



Celebrating our 20th year!

NEWS FOR THE WEEK OF April 12, 2010

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News and Notes

Everyone is invited to the Chicken Coop Play this Friday

The Chicken Coop students are performing a play they wrote and produced themselves, titled *Egyptian Mythology*, at the Royalston Town Hall at 7:00 pm on this Friday, April 16. The Village School community is invited to attend. Free!

Biodiversity Day Tuesday April 27

Each class visits a local habitat and surveys the flora and fauna in that habitat. One class will go to Lawrence Brook, another class to the Camp Caravan pond, and other classes will visit the woods. The classes visit the same habitats each year and keep a log of the species of plants and animals that they find, recording observations with drawings. Permission slips are attached for 1st-6th grade classes. It's muddy fun!

Auction Update: Raffle Tickets

Parents are welcome to help cut more Red Sox raffle tickets in the hallway on Friday morning. We will have posters and more raffle tickets on Friday. We will also have the merchant list organized for parents to cover their local area.

Student Art Show at the Ale House April and May

The Gardner Ale House hosted a wonderful reception for the student artists last Sunday. You are welcome to view this inspiring art show at the Ale House for the rest of April and May.

May Day Wednesday May 5th

Our May Day celebration takes place at 9 a.m. for an hour. Children gather around the Maypole, and everyone sings! Do invite friends and relatives. Parents are encouraged to come in early in the K-6th classrooms (from 8:00 a.m. on) to help make flower wreaths for our students and for the visiting Royalston kindergarten students. Please bring in hand clippers, grapevine, extra daffodils, and any other flowers.



Preschool

After the visit to Rise's farm, the class worked on drawing their favorite memories of the farm and the wonderful results are hanging in our classroom. Please stop in to see them. We had a busy day today with Teddy Bear Picnic and our trip to the library. This week we are telling the story of the *Root Children*. This is a wonderful spring story about the root children waking up underground after sleeping all winter, and painting the beetles, lady bugs, bumble bees and ants to get them ready for spring. The class will hunt for rocks and turn them into bugs by painting them this week. This Wednesday, April 14th, is

one of two spring trips to Sweetwater Farm in Petersham. The next trip is scheduled for Wednesday, May 19th. We will meet at the farm at 9:00am. Please sign the attached permission slip only if you can't attend with your child, or if you need Kim and Leanne to transport your child back to the school for the Lunch Program. We will celebrate Brent's birthday on Friday. Next week is April vacation. We will celebrate May Day on Wednesday, May 5th and parents, friends and family are invited to join us at 9:00 a.m.

April 2010				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
12 8:45 All School Sing Teddy Bear Picnic	13 Music Classes 2nd-6th to Rise's Farm 8:45-11:30	14 Spanish Preschool to Sweetwater Farm 9-11:15	15 Art classes	16 8:45 a.m. 2nd-3rd to Camp Caravan, spring ceremony Last Swimming 7:00 Chicken Coop play at Royalston Town Hall
19	20	21	22	23
SCHOOL VACATION WEEK				

Kindergarten—1st Grade

We finished our *Sea Creatures* theme last week with a Theme Share in the classroom on Thursday morning. It began with children sharing favorite sea books, then we sang five sea songs, shared facts that were learned, then the class showed guests their own hand-made books of sea stories and facts. Thank you parents, for attending and making it a great event.

We start a new theme -*Spring* - this week with the story *Spring Defeats Winter*, a Native American tale about how Young Man Spring defeats Old Man Winter. We'll be journaling it, acting it out and hopefully telling it outside, feeling the warmth of the sun coming from the south to chase the cold weather back to the north.

For this theme we'll be investigating, doing and learning through planting for the school garden, going on nature hikes, singing, reading spring stories and facts, writing spring poetry and stories and creating spring artwork. We'll be digging over the school garden this week and planting the first crops including peas and radishes.

Our songs this week are about spring and preparing for the May Day celebration coming up soon. Due to the unseasonably warm weather, the forsythia around the school are already in bloom so we'll be looking for other flowers to wear as decoration this May Day. Songs will include *Early One Morning*, *Cuckoo*, *Shepherds Hay* and *Country Life*.

2nd - 3rd Grade

It was great to have so many visitors come to the school for Special Visitors Day last Monday. The children loved sharing their work with their visitors and introducing them to their classmates.

