



# WOODSTOCK NEWSLETTER

Date: December 1, 2006

## WOODSTOCK SCHOOL OFFICE

Dear Woodstock Families,

Ho! Ho! Ho! As I sat to write this, I realized that there are just 16 days 'til our Holiday vacation! Wow, wasn't it just Halloween? There is always so much to do this time of year that we tried to keep the calendar as free as possible.

As you are receiving this, it is Friday, December 1st and time for Cookies With Santa. Thanks one more time to our awesome WPTA for putting this wonderful evening together. It is always so much fun. We appreciate the Woodstock Town Office and Fire Department helping out as well.

Basketball has begun for our 4th and 5th graders with their coach Andy Steck. They will meet every Monday and Wednesday afternoon. We are looking forward to a great season!

Basketball for Grades K/1 will meet on Sundays from 11:00 to noon beginning on December 10th. Mr. John Rothwell will be coaching this team. The 2nd and 3rd grade team will meet on Friday afternoons from 2:45-3:45. They will be coached by Sandy Frazer and Rebecca Henley. We are so appreciative of these volunteers who give their time to coach our younger students. Any parents who would like to help out will be welcome and appreciated.

Coming up is the anniversary of the book, Charlotte's Web. As many of you probably know, E.B. White was a Maine author so this book is a little bit special to us. We are going to be doing many activities centered around this book in the next two or three weeks. It is going to be exciting to say the least. Please watch for flyers coming home that tell you about all the ways we are going to honor this wonderful book and its author. This book is read every year in second grade because it has so many curriculum connections and teaches us so much about friendship.

The staff will again be celebrating holidays around the world with their students. Each class has chosen a different country and will be exploring the different holiday traditions of that country. All the students in K-5 will get a chance to visit each country. Check out the dates on our calendar and come in to help out or visit.

The Children's Stage Adventure Theater will be held next week at C.P.S. Auditions are Monday. A bus will pick up any WES students who wish to participate. Please remember to send in a permission note if you want them to take the bus to CPS for the auditions.

With the holiday season upon us, stress can become a major factor in our lives. Try to take time everyday to appreciate your family, home and yourself. This season is a great time to relax with the kids and read some holiday stories or draw some pictures to send to friends and relatives. Enjoy!

Sincerely,

*Jolene M. Littlehale*

Teaching Principal

### **KINDERGARTEN - Miss Wilkey**

Happy Holidays from the Kindergarten! We have been very busy this past month and will continue to be throughout the holiday season. We are looking forward to the upcoming book fair, Cookies With Santa, and other holiday festivities.

During the last month we have learned a lot! At the beginning of the month the kindergarteners learned about the voting process and took part in a mock election. They enjoyed being able to go into a real voting booth to cast their vote. Later, we focused our attention on family and thankfulness. We discovered that there are many types of families and drew pictures of our own. The students also enjoyed sharing what they like to do with their family. Family was a big part of what we decided we were thankful for, too. Other things to be thankful for were friends, homes, food, pets, and toys. The students shared their family portraits and what they were thankful for during our Friday Meeting.

Another way that we celebrated Thanksgiving was to invite the First Grade over for a special snack. We read stories about the first Thanksgiving and had some special treats. The First Graders made us lovely thank-you cards afterwards.

In Math, students worked hard at learning to tell time. They practiced telling time to the hour and half-hour. We also spent time learning about the days of the week and months of the year. Finally, we discussed time concepts, such as past, present, and future.

We are now beginning a unit on Money. This will be a part of an Economics unit that will include concepts like goods, services, products, and consumers.

The kindergarteners continue to work very hard at reading and writing. They are sounding words out, often on their own, and are learning new words all of the time. They have made a lot of progress since September! We will continue to work with word families and individual letters. Also, we will focus more specifically on vowels and their many sounds. The students enjoyed their first Writer's Share Circle and are eager to write and publish more stories for next time.

During December, we will learn about holidays around the world. We will read stories and have a variety of activities to do. In our classroom we will also discuss winter. Jan Brett, who has written many great winter and/or holiday themed books, will be our new Author of the

Month. We look forward to reading her stories as well as all of the other special events this month!

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

This month has certainly flown by. Even though it has been a relatively short one, first graders have been very busy. I am amazed at how much they learn in a short period of time.

In math, they completed their first local assessment on time. Everyone did a fabulous job. There are even a few students who have passed the timed addition test that has to be completed by the end of first grade. Way to go kiddos. We have been busily working on different strategies for adding and subtracting. Currently we are learning how to cross out, count back, and use a number line to subtract. Everyone is picking this up rather quickly. Our next unit will be on place value, counting patterns, ordinal numbers, and comparing numbers to 100. From what I have seen so far, the children are going to breeze through this material.

