



# WOODSTOCK NEWSLETTER

Date: April 27, 2007

## WOODSTOCK SCHOOL OFFICE

Dear Woodstock Families,

The old saying, "April Showers Bring May Flowers" certainly is coming true this month. All that rain and then sunshine brought out the daffodils on the side of our building, and things are popping up in our perennial garden on the hill.

On Wednesday evening, we held our annual **Volunteer Recognition Dinner**. We were pleased to have many of our volunteers there. This year, the Volunteer of the Year Award went to Kelly Helms. Kelly is the mother of Dylan Helms in fifth grade. She has been a strong support for his class all the way through school. She has been a very active member of the WPTA, and a cook for our MEA breakfasts. Kelly has been a representative for WES during Title One reviews. We appreciate the time and caring she has given to our school for the last six years. I know Telstar Middle School will look forward to having her help up there.

On Thursday night, we finally got our **Curriculum Fair** in. The students and their teachers had all worked so hard to complete projects and displays, so we were grateful that the weather finally cooperated. We hope you had a good time visiting each room and learning more about the curriculum that is taught at each grade level.

The **WPTA** will be meeting on May 3rd for the last whole group meeting of the year. There will be a vote for the 2007-08 officers. Those names are posted on the PTA bulletin board in the hallway. There are many plans for special year-end events that need to be finalized. We hope we will have a good turn out for the meeting. Child Care and a movie will be provided.

Field trips are happening! Keep a close eye on the calendars that we are attaching to this newsletter. There are **changes!**

The **4th and 5th grade Softball** team is up and running with Mrs. House! They have games scheduled with Crescent Park and Andover. You can find the dates on the calendar. Try to attend a game and cheer our team on!

I'd like to thank Sheryl Morgan for all of the work on our **yearbook**. It is at the publishers and will be ready for the end of the year. Thanks to the efforts of the calendar sales and the WPTA donation, the yearbooks will be free to all students this year. What a great treat!

Enjoy the spring. It gets to be a very hectic time, so please try to set aside some time each day just to enjoy your family in a quiet way.

Sincerely,

*Jolene M. Littlehale*

Teaching Principal

### **KINDERGARTEN - Miss Wilkey**

Spring has finally arrived! The kindergarten class has enjoyed the warmer temperatures. Many students have been eager for grass to run on and for flowers to start growing.

We have recently finished a unit on Seasons and Weather. The kindergarteners learned about the typical weather of each season, however we had a nice example of how weather can sometimes be unpredictable. We discussed the sun and its role in making weather and the seasons. We also focused on the water cycle. Students learned terms such as water vapor, water droplets, and ice crystals. We did a lot of writing during this unit as well. Everyone wrote about their favorite season and favorite kind of weather. A majority of the class prefers Summer and hot, sunny weather. Many cited swimming as a reason for these preferences.

This week we began a unit on dinosaurs. The class is very excited for this unit. Some students already know many facts about dinosaurs and are eager to share. The focus of the unit will be on fossils and what they can teach us about dinosaurs. Students will understand that dinosaurs existed before people (even cavemen) and that the only information we have about them comes from fossils. We will also classify dinosaurs and learn differences between meat and plant-eaters. This unit will also have many writing components and will tie into our math activities.

In Math, we have been adding and subtracting. Students have learned a few basic strategies for solving computation problems. In Kindergarten, word problems are popular because the students can visualize the problem better and relate it to a real-life situation. Beginning next week we will be learning to collect data and make graphs. We will begin by making simple bar graphs and taking surveys. Students will also learn to tally and to make pictographs. We will make graphs about dinosaurs as well.

In Literacy, we are making a lot of progress in reading and writing. Earlier this month we focused on story elements. We are now focusing on non-fiction. We are learning about the styles of non-fiction books and the format. Students are already identifying the Table of Contents in books that they look at. We will read many non-fiction books on dinosaurs. Also, we have finished our Letter of the Week study. We have spent a week on each letter of the alphabet and will now have a review. Other aspects of literacy that we are studying are 'l-blends', syllables, and silent e's.

We are going to be very busy for the next month. On May 31st we are going on a field trip to the ocean. It will be an exciting event for us!

## **GRADE ONE - Mrs. Wentworth**

As always, April has flown by. Although it was a very short month, it has been a busy one with events like curriculum fair, spring fling, the volunteer dinner, and a Mahoosuc Arts presentation about tall tales. And all of this was done between snow days, early dismissals, late starts, and a week of vacation! Phew!

