



NESKOWIN VALLEY SCHOOL¹ VOICE



Volume XVIII, No. 1 September 16, 2009

Sept	Thur	17	Fall Campout / Sleep Over (Middles & Olders)
	Wed	23	Fall Equinox / Labyrinth Walk
	Fri	25	Fall Revival / Spring Clean-up
	Mon	28	NO SCHOOL – Staff Planning Day
Oct	Wed	7	Pet Blessing
	Fri	9	NO SCHOOL –Inservice Day
	Sat	10	HARVEST FESTIVAL

Gather'rounds are every Wednesday 11:30-11:50am unless noted differently.
Morning Music is every Monday 8:30-8:45am, or Tuesday on weeks when there is no school on Monday.
You are welcome to join us!!

HEAD OF SCHOOL Notes

The first week of school was a delightful whirlwind of activity. Students met their teachers and classmates and shifted into new routines with ease. Many parents enjoyed food and conversation during our parent orientation potluck (the brainchild of our wonderful Parents Association, led by Sharon Bergerson, Tara Will, Tara Rislov and KJ Konink), then met with teachers for class previews. On Friday night, parents and folks from the community danced in the new year with a terrific dance band, Donna and the Side Effects. It all came together with the planning, hard work and support of parents, students, teachers, staff, board members and the larger NVS community. I can't possibly thank all the people who made the first week of school such a success—anyone reading this likely had a hand in wishing us well, at the very least! Thank you!

One person who deserves special thanks is parent Sherry Patterson, who sorted and organized our art materials and in the process made room for our music, drama and art classes.

As the year begins, please help your family create new routines that support your child at school. Putting healthy sleeping, eating, and study habits into place now will pay dividends as the year goes on. Plan ahead so you have plenty of time to arrive at school. We appreciate your slow, watchful driving in the parking lot. Please show your children how to walk the pathway in front of parked vehicles, and be sure to pull your car into a parking place rather than stopping to let children out near the door—let's put safety first!

Our upper grades still have room, so we are continuing to invite families to join us at NVS. Please let me know if your friends and neighbors would like to have their children attend.

Julie

HARVEST FESTIVAL – Silent Auction

We are well under way with preparations for the 27th annual Neskowin Valley School **Harvest Festival**, scheduled for **Saturday October 10, 2009**. We hope to carry on the tradition of making it the school's most successful and fun-filled fundraiser. As you may already know, the Silent Auction is a crucial component of the Harvest Festival. Those who attend and bid on the variety of donated items help raise the much-needed funds required to support our school's curriculum and growth. Last year's auction was well supported by those in attendance, and it is our hope we can count on your support again this year by preparing a donation for the Silent Auction.

Several parents and teachers are helping to gather donations from area businesses and individuals. And now we need your help! Please take a moment to think about an item or service you and your family would be willing to donate and then fill out a donation form. There is a form attached as a link to the Voice, or you can pick one up at school. The form and donation items may be delivered to Kaileen's office or mailed directly to the school's address: **10005 Slab Creek Road, Neskowin, OR 97149**. If you have any questions, please email Tara Will (tarajan@msn.com) or Tara Rislov (tjrislov@msn.com).

Although we will gladly accept any last-minute donations, we would really like to have your decision no later than September 30th.

Looking for ideas? Pick up a Gift Card from your favorite book store, restaurant or movie theater...offer babysitting services...gift baskets...art work...books...wine...pet care products...kitchen and home supplies. Have fun and get creative!

Thank you,

Your Silent Auction Committee

HARVEST FESTIVAL - Bakery Café

The Bakery/Café needs everyone's help this year to make it successful. Every year there are delicious baked goods that parents and friends of NVS donate to the **Bakery Café**. We are hoping that you all can help make this year's **Bakery Café** as delicious as ever.

We would appreciate your help in any way that you can. We are looking for volunteers to pick up donations from restaurants the day before, work a shift the day of the event, and donate as many baked goods as possible!

