



Friday, November 14, 2008

STRATTON SCENE

DATES TO REMEMBER:

November 12 – 14	Fall Book Fair
November 16 -22	American Education Week
November 20	Grade 3 Wax Museum
November 25	School Committee
November 26	Noon Dismissal – No Lunch Served
November 27 – 28	Thanksgiving Recess – No School
December 2-4	Parent-Teacher Conferences
December 16	Grade 2 field trip to Children's Museum
December 22	Holiday Concert – Town Hall

Dedicated to our Fabulous Fourth Graders

STRATTON SCHOOL PHONE NUMBERS

Main number	781-316-3760
Safe number (To call your child in tardy or absent)	781-316-3767
Information number (Recorded message of meeting dates, school closings and delayed openings)	781-316-3750
Nurse (Mrs. Benes)	781-316-3752
Secretary (Mrs. Fischer)	781-316-3753
Fax number	781-641-5454

Stratton Website:

<http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/Stratton/>

Arlington School Calendar Website:

<http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/calendar/default.asp>

For school cancellations, listen to WBZ News Radio 1030 or go to **www.town.arlington.ma.us**



Note: Lost & Found cartons are located in the Main Lobby.

Hi Everyone,

In keeping with the true spirit of the Thanksgiving season we would like to offer our most sincere and heartfelt appreciation to all of the people that help PTO, the Stratton community, and the students throughout the year. It constantly amazes us how large this list is, but here goes:

- Teachers and Staff, for taking such great care of our children (physically, emotionally, and intellectually)
- PTO and classroom volunteers
- Enrichment planner and participants
- Fundraisers and social planners
- Library helpers
- Food pantry, Holiday support-a-family, and Coats-for-kids volunteers
- Room parents and hospitality
- Classroom photocopiers
- Lunchroom volunteers (perhaps one of the most unnoticed, but invaluable groups!)
- Bakers and Buyers
- Habitat garden helpers
- Fifth grade safety patrol
- Mr. Brown and Mrs. Fisher
- ...and countless other who give of themselves every day.

From the Co-Presidents –Ms. Holt-Kane and Ms. Martin

Thank you!



Information about the Holiday-support-a-family will be coming out soon. This is a great way to get the whole family into the spirit of giving during these difficult economic times.

As you start to organize yourselves for the holiday season (given all of the free time we all have), keep in mind that we will be having a Stratton Community Yard Sale (In the planning stages for the early spring). Start to gather your junk/treasures.

Realizing how crazy the holidays can be, there will be no December PTO meeting. The next meeting will be January 7, 2009. Mark your calendars!

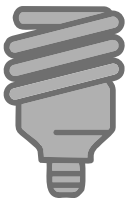
We have been truly amazed at the generosity of Stratton families and the community this year. It is overwhelming to experience the creativity, energy and involvement (in both time and financial contribution). In these hard economic times, we understand that every dollar donated to Stratton means less in everyone's pocket. And yet, people continue to give: Every minute, every dollar, every cookie, and every smile. Again, we thank you and feel honored to be a part of such an amazing group of people.

Have a safe and happy Thanksgiving and a wonderful holiday season,

Beth and Pam

Fundraising – Mr. Bernstein

Fundraising update



Monthly fundraising 'Plug' – I still have several boxes of 60W and 100W 'green' light bulbs – please contact me at morning dropoffs or otherwise if interested in buying any (\$5 per bulb).

PTO Election Day Bake Sale Big Success!



A huge thanks to all of you who helped out at the Election Day Bake Sale! The PTO made over \$1,200 net after all expenses! At least 40 families donated food, ranging from sweet breads and cookies to soups and lasagna. Three businesses donated goods: Mamadou's Artisan Bakery (Swanton St, Winchester) donated 70 loaves of bread, Sweet Sue's (Mass Ave near Mill St) donated over 3 dozen pastries, and Arlington Café (Summer St across from the ballfield/rec) donated pizzas. At least twenty Stratton parents and many kids helped staff the table over the course of the day. By mid afternoon the table had been completely sold clean! With much help from Lynn Horgan, and Susanne and Sheldon Friedman, we were able to start a second bake sale before the end of the afternoon. Sheldon made great use of the Stratton Kitchen and baked up lots of cookie dough and breads. Those, together with the pizzas brought in a significant amount of additional money.

