



NEWS FOR THE WEEK OF
November 9, 2009

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www.villageschool.to

News and Notes



Come to Open House this Saturday 10 a.m. to noon

This is a great opportunity to build our enrollment for next year. Let's keep posting flyers and give postcards to friends. Parents are hosts at the Open House, welcoming visitors, and baking and serving refreshments too. We share this gift of the school with others, and invite them in. It doesn't have to be a secret! There is a sign up sheet in the hallway for food and tasks. It's always a lot of fun, and your children can come too. Let's all make it into a heartwarming event.

1st - 6th grade Cross Country Skiing in January 1st - 6th graders go cross country skiing on Royalston common every Friday afternoon from January 4 until February vacation, weather permitting. Children needs skis, poles and boots that easily click into bindings. See if your child's skis fit from last year. Parents of older children often have smaller boots to lend to younger skiers. Parents are always welcome to join us.

Thursday, November 19 Preschool-3rd grade goes to Shea Theater in Turners Falls for a marionette performance. We are going on a school bus! We will leave the school at 8:45 a.m. and return at noon. More information can be found on the attached permission slip.

Holiday T Shirt Order

Please see the display (and order forms) in the hallway. You can order t-shirts, sweatshirts, hats and more. This year, we are also offering a soft organic cotton T and a pullover fleece. All have the Village School logo imprinted. Orders are due Nov. 23, and will be in by Dec. 7.

Village School Downhill Ski Group

Wachusett Mt. season ski passes at the "greatest possible savings" (GPS) can be purchased by November 18. There are brochures in the hall or you can go to www.wachusett.com and look up GPS Clubs. State that you are joining the Village School group. You can also contact Nicki Maitland (978-827-1271) or Beth Ingham (978-297-1148) for more info. Skiing is a great family activity for Wednesday afternoons in the winter.

Thank you everyone for making the Lantern Walk such a heartwarming event, with a great outpouring of community spirit.

Preschool

The Lantern Walk was wonderful and we saw many preschoolers enjoying themselves, eating pizza and contra dancing. This week our story is *Chicken Little*, about a chicken, who, of course, thinks the sky is falling. Chicken Little has friends with great names like: Henny Penny, Cocky Locky, Ducky Lucky and Goosey Loosey. Our telling of the story has a happy ending.

On Thursday, November 19th the Preschool gets to travel by bus to Turners Falls to see the Tanglewood Marionettes perform *The Dragon King*. We are fortunate to have received a grant to cover the cost of the tickets and the transportation and we look forward

to taking the preschoolers with the K-3rd grade on this new adventure. Please sign and return the attached permission slip. Now that the weather is turning cold, don't forget to send your child with mittens (gloves are hard for preschoolers to put on and are not as warm), hat, snow pants and boots. Also, please check to make sure your child's cubby has a supply of shirts, pants, underwear and socks.

This week we are collecting acorns and working on our Thanksgiving birch bark baskets in Art with Renee.

November 2009				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
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 greet visitors
16 8:45 All School Sing	17 8:45 Book Buddies Music	18 Spanish K-1 to Sweetwater Farm 8:45-11:30	19 Preschool-3rd to Shea Theater Turners Falls leave at 8:45, return by noon	20 Yoga

Kindergarten—1st Grade

This week we continue with the story of *The Twelve Huntsman* from the Brothers Grimm. We will retell the story, act it out and write in journal about our favorite parts. Our *Building and Buildings* theme continues. Last week we visited Gary's grandparent's stone house in Petersham, built by Jim and Gus Dowd. We started the day with circle time to ask more about the house, and amongst other things, learned that the stones for house were dug from the property. Next we watched a demonstration as a large stone was split in two with metal pegs and a hammer, then we went inside to see plans and pictures of the house construction. As a treat for Gary's birthday, we were entertained by a magician, and then birthday cake and a hike completed the morning. Many thanks to the Dowds for opening your house to us - it was a great morning for everyone.

Our weekly Friday morning yoga classes with Lauren are very popular with the class. Since September the class has noticeably increased in their focus, posture and balance.

In art last week we made pictures using tissue paper collage then cut out building silhouettes from black card to stick over the top. This week we will work in clay, making gifts for the holiday season.

2nd - 3rd Grade

We had a fascinating visit to Plimoth Plantation. The children were impressed with the summer and winter wetus (the Wampanoag's houses) and enjoyed watching a Wampanoag man use fire to make a dugout canoe. The children asked great questions and we learned that deer bladders were used as drinking vessels (something we've been wondering about for a few weeks). We also have a chance to visit the English Village. It is based on a 1627 temporary village and the houses are made of mud and wood with cattails bundled together as the roofs (we even got to see a man repairing a roof). We learned a lot about the Wampanoags and the English Village.