Sign-up sheets are on the bulletin board in the entry hall, as well as ingredient cards to be included with your baked goods. So look through your recipe books and show off your favorite baked goods at this year's **Neskowin Valley School Harvest Festival**.

Here is a suggested list of items that have sold well in the past, as well as items we would like to see this year. Please bake goods from scratch; we prefer no store-bought items.

Suggestions of baked goods we would like to offer at the Bakery Café.

Layer Cakes	Breads
Pies	Scones
Large Cinnamon Rolls	Bundt Cakes
Large Decorative Cookies	Pound Cakes
Rum Cakes	Chocolates
Cup Cakes	Brownies
Large Muffins	Tarts
Cookies	Fudge
Shortbreads	Cobblers
Candies	Bar Cookies

Whole pies and cakes sold very well last year and we would love to see more! So if you have a favorite pie or cake you like to make, we would love it for the Bakery Café.

Due to health regulations we cannot accept cream pies, cheesecakes, custards, or uncooked cream frostings.

Thank you so much for your help and support.

If you have any questions or would like to volunteer to work a 2-hour shift the day of the event, please contact Mason McMullin. 541-921-3420 or masonmc@earthlink.net

BEGINNERS' CLASS Notes

A BIG welcome to Rachel, Taben, Jameson and Luani, and their families. It's been a great start to the year, with ALL of us new and learning things as we go through our days. In just five days, we have planted sweet potatoes (and one avocado seed) in water to watch them sprout; adopted a tree to watch through the seasons; painted BIG paintings, built TALL buildings and made LONG train tracks; learned each others names and signs; helped open snack and lunch packaging, and had our first trip to Linda the Librarian.

Ask me:

- ◆ about my reading word
- ◆ about the paint colors we're using
- ◆ about our new shoe experiment

Kate

EXPLORERS CLASS Notes

We have had a busy and fun start to our year in the Explorers' Class! The students from last year have settled into the new morning routine, and our new students have as well. We are working hard at creating school and classroom routines, and having fun along the way.

Thanks to those of you who attended the Parent Orientation night Thursday. It was really nice having that time to talk with you all, and I'm looking forward to implementing some of the great ideas that were discussed. If you were unable to attend, please ask me for the parent packet I handed out. If you have any other questions or concerns, please let me know.

We have started talking about apples in our class as the apple trees on the playground are very appealing (though the children remind me those apples do have bugs in them). They also did some apple tree paintings using their hands and arms and, on Tuesday, Marissa and four bakers made some delicious apple muffins (the recipe will be sent home this week). During our Morning Meeting on Monday we did a class survey and discovered that *everyone* likes apples! To this Noah said: "Well, it's definitely not a tie."

Our procedure for Sharing Day has changed. Since we have a larger class this year, we are dividing the children into three groups, and each Friday **one** group will present their object or story during our share time. I will post the schedule on the door of our classroom, and send a copy home today along with our sharing guidelines. If you have any questions please ask Marissa or me. **The first Share Day is this Friday.** Thanks!

Ask Me's...

- ...what did we bake with Marissa Tuesday?
- ...to read my *Apple Tree* book with you
- ...what does the special helper get to do?
- ...what letter are we practicing?
- ...what are we making with Karen during Art?
- ...what did we do with Sue during Drama?
- ...what did Linda read to us? (Remember to return library books by next Thursday).
- ...what do my feet do in our classroom and school?
- ...how do I sit at the green rug?
- ...to read with you 20 minutes each day.

I hope you all have a wonderful week!

Jenny

**Class Wish List:
Hollow Block Set**

YOUNGERS' CLASS Notes

Week One in the Youngers class has been a process of learning to work with each other in a new environment. Several students are new to the class, the room is new to all of us, and the shared teaching arrangement for Kate and me has added another layer to everyone's experience. For all the novelty, these eight students and two teachers seem to be settling into productive routines faster than at any time I remember.

