



OUR 24<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

NEWS FOR THE WEEK OF

# October 7, 2013

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



## News and Notes

### Jacobs Hill Hike This Friday Oct. 11

K-1 parents drive the K-1 children to the trailhead on Rt. 68 (5 minutes from the school) at 12:45. 2nd-6th children walk from the school at 12:45. Parents are welcome to join us.

**We are Pressing Apple Cider at the school this week**, starting Tuesday. We'll accept donations of apples, check with Rise.

### More School Photos This Friday

We were rained out last week. Kirsten is back this Friday. The Preschool and 4th-6th class photos will be taken also.

### Calendar Discrepancy

If you have the big color photo calendar sold last December - some of the dates for events have changed. The color calendar had Oct. 4 for Jacobs Hill Hike, but the actual hike is this Friday Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>. Always double check with the newsletter calendar or the online monthly calendar.

### The Case of the Disappearing Spoons

Children should bring spoons or forks from home in their lunch bags. Sometimes they forget, and 'borrow' school spoons.....which end up in their lunch bags. This has led to a shortage of spoons in the building. We would love donations of teaspoons to the school to replenish our supply!

### Come to the Parent Work Day Sunday October 20 9-4

Come and pitch in for an hour or two, meet new parents - it's great for morale, when new and old parents pitch in together. And it's fun! *'Many hands make work light.'* The hallway sign up list of projects is growing. See Rise if you can take on a project and organize it in advance, a huge help that makes the day more efficient. The school pays for all materials. Children are welcome- they will have a lot of fun. Child care is provided in the playground.

### Children Need Lots of Sleep

If your child has trouble falling asleep, a cozy night time routine can help, with turning down the lights, snuggling and reading to your child before bed. Try to avoid TV for a few hours before bedtime- it's overstimulating. Getting children to bed on time will set them up for a great start the next day. Preschoolers need 11 to 13 hours of sleep, and five to ten-year-olds need 10 to 11 hours of sleep. Here is a good short article about sleep for children.

<http://health.yahoo.net/experts/dayinhealth/simple-habit-makes-kids-smarter>

## Preschool

Last week the children enjoyed using the puppets to act out the story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Last Friday they ate porridge and hardboiled eggs for snack. Last Wednesday, Sophia's mother, Angela brought in bananas and homemade rice pudding (arroz con leche). The class enjoyed it very much. Jocelyn led the class in a song for Angela in Spanish about arroz con leche.

This week our story is *The Little Red Hen*. This story brings up the topics of helping and cooperate on. Leanne will make bread with the class and when she asks for help, we are sure she will have lots of volunteers.

Last week the children used sponge painting to paint an oak leaf and a maple leaf with fall colors. This week we will continue to notice the fall colors. The class will have the opportunity to do leaf rubbings and leaf prints. We are singing songs about autumn in All School Sing and in the classroom.

This Wednesday October 9<sup>th</sup> is our trip to Sweetwater Farm in Petersham. We will meet at the farm at 9:00 a.m. Let us know if you need directions. Permissions slips are needed only if you are not able to attend with your child or if your child needs a ride back to school for the Lunch Program.

## October 2013

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7 8:45 All School Sing Spanish	8 8:45 Reading Buddies	9 Preschool at Sweetwater Farm 9 a.m. to 11:15  8:45 a.m. 2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Reading Hour for Parents	10 8:45 Reading Buddies  Art classes	11 Photos Yoga <b>K-6th Jacobs Hill Hike</b> leave school at 12:45. Parents welcome.
14 <b>NO SCHOOL</b> <b>COLUMBUS DAY</b>	15 <b>NO SCHOOL</b> Parent - Teacher Conferences	16 K-1 at Sweetwater Farm Afternoon: Parent - Teacher Conferences	17 8:45 Reading Buddies  Art classes	18 Yoga  <b>Parent Work Day</b> Sunday →

## Kindergarten—1st Grade

---

We continue our *Growing* theme with the picture book *Corn* by Gail Gibbons, about the history of corn and types of corn, as well as about planting, harvesting, and corn's many uses. We'll be shucking some of the flint corn from the garden that has been drying in the classroom. We'll remove it from the husks to dry a few months more before grinding it into cornmeal for baking. According to the book, an average cob has about 800 kernels – we'll try counting some of the kernels on the cobs we have grown!

We had a glorious sunny fall day for our trip to Red Apple Farm last Wednesday. Activities included a hay ride, picking apples and pumpkins, hiking the orchards, and feeding some of the farm animals. The apples and apple cider were delicious!

