

Tunes from trash

*Kids learn to recycle
junk into music-makers*

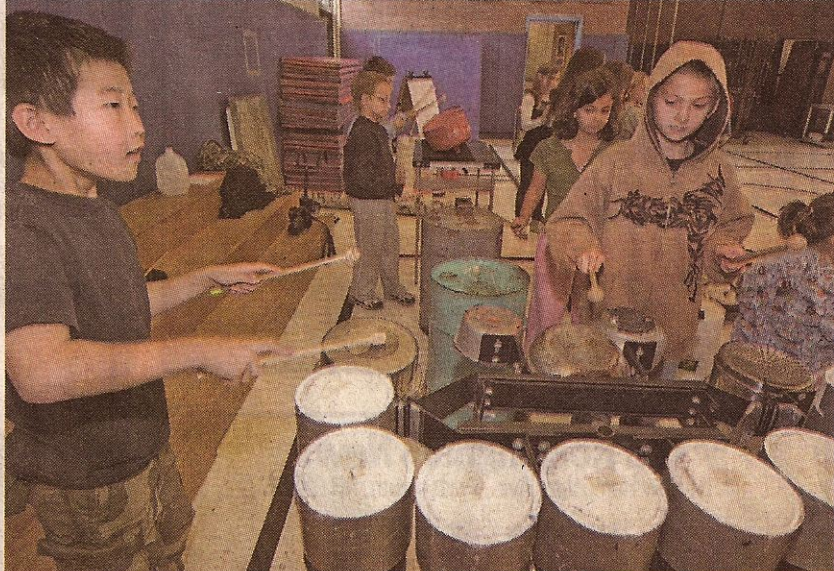
BY ANN SANOK
rockinghamnews@seacoastonline.com

NEWTON — There has been a lot of trash activity in the school gym lately. Old PVC pipes, rusting steel coils, 55-gallon plastic barrels and metal gasoline cans might seem like a just a lot of junk, but Memorial School students learned these objects can be music to their ears.

Artist-in-residence Jeff Erwin, a juried member of the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts, introduced students to his unique interactive art form this week, proving that music and art can exist in the most unlikely places.

Erwin, who has a master's degree in education, creates instruments from used and recycled materials, demonstrating how anyone can create a diversity of sound, vibrations and yes, even music, from the most surprising objects.

On Tuesday, students in Cynthia Tatarosian-Augustin's fourth-grade class listened intently as Erwin showed them how sounds changed by degrees when a metal pipe was lowered into water. Erwin demonstrated how a mallet applied



JOHN GARDEN PHOTO
Newton Memorial School fourth graders Ryan Gersbach and Eddie Lindscott play a percussion instrument made of junk parts during a "Junk to Funk" music program on Tuesday.

to an ordinary bundt cake pan creates a chiming echo. A circular metal device called the waterphone produced a haunting sound similar to the calls whales make in the ocean.

Erwin says junk music is popular with students because it lets them create and experiment with sound and music without being evaluated as to whether they are good musicians or highly skilled.

"It allows a real freedom, not only

to make music and sound, but to learn about creativity. Kids see that music doesn't just come from typical instruments, it exists everywhere," said Erwin. "In the process, they learn that there is always a different way to do things."

Enrichment coordinator Debbie Okolo said Erwin's artist-in-residency was made possible in part through

See TUNES, Page A2

TUNES: Kids learn to recycle junk into music-makers



JOHN GARDEN PHOTO
Newton Memorial School fourth-graders Haley Townsend and Madison Smith play a percussion instrument made of PVC tubes during a "Junk to Funk" music program on Tuesday.

Continued from page A1

PTO funding. "The PTO is a valuable contributor to our enrichment program and we are grateful for all their efforts," said Okolo.

Fourth-graders Maxine Smith and Taryn Wood took a turn on what Erwin calls "The Beast," a unique sound structure made of old pots and pans, a metal rolling device once used in a post office, some old traffic signs and a clock. Julie Melvin took her mallet enthusiastically to some old gas cans, creating a tangy sound reminiscent of Caribbean steel drums.

Under Erwin's direction, it didn't take long for the entire class to figure out how to make "junk music." They beat their instruments harder and harder until a cacophony of sounds, cultural, industrial, pop and hip-hop filled the air. Gradually they slowed the beat and

"The PTO is a valuable contributor to our enrichment program and we are grateful for all their efforts."

Debbie Okolo
Enrichment coordinator

softened their blows, yielding a melodic, almost symphonic sound.

The school's fifth-graders will demonstrate their junk music skills to the public on Monday, Nov. 19 at 7 p.m. in the Memorial School gym.