



OUR 24<sup>TH</sup> YEAR  
 NEWS FOR THE WEEK OF  
**October 21, 2013**

PO Box 122 Royalston, MA 978 249-3505  
[www.villageschoolma.org](http://www.villageschoolma.org)



**News and Notes**

**K-1 Reading Workshop with Parents this Wednesday**

Don't miss this chance to learn some skills for helping your beginning reader. It will start promptly at 8:30 a.m.

**4th-6th Poetry Publishing Party this Thursday**

All parents are invited to attend the culmination of the 4th-6th students' poetry writing project. There will be lots of poems to read!

**Watch for your Annual Fund Letter**

Look out for your parent letter, which is going out this week. Letters to friends of the school will go out soon too.

**School Photo Orders**

Please return your orders by this Friday. Every order includes a class photo.



**About the Lantern Walk on Friday November 8**

All students are making lanterns for this quintessential Village School event. The Lantern Walk celebrates the change in season, from summer's bright warmth to fall's darkening days. It begins at 5 p.m. with a procession of children holding lanterns, then gathering at the fire pit in the playground. After singing and a story around the fire, we walk with our lanterns to the Town Hall, where we'll enjoy an Italian pot luck dinner followed by family contradance. All children participate and it's great family fun. K-6th children are learning and practicing the dances in the next weeks.

**Awesome Parent Work Day - Great Teamwork !**

Thank you to everyone for pitching in. You arrived in waves and got right down to work. From the 4th-6th tables, to the pre-school bathroom, to the play structure, to the new bulletin boards, to the garden, picnic tables and paths- the building and grounds are cleaner, brighter, more beautiful and more comfortable. Once again, we proved "many hands make light work."

**Preschool**

Last week the class began to paint and decorate their pumpkins. Last Thursday the children started creating bird masks in art class with Renee with colored tissue paper and diluted glue. On Friday the children added feathers and sparkles to the masks with wonderful results. On Friday we also went on an acorn hunt along the trail in the woods. Gus, a 5<sup>th</sup> grader, joined us and was a big help with the children. The class collected acorns, pine cones and colorful leaves. Today we walked to the Royalston Library for story hour and picked out new books. The children have been choosing some wonderful titles which they have been sharing with their Reading Buddies on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Today we celebrated Alijah and Leanne's birth-

days, both born on the 20th. This week we will be telling the story *It's Too Noisy*, a Yiddish tale about a farmer who can't sleep because of his noisy children. He complains to the village wise man who suggests that he bring his chickens, rooster, sheep, pigs, donkey and cow into the house. Ask your child what happens next. Please send in a clear 2-liter bottle by Monday, October 28th, for lantern making. We want to invite parents or other family members to come in at 8:30 a.m. next week for 15 minutes to help your child decorate his or her lantern for the Lantern Walk. It's easy and fun. We will have the supplies out next Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday (28th-30th).

**October - November 2013**

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
21 8:45 All School Sing Spanish Preschool Library	22	23 8:30 a.m. K-1 Reading Hour with Parents 2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> at Sweetwater Farm	24 8:45 Reading Buddies Art classes 8:30 a.m. 4 <sup>th</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> Poetry Publishing Party	25 Yoga Soccer Contra dance practice
28 8:45 All School Sing	29	30 4 <sup>th</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> at Sweetwater Farm	31 8:45 Reading Buddies <b>Halloween</b> 	1 Coffee order due Yoga soccer Contra dance practice

## Kindergarten—1st Grade

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We continue our Growing theme this week with the picture book *A Field of Sunflowers* by Neil Johnson, about a farmer who decides to grow a crop of sunflowers. It's full of great photos of the field from sowing and growing, to the sunflowers in full bloom. We have two large sunflower heads in the classroom that we'll be looking at more closely. One is ten inches across. We'll be removing some of the seeds to sprout, to eat, and to plant next spring. In science this week we are looking at how trees grow. Activities will include visiting trees around the school, estimating their age, and examining tree cross-sections.

In art last week the class worked on large tissue paper collages that will be used as backgrounds for the leaf paintings that we completed last week. Look for the completed art work on display in the Town Hall on the night of the Lantern Walk. In art this week we'll be making our lanterns. The children are happy to see their clay cups return from the kiln after the final firing. We'll begin using them at snack time this week.