In addition to raising significant money for Stratton, it was a wonderful community event. Lots of people stopped to chat and/or made small donations. Credit really goes to all of the volunteers – many hands make the job easy. Thank you from Saskia Oosting and Maura Shea Crowley (who put in a *huge* amount of effort and did a terrific job!)

Spook'd Event also a big success!

Over 45 families participated in Spook'ing friends and neighbors, and this new tradition raised over \$1,000. Huge thanks to Teresa Spangler and Peranders Lof for organizing this, putting in another *huge* effort, not to mention their nightly 2am and 4am expeditions out onto neighbors' lawns.

Opt-Out program – There has been great response already to the Opt-out and Membership programs – we're up to 55 families or about 20% participation. We'd like to get 100% participation, even if you can only contribute a few dollars. Thus we're keeping the program open for another few months (Opt-Out - \$150 donations (fully tax deductible), which then give you the right to abstain completely guilt-free from giving for the rest of the year; Membership \$25 or \$50 or whatever you can afford). If of interest, ask Joe Geiermann or any PTO Chair for a form or simply bring one of us a check made out to Stratton School PTO.

General Update

Continuing last month's theme, here is a second installment providing context around the what/when/why of PTO fundraising. For those who may have missed last month's Stratton Scene, a

quick recap. Last month I addressed -- How are our kids' educations enriched by PTO funds? Examples included supplemental books going right into the classrooms and special materials appropriate for cross-grade shared use. This month, I tackle a 2nd basic question that might be of interest -- Why isn't the School Budget paying for such things? Next month, I'll try to cover -- How does Stratton fundraising compare? I didn't get much feedback last month, but let me know if you have additional questions you'd like us to address.

This month - **Question #2 – Why isn't the Town School Budget paying for these nice things?**

As Ron Spangler and others have articulated, I think people have a general sense that budgets are tight around Arlington these days. But here are a couple of examples to make the point. In this current year's Town budget, Arlington and the School Board were forced to raise facilities use-fees pretty significantly; increase charges for extra-curricular activities, cut middle school electives like drama and music, and reduce staff by 13.5. Next year, the Town and the School Board will face even harder choices. Mr. Brown is given a very small discretionary budget to pay for a few supplemental supplies and materials, but these funds don't stretch far at all into our childrens' school lives.



There are many many things around the school that Mr. Brown, the staff and the teachers are not buying because of these tight budgets. Every teacher in the school would love to have funds to further supplement the core educational materials. Another example – when teachers come back from professional development seminars, they'd love to be able to implement the new ideas they bring back with them. But this requires money. Thus the PTO and our fundraising efforts.

Fundraising events and updates

- **Gift Wrap campaign** – Was a nice success. General feedback has been that Meadow Farms offers a little less diversity of giftwrap options, but a greater set of other options. Profit back to the school worked out to be about the same as we had received in previous years from Innisbrook. If you have opinions or preferences about the company we should use next year, please let me know.

Enrichment –Mrs. Weaver and Mr. Geiermann

This has been a beautiful fall season. I love the fall. I love sweaters, apples, hot cider pumpkin pie, and yes I love that it gets dark before suppertime. The Pumpkin Carving was a hit as usual. Lucky Bob got some great reviews from kids and parents alike. The kids loved that he involved the crowd, regardless of age. And the parents loved that he kept the kids attention for 30 minutes. Gabriela Mistral, with Historical Perspectives, also received favorable reviews. A couple of teachers responded to my request for feedback and they seemed pleased. A few parents emailed me with a report that their child really enjoyed her. My children, however, had to be given the 3rd degree in order to get any information about the assembly out of them. So go figure. . .

On slate for this month:

1st grade is going to see the play Henry and Ramona on November 12.

3rd grade has Mad Science coming on November 14th to do a "Good Vibrations" Sound Workshop.

4th grade just saw Henry and Ramona at the Arlington Center for the Arts on November 7th and on the 14th of November they will go to the Blue Hills Observatory for a Weather Watchers and Kite Making workshops. I did this last year with them and despite the fact that we were socked in with fog, it was a really great program, so I know the kids will enjoy it.



