago, and learning what a dam actually does with the water”, Ms Elmer said.

She also loved the intergenerational bonding, which allowed the children a special day for lunch for their interview, or a special sleepover with “granddaddy”, or a fun night with just granny. Many of the children have enjoyed the lake for recreational use, but now have a greater appreciation for the lake and its impact on their families and senior citizen friends when it was formed 50 years ago. “5 Going on 50” is just another joy that SML has brought to many of residents in Bedford and Franklin counties!

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We’d love to hear from you!

It’s always great to hear from our readers. We enjoy receiving your comments, suggestions, puzzle solutions, and any photos and articles that you care to submit to us.

Please understand that it is not always possible to answer everyone, but we do read everything that we get.

If you would like to submit a photograph or article for consideration, please observe the following guidelines:

- We cannot return the items that you submit; please do not send originals
- For best quality, digital photos must be high resolution (300 dpi)
- Images taken from websites are generally of lower resolution and therefore unusable
- Articles should be relevant to SML or the immediate area, including:
 - o History of the area
 - o Interesting personalities in the community
 - o Adventures, life experiences, etc. of people with strong ties to the lake
 - o SML clubs, organizations, churches
 - o Culture and the Arts at the lake
 - o Fiction and humor from local writers.

While we encourage everyone to submit anything of his or her choosing, we cannot guarantee that we will use your submission(s). Anything that is used may appear in any subsequent issue of the magazine. We discourage readers from submitting the following types of content:

- News stories, political opinion and other topical pieces that “age” quickly.
- Book reviews, restaurant and theater reviews
- Event driven stories, although we may print a photo or two from time to time
- Articles designed to promote or advertise a specific business

Please send submissions to:

Discover SML Magazine
40 Village Springs Dr., Suite 25, Hardy, VA 24101

Or via e-mail to:

editor@discoversmithmountainlake.com

From Our Readers

Dear Mr. Erlandes,

Every issue of Discover has been good in all these recent years, and this year’s Winter issue is superb!

Tears accompanied my reading of the Christmas story, *The Most Precious Gift*. My laughter went along on your road trip, *Road Wearier*. The calendar photos, as always, are just right for each month.

You certainly can be proud of your first Alex Erlandes Scholarship Awardee. I read the fish articles because my husband, Tom, zeroed in on them. I checked out the Brain Teaser and even the poem, *In the Bleak Midwinter*, struck a chord for me.

All in all, the Discover Winter issue 2015-16 was a pleasure to read, and I wanted to tell you. Tim, your Editor’s Note left me counting my blessings. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Nancy Rae Brown