Kate and I handle the transition from morning to afternoon by holding a class meeting right after lunch recess. By then we've already talked during recess about how the morning went and about plans for the afternoon. At the class meeting, students get to see me handing the teacher reins to Kate. Daughter Hazel is at these meetings, too, which gives the students an opportunity to be solicitous of a little person who is not yet quite sure of them. After the meeting the students plunge into focused reading and journaling under Kate's guidance, and I do some one-on-one tutoring in the classroom annex before driving Hazel home for her afternoon nap.

Kate has brought much insight and experience to our classroom. In just the first week, the students and I have benefited from her ideas about reading instruction, poetry writing and physical education. I feel fortunate to be part of this collaboration.

Thank you to parents who came out for the orientation meetings and potluck last Thursday. We had a full house in the center and I was able to talk privately with a few parents afterward in our classroom. I appreciate your aspirations for and concerns about your children, and I hope to keep the lines of communication open throughout the school year. I've already had offers of volunteer help, which assures me that this group of parents will be as involved in the school as the ones I've known in the past. If you need the classroom information sheets and parent survey I handed out on orientation night, please let me know and I'll get you copies.

Beginning today, I'll send homework with students each week, including the exhortation to read with your child every day. As a new parent, I now know how challenging that can be at times. Including others at home in your reading tutoring group (spouse, grandparents, other relatives and friends) can distribute the load over more than one set of shoulders. For future academic and emotional success, there is no more important experience than having someone read to you, read with you, and listen to you. I encourage you to let me and Kate know how that project is going. We would be glad to offer our encouragement and advice.

Here are some questions you might ask your child as conversation starters about his or her school experience:

What is the difference between focused reading and exploratory reading?

What experiment with sound did you do with cups, water and table knives?

What's in your daily journal?

What does a Venn diagram look like? What is it useful for?

What did you do for music with Eric?

What did you do for drama with Sue?

What did you do for art with Karen?

What day do you have library with Linda?

How many students are in the Youngers class?

Can you name all of them and say something about them?

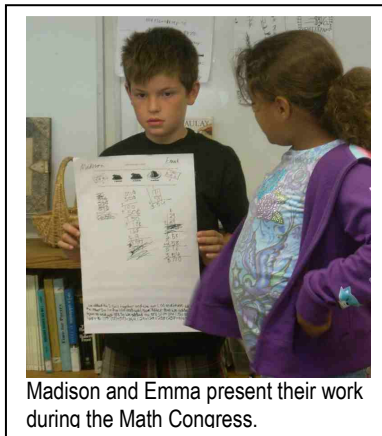
Best wishes for the week ahead. Call us if you have anything you'd like to discuss.

John

MIDDLES' CLASS Notes

Welcome to life in the Middles. This is going to be a terrific year if the first week can tell us anything. The music program is inspired and inspiring, drama engaging, and art is wild! The students have been eager, curious, cooperative, and fun, and the class as a whole has been absolutely joyful. I'm having a great time—maybe the best year yet. Thank you for your help in getting your child off to a strong start.

Clouds: Our first thematic study is physics, but before we get into it we are brushing up on our “cloudspotting.” We had great fun today looking at, acting out, and painting *cirrus* clouds. They were performing beautifully for us as we gathered near the field to watch and describe them. *Ask me: What are the characteristics of cirrus clouds? How did we act them out? What kind of breathing did we use to represent them? What technique did we use to paint them? To go outside with you to look for cirrus clouds.*



Madison and Emma present their work during the Math Congress.

Habits of Learning and Living: Listening with Purpose, Caring for Others, Thinking Deeply. The focus for classroom behavior this year (as it was last year) is on these Habits of Learning and Living. We have them posted in the room and refer to them with nearly every lesson, identifying which specific habit will be called upon in the next activity. The habit of caring for others was made explicit Monday as one student asked me if she could help another who was struggling with a writing project. The way they worked together was masterful, and both people felt successful and capable when the work was done. *Ask me: How do I think about the Habits during the day? Which is easiest for me? How do the discussions in the classroom affect our class?*

Multiple Intelligences: Our work today on the many ways of being smart provided another opportunity for me to marvel at the wisdom of NVS students.

