

Hi Mom and Dad,

Today the Art Parent came into our class and showed us our **Masterpiece of the Month**. Since we are learning about our community in school, we learned about a famous artist who loved everyday life in his community so much that he painted pictures of it. **His name was Grant Wood and he painted a very famous picture called American Gothic.**

American Gothic is one of the most famous paintings in the world and lives at the Art Institute of Chicago. Maybe we could go visit it sometime.

Grant Wood grew up in the Midwest (where we live) in a state called Iowa. His paintings show the love he had for the people, the farmlands and the customs of the Midwest. **Grant Wood helped create an important, all-American style of art called Regionalism.**

Grant Wood loved to draw even at a very early age. He often drew pictures with burnt sticks that his mother gave him from their stove. The Art Parent brought in a real-live burnt stick and showed us how you can draw with it.

When Grant Wood painted *American Gothic*, he was just having fun showing the kind of people he had known his whole life. One reason that *American Gothic* is so popular is because very often, people see something in it that reminds them of themselves. **Did you know that Grant Wood modeled the farmer and his wife after his dentist and his own sister?**

Lots of people love to have fun with *American Gothic*. We saw a funny version of *American Gothic* with the characters from *SpongeBob Square Pants*. And we saw that some Paul Newman snacks have an *American Gothic* picture on the package. I have never noticed how often I see parodies of *American Gothic*....they are all over!

We brainstormed lots of things that go together (like a cat and a mouse, or my mom and my dad) and drew our own *American Gothic* parodies. It was funny to think of what the farmer character should hold (the mouse held a piece of cheese!).

After traveling all over the world, Grant Wood finally decided that the best place to create art was right in his own backyard. To Grant Wood, there really was no place like home!

Ask me about *Grant Wood and American Gothic*. I will have a lot to share!

