



NEWS FOR THE WEEK OF

# November 16, 2009

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## News and Notes

**This Thursday, November 19, Preschool to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade goes to the Shea Theater** in Turners Falls for a marionette performance, on a school bus! We leave the school at 8:45 a.m. and return at noon.

### Holiday T Shirt Order

Please see the display (and order forms) in the hallway. You can order t-shirts, sweatshirts, hats and more, with the Village School logo. Orders are due Nov. 23, and will be in by Dec. 7.

### Art for Sale, to benefit the art program!

Have you noticed the awesome artwork all over the building? Art teacher Renee has been firing the creative juices of all the students, with outstanding results. Now Renee is displaying a piece of her own art in the hallway, for sale to the highest bidder, to benefit the art program (to buy more quality paint, glazes and materials.) Minimum bid is \$200, and bidding ends Nov. 23. You can enter your private bid in the office.

### Book Drive for Native American Children

The 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> graders have learned about the needy children of the Assiniboin tribe in Montana from Chuck Baxter (Leah and Hannah's Dad). Parents are asked to join in a book drive for the children, donating new books, suitable for grades K-12. There will be a collection box in each classroom. Books can be dropped off until Nov. 30.

### Toy Drive Friday, Nov. 27 12-4pm (or leave items in hallway)

at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon. Unwrapped new or gently used toys, books, puzzles, and games are accepted for families in area towns. You can also leave items in the hallway near the ramp entrance before Thanksgiving.

### K-6th Parents

Please send in a glass pie plate with your child's name on the **bottom**, for your child's individual winter garden. In the four weeks that begin November 30<sup>th</sup>, the whole school will enter into an appreciation of nature, focused on the winter gardens, culminating in the winter solstice. The preschool has a large garden for the whole class. In the first week, (starting November 30) we will be mindful of the mineral world. Starting with a thin layer of sand, children will be looking for special rocks, crystals, or minerals to put in their garden. (You can send unique specimens in, they will not get lost.) The following week, we will place our attention on the plant world, adding moss to our winter gardens. In the week after, we will attend to the animal world, and all the preparations that animals are making for the impending winter. We will make wax or clay animals to put in our garden. On the last day before the winter break (December 18<sup>th</sup>), we will begin the 4<sup>th</sup> week, by looking at humankind with appreciation, viewing each person as a special being who brings precious light into this world. On that last day, we will place candles in our garden. The winter gardens go home on the last day, and the candle can be lit each day at home. At home, the winter gardens become Zen-like focal places, that grace the holiday table or the family display area. As nature enters dormancy outside, these miniature gardens are refreshing to the eye, the heart and the mind. The children love playing with them and decorating them.

*Thank you everyone for pitching in to make a warm, inviting Open House.*

### Preschool

Today we walked to the Royalston Library and heard a story read by Laura's mom, Jen, always a treat. This week our story is *The Gingerbread Man*. The class is always delighted when we tell this story about an older couple who have no children. The wife decides to make a gingerbread boy out of cookie dough and she carefully decorates him with raisins for his eyes, nose, mouth and buttons. She pops him into the oven and when she begins to smell the gingerbread cooking she opens the oven and the gingerbread boy jumps out of the oven and runs out of the

house singing, "Run, run as fast as you can, you can't catch me I'm the gingerbread man!" We will make our own gingerbread cookies on Wednesday for snack. On Friday we will celebrate Peter's birthday and make cranberry sauce to go home in our Thanksgiving baskets. Our trip to the Shea Theater is this Thursday, November 19<sup>th</sup>. Please return the permission slip as soon as possible. The bus will leave the Village School at 8:45 a.m. and return at noon. We think that the ride on the bus will be the highlight of the trip.

November 2009				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
16 8:45 All School Sing	17 8:45 Book Buddies Music	18 Spanish K-1 to Sweetwater Farm 8:45-11:30	19 Art Classes Preschool-3rd to Shea Theater in Turners Falls, leave at 8:45, return by noon	20 Yoga
23 8:45 All School Sing T shirt orders due	24 8:45 Book Buddies Music 2nd-3rd field trip to Native American site	25 NO SCHOOL	26 	27 NO SCHOOL

## Kindergarten—1st Grade

Our *Building and Buildings* theme continues this week with the story *Roxenboxen*, about a girl and her friends who build an imaginary village on a hillside. We'll listen to the story, record ideas in our journals, and build our own *Roxenboxen* village. We worked on a fun building project last week using small marshmallows and toothpicks, which the class used to construct some great 3D models of houses and buildings. Our new theme, to start after the Thanksgiving, will be *Mirrors, Reflections, Shapes and Symbols*. We chose this theme after a brainstorm with the class and it's a combination of two popular ideas.

Last week in art the children began making frames for mirrors. They rolled out clay and then cut out a circle from the center for the space for the mirror. Next we decorated the circle, imprinting it with shells, fabric and forks. The clay will now get fired, ready for glazing next week. Using the clay cut from the middle of the frames, each child made a clay animal that we'll use in a few weeks in our annual winter gardens.