When asked, “What does it mean when we say someone is smart?” they all shared remarkably insightful answers. “It is someone who pays attention to details,” “someone who knows a lot about what they are doing,” and “someone who makes things that turn out really well—with quality.” We explored Howard Gardner’s multiple intelligences (MI) through words and pictures. There is a homework assignment related to MI. I will send home a sheet that will help with this assignment on Wednesday.

Math: We started working with CGI (Cognitively Guided Instruction) Math last week and this, and our first problem went home in the Parent Orientation packets. On Mondays the students use a variety of intelligent strategies to analyze and solve complex problems. On Tuesday, we hold the Math Congress during which each pair presents their strategies to the group and we discuss relevant concepts and approaches. This week we will also get into our comprehensive math curriculum, Everyday Math. Homework from Everyday Math won’t show up for another week or two as I am waiting to receive the student materials from the publisher. If you would like to check out the program, the web site, <http://everydaymath.uchicago.edu/>, offers support for parents and students.

Overnight: The long-awaited and highly prized overnight is this Thursday, as you already know. Please look over the gold sheet that came home in the homework folder and help your child prepare. The big event of the afternoon and evening will be working with our resident artist, Karen White, on a very messy project, so paint clothes (tops and bottoms) are in order.

I’m delighted with the way the class is working together and with me. This promises to be a fun, productive, and satisfying year. Thanks for all you do for your child and for lending this most precious being to me. *Jackie*

What's New?

- Emma Fennel joined NVS
- Homework Folders—Send them back daily.
- Cloudspotting
- GLOBE xpedition on line
- Bring paint clothes to the Sleepover.

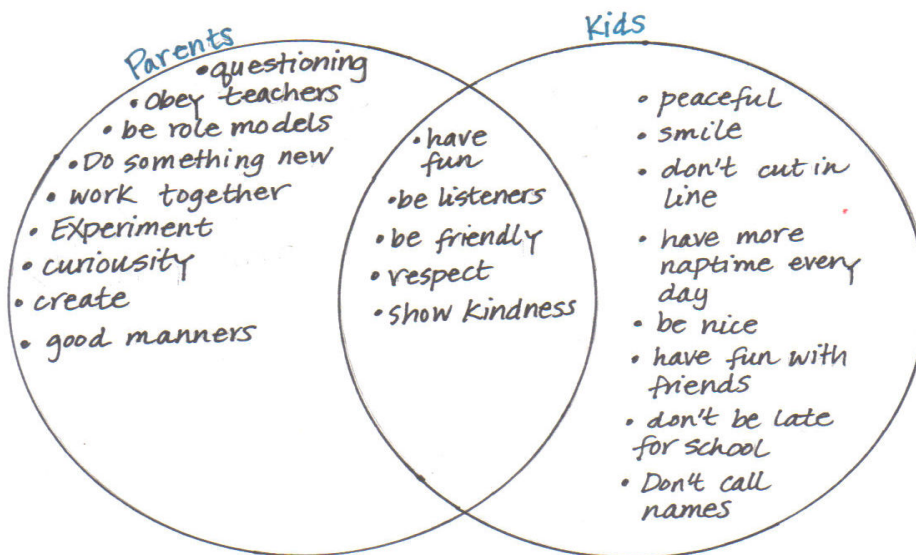
September Events

- ★ Sept. 17 Fall Sleepover
- ★ Sept. 23 Autumnal Equinox—Labyrinth Walk
- ★ Sept. 25 Fall Revival, Beach Cleanup

OLDERS' CLASS Notes

Last Wednesday 8 boys and 1 girl stepped into the Olders' classroom to initiate their year: what an incredible start it has been. This group of students has already begun to develop tight bonds, created over games of football at recess, investigations of playground physics, and the naming of our class guinea pigs (Butterscotch and Twitter).

