



NEWS FOR THE WEEK OF March 19, 2018

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News and Notes

Come to Science Night This Wednesday at 7 p.m.

The 4th-6th grade class is presenting the results of two months' work on their science projects at Science Night. It starts very promptly at 7 p.m. so the children don't get to bed too late. We welcome everyone, not just parents of 4th-6th graders, to Science Night.

Parent-Child Group Begins Again This Wednesday 10:15

Parents and children ages 0-3 are welcome to gather in the pre-school room, play and enjoy the company.

Review of the Language Arts Teacher In Service Day

It was an inspiring and productive Language Arts In Service day, led by Heather Lobenstine. Besides being a long time teacher and librarian at Shutesbury Elementary, Heather has had extensive experience in staff development with Writer's and Reader's Workshop (the programs we use at the VS).

We began the day by looking at exemplar texts of student personal narrative writing and examining the progression of skills and expectation across the grades. From there we each identi-

fied a specific skill to focus on and designed a mini-lesson to teach that skill.

A mini-lesson is a short (10 minute) introduction to a new skill. The teacher names the specific point being taught, demonstrates examples, asks the children to practice the skill right then and there, and then the children go back to include the practiced skill in their writing.

Teachers designed 10 minute mini-lessons and broke off in pairs to work while being coached by Heather. Mini-lessons are deceptively complex to design and teach and teachers enjoyed the opportunity to reexamine a familiar teaching tool with nuance and time to refine and practice. The growth mindset of our teachers is one of their many outstanding qualities; they are always willing to learn new practices or refine familiar ones.

K-6th Swimming Continues on Fridays

Make sure children come to school with a towel and a bathing suit. Pick up is at the Athol YMCA at 3:10.

After School (3:30-5:30) is closed this Thursday

Preschool

Last Monday the class made green play dough and as soon as it was cooked, the children kneaded the warm dough- so satisfying on a cold morning. Last Friday the class mixed blue and yellow water to make all shades of green and on Friday they used small paint rollers to decorate mural size paper with green and yellow paint. All of these activities are open ended and developmentally appropriate - the process is more important than the product.

Before our trip to the Royalston Library today, the class made another batch of play dough to be used at the Village School table at the Family Fair this Tuesday, March 20th at the Athol Library from 5:30-7:00 p.m. Rise and Kim will be there to talk

about the Village School preschool and our new building.

This week our story is *Strega Nona and the Magic Pasta Pot* by Tomie dePaola. In this charming story Strega Nona sings to her pasta pot "Bubble, bubble pasta pot, boil me some pasta nice and hot, I'm hungry and it's time to sup, boil enough pasta to fill me up!" Ask your child what Strega Nona does next to get the pot to stop cooking. This Friday, Romaine's mom Kalliope will visit the class to make pasta from scratch with her pasta machine. We will enjoy pasta and our vegetable of the week, cabbage, for snack this week.

We will visit Rise's farm in Phillipston on Friday, April 6th from 9:00-11:15. The permission slip will go home next Monday.

March 2018

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
19 8:45 All School Sing Spanish	20 8:45 Reading Buddies knitting	21 8:45-11:45 K-1 Lambing & Sugaring Field Trip 10:15 Parent Child Group resumes SPRING! 7:00 p.m. Science Night	22 8:45 Reading Buddies Art classes 3:30 After School Art After School closed 3:30	23 8:45-11:45 4th-6th Lambing and Sugaring Trip, drivers needed for return K-6th Swimming Pick up at Athol YMCA at 3:10
26 8:45 All School Sing Spanish	27 8:45 Reading Buddies	28 2nd-3rd Lambing & Sugaring Field Trip 10:15 Parent Child Group	29 8:45 Reading Buddies Art classes 3:30 After School Art	30 Swimming at YMCA Good Friday Passover begins evening

Kindergarten—1st Grade

This week we're acting out the story of *Peter and The Wolf* with Prokofiev's music. We are working on our musical instrument books. Children are drawing and writing about instruments from our Theme share table including recent additions of a tambourine and accordions. Others instruments include a glockenspiel, a ukulele, an electric guitar, shakers, and a tuning fork.

