



NEWS FOR THE WEEK OF
January 4, 2010

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News and Notes

WELCOME BACK!

Parent Group Meeting This Wednesday

Come to Parent Group Meeting This Wednesday 8:45 p.m. Join us in the cozy warm capital campaign office at Camp Caravan for coffee and goodies. We'll prepare for the February Open House, and start looking at the Silent Auction.

Boots and Slippers

Children are sledding at recess. With snow on the ground, no outdoor shoes are allowed in any of the classrooms. All children need a pair of slippers that stays at school. That way, wet outdoor boots stay in the hallway cubbies, and children move around the building with warm dry feet in slippers. An extra pair of gloves/mittens is handy for the afternoon recess. Please also make sure that your child has a **complete change of clothes** in a bag with his/her name on it in the cubby. Then children with wet clothes can change into dry clothes and be comfortable for the rest of the day.

Sweetwater Farm Organic Beef for Sale

Karen reports that they have lots of beef right now, just call to arrange pick it up. There is meat for stews, roasts, burger for chili, and more. Call 978 724-8832.

1st - 6th grade Cross Country Skiing begins this Friday

1st - 6th graders go cross country skiing on Royalston common every Friday afternoon, conditions permitting, until February vacation. Children needs skis, poles and boots that easily click into bindings. Parents are always very welcome to join us, especially to help the new 1st grade skiers. We leave the school at 1:45. When children bring their skis on Friday, they can leave them by the front entrance, and bring the ski boots inside. **Please make sure your child's name is on the skis and the poles!**



Preschool

We will begin the New Year with exploring castles. We will start with some castles set up in the room. The class will build their own castle/sculptures with wood and glue.

Our story this week is *Poor Goose*, a French tale about a goose who has a headache and decides to go to the castle to get some peppermint tea. Along the way the goose meets a cat, a lamb and a cow and together they make their way to the castle. They

never make it to the castle but they end up making a lonely old woman very happy.

Please make sure your child has mittens, snow pants, boots and a hat every day. Also please make sure your child has extra socks and pants in their cubby. We are looking forward to having lots of fun in the snow!

January 2010				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
4 8:45 All School Sing	5 8:45 Book Buddies Music Classes	6 8:45 a.m. Parent Group Meeting	7	8 Coffee orders due 1st-6th Cross country skiing
11 8:45 All School Sing	12 8:45 Book Buddies Music Classes	13 NO SCHOOL TEACHER INSERVICE DAY	14	15 Yoga 1st-6th Cross country skiing

Kindergarten—1st Grade

We start our new theme of *Winter Birds* this week. We will be watching and learning about local birds, reading fairy tales about birds, as well as working with bird art and craft activities. This week we'll start feeding birds using the bird feeders by the classroom window – we're looking forward to seeing which birds are the first arrivals!

Our story for the week is *The Seven Ravens*, about a girl who finds out her seven brothers have been turned into ravens and sets out on an adventure to find them. We'll be journaling our favorite parts of the story, retelling it and acting it out. Our rhyme this week is *See the Little Ducks*. In science we will make birdfeeders from milk cartons and wooden dowels.

In Kindergarten phonics, we have completed our journey through the alphabet. This week we'll start looking at letter blends, beginning with 'ch'. The 1st graders will bind their ABC Word Books, which include their own selection of words for each of the letters A to Z.

We finished off our *Shapes, Mirrors and Reflections* theme before the

holidays with the children sending home their beautiful pottery glazed mirrors as holiday gifts. We also continued work on reflections with the children trying to write their names so they could be read in the mirror. Our last art activity before the holidays was making shiny suns as a reminder of the winter solstice, after which the days again become longer. See the bright pictures on display in the hallway.

In math, 1st graders will start a new Investigations unit, *What Would You Be?*, about data analysis. We start this week with sorting activities - sorting buttons, shapes and children. We will also play the game *Guess My Rule* in which children sort objects and another child has to guess how they have been sorted.

On Fridays, weather permitting, the 1st graders will go cross country skiing with the older children on Royalston common, and the Kindergarten group will go sledding. Parents are very welcome to join us for either activity, which begins at 1:45 p.m.

2nd - 3rd Grade

This week we will begin some new projects. In reading, the children will become super sleuths as they dive into the world of mystery. We will read mystery stories, think about their structure and use our problem solving skills to try to solve some mysteries. If fitting, some children will read the same story and engage in book talk about the story as they read it.

We will do a short writing unit and study rebus stories (stories that use pictures to represent certain words) and then write our own. We will look at Native American symbols and think about symbols that we see in our everyday life. Then we will work on creating our own stories, using some Native American symbols and some of our own. It will be interesting to see the ideas that the children come up with.

In Theme, we will finish up our night dioramas and hear more stories about the stars. Children can bring in objects from home to incorporate into their dioramas. Next, we will begin a study of the relationship between Native Americans and animals. We will think about how Native Americans relied upon animals for so much of their daily lives and also think about the spiritual aspect of the animals and how many Native Americans had their own spirit animals. We will look at animals of the Northeast, with a special focus on wolves. The children will choose their own spirit animals, which we will incorporate into several different projects.

We will review some math ideas that we were working on before the holiday break. 2nd graders will continue to work on sticker problems and think about how groups of twos, fives and tens can help them solve story problems. 3rd graders will continue working on strategies for subtraction problems.

In science, we will begin a study of water. We will do experiments that demonstrate the properties of water. This is sure to be a favorite with the children.

We will have our first cross-country skiing session this Friday. Children should bring their boots inside and skis and poles can be left outside the building. Please make sure your child's name is on the poles and skis.

4th - 6th Grade

This semester we are studying various aspects of the Ancient Greece theme. Having spent much of last semester working with Greek myths, this term we will look more at Greek history and literature.

We will begin by reading an excellent retelling of the *Iliad* by Rosemary Sutcliff, and then look at the archeological evidence that the story of Troy was based on historical events in the 13th century BCE. Using a combination of books and excellent BBC TV programs, we will learn about the work of Heinrich Schliemann, who is credited with discovering the ruins of Troy, and also look at controversies surrounding his methods. This will build on practical work we did in December in identifying various household objects that had been excavated on an actual archeological dig in the 1920s, and working out what they told us about everyday life in Ancient Greece. We will also read a version of the *Odyssey*, also by Sutcliff, using it as a whole-class reader and a springboard for a variety of literary discussions.

We will compare life in Athens and Sparta and look at a few key incidents in Greek history, as an example of the way Athenian city-states warred with each other but also combined against common enemies such as Persia. We will spend some time on the history of Alexander the Great and his conquests, and use an excellent children's biography of Alexander as a whole-class reader, which will also give the children experience in finding information in non-fiction texts. We will also be learning about various Greek scientists and philosophers, and read an extract from Plato showing how teachers still use Socratic methods in their teaching.

In science, the children will begin the semester by choosing an experiment for their Science Night project. This year we will put emphasis on scientific method and helping the children to frame a question that they can then answer experimentally. Our science teacher, Cathy Szal, is planning an in-class conference in which the children will present their projects to each other as works in progress, so the rest of the class can make suggestions as to how the projects could be refined. Please see the attached Science Project information.

Everyone should bring in their knitting needles from last year, we will start knitting later in the month. Don't forget, we are cross country skiing this Friday, so children need to bring skis, poles and boots.