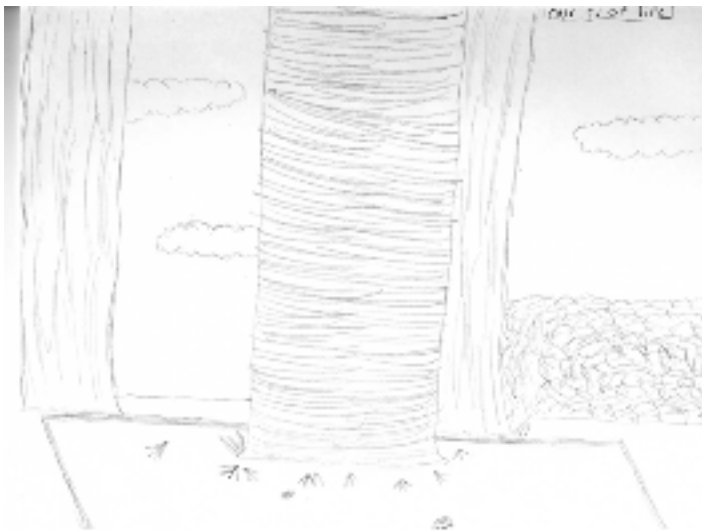


Saratoga Independent School
Square of Life Project
Anthropology Group

We made our first observations on 9/22/06. It was about 9:30 and 50 degrees out. Our class is made up of 14 students. We split up into 4 groups each observing our own squares. Here are our findings:

Group 1 - We enjoyed observing our square of life. One of the most memorable things we saw was a gall. For those of you not familiar with a gall, it is a growth or swelling on a plant. It is usually caused by an insect or plant pest. This gall was about three and a half inches round. It was yellowish in color with maroon dots on it. We also saw dead pine needles on the ground that had fallen from a tall pine tree that looked like it was going to die because the other trees around it aren't letting it get enough light. There was a white fungus growing on the tree. We spotted a patch of brown mushrooms next to the tree. We also saw some orange and yellow leaves on the ground that had fallen from other trees which is a sign of fall. We spotted a shiny black ant that was hauling a piece of food back to its ant hill. We also saw a woolly bear caterpillar inching along on the ground. This is what we saw in our square of life.

We thought this project was going to be fun. We thought that we would see a lot of wildlife. We had fun working on this project but we didn't see as much wildlife as we thought we would. We chose to compare our findings to the Harold Sheppard School in Sorel-Tracy, Quebec, Canada. We read through many reports and thought these students had a lot of information about their square of life. We thought that even though they found more wildlife, there were many similarities between our squares.



Our Square of Life



Group 2 - During our observation we saw insects like carpenter ants, a fluorescent green tree hopper, and a small brown grub. We also saw plants like moss, an oak leaf, and an acorn. We also saw what we thought was a swamp hosta (our square is near a drainpipe with water coming out of it, the ground is very damp).

We found less wildlife than we thought we would. We know there are many animals that live on or around our school grounds and we would have liked to see deer or raccoons. We saw similar things to the Harold Sheppard School in Quebec probably because we live relatively close to one another.

Group 3 -

We saw many different insects in our square. We noticed crickets and a small black beetle. We also saw small holes with little piles of dirt next to them. We think these were made by a chipmunk. We also saw a small olive green toad with brown markings. We saw a small black insect in the grass which was similar to a flea. We found a lot of animals during our observation.

We first thought this project was kind of silly and that it would be hard. We also thought that we would not see much wildlife. After we made our Square of Life observations, we were surprised that we saw a lot of wildlife. It wasn't a hard project at all, we just took some time and looked carefully. We wanted to compare our observations to the Harold Sheppard School in Quebec, Canada because they reported a lot of wildlife and it is peaceful there. We were surprised that they found so much litter in their squares. It was shocking to us because we think of Canada as being really clean but now we know they have litter too.



Group 4 - Today we studied our square of life. The air was damp and cool when we went out to make our observations. Our square is located beside the driveway to our school. The area immediately around our driveway is woodland. In our square we observed a thorn bush about 3 feet tall with small sharp thorns. We also noticed small ash colored mushrooms each a few inches apart. There were 1 or 2 fern bushes near the square. We saw 5 or 6 acorns in good condition. There was a dead pine cone and a few dried out pine needles from a nearby pine tree.

We thought this was an interesting project. We didn't think we would see much life in our square and we really didn't. We were surprised that although the Harold Sheppard School in Quebec, Canada found a lot of litter in their square, they found their square to be thriving with life.