



NEWS FOR THE WEEK OF

November 2, 2009

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News and Notes

Come to Parent Group Meeting This Thursday We will plan for the Lantern Walk, the Nov. 14 Open House and more.

Open House Saturday November 14 10 a.m. to noon.

We open the school and our hearts to visitors. Parents and students welcome guests. Parents bake for refreshments too. Flyers are in the hallway. Check the list to see what places you have been assigned to post flyers in your town. Take extras, and post them everywhere! Thank you.

About the Lantern Walk This Friday Evening

On this special evening, all families participate in this traditional Village School event for celebrating the transition in seasons. All the children look forward to this event.

Important: All children should report to the classrooms by 5:00 p.m. Preschool and K-1 students go with their parents to pick up their lanterns and then go outside and gather by the fire. 2nd-6th children meet in the classroom (their parents wait outside) and then walk in a singing procession to the playground, holding their lanterns high, to join the Preschool and K-1 children at the fire. Then we enjoy more singing and a seasonal story. Parents - please bring flashlights for reading words and lighting your way. After the story, children will walk with parents to the Town Hall for the pot-luck dinner and con-

tradance. Suggested donation at the door is \$10 per family, or \$5 per adult and \$2 per child. Parents are responsible for their children throughout the whole event.

About the Pot Luck: All parents need to bring a main dish that serves 12, such as a meat lasagna, vegetarian lasagna, baked ziti, meatballs, or any Italian style dish that is easy to serve and eat. Salad and bread together count as a main dish. If you have time, desserts are welcome additions. **Please leave your pot luck Italian dish at the Town Hall before the Lantern Walk**, with a folded card denoting content (meat, vegetarian, spicy, etc.). Volunteers are needed to organize the kitchen, set tables, prepare the pot luck, and of course, clean up. A sign up sheet is posted in the hallway today. We will all clean up the kitchen and the Town Hall before it is all over.

About the contradance: The contradance is a Parent-Child dance. The K-6 children have been practicing the dances. The older students will lead dances, dance with their parents, and dance with reading buddies. Younger children join right in the fun. The dances are called and are easy to learn. Children who are not dancing are expected to sit with a parent.

Preschool

Last week the children joined the whole school in enjoying the Scottish harp and cello duo. The children were entranced by the music, and joined in the singing, and clapped with the beat. The harpist even played some blues! On our visit to Sweetwater Farm, we walked to the orchard and picked up drops. Parents and teachers shook apple branches to encourage more drops. Our song *Shake, Shake the Apple Tree* just had to be sung. After snack the class helped make cider and then tasted the sweet result. Thank you to Karen and Loren for making our morning so delightful. Last Friday, after getting their faces painted and doing some yoga with Loren, the children went downstairs to see the 4th-6th classroom transformed into Hades, based on the students' study of Ancient Greece. At the end, the children happily recognized their Reading Buddies when the lights were turned on.

This week we will finish our lanterns for this Friday's Lantern Walk. On Friday we will meet at 5:00 p.m. in the classroom to pick up lanterns. Then families can gather by the fire to sing songs and listen to a story. See above for more information.

Today we walked to the Royalston Library and heard a story read by librarian Jen Bartkus. Each child chose a book to bring back to the classroom. Our story this week is *It's Too Noisy* which is an old Yiddish tale about a man with lots of children who can't get a moment's rest. The wise man tells him to bring his chickens, sheep, pigs and cows into the house for a few days. When the wise man tells him to finally put all the animals back into the barn, the man gets to enjoy the peace and quiet of his house.

November 2009

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2 8:45 All School Sing 2nd-3rd to Plimoth Plantation	3 8:45 Book Buddies Music	4 Spanish 2nd-6th Sweetwater Farm 8:45-11:30 K-1 Stone House visit 9:15-11:30	5 Art Classes 8:45 a.m. Parent Group Meeting	6 coffee orders due 5:00 Lantern Walk Pot Luck Contradance
9 8:45 All School Sing	10 8:45 Book Buddies Music	11 NO SCHOOL VETERANS' DAY	12 Art Classes	13 coffee orders in Saturday: Open House ▶ 10-12 Parents welcome visitors

Kindergarten—1st Grade

Our story of the week is *The Twelve Huntsman* by the Brothers Grimm, about a prince and a determined princess who disguises herself as a huntsman. Our popular *Building and Buildings* theme continues. Theme share has including a bird's nest, books on buildings, pieces of lumber and Lego construction. Last week the class was fascinated by a collection of house plans and designs that Katrina brought in. They then imagined their own ideal houses and then went off to draw and describe their creations. The houses included flowers on the roofs, large trees inside, slides, basements with woodstoves, swimming pools and one even had an aquarium for baby belugas! We have been using a large foam construction set and set up a full size tent in the classroom. In art this week we will use wooden blocks and glue to make 3D structures. This Wednesday we will visit a stone house in Petersham, built by Gary's father and grandfather, both stonemasons. Children can either travel from school at 8:45 or meet us at the house at 9:15. Remember to return permission slips and leave car seats in school that morning.

