



OUR 24TH YEAR

NEWS FOR THE WEEK OF

December 16, 2013

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News and Notes

See You at the Holiday Celebration This Friday at 11:00 a.m.

All students begin the day in their classrooms, at the usual time. Both the 2nd-3rd and the 4th-6th classrooms have Publishing Parties for parents at 8:30 a.m. Afterwards, parents can help set up at the Town Hall. Please do not park in the traffic circle at the Town Hall. Classes start singing at 11:00, and we are done and eating pizza by noon. There is a donation collection box for pizza in the hallway. After pizza, school vacation begins, and there is no Lunch or After School Program. Please make sure to remember to stop by the school afterwards to pick up your child's winter garden, art work and other items, and clean out cubbies.

Calendars are Available

If you missed ordering a 2014 Village School calendar, there are still a few available for purchase for \$12 in the office.

From the Staff

Warmest thoughts and best wishes for a wonderful Holiday and a Happy New Year. See you in January, fresh and ready!

Winter Gardens Continue

This week, the whole school enters into an awareness of animal life, by placing clay animals in the Winter Gardens. Now the Winter Gardens become miniature imaginary play settings, with a base of sand, a layer of moss, and special rocks and animals. At the end of the week, the gardens go home with a candle to light, to represent the human spirit.

On the Web Site

Enjoy *The Importance of Make-Believe*, a short article by Rise. Find it on the Curriculum page on the website.

Looking Ahead to January

- January 10th is the start of Friday afternoon cross-country skiing for 1st-6th graders. Think *snow!* 1st-6th graders need cross-country skis, and boots that fit into the ski bindings. It would be a big help for 1st-4th graders, over vacation, to practice tying their boots, and then practice fitting the boots into the bindings.
- 2nd-6th graders begin knitting on Tuesday afternoons and a short session on Wednesday morning. Extra hands are needed to help these young knitters, so if you want to help, and you know how to knit, contact Lynn Anair.

Preschool

This week our story is *The Elves and the Shoemaker*. In this story a shoemaker is down to his last piece of leather. He lays the leather on his workbench and goes to sleep. In the morning he finds a pair of finely made shoes on his workbench. A customer pays double the asking price for the shoes and he is able to buy two pieces of leather. After this happens over and over, the shoemaker and his wife decide to stay up late one night to see who has been making these shoes. Ask your child who they discover and what the shoemaker and his wife do about it. This story is fun to do as a puppet show and the children always enjoy acting it out.

Last week we were busy making wrapping paper and decorating the windows with tissue paper candles. This week the class will make ornaments and paper chains. On Wednesday Kim's son, Jamie, will visit and play the vibraphone for the school. He will introduce xylophones to our class.

Attached is a short article, *The Importance of Make-Believe*, that we hope you find useful.

The children are practicing songs for the Holiday Celebration this Friday at the Royalston Town Hall starting promptly at 11:00. We'll see you all then.

December 2013				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
16 8:45 All School Sing Winter Gardens: Animals →	17 8:45 Reading Buddies	18	19 8:45 Reading Buddies	20 Take home Winter Gardens 8:30 a.m.. 2nd-3rd & 4th-6th Publishing Parties 11 a.m. Holiday Celebration at the Town Hall Take home art work and clean out cubbies.

Kindergarten—1st Grade

Our theme of *Olden Times* continues with the book *The Tomten* by Astrid Lindgren, about a troll-like creature who moves around a farm on a cold winter's night. Last week the class enjoyed journaling some of their memories from the *Little House* series, our read aloud at snack time. Some of the events recorded were Pa cutting down a tree, building a log cabin, Mary and Laura seeing a wolf across the frozen lake, and the invasion of grasshoppers.

Last week we went out on a snowy afternoon to uncover and collect moss from behind the Island of Trees to add to the Winter Gardens. We'll spray water on our moss to keep it alive. This week we are focusing on the animal world and the class will make small animal figures out of clay to add to their gardens. We'll complete the gardens on Friday morning by adding a candle to the gardens to represent the human spirit. Don't forget to take the gardens home on Friday, and clean out cubbies.

In art last week, the class used stamps to print seasonal wrapping paper. We'll make paper chains this week as holiday decorations

and gingerbread people for snack time.

In phonics we are looking at the 'w' sound and kindergarten is practicing reading words made with letter sounds they know.