I was very pleased with all the hard work first graders did to get ready for curriculum fair. Again this year, the geometry projects were creative and sophisticated. Thank you to all the parents and grandparents for your help with the projects and attendance at the fair. The children enjoyed showing you some of the things they have been working on. Everyone has learned a lot about 2-3 dimensional shapes, including how to name and draw them. By the time you read this, we will be wrapping up our geometry unit with some lessons about congruency and a final assessment. In May, we will be working on time, measurement, and fractions, as well as continued practice with addition/subtraction facts and strategies.

I want to thank Mrs. House and Student Council for our spring fling week. First graders enjoyed playing the games and wearing the special things each day. It was a lot of fun.

We began a poetry unit during our writing workshop this month. This group loves to listen to different poems, especially funny ones like *My Baby Brother* and *How to Torture the Teacher*. They have been learning that not all poems rhyme and there are a number of different forms and ways to structure poems. It has been fun watching them experiment with this genre of writing. Hopefully, you will get to hear some of their creations at the next Friday meeting and/or at our Mothers Day tea on May 10<sup>th</sup>.

Our reading workshop time has been focused on using different strategies for developing comprehension skills. We have begun using reading response journals and story mapping, venn diagrams to compare/contrast different characters, and schema (our background knowledge) to help us understand more of what we read. Children are applying some of the new strategies to the books they are currently reading during our reading block, and during story time with think alouds and conversations. They are continuing to practice predicting, inferring, and questioning skills. We have also just begun an author study on Kevin Henkes. His stories are great for helping the children realize how personal connections contribute to their understanding of a story.

In Social Studies, we finished up our unit on mapping. The children did a great job on their final assessment. Our next unit of study is "Then and Now." Students will learn what "history" means by reading and listening to stories about the past and then compare and contrast that information with what they know about today. One of the things they will be asked to do for this is to bring in an artifact – something old, to share with the class.

In Science, we have been reading and talking about different life cycles, as well as Earth Day and the importance of taking care of our environment. The remainder of the year will be spent studying magnification, air, and tide pools. The final field trip of the year will take first graders to Crescent Beach and Fort Williams on June 6th. This is always fun.

As we look towards the end of the school year, May is always a busy time. It is a time for reviewing, assessing, and celebrating what your children have learned this year. Over the coming weeks, there will be a number of assessments given such as the DRA, the Fry word test, a final writing prompt and a math assessment. In order for your child to do well on these, it is going to be important for them to get lots of rest and be in school each day. I am very pleased with everyone's progress and growth. Don't forget to sign those report cards and send them back to school. Have a great weekend everyone.

## **GRADE TWO - Mrs. Meisner**

It really does seem like spring now! Hooray!

The Second Graders did go on their Sap Orchard Trip to Fred Burke's Sap House in Bethel. We had a great time with an ice cream and maple syrup treat! Thank you to the chaperones who went: Cindy Cox, Rebecca Henley, and Tony Gilbert! I had great reports from everyone on how well they behaved! Makes me very proud of them!

We will be going on our Environmental Field Trip, Monday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, and rain date, Friday, May 25<sup>th</sup>. This is an excellent day! There are lots of presenters sharing information about the environment. It takes place at Judy Coolidge's home in Bethel. The children travel from station to station until lunch time, then we eat lunch altogether in a big field and come back to school about 1:30. If you can go, please do. You will enjoy it! I will be sending home more information soon.

This week has been a really busy week! We had Curriculum Fair, the Volunteer Tea, and we presented at Friday Meeting! I hope you got to see all these things!

The kids did projects about "Famous American Landmarks and Monuments" for Curriculum Fair and they are wonderful! Thank you parents for showing so much interest in what your child does! Excellent!

We presented our "Earth Day" posters and did a skit for Friday Meeting. That is our last time presenting this year. The kids enjoy this so much and do such a great job! It's great for speaking and presenting skills!

The Second Graders were the big point winners for Spring Fling Week! We got 565 points! Wow!

We were also the winners of the "Pizza Party" for bringing in the most glasses and cell phones for the Lions Club! Excellent!

We very much enjoyed having Ciara Nadeau join us for a day in our classroom! She was job shadowing and did a super job working with the kids! I love seeing those big Second Graders come back to visit! Thanks, Ciara!

The N.W.E.A. testing over Math, Reading, and Language will be coming up during May 14<sup>th</sup> – May 25<sup>th</sup>. Please make sure your child is here for their specific test days! More information will be coming home soon!

### **GRADE THREE - Mrs. Burke**

What a crazy month this has been. With all the activities that were delayed or postponed, and now the make-up days, it sure takes a lot of flexibility to keep on task when you live in Maine. Tonight is our Curriculum Fair, and I already have heard from many children who will not be able to make it due to conflicts in their schedules. It's too bad the weather didn't cooperate so that we could have had the fair when it was originally scheduled. The students have worked very hard on their solar system, and it looks fantastic. If you weren't able to make it to the fair maybe you could find some time to just peak in on another visit to school. We will be leaving it up for a while for just that purpose. I do think that the children have learned a lot about the solar system and how it works. Yesterday we went over the curriculum on an overhead projector and checked off all of the things that we have learned. There was only one that we didn't check off, so we did a bit of research and now we can check that off too.

