



Celebrating our 20th year!

NEWS FOR THE WEEK OF  
**March 8, 2010**

PO Box 122 ♦ Royalston, MA ♦ (978) 249-3505 ♦  
[www.villageschool.to](http://www.villageschool.to)



News and Notes

**Parent Group Meeting Highlights**

- Parents are making lunch for the teachers for the Inservice Day on March 17. If you can make one item, such as a salad, or bread, or main dish, contact Kim Bryant - she is coordinating the meal.
- If you have any spare picture frames, let Renee know, she is framing children's art work for the art show.
- Monday April 5 is Grandparents and Special Visitors Day. Children will be sending home invitations for their special visitor to come to school with them that morning.

**Come to Science Night Wednesday March 24 7 p.m.**

From January through March, 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> students prepare independent science projects, a noncompetitive event. Out of their own interests and curiosity, the children find a topic to investigate. The topic areas are in any of the sciences including geology, biology, chemistry, physics, astronomy, engineering or mathematics. Once a general topic is established, George and Cathy work with each child to develop a research question. Most of the work, including the experiments themselves, are done in class. On Science Night each student proudly displays a 2-3 page report, one poster and the experi-

ment set-up, and is ready to present the experiment and the results. You don't want to miss it!

**No School Wednesday March 17**

On our annual Teacher Inservice Math Day, the teachers work with Polly Wagner, the Village School Math Coach, looking at children's work to understand how math thinking develops in children across the grades. Teachers are also looking at differentiating instruction for individual children. The teachers brainstorm and collaborate, in keeping with the model of how the children work together.

**Village School Art Show April 11 Save the Date**

The Village School Art Show opens on Sunday afternoon April 11, at the Gardner Ale House, with an artists' reception from 3 to 5 pm. Each student will have a piece of art displayed. The Ale House will provide complementary light snacks and beverages. The K-1 class will exhibit their clay owls. Renee is working hard to frame all the other pieces. This will be a fun event- the children are the heroes of the afternoon. Be sure to invite friends and relatives. The art show will continue at the Ale House for the rest of April. After that, some of the art will be displayed at the Royalston Library in May.

Preschool

Last week the preschoolers helped Rise tap a tree near our school driveway. As soon as the tap went in, the sap started running, and all of the children tasted the fresh dripping sap. We will visit Rise's farm on Tuesday, March 23 to see the sugar house, sheep, lambs (hopefully), llama and chickens. We will meet at Rise's at 9:00 a.m. and parents and younger siblings are welcome to attend. After having pancakes with fresh maple syrup, we will leave at 11:15 a.m. This week our story, *Borreguita and the Coyote*, is from Mexico. In this story,

coyote wants to eat a borreguita (little lamb). The lamb tricks the coyote again and again until coyote finally gives up and goes home. We will have guacamole with chips and salsa for snack this Wednesday. Today we celebrated Isadora's birthday which is the first of many spring and summer birthdays to come! Please note that there is no school on Wednesday, March 17<sup>th</sup> for the Staff Inservice Math Day.

March 2010				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8 8:45 All School Sing <b>1:00 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Antigone Workshop: Town Hall with Norah Dooley</b>	9 8:45 Book Buddies Music Classes	10 <b>K-1 Nature Hike at Camp Caravan</b> Spanish	11 Art classes	12 Yoga <b>K-6 Swimming Pickup at YMCA at 3:10</b>
15 8:45 All School Sing	16 8:45 Book Buddies Music Classes	17 <i>St. Patrick's Day</i> <b>NO SCHOOL STAFF INSERVICE DAY</b>	18 Art classes	19 Yoga K-6 Swimming Pickup at YMCA at 3:10

## Kindergarten—1st Grade

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Our *Sea Creatures* theme continues this week with the story *The Seal Wife*, a Scottish folk tale about the children of the king and queen of the sea. We'll be retelling, journaling and acting out the story. Last week's story, *The Earth on Turtle's Back*, was very popular with the children who were keen to act out the different sea creatures including whales, dolphins and the turtle. Our classroom theme display is growing with shells, model animals and ocean books. Last week Kim Bryant, Willa's mom, came into school to cook mussels for snack time – nearly all the class tried them with a few children asking for more. The mussel shells also proved popular and once they had been washed, the children got to take them home. Last week we made a list of the children's questions about sea creatures including 'How do fish breathe?', 'Why don't Blue Whales have teeth?' and 'How do scallops move using their shells?' We're hoping to find answers to the long list of questions during our theme study.

We began science class last week outside, measuring out the length of a Blue Whale (90 feet) and an Orca (26 feet). We looked at books on whales and made information cards on sea creatures. We finished the class with a whale story and listening to recorded whale songs.

