



OUR 24<sup>TH</sup> YEAR  
NEWS FOR THE WEEK OF  
**December 9, 2013**

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**News and Notes**

**Winter Gardens Continue**

This week, the whole school enters into an awareness of plant life, by placing moss in the Winter Gardens. If you have moss at home, send in a small square with your K-6th child, for his or her pie plate. We will also hunt for moss out on the school grounds. We'll spray the moss daily with water to keep it green and alive.

**About the Upcoming Holiday Celebration**

Our Holiday Celebration is Friday Dec. 20th at 11 a.m. at the Town Hall. We will start promptly. Each class will be singing for parents, and some classes will play recorder. We'll finish with pizza for all - there will be a donation box for pizza in the hallway. There is no Lunch Program or After School Program that day. This will be the last morning of school until we start again on January 6th.

**Calendars are Available**

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

**Children's Art Note Cards for Sale**

The 4th-6th class painted colorful acrylic landscapes on canvas which have been photographed to create a beautiful set of note cards. The cards will be for sale in the hallway all this week, sold in sets of 6 for \$10.00 per set. These make great gifts! Please look at the display in the hallway to select your cards, and then fill out the order form and return it by this Friday, Dec. 13th.

**Hannafords Helps Schools Certificates**

Please return any Hannafords Helps Schools school dollar certificates to the canister in the hallway by Wednesday, so we can send them in this week.

**High Chair and Car Seat Needed to Lend**

George, in the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>, would be very grateful for the loan of a high-chair and a child car-seat over the holiday period, for use by his visiting grandchildren. If you have one or both, let him know.

**Preschool**

Last Friday the children acted *The Mitten* story outside using a blanket as the mitten for the animals' shelter. It was so much fun to act out, that some of the children stayed and acted it out three times. Today we walk to the Royalston Library to hear a story and exchange books. The class is working on holiday gifts for their families. To make our classroom more festive, the children will be making tissue paper candles for our windows.

This week our story is *The Tomten* by Astrid Lindgren. In this story, a small, quiet and gentle tomten lives on a farm in the deep of winter. He comes out at night and quietly checks on all the animals in the barn, speaks to them in tomten language and re-

minds the animals that spring will come again. It's a very simple and soothing story for young children. We will take out our barn and animals this week and we will try to make one or more tomtens for our class puppet show.

We will add moss to the three winter gardens we began last week. The children will mist the moss to keep it moist and healthy. The children are practicing songs with Jocelyn to sing for parents, grandparents and relatives on Friday, December 20th at 11:00 a.m. at the Royalston Town Hall, followed by a pizza for all. There will be no Lunch Program or After School Program that day.

<b>December 2013</b>				
<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>9</b> 8:45 All School Sing <b>Winter Gardens: Moss and plant life</b> bring in layer of moss	<b>10</b> 8:45 Reading Buddies	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 8:45 Reading Buddies  <b>1:00 2nd-3rd to Camp Caravan</b>	<b>13</b> soccer    yoga
<b>16</b> 8:45 All School Sing <b>Winter Gardens: Animals</b>	<b>7</b> 8:45 Reading Buddies	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 8:45 Reading Buddies	<b>20</b> Take home Winter Gardens <b>8:30 a.m.. 2nd-3rd Publishing Party</b>  <b>11 a.m. Holiday Celebration at the Town Hall</b>

## Kindergarten—1st Grade

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For our theme of *Olden Times*, we are beginning to read aloud *The Long Winter* by Laura Ingalls Wilder. We'll talk about the story and journal about some of the events. Some of the theme share items brought in so far are: an old phone, a candle holder, an old family portrait, and a picture of an old tractor. The class had fun learning how to use the rotary dial phone and pretending to call the school. The class brainstormed about Olden Times. Some ideas went back as far as cave people, though we will try to limit our theme to the last few hundred years.

In science the class did a felting project with Trina and used special combs to clean and card the wool.