Everyone did a great job on the first Science assessment about organisms. I was very pleased with how well they applied their new knowledge. Our next Science unit is on the seasons.

In Social Studies, we enjoyed learning about citizenship and the voting process. First graders were quite pleased with the fact that most of them had voted for Gov. Baldacci and he was the school winner. We have also been studying about the Pilgrims and Native Americans. The students have been interested to learn what a typical day was like for young people back then. They will take this information and write about it in a couple of weeks. Upcoming units will focus on geography, the continents, and holiday traditions around the world.

First graders have been doing a lot of work identifying and using different strategies to help them with their reading. It seems to be working because they are all advancing through the levels very quickly. We have also been focusing a little more on comprehension skills, as well as reading fluently. The students have had fun learning about the sounds of vowels and different patterns through the use of songs like *The CVC Blues* and *Vowels Free To Be*. Finally, I have begun introducing different language arts centers to the children. While I am working with groups or individuals, they can *Read around the room*, *read from the overhead* and play the *Word Hunt Rap*, and re-order a familiar story in the pocket chart. I will share more activities with them this month.

Everyone was very excited to work with the school laptops for the first time. They are becoming familiar with the keyboard, learning how to log in to their e-mails and surfing a couple animal websites. We will do much more of this after the holidays. They have also been exploring the use of calculators and deciding which is faster – their own minds or the calculator.

I want to thank all the parents for coming to the parent-Teacher conferences. It was nice to share all the wonderful things your children are doing.

It looks like December is going to be another hectic month. I hope to see some of you at Cookies with Santa, Friday Meetings, and our classroom party on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. I hope everyone gets to enjoy this busy time of year and spend some quality time with your loved ones. Happy Holidays.

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

Well, November has just whizzed by already! It's been one of those very busy months again!

We've had conferences and thank you to everyone for attending them! Report Cards have gone home and I had some very good things to say about my Second Graders! We had a Reading Night and that was absolutely terrific! The Second Graders got a special book about "Oceans" for having the second best attendance that night! Hooray!

We've had a visit from "Samantha Skunk". Samantha had a message about not using tobacco and smoking to share with the students. Mrs. Emery from "Partnership for a Healthy Maine" and two Telstar students, Julia Stambolis and Paul Saucier, came to do the presentation. It was excellent! Then we did our Health assessment over not smoking and everyone did very well on it. Everyone either got a 3 or a 4 out of a possible score of 4 on it. Wow!

We are starting on Solids and Liquids in science right now and you should have had a chance to do a special homework assignment with your child called "Mystery Solid". It's a fun way for the kids to talk about solids and to use the term properties as part of their discussion with you. I hope you had a chance to do it with them!

We have finished studying about the Pilgrims and the First Thanksgiving and Veterans Day and now we have started learning about Africa. We will be making some African masks, which will be on display in our room and we will be studying about Kwanzaa an African holiday that coincides with our Christmas holiday as part of our African research. Part of the Second Grade Social Studies curriculum is learning about different cultures and their celebrations so this fits right in!

There are many activities coming up in December so check your calendar! First thing is "Cookies with Santa" on December 1<sup>st</sup>! Then soon after that we will be doing "Holidays Around the World" again this year. Each teacher chooses a country and does a craft to go along with that country's holiday celebration. We do the craft with every classroom and it's great fun! I have chosen Germany this year! Can't wait!

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

November has been another busy month. We began quite a few projects and units that we are trying to finish up before the holiday fever takes over.

First of all, we have been writing a report on our field trip to Augusta using topic sentences and paragraphs. It has been a perfect learning experience for these skills, but it has taken quite a long time for everyone to finish. If you happen to be in the building you might want to stop by the bulletin board and check them out. The kids really put a lot of information on paper. I was not only pleased with their writing, but also with how much they learned about the time period around the Revolutionary War.

During our reading block we still have some kids working in their reading folders, reading self-chosen books and then writing about them. Most of these students are writing some awesome notebook entries telling about what they have read. However, there are a few who still need to work on how to do that effectively. It would be helpful for you to talk to your student about what they are reading in school, and how well they think they are responding to what they have read. Other students are working in groups with either Mrs. Littlehale or me on specific skills. My group is reading *Cross Country Cat* while Mrs. Littlehale's group is reading *The Chalk Box Kid*.

In math, we are just finishing up our unit on telling time to the minute. We have learned about using quarter past, quarter to, and half past the hour. We have also learned about saying the time as how many minutes after the hour and how many minutes before the hour. *Please* help your child by reinforcing these skills at home. If your child asks you what time it is on an analog clock, encourage them to figure it out for themselves. Or from time to time (no pun intended) you could simply ask them to tell you what time it is just for the practice. It is a new skill for many, and although they may be pretty good at it right now, I'm sure that it will be quickly forgotten if not used.