In math, last week the kindergarten children made repeating pattern snakes using paper pattern blocks. They are getting confident at looking at a repeating pattern and predicting what comes next. First graders are on the data unit *What Would You Rather Be?* This week we are planning and taking surveys.

The class has been having a blast sledding at recess and last Friday they went sledding down the big hill behind the school. Make sure children have warm, waterproof mittens. On Friday afternoons in January, 1st graders will be cross-country skiing and the Kindergarteners will be sledding.

Attached is a short article, *The Importance of Make-Believe*, that we hope you find useful.

In music we are singing seasonal songs and preparing for this Friday's holiday performance at the Town Hall - see you there!

2nd - 3rd Grade

Last week the children enjoyed a magical visit to Camp Caravan, in the cold. The children visited last spring for Biodiversity Day, but it looks very different now, all snow-covered. We trekked through the woods to the sweat lodge. Jim Farnham led us in a ceremony as he explained how ceremony is used by Native Americans. He lit sage leaves in a shell and passed it around the circle so we could smudge ourselves; the smoke is cleansing, unites everyone, and gets them ready for ceremony. He told us the story of how he and another man found the place of the sweat lodge and explained the purpose of sweat lodges. The children listened silently as they sat in the snow. It ended with each child offering sage to a special tree within the circle of trees. Thank you, Jim, for sharing with us. We look forward to a return visit from Jim in January for drumming and storytelling.

Our *Buffalo Dreams* discussion continue. The children have made some close observations and interpretations of the text. They've also noticed some interesting details about the pictures. They wrote down questions about the story, including: Will Joe touch the baby buffalo? Is the buffalo magic? Why does the buffalo need good dreams? We will finish the book this week.

In math, 2nd graders are counting by 2's, 5's and 10's and will finish the *Number Strings, and Story Problems* unit by going to the sticker station where stickers can be purchased in rows of 10 or single stickers. In the new year we'll begin a new unit, *Pockets, Teeth, and Favorite Things*, looking at data.

Children should bring in their secret gift on Wednesday. We will exchange gifts on Thursday afternoon. Please send in a large bag with your child on Thursday. Also, if you have any clementine boxes, particularly the wooden ones, please send them in this week.

Our Publishing Party is Friday at 8:30 a.m. The children are excited to share their memoirs. Light refreshments are welcome, and coffee and tea will be served. Afterwards, parents can head over to the Town Hall to set up for the Holiday Celebration, which starts at 11:00 a.m. Please don't forget to stop by the school to grab your child's winter garden and to clean out cubbies.

4th - 6th Grade

Our Publishing Party is this Friday at 8:30 a.m., to celebrate the memoirs the children have been writing over the last few weeks. Our event coincides with a Publishing Party in the 2nd-3rd classroom next door, so parents can visit both. Light refreshments are welcome, and coffee and tea will be served.

Once the memoirs were finished, the children worked on a short exercise which involved cutting 140-word news stories to around 100 words, without removing any facts. It's a good way to get children look for redundancies, and to work with choosing pronouns, for example. Since the stories involved giant frogs and alien spacecraft, it wasn't too serious. We are following up the news story exercise with 100-word stories. Many of the children have decided to re-write fairy tales in a variety of ways, under the heading 'fairy tales gone wrong'.

In science we finished our series of lessons on simple machines, in which we looked at levers, pulleys and gears. Each lesson has included simple experiments to show how each system works, and the chance to make some kind of working model or toy from special Lego Dacta kits, using the scientific principles being studied.

Last week, the students made individual portfolios for their artwork, using a variety of stamps to decorate them creatively.

In math, 4th graders are finding strategies to solve division problems by using multiplication facts they know and by building multiple towers. We will finish the *Multiple Towers and Division Stories* unit this week and will begin *Size, Shape and Symmetry* in the new year.

We ended last week with some glorious sledding down the long hill behind the woods. The children had a great time, and one of them commented afterwards that the group had felt like a 'real class', enjoying themselves and working harmoniously together.

Thursday is our secret gift-giving event. Please make sure your child brings in his or her gift on Wednesday, wrapped, and without the recipient's name on it. If your child is making some sort of baked goods, these can be brought in on Thursday, but we prefer to have gifts on Wednesday to ensure that nobody – giver or receiver – is left out.