

Be Mine Valentine

Kids find learning math skills sweet

By JEANETTE KRIZEK

Learning math at the Prairie Heights Elementary School in Jennings had a sweet twist last Wednesday with the theme focusing on valentines.

Students in kindergarten through second grade had a Hands-on-Math hour, learning math skills that will apply to everyday life using valentine candy.

Cheryl Soderlund, first and second grade teacher, said the students took turns predicting the temperature, read a thermometer which hangs outside the classroom window, then recorded the information on a chart.

Abby Bainter took a turn and found the day to be a chilly 39 degrees. The Sweethearts in class decided it was 14 degrees colder than the day before.

After recording the temperature, students divided into small groups to work on problem-solving concepts, sorting and patterning skills.

Mrs. Soderlund brought out the tools to study with — in this case, several large containers of candy hearts — and the fun began.

The kindergarten class played a graphic and sorting game with candy hearts. The students estimated the amount of candy in a container and which color was dominant. Each player drew a heart from a basket held by teacher Becky Ayers, then placed it on a graph.

At the end of the hour, the students counted their hearts to see which color won. Pink hearts won overall but orange was a close second. Other colors in the candy package were purple, yellow and green.

Mrs. Ayers, the Title I teacher, said

students tried not to eat the candies but a few did get sampled during each game.

First-grade students tackled a "place value" game using heart-shaped puzzles. Matching shapes were put together. Numbers on the right were the ones columns and numbers on the left, the tens columns. This created a two-digit-numbered heart that fit together. Whoever got the most numbers won.

Second graders played the "cover up" game. Dice were rolled and the sum was added or subtracted to match numbers on a game card.

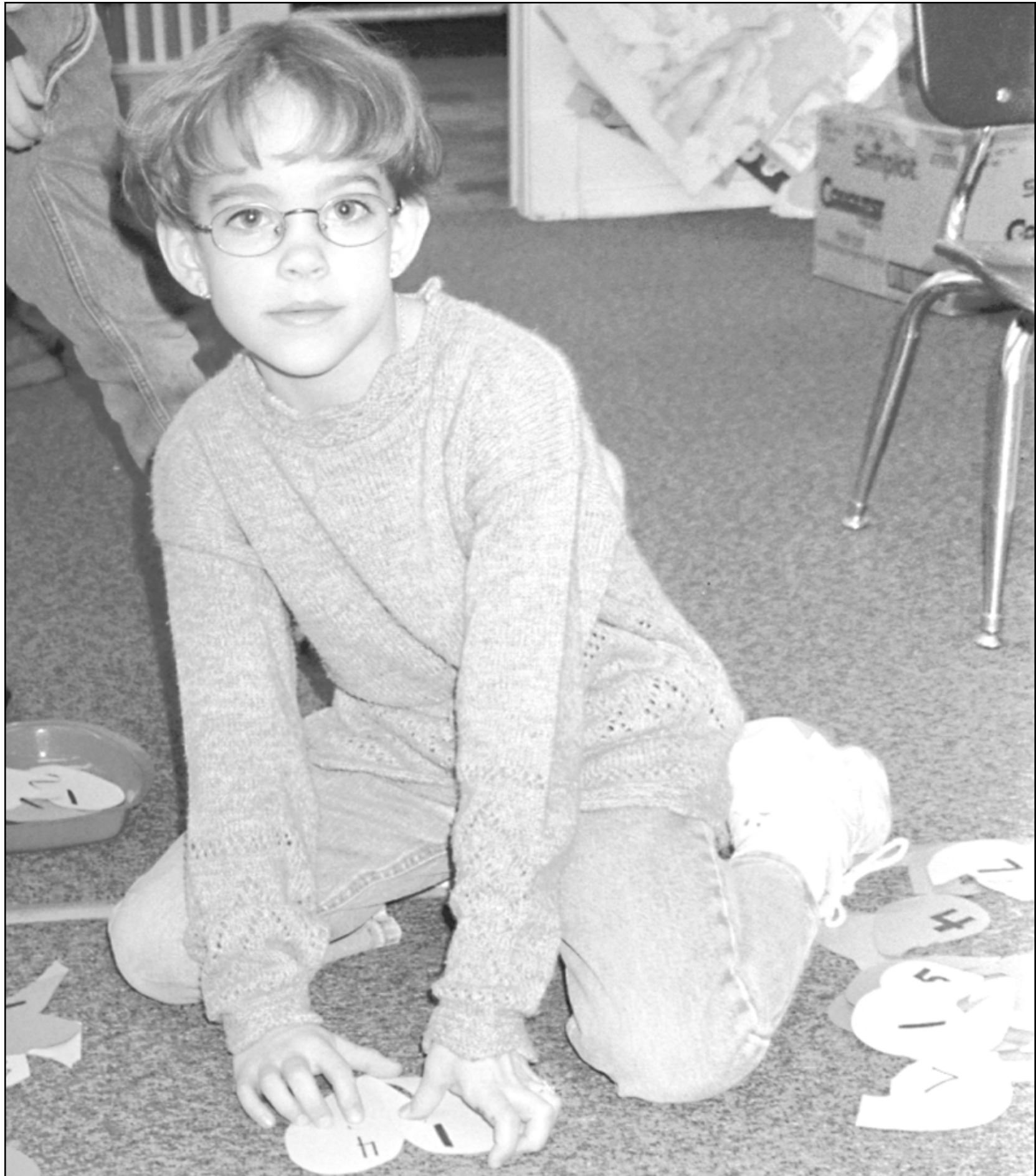
Candy hearts were used to cover the matching number. To win, a student had to cover all the numbers on the game card.

