



October 24, 2011

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News and Notes

About the Lantern Walk on Friday November 4

All students are making lanterns for this quintessential Village School event. The Lantern Walk celebrates the change in season, from light to dark. It begins with a procession of children holding lanterns, then gathering at the fire pit in the playground at 5 p.m. After singing and a story around the fire, we walk with our lanterns to the Town Hall, where we enjoy an Italian pot luck dinner followed by family contradance. All children participate and it's great family fun. A sign up for the pot luck will be posted next Monday. **Save Your Carved Pumpkins**, that are in good shape, for the Lantern Walk, they'll be used for luminaires for the procession. Drop them off at the school after Halloween.

For Parents Leaving Car Seats at the School

On Tuesdays, please do not leave car seats in the area just inside the entrance - that is actually the music room, and is used for music lessons throughout the day. Thank you.

K-6th Parent/Teacher Conferences

You will get an email or a phone call this week for the time of your conference on Tuesday November 1, or Wed. Nov. 2.

Annual Fund for Parents

Thank you for responding to the Annual Fund letter. Send your pledge in as soon as possible, and save Sarah Briggs phone calling time. Thank you, Sarah, for taking on the task of calling parents. The Annual Fund letter to Friends (grandparents, friends of the school, relatives) is going out this week. Let the office know of any friends or family that would want to receive it. The letter has some lovely pictures of Village School scenes, in the classrooms and outside.

Come to Parent Group Meeting Wed. Nov. 2 8:45 a.m. Come join us! We will plan for the Lantern Walk, the Nov. 19th Open House, and the Book Fair. Rise will give a tour of Camp Caravan, the future home of the Village School.

Collecting Supplies for a School in Peru

Karen Walton, a Village School alum, is going to Cuzco, Peru, to volunteer at an elementary school. The school needs supplies. There is a hallway box for donations. What's needed? Pencils, colored pencils, erasers, bound composition books, and simple beginning English readers- with one or two words on each page. Everything needs to be in by next Monday..

Preschool

Last week when the Royalston firefighters arrived in the preschool room to visit, the children sat silently, awestruck, as the Fire Chief spoke. Then they went outside to see the fire truck and ask questions. The class also ground wheat to make bread, inspired by the story, *The Little Red Hen*. Thank you to Sam and his family for sending in the wheat berries for the class to grind. Under blue skies the preschoolers visited Sweetwater Farm last Friday. The class watched the goat being milked, walked to the orchard to pick up drops and then watched as the apples were pressed into cider. Delicious! Today the children drew pictures of their Sweetwater Farm memories. This week

our story is *The Gingerbread Boy*. The class will make their own gingerbread cookies on Wednesday after helping to make the dough on Tuesday. Parents are invited to spend some time this Wednesday, Thursday or Friday morning from 8:30 a.m.- 8:45 a.m. helping your child turn his or her 2-liter bottle into a lantern for the Lantern Walk on Friday, November 4th. Please keep those 2 liter bottles coming in. The Lunch Program will visit the Royalston Community School this Thursday at 1:30 p.m. to watch a performance of the *The Pied Piper*. Lunch Program parents: please return the attached permission slip, and leave your child's car seat that day.

October - November 2011

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
24 8:45 All School Sing 2nd-3rd to Plimoth Plantation 8 to 5:30 Spanish	25 8:45 Book Buddies Music Classes 8:30 a.m. K-1 Theme Share Parents welcome	26 4 th -6 th to Sweetwater Farm 2nd-6th Star Watch at Richardson Farm 6:30 p.m.	27 Art classes Star Watch rain/cloud date 1:30 K-1 and Preschool Lunch Program to RCS to see Pied Piper.	28 Gardening K-6 Contradance practice Soccer Yoga
31 HALLOWEEN 8:45 All School Sing Spanish K-6 Annual Cemetery visit	1 PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES NO SCHOOL	2 normal 1/2 day 8:45 a.m. Parent Group meeting Conferences begin at 1:30	3 Art classes	4 5:00 Lantern Walk begins 5:30 walk to Town Hall 6:00 Pot luck 6:30 Contradance begins

Kindergarten—1st Grade

Come to our Theme Share about *Gardens and Vegetables* tomorrow morning from 8:30 a.m. to 9:15 in the classroom. Come watch, listen and participate as the children share their learning from the last six weeks. You'll be your child's partner for some of it.

Our story of the week is *Benjamin Bunny* by Beatrice Potter. We began the theme with *Peter Rabbit*, six weeks ago, so it is fitting to end with a story in the same series. We'll also act out the story in the garden.

On our trip to Red Apple Farm last Wednesday, activities included a hayride, walking in the orchard, and picking apples and a pumpkin. We also visited and fed the animals, including goats, a donkey and piglets. We enjoyed apples, donuts and fresh apple cider for snack. The children were fascinated to see the large wind turbine spinning powerfully above their heads. Each child chose a gourd to bring back to the classroom, which we will draw and describe this week.

