



It's the winter season of 2009 and we find bare oak trees reaching their glassy arms toward the slate-grey skies, clouds rushing in behind blustery winds, and snowflakes falling gently on a field as white as a downy blanket. Third grade writers have been hard at work creating wonderful pictures in readers' minds, and they are striving to incorporate great author's craft techniques. Similes, metaphors, personification, and alliteration are just a few of the techniques that students are feeling more comfortable with using on an independent level.



Our "Empowering Writes" program has turned even the reluctant writers into authors who are recognizing the purpose and enjoyment in putting pencil to paper. Our writing program teaches children to break down the writing process into five main parts: an exciting beginning, description of the setting, building suspense, the main event, and extended ending. Each skill is introduced in isolation with an opportunity for teacher modeling, guided support, and independent practice. As students become more comfortable with using each technique, we encourage them to incorporate it into their longer written pieces.



Student writing is typically scored on a Six Point Rubric. Writing will be scored from a 1 (lowest) to a 6 (highest), based on four main criteria: description, organization, fluency, and focus. A third grader is expected to create a story that flows in order of events, stays on topic, and contains a good amount of specific details.

Ask your child what he or she has written lately. Perhaps they'll teach you a thing or two about author's craft! If you are interested in a copy of the narrative writing diamond and other tools your child uses during writing, contact your child's teacher.

On a side note, third grade is running our annual Community Cares project for needy families in town. This year, we are welcoming donations of non-perishable breakfast items, condiments, and grocery gift cards. Our food drive will run until February 13<sup>th</sup> at which time we will sort, categorize, and deliver the items to the Coventry Human Resources Department.



Stay warm!! Donna Gwozdz, Anne Burke, Jennifer Emerson, Heidi Bosco, Ronnie Giana, Katie Stiles, Erin Brown, Gail Sroka, Jan Spangle and Nan Kandolin

## News from Grade 4

Jerry Craig, Mike Daigneau, Jim Dzwonchyk, Janine Goldsnider, Erin Hazzard, Kim Licata, Michelle Santese, , Barbara Timberman

It is February already and winter is in full swing. Please make sure children are prepared for the outdoor weather. Coats, hats, gloves, scarves and boots (when it snows) are essential, especially if students want to participate in an outdoor recess.

March is around the corner and we are sure you have already heard the buzz about the CMT's. Our children have been hard at work preparing for the test. Some helpful hints to put students at ease: Go through your child's papers and take out practice sheets. Set them aside and every so often ask them what they are learning in class. This is a great way to reinforce the skills we are learning at school. Some of us have just finished our units on Biomes, and Native Americans. Our students created murals, dioramas, and gave presentations about their topics.



Other groups have started the Electricity unit. They have conducted different experiments including: how to make an open and closed circuit, floating magnets, and static electricity.



Next quarter some of us will be heading to Ancient Egypt while others will study the significance of some of the most influential African Americans in our world.



This year we are pleased to have each of the fourth grade classes involved in a sister school program. These programs are run through EASTCONN. Several classes are participating in System Explorers, where students are challenged to validate the laws of Force and Motion through the use of Legos. Two classes are involved in Water, Wildlife, and People. This program involves students' observing different ecosystems in the Long Island Sound while learning about diversity.

These two classes were able to meet their pen pals who they have been writing to over the course of the first half of the year, in the early part of January. This year our classes are paired with students from North Windham, Vernon, and Stafford, depending on the program they are involved in. The System Explorers group will be heading to The Bishop Center on the UCONN campus Thursday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, and Friday, February 6<sup>th</sup>.

In groups, students work on different activities including team building, Lego challenges, science experiments, observing ecosystems, and traveling to the Long Island Sound.

We are happy to announce that G.H.R. raised over \$1000 for UNICEF. I know it seems like a long time ago, but because of all the generous donations it took a long time to count all that money (change)!



**Mrs. Bernier, Mr. Carlson, Mrs. Moriarty, Mrs. Piteo, Mrs. Sandberg, Ms. Silvernail, Mr. Spivey, Ms. Steeves, Ms. Woodin**

Students are busily preparing for the Connecticut Mastery Tests. In mathematics, the students dove into division, learning partial sums, a new technique for many, as well as the traditional method. **“Does McDonald’s Sell Cheesy Burgers?”** Soon students will be developing a fondness for fractions as they learn how to add and subtract fractions, simplify fractions and much more. Ask your child which is bigger,  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{1}{4}$ ?



Can you hear me now?...How does the ear work? In science, the students are beginning their exploration of sound. Sound is a form of energy that causes the sensation of hearing. Students will be studying pitch, volume and vibrations through a series of hands-on experiments.



In social studies we have explored the unknown and found a “New World.” Our discussion now focuses on the rise of the English colonies. We will discuss the Lost Colony of Roanoke and what life was like for settlers in Jamestown.



In reading, students are focusing on non-fiction selections, studying fact and opinion, and cause and effect. They are continuing to study text organization/structure and are working on identifying the author’s viewpoint in an article.



In language, students are polishing their expository writing by adding golden bricks such as anecdotes and descriptive segments. They continue to review the mechanics of writing to make their pieces fluent.



Attention 5<sup>th</sup> grade parents and students: Start saving your pennies for the annual 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Penny Challenge, coming soon to a hallway near you!



## MATH MATTERS - Kim Licata ASSIST Teacher

Most students in our school have math homework Monday through Thursday. Many times I hear students ask why they are being given homework. Mastering a skill requires a fair amount of practice for most students.

Along with the practice of skills, homework helps children develop a sense of responsibility and getting things accomplished on time.

As a parent you can help your child be successful in a variety of ways.