A few members of the Enrichment Committee (Marian Tomusiak, Marilyn Oberhardt and Maura Rooney – all much more science minded than myself) met to discuss and plan a Science Night. We will definitely need a lot of volunteers for the evening to be a success, so if you are interested,

please contact Taryn at XXX.XXX@XXX.XXX or Joe at XXX.XXX@XXX.XXX. We'll have a meeting to go over each station or experiment and the evening will be 2 hours of science fun. Please get involved. Thanks.

Stratton Scene – Mrs. Mateos

The remaining issues of the Stratton Scene will be published according to the following schedule:

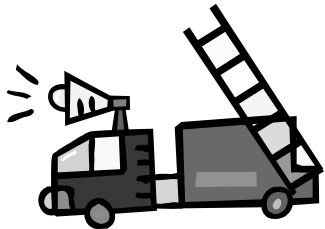
<u>Issue Date</u>	<u>Editor</u>
Dec 12	Mary Sprague
Jan 16	Mary Sprague
Feb 13	Terri Brosius
Mar 13	Kalyani Seth
Apr 10	Steve Roels
May 15	Steve Roels
June 12	Grace Mateos

Please contact each month's editor directly if you have any questions about articles for a month's Scene. You can always contact me as well at XXX.XXX@XXX.XXX or XXX.XXX.XXXX.

FROM THE CLASSROOM

Kindergarten News –Mrs. Satlak-Mott, Mrs. Magalhaes, Mrs. Gigliotti, Ms. Leblanc (teachers); Mrs. Laiosa, Ms. Peterson, Mr. Cooney (assistant teachers)

The Kindergarteners have been working hard this fall! We continue to talk about our Community and the many people who work hard to help keep our community safe! Our field trip to the Arlington Fire Station and the Robbins Library was a great success!

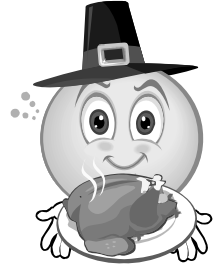


The children enjoyed visiting with the firemen and taking a closer look at the big fire trucks! We also enjoyed touring the Robbins Library and learning about all of the wonderful

resources that the public library has to offer us! We would also like to thank the many parents who have taken the time out of their busy schedules to come into the classrooms to teach the children about their jobs!

As the Thanksgiving holiday approaches, the kindergarteners will be focusing on the topics of Pilgrims, Native Americans and being thankful for family and friends. We will engage in a variety of art and literacy activities as we learn about how the Pilgrims and Native Americans use to live. We will also discuss the importance of being grateful as we learn to respect and be thankful for our family members and friends who help and love us each day. We hope that all families enjoyed decorating the family turkey projects and we are excited to display the finished turkeys for our upcoming Harvest Feast. Each classroom will celebrate Thanksgiving with a Harvest Feast on Wednesday, November 26th. Your child's

teacher will send home more information regarding this anticipated event!



In Math, the children have been finishing up the unit on patterns and moving towards a new concept of counting, collecting and measuring. The children have been diligently practicing their rote counting skills, number recognition and writing the numbers 0-10. We practice these skills by using a variety of materials such as unifex cubes, pattern blocks, counters, stencils, dry erase boards and a variety of math games! Parents can help support math skills by practicing counting, number recognition and handwriting at home.

The kindergarteners continue to learn the alphabet with our *FUN*dations Phonics programs. We want to thank parents for supporting children with their letter of the week homework. The children are moving right along and have been working hard at learning the letters and sounds of each letter. We are also learning new sight words (word wall words) each week! Our literacy activities include: being "letter" and "sight word" detectives using highlighters, sorting and discriminating between the beginning sounds of words, reading poetry and "big books" with familiar text, and playing literacy games such as *FUN*dations Bingo! The children have also been working hard at learning the proper handwriting formation of letters as they use the "sky", "plane", "grass" and "worm" lines as their guide. These literacy activities will help to build the foundation necessary as the children prepare for their exciting journey into the world of reading!

During writing workshop the children have been using their knowledge of letters and letter sounds as they begin to "stretch out" words and write down the sounds that they hear. We have begun writing in our journals about real life events and we hope to work our way towards writing stories with a beginning, middle and end!

Grade 1 News – Mrs. Abbott, Mrs. Forse and Mrs. Pratt

Did you enjoy any of the Ramona Books by Beverly Cleary when you were younger? Our first graders are certainly laughing out loud as we read about the adventures that Ramona encounters. We are looking forward to seeing the performance at the Arlington Center for the Arts on November 13th.