When I first started teaching third grade (just a few years ago) I told a colleague who had been doing it for many years that I didn't know what to teach. She said it was easy, that all you really needed to teach that the children didn't already know how to do was multiplication and cursive handwriting. Well, we are still working on those two things. In fact, those will be a major focus for these last few weeks of school, since we have yet to master either one. So next week, we will begin times tables testing. Get out those flash cards! As soon as any student has mastered their times tables they will be finished with math homework for the year. How is that for an incentive to learn them quickly?

Speaking of homework, I have seen a drop in the quality of some of the home-work that has been coming in recently. I know that it has been a long year, but it is too soon to start slacking off at home or in school. We still have almost a full quarter to go, and a lot left to learn. It would be great to show your kids that their homework is important by giving them the time and space necessary to get it done well. I know that this time of year gets very hectic and that isn't always easy to do.

Enjoy the budding spring season. The longer sunny days are sure to give us the energy we need to finish up the school year.

### **GRADE FOUR - Mrs. Ferland**

Another month has flown by! After April vacation, the time seems to slip away fast until the last day of school. There is still so much to do and learn about. But looking back, April was a busy month. We finished our unit on the human body. Now everyone knows where the major organs of their bodies are and why they are important. Our paper bodies were

filled with the organs. We will spend a couple of weeks learning about nutrition and healthy eating, then we will move on to rocks, minerals, and fossils.

In social studies, we finished learning about the Mountain region. We are in the middle of learning about the Pacific region. For curriculum fair, we did Power point presentations and salt maps of a state of our choice. We hope you enjoyed them.

In writing, we wrote children's stories. We had them on display at the Curriculum Fair and we will read them to the younger students very soon. These stories were fun and creative. The illustrations were bright and colorful and added to the stories. April is Poetry month so we have been writing poems. We also are learning about Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and his writings. We will visit his house in June on a field trip to Portland. All the poems will be mounted and published into a book for each student.

In reading, we are reading novels about the Pacific region. One group is reading *Julie of the Wolves*. Another group is reading *Island of the Blue Dolphins*. A third group is reading the fun story of *Stuart Little*. After we are done, we will break into groups and share our books with other people who did not read it.

There are many things going on in the last 7 weeks of school. Check the calendar! We have two field trips in June and many other activities. Softball and baseball have started and the weather is warmer. It can be a busy and tiring time of year for kids.

Thank you to all the families who attended the curriculum fair night. It was wonderful to see everyone and share all our hard work with you. Have a great weekend.

## **GRADE FIVE - Ms. Wilson**

April was a busy month in fifth grade. With all the snow, and the week of vacation, April just blew right on by! Now that we are in the final stretch of the school year, it seems almost unbelievable that fifth grade promotion is just around the corner. In the next two months, we will be beginning our transition to Telstar, and planning for the next big events for this class.

Our math classes this month focused on multiplication. Although we have been working on multiplication all year, this month we reviewed our strategies, and fine tuned our knowledge of why the traditional math algorithm works for multiplication. We worked on different properties of multiplication, and we began to incorporate more algebra into our math thinking about multiplication. Students enjoyed these challenges, and showed mastery of math concepts.

Our reading classes transitioned to another novel. Currently, we are reading the book, *The Sign of the Beaver*, which depicts life for settlers in Maine during the 17th century. This book ties in with our studies of colonization in social studies. While reading this book, we have been focusing on vocabulary and reading comprehension. Students have reviewed the types of questions that are asked about books, and they have been writing written responses to questions about the text with complete and well thought out details and evidence.

During our writing classes, we worked on our personal essays about what the American Flag means. Annually, the Western Maine Marine Corp. League sponsors an essay contest based on this theme, so students have been working on their essays. Students learned how to reflect on personal life experiences, and how to consider the point of view of others. Students also worked on how to use metaphors and symbolism to express their ideas.

Our science classes this month have focused on Motion. Students learned about Newton's Laws of motion, and the affects of friction and gravity on motion. Currently, students are developing Newton's Laws Power Point presentations to present their knowledge, and they are also beginning to build vehicles to test Newton's Laws.

Additionally, in health this month, students were taught about puberty. Ms. Brown from the Western Maine Health Alliance came to educate fifth graders about puberty changes for boys and girls. The students found these two sessions extremely informative, and they had many of their questions and concerns answered. This was certainly a valuable experience for them.