Our art lesson last week was about music and teamwork. The children heard different styles of music in the background and used sharpies to make marks to represent the different sounds they heard. Between musical pieces the children stood up and moved to work on another sheet of paper. When the drawings were done, they used watercolor to fill in their shared musical line drawings.

This Wednesday we're visiting Rise's Farm in Phillipston for our annual Sheep and Sugaring trip. Activities will include collecting sap, seeing the sugaring house in action, and hopefully seeing new born lambs in the barn. We'll finish the morning with singing, a traditional story, and pancakes and fresh syrup in the farmhouse. Bring sleds, so the children can sled down the big hill there.

In phonics Kindergarteners are practicing making words that end in -and, such as sand, band, and land, and making rhyming words. 1st graders are practicing using 'ing' and reading high frequency words.

Last Friday the kindergarten math class explored a number line and the idea that numbers continue forever. We started a number line and the children watched in fascination until our number line read 200. 1st graders are investigating subtraction. We are playing the games *Roll and Record Subtraction*, and *Five in a Row Subtraction* and solving subtraction story problems.

Last Friday we began our swimming sessions at the Y in Athol. For the first half of the session the class had swimming lessons based on ability levels. This was followed by thirty minutes of free-play with the use of floats, balls, and water toys. The children were excited and happy and are looking forward to more swimming this Friday.

2nd - 3rd Grade

The children created coil pots in art. After rolling out "snakes," they coiled them around and built them up. They had to work carefully to make sure each layer was secured to the next and try not to leave any gaps. The creations varied from pitcher-like pots, to pots with lids, to cups with handles. In Theme, we are working on weaving. The children are experimenting with how to create different textures by varying the weaving pattern.

The biography groups are going well. The children are enjoying learning about their person's younger life and are finding some information quite surprising. The Abraham Lincoln group was surprised that he only had one year of schooling his whole childhood and stopped schooling completely at age 15. The J.K. Rowling group was impressed that she grew up with a view of Chepstow Castle, which fed her imagination. The Wayne Gretzky group couldn't believe that he learned to skate the first time he put on skates at age 2!

We are hoping to finish the research part of our projects this week. While it isn't assigned homework, if the children are motivated to do more research at home, they are certainly welcome to and can bring in the information they find. They love reading about their animals and finding new, fascinating information.

The third graders began a new unit on fractions. Right now, we are focusing on how to divide a whole into halves, fourths, eighths, thirds and sixths. We are also thinking about how fractions are related to division and decimals. Please see the attached letter for more specifics about the fraction unit. Children should continue to practice their multiplication facts as part of their homework.

We have two upcoming field trips—Rise's Farm on Wednesday, March 28th and the Ecotarium on Tuesday, April 3rd. We'll need one driver for the Ecotarium field trip. Please see the attached permission slips for more information.

4th - 6th Grade

Last week we began working towards the play-writing project that will occupy the next four weeks. We began with a short writing task to help the children learn about – or review – play-writing as a genre. We talked about the difference between a play script and a novel, and how the narrative in a play is carried mainly in the dialogue.

The children then practiced dialogue writing, based on a variety of children's picture books, which they had studied as a class during our picture-book writing project in the fall. So, for example, some children imagined and wrote a dialogue between Max and his mother in *Where the Wild Things Are*, and others used a class favorite by Quentin Blake, *Mrs. Armitage on Wheels*. The children then shared their scripts with the whole class.

On Thursday we began brainstorming ideas for the play itself. The children talked in pairs for a few minutes, and then moved into six small discussion groups, with one person in each group acting as secretary, and noting down all the ideas, whether or not they conflicted. This is always a rather chaotic part of the process, but it is fascinating to see how a whole class can come to an agreement about plots and characters within just a few sessions. We'll continue discussing ideas this week, and move on to writing the play itself.

Meanwhile, we've finally finished writing reports, which took a little longer than planned due to weather disruptions. This week we will devote a lesson to an internal publishing party, in which the children will be able to share each other's reports. Since the three grades worked on different topics - the Black Death, the Battle of Hastings and the Crusades - all the children will be able to benefit from each other's research.

On Monday the children work on their posters and graphs, ready to show on Science Night itself, this Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m., which starts promptly. Please have your children here by 6:50.

We visit the Richardson Farm on Friday- drop off there at 8:45. We are looking for a few drivers for the return trip at 11:45 back to the school.