Kathy Randolph, kindergarten teacher, borrowed students throughout the hour to race the clock in the "Mad Minute" game. She kept track of the clock for a minute as each student added and subtracted math problems on a page. The goal was to see how many problems could be solved in a minute.

A teddy bear holding a heart was the canvas for each students 'Love is' poem. These were displayed around the door.

A king-sized poster in the hallway with the heading "My Heart belongs to a Good Book" was filled with hearts of all sizes. Each heart had the title of a book that students had read this month.

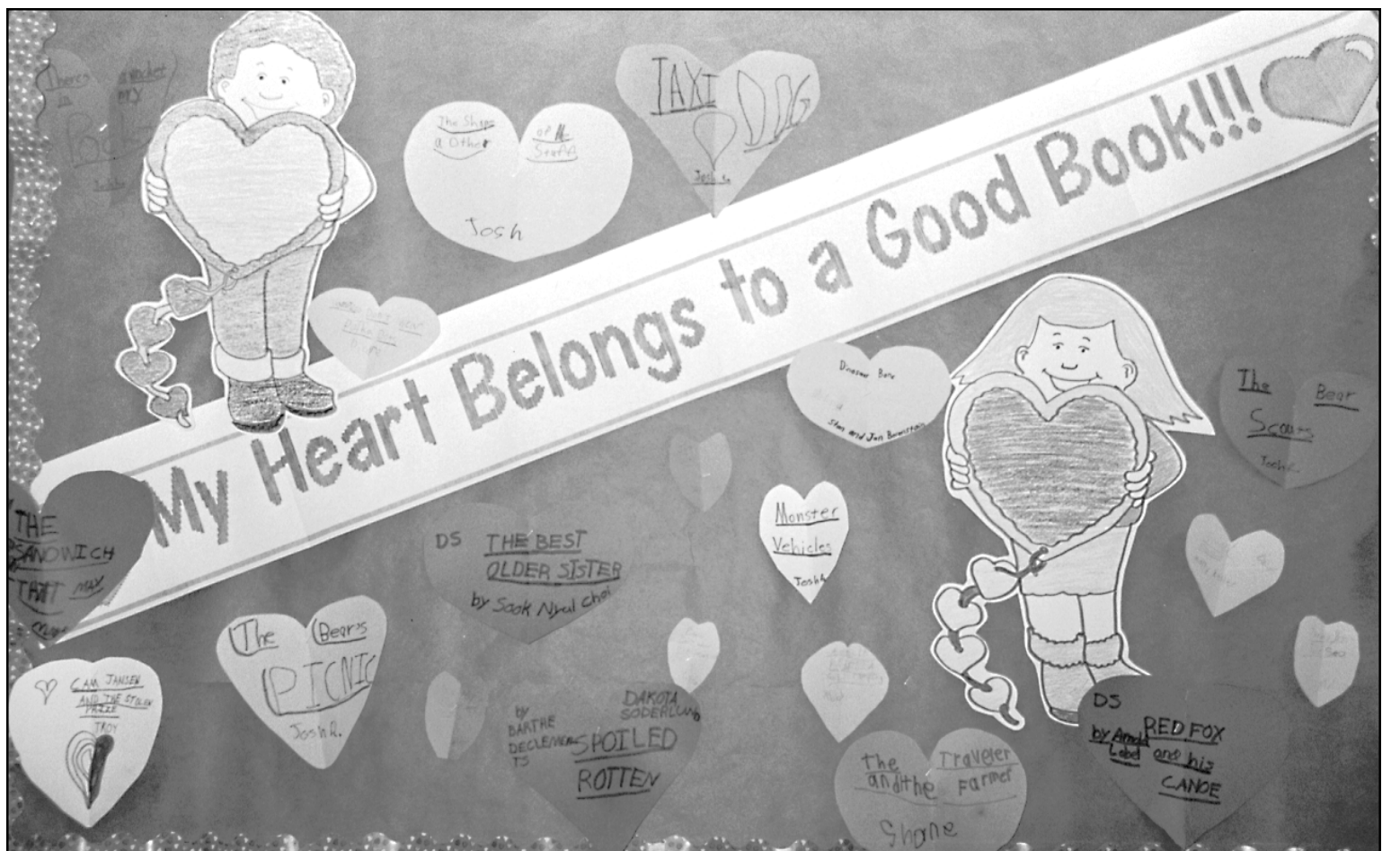
Mrs. Soderlund said that February is a fun month for students and the candy helps them with learning — as long as they don't eat it too soon.



