



# News for the week of September 21, 2009

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## News and Notes

### Come to Parent Group Meeting This Wednesday 8:45 a.m

This is our first meeting of the year. We'll introduce ourselves, talk about our activities during the year, and organize meetings. Rise will talk about what's new at the school. All parents are members of the Parent Group and are very welcome.

### More What's New at the School This Year

Loren Magruder is teaching yoga to all classes on Fridays. Loren has taught adult and children's yoga at the Listening Center and Sweetwater Farm. Much more than the physical postures, yoga allows students to experience, and to be comfortable with inner quiet. Loren's gentle direction guides the children through a series of creative and playful postures followed by time for relaxation and reflection.

### Come to Curriculum Night Wednesday September 30

Spread the word, especially to friends who are interested in the school. This is a once a year event. Present parents: this is when you hear about what is new and exciting in your child's classroom. Discover how learning grows, by scaffolding on a curriculum structure that provides plenty of room for creativity and individual voices. It's inspiring, and will help you feel totally connected to and involved in your child's experience. Parents of younger children are strongly encouraged to visit the kindergarten and upper grade classrooms. Each presentation will start promptly on time, so we can get through the evening without staying too late. Since this is an evening event, it's best for children to stay at home with a babysitter. Friends and parents of potential students are also welcome to attend. Presentations begin at 5:45 p.m.

### Don't Miss the Garlic and Arts Festival! October 3 & 4

Parent volunteers are needed for the Village School tent. We offer a woodworking project for children. It's a great way to publicize the school. Bring your kids, the whole event is lots of fun. VS graduates are very welcome to pitch in. The sign up sheet is posted in the hallway.

### Target Take Charge of Education

If you have a Target Red card (Target Visa, Target credit card, or Target Check Card), Target donates up to 1% of your purchases to the Village School. We are not encouraging credit card use; however, if you do shop at Target, it might as well benefit the school! You can enroll at target.com.tcoe or at 1 800 316-6142.

### Hannaford's Helps Schools

When you shop at any Hannaford's, save your Hannaford's Helps Schools dollars that are automatically given to you at the cash register with the purchase of certain items. You can leave those 'dollars' on the hallway table. Last year the school received over \$500 from this program.

### Recorder Lessons

All 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> students learn to play recorder and read music. This lays the foundation for learning future instruments. Each student has a high quality in-tune recorder at the school with his or her name on it. All students should have a high quality recorder at home, so they can practice. As you know, regular practice is the key to learning any instrument. All recorder students are expected to practice 5 minutes every day. You can purchase a recorder for home, for \$8 from the school. Ask Jocelyn in the office.

## Preschool

This week our story is *The Three Little Pigs*, always a big hit with the preschool class. Last Friday the class acted out *Three Billy Goats Gruff* on the ramp outside. We had some expressive billy goats and trolls. Tomorrow is our trip to Sweetwater Farm in Petersham. We will meet at 9:00 a.m. at the farm, dress warm if it is chilly. Pick up is at 11:15 at the farm. We are waiting for a rainy day to make play dough with the class and we also need a sunny day to make our sun-paint snack napkins. Hopefully we will get to do both this week. Our caterpillar hung in the "J" shape on Friday and is now a chrysalis. A butterfly should emerge in about two weeks. This is a finger play we are doing at circle time: "A fuzzy little caterpillar sat upon a leaf, he spun a little chrysalis and then fell fast asleep, while he was sleeping, he dreamed that he could fly, and when he woke up, he was a butterfly!" Please come to Curriculum Night on Sept. 30 to get a great taste of how children are served by the Village School education after preschool. It's a worthwhile experience.

## September - October 2009

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
21 All School Sing Happy Rosh Hashanah	22 8:45 Book Buddies 1st day of Fall Music Preschool to Sweetwater K-1 to Royalston garden	23 Spanish 8:45 Parent Group Meeting at picnic tables All Welcome!	24 Art Classes K-1 visit to Renee's studio & garden in Hubbardston	25 Yoga Coffee in K-1 Hiking 2nd-6th nature drawing w Elizabeth Farnsworth
28 8:45 All School Sing Yom Kippur Poetry Week (see page 2)	29 8:45 Book Buddies Harvest Morning Music Classes	30 K-1 Sweetwater visit Curriculum Night 5:45 K-1 6:45 2nd-3rd 7:45 4th-6th	1 Art Classes	2 Yoga K-6th Hiking Village School tent at the Garlic and Arts Fest October 3 & 4

## Kindergarten - 1st Grade

Our *Gardens and Vegetables* theme continues this week with the story *Jack and the Beanstalk*. We'll read, retell and act out the story along with looking for some real beanstalks. On the topic of beans, the children ate bush beans with great enthusiasm for snack last week. Various vegetables have come in for theme share. Gus happily explained that the cherry tomatoes he brought in were from the seeds we planted in the classroom last May, one of which he transplanted as a seedling to his garden in June. A basket of ornamental gourds fascinated the class. Each child chose one which we then described and drew. The children were delighted to know that they will each take home a special gourd at the end of the theme. In science last week we examined and identified garden vegetables and then went into the school garden to look at the vegetables. Then we used magnifying glasses to hunt for, and examine insects and bugs. After making a great variety of observations, the class journaled their observations and memories. We began Spanish last week, singing songs and reading the *Hungry Caterpillar* in Spanish.

