

WELLS MEMORIAL SCHOOL

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“Knowledge and Responsibility for Today and Tomorrow”

May 2009 Newsletter

From the Front Office

On Friday we sent home information on the H1N1 influenza virus. I hope you all received it but if not, please contact the office and we can send home another copy with your child. As a reminder, you can receive additional information at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention web site, www.cdc.gov; the World Health Organization website, www.who.org; or the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, www.dhhs.state.nh.us. There is also a toll free number for the Bureau of Communicable Disease Control at 1-800-852-3345 x4496.

Once again, we are approaching the end of the school year and there are many events on our calendar! This newsletter, as well as the calendar, will highlight these events. I also want to remind families about a few safety reminders associated with the spring tradition of riding bikes to school. Students **must** have a securely fastened helmet. Students also need of have a note from a parent/guardian as well. The note can cover the remainder of the school year if you wish.

Students will be taking the end of the year Measure of Academic Progress tests this month. This is the computer based assessment and will give teachers data on the student growth in the areas of math and language arts. The fourth grade is also taking the NECAP science assessment this month.

And now, onto the events!!

- May 4-8 Earth Week! See the newsletter for a list of events.
- May 18 NHDI rehearsal at Keene State College
- May 19 End of the year chess tournament at WMS
- May 20 4-5, NHDI rehearsal at Keene State College
- May 26 Kindergarten Orientation 7 pm
- June 1- Grade 6 picnic at Wheelock Park in Keene with Nelson and Marlow Schools
- June 3 Step up day, grade 6 to the Keene Middle School, new kindergartners to WMS
- June 10 12:00-Volunteer Appreciation lunch
- June 19 Awards Ceremony for K-5 in the morning, Field Day in the afternoon
- June 22 Grade 6 graduation and awards
- June 23 Flashback Day, half day of school

More details about individual events will be forthcoming! Enjoy the wonderful spring weather and be sure children get plenty of rest and sleep during this very busy time of year.

May 4-8 is EARTH WEEK at WMS!

We don't celebrate for just a day here at Wells Memorial School. We celebrate for a whole week in a variety of ways! On **Monday**, colorful posters encouraging the 3 Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle) for the poster contest will go up all over school. Then we will have an art period (2:10-3:10) on **Tuesday** that uses either nature or recycled materials. Students could choose from rock painting, weaving baskets, Huichol yarn art pictures, making paper, or wool and felt pictures. Moving outside, it's time to spruce up the gardens around our school on **Wednesday** after school until 4:30. **Thursday** is another after school day, but we will be working on the trails until 4:30. **Friday** is a "power down" day where we keep electricity usage to the bare minimum. Even this is not enough! At the end of lunch time each day, volunteers can lead the school in an Earth Week cheer of their own devising. Volunteers will be given a flower seed package for their efforts.

LA ESQUINA ESPANOL

SPANISH CURRICULUM NIGHT... was a great success due to the efforts made by all students at WMS. Thank you, everyone, for the laughter, the smiles, the excellent Spanish, the strong student leadership, the great food, and the heartfelt warmth of the school community. I appreciate all the extra help and support given to me by my colleagues these last few weeks. Un mil de gracias!

ALPACAS WALK THE BALLFIELD... Tex and Whalen, 2 male alpacas, (**blanca y morena**) visited our school on the 15th of April. Liz and John MacEachran of Sharon, NH taught us about alpacas from Peru and Bolivia. They now have about 50 alpacas in total on their farm with babies on the way. The MacEachrans raise alpacas to sell their fleece. We all got to feel how thick their fleece is. They will be getting sheered this week. We saw their teeth and learned how they chew; listened to them hum and talk; and enjoyed watching their big eyes. Muchas gracias to our furry visitors.

CINCO DE MAYO... is a holiday that is celebrated in Mexico and many parts of the United States where there is a large latino population. It is a day that takes a look at the history between France and Mexico. Next time you come to the school, take a look at the bulletin board across from the main office to get a glimpse into Mexican History and what the **Battle of Puebla** is all about.

Classroom News:

Kindergarten/First Grade: As we continue our weather unit, we have been learning to read thermometers, studying clouds, observing the trees and the flag for signs of wind, and checking for precipitation so we can record the weather about once a week. Last week we studied the sun and shadows. Luckily we had a very sunny week and were able to observe and trace our shadows during different times of the day. Ask your child how their shadow changed from morning to afternoon. Soon we hope to make rain gauges and explore puddles! This Wednesday we will lead whole school meeting by teaching the school some weather songs and sharing some of what we've learned. You are welcome to join us from 9-9:30 that day!