Last week the class took their Winter Garden pie plates outside to cover the bottom with a thin layer of sand and a few special rocks. This week we'll be looking at the plant world and will place moss in our gardens. Moss can be brought from home if available, or

we'll collect some from around the school property.

Last week the class painted their holiday gift pottery ready for a final firing. Afterwards they worked on holiday greetings cards.

In phonics we'll study the 'sh' and 'th' sounds. In music we'll continue singing seasonal songs and prepare for our holiday performance at the Town Hall on December 20<sup>th</sup>. The class will sing a selection of songs and 1<sup>st</sup> graders will play recorder.

The kindergarten math class is constructing repeating patterns using two and three color blocks. We will be looking for repeating patterns in our classrooms this week. First graders are completing the unit *Solving Story Problems* and starting a new unit data unit called *What Would You Rather Be?* We'll begin with sorting activities including sorting shapes and buttons. See the attached math news.

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## 2nd - 3rd Grade

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Last week we began reading *Buffalo Dreams* as a class reader. The children are excited to read the same book together and we have had very successful discussions to start the story. We began by making predictions about what the story is about (they were only given the title). They drew some great pictures to go along with the story. Then, after reading the first few pages, the children discussed why the birth of a baby white calf buffalo was important to the Bearpaw family and we are thinking about what the buffalo represents. They have also made some insightful comments about the pictures in the book. They are patiently listening to each other and responding to each other's comments.

In science, we had some guest visitors—a few goldfish. The children learned about fish and then made some close observations and drawings of fish. They noticed that: one had transparent fins, one was afraid when a finger was put near it, while another was not, and one had two different colored eyes.

The children's singing and recorder playing are coming along nicely for the Holiday Celebration. Ask your child to give you a preview. Also, all children should be practicing recorder every night and filling out their charts.

There is no homework (except for reading) this week so that the children can work on their secret gift. Gifts should be homemade and come in wrapped on Wednesday Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>.

Due to the weather last Thursday, our trip to Camp Caravan is rescheduled to this Thursday afternoon.

On Friday, December 20, at 8:30 a.m., we will have a Publishing Party to celebrate the children's hard work on their memoirs. You will hear your child's memoir and then get to hear other students' work as well. Feel free, but not obligated, to bring in a snack that we can enjoy after the Publishing Party. Tea and coffee will be served. Come and celebrate the children's writing and then head to the Town Hall to set up and hang out with other parents before the Holiday Celebration.

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## 4th - 6th Grade

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We have now finished reading *The Little House on the Prairie*, and have found many connections between the story of the Ingalls family and the wider history of western settlement we've been studying with the help of *The Split History of Western Expansion*.

*The Split History* gives equal weight to two perspectives, that of the settlers and of Native Americans. Reading it helped us to notice some of the underlying negative attitudes towards Native Americans even of a family such as the Ingalls, whom we've been accustomed to seeing as the 'good guys'.

We have also completed our third piece of work using the map of the United States, in which the children plotted the accession of the 50 states in various time bands. The process showed clearly that when California became a state in 1850, most of the west - amounting to half the country - was not yet organized into states. The reason, of course, was the sudden influx of prospectors and others in the gold rush of 1848-9, which gives us a starting point for studying it in the New Year.

First, however, we'll be looking at immigration, and showing how this was linked to westward expansion, and has continued to be a factor in American history until now. We will also be asking children to research the countries of origin of their own families, so be prepared for family tree questions.

We had another lively science lesson last week, in which the children worked in pairs to make a series of experiments involving pulleys. They saw how pulleys made it possible to do more work with less effort, and how adding extra pulleys into a system increased this effect.

In art last week the children continued working with watercolors, and it was clear that they had learned a lot from our recent visit to the MFA to see the amazing exhibition of watercolors by John Singer Sargent.

Many thanks to the Wright, Conry, Word and Johnson families for donating books to our class library during the recent Book Fair. Both teachers and children appreciate the support.