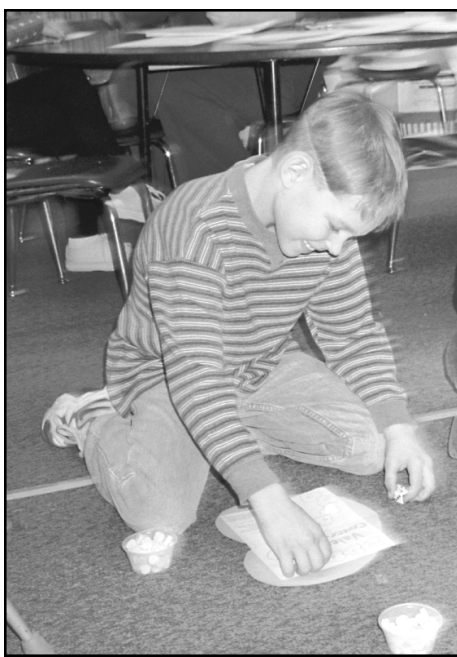
MATCHING HEARTS was part of first grader Abby Bainter's Elementary School in Jennings. This students used valentines to "place value" math project last Wednesday at Prairie Heights learn math skills.



A CHLLY MORNING temperature was recorded by Abby Bainter (left) and teacher Cheryl Soderlund on a graph chart.



A BULLETIN BOARD full of Valentine hearts showed off all the books the first and second graders have read so far this month.



CANDY HEARTS (above) were held by Becky Ayers as kindergartner Cheyenne Soderlund (right) reached into the basket for a selection. Classmate Jade Cressler awaited her turn. At left, Troy Bainter worked on the Cover-Up game.

Herald staff photos by Jeanette Krizek