Kindergarten Math: Kindergartners are getting more adept at recognizing coins and trading pennies for dimes and nickels. We have also been practicing skip counting by 2's, 5's, and 10's. This past month the kindergartners explored patterns by weaving, beading, and using pattern blocks and unifix cubes. We will continue to explore patterns, practice counting, learn about coins (including quarters), and create graphs over the next few weeks. At this point in the year, your child should be able to count to 100 fairly independently, so please practice with them at home if they are not able to.

Kindergarten Language Arts: We've been reading some fun stories about spring recently. Some of our favorite characters are "Bear" in Bear Wants More and Bear Snores On by Karma Wilson, and "Hopper", the main character in several books by Marcus Pfister about an adventurous young rabbit. After I read, the kindergartners often draw and write in response to a question about the story. Kindergartners are becoming more independent in their writing skills. I am encouraging them to copy common words from our word wall or sound them out on their own if they can. The emphasis is on hearing the sounds and knowing which letter to write, rather than spelling everything correctly. We are almost done learning to write all the lower case letters correctly, and they are beginning to incorporate more lower case letters into their writing. Their writing journal will come home at the end of the school year.

We are continuing to practice phonics and phonemic awareness skills as part of our language arts lessons. Many kindergartners are able to sound out very simple words and recognize common sight words such as **is**, **it**, **to**, and **the**. They are excited about their progress with reading!

First Grade Math: We are in the midst of a fun unit on geometry that involves a lot of hands-on activities. Last week we learned the names and attributes of different shapes, and made polygons (4-sided closed shapes) out of straws and twist ties. This week we will explore 3-dimensional shapes and symmetry. We are also continuing to practice counting coins and telling time. We hope to finish our geometry unit this week, and begin a new unit on fractions, place value, and money next week.

First Grade Language Arts: As April showers (?) bring May flowers (!!!!), Mrs. Brantley's first graders continue to blossom as readers. A typical language arts class begins with blending games and sight word phrases to decode. As we complete our introduction of long vowel sounds and the many different patterns in which they present themselves, the difficulty level and length of our stories noticeably increase.

In order to avoid unnecessary frustration, try to spend at least fifteen minutes or more listening to your child read everyday. When you see your child struggling, remind them to use all of the reading strategies they have available to them. After looking for picture clues, making predictions, looking for familiar chunks or vowel patterns, etc. it is okay to give them the word and encourage them to read on. We want to make sure that reading together is an enjoyable experience, not a chore. Remember to praise your child's efforts and remind him/her of just how far he/she has come as a reader. You might even make a few errors of your own, laugh about it, model self-correction, (what makes sense?, what sounds right?), and take turns. We call this, Buddy Reading.

Our new literature theme is "Weather", which happens to correspond with our newest science unit. The students are already excited to share their newly gained knowledge about types of clouds and then read stories and poems relating to the same theme. Since spring has sprung, why not go outside and share your favorite stories together!

Room 6- (Grade 2 & 3) Astronauts (students) in room 6 are working in " crews" of two and are traveling into space to study the assigned destination- either a planet, star and the moon. Students are using laptop computers to complete what is called a Web Quest. A Web Quest is a learning activity used by educators. During this activity students work in cooperative groups to read, analyze, and synthesize information using the Internet.

Students begin the Web Quest by looking at past NASA mission patches and then create a patch of their own. Then, they print out data collection sheets to record the research they do on the Internet through links included on the Web Quest pages. After doing considerable research, the students plan out a Power Point presentation on paper, then create that presentation to "debrief" Mission Control and the other crews on their destination.

If you receive this newsletter electronically just cut and past the following web address to check out the Web Quest
http://web.me.com/flyfish29/Site/Start_____.html

In **third grade math**, we are entering into our final months with much more curriculum to cover in our Everyday Math program. It is expected that third graders know their addition, subtraction and multiplication facts, (0-10), by the end of the school year. (Also, how multiplication and division relate to one another). It is essential that number facts be practiced and drilled **DAILY!** This can take the form of flash cards, card, dice and dominoes games, etc.

We are encouraging students to keep track of the facts they already know and focus on the ones they need to learn. All students should have the zero, ones, twos, fives and tens memorized. If not, practice counting on until they become automatic. We have also learned the nines trick with our hands. If your child learns to count by threes, than

six should be an easy addition to their repertoire. The same can be said for twos, than fours, than eights. Please help your child to achieve the goal of learning all of their math facts by the end of the school year.

By your supporting our efforts here at school, we can spend our remaining time building on previous knowledge and skills such as place value, decimals, fractions, geometry, problem solving and more. Thank you for your help.

Mrs. Fulton's Language Arts Group: We have finished our unit on City Wildlife and have begun our unit on Imagination. We have been working very hard on our writing, including descriptive writing, sensory adjectives, and sentence combining. We will begin our poetry unit later this month. We continue to work on our spelling skills and our cursive is quite impressive. We plan to share some of our hard work during whole school meeting on the 20th of May.

