

Guilford Sixth Grade Creates a *Florilegium**

BY JEN KRAMER

During the last school year, the sixth graders of Guilford Central School celebrated their explorations of a wonderful local forest by creating the *Weeks Forest Florilegium*. During “Forest Thursdays,” students watched the Weeks Forest change from warm greens to vivid reds and finally, to snowy whites. They learned about the animals and plants that live there and how they are all part of the food web. They became “clan” members: turkey vultures, deer mice and northern saw-whet owls, and built clan forts on the far side of the Broad Brook. Finally, each student “adopted” one of the plants growing in this diverse ecosystem.



Students draw their plants

In the forest, they recorded their observations of these plants, made sketches and took samples. Back at school, they researched their plants and mapped their locations on the Guilford Conservation Commission’s trail map. With help from local bookmaker Linda Lembke, our classroom was transformed into a scrip-

torium, or bookmaking workshop. Over several weeks, students created beautiful illuminated pages of their plants, painted book covers using leaves from the forest, and bound copies of all the pages made by the class into books they could each take home.

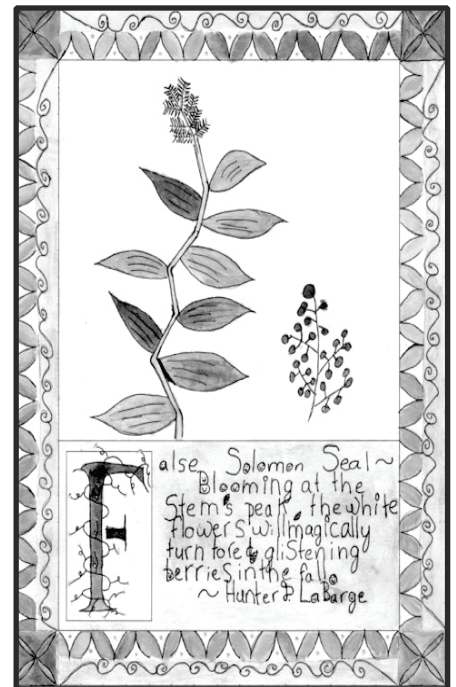
Many thanks to the Guilford sixth graders for the boundless enthusiasm and energy they brought to this project, to Linda Lembke for her gentle guidance and beautiful materials, to art teacher Rachel Mangan and paraeducator Jaclyn Bristol for their contributions, and to the Anthony family who made it possible for the 6th graders to use Weeks Forest as an outdoor classroom.

If you have a sixth grader at home or in your neighborhood, we invite you to explore their *Weeks Forest Florilegium*; if you don’t, stop by the Guilford Library and take a look at their copy. We hope you enjoy our book and that it inspires you to visit the Weeks Forest, a truly magical place in Guilford.



Hunter LaBarge works on his page

*The word florilegium derives from the Latin florilegus, which can be translated as “culling flowers.” It initially applied to a collection of flowers, and later to books about flowers, but it wasn’t long before the word began to be used for “a collection of the flowers of literature.” Its synonym anthology comes from the Greek word for “flower gathering.” (From www.merriam-webster.com)



Hunter’s page

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