This Tuesday we will visit Kathy Morris and Larry Siegel's garden in Royalston. They are both expert gardeners and we look forward to a hands-on tour of their garden.

Last week in art, the class made clay pinch pots that we'll be glazing and using for our classroom drinking cups. This Thursday we'll go on an art field trip to Renee (our art teacher) Malowitz's garden and art studio in Hubbardston. Renee has invited us to help harvest in her garden and then work on vegetable printing in her art studio.

In math, the Kindergarten is working with our new calendar. The group has been keeping track of the day of the week and recognizing the numeral for each day. The group also practices counting objects like people, arms, legs, and days in the month. 1<sup>st</sup> graders continue to work on counting forwards and backwards, solving addition problems and playing *Double Compare*.

## 2nd - 3rd Grade

In celebration of autumn's arrival, our poem of the week is *Leaves* by Elsie N. Brady.

Our first visit to Sweetwater Farm started with a tour of the farm animals. The children were impressed by the ram's horns and the size of some of the cows. Our tasks for the day were to put up poles for an electric fence so that the sheep could be moved, pick onions and pick (and eat) raspberries. We then helped build part of a fence that will serve as a place to safely corral the cows. We finished the day visiting the cows out in pasture.

Last week we had a beautiful day to walk to the library and there were enough leaves on the ground that we could hear the crunch, crunch, crunch of the leaves as children happily swished their feet through them. The children enjoyed the 1<sup>st</sup> graders coming down for science and had fun learning about insects and going on an insect hunt. We found crickets, grasshoppers, carpenter ants, dragonflies and Robbie was even able to catch a bee so we could look at it closely in a bug jar that has a magnifying glass. In music, we learned a song about the four elements and even sang it in round by the end of class. We also practiced some drumming. In art, we made clay cups that we will use in class for drinking water.

In Reading we will focus on how to use sticky notes when reading. The children will learn what kinds of thoughts and questions they might write on the sticky notes. In Writing we will continue to hear poems about nature. This week we will hear poems about clouds and write a cloud poem (if we have a day with the right kinds of clouds, of course).

In Math, the 2<sup>nd</sup> graders will work on coin values, writing numbers up to 100 and learn the game *Collect \$.25*. The 3<sup>rd</sup> graders will learn the game *Collect \$2.00* and work on strategies for *Capture 5*.

We need cornhusks to make cornhusk dolls. Please save husks and send them in. Thank you.

### ABOUT POETRY WEEK

Next week, all kindergarten to 6<sup>th</sup> grade students will work on the same writing project – writing a poem about a potato. And not just any potato, but one they have harvested themselves. We will begin by harvesting vegetables from the school garden on Tuesday morning, Sept. 29, with the reading buddies working together. Each child will choose a potato and examine in it any way they can; looking at it, feeling its weight, and thinking about the planting and harvesting they've done. We will then divide into our usual classes and each child will write a poem about his or her particular potato. On Friday morning, we will all gather to hear each other's poems, with reading buddies again supporting each other. Finally we will celebrate by eating roast potatoes together, to remind ourselves why we grow them in the first place! It promises to be a lively community event.

## 4th - 6th Grade

Although we had planned to begin studying Greek myths last week, it would have been quite disrespectful to the sun-god Apollo to ignore the beautiful sunny afternoon he'd laid on last Monday. So instead of remaining in the classroom, the children went outside to draw pictures of the school in their journals, as part of our work on focusing journal writing on the children's own life and environment. This has become an annual event and it was gratifying to hear one student comment that her drawing was so much better than her effort last year. The whole class produced beautiful pictures, showing perspective and light and shade.

The following day they wrote in their journals about some feature of school life that they particularly value. Everyone shared his or her observations with the rest of the class, and some of their comments will be published on the school website.

Our theme study continued with a look at the Greek alphabet. There was much hilarity as the class transliterated their own names into Greek letters and tried decoding various common English words that had been converted into the Greek equivalent. In movements, we began learning a movement called *The Greek Letters*, in which the children take gestures that represent the letters.

To begin our poetry unit, the children each chose a book from our extensive class poetry library and found one or two poems that appealed to them. We discussed what made a poem a poem, and listed various features that they had noticed. John chose a poem about rats and was fascinated that the poet had written about an animal most people hate. When it comes to poetry writing, he said: "You can take something weird, and just do it." To prove the point, next week we will write poems about potatoes. The children know several of Pablo Neruda's *Odes to Common Things*, and potatoes fit right into that tradition.

We had the first of our three visits this fall to Sweetwater Farm.

The children harvested onions and raspberries – they were allowed to eat one berry for every four they collected – and visited the many varieties of animals on the farm. At the end of the morning they worked on building a cattle pen.

5<sup>th</sup> graders are solving number puzzles like this: "Find two numbers that fit both clues. This number of tiles will make a rectangle 3 tiles wide. This number of tiles will make a rectangle 4 tiles wide. What other numbers fit this clue?"

