



Backpack Express

Dates for January

January 4, 2010	Boys and Girls Basketball Game Away at Troy	4:30pm
January 7, 2010	Boys and Girls Basketball Game Home SDM Meeting	4:15pm 6:30pm
January 8, 2010	Boys and Girls Basketball Game Away at ND/Bishop Gibbons	4:15pm
January 11, 2010	Boys and Girls Basketball Game Away at Schenectady	4:15pm
January 12, 2010	PTO Meeting	7:00pm
January 14, 2010	Boys and Girls Basketball Game Home	4:15pm
January 18, 2010	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday	NO SCHOOL
January 21, 2010	Boys Basketball Game Home Board of Education Meeting	4:15pm 7:30pm
January 25, 2010	Boys and Girls Basketball Game Away at NAA	4:15pm
January 28, 2010	Boys and Girls Basketball Game Away at Hackett	4:15pm

Principal's Message

The first semester ends on January 29th 2010. You will receive your child's report card no later than February 5th. If you have any questions regarding your child's academic program please contact your child's Teacher or Guidance Counselor.

Please note that all early dismissals due to snow are considered Emergency Dismissals and students will be transported by bus to their emergency contact as you have identified at the beginning of the school year. Parents as well as emergency contacts (as you have designated) will receive an automated phone call stating that students are being transported to their emergency contact at a specific dismissal time.

All bus notes or pre-arrangements that have been set up for the dismissal of your child on that day will be disregarded and your child will be dismissed and transported to the emergency contact you have listed.

If you have any questions about your emergency contact designations or the emergency dismissal procedures please call the Main Office at 283-4600 Ext. 10.

Principal's Message Continued

It is time to register your child for Kindergarten if he or she will be 5 years old by December 1st of 2010. Please contact Mrs. McKenna at 283 4600 ext. 10 to begin the registration process.

Our School Board of Education at their last meeting approved High School choice for the following schools: Brunswick (Brittonkill) Central School District (C.S.D.), East Greenbush C.S.D. and Troy C.S.D. The Board also approved the addition of Averill Park C.S.D. to our High School choice options.

I thank you for your continued cooperation and support.

Kindergarten News

Kindergarten is excited to be back at school for the cold, snowy month of January. This January we are excited to begin our "Scientist of the Week" program, which is every Tuesday afternoon at 1:50 p.m. Parents will get to come in with their child (who is our scientist of the week) and demonstrate a science lesson to the entire class. We are so excited to see all of our new scientists!!! We will also continue with our Mystery Readers at 10:30 each Thursday morning. A reminder will go home the week you are to come in to be the Mystery Reader. Students are excited to continue working in our centers each morning with Mrs. Dutton, Mrs. Carbone, and Mrs. Meyer. Students will be back to taking home their books to read each night from Ms. Dutton in January. We encourage all of our parents to read every night to your children and to read the books that go home each night and please initial the paper in the reading bag. Students are doing a wonderful job with writing in their journals and we look forward to improving our writing in the coming months. Also, please make sure your child turns in his/her HOMEWORK at the end of each month. Enjoy the month of January and keep READING!!!!

First Grade News

The First Graders learned a lot about holidays from around the world. They learned about traditions and customs that originated in England, Germany, Israel, Africa, Mexico, and our Big "Melting Pot," America! They had a great time singing holiday carols, making holiday cards, creating 3 dimensional poinsettias, making Christmas trees, creating menorahs, making Kinara candles, writing letters to St. Nicholas and putting them in envelopes with sugar on them to glisten in the moonlight on their windowsills, and playing the dreidel game!! They also made beautiful presents with their loving hands for their families!! Thank you to everyone for your help and contributions to our Holiday Gatherings!! They were fantastic! Happy New Year to all!!

Second Grade News

Second grade would like to thank all of the parents for their support and donations throughout the holiday season. We were pleased to be able to make holiday crafts, participate in a book exchange, and create 2010 calendars!

Our reading centers continue to foster independence and challenge students on a daily basis. Seasonal literature has been prevalent throughout both second grades. Students are enjoying our guided reading books as they are tailored to their individual reading level.

