



Friday, October 10, 2008

STRATTON SCENE

DATES TO REMEMBER:

October 13	Columbus Day – No School
October 14	School Committee
October 14	Early Release Day – 1:00 pm Dismissal, Lunch Served
October 22	Town-wide ACE Open House – Stratton Cafeteria – 7:00 – 8:30 pm
October 24	Pumpkin Carving 6:30 – 8:30 pm
October 28	School Committee
October 28 – 31	5 th Grade Alton Jones Camp
November 4	Professional Day – No School
November 5	Picture Retake Day
November 5	PTO Meeting 7:00 pm
November 11	Veterans' Day – No School
November 12 – 14	Fall Book Fair
November 16 -22	American Education Week
November 25	School Committee
November 26	Noon Dismissal – No Lunch Served
November 27 – 28	Thanksgiving Recess – No School

Welcome Back Issue

STRATTON SCHOOL PHONE NUMBERS

Main number	781-316-3760
Safe number	781-316-3767
(To call your child in tardy or absent)	
Information number	781-316-3750
(Recorded message of meeting dates, school closings and delayed openings)	
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.

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

Mr. Brown

The opening of the 2008-'09 school year at Stratton went quite well. The children shifted from the casualness of summer into the structure of school almost immediately. Granted, the presence of full face smiles was limited for a day or two or three or ..., however the upside of things eventually kicked in and it became easier and easier to coax a cheerful countenance. The initial writing projects at the various grade levels produced an assorted sampling of summer adventures with a wonderful array of descriptive words to guide the reader.

There are a few projects in the works supportive of the community. Over the past few years Stratton has participated in the Safe Routes program that encourages families to walk to school. A few years past Nina Martorana was the parent coordinator of walk

to school activities. Recently, Lenore Wadman has taken the reins of that project. Over the past year and a half Arlington's Traffic Advisory Council (TAC) has been meeting with Stratton to review the state of traffic about the school and walking routes immediately around the school including main paths from the surrounding neighborhood. A detailed map was created to display the results of that review. The initial result of that project was to identify streets and crossing places that needed clearer signage. Once that was done a presentation was made to the Arlington Board of Selectmen for approval of those recommendations. Soon after the recommended work was completed.



The Stratton Safe Routes committee has applied to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation's Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Assessment Program. This assessment will provide recommended improvements to enhance walking to school. As described above, Stratton's Safe Routes committee evaluates the roadways and sidewalks that lead to and from the Stratton. I am sure that report will provide much guidance to the appraisal. The town of Arlington is also identifying sidewalks in need of repair and instances where sidewalks are needed.

At the start of this school year parking restrictions were posted on Mountain Avenue and Pheasant Street. This has made the morning drop off less congested immediately around the school. However, parents are reporting that a few side streets are now more congested. I recommended that Stratton's Safe Routes committee meet in the month of October to continue the work described above and to provide up-to-date information on committee activities. It will also be a time for Stratton parents to share thoughts and observations. I will inform everyone of that meeting as soon as the date is set.

This year's Holiday Concert will be at Town Hall. The date is December 22nd with a snow date of December 23rd. Having the event at Town Hall will allow the whole Stratton community to view and participate in the program together. (The past few years we needed to break the program into two sessions.) We will need some parent volunteers to help support this project. The tasks involve moving equipment into place in preparation and then breaking down afterwards. It will not be a lot to do but a team will be



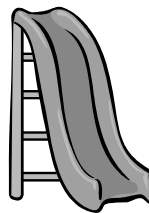
needed to do it quickly. It is our intention to have refreshments prior to start of the concert for the adults. A team of volunteers will also be needed to set up and break down the refreshment area. And, if there is a volunteer who is willing to assume the role of "event liaison" working closely with me and Becky Kaplan – the music teacher – please let me know soon. I believe this has the potential to be a great community event and a thrill for the children.

FROM THE PTO

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

How can it be October already?

It seems that just a few days ago we were asking each other "how was your summer?" and here we are at the beginning of fall. The "new school year jitters" have given way to the hum of a well oiled machine. It still amazes us how our children (and parents) seem to thrive on the structure of the school day! It doesn't take long for even the kindergarteners to learn the new routines and the ever popular Mr. Rufo saying, "You get what you get and you don't get upset!"



The children were even more excited to come back to school because of the new playground which has been such an amazing addition to a truly tremendous school. It is fantastic to see large groups of parents and children hanging around playing and chatting well

after the school day has ended. Kudos to all of the parents and community members who helped us bring this project to fruition.

Thank you to this year's 5th grade Safety Patrol leaders! We appreciate your dedication and hard work. It is lovely to be greeted with cheerful smiles and enthusiastic "Good Mornings!" Remember to thank them for their efforts (and remind them not to wrestle!) Keep up the good work 5th graders!

Start planning for Pumpkin Carving! This popular family night will take place on Friday, October 24th, from 6:30-8:30. One suggestion: pre-gut (is that a word? Maybe un-gloop? De-yuck?) your pumpkins at home the day before so you will have plenty of time to create your masterpieces and enjoy the other events that evening. Entertainment this year will be Lucky Bob (NOT Sideshow Bob) juggler and magician extraordinaire. (You can check him out at www.luckyshow.net.) If you are interested in help-

ing out contact Kathleen Harris at kathleen.harris1@verizon.net.

