



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/RICK McFARLAND

Jason Williams of Wyoming teaches Mabelvale Middle School seventh-grader Artoria Allen how to throw a lariat to rope a hay-bale steer at the school Monday. Williams was participating in Provider Pals, a program to teach kids about life in other places.

Fishers, ranchers, loggers turn jobs into an Earth Day lesson

BY CYNTHIA HOWELL
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Hundreds of miles away from the ocean and at least a couple of generations away from the farm, Mabelvale Middle School's city-fied seventh- and eighth-graders learned their lessons Monday from men and women who make their living directly from the land and sea.

Peter Halmay, a sea urchin diver from San Diego who wore his diving attire, temporarily turned Pam Wallace's social studies class into an aquarium/sushi bar.

He passed around live star-

fish, offered up sea cucumbers for good luck kisses and pried apart a spiky sea urchin to offer students a taste of the salty flesh.

Across the hall, Montana ranchers Dena Fritz and Justin Downs explained the dawn-to-midnight work of the just-completed calving season.

In another class, a North Carolina shark fisherman told of his work, and in yet another classroom, a Montana farmer made pasta from durum wheat.

Out back of the Little Rock school, students collected wood trunk slices or "cookies" from

loggers, checked out the menagerie of small farm animals, and then panned for flecks of gold and garnets in two tubs of muddy river water. A loaded logging truck and the latest in low-emission earth-moving equipment were parked on the edge of campus.

In all, 10 resource providers from Montana, California, North Carolina and rural Arkansas participated in the "Celebrate Progress on Earth Day" program at Mabelvale on Monday, an event sponsored by the Montana-based Provider Pals