Throughout January and February second graders will be learning about penguins and their habitat. This unit will culminate with the students creating a written and oral report as well as a power point presentation. Center based activities will be focused on this theme.

Second grade would like to wish the Harris Family best of luck!

Third Grade News

The third graders have been diligently working on counting money and finding different ways to represent a variety of values. Continue to give your children opportunities to use money in their daily lives. For instance, count dad's change, let your child count out the money they need to purchase products and use the AAA Math link on the school website. The students have also been creating frequency tables and using the data to make and analyze both bar graphs and pictographs.

The class has started their unit on Japan with Mrs. Mahoney. We are learning about the customs and culture of the Japanese. We are making our very own Kimono's using fabric paint and pillowcases. Thank you for your donation of these supplies. We anticipate creating a travel brochure about Japan in January. In Mr. VanLeuven's Science class the students are finishing their Structures Unit. The third graders made plaster bricks using paper molds and rebar. They then tested each mold to see how much weight it could hold. They will end December by making a structure out of paperclips and straws. We are looking forward to our Chemical Tests Unit next, where students will test how safe household products are. They will complete this task using such things as vinegar, water and cabbage juice.

In writing the students have been working on Procedural or Directional writing. They did a great job being specific and using many details to show the reader "how to" do a task. Next, we will be working on our brochure writing unit which will tie into the Japan Social Studies Unit.

Hope you enjoyed your Holiday Break! PLEASE have your child read 20 minutes daily.

Sincerely,

Mr. VanLeuven & Mrs. Mahoney

Fourth Grade News

Fourth grade has had a very busy December. In science we continue to work on our electricity unit. The students designed and created their own working flashlights with switches. Some students added handles, used plastic "housing," and created other improvements to their great work. We are now creating Question and Answer Boards. These boards will use a circuit tester that light up when the correct answer is matched with a question.

In Math we continue to explore multiplication and division. In Social Studies, we continue to learn about the colonization of New York State. As part of our Math program, we have tried several types of multiplication and division techniques. Our goal is to find the method that each individual child likes the best! Holes has us on the edge of our seats! Isn't the book always better than the movie??? In ELA we are examining writer's craft and metacognition. We hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday season!

Fifth Grade News

Fifth grade finished up a Science unit on Chemistry. They particularly enjoyed making silly putty and seeing which substance cleans a penny the best. They are looking forward to our next unit on land and water. In math we have been working on division and continue practicing our facts. In SS the students have been learning about the discovery of America by European Explorers. Please have your child continue reading their DEAR book.

Health Class and Physical Education News

In Health the sixth graders have been studying emotional health. As part of their unit they are making "I am unique" books that highlight all of their positive qualities.

Third grade Health has studied many aspects of safety and is just completing the bus safety unit. As part of this unit they were able to practice safe bus crossing and emergency exiting with our transportation coordinator Bonnie Cole.

In the gym, students completed a ball handling/basketball unit and are now enjoying playing team handball.

Art Room News

Hello from the art room. There have been lots of exciting projects going on in the art room lately! **Kindergarten** has been busy making clay pots, learning about different types of line, and lots and lots of messy painting. **First Grade** is busy making dinosaur sculptures. Believe it or not, the sculptures are made out of a tin foil base and paper mache on top. **Second Grade** made gorgeous mandalas and are currently learning about the paper cut-outs of Matisse. The kids have been having a lot of fun modeling for each other as they learn to draw the human figure. **Third Grade** is finishing their Aboriginal Dot Painting and will be moving onto Japanese art next. **Fourth Grade** just finished making really cool paper relief sculptures and began to make Native American horse masks. **Fifth Grade** just started a Picasso sculpture out of knee high stockings and a wire hanger! **Seventh Grade** just studied Pop Art and are now making gigantic paper mache sneakers. Our **Accelerated Art** students finished their Master's Project which will be displayed in the community sometime soon (location to be determined) and are working on a giant cartoon project.