Our new theme, *Native Americans*, begins next week. Activities will include storytelling, dance, art and craft, nature hikes and music.

In art last week the class began making their lanterns for the upcoming

Lantern Walk on November 4th. They began by cutting out shapes through which the lantern light will shine. This week we'll paint our lanterns with watercolor paint.

This Thursday afternoon we'll visit the Royalston Community School for a performance of *The Pied Piper* put on by students from Mt. Wachusett Community College. Please sign and return the attached permission slip. Parents are welcome to drive and attend the performance. Don't forget to leave car seats.

Last Friday afternoon the K to 6th practiced contra dance outside accompanied by local musicians. They did a great job and we'll practice again this Friday at the Royalston Town Hall.

The kindergarten math group continues to get lots of practice counting. Last week they worked with "inventory bags," counting the items in each bag and recording what they found. First graders are continuing work on the 2D geometry *Making Shapes and Designing Quilts*. This week we'll be making, sorting and describing shapes.

Our Spanish phrase of the week is ¿Y tu? ----- And you?

2nd - 3rd Grade

Last week on our Sweetwater Farm visit, we watched the goats get milked and helped out with morning chores. Then we took a walk to the orchard to pick apples for snack. The children joyfully climbed apples trees and discovered a hole in one tree that reminded them of the tree that Sam Gibley uses for his home in *My Side of the Mountain* (our current read aloud). After snack, the children tore out corn stalks to get beds ready for planting garlic. With corn stalks in hand, they became wizards, whalers and knights.

When K-1 and 4th-6th visited our class last week, we sang three songs and played the big drum, recorder and maracas for them. We are learning the song *Pumpkin Pie* and the children almost have all the verses down (it's a long song and always a class favorite). Ask your child about the story told in the song.

In reading, the children are practicing strategies they can use to decode tricky words. Some of the strategies we are using include: looking for small words or small chunks within big words, making sure that what we say makes sense within the sentence and that our sounds match the letters and skipping the word and reading to the end of the sentence to see what would make sense. Children are also writing down words they can't figure out or don't know the meaning, on sticky notes so they can build their word power.

The 2nd grade math group is learning about shapes, including sides, faces, vertices, angles, and right angles. We are working on ways to describe rectangles by using rows and columns. Ask your child to make up a rectangle riddle for you to solve or see if your child can solve your riddle. The 3rd graders conducted surveys in the K-1 and 4th-6th and are sorting their information into categories and making representations of their data. This week we will discuss the representations and work on graphs.

This Wednesday evening is our Star Watch at Richardson Farm (Rise's house). It begins at 6:30 with pizza and hot apple cider. (RSVP Rise if you are coming.) This will give us a window into the night sky and help us prepare for upcoming Theme stories about the night sky. (If it's cloudy, the Star Watch is cancelled.)

4th - 6th Grade

The whole class has lobbied for a chance to write more poems, so we will spend one more week on poetry before moving on to short story writing. The children will be writing short stories for their reading buddies which, apart from being fun, helps them to think about writing for specific audiences. The class is now working on weekly spelling and handwriting assignments for homework. The reward for adopting a neat and legible cursive script for all writing – and not just final drafts – is to be excused from handwriting homework. It's a good incentive, as Gabe and Robbie can attest!

Last week we watched the BBC film of the *Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, and compared it with the book, which the children now know in detail. Encouragingly, the class was unanimous in its opinion that it's better to read a book before seeing the movie version, rather than the reverse. We discussed how books and films work differently, and how a film can replace a page of description with a single sweep of the camera.

The 4th grade math group is working on division strategies by breaking apart problems into smaller pieces. We also looked at the relationship between multiplication and division (how 15×6 relates to $90 \div 6$). This week we'll work on solving 2 digit multiplication problems. The 5th-6th grade math group has moved on from the long unit on multiplication and division to a shorter unit on 3D geometry. This begins with children building boxes to accommodate various numbers of cubes, leading to an understanding of how volume is calculated. We will continue intermittently with number puzzles involving factors and multiples, not least because the group enjoys them so much.

We had a great soccer-playing session last week. As well as the usual game with the 2nd-3rd grade class, the children are starting to practice specific drills from Adrianna, the K-1's assistant teacher, who is an experienced soccer player.

We go on our last visit of the fall to Sweetwater Farm this Wednesday. Drop off at 8:45 a.m., and pick children up at 11:30, all at the farm. Children should be dressed for being outside all morning.

2nd-6th PARENTS and children are welcome to attend the Star Watch this Wednesday evening, at 6:30 p.m. at Richardson Farm (Rise's house). Dress warm! RSVP to Rise, so we can provide pizza and cider. If it is cloudy, it will be cancelled. The rain date is this Thursday, same place and time.