The kindergarteners are beginning a new math unit. Please see the attached math news. Last week the 1<sup>st</sup> graders completed the addition and subtraction unit by writing their own story problems. One example was, "There were 30 dump trucks. 2 drove away. How many were left?" This week we are starting a new unit, *Making Shapes and Designing Quilts*. See the 1<sup>st</sup> grade math news for more details.

Last Friday the class enjoyed soccer practice and then we worked in the garden, digging over the beds to prepare for winter. Soccer practice will continue on Friday afternoons for the next while, weather permitting.

Reminder: This Wednesday morning is the K-1 Reading Workshop for parents beginning at 8:30 a.m. in the classroom. Rise will be outside with the children during the presentation, then at 9:00 you will get the chance to try out some of the techniques you just learned, by sitting and reading with your own children. Don't miss it!

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## 2nd - 3rd Grade

Last week the children worked on creating group poetry. On Wednesday, we loosely used a Japanese form of poetry called a 'renga'. We went out into the garden and stood quietly as we experienced our surroundings. The children shared thoughts which came to them, which the teacher scribed. The children made great observations such as, "cold grass feels like winter," "a tree disappeared," "sunflowers dying," and "I feel happy and sad at the same time." The children had a lot to say. On Thursday, they worked in smaller groups with some of the words and lines from Wednesday. They had the words on cards, and they worked to arrange them into a poem. The results are spectacular. See them hanging up in the classroom.

Before and after our group work, we discussed how to make working in groups successful. The children had some great ideas, including: letting everyone contribute to the group, listening to what each other has to say, being positive, and staying focused on the work. Some students also shared that group work was challenging for them. It is so great to see the children feel comfortable to discuss their challenges with the whole group. We talked about the challenges of group work, and how we can face them and work with them. This is certainly a topic we will come back to again.

In art, the children created their lanterns for the lantern walk. We have a new style this year and our class was the first to test them out. We used a special Japanese style of watercolor paper that is made of a translucent plastic. The children used black sharpie and white crayons (which made a resist) to create drawings. Then, they used liquid water color to watercolor over the whole lantern. Lastly, they added some salt. The results are stunning and it will be great to see them shining on the evening of the Lantern Walk.

On Monday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, we will go on a field trip to Plimoth Plantation. Please see the enclosed permission slip for more details. This Wednesday, we will visit Sweetwater Farm. Children should be dressed to be outside all morning and should bring a snack and a water bottle. Drop-off is at 8:45 and pick-up is at 11:30.

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## 4th - 6th Grade

Following the children's four-day break over Columbus Day and Tuesday's parent conferences, the children used the remainder of the week to put the final touches on their poetry. Don't forget to attend our Poetry Publishing Party this Thursday at 8:30 a.m. when we'll welcome parents of class members and anyone else who would like to read the children's varied and interesting poetry.

We also completed the first phase of our theme study. The children finished coloring maps of the United States showing the original states, the Northwest Territory, the lands of the Louisiana Purchase and New Spain. On Friday they drew in the exploration routes of Lewis & Clark across the north of the country, and Zebulon Pike in the southwest.

This week we will begin studying the westward migration of settlers and what happened to the indigenous peoples as a result. To begin our study we have a set of excellent books, called *The Split History of Westward Expansion*. Read in one direction the book tells the settlers' story, and from the other end (once it has been flipped) it tells the same story from the Native American perspective.

We will also begin reading *The Little House on the Prairie*, which, of all the books in the series, touches most on the conflicts between settlers and Indians. It also shows the start of the Ingalls family's own migration westward.

This week we will also begin our memoir project, and we'll read and discuss a range of short memoirs before the children begin planning and writing their own personal stories, probably later next week.

Every Friday morning, we devote about twenty minutes to 'Questions', in which the children can ask anything they like, and the teachers endeavor to answer them. It has been interesting to hear regular questions about the government shut-down and the debt limit debate, and to see how interested the children have been in the answers. It was clear that this was an issue that had touched them, even if didn't directly affect them. Other recent questions have included 'why do people do bad things?' Perhaps there was a link!