Artistically yours, Mrs. Mitchell

Media Center News

I would like to take an opportunity to introduce myself to you. My name is Linda Fecura Bunk (Ms. Fecura to the students), and I came on board as a long-term sub for Martha Vickers at the end of November. Since then, I have had such a delightful time meeting and getting to know all of the staff and students here at Gardner Dickinson! Coming into the Library now has afforded me a perfect time to introduce library units designed around a winter theme.

For starters, we've covered hibernation and snowfall with the Kindergartners using *Nuts To You!* By Lois Ehlert and *Dream Snow* by Eric Carle.

The first and second graders learned about how people and animals prepare for winter as we read, *When Will It Snow?* by Bruce Hiscock. We also reviewed the difference between fiction and nonfiction and how to make a fiction call number. If you want to really excite your youngster, ask them what their fiction call number would be!

Currently, the first graders are learning about the author/illustrator Jan Brett as we read her rendition of the Ukrainian folktale, *The Mitten*. Afterward they get to color, cut, and stuff their own mittens full of all kinds of unlikely woodland creatures.

The third graders are learning the difference between Tall Tales, Folk Tales, and Fairy Tales this month. We're right in the middle of a unit on Tall Tales featuring Anne Isaacs' Caldecott Honor Book, *Swamp Angel*, illustrated by the ever talented Paul O. Zelinsky. They've been so

Media Center News Continued

imaginative as we discover together the literary elements that contribute to Tall Tales. Ask them to tell you about them!

Next, in a unit on Biographies, the second and third graders will learn about Wilson Bentley, the man who pioneered snowflake photography at the turn of the century. We will read his Caldecott winning biography by Jacqueline Briggs Martin, *Snowflake Bentley* and look at a collection of 2,453 of his original snowflake photographs in *Snow Crystals*. Afterward, we will try to make our own unique snowflakes with paper and scissors.

Meanwhile, the fourth graders have been working on a unit about genres. We've focused on 13 different genres and our unit will culminate in both a fun "Genre Relay" and the always popular, "Genre Bingo"!

Lastly (but certainly not least!), I have been reviewing the Dewey Decimal System with the 5th graders. We've read a fun comic strip about the DDC and will get ready for a Dewey Decimal project and, of course, "Dewey Decimal Bingo"!

So it's been a busy, but very fun first month here in the library. I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season - and shared a good book with your loved ones over the Holiday Recess!

Yearbook News

You still have time to purchase a yearbook for the 2009-2010 school year. Yearbooks are \$35.00 and can be purchased up until January 29th. Yearbooks are printed in limited quantities and we cannot guarantee that there will be extra copies to purchase in June.

The 2010 Yearbook Club needs your help! If you have any pictures from sporting events, class parties, field trips and other events please send them to

kmorrow@wynantskillufsd.org. Thank you for your support! Yearbook Club

PTO News

PTO would like to thank all of you who have joined this year! Mr. VanLeuven and Mrs. Tatarczuk had the highest percentage of members and they won a pizza party. Thanks to Debbie Kane for being in charge of membership and Chris's Pizza for donating the pizza for the winning classes!

PTO would like to thank Sherri Lillis, Mary Lou LeFevre, Karen Meemken and all of the other volunteers that helped with the Craft Fair. We would like to thank Michelle Fanning for

PTO News Continued

organizing the first Guptills event which was a success. A thank you is in order for Tammy Miller as well for taking care of our Simply Certificates fundraiser. Thanks to Nicolette Avery, Lynn Pinzer and Maria Vooris for organizing the holiday craft night. Also a thank you to Marilyn and Cliff Halpin and all the other volunteers that helped with the holiday shop, it was a huge success. We really appreciate all the time committed to helping the PTO and our school!

We have lots of exciting activities coming up. Mark your calendars for Family Movie Night on January 22nd where we will be watching the movie UP! Also Jump Rope for Heart information will be distributed at the end of January with the Jump Rope for Heart Event set to take place the end of February; look for details to come home soon. We have even more fun activities to come, stay tuned!

PTO is looking for volunteers!!

The Craft Fair will be replaced by a Fall Festival next year. We need volunteers to be on the committees. If you are interested in joining these committees please let us know.

Please come and join us at our meetings, we value your ideas and opinions. Join us for our next meeting which will be January 12th. Hope to see you there.