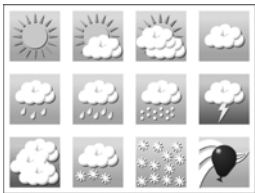
As we approach the end of the first term, our first graders are making tremendous progress in reading. They are working hard to master their trick words, and identifying digraphs (sh, th, ck, ch, and wh) in reading and writing.

Every Friday the students are writing and illustrating during Writer's Workshop.

The first graders are really stepping up as they meet the challenges of solving story problems involving combining and separating (+ and -). The children are expected to demonstrate their strategies for solving the problems. They are learning to use a rubric, which states:

1. the answer with a label (5 cats)
2. the equation. $3+2=5$ cats
3. a labeled picture. OOO OO 3 cats 2 cats
4. a sentence explaining their thinking (I know $2 + 2$ is 4 so 1 more is 5).

The students are becoming more familiar with the process, and parents can provide support at home by reviewing with their student that all four items are included as they review the homework.



Weather in New England is always exciting, as the first graders are learning this October and November. First-grade meteorologists are observing the changing weather patterns in

our area. We have certainly seen some changing temperatures over the last six weeks, as the students have learned to record, graph, and summarize weather features, including cloud cover, precipitation, wind, and temperature. The children are learning to read a thermometer, a difficult skill for many 6-and 7-year-olds as it involves counting by two's. The children are exposed to many opportunities to practice. For example, we measured, recorded, and compared the temperature inside the classroom and outside. In upcoming lessons, we will do simple experiments with thermometers, study types of clouds, and learn about the water cycle.

We are working very hard and appreciate all the support that our wonderful families give. We have much to be thankful for! Happy Thanksgiving to all!

Grade 2 News – Mrs. Daley, Mrs. Shediak, and Ms. Brambilla

Hello! Hola! Bonjour!

The 2nd graders spent most of October learning about early North American explorers, with a focus on Columbus. This unit was a great introduction to our next unit on the geography of the world. We learned the names of the seven continents and five oceans of the world. Second graders also learned where they live in the world, becoming familiar with vocabulary such as continent, country, state, and town. Students can identify where on the globe they live.



Second graders also had the opportunity to research a country from which their families have ancestral ties. These posters are hanging proudly in the 2nd grade hallway and will be presented to parents at World Fest, which is scheduled for Wednesday, December 17th.

Once we established an overall view of the world, the 2nd graders embarked on a tour of the world. As we explore each of the continents, we are learning about some of the countries within each continent, the topography, including important mountains, rivers and deserts, climate, plants and animals, and some of the cultures. While visiting Asia, we will focus on Japan. We have acquired some wonderful kits from the Boston Children's Museum full of authentic Japanese artifacts, clothing, and books, and will take a field trip to the Japanese house at the Children's Museum on Tuesday, December 16th.



In math, we have just finished our unit on money. Second graders learned to identify coins and their associated values, as well as bills to \$10. They learned to count money efficiently, how to trade coins. We also learned how to make change from a dollar. This is a difficult skill. Please continue to practice using money at home with your child.

Our next math unit will focus on geometry. We will learn the names and attributes of shapes, as well as the relationship between shapes. We will also begin exploring arrays.

In writing, we are practicing editing and revising our writing, with a focus on Ideas, Conventions, Organization, and Word Choice. The second graders really showed their creativity by writing scary Halloween

stories. We will continue with fictional writing using authors as mentors.

Conferences will be December 2, 3, 4. If you have not already done so, sign up on-line for a conference on-line from the Arlington Public Schools website: www.arlington.k12.ma.us/parentconferences.

The second grade teachers would like to wish all the families a happy and relaxing Thanksgiving.

Grade 3 News –Mrs. Trottier, Mrs. Mullen, Mrs. Barth, and Mrs. Lees

The third grade has been extremely busy over the last few weeks. At the time of press, the students have been working diligently on their biography reports and speeches. Based on the fine results of the students' rough drafts we expect to see amazing results on their published pieces. The children did a great job meeting the due dates of their first long-term project in the third grade. Many children visited multiple websites to locate additional information on their figures. We are very impressed with the success of their biography report/research project. The Wax Museum will certainly be a day the third graders will not forget. Our wonderful room parents have organized a breakfast for the day and we are thankful for your kindness!