The contra dances at the Lantern Walk were very popular and we continue to practice *Heel and Toe* and *Zodiac* in the classroom. In music we are singing favorite songs including *Mama, Mama Crow, Old*

### 2nd - 3rd Grade

Last week we went with Susan Pepper-Aisenberg, Ruby's mom, to pick cranberries in Orange. We picked about a gallon of cranberries and will use them to make cranberry sauce this week. Thank you, Susan, for taking us picking. On Thursday, Chuck Baxter, Leah and Hannah's dad, came in to talk to us about the drum and shield he is lending us. Come take a look—they are amazing. He taught us about the Assiniboin tribe that he works with and we learned about how they are different from the Wampanoag. Thank you, Chuck, for lending us the shield and drum and for visiting our classroom.

In music, we are singing *Des Colores, Montay*, and *The Earth is our Mother*. We are playing *Where is Thumbkin* and *Lightly Row* on recorder. Please help your child remember to practice recorder 5 minutes a day. The most important days for them to practice are Monday, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, but of course, they should practice every day.

We begin new units in math this week. Both groups are working on number sense. The 2<sup>nd</sup> grade unit is *Stickers, Number Strings, and Story Problems* and the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade unit is *Collections and Travel Stories*. Please see the attached family letter for more details about your child's unit. In writing, we are reading a lot of memoirs and exploring our own stories to see what we will write about for our own memoir.

We will join the K-1 at Sweetwater Farm this week. Drop-off is at 8:45 and pick-up is at 11:30. On Wednesday night, if it's clear, we will have stargazing at Richardson Farm (Rise's house) at 6:30. Pizza will be served at 6:00 p.m. On Thursday we go to the Shea Theater. We are taking a bus, which will leave at 8:45 and we will return by lunch.

Also, we begin our food collection this week for local families for the holidays. Please bring in non-perishable items and place them in the basket in the classroom.

On Tuesday, Nov. 24, William Sullivan, astroarchaeologist and author, will visit our classroom in the morning. We will go with him to view a local Native American site. Please sign the attached permission slip and return it by the end of the week.

*Roger and Mister Moon*.

In math, the kindergarten group is counting backwards from ten and playing the card game *Compare*, in which each child puts out a card from 0-10 and the child with the highest card calls "me." This game is good practice for recognizing the numbers, particularly the difference between 6 and 9. First graders are starting on a new *Investigations* unit, *Solving Story Problems*. This week, along with problem solving, we'll play the game *Counters in a Cup*, involving calculating what's missing and we will lay out the November calendar.

Reminders: This Wednesday we are at Sweetwater Farm. Drop off at the farm is at 8:45 and pick up time is at 11:30. Parents are welcome stay for the morning.

This Thursday we'll visit the Shea Theatre in Turners Falls for a marionette performance of *The Dragon King*. We'll leave the school at 8:45 a.m. on the bus (!) and will be back to school by lunchtime.

### 4th - 6th Grade

We can already feel the acceleration, usually heralded by the Lantern Walk, that always happens as we approach the holiday season. For example, in art last week, the children made clay animals to put into the winter gardens they will be making after Thanksgiving. This week they will be working on a still life connected to a Thanksgiving theme. And for the second time our painting of the week is by an artist connected with the school. Susan Pepper-Aisenberg, mother of Ruby, has kindly loaned us one of her paintings and will talk to the class about it in our regular art appreciation time. As always, the classroom had several impressive art displays for the Open House last Saturday, as well as the science display showing the main geological periods of the Earth's history.

We have spent much of our theme time this semester in studying Greek myths, and particularly myths about ancient Greek gods and goddesses. This included the preparations for our Hades event before Halloween. We have now covered all the major deities, and this week and next we will be learning about the twelve labors of Heracles. We will read the stories, the children will retell them to each other, and they will each illustrate one of the labors for a display after the holiday.

The children are also on track to finish their memoirs before Thanksgiving. We have been looking at ways to set the scene for each memoir, giving it a context and showing the reader why the events described have particular significance for the writer. As the children write, we are also reading short memoirs to help them see how adult writers accomplish this.

In math, 5<sup>th</sup> graders not only created a model of a cubic meter, then measured the number of cubic meters that could fit into their classroom, they also discovered how many 5<sup>th</sup> graders can fit into a cubic meter! Their follow-up discussion included observations about discrepancies when measuring such a large space. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade math group is forging ahead with our 2D geometry unit. Last week we investigated whether or not various given lengths can form a triangle or a quadrilateral. By now the children are sufficiently used to making a general statement algebraically that they were able to come up with a formulation themselves. They concluded that three given lengths, a, b and c, will form a triangle only if  $a + b > c$ . They made a similar statement about quadrilaterals and then extended it for polygons of any number of sides.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Star Watch This Wednesday, November 18

at the Richardson Farm on Narrow Lane in Phillipston. Pizza at 6:00 p.m., and then at 6:30, John Richardson, astrophysicist, will orient us in the night sky, and connect the constellations with Greek mythology. If you are coming for pizza, let Rise know. If it's cloudy, it's cancelled.