



Keyed up: Jason Colquitt as musician Ray Charles.



Brush up: Zachary Goodman portrayed artist Vincent van Gogh.



Inventive face: Kyle Heller as American inventor Ben Franklin.



Stanza stance: Ryoko Suzuki as 19th century Japanese poet Akiko Yosano.



Surreal 'stache: Michael Peck as Spanish artist Salvador Dali.

Warner students wax historically on famous figures

With the push of a button Monday night, visitors at Warner Middle School's "Wax Museum" heard everything they'd ever want to know about famous people from the past and present who made positive contributions to the world.

Sixth-graders portrayed everybody from Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King Jr. to Orville Wright. Even sports and entertainment heroes were well-represented on a night mostly devoted to history.

Visitors to Warner crammed every hall in the building, making their way from student to student. At each station, a timeline, biography and "self-portrait" augmented the actual presentation, which began when a crayon-on-paper button was "pushed" by the visitor.

Students, who spent weeks researching and practicing their roles, then recounted in detail some of "their" accomplishments and little known personal facts.

"Shalom," said Menachem Begin, portrayed by student Philip Mintz. "My main accomplishment is that I was prime minister."

A gavel rested on the desk in front of Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor (as played by Courtney Kolb).

"Do you know who the first woman in the Supreme Court was?" she began, following the button being pushed. "It was me."

Some other interesting characters included Candice Hesano's Queen Elizabeth, Bill Camp's Neil Armstrong, Jodi Bachrach's Rosa Parks, Mika Stefan's Elizabeth Arden and Erin Fried's Walt Disney.

The works

Perhaps no student had a more complete presentation than Bradley Jaffe, who portrayed Detroit Red Wings goaltender great Terry Sawchuk. Jerseys from Sawchuk's various teams lined the wall behind Jaffe, who wore goalie equipment and painted-on stitches while standing in front of a street hockey net.

"I researched him a lot," said Jaffe. "He's the greatest goaltender of all time, he invented the stance that every goaltender does right now."

Another legendary sports figure, boxer Joe Louis, was portrayed by Donny Ljucovic. He wore bright red Everlast boxing gloves on his hands, which he borrowed from his cousin.

"I'm really involved in sports," said the student, pausing from his role. "Joe Louis was my fifth pick, but the first four were already taken."

Portraying American aerial pioneer Orville Wright was Kyle Kioetely.

"If Orville Wright didn't invent the airplane, life today would be different," he said, wearing an outfit that could have come right out of the early 20th century. On the chair next to Orville was a kite,

indicating the character's love of flying at a very early age.

Portraying Will Mayo, of the famous Mayo Brothers, was Brad Stulberg. The student delved into all of Will Mayo's achievements, such as founding the Mayo Clinic and coming up with a cure for appendicitis.

Watching the spiel was Stulberg's former teacher at Forest Elementary School, Kathy Koperski.

"The amount of research involved in this is great," Koperski said. "I'm really impressed with the knowledge they have. And they cover a wide variety of people."

Stulberg, like other students, picked someone they thought might be interesting to portray. But, from there, it was extensive time in the library, on the Internet, and in front of mirrors, perfecting their portrayals.

Both of his parents loved their son's presentation, and those of the other students. Nine sixth-grade classes participated in the wax museum.

Good reviews

"I think it's outstanding," said Bob Stulberg. "It's real educational and interesting. Kids learned how to give speeches and do research. Every button I've pushed, they've really gotten into it."

Just as impressed was Linda Stulberg. "What a wonderful way to make history come alive."

Parent Ramya Jappaya, whose daughter, Christina, portrayed Hillary Rodham Clinton, was most impressed with the self-portraits. "They spent a lot of time on those, and it shows."

"We wanted kids to learn about somebody who made a positive contribution to society from the past or from today," said sixth-grade teacher Debbie Smith. "They were able to do different research for the first time."

Some students really dug for their material. Student Lindsey Cohan, who portrayed early 20th century literary figure Clare Booth Luce, used the Internet to track down an authentic autograph, Smith said.

"Someone who collects memorabilia (in Maine) found out on the Internet that this was going on," Smith said. "And so he provided the ... autograph."



Glove save: Brad Jaffe, a sixth-grader at Warner Middle School, suits up as former Red Wing Terry Sawchuk for the school's presentation of a wax museum. Listening to Brad's speech on Sawchuk's life are Nathan Valade and his mom, Ann Valade (Brad's best friend Gregory's brother and mom); his mom, Iris Jaffee; and family friend Carol Kromirs.

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Hills middle school highlights children's high-tech wizardry

From rocket ships to web pages, Warner Middle School students are doing some pretty amazing things when it comes to technology.

And they showcased their high-tech talents during last week's Technology Night.

The show-and-tell at the Farmington district school featured student demonstrations on Lego Robotics, ham radio, desktop publishing, Power Point and computer-aided design. Several stations in the converted metal shop were devoted to how a CO2 dragster was created in the computer lab through the wonders of CAD.

"This gives (parents) the chance to see what their children are doing in terms of learning about technology," said Warner teacher Tom Ogle. Some of the work on display was put together by students in the after-school Technology and Radio Club, which is connected with the building's teen center.

Tunnel vision

Ruth Diamond was impressed. Her sixth-grade son, Yoav, is one of the students whose work was on display.

"Now when he talks about technology," Diamond said, "I'll be able to visualize what they're learning. I saw the ham radio, the Legos, the air tunnel ... It's hands-on learning and that's better than sitting in a classroom."

"And, if they're interested enough, they have all of those after-school opportunities."

To create the CO2 dragster, students started out by doing a sketch on CAD. From there, Ogle said, a plastic foam prototype was created in order to be placed inside the flow visualization smoke tunnel. The smoke swirled around the object, from all angles — giving students data about whether the dragster was sufficiently aerodynamic.

"We're looking for smooth, straight streams," said Ogle, demonstrating how the smoke tunnel works. "We don't want choppy streams."

That data enabled students to take the prototype and put together a wood block version, one that was ultimately used in computerized experiments to determine the amount of speed vs. drag.

All of the information was highlighted in a Power Point presentation of CO2 dragster results, shown in another classroom by eighth grader Ariana Blumenfeld.

As explained by eighth grader Scott Staler, the dragster careened down a 20-meter track, one with an infra-red sensor and CO2 cartridge at the other end. "The computer sends a firing pin down to the cartridge, and it records what the fastest time was."

Hamming it up

Parents also watched eighth grader Matt Henry discuss how he used HTML Web Publishing to build a professional-quality page. "This is my basketball —

technology and doing web pages," Matt said later.

Matt and all seventh and eighth graders in teacher Tracy Wallace's computer course must design a web page. But most design them using Microsoft Word '97, which puts in the HTML coding for you.

"This is how the pros do it," said Wallace, referring to HTML. She added that companies tell her that "these are the kinds of things they're looking for. They want to hire our eighth graders but it's illegal."

Down the hall, seventh grader Edward Bellamy, who is in the Technology and Radio Club, watched with interest as Ogle demonstrated the smoke tunnel and, later, as foreign language teacher Jeff Drelles tried to make a contact with someone in South America via the ham radio.

But Drelles wasn't having initial success. "There's nobody who wants to talk," Drelles said. "There's nobody on this frequency."

Edward spoke enthusiastically about all of the projects and demos. "I like rockets, ham radios and CO2 cars. I just like it (technology) because it's fun."

Meanwhile, since there weren't many parents on hand to experience Technology Night, Edward added that some didn't know what they were missing.

"They would be amazed to see how stuff has been changed ever since they were in school," he said with a smile.