### 2nd - 3rd Grade

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Last week, the children enthusiastically went swimming at the YMCA. For half an hour, they received a swim lesson, where they worked on the front crawl, sidestroke and backstroke; then they had a half hour of free time—they loved playing with the noodles, rubber ducks and diving down to get rings and sticks. Everyone left with smiles on their faces (and a little tired!).

On Wednesday, we hiked down to Lawrence Brook. The children looked and listened for signs of spring; they noticed ice melting (and loved seeing how it carved out streams in and under the snow), buds forming, birds singing and how high the river is. As we stared at the river, we noticed a skeleton—a spine and ribs—of some animal sitting in the bottom of the river. We were all amazed and captivated by the sight of the skeleton. When a calm part of the river flowed over the skeleton, we could actually see individual vertebrae of the spine. The children guessed that the skeleton was from a beaver, baby deer, or baby bear.

The children started working on family trees in Spanish. This is a great exercise for them to learn family member names in Spanish. They learned: mother (madre), father (padre), sister (hermana), brother (hermano), aunt (tia), uncle (tio), cousins (primos) and grandparents (abuelos). They noticed that when a Spanish word is female, it ends in 'a', if a male or a group, it ends with 'o'. They will continue this project this week.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> graders loved playing *Roll-a-Square* last week. They figured out how many groups of ten they had on the board and how many more cubes they would need to fill a row. This week they'll work on determining the difference between a number and a multiple of ten. 3<sup>rd</sup> graders have been busy finding multiples of 2, 3, 5, 6, and 10. They noticed a relationship between five and ten, and three and six, (for example, the product of  $10 \times 2$  is double that of  $5 \times 2$ ). This week they will work on using arrays to model multiplication situations.

In theme, we continue to learn about Native Americans relationships with animals and we will begin to study the Pequot tribe in preparation for a field trip to the Pequot Museum on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

This Wednesday we'll visit Camp Caravan for a nature hike to look for signs of spring. We'll leave the school at 9:00 a.m. and return by noon. Please remember to leave car seats in school that morning. In art last week, the class worked with markers to make detailed and colorful underwater pictures that showed an amazing variety of sea creatures. This week we'll make three dimensional fish to hang in the classroom.

This week the kindergarten math group played a game called *Double Compare*. In this game, each child turns over two primary number cards, combines the two numbers and compares their sum with their partner's sum to determine who has the highest number. 1<sup>st</sup> graders are starting a new *Investigations* topic *Number Games and Crayon Puzzles*. We'll begin by reviewing number combinations to 10, and playing addition games.

The children had a wonderful afternoon swimming last Friday. The whole class was confident and happy in the water for the one hour session, half of which was instruction and half free play. Swimming continues on Friday afternoons until April 16<sup>th</sup>.

### 4th - 6th Grade

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In our theme work we are studying the life of Alexander the Great, using a biography of Alexander as a whole-class reader. Last week this included a brief history of the Persian Empire and the various Persian attempts to subdue the Greeks. Now the children are learning about how Alexander and his relatively small army of Macedonians managed to take over the Persian Empire. This week we are looking at the geography of the empire and comparing it to the modern countries that cover the same area. After all, Alexander successfully subdued the territory that covers modern Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan, which might be a source of some chagrin in our own recent governments!

Last week we finished reading the *Black Ships of Troy* – a skillful retelling of the *Iliad* - and the children cheered when the legendary wooden horse finally made its appearance. We'll be reading a version of the *Odyssey* before the end of the year.

We had a theme-related art lesson last week, when the children each made a small mosaic, using stone tiles, and pieces of glass and shells. We aim to finish the project this week.

Last week we had our last knitting lesson, and the children have produced beautiful bags, gloves, hats and scarves. Many of the children are continuing to knit during story time and at other odd moments of the day. Our knitting teacher, Lynn Anair, is kindly offering advice and trouble-shooting on Fridays or in After School.

We are rapidly approaching Science Night, March 24<sup>th</sup>, and last week the children wrote first drafts of reports on their experiments. This week they will complete the reports and next week they'll make posters, and assemble other display materials. Save the date!

4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will practice two-place multiplication skills when they compare the areas and perimeters of rectangles. They will make predictions and write explanations of their thinking.

In recent music classes, every child has been playing chords - and sometimes melody - on the piano to accompany the class in singing John Lennon's *Imagine*. Now Jocelyn is teaching all the children to play basic guitar and they are learning a few chords to accompany songs.

Swimming was a big hit on Friday. Since last year, the children's strength and skills have grown by leaps and bounds.