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# Backpack Express

## Dates for October

October 7, 2008	Cross Country Meet @ Troy	4:15PM
October 7, 2008	Girls Soccer Game @ Home	4:15PM
October 8, 2008	Boys Soccer @ Home	4:15PM
October 8, 2008	Girls Soccer @ Troy	4:15PM
October 9, 2008	PTO Ice Cream Social (Cafeteria)	6:30PM
<b>October 10, 2008</b>	<b>Superintendent's Conference Day</b>	<b>NO SCHOOL</b>
<b>October 13, 2008</b>	<b>Columbus Day Holiday</b>	<b>NO SCHOOL</b>
October 14, 2008	Girls Soccer @ Amsterdam	4:15PM
October 14, 2008	PTO Meeting	7:00PM
October 15, 2008	Boys Soccer @ Schenectady	4:15PM
October 16, 2008	Girls Soccer @ Home	4:15PM
October 16, 2008	Board of Education Meeting	7:30PM
October 17, 2008	Boys Soccer @ Troy	4:15PM
October 17, 2008	Cross Country Meet @ Grafton	4:00PM
October 18, 2008	Girls Soccer @ Home	10:00AM
October 20, 2008	Boys Soccer @ Albany	4:15PM
October 22, 2008	Boys Soccer @ LaSalle	4:15PM
October 22, 2008	Cross Country Meet @ Saratoga	3:30PM
October 24, 2008	Boys Soccer @ Home	4:15PM
October 24, 2008	Girls Soccer @ Loudon Christian	4:15PM
October 25, 2008	Cross Country Meet @ Troy	9:00AM
October 27, 2008	Boys Soccer @ Home	4:15PM
October 28, 2008	Report Cards Mailed Home	
<b>October 31, 2008</b>	<b>Parent-Teacher Conferences Elementary Grades &amp; MS Staff Dev.</b>	<b>1/2 Day of School</b>
November 1, 2008	PTO Craft Fair	10:00 —4:00

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## Principal's Message

Welcome to Fire Prevention Month. The issues of safety at home and school are accentuated during this month for our students in the classrooms. Teachers are helping students understand fire prevention practices along with other safety practices that have been established to keep everyone safe.

This is also the time of year I encourage parents to remind our children to ride the bus safely. Staying in their seats and observing the bus rules while obeying the bus driver.

### Just a few reminders:

Please be aware of the student drop off area in the morning and at dismissal. Parents that wish to come into the school or wait for their child to enter the school need to park in the parking lot and not in the drop off area.

Thank you to those involved in the PTO for all the support you provide to our school.

I'll see you at the Craft Fair on November 1<sup>st</sup>.

## Kindergarten News

Kindergarten is off to a fantastic start! We are looking forward to our trip to Liberty Ridge on October 17<sup>th</sup>. Children are becoming familiar with big books, such as Chicka Chicka Boom, Mrs. Wishy Washy, and Silly Sally. Please encourage your child to talk about the big book of the week. Coming soon your child will be taking home books in a bag to read to you, and other family members. Please encourage them to point to each word as they are reading, using pictures to help with unknown words. Thank you to the PTO and parent volunteers for organizing our Kindergarten Family Fun Night. Due to having a half day on October 31<sup>st</sup>, we will be having a Harvest Brunch for the children at 10:30 a.m. All are welcome!!!

## First Grade News

The first graders are back into the swing of school! We are off to a super start! We have been busy writing stories about observations, the fall season, and us! We have been practicing our reading strategies in guided reading groups and doing a wonderful job working independently at centers. Our science center is teaching us about making observations using our five senses. The math center is a great place for us to practice our math skills hands on! Did you

## First Grade News Cont.

know we can count to 100 by 1's, 2's, 5's **AND** 10's? We are beginning spelling words and a weekly test in first grade. In the ABC center we mix and fix our spelling words and we began poetry in the pocket chart center! We had a great time on our first field trip to Liberty Ridge Farm. What a terrific place to make observations about fall! We are getting excited about publishing spooky stories during the month of October!

## Second Grade News

As usual 2<sup>nd</sup> grade is off and running with many activities! September found us at Goold's Orchard where the children followed an apple from the tree, through the sorting process. We were able to see the bins that the apples are stored in. Do you know how many apples an average apple tree can produce? We were surprised to learn that 4,000 is the answer. In celebration of National Orthodontic Month we will be visiting Dr. Brendan Cooney's office.

Guided Reading and centers are the main focus of our school day. The children have become independent workers at their centers. We are very proud of the growth they have shown since the beginning of school.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> graders are learning to become scientists through observations and experiments. They observed leaves and ice cream. In Social Studies we have started to discuss community helpers. We have brainstormed possibilities for our future occupations.