Our social studies/science time has been spent largely on reading our *Weekly Readers*. This year it seems to be taking us a lot longer to read and discuss each issue, so we are quite a few issues behind. I may start sending some home as homework so that we can get caught up before the holiday break. We do love the information that we learn from reading them, and we are definitely picking up some good strategies for reading informational text.

Soon we will begin our Christmas Days around the world. Third grade will be featuring Christmas in Italy, so if anyone has any helpful information about how Christmas is celebrated in Italy, I would certainly appreciate any help I can get.

Meanwhile, I hope that everyone can enjoy the spirit of the season even while hustling about during this busy time.

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

November was a very quick month. Thank you to all the parents who met with me. It was great to meet new people and see some familiar faces. December promises to be busy too. Basketball started this week and kids are ready to run and shoot hoops. With the holidays coming, basketball is a great way for them to run off some extra energy.

In fourth grade this month, we have spent a lot of time learning about the Southeast region. We are learning about the civil rights movement, slavery, and important people that during that time. In reading, we read about people like Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., Harriet Tubman, and Marshall Thurgood. In social studies, we learned about the agriculture, climate, and coal industry. In December, we will continue to read about this region and learn about the history and economy.

In writing, we have been writing persuasive essays. After choosing the topic, we listed reasons to back our opinion up. Some topics include having a pet day, having a bike trail to school, and having lockers at school. There are some pretty convincing reasons and they just might talk me into of their ideas.

In math, we started our unit on geometry. We have learned about polygons, angles, triangles, congruency, and symmetry. There is much more to learn so we will continue until the holiday break. There are a lot of new vocabulary words and I am impressed by how quick everyone is learning and using them. We have some fun activities that we start the class with each day. It is fun to use our bodies to practice angles and degrees of a circle.

With a new quarter, we start a new science unit as well. We are learning about life cycles, habitats, and ecosystems of our world. There are many pictures around our room about animals and how they live.

Don't forget Cookies with Santa tonight. I know my kids always look forward to it and we have our list ready! Have a great weekend.

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

It was wonderful to see everyone at the school concert and also at conferences. Our school has such a great community atmosphere, and being able to connect with everyone over the past few weeks has been wonderful. The fifth graders are making a lot of progress, working hard, and learning a lot of new material. We have begun some new units in the past couple of weeks, and we are off to an exciting start with them. I would like to share with you what we have begun.

During our math times, we have shifted to working on fractions, decimals, and percents. In fifth grade, we learn these three concepts together because students benefit from knowing how to interchange the notation. They learn from being able to connect the ideas and similarities of dealing with numbers between numbers. So far, students have made very successful connections between percents and fractions. Be sure to quiz your fifth grader about this as you go holiday shopping and see those sales out there!

Students have begun reading a novel during our literacy block. After a great deal of work about drawing inferences from text and summarizing the events of a story, we have moved onto the novel, Hatchet. While studying this novel, students will participate in a reading discussion group where students get to choose the topics for discussion, and run their own book talks. This

is a great way to get kids reading, enjoying literature, making important life connections, and making reading a fun and social activity - so important for kids almost in middle school!

During our writing block, students have been working on a narrative piece of nonfiction about their own lives. Details have been the emphasis, and students have questioned each other to improve their writing. When the final drafts are complete, students will publish these stories into a scrapbook to take home and be able to share with family and friends.

Our science unit on ecosystems wrapped up with some wonderful 3D depictions of ecosystems. They are now in the hallway for all to see. We have moved on to studying the solar system, which has been a source of fascination for the fifth graders. Currently we are studying the movement of the Earth.

In social studies, we moved on to studying the Age of Exploration. Students have learned about Marco Polo and his influences in Europe, and we have begun learning about the Portuguese explorers of the time.

I know that December will fly right by, with all the fun holiday stuff happening. Enjoy the holidays, and feel free to stop in at any time to see what we are up to in grade 5! In January we will be hosting our annual Basket Bingo to raise money for our Boston trip, so look for future updates on that next month.

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

The month of November went by very quickly and now we are gearing up for December. The students are continuing to work in their various reading and spelling programs and doing a great job. The older math students have continued to work with money and adding and subtracting larger numbers. A couple of them have been working on writing checks and keeping checkbooks.

Our bulletin board for December says Happy Holidays and we have some festive bunnies decorating it. The children will be doing some writing activities to add some of their writing to the board.

I will be participating in a special class that is going to enable my classroom to have a Smart Board in the room for the children and I to use in our learning. It has a lot of potential to get everyone very engaged and involved in their learning. I can't wait to start the training and get the board in my room. My first class is next Monday night and hopefully the Smart Board will be installed into my classroom shortly after we come back from our holiday break.

I would like to wish everyone happy holidays.