Finally, in social studies we began learning about English colonization in the New World. Students learned about the settlements of Roanoke, Jamestown, and Plymouth. Currently, students are now studying the development of the thirteen original colonies.

Overall, it was a fast and furious month of activity. The next 6 weeks are sure to fly by quickly. The fifth graders have gotten spring fever, and they are ready to move on to Telstar. The count down for them has begun!

### **RESOURCE ROOM - Mrs. Robinson**

The month of April seems to have flown by and we are gearing up for May. We have spent a lot of time getting ready for Curriculum Fair. The children have some really great projects.

We will continue to work in all our programs as the year continues. I will be doing one last round of DRAs and the second through fifth grade students will be involved in taking the NWEA testing. I hope that everyone has a great May.

### **ART - Miss Ingraham**

The yearly art show is up and ready for you to come in and take a look. I look forward to this special event every year because it demonstrates how hard each student works in the art room. Two pieces of artwork were selected from each student and hung through out the school. It will give you a good idea of what each student has been up to in the art room all year! I encourage you and your family to come in and look at the wonderful pieces of artwork. Take the time to walk around and look at the work created by other students too. Take the time to look at everything and talk about what you see.

## **GUIDANCE - Mrs. LaVallee**

### **Student Responsibility - Part II**

Have your child take this Student Responsibility Quiz or rate these questions yourself. Answer with a “yes” or “no”.

1. \_\_\_ I regularly set goals for things I want to accomplish and I can make a list right now.
2. \_\_\_ I make plans for my time day-by-day and week-by-week, and set priorities to make sure I get the important things done.
3. \_\_\_ I keep track of my school assignments and I have a daily study plan. I can tell you what it is.
4. \_\_\_ I have a step-by-step method of studying for tests and I can tell you what the steps are.
5. \_\_\_ I know how to find the main ideas in what I read and I can tell you how I do it.
6. \_\_\_ I have all the “tools” I need when I do my homework – dictionary, pencils, pens, paper, scissors, thesaurus, schoolbooks and papers.
7. \_\_\_ I make sure I get ready ahead of time – my school work is done in time for me to check it over, my clothes are ready for the next day before I go to bed, my school materials are set out and ready to go the night before, etc.
8. \_\_\_ I spend as much time reading for fun as I do playing on the computer or watching TV.
9. \_\_\_ I have a regular process that I use to solve problems – and I can tell you what it is.
10. \_\_\_ I listen well in class and follow directions carefully.
11. \_\_\_ I get along well with teachers and other students, and I know how to resolve conflicts peacefully.
12. \_\_\_ I know that I am responsible for what I do and must accept the consequences both good and bad for my behavior.
13. \_\_\_ I know my parents expectations for me about such things as school attendance, grades, chores, honesty, use of drugs and alcohol – and I can tell you what they expect about each of them. –Excerpts from “The Parent Institute”

Seven or more “yes” answers is very good. Five is average. Fewer than three “yes” answers indicates that real improvement is needed. Talk to your child about the scores on this quiz and use it as a place to begin some real conversations.

## **INSTRUMENTS - Ms. DeVore**

Our biggest band event of the year is coming up on Friday, May 4. On this day all three of the district’s fifth grade bands will join together to form the SAD 44 Fifth Grade Band. The fifth graders will go “on tour” that day, performing the same concert at Woodstock, Andover, and Crescent Park Schools. They’ll be at Woodstock at 10:15 AM. The WES fourth grade band will also play at the Woodstock concert. All fourth and fifth grade band families are welcome to come hear our children play, so mark Friday May 4 on your calendar!

**MUSIC - Mrs. Stowell**

Third, fourth, and fifth graders have been playing the recorder, and are doing very well. This past week they took a break from that and did some movement activities.

The younger classes have done a variety of bunny songs, such as "The Bunny Boogie", "Funny Bunny" and "Hip Hop Bunny." They have also learned game songs and performed movement activities.

The chorus will be performing with the traveling chorus next week when the 5th grade bands of the district go "on tour."

**PHYSICAL ED. - Ms. Russell**

Storm days caused us to extend our gymnastics unit beyond spring break, so we could have time to practice tumbling as well as learn new balancing moves on the mats and beams. Grades K-2 focused on the basic skills while 3-5 put together mini-routines of 3 to 5 moves.

The climbing rope was available to test upper body strength by climbing or simply swinging on it, and grade 5 students had a chance to conquer the climbing net. Students who attended the curriculum fair had the opportunity to show their families what they could do.

A short jump roping unit is coming up, followed by activities involving tossing and catching. We'll enjoy being outdoors again!