The past week we've focused our time on **getting to know each other** and **establishing guidelines** for a functioning classroom. Recently students put their heads together to generate ideas about **ideal classroom behaviors and environment**. Ideas ranged from **Ben's** request for "pie every week" to practicing "peace and quiet." On orientation night, parents also contributed their thoughts on this same subject. The following day we decided to compare and contrast student and parent ideas on this ideal classroom. **Gus** suggested that we use a Venn diagram to show the results visually. The image below is a brief sampling of qualities or actions that parents and/or students believed to be important:



As the Olders analyzed the results, our class made some interesting discoveries. **Isaak** pointed out that parents were more likely to write lengthy descriptions of what makes a good classroom environment. On the other hand, the students tended to express their ideas briefly. Through our comparison, we also realized that parents and students often used different words to express similar ideas. For example, parents mentioned that good nutrition was essential for learning, while Olders made this point by requesting certain food items like coconut juice to keep their energy level optimal. A common theme among both parents and children focused on time for physical activity and breaks. This is a great message to emphasize both at home and school, as it can help increase quality of and interest in work. You are welcome to join us in the classroom and take a look at the rest of the ideas students and parents have generated.

We will continue this week to **make new routines habitual**. Tuesday marked our first day of **homework**. In the Olders' class, students are responsible for writing down their homework in planners. By putting pen to paper, they are reinforcing in their memories the work they will have to complete. Students will also practice time management skills as they plan their week's assignments. It was insightful for me to listen to the reactions of students to this system. Previous Olders' class members seemed to slip back into the process with ease. However, incoming 6th graders remarked that it was very confusing. On Wednesday we will

discuss our thoughts on this homework process during our class meeting. One of the wonderful aspects of NVS is that we have the **flexibility** to change a way of doing things if it isn't working, and we may decide as a group to develop a new system. Alternately, we could realize that this is a chance for students to exercise patience and see if they can adapt to a new way of thinking.

Perhaps the most exciting events of the first weeks of school have involved **collaboration between students and teachers** as we investigate new topics for learning. One sunny day at recess **Helen, Isaak** and I brainstormed ways to incorporate our upcoming science unit (involving chemistry, physics, and electricity) with a study of the physics of movement on the playground. This has resulted in a series of questions: What surface (paper, scarves, blue jeans, etc) allows you to reach the bottom of the slide the quickest? What ratio of pushers to riders allows the merry-go-round to spin the fastest? How does a one or two-lap warm-up affect the speed of a sprinter as he/she runs across the field? Students helped to design experiments to answer these inquiries, and were especially challenged by the idea of **controlling variables** to yield accurate results. We are ready to test out our ideas and will keep you updated!

I am grateful for your **support as parents** at the beginning of this school year. You have brought your child to school prepared with supplies, fostered an eagerness for learning, and have already offered to help our classroom in various ways. Let's commit to good communication with each other as we move forward in the joy of learning.

Amy

LIBRARY NEWS

Welcome back to school! The library is open this week and students will be checking out books and bringing them home. Please help your child return their books each week. The Beginners, Middles, and Olders have library on Tuesdays. The Pre/K, and Youngers have library on Thursdays.

We need used books for the Harvest Festival book sale. If you have any to donate, please bring them to the library or office. Thank you.

Thank you, Zac Will, for the awesome book you donated to the library in honor of your 5th birthday.

Parents, there is a long-standing tradition of "Birthday Book Donation" at NVS. It is a great way to celebrate your child's special day. We put a placard in the book honoring the giver, and read the book at library time with their class. The kids are always excited to be a part of this wonderful tradition. If you have trouble choosing an appropriate book, there is a Wish List of books posted in the library on the check-out desk.

Dinner Table Discussions

- Were you surprised by any similarities or differences in your **Venn diagram** representing ideal classroom behavior and environment?
- What variables did you work to control in your **Playground Physics** experiment? Why were they important to control?
- Are you ready for the **campout this Thursday, September 17th**? Check your supply list to make sure you bring what you need!