



NEWS FOR THE WEEK OF
February 22, 2010

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News and Notes

About 2nd-6th Downhill Skiing this Friday

The 2nd-6th grade is going to Crotched Mountain in Bennington NH (just north of Peterborough) this Friday, Feb. 26, for a day of downhill skiing. We will leave the school at 8:45 a.m. and return by 3 p.m. Crotched Mtn. provides a lunch of a hot dog or grilled cheese, chips and soda. Of course, you can also pack a lunch for your child.

Come to Parent Group Meeting Next Week

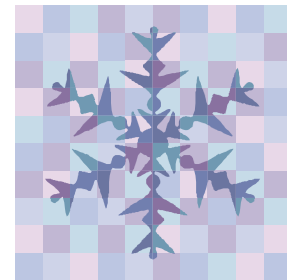
On Wednesday, March 3, we will meet at 8:45 a.m. and roll up our sleeves to get going on this year's auction. Bring your enthusiasm, energy and ideas.

Don't Forget to Send In Contracts

Don't forget to send in the reenrollment contract with the deposit, to hold your child's place for next year.

About Swimming for the K-6th

Swimming for the K-6th starts on Friday, March 5 at the Athol YMCA, and will end before April vacation. The children bring a bag with a towel and swimsuit to school on Fridays. At 1:30, they get on the bus to the YMCA. At 2:00, children have lessons, and at 2:30, they have a free swim period. Parents are asked to pick up at the YMCA at 3:10. Over the years, we have seen children's skills improve from week to week with this program. Just like cross country skiing, it is a rewarding, challenging group activity.



Preschool

The class was welcomed back today with "goop" in the media table. Our story this week is *Strega Nona*. In this story Strega Nona has a magic pasta pot. Only Strega Nona knows how to get it to work and how to turn it off. When Strega Nona goes on a trip, Big Anthony decides to give the magic pasta pot a try. He gets it to start making pasta and starts feeding the whole town but he can't get it to stop! The class will be learning the song Strega Nona sings to start the pasta pot: "Bubble, bubble pasta pot, boil me some pasta nice and hot, I'm hungry

and it's time to sup, boil enough pasta to fill me up!" Then when she has enough pasta she sings: "Enough, enough pasta pot, I've had my pasta nice and hot, so simmer down my pot of clay, until I'm hungry another day." Ask your child what else Strega Nona has to do to get the pot to stop.

We will be making pasta for snack this week. In Art this week the class will make "fossilized" dinosaur footprints in clay.

February - March 2010				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
22 8:45 All School Sing	23 8:45 Book Buddies Music Classes 2nd-6th knitting	24 Spanish	25 Art classes	26 2nd-6th downhill skiing at Crotched Mtn.
1 8:45 All School Sing	2 8:45 Book Buddies Music Classes knitting	3 8:45 am Parent Group meeting Spanish	4 Art classes	5 Yoga K-6 Swimming Pickup at YMCA at 3:10 Coffee orders due

Kindergarten—1st Grade

Our new theme, *Water and Sea Creatures*, starts this week. The idea for the theme came after a class brainstorming session. We'll be reading stories, researching, investigating and creating a collection of aquatic animals. We'll begin with the story *The Dolphin Kooyangara* or *The Dolphin Children*, an Australian Aboriginal tale about some children who get lost and who are saved by a sea spirit. This is also the time of year when we begin swimming at the YMCA on Friday afternoons so the class will get extra experience of life in the water.

We completed our *Birds* theme before vacation with a theme share. Many thanks to all the parents who came to share in the work on birds that the class produced, which included stories, pictures, nests, clay owls and ducks, and songs. The last activity was to create a title page for a book containing each child's work titled *Bird Stories and Facts* which the children proudly took home.

In our last art lesson we made a variety of Valentines cards. In the first project the class used paper heart shapes and for the second project they used paint and sponges for a background before printing shapes on top.

2nd - 3rd Grade

In the week before vacation, we had a delicious lunch at The Gardner Ale House, followed by an informative and fascinating field trip to Wolf Talk in Gardner. We learned about the hierarchy of a wolf pack and about wolf behavior. The children heard the wolves howl and saw how the younger wolves submit to the alpha pair. It was a spectacular site to see all the wolves run around their pen and completely disappear into their den, which we learned goes about 12 feet underground! Thanks to Trina and Rick for the lunch and to Michael LeBlanc for the visit with the wolves.