During the week of Halloween we visited the Jason Russell House. We learned a great deal about our community's history and heritage as we explored the 18th century home. The children heard about famous figures from Arlington, were im-



pressed about the process of making wool clothing and enjoyed creating their own bracelets. We also took a short walking tour through Arlington center learning the significance of the gravestone symbols at the town cemetery. The children even chose tombstones to create gravestone rubbings. We would like to say a big "thank you" to our parent chaperones.

The third graders have finally been introduced to the long awaited multiplication. The unit titled, "Things That Come in Groups", focuses on the relationship between multiplication and division so that they will become experts on factors and multiples and play games using arrays. We started with the "easier" fact tables; zero's, one's, two's, fives', and ten's, before we leap into the more "challenging" facts. Just as the

children studied their addition and subtraction flash cards each night, it will be important for them to continue studying their multiplication (and later in the year, division) flash cards.

In light of our biography project, our classes have been reading a variety of biographies during our reading block. Students have learned that there is a female baseball great nicknamed "Babe" and we read about Disney and

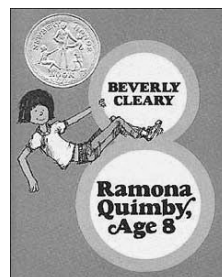


Peanuts artist, Bill Melendez. The students have also read about the lives of Louis Armstrong, Rosa Parks, The Wright Brothers, Henry Ford, and presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama. Throughout the reading of these stories, students have practiced their skills in evaluating the author's viewpoint and developing questions about the text to better understand and organize the information. The students are becoming experts at our six focus strategies: wondering, guessing, picturing, noticing, figuring out, and connecting. We have answered open response questions to assess students' understanding of these reading strategies and have continued developing ideas and strategies for quality writing in response to literature.

Not only have the children in our rooms been reading up a storm, we have been writing furiously as well. The children are becoming more comfortable using the "larger" dictionaries in class to help edit their writing pieces. It is obvious that looking for guide words on Tuesday night's spelling homework is paying off. Using the thesaurus is another important tool that is used during Writers' Workshop. We have "outlawed" certain bland words from our writing pieces, such as "big," "nice" "fun," "awesome," and "cool." Instead, students are using the thesaurus to choose more descriptive vocabulary.

Grade 4 News – Ms. Marshall and Ms. Leonard

We are off and running in fourth grade. We have done a lot of great work and fabulous activates thus far and we have more terrific things on the horizon.



On Friday November 7, 2008 we attended the ACA production of *Henry and Ramona*. Two of our wonderful fourth graders, Ella Necheles and Isabella Laiosa ap-

peared and they gave fantastic performances. This coming Friday, the fourth grade will be going to Blue Hills Observatory. We will be taking a tour and studying different tools used for measuring and recording weather. In addition we learn a brief history of weather and meteorology. It was a great success last year and we look forward to it being a great day this year.

In math, we are continuing our study of arrays. This unit not only helps students review their multiplication facts but it is an extension of what we have learned about factors and multiples. We will be using the array manipulatives to introduce the concept of the distributive property. This unit, although it may appear simple to some, helps students to learn and develop complex math concepts such as, the distributive property, the commutative property, area and perimeter, and factors and multiples. Please make sure your student is reviewing their multiplication facts because we will be starting long division in the beginning of December.

In language arts, the students have been doing a great job using the six comprehension strategies. It is helping them to think deeply about what they are reading, as well as giving them tools to help them talk and write about what they are reading. We have been using a combination of short stories, excerpts from texts and whole novels to practice these skills. Their progress is truly impressive.

The students have been working hard on their five paragraph essays in writing. We have been taking a long time and going through the process of developing and creating a five paragraph essay. There is a particular focus on the structure of the essay. We are also encouraging the students to stretch their word choice and take risks using strong words in their writing. We look forward to reading the resulting essays.

We will soon be starting our study of landforms and bodies of water. In this unit the students will learn about the different landforms and bodies of water, where they usually occur and how they affect the ways of life of the people living around them.