### **TITLE ONE – Mrs. Hartford**

I want to thank all of the WES team of teachers, parents, and care givers for making our Reading Night a success. Dozens of books were swapped, many balloon creations bobbed about, the fried worms were a pleasant snack, and I was very impressed with the many words our youth made from the word "nonfiction"!

Sixty percent of our student body participated in this community event. It was very encouraging to see so many men come to show their support of children's literacy in a fun interactive way. The character photos and other group photos from this event are on the bulletin next to the multipurpose room.

Thanks again for making reading night a fun and memorable experience!

### **ART - Miss Ingraham**

Kindergarten has been experimenting with mixing colors to make new colors. We used the three primary colors to make the secondary colors in the rainbow. We also have been learning about what are warm colors and cool colors.

First grade has been working on making paper patch quilts. We examined several examples of Quilts by an artist name Faith Ringgold and quilts by other quilters. We looked at how you can use two different colored triangles to make a square. Each student decorated all of his or her colored triangles with lines and patterns and then glued the shapes together to make a paper quilt.

Second grade has been painting machines. We started out by drawing a machine in pencil and then painted the base coat of the machine. This project is really helping to enforce patience and control of the paint.

Third grade has been working on a castle project. We looked at the history of Castles and how they were made. Each student was asked to design a castle that includes the texture of the building and any structures that might help protect the people living inside.

Fourth grade has been working very hard on the paper mache` project we started a few weeks ago. Each student has finished putting the paper mache` on the animal. The next step is to start painting the animal.

Fifth grade has started working on Mandalas. Mandalas are radial symmetrical designs used in many different cultures around the world. They symbolize whole-ness or the circle of life. Each student was asked to create his or her own symmetrical design.

### **GUIDANCE - Mrs. LaVallee**

***Here's The Help Teachers Want From Parents***

The National PTA asked teachers what they wished parents would do to help their children in school. Here's what teachers said:

***Encourage your child*** to do his/her best. Show you believe that education is important. Let him/her know you want him/her to do the best he/she possibly can.

***Set a good example.*** Actions really do speak louder than words. When you spend time reading, you show your child that reading is enjoyable and useful.

***Emphasize academics.*** School is your child's job. Other interests—from athletics to TV, friends, and games—must take a back seat.

***Provide resources at home.*** You don't need a lot of expensive equipment—but you should have a place for your child to study. (The kitchen table works just fine after mealtime.) A few basic, inexpensive reference books—a dictionary, an atlas, an almanac—will make study time easier.

#### **MSAD # HEALTH COORDINATOR – Ms. Russell**

The Great American Smokeout was recognized on November 16. That week, Samantha Skunk and friend, portrayed by Telstar High School students, visited Grade 2 classes. "The tale of Samantha Skunk: Why Smoking Stinks", is a program that brings peer student leaders to classrooms as lovable magenta skunks. They connect with the children by reading to them from a jumbo-sized book dressed as Samantha Skunk, bringing an anti-smoking message young ones can easily remember.

#### **INSTRUMENTS - Ms. DeVore**

Congratulations to the fourth and fifth grade bands on their excellent performances at the Woodstock School concert last month. The fourth grade band is working to perfect "Jingle Bells, which they'll play for the whole school at a special "mini concert" at the end of the day on December 18.

The fifth grade beginners have joined in with the second year players to learn several Christmas songs which they'll be performing at "Cookies With Santa" this Friday, December 1. The fifth grade band will do a repeat performance at the "mini concert on December 18.

Band classes meet on Monday and Thursday. Some students are having a hard time remembering to bring their instruments to school on these days. Anything you can do to help them will be much appreciated!

#### **MUSIC - Mrs. Stowell**

During November, many seasonal and holiday songs have been sung at all grade levels. Fifth graders learned "Simple Gifts" and a circle dance to accompany it.

Fourth graders sang "The Eagle" and "Grandma's Feather Bed."

Third graders have learned about folk stringed instruments and given a try at playing the dulcimer.

Kindergarten, First, and Second Grades have all done a lot of movement such as walking, galloping, and skipping. "Over the River and Through the Wood" is a great song for all those ways of moving.

All grades have also sung Native American songs and played rhythm instruments as accompaniment.

### **PHYSICAL ED. - Ms. Russell**

All grades have begun volleying skills. The same basic skills- overhead pass, forearm (bump) pass and serving-are practiced at all levels, but with different equipment. We begin with balloons with younger students and move on to beach balls, then modified volleyballs. Grades 3-5 will be involved in positioning and game play. Volleying practice helps develop hand-eye coordination and can give the arms a great workout! Grades K-2 also continues to work on loco-motor skill and spatial awareness, while 3-5 begins class with push-ups and abdominal exercises to build muscular endurance and strength.