We visited The Pequot Museum on Thursday. The dioramas were fascinating. They loved searching for the different animals in the eastern woodland diorama and especially loved watching the mating dance of the grouse. When we stepped into the Pequot village, it was like stepping back in time. We saw displays of Pequots hunting, fishing, gardening, weaving and other activities of daily life. We even got to sit inside a wigwam and listen to a story. It was an informative day and well worth the long drive.

Our poem of the week is *Native Americans* by Nora. Nora decided to write a poem about Native Americans because she loves learning about them and is inspired by their culture. We have painted the base of our dioramas. On Wednesday, we took a hike through the woods and to the meadow to observe habitats and to collect materials for our habitat dioramas. The children observed pill bugs, birds, ants and beetles; they collected moss, rocks, leaves and sticks. We finished with a short read aloud session at rocky point. The children's spirit animal reports are rolling along. We are beginning to do some editing work and should finish the reports this week. In reading, we will finish the story *The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses*. We will find out if the girl stays with the wild horses or returns home to her family.

In math we will finish up our *Patterns, Functions and Change* units. 2nd graders will work on creating four and five element repeating patterns (abcd, aabbc). 3rd graders will work on creating a representation for a situation with a constant rate of change.

On Friday, we will join Jim Farnham at Camp Caravan for a spring ceremony. We will leave the school at 8:45 a.m. and return by lunch. Please sign the attached permission slip and return it by Wednesday. This Friday will be our last swim class. The children have grown in their confidence and skills. When we return from the April break, we will garden and play soccer on Friday afternoons.

We meet at Rise's farm tomorrow at 8:45 a.m. Dress warm. Also, please sign and return the attached Biodiversity Day permission slip.

We had a surprise visitor in science last week when Katrina bought in a Leopard Gecko for the class to admire. They were fascinated by it and saw it catching and eating crickets. After studying it, they made detailed drawings of it in their journals.

This week the Kindergarten is beginning a study of 3-D geometry. They went on a shape hunt in the classroom and at home. 1st graders are starting a new unit called *Two's, Five's, and Ten's*. We'll begin by investigating ways of counting to 100 and keeping track of totals up to 60.

This Friday will be our last week of swimming at the Y in Athol. After vacation we'll be playing soccer and gardening on Friday afternoons.

Please sign and return the attached permission slip for 1st graders for the Biodiversity Day field trip.

4th - 6th Grade

Last week was full-on! We began by working out several scenes in the play and by the end of the week the children had written five scenes and Wendy and George had compiled the contributions into a combined script. When each of these composite scenes is completed, the children read them through several times, with different students trying various parts. We then discuss how the script can be improved, whether all the lines work, etc, and alter it accordingly. The result is that the whole class works together to edit and improve each scene as it comes off the press. By the end of the week we had also found the elusive 13th character that we needed in order to give a part to every child in the class. All we need to do now is to work out how our characters will get themselves out of the difficulties we're created for them, but hey, we've still got a week before our vacation deadline!

On Thursday we took a day off from the play to visit the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. The main reason was to visit the MFA's fine exhibit of Greek artifacts. We took a guided tour and it was a pleasure to see how well the class has absorbed the myths and other aspects of Greek culture, so that the children were able to contribute almost as much to the discussion as the docent who was leading us. We also had time to visit an extraordinary special exhibition of the still-lives of the 17th-century Spanish artist, Luis Meléndez, and to pop into the Impressionist rooms to revisit some old friends.

Meanwhile, in science, we have begun studying the human body, starting with the skeleton. Apart from the science itself, we discovered that the word 'skeleton' is entirely Greek – σκελετον - and originally meant 'dried-up'. It's amazing what you can learn from a good dictionary!

The week ended with a Publishing Party on Friday to celebrate the completion of the children's reports on various aspects of Ancient Greek life and culture. This writing project was in danger of being overtaken by the play, so it was good to find time to complete it properly. Many thanks to everybody who came to the party.

In math, 4th and 5th graders are working at refining their strategies for solving division problems. They will work to find efficient strategies using clear and concise notation.

Don't forget, we meet at Rise's farm at 8:45 am tomorrow, Tuesday morning. Dress warm. We will ferry the children back to school by noon.

Also, please sign and return the attached permission slip for Biodiversity Day, Tuesday April 27, when the class goes out with Cathy Szal to survey flora and fauna by Lawrence Brook.