Last week in art, the class glazed their pinch pot cups ready for a final firing. This week we'll be working on an all school leaf project to display later in the fall. The napkins that the class printed with vegetable prints are now washed, dried and ready to use.

In singing this week we'll be singing and dancing to *Shady Grove* along with seasonal favorites including *Yellow the Bracken* and

*Leaves Are Falling*.

In phonics this week our letters are 'h' and 't.' See how many words your child can find that begin with these letters.

The kindergarten math class is making a counting book this week based on *Anno's Counting Book* by Mitsumasa Anno. The children will illustrate a page for each number. Last week the 1<sup>st</sup> grade class enjoyed writing out new calendars for the month of October to take home. This week we'll complete the unit *How Many of Each?* We'll solve story problems and play *Heads and Tails* and *How Many Am I Hiding?*

Parents are invited to a special Reading Workshop on Wednesday Oct. 23 at 8:30 a.m. in the classroom. You can practice your new learning with your child right afterwards.

This Friday afternoon we are hiking Jacobs Hill in Royalston. Parents are invited to join us and help transport the K-1 five minutes by car to the trail head. We'll leave the school at 12:45 by car and return by 3:15. Please let Martin know if you can assist with transport.

---

## 2nd - 3rd Grade

Last week we went on two great field trips. On Monday, we visited Lawrence Brook for the river study. Nets in hand, the children eagerly bumped along the bottom of the river to collect specimens. They observed the anatomy of the discovered creatures to understand how their bodies are adapted for living in a river. We found all sorts of life, from dragonfly larvae to backswimmers, to newts, to stone flies. We hiked up the river to a pond to see what else we could find. That spot was just as rewarding. The fall foliage flanking the water was a spectacular sight that we took time to enjoy as well. On Wednesday, we had our first of two visits to Sweetwater Farm. Our morning started with Doug, a farmhand, calling the cows to come eat some hay that had gotten wet. It was fascinating to hear the cows call back to him and to each other. The children loved watching the cows come running and loved climbing up the stone wall to feed and watch them. We then fed and gave water to the chickens, goats and sheep. Afterward, we stacked some wood. We finished with picking apples in the orchard. The children burst into *The Apple Tree* song from *All School Sing*, and one student commented, "The song is right, I do feel free standing in the top of an apple tree." It was a fun and productive morning.

Along with the field trips, we took advantage of being outside during theme and writing. We played the stick game, a game that vies for the change of seasons—very fitting for this time of year—and we made cornhusk dolls. In writing, we made close observations of a chosen object in preparation for writing a poem about it. We also took some time to watch the clouds, which were particularly magnificent on Thursday.

Don't forget to come at 8:45 this Wednesday for a morning of reading. First you will be given some strategies to help your child with reading. Then, your child will come in and you will have a chance to read with your child and practice what you learned.

Parents are welcome to join us on the Jacobs Hill Hike this Friday, we'll leave the school at 12:45.

---

## 4th - 6th Grade

Last week's science lesson took the form of a field trip to the Fisher Museum at the Harvard Forest in Petersham. The centerpiece of the display is the series of beautifully executed dioramas that show how the landscape changed at roughly 50-year intervals between 1700 and 1930. There's no better way to understand what happened to forests and farms, as people responded to both the Industrial Revolution and the opening of the American West.

Before viewing the display itself, the children worked in groups to put photographs of the dioramas in chronological order. This was a very successful exercise, and there was lively discussion as members of each group analyzed what each picture showed, and judged whether a picture of partial forest showed re-growth or stages in the original clearing.

Following a guided tour of the dioramas, we took a walk through part of the forest behind the museum, and with the help of various interpretive signs, saw various ways in which it's managed. If you've never visited the museum and the forest, you should; we highly recommend it!

We continued our poetry project last week, and the children will write more poems this week. In just two weeks, the class's writing is showing interesting development, as the children experiment with more varied vocabulary, and examine the reasons for choosing particular line breaks. We continue to read poetry together, and ended last week with Billy Collins' poem, *The Trouble with Poetry*. Don't forget, our Poetry Publishing Party is at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday October 24<sup>th</sup>. Everyone is welcome, whether or not you have children in the class.

In last week's art lesson, the children glazed their drinking mugs, and completed their detail drawings of the school building. These complement the drawings of the whole school that the children did earlier in the semester. The result is a fine display of line drawings and partial watercolors of the school; feel free to come down and view them at any time. Once the mugs are ready for use in the classroom, we'll set up a schedule to make sure they are all washed regularly!