This week we begin a new reading unit. We will look at and map out story structure in the stories we are reading, to help us understand the different elements that make up a story. We will look at such things as rising action, conflict and resolutions. In writing, we will take a few more days to wrap up our rebus stories. Then we will begin working on a research project. The children will research and write about their spirit animals. We will begin by listening to the story *Knut: How One Little Polar Bear Captivated the World*, so we can think about what kind of information is presented. We will use the story to think about how nonfiction is different from fiction. Then, we will brainstorm about what kind of information we can research and write about for our own animals.

In math, we begin new units—the 2nd graders will work on addition, subtraction and the number system and 3rd graders will begin work on multiplication and division. This week, 2nd graders will revisit story problems using stickers. 3rd graders will begin to think about multiplication as about combining equal groups, and work on solving multiplication problems. Please see the enclosed letter for specific information about the units.

The children love knitting on Tuesdays, and during every spare moment that they have. They are becoming quite knowledgeable and skillful with their knitting—they know when they drop a stitch and are quite helpful with each other. It is a sweet scene to see children knit as they listen to a story read aloud. Our current read aloud is *Miracle on Maple Hill*, a delightful tale about a family who moves from Pittsburgh to the Pennsylvania countryside where the mother spent summers with her grandmother.

Don't forget, we have our downhill ski trip on Friday. Children should bring a snack, and water. Lunch will be provided. We will start swimming at the YMCA on the following Friday.

The kindergarten math group is playing their favorite game of *Roll and Record* with two dice. They combine the two numbers and record the sum. After recent practice using tally marks to keep track of a count, in the 1st grade math group, each child set to work with a clipboard, pencil and paper to count all the birds they could see in the classroom. They were excited about the task. When their tally charts had been completed we used counting in fives to find the totals. Some of the class made it to three figures! The 1st graders are continuing work on measuring activities. This week we'll measure fish cut-outs using inch cubes to see whether fish are long enough to be 'keepers'. We'll also find the differences in length between fish.

This Friday the K-1 class will be sledding or hiking depending on the weather. If it looks good for sledding, do send in sleds.

Friday swimming at the YMCA in Athol begins on March 5th. Pick up will be at the YMCA at 3:10.

4th - 6th Grade

The Friday before the vacation, K-1 parents Celia Baxter and Joanie Cohen-Mitchell spoke to the class about the situation in Haiti, based on Chuck Baxter's visit to help the Haitians after the earthquake. They showed photos of Haiti before the quake, and photos of Haiti after the quake. They spoke about Haitian culture, and ended by telling a Haitian fairy tale. Thank you, Celia and Joanie.

Earlier in the week, the children spent their writing periods continuing research into various topics connected to Ancient Greece and we discussed the structure of a reports and how to plan them. This week they will begin writing.

This week we will also start learning about the relationship between the Greeks and the Persians, leading to a study of Alexander the Great and his conquests. This will involve both history and the geography of the region from the Mediterranean to India.

In math, 5th graders have been using attributes (length of sides, kinds of angles, and sets of parallel sides) to describe and compare quadrilaterals including parallelograms, rectangles, rhombuses, and squares. The 6th grade math group had a lot of fun learning about Pythagoras' Theorem for right triangles. They had been working out the perimeter of various triangles drawn on a squared grid but were frustrated that they could only estimate the length of the hypotenuse in a right triangle. With the Greek connection, it seemed a natural place to introduce Pythagoras. The group drew 3-4-5 and 5-12-13 triangles and drew squares on each side. It didn't take them long to discover the relationship between them. The children really enjoyed being able to use the theorem to solve the problem they had come up against, and we extended the project for a further day because they were having so much fun. This week we will investigate the relationship between the diameter and circumference of a circle, and how the radius and area are related.

In Science most of the class carried out further experiments with the Science Night projects, in the light of their discussions in our first annual Village School science conference. You could feel how the conference had helped bring the class together and give each child an understanding of what the others were doing.

This week we look forward to downhill skiing on Friday at Crotched Mtn. We will leave the school at 8:45 and return by 3:00. We start swimming at the YMCA the following Friday.

Finally, if anyone has borrowed the class's large format book on Picasso, we would be very pleased to see it back!