This year we had School Council elections for 4 open council seats. Luckily we had four qualified and enthusiastic nominees. The election results are as follows:

- 2 year term: Chuck Hannon and Gary Kane
- 1 year term: Paul Morrison
- PTO liaison: Bill Grubb

Congratulations to all of our candidates and thank you for serving on the School Council.



We welcome everyone to attend our monthly PTO meetings, usually held on the first Wednesday of the month. If you can't make a meeting please feel free to contact either of us at home:

Pam 641-4296 or holtkane@verizon.net
Beth 646-6889 or dber.martin@verizon.net

We are still looking for:

- Senior Volunteer Coordinator
- Volunteer coordinators for grades 1, 3 and 5 (we have K, 2 and 4 coordinators)
- Habitat Garden

Thanks to the many families who have already contributed Opt-Out/membership dues. The response to this new program has been very favorable and we have already exceeded last year's membership funds. **These donations are tax deductible and are eligible for a matching donation from many employers.** We are striving for 100% participation in this area where the funds are used for the betterment of your children's educational experience. Learn more about this in the Fundraising article.

Oh, one more thing, if you have not already done so, please update (or, for new families, register) your family information to be included in the Stratton Directory. The website for this information is https://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/pto_directory/

Lastly and most importantly: GO RED SOX!!!!

Fundraising – Mr. Bernstein

Monthly fundraising 'Plug' – Election Bake Sale: We'd love help taking advantage of what might be a pretty good turnout on election day. Let me know if you can volunteer to bake and/or cover the table on the day.

General Update

Whenever I'm asked to give money, I'm less perturbed by it if I have some sense of context – what, when, why, etc. So in that spirit, I'd like to try over the next few months to provide some such context. In particular, I think 3 basic questions might be of interest. 1) How are our kids' educations enriched by PTO funds? 2) Why isn't the School Budget paying for those things? 3) How does Stratton compare? Let me know if you have additional questions you'd like us to address.

This month – Question #1: How are our children's educations enriched by PTO funds?

PTO contributions fund a long list of activities and supplemental materials: author visits, wingmaster assembly, mini-grants for teachers, new teachers' grants, math night, ice cream social, etc. Fundamentally, our contributions enable supplementing of the core educational materials. If there were no PTO funds, our children would receive a decent education, classrooms would have decent materials, etc. However, PTO-funded materials bring richness, depth, and breadth.



A couple of examples – Mr. Brown has a strong belief that books need to be accessible – ie, not just in the Library but also in the classroom. It is important, maybe even critical to our children's ability to learn, to have supplemental materials right at hand, right in the moment for students. PTO funds make this possible at Stratton (and other schools in the District are now following suit.)



Similarly, Stratton puts strong emphasis on reinforcing themes across grades. PTO funds make it possible for teachers to buy materials and resources appropriate for cross-grade shared use.

If you have "colorful" examples of PTO funds enriching our children's educations, let me know and we'll include them in this column in future months. Mr. Brown and the teachers are also considering efforts in the spring to highlight PTO-funded materials in the classrooms.

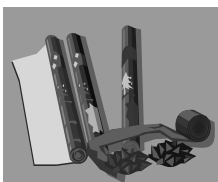
Fundraising events and updates

- **Town Day success** – 23! great volunteers ran a Stratton booth around Stratton Pride and Stratton going green – thus the theme of Bulbs and Bulbs. We raised more money than we expected (about

\$500). And we still have some light bulbs left over. Contact me if interested in buying any (\$5 per bulb.)

- **Opt-out experiment** – Many parents have complained that the PTO nickels and dimes families throughout the school year. In response, this fall we are testing a new approach: an Opt-Out program for those who prefer to fulfill their PTO fundraising obligations all at once at the beginning of the school year. We are asking for \$150 donations (fully tax deductible), which then give you the right to abstain completely guilt-free from giving for the rest of the year (though we do ask that you continue to volunteer for PTO events throughout the year.) If of interest, ask any PTO Chair for a form or simply bring one of us a check made out to Stratton School PTO.

- **Gift Wrap campaign** – The fundraiser should be finished by the time you are reading this. We switched to a new company this year (Meadow Farms – better catalogue, more profit back to the school).



- **New idea around Halloween** – Look for more on this in the coming weeks.

Enrichment – Mrs. Weaver and Mr. Geiermann

Welcome back, Stratton! Another year has kicked off with a smooth start. The Enrichment Committee has had its first meeting of the year and we are so fortunate to have such involved and caring parents in our school community.

Just a quick thanks to the Enrichment grade volunteers this year. These are the enrichment reps that will work with the teachers to bring programs to their respective grades.

We have for 1st grade – Michelle Jacobo, 2nd grade – Saskia Oosting, 3rd grade – Maura Rooney, 4th grade – Kathleen Harris, and 5th grade – Ann-Mer Slebodnick. Thank you so very much.

We are still looking for someone to do Kindergarten. If anyone is interested, please email Taryn Weaver at xxxx@xxxx.com or Joe Geiermann at xxxx@xxxx.com.

This fall we had a school wide assembly from **Historical Perspectives**. This group is based in Chicago but has troupes all over the country. They put together a “one man show” of different historical figures. The historical character who visited us was

Gabriela Mistral. She was a Chilean teacher and poet who became the first Latina to be awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1945. This assembly was presented on **Tