



Celebrating our 20th year!

NEWS FOR THE WEEK OF
April 26, 2010

PO Box 122 ♦ Royalston, MA ♦ (978) 249-3505 ♦
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News and Notes

This Tuesday April 27 Biodiversity Day

Bring boots and raincoats! Each class visits a local habitat and surveys the flora and fauna. It's muddy fun, so dress appropriately.

Recess and Black Flies

Black flies don't stop us from recess. The black flies won't be so attracted if your child is wearing a light colored hat, and a light colored jacket. This is especially important for the little ones. Please return the attached Black Fly Permission Slip.

Don't Miss the Play.....and What's Needed?

Once again, the 4th-6th class is writing an original play, based on their year-long study of Ancient Greece. Casting takes place this week, and then it's full steam ahead until the performances on Friday May 21st. You don't want to miss it. We need to borrow a good digital video camera, to videotape the play. And we are also looking for a volunteer to videotape the morning and evening performances on May 21st. Check in with Rise.

Student Art Show Continues at the Gardner Ale House

This great show continues for the month of May. Flyers are on the hallway table for posting.

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 8:10 a.m. on) to help make flower wreaths for our students and for the visiting Royalston kindergarten students. Please bring in hand clippers, forsythia, ribbon, floral tape and wire, grapevine, extra daffodils, and any other flowers.

Come to Parent Group Meeting After May Day Fun on Wednesday May 5 at 10 a.m. Many hands are needed to prepare for the auction. It's fun, and there is something for everyone to do.

Auction Update: Raffle Tickets

This year's raffle is for Red Sox tickets. Please sell what you can, and bring in the filled in tickets and money. More tickets to sell are available in the office.

Don't forget to Sign Up for Summer Programs

Brochures are in the hallway and online.

Preschool

It's good to be back. We are busy getting ready for May Day which we will celebrate on Wednesday, May 5th. We will be dipping coffee filters in colors to make flowers for the preschoolers' May Day crowns. We will continue with the story *The Root Children* this week. The class will plant flower seeds this week, which will grow in the classroom until ready for transplanting in our garden. Today we used clay to make a sur-

prise for Mother's Day. Before vacation, the 4th-6th grade class came into the preschool room to learn how we use conflict resolution in the classroom. Leanne and Kim acted out some role playing and we asked the preschoolers for solutions to the problems presented. The children had lots of suggestions and helped solve the conflicts. With black flies here, don't forget to send in your child with a light colored hat and jacket.

April - May 2010				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
26 8:45 All School Sing	27 Biodiversity Day Raincoats and boots 8:45 Book Buddies Music Classes	28 Spanish 2nd-6th to Sweetwater Farm 8:45-11:30 drop off and pick up at farm	29 Art	30 Yoga Gardening
3 8:45 All School Sing Student Art Show continues at the Ale House throughout May	4 8:45 Book Buddies Music Classes	5 MAY DAY! 8:15 wreath making in classrooms 9:00 May Day celebration begins 10:00 Parent Group mtg	6 Art classes	7 Yoga Gardening

Kindergarten—1st Grade

We continue our *Spring* theme this week with the book *Turtle Spring* about a girl whose turtle disappears in autumn to hibernate in the compost pile. The class enjoyed last week's story *Spring Defeats Winter* and we got to tell the story outside, feeling the warmth of the sun on our backs from the south, chasing the cold weather away back to the north. It looks and feels like spring has arrived at the school with the daffodils grouped around the school garden and the forsythia in bloom. We brought flowers into the classroom to look at and draw. Last week the class drew and wrote a list of *Spring Things*, which included daffodils, rain, green grass, insects, baby animals and mud. This week we'll take a nature hike to look for more signs of spring including the budding and flowering trees all around the property.

Before vacation we started working in the garden, first weeding the beds, then planting the first crops of the season including potatoes, peas and radishes. The class also enjoyed finding bugs and worms in the soil!

Last week in art, the children glazed their *Sea Creatures* pottery. This week we'll be working on spring pictures. In music we have many songs to sing as we prepare for our May Day celebration next week including *Country Life*, *Shepherds Hay*, *Early One Morning* and *The Lark*.

