



OUR 24TH YEAR

NEWS FOR THE WEEK OF

November 18, 2013

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News and Notes

The Annual Book Fair Begins This Monday

The book fair begins today. Every family receives an order form today with the full list of books, including the new 2014 Village School calendar. Books are displayed in the hallway, along with the classroom wish lists. Please fill out your order form and return it with a check for the total, to the hallway envelope by 3:15 p.m. this Friday.

Come to Parent/Teacher Night Out This Wednesday!

Starting at 6 p.m. Get a babysitter and treat yourself to a free night out at the Gardner Ale House with teachers and staff. Food and drink are on the Ale House. Thank you, Rick!

K-6th Parents: Send in Pie Plates for Winter Gardens

This week, please send in a glass or plastic pie plate with your child's name on the side, for your child's individual winter garden. Starting December 2nd, each K-6th student creates a winter garden in his or her pie plate. These gardens focus awareness on the different kinds of life on this planet. In the first week, the children will put a shallow layer of sand in the plate, and put in a few interesting rocks, with our attention on the mineral world. Keep your eye out for cool rocks!

Dress for the weather.

Temps can be in the 30's or 40's, and a brisk wind makes it cold! Children should have a wind and waterproof parka, hat, gloves or mittens, snowpants and warm snowboots at school. Extra gloves/mittens are very handy. Please label all outdoor clothing, so if something shows up in the Lost and Found, it can be identified. Dress in layers - and all children should have an extra sweater in their cubbies.

Thank you

Many thanks to everyone who donated for new 4th-6th classroom chairs, at the Silent Auction. The classroom now has a dozen new chairs, which are much more comfortable and sturdy than the squeaky and dilapidated chairs they replaced. You can enjoy them too, at meetings and graduation!


1st-6th grade Cross Country Skiing in January

1st-6th graders go cross country skiing on Royalston common every Friday afternoon from January 10th until February vacation, weather permitting. Children need skis, poles and boots that easily click into bindings. See if your child's skis fit from last year. Ask Rise about extra skis that may be available.

Preschool

Last week we rearranged the classroom. The children are enjoying the climbing structure and slide in a new location by the window. The class built towers out of blocks and then knocked them down using a tennis ball on a string hung from the ceiling. Last Friday for snack the children helped make deviled eggs, but because the yolks were mixed with cream for a milder taste we renamed them "angel eggs". They were a big hit with everyone. Today we walked to the Royalston library and enjoyed listening to a story read by Paula (Stashu's mom). We picked out new books for the classroom.

This week we are telling the story, *The Gingerbread Man*. The children will make gingerbread dough on Tuesday and then they will make and decorate a gingerbread man cookie with raisins on Wednesday. The class will also start making Thanksgiving baskets and cranberry sauce this week. Now that the weather is getting cold, please make sure your child has snow pants, boots, mittens (no gloves please - they are hard for preschoolers to put on) and a hat every day. Labeling all of your child's outdoor gear will help eliminate confusion and lost items.

November 2013				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
18 BOOK FAIR ALL WEEK →	19 8:45 Reading Buddies	20 8:30 a.m. K-1 Theme Share 6 p.m. Parent Teacher Ale House Night Out	21 8:45 Reading Buddies 8:30 a.m. 4th-6th Reading Hour with Parents	22 soccer 4th-6th at M.F.A. Send in Book Fair orders with payment
25 8:45 All School Sing	26 8:45 Reading Buddies	27 NO SCHOOL THANKSGIVING BREAK	 Thanksgiving Day	29 NO SCHOOL

Kindergarten—1st Grade

We complete our *Growing* theme this Wednesday with the Theme Share for parents, starting at 8:30 a.m. The children look forward to seeing you. The class will be singing, playing recorder, and sharing their work and ideas about growing. Last week the children began writing their own books about growing which we'll complete this week. Book titles include *Things That Grow*, *The Growing Book*, *What Grows*, and *Everything Grows*. We'll read these newly written books aloud to the class. In music we are practicing for the Theme Share, singing *Keep on the Sunny Side* and *Bright Morning Stars are Rising*.