Our team is looking forward to a very successful year! Thank you for your continued support. **Remember .....read, read, read with your child!**

## Third Grade News

The school year in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade has started out quickly. In ELA third graders have been busy learning how to be good Wii-cops (checking our writing to be sure we have indented, included an introduction sentence, checked for capitals/punctuation, organized grammar within our sentences, and corrected spelling errors). We have also reviewed strategies/tips on comprehension when answering questions. We have also put forth good efforts on our writing journals.

In social studies we have discussed and reviewed the variety and importance of maps, globes, and graphs. While in science, the students have been learning about the states of matter,

## Third Grade News Cont.

exploring how to distinguish different objects by stating their properties and finding out the differences between physical and chemical changes. We will also continue to explore different types of energy and begin our Structures unit in the near future.

3<sup>rd</sup> graders have been working hard on place value concepts and rounding numbers. We will continue with this into the month of October and be reviewing simple addition and subtraction as well. That will then lead us into addition with regrouping and some higher level subtraction.

Both classrooms have been busy with guided reading and cursive as well. Keep up the good work with spelling too!

Mrs. Nicklas and Mr. Van Leuven

## Fourth Grade News

Fourth grade is having a fantastic fall! Our students are impressing us with their skills in multiplication, and all of their hard work and practice is really paying off.

We are enjoying Judy Blume's Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing in ELA. Ask your child about the Hatcher Family...how does he/she compare to Fudge??

In Science, we just finished up an "electrifying" unit on Electricity. The students really worked hard and we learned a lot of interesting information!

The election and New York State have been our focus in Social Studies. The children have been having a great time learning about the political process. They continue to impress us with their knowledge of the candidates and their parties.

## Fifth Grade News

The 5<sup>th</sup> Grade enjoyed their field trip to the Howe's Cave Rock Quarry as part of our study of rocks and minerals. We are now learning about the parts of atoms as well as chemical reactions. Be sure to keep reading 15 min per night and brush up on those x tables. Over the next few weeks we will be preparing for the upcoming NYS SS Test.

# Sixth Grade News

## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Rocks!

In science class, we have been learning about classification and the 6 characteristics of all living things. Ask a 6<sup>th</sup> grader how “Can Cats Eat Goopy Red Rats” can help them remember those characteristics. To reinforce these concepts, we have completed controlled experiments with yeast, bread mold, and potatoes.

In math, students have been working on using their text book and notebooks as resources (instead of just “stuff” that you throw in the book bag every night). Currently, students are studying “Measures of Central Tendency” – just a fancy way of saying mean, median, and mode. And, now that the new computer lab is open, they will be using Microsoft Excel to complete and graph some of these statistics.

Finally, Mr. Mesh is proud to say that his class beat Mrs. Horacek’s class in the fire drill straight line competition! Maybe next time Mrs. Horacek...

### ELA/Social Studies – Mrs. Horacek

We’re off and running! As of this writing, 6<sup>th</sup> grade has already finished reading SIXTH GRADE SECRETS, solved the mystery of the Iceman’s death (or so we think), have begun writing our first short story in ELA lab, AND is currently working on our poetry unit. Now that’s what I call amazing.

Soon we’ll be journeying to the top of EVEREST, thanks to author Gordon Korman and will then visit Mesopotamia. We’ll learn to belt out tunes about the Tigris and Euphrates, as well as Hammurabi. It’s all very thrilling.

As you may or may not know, Mr. Mesh and I both have a somewhat competitive spirit. I *will* grant him a win for having the quietest line during the last fire drill, BUT hope he realizes it will *never* happen again.

I am soooooo lucky to be able to spend my time with your children. I learn something new every day and look forward to their smiling faces in the morning.

Thank you all so much for making my days brighter. Please take some time to enjoy the beautiful crisp air and the smells of autumn with your child—just don’t jump in a pile of leaves with a wet lollipop!

## Art Room News

Lots of exciting things have been going on in the art room this year. The children are already doing an extraordinary job on their projects and never cease to amaze me with their endless talent!

K-5 is in the process of finishing up their "Original Works" artwork. I will be packaging these up and sending home order forms over the next couple of weeks. Please send them back in a timely manner to assure your items will be ready by the holidays. The children are all very proud of the time and effort they've put into their drawings.