Fourth grade has a busy start to the month of May—and for many, a busy end! We are preparing to visit Jaffrey as the conclusion for our study of Amos Fortune. We hope for nice weather and a fun picnic lunch that day. Parents will be coming for a sharing and potluck evening that will be lots of fun! Three members of class, Hannah Eaton, Kyle Anderson, and Carly Noyes, will be going to Concord to display and share their projects for the Water Science Fair. Miss Aldrich is busy working on Rascal as her last day with us is the 13th. Of course there are the many rehearsals left for NHDI, but the performance is closer! There is so much to do outside now cleaning up where the trees were—but it is looking great! Best of all, Fiondir (the gnome) has a new home in a new location!

The fifth and sixth grade has been busy this month. In writing we started a unit on writing newspapers. After examining a number of examples students were ready to write. They had a choice of writing about events from their years here at Wells Memorial or writing about events from colonial history. In reading we continue to work on their ability to infer. We defined inferring as figuring something out that is not specifically stated. One focus is on being able to back up your inference with evidence from the text or knowledge of people and stories. In math the sixth grade finished a unit that included dividing fractions, positive/negative numbers and beginning algebra. I was truly impressed with their ability to do the beginning algebra material. The fifth grade has continued their work on fractions including ordering, multiplying, dividing, mixed numbers and percents. In science we completed a unit on matter. Students explored properties by interacting with Oobleck. We continued our explorations of properties as well as chemical and physical changes with some activities involving mystery powders. The unit finished with mixing some chemical to observe chemical reactions. In this part of the unit students were able to plan their own investigations to further explore the chemicals we worked with. We packed a lot into a short month.

Our next science unit is on ecosystems. We started the unit by observing and planning investigations to find out about some common aquatic creatures. As part of this unit we will be working with Janet Altobello of the Harris Center. Students will be going out in small groups each Friday to explore several sights close to the school. At these sites they will find, identify and count the animals they find. We plan to do some water quality tests. They will also identify some common water plants. Back in the classroom

we will work with this information to learn about the interactions within this environment and trace the cycles. Students should wear proper shoes which includes old sneakers or rubber boots. They need to dress in layers so they are prepared for the variety of weather conditions we experience in May. I recommend covering up as a bug strategy rather than bug spray since the aquatic creatures will die if kids have these chemicals on their hands.

The sixth grade trip has experienced some changes. Since several 6th graders are unable to go for a variety of reasons the students have decided they would rather do a day trip that everyone can attend. We are exploring several options. There will be more information coming home. Stay tuned for further fundraising as we will probably need a little more money that we have raised so far.

After School Clubs

Reminder: Students must have a current signed permission slip each month in order to stay after school for clubs.

WMS offers a variety of after school clubs run by various staff members. Each month you will see the choices in the newsletter with the dates and a permission slip that must be returned for your child to participate. Please remember to sign up early. Spaces are limited in some clubs. If a child needs to attend a **Study Skills** class and is scheduled for a club they will be excused from the club.

Homework Club- Grades 3-6. This activity will meet on Tuesday, May 5, 12 19, 2009.

It is open to students who would like to work on homework assignments after school with teacher support. Students will be expected to work on homework and/or long-term assignments. Also extra help in a certain subject such as math or spelling (studying for test and journal assignments) is available. Mrs. Fulton will be supervising.

Please provide a healthy snack for your student after school.

Chess Club-Grades K-6. This activity will meet on Tuesday, May 5 & 12, 2009. The club meets every Tuesday at 3:15 until 4:30. Young students (K-2) have been more successful with a shortened club time (4:00), but are welcome to stay. Parents are then asked to pick up all students by 4:30. Each month, a new permission slip is attached to the newsletter. Students are unable to attend without a current permission slip. Students of all levels, beginner to expert, are welcome to play and learn. Mr. Bradley will be supervising.

Please provide a healthy snack for your student after school.

**Please see separate flyer
regarding Chess Tournament
On May 19th.**

Chess Club Permission Form K-6th grade

My child/children _____ has/have permission to participate in **Chess Club** on **Tuesday, May 5th & 12th, 2009**. Pickup time for students in grades **K-2** is **4:00** and for grades **3-6** pickup is at **4:30**. Mr. Bradley will supervise.

Parent's signature _____ Date _____

Homework Club Permission Slip Grades 3-6

My child/children _____ has/have permission to participate in **Homework Club** (grades 3-6) on **May 5th, 12th & 19th, 2009**. This activity will end at 4:30 and will be supervised by Mrs. Fulton.

Parent signature _____ Date _____
