



Celebrating our 20th year!

NEWS FOR THE WEEK OF

May 3, 2010

PO Box 122 ♦ Royalston, MA ♦ (978) 249-3505 ♦
www.villageschool.to



News and Notes

Don't miss May Day This Wednesday 9 a.m.

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 crowns for our students and for the visiting Royalston kindergarten students. Please bring in hand clippers, wire cutters, scissors, floral wire, ribbon, forsythia, extra daffodils, and any other flowers that are blooming.

Come to Parent Group Meeting After May Day Fun

this Wednesday at 10 a.m. Many hands are needed to prepare for the auction. It's fun, and there is something for everyone to do.

Spring Cleaning of Cubbies

Please take home extra snow pants, snow boots, etc, from cubbies, and please check the overflowing Lost and Found in the hallway. A volunteer is needed to wash all the spare snow clothes used by the 2nd-6th this year, so we can put them away for next year.

Save the Date for The Play Friday May 21

This year's play has a great humorous plot. Performances are at 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. We wish to borrow a digital video camera, to record the play. The Play t-shirt order is attached for 2nd-6th graders. If anyone else wants t-shirts, ask for the order form in the office. Orders are due this Thursday.

Report on Biodiversity Day

Despite the rainy weather, Biodiversity Day was very successful. With the help of forester Joe Zorzin, we were able to list 127 different types of plants and animals found that day! The list is posted in the upstairs hallway, surrounded by the creatures made in art in celebration of Biodiversity Day. The children also enthusiastically explored ponds, streams and vernal pools with the help of Katrina Walton, Cathy Szal and a handful of nets. Biodiversity Day gave us the opportunity to talk about biodiversity, as well as enjoy lots of hands-on time exploring in nature.

Don't forget light colored hats for all children, to keep the black flies away.

Preschool

In honor of Mother's Day, our story this week is *Heckedy Peg*. This story illustrates a mother's love and determination to protect her children. When a mother leaves her seven children to go into town for shopping, a witch named Heckedy Peg comes to tempt the children with gold coins. Ask your child what Heckedy Peg turns the children into, and how the mother gets them back. We will be preparing for this Wednesday's May Day celebration and we will also be preparing some sur-

prises for Mother's Day this week. We are planning to walk to a nearby pond with science teacher Cathy Szal to look at the creatures that live in that habitat. We are planning to go on a cool morning when the bugs won't bother us, maybe Thursday or Friday. The preschoolers will need mud boots and hats for our walk.

With black flies here, don't forget to send in your child with a light colored hat and jacket.

May 2010				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p><u>3</u> 8:45 All School Sing</p> <p>Maypole practice</p>	<p><u>4</u> 8:45 Book Buddies</p> <p>Music Classes</p>	<p><u>5</u> MAY DAY! 8:10 wreath making in classrooms 9:00 May Day celebration begins 10:00 Parent Group mtg</p>	<p><u>6</u> Art</p>	<p><u>7</u> Yoga 2nd-3rd at Camp Caravan Spring Ceremony Gardening</p>
<p><u>10</u> 8:45 All School Sing</p>	<p><u>11</u> 8:45 Book Buddies</p> <p>Music Classes</p>	<p><u>12</u> K-1 to Sweetwater Farm 9:00 drop off, 11:30 pickup</p>	<p><u>13</u> Art classes Student Art Show continues at the Ale House throughout May</p>	<p><u>14</u> Yoga Gardening</p>

Kindergarten—1st Grade

We continue our *Spring* theme this week with the book *Springtime in Noisy Village* about the children who live in North, Middle and South Farms and their adventures in springtime.

Last Tuesday was Biodiversity day. The 1st graders spent the afternoon exploring the pond at Camp Caravan with Cathy, while the kindergarteners visited the pond behind the school. There was lots of pond life, which we saw and caught, including tadpoles, a tree frog and pond skaters. There is now a wonderful Biodiversity art display in the corridor showing many local animals painted by the children. On Wednesday Katrina bought in frog eggs for the class to carefully hold and study before they made drawings. Some of the class added the whole frog lifecycle to their pictures— they are becoming nature experts. We are also reading an information book, *Frogs*, by Gail Gibbons. The class enjoyed thinking about the differences between frogs and toads, which many are familiar with - we dug up a hibernating toad on our last visit to Sweetwater Farm.

We had more animal visitors last week when Rise bought in baby chicks for the class to observe and hold. It was great to see the chil-

2nd - 3rd Grade

Last week began with All School Sing on the front lawn. We practiced our May Day songs and tried our best not to let the black flies bother us. Don't miss May Day this Wednesday. Parents are invited to the classroom from 8:10 a.m. onwards to help make forsythia crowns for the children to wear.