Agree on a regular time for homework each day. Provide a quiet place for studying, with a large work surface and good lighting. Turn off the TV. Go over completed homework with your child and praise his/her efforts.

If your child asks for help, suggest reading the directions again. Work through any sample problems together. Describe the steps used so far- he or she may catch a mistake. Look for patterns. Have your child describe a story problem in his or her own words. Draw diagrams or move objects to “see” the problem.

We appreciate all the help that parents give their children each day. By working together as partners in your child’s education, we can make a difference!



# Superintendent's Corner

## DONUTS WITH DONNA:



The Superintendent of Schools is available for casual conversations with community members during the school year. "Donuts with Donna" is a way for you to greet your school Superintendent, ask questions, and keep informed about education in our town. Please feel free to stop by, where there will be an informal atmosphere with an open dialogue and no set agenda. The February session of "Donuts with Donna" are scheduled for Wednesday, February 25 from 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. at the Booth & Dimock Library on Main Street.



## STAY INFORMED - STAY INVOLVED

Do you know when the next Board of Education meeting is? Do you know that they are open to the public to attend? If you cannot make it in person you can watch it LIVE on Charter - Channel 13. Dates for regular Board meetings in 2009 are: January 8 & 29, February 12 & 26, March 12 & 26, April 7 & 30, May 14 & 28, June 11 & 25, July 9 & 30, August 13 & 27, September 10 & 24, October 8 & 29, November 12 and December 10. Unless noted on the agenda, all meetings are held in the Town Hall Annex Building and start at 7:30 p.m.



## Greetings From the Media Center! ~ Mr. Lowman

February is here and so are the new Nutmeg nominations. Students in 4th and 5th grade have voted for their favorite book and the results will be known very soon. Thanks to all our students who participated by reading these wonderful books. Sometime in March we will be talking about the 2010 books to 3rd, 4th and 5th graders. We already have

the books on hand and there are many great choices.

Speaking of awards, the 2008 Newberry Medal has been bestowed on The Graveyard Book by Neil Gaiman. This book was just released in the latter part of 2008 and has been critically praised. I recently read the story and very much enjoyed it. We hope to

have it in the library soon for interested students to read. All fans of scary stories will be fighting for this one.



## Nurse's Notes

Theresa Mckeever 742-4529

Burr! It's cold out there! As the mercury drops on the outside thermometer in February, I see more ill children in the health office at school. I do have some tips to help things run more smoothly in the event your child becomes ill:

- If your child has a fever, is vomiting, or has diarrhea please keep her/him home until that issue is resolved.
- Please notify the school of any changes in your contact information in case your child becomes ill, or has an accident at school.
- If your child requires medication (even over-the-counter) I *must* have a doctor's order and an adult *must* bring it to the health office in the original pharmacy labeled container.
- If your child must be absent from school, please contact the health office before 9:30am on the day of the absence. I do have voice-mail, so you can call anytime.

At this time I am not aware of any cases of head lice, but parents have asked about a picture. This site may be helpful: [pediatrics.about.com/od/headlice/ig/Head-Lice-Pictures/](http://pediatrics.about.com/od/headlice/ig/Head-Lice-Pictures/)



## From the Reading Room

~ Mrs. Sue Hansen~



### Reading More Purposefully

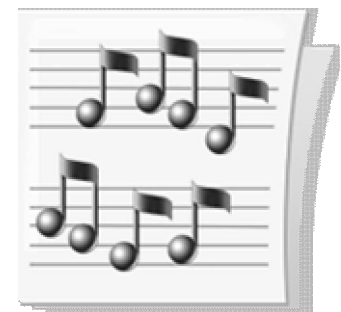
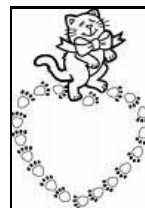
When adults read, they often make notes on what they are reading. Some people write notes in the margins. Others turn down the corners of pages, and use pens or highlighters to mark what they found interesting. Some people fill their books with sticky notes, even using different colors to mark different kinds of things. Providing bookmarks, sticky notes, and highlighters so that children can mark what they want to remember, what they find interesting, or what is confusing to them is a valuable and natural comprehension strategy. Children love using these tools, and read their texts with more enthusiasm and purpose when they have one of these ways of marking text.

## From the Music Room:

Mrs. Labelle



The music classes are busy singing Valentine songs and practicing use of music symbols.



**Thoughts on Love from the fourth grade:**



I think love brightens up your day. Morgan

Love to me is Valentine's Day, when it's all about love. Julia C.

To me love is strong, like someone or something. To love something you must respect it. If you abuse it, you don't love it. Shannon

What I think love means is when two people are together and they spend time together like going out to eat. Sloan

To me, love means a happy feeling. Orkan

Love is a strong emotion or connection between two people. Zach

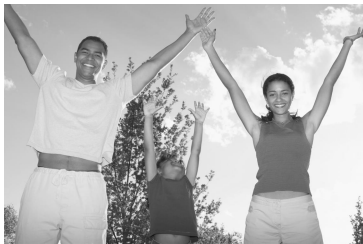
To me, love means friendship and kindness. It also means caring for each other. Nathaniel

Love to me is someone that is caring for me and like a light that brightens up your day with joy and happiness. The reason I think this is because when something sad has happened, when I think of love it makes me feel happy. Luke

Love to me means that someone cares about you, and that person never wants you to get hurt. Love also means to me that when you are away from a person you love your really miss them and you want them to come back home. Caitlin



**GHR PTO News**



**Next PTO Meetings! :**  
**Tuesdays**  
**02/10**  
**@ 7pm!**

Thank you for all the box top donations, Campbell's labels, and ink cartridges. These donations are a great asset to our school.