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2nd - 3rd Grade

Before vacation, we had teddy bear visitors and had a joyous picnic in the beautiful sunshine. We also visited Rise's farm. Some early arrivals got to witness a lamb being born. Those who came a bit later got to watch the mother clean the lamb and see the lamb attempt to take its first steps. We strolled down to Katrina's to meet her horse, pony and bunnies. We then went on an adventurous hike in Rise's woods. And of course, lastly, we heard the Native American story about why we have sap and ate delicious pancakes and maple syrup. Everyone left with full stomachs and smiles on their faces.

In preparation for Biodiversity Day, the children made paste-paper animals. They busily drew and cut out an array of animals. They then painted them with the colored paste, using different utensils to experiment with creating different textures. Make sure you check out the display hanging up in the upstairs hallway.

In science, we visited our special places for the last time (we will make a brief visit to say good-bye at the end of the year). The children looked for signs of spring around their special place. They found spiders, buds, moss and grass. They also added to their debris huts.

Our poem of the week is *Life Doesn't Frighten Me* by Maya Angelou. Burke chose this poem because it has bugs in it and he really likes bugs. 2nd and 3rd graders begin a new math unit—fractions—this week. In reading, we will all read the book *The Boy Who Lived with Seals*. Children should continue to read their independent books at home. In writing, we will begin writing our spirit animal stories. The children did a great job on their research projects. We will celebrate all our spring writing projects at our Theme Celebration at the end of the school year.

We will visit Camp Caravan on Tuesday afternoon to observe and count animal and plant species. Children should wear long-sleeves, light colored clothing, raincoats, hats and boots. This Wednesday, we will visit Sweetwater Farm. Drop-off is at 8:45 and pick-up is at 11:30. Don't forget, Wednesday, May 5 is our May Day celebration. The 2nd-3rd graders, joined by the K-1, will perform a Native American song and dance.

This Tuesday it's Biodiversity Day and in the afternoon the 1st graders will be going to Camp Caravan with Cathy to explore aquatic life in vernal pools. The kindergarten children will explore the stream by the meadow behind the school. Children should bring boots, long sleeve shirts and raincoats.

The kindergarten group finished their 3-D geometry unit and will begin a unit on addition and subtraction this week. 1st graders will continue work on the *Investigations* unit *Twos, Fives and Tens*, including solving and writing story problems such as 'How many hands do nine people have?'

We completed our swimming sessions at the Y before the vacation. The class really enjoyed the lessons – many thanks to all the staff there. Now we'll be gardening and playing soccer on Friday afternoons. Please sign and return the Black Fly permission slip.

4th - 6th Grade

The last week before vacation saw a concerted push to finish writing the play – and we almost made it. The class has now worked out the whole plot and by the end of the week the children had written all but the last two scenes. The play is a good example of a useful role for homework. The children write a scene almost every night – often producing half a dozen pages or more – but because the play is their own project, they do the 'homework' with enthusiasm. This enables us to cover a lot of ground very quickly.

Role-playing has been particularly successful this year, and the children have improvised dialogue for several of the scenes before going on to write their own scripts. Sometimes the contribution of individual children in these improvisation sessions has been so convincing that it has defined a character for the rest of the class. Our regular read-throughs of each completed composite scene have also helped us all to get a feel for the characters and how they should be developed. As always, it is a pleasure to see how everybody rises to the challenge of writing and acting, and there are often one or two very gratifying surprises.

Although the premise of the play is serious – the suspension of the seasons and the probable end of the world – the play has, rather surprisingly, evolved into a comedy. It will be fun to see how this is refined once the children are given their roles. Casting is a keenly anticipated feature of the play process and we expect to have completed it by the end of this week. That will leave us with three weeks to pull the whole play together for the performances on Friday May 21st.

We visited Rise's farm before vacation. Early arrivers were lucky enough to see a lamb being born, and we all enjoyed visiting the new lambs and the rabbits and horses at the neighboring Walton household. It was unusual for the visit to be so late in the semester, and with the spring so early we were able to enjoy a fine hike through the woods, and across the newly green fields. We finished with bellyfuls of pancakes with fresh syrup.

In math, 4th and 5th graders will describe and compare strategies for solving division problems. They will practice estimating answers to equations like $624 \div 40$.

Don't forget to make sure that your child brings a pair of water boots, raincoat, long sleeved shirt, and a hat for Tuesday morning's Biodiversity Day exploration. On Wednesday, we go to Sweetwater Farm. Drop-off is at 8:45 and pick-up is at 11:30.