On Wednesday we visited Sweetwater Farm. We picked apples and made cider. Thanks to all the staff at Sweetwater for the great fall visits. We look forward to coming back in the spring. We also visited Burke's grandparents' house to watch a magic show. The children loved the magic tricks—don't be surprised if your children show you some tricks of their own. Thanks to the Dowds for inviting us to join the K-1 for the magic show.

In art, we drew self-portraits using sharpies and then painted them without using paint. We used a special bleeding art tissue to create an array of colors over the drawings of the self-portraits. The children experimented with different ways to apply the color, resulting in some interesting effects. In science, we visited our special place and worked in pairs to create debris huts. The children worked cooperatively to create the temporary shelters and we will revisit them throughout the school year.

In math, both grades worked on creating line plots. We learned that using line plots to show data is useful when collecting information such as how many people live in your house.

In writing, we will begin a personal narrative unit. We will explore stories such as *Owl Moon*, and *My Side of the Mountain* to help us understand how to create a personal narrative. The children will think about what stories in their own lives are important and then choose one for their personal narrative writing.

In Theme, we are focusing on stories about thanks and it will culminate with learning about the Native American Thanksgiving—what it was like before the Europeans arrived—and the first Thanksgiving between the Native Americans and Europeans. We started with the story *Greeting the Sun, A Maushop Story*, which is about how and why the Wampanoag people give thanks to the sun. We will be thinking about what we are thankful for. On Thursday, Nov. 19, we are going on a school bus to see a marionette performance in Turners Falls. Please sign and return the attached permission slip.

In music we are learning and singing *Old Roger*, *The Treehouse* and *Leaves are Falling*. Last week we went hiking to find and cut sticks to complete our lanterns for the lantern walk on Friday night. It was a wonderful family event with story, song, food, music and dancing. The K-1 children must have slept well that night!

In math this week the Kindergarteners are comparing a ten-unit measuring stick to different items in the classroom. After they determine which is longer, the item or the measuring stick, they record it on paper. First graders are completing work on the 2D geometry unit *Drawing Shapes and Designing Quilts*. Next week we'll begin a new *Investigations* unit, *Solving Story Problems*, working with addition and subtraction.

Next week, on Nov. 18, we go to Sweetwater Farm on Wednesday, with drop off at 8:45 and pick up at 11:30. Parents are very welcome to join us. On Thursday, Nov. 19, we are going on a school bus to see a marionette performance in Turners Falls. Please sign and return the attached permission slip.

4th - 6th Grade

We are all very happy to welcome Daniel Jaro back to the Village School as a 5th-grader. Within a matter of hours it seemed that he'd never been away. Daniel has arrived just in time to take part in our new memoir project – a writing unit that should take us to Thanksgiving. Our first read-aloud of the year was *My Family and Other Animals* -Gerald Durrell's boyhood memoir of the five years his family spent in Corfu in the 1930s. This, and a variety of short memoirs we read together, helped the children recall the difference between a memoir and an autobiography. Some examples covered incidents that lasted less than a day.

Armed with this experience, the children chose a subject for their own memoir and began planning how it will develop. Some have already begun writing their first drafts and the project will incorporate mini-lessons on ways to include thoughts and feelings, establishing the significance of the story for the writer, as well as paragraphing and other technical matters as they arise.

Meanwhile the children finally finished self-portraits as a variety of new gods, including the goddess of dots and the god of sodas. The project was sidelined for a couple of weeks as we prepared for the Hades show, but the finished portraits are now on display. So, too, are the masks the children made for their Hades character, together with the speeches they wrote. The aim is to fill the classroom with art and writing for the Open House on Saturday, but, of course, anyone is welcome to visit the classroom before and after the event.

Last Wednesday, in glorious weather, we made our final visit of the fall to Sweetwater Farm. We began with all the children collecting the last apples from the orchard and then we split into three groups that rotated between weeding, harvesting carrots and making apple cider in a hand-operated press. Most of the new cider was saved but we also drank a good deal of it, too.

Last Friday, we had our last contradance practice before the Lantern Walk. The students have been terrific partners with the K-3 children, guiding them through the dances.

In math, 5th graders have been using their multiplication skills to determine the volume of rectangular prisms. Now they will use cubic centimeters to find the volume of small rectangular prisms. The 6th-grade math group has started working on a new curriculum unit, on 2D geometry. We will be looking at the characteristics of a variety of polygons and developing formulas for calculating the angles of regular polygons.