2nd - 3rd Grade

Last week we enjoyed the Scottish harp and cello concert at the Town Hall. In the afternoon we had a workshop with the musicians. We learned a lot about the harp, sang some songs, and learned a dance. The children asked great questions and loved listening to the music, especially the faster songs.

In music, we practiced the song *Leaves are Falling*, and learned a new Spanish song, *Des Colores*. The children picked up the chorus quickly and practiced it again in our singing session with the 4th-6th. In science, we identified the leaves that we collected in a previous science class. We also looked at leaves under a microscope and made a bookmark. In Spanish, we heard the story *Where the Wild Things Are* in Spanish, of course and then worked on creating our own story in Spanish. We then acted out the story.

We ended the week with an informative, fun trip to Hades. The transformation of the 4th-6th classroom set a perfect scene for Hades and the day before Halloween. All the actors delivered their roles well. In the afternoon, we went to the cemetery where the children picked an old gravestone to draw in their journals, and then we listened to Rise tell a story.

In Reading this week, we will think about setting. We will think about how to look for clues that tell us about setting. Then we will think about how setting relates to mood, character and plot in a story. We will take notes and draw pictures of settings that we find in our books.

In Theme, we share our experiences and journal about our visit to Plimoth Plantation. We will also begin to hear stories about thanks and gratitude and think about different ceremonies the Native Americans performed to give thanks.

On Thursday we will go foraging for cranberries with Susan Pepper-Aisenberg (Ruby's Mom). We will leave the school around 8:45 a.m. and return by 11:00 a.m. Please sign the attached permission slip.

Reminders for 2nd-6th for this week:

Our last Sweetwater Farm visit for this fall is this Wednesday. Drop off is at 8:45 and pick up is at 11:45 a.m. at the farm.

This Friday is the Lantern Walk. Children should report to the classroom at 5:00 p.m., and parents can wait outside by the fire. Look for more details on the front page.

Last Monday the children were enthralled by a performance at the Town Hall of a Scottish harp and cello duo. The children joined in some of the songs and recorded clear memories of the event the next day in their journal entries. Some of them tried to draw all thirty six strings on the harp! In Music with Jocelyn, the class sings with gusto and requests song lyrics so they can practice at home. This week in math, the kindergarten is playing the game *Inventory Bags*. The children work in pairs, counting the items in a bag and recording the results on paper. They are very accurate in their counting and are getting lots of practice writing numbers. The 1st graders are completing work on shape and patterns and will create their own geometric quilt designs. The class has been enjoying singing lantern songs to prepare for this Friday's Lantern Walk. The K-1 children should come with their parents to the classroom at 5:00 p.m. to collect their lanterns, then gather outside with their parents around the fire to continue the evening. Parental supervision is requested throughout the event, especially in the dark.

4th - 6th Grade

Last week ended with a spectacular Hades 'haunted house'. The whole classroom was draped in black to transform it into 'Hades,' using black lights to create a dark and ghostly atmosphere. Each child played the role of a different denizen of Hades and each wore a wonderfully sculpted mask they made in a special art lesson on Tuesday. Various props (and the masks themselves) were decorated with glow-in-the-dark paint to add to the general ghostliness. The class put on several tours, for parents, for the 2nd-3rd grade class, the K-1 class and finally the preschool. Each student read or recited the piece they had written about their character so that everyone learned all the Hades myths by listening to each other's recitals.

Visitors were greeted by Thanatos, the god of death, played by Mike, and were then conducted into Hades by the god Hermes, played by Matt. 'Hermes' explained that his father, Zeus, had given the visitors special dispensation so they could leave Hades after the tour; most people aren't so lucky! The tourists next met Charon (Peyton) the ferryman who conducts the dead over the river Styx and were then confronted by the three-headed dog Cerberus, acted by Marissa in a fearsome three-faced mask.

Julie portrayed Minos, one of the three judges of the dead, whose job was to weigh the good and bad deeds of each soul to decide which part of Hades it would inhabit. Two of our characters had been condemned to dwell in Tartarus, because of their sins as mortals. The first was Sisyphus, played by John, who told his story while continuously rolling a heavy rock (actually a large exercise ball covered in glow paint) up and down a slope.

Next we met Hecate (Soleil), in her role as the goddess of witchcraft. Hecate likes to lurk at crossroads and deceive travelers and she and Hermes had a lively argument about the direction the visitors should take. Hermes prevailed and took the tour to visit Morpheus (Dani) who explained how good and bad dreams are sent to us mortals. We then heard the sad story of Tantalus, as Ruby explained how he had tried too gruesomely hard to please the gods when they came to dinner, and was condemned to live forever within sight but not within reach of food and water. Finally we met Hades himself (Lila), and his wife Persephone, played by Marnie. They sat high up on thrones and Persephone explained why the visitors should not accept the grapes that Hades was offering them.

The children put on a marvelous show and the whole event was a real group effort. Renée and Wendy provided energy and inspiration in setting up the classroom, aided by a small group of children - John, Ruby, Dani and her sister Laura - who came in late on Thursday to help transform the classroom.

This week we are back on earth as ordinary mortals. We will continue to study myths for the rest of this semester. The Hades show will be a tough act to follow ... until we get to the play, of course.