Also, in honor of Veterans Day, the students will be writing letters to active duty soldiers serving our country. We feel that this assignment gives the students a sense of the sacrifices some people make for our country and also brightens the days of those brave men and women who receive our letters. This activity also gives the students practice in their letter writing skills.

Keep an eye out for our Fourth Grade P.R.I.D.E bulletin board. On it you will see pictures of fourth graders showing P.R.I.D.E.

Grade 5 News – Mrs. Gaffey, Ms. Carbone, and Ms. Staley

The weather certainly seems to be getting colder. The patrol leaders have had to bundle up to stay warm! Patrol leaders are still in their first cycle, although a few people may be hoping for a change. Despite the impending winter, most of the students have eagerly volunteered for this extra responsibility. The students have been doing a great job. We are all truly grateful to our dedicated patrol leaders!

By the time this goes to print, some of us will be almost through the November Book Project. Students



were asked to select a fiction text, which they would then use to create a newspaper. During this process, students will have the opportunity to explore the many facets of creating a newspaper. They will create

their own newspaper to actual size, and it will include the following items: title/name of newspaper and date, summary article, character article, advice column, book review, advertisement, as well as one "extra" item. All of the space will be filled as a true newspaper would. The rubric given is designed to direct the focus of the project; however, it will be fascinating to see how each student will make it their own. This is a real opportunity to let creative juices flow!

In **Math** we have completed our Prime Time unit. We will now focus on **Fractions, Decimals, and Percents**. This is a longer unit, dense in content. Throughout this unit we will build upon previously learned material as well as explore new concepts. Identifying a fraction as part of a whole is the foundation for this unit. Many times students struggle with fractions because it is difficult for them to grasp this concept. Making home/ life connections to fractions, decimals, and percents is vital for success in this unit. Talk to your children and discuss with them what they think a fraction is. Show them how you visualize fractions. I'll ask students for examples from home to help reinforce the connection between school and home. We will also continue to spend time each week working on strengthening our division and multiplication skills.

In **Social Studies** our most recent peek into America's story has sent us back in time...way back in time, to the discovery of America. Students began their study by learning about the Viking Explorers, the greatest sailors and adventurers of the Middle Ages. They are now well into their study of exploration and are learning about the great explorers of the world. In class, students will research using expository text in order to learn more about the contributions of these famous explorers. After we study explorers, we will move on to the colonization of America!

In **Science**, students are secure in their understanding of life in different biomes. They have completed their research papers and posters on wetlands, rainforests, grasslands, tundras, deserts, and forests. As we all know, our fifth graders were fortunate enough to spend four days at Alton Jones Science Camp, where they experienced first-hand, life in a temperate forest biome. We will continue to follow the flow of energy as we look ahead to animal and plant classification and adaptations. The students will be working together in class to research and gather information about different plant and animal species.

Our work in all other curriculum areas is progressing nicely. Our vocabulary programs continue to widen our word choices as they relate to our writing program. Students are consistently utilizing Wordly Wise words in both their oral and written expressions, and are excited about their expanding repertoire of words! They have worked through eight of the twenty word lists in the curriculum thus far. You

can hear whispers of "Nice use of Wordly Wise Word" in unison in our end of the hallway. Many parents will share at conference that they too are hearing this familiar phrase in the car, and at the dinner table. Writing is underway in many different formats. Open-response in Social Studies studies, journal writing, and Writers' Workshop. We are beginning to see styles of writing evolve. In the upcoming month students will continue to work on their letter writing skills, and will start descriptive writing.

The fifth grade class would also like to thank those parents who bravely volunteered to be chaperons for 5th Grade Science Camp at Alton Jones: Betsy Rose, David Martin, Bess Deck, Denise Jones, Doug Weaver, Phil Bauman, Betsy Riley, Jess DeFeo, Laura Jodoin, Jim Scutti, Mary Hull-McSweeney, Dushyant Sahani, Will Donham, Ferriss Donham, Youssef Saleh, and Ginny Griffin—you are AMAZING!!! Additionally, parents should be aware that in order to schedule parent/teacher conferences they must sign up online starting Monday November 10th.

The Stratton Scene is the Stratton School's monthly newsletter. It is edited by a rotating group of editors, each of whom oversees the production of one or more issues of the Stratton Scene. This issue was edited by Cheryl Sweeney. The December 12 issue will be edited by Mary Sprague.