

# Kids Stuff

## Third-grade Reading Challenge



Courtesy photo

By JANA  
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Hands waved in the air to celebrate the milestone: a

correctly answered question in the Third Grade Reading Challenge.

The “silent applause” was a sea of fingers wiggling overhead for three student teams

competing at Frylands Elementary in Monroe. The Wild Readers, Smart Reading Warriors and Flaming Readers were competing to advance to the semi-finals.

The “Mega-Fun, Biblio-Trivia, Rockem-Sockem Third-Grade Reading Challenge” by Sno-Isle Libraries fine-tunes essential skills of reading. The comprehension tested in the challenge can impact daily life later on. And Sno-Isle says the third grade is when the path sets: Kids who master the reading craft in third grade are less likely to drop out of school.

“You are going to get used to what a challenge is like so you’ll be reading for the semi-final,” Monroe children’s librarian Shannon Dye said to the group. “The one with the most points will win the challenge.”

Graduation rates in area school districts are better than state averages. Monroe School District has an 87 percent graduation rate; Snohomish is at 90 percent, and Everett Schools graduate 96 percent of its students, according to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction’s Report Card data. In Washington state as a whole, the high school graduation rate is 81 percent and 70 percent of high school

drop-outs are low income, according to 2018 statistics from the state.

The contest tasks them with reading six books before semi-final and final reading challenge events. The knowledge quiz bowl-style events test the teams’ attentiveness to what they read, and help them focus on reading comprehension.

Dye prods the group along, as they ponder their answers.

“Do we have an answer from our middle team?” she asks, as the group waits for one last team to file their answer. Just short of a minute passes, and she pushes again, “it’s better to put a guess than nothing at all.”

The Frylands competition played out with desks grouped in a circle. The group as a whole views a question, then teams join in a whisper to decide on the answer. The chosen item is put to scratch-paper and a “runner” brings the final item to the judges.

The question is answered by all three groups, and the winner of the round is announced. Hands raise and wiggle to celebrate with silent

applause and the next question is read.

“When she really needs to think, where does Zoey wear her thinking goggles?”

Students file their answer, team by team. Then Dye reads aloud from her key book, “The correct answer is ‘A, on her head.’”

Surveys by Sno-Isle say that the challenge improves confidence in reading ability and enjoyment in reading.

Melany Perez-Soto, 9, already enjoys reading. She said she liked taking part in the preparation for the contest, because “you can explore a new world.”

Jacob Anguiano, 8, said the competition is fun, but “it’s a little hard to keep up and make sure that you get all the right answers.”

Frank Wagner Elementary school librarian Sally Ciuzak attended the Monroe event to support the students because she said she is proud of them.

Dawn McArthur, a special education teacher at Frank Wagner said, “I just came to support the big, beautiful brains.”

## Fun for kids at your local library

**Monroe Library**  
1070 Village Way

• **Therapy Horse: March 14** ~ Come meet a therapy miniature horse! Hear stories about horses and learn about pet therapy – then get your picture taken with a miniature horse! For grades K-5 from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

• **Shrinky Dinks: March 25** ~ Create your own Shrinky dink jewelry, key chain, or magnet and watch it shrink right before your eyes! For grades K-12 from 4-5 p.m.

• **Reading with Rover: March 28** ~ Read aloud to

a loving canine listener. For school-age children with caregiver from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

• **Grass Gnomes: April 9** ~ Come make your own funny grass gnomes that you can keep in your windowsill. For grades K-5 from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

**Snohomish Library**  
311 Maple Avenue

• **Pollination Station: April 6** ~ What’s the buzz about bees? Participate in a hands-on model of the pollination process, help plant bee-

friendly wildflowers and take home your own bee-friendly plant. 2-3:30 p.m.

• **Reading with Rover: April 4** ~ Read aloud to a loving canine listener. For children with caregiver. 11am-12pm.

• **Dinosaur Discovery: April 8** ~ Witness dinosaurs come to life and experience the closest thing possible to a dinosaur encounter. Meet movable dinosaurs, explore

a sand pit, study fossils and more. 10-11 a.m.

• **Optical Illusions: April 10** ~ Not everything is what it seems – some things are just an illusion! Hands-on experiments that explain the magic behind optical illusions. 4-5 p.m.

Come meet a miniature therapy horse at the Monroe Library March 14.