Our beginning of the year fall art is already well underway in elementary art. Kindergarten is working on color mixing and had the messy hands and faces to prove it! We had fun mixing red and yellow to sponge paint our pumpkin drawings. First grade painted their hands and arms brown to print a tree trunk and are sponging the leaves. The kids were amazed at how their fingers became branches. Second Grade has been creating Aboriginal works of art with lots of painted dots. Third grade began using real fall leaves as a starting point in a colorful oil pastel creation. Fourth grade will be drawing a fall still life soon and fifth grade is creating a school supply still life

The middle school has already done some gorgeous pieces of work this year too. Sixth grade is working on some Mesopotamian rock painting to tie in with their social studies unit. Seventh grade is finishing up painting Senofo African art designs painted on real canvas (they loved it). And eighth grade is making me dizzy with their "Optical Illusion" art. I will be changing art exhibits in the school monthly so be sure to check out the creative works of our Gardner Dickinson students.

Our Technology students are just finishing our Mouse Trap cars this week and will be racing them tomorrow. The kids had so much fun making them and had to problem solve to get them to go further and faster.

Thank you for all your donations to the art room and positive feedback and all the fun things we have going on. I look forward to a fun, messy, year with our students.

Mrs. Mitchell

## Library Media Center News

Mrs. Vickers is pleased to announce new books ordered this past summer have arrived in the library media center! Come in and check out these new titles and more! *How Do Dinosaurs Go to School?* by Jane Yolen; *Stargazer's Alphabet: Night-Sky Wonders From A to Z* by John Farrell; *Strange Happenings* by Avi; *Reaching for Sun* by Tracie Zimmer; *Andrew's Loose Tooth* by Robert Munsch; *Where the Giants Sleep* by Mem Fox; *Twelve Rounds to Glory: The Story of Muhammad Ali* by Charles Smith Jr.; *Jazz Baby* by Lisa Wheeler, and the *American Mastodon* by Carol Lindeen. Be sure to take excellent care of our library books and enjoy!

## Cafeteria News

The school year is under way and already NUTRITION is the talk of the school. A lot is said about school lunches and here's some more information you might not know.

We do not DEEP FRY anything! Our French fries, chicken nuggets, chicken patties, even our hamburgers are oven baked. We now serve almost entirely WHOLE GRAIN breads and rolls. Our pizza dough, bagels, dunkers and sandwiches are all whole wheat, the rolls for hamburgers & hot dogs, the French Toast sticks, even the breading on the chicken nuggets and chicken patties are Whole Wheat (WW).

### GD Loves Chicken

Our very popular chicken nuggets and patties are processed by Tyson and are white meat, WW breaded oven baked and the patties are served on a WW bun. We only use packets of PC mayo. The right amount! We offer a BALANCED CHOICE EVERY DAY. BALANCED CHOICES is Chartwells key to nutrition. By choosing all components of the meal your child puts nutrition first at lunch time.

### Grab a Snack @ the VENDING MACHINE

All our ice cream is proud to pass NYS Choose Sensibly Program guidelines. Our snack machine offers a variety of baked, portion control choices and our AQUAFINA water machine features flavored and crystal clear ice cold water.

### BRAKE FOR BREAKFAST

I'll say it again, students who eat breakfast perform better in school. It's that simple. For a \$1.00, you receive your choice of milk, 4 oz chilled apple juice, a variety of daily specials or

## Cafeteria News Cont.

corn flakes or oatmeal every day. WOW! Can you believe all that goes on in our Cafeteria!

Our very popular chocolate chip cookies just got even better. These are so good! We bake them fresh daily and sell out quickly. They are only a quarter and are now reduced fat.

WOW! I get carried away when it comes to nutrition, but, just so you know, every menu we serve meets NUTRIKIDS standards and are compliant to all State and Federal requirements and restrictions in items such as calories counts, fat limits, protein, carbohydrate and dairy required amounts.

So to make a long story short, (too late), we try to be very healthy in the cafeteria! As always if you have any questions, comments or concerns, I'll be in the Cafeteria!

Thanks, Jill

## PTO News

PTO would like to thank all of you who have joined already and let you know that our membership drive will continue through November. Help your class go for the gold!!

PTO would like to thank Amanda Ruddy for organizing the ice cream social. We also would like to thank Aggie Casale for helping with the school pictures. Also thank you to Ann Marsh for doing the Yankee Candle fundraiser again this year. We really appreciate all the time committed to helping the PTO and our school!

We have a lot of exciting activities this year! Please join us at the craft fair November 1<sup>st</sup> from 10am – 4pm., then at our first Gardner Dickinson Game night in November! We have even more fun activities to come, stay tuned!

Please come and join us at our meetings we value your ideas and opinions. Join us for our next meeting which will be November 18<sup>th</sup>. This meeting will feature a speaker on internet safety and bullying. Hope to see you there.