Last week in science, Trina read a book about how we grow. The class took first measurements of themselves to investigate how much they are growing this year. They drew around their hands and their feet, and we marked their height on a growth chart. We'll revisit the activity later in the year to look for changes. This week we'll plant bulbs outside, to enjoy in the spring.

Our new theme, starting next week, will be *Olden Times*.

Last week in art the children worked on clay platters which will be fired, and then we'll glaze them to get ready for a final firing. In phonics we'll be looking at the letters 'r' and 'f', and practicing writing and reading words that feature these letters.

The children have been gaining in strength and focus during our weekly Friday yoga lessons. They are now able to help lead the class by demonstrating some of their favorite postures which their classmates then take.

The kindergarten math class begins a new unit this week, *What Comes Next? Patterns and Functions*. See the attached math news to find out more. First graders are continuing work on the *Investigations* unit *Solving Story Problems*. This week we are focusing on subtraction, story problems, and games.

Last Friday afternoon the class enjoyed soccer practice. They began practicing skills and then had a short game. We'll continue Friday soccer practice until the holiday vacation, weather permitting.

2nd - 3rd Grade

Last Tuesday, the children enjoyed a fun and productive day at the Farm School. Their favorite parts included playing with the goats, stacking firewood, picking beans out of pods and helping in the kitchen. They also enjoyed listening to Reid read *Farmer Boy*. Tomorrow Becky Szal (a Village School alum) will visit to teach us weaving. We will think about how the Native Americans used this skill to create clothing. This is always a favorite activity and one that will continue long after her visit.

In their work on memoirs, the children have chosen a variety of subjects and are working to incorporate detail into their writing. This week we will work on fleshing out some parts that can be expanded. Our current read-aloud book, *Rascal*, is a memoir about a boy and his relationship with his pet raccoon. You can hear a pin drop during read-aloud.

The children have grown used to the ball chairs and love to sit on them. They show good attention at work and love to be able to bounce (but only a little bit). They are a great addition to the classroom and we have even used them a little bit in yoga, for stretching. The children take care of them and have a respect for how to use them.

The 3rd graders are working on addition problems to 1,000. They are thinking about estimation and using rounding up as a strategy to estimate what the answer might be, before they try to solve a problem. This week, they will learn the game *Capture on the 300 Chart*. In science, we are steadily making our way through the animal world. We have learned about invertebrates, amphibians and reptiles so far.

After Thanksgiving, we will begin to create our winter gardens. Please send in your child's glass or plastic pie plate, with name written on the side, by the end of this week so that they are ready to start when we come back from the break. This is a special tradition that the children look forward to.

4th - 6th Grade

Last week the class was hit by a wave of illness, which reduced the class size by eight (out of 18) for two days. However, the survivors still managed to have a great visit to the Farm School on Tuesday. We always begin with a tour of the farm, which gives us a chance to see how it has developed since our previous visit, and there's always something new to enjoy. Afterwards, groups worked in the garden, fed various animals - including the cows in the barn - and stacked wood.

In the afternoon the 4th-6th graders had a chance to work with the young oxen that are being trained to work on the farm and in the forest. Each of the children had a chance to lead the yoked pair, and to practice basic commands for start, stop and turn. Thanks to Reid and Lindsey for arranging the session to fit in with our study of the Little House series. We'll soon be reading *On the Banks of Plum Creek*, in which the Ingalls family swaps its ponies for a pair of oxen strong enough to plow the untouched prairie.

Because of the widespread illness in the class, we postponed the parents' Reading Workshop until this Thursday, Nov. 21st, from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. The workshop is designed to share ideas about how to remain engaged with children's reading as they get older. Each of the children has chosen one of his or her favorite books to discuss with their parents. It will also give parents a chance to share in our school reading sessions, in which the children become completely absorbed in their individual reading books.

In art, many of the children have now completed their landscape paintings on canvas, using acrylic paints and a variety of techniques which they saw demonstrated on a number of videos. This Friday we'll be visiting the M.F.A. in Boston to see the special exhibition of watercolors by John Singer Sargent. If your children are leaving from the school, please make sure they are here in time for us to leave at 8 a.m.

Don't forget to send in a pie plate this week, with your child's name on the side, for your child's winter garden.