On Biodiversity Day last week, we trekked through Camp Caravan, exploring the forest and the pond. We learned about different tree species including larch, princess pine and beechnut. The children caught all kinds of animals in the pond: leeches, a giant water bug, a water scorpion, frog eggs, and a water boatman. The giant water bug was an instant favorite. This week we will find out how many different species of plants and animals we saw. On Wednesday, we worked in the snow, rain and wind, at Sweetwater Farm. We began the day by feeding the goats and chickens. We then visited some lambs that were born earlier that morning. Next, we warmed ourselves up by moving bales of hay and straw. We finished our day by rotating through visiting the sugar shack, filling some peat pots with soil and making goat cheese.

Our poem of the week is *An Extraterrestrial Alien* by Jack Prelutsky, chosen by Robbie. He chose this poem because he likes what it is about and thinks it is a cool poem.

The children enjoy discussing *The Boy Who Lived With Seals*. They made great predictions about the story and noticed how it is similar and different to *The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses*. We will use these stories as models for our own spirit animal stories. In writing, the children drew sketches of their main characters and thought about what characteristics their characters will have. Here are some of the character traits: brave, adventurous and strong. We will start outlining plots this week.

Fractions have been a big hit with the class. They are having fun figuring out halves, thirds and fourths. This week the 2nd graders will work on fractional parts that have numerators greater than one. 3rd graders will work on fractional equivalencies ($3/6 = 1/2$).

This Friday, May 7, weather permitting, we will go to Camp Caravan and join in a spring ceremony with Jim Farnham. Please sign the attached permission slip and return it by Wednesday.

dren's confidence increasing as they carefully handled the chicks after being shown the best way to pick them up and hold them.

In art last week, the children painted spring landscapes using paint and sponges then added trees by painting with popsicle sticks and added colorful blossoms to complete the pictures.

In math, kindergarteners are playing *Quick Images* and are enjoying simple addition, such as $4+4=8$. 1st graders are continuing work on the *Investigations* unit *Twos, Fives and Tens*. We'll review combinations that make ten, add numbers to ten and add tens together.

We go to Sweetwater Farm again on Wednesday May 12.

This Wednesday is May Day so we are practicing songs including *Shepherds Hay*, *The Lark* and *Cuckoo*. We will be gathering at 9.00 a.m. on the front lawn for singing and dancing around the Maypole. Don't miss it! All parents are invited to the classroom from 8:10 a.m. onwards to help make forsythia crowns for the children.

4th - 6th Grade

The class has passed two important milestones in the work on the play. First, we finished the script on Tuesday, and on Friday we completed the important ritual of casting all the parts. As always, each child made his or her own top three choices for his part and then wrote a suggested cast for the other parts. George and Wendy then agonized over the process of fulfilling as many aspirations as possible. By a long-standing tradition, 6th-graders get preference over the younger grades, but even so, it's impossible to give everyone their first choice. However, we always find that once the parts are assigned, everyone develops real enthusiasm for their character. We are ordering Play T-shirts, please see the attached order form.

The play has been an ongoing thread in our schedule, and will be our main activity for the next three weeks as we rehearse the play and the children learn their lines.

We managed to fit in a variety of special events last week. First was Biodiversity Day when the whole class went to the area around Doane's Falls to find and record as many species of plant and animal life as we could. Each group worked alternately with Cathy Szal and Katrina Walton along the banks of Lawrence Brook, and with local forester Joe Zorzin in the woods across the road. We're very grateful to Joe for once again sharing his enthusiasm and expertise.

The following day the class visited Sweetwater Farm in Petersham. Despite the inclement weather, we had a good time stacking hay bales, feeding animals and admiring two new-born lambs. This was our first visit of the season and we're looking forward to returning to Sweetwater in early June.

Finally, on Thursday and Friday we had two study sessions of human reproduction as part of an ongoing study of the human body in our regular science classes. We split the class by gender; the girls worked with Cathy and Jocelyn Langer, while the boys met with George and Wm. Levine, a nurse practitioner who has long experience of sex education. Thank you, Wm., for giving your time.

In math, 5th graders begin a new unit, *Growth Patterns*. They will be plotting coordinates on a grid to represent a situation in which one quantity is changing in relation to another.

Don't miss May Day this Wednesday, come in early - 8:10 - to help make May crowns.

2nd-6th Graders Can Bring Water Bottles: The school water that comes out of the tap is approved official drinking water and is chlorinated. If you don't want your child drinking school water, please send in your child with a filled water bottle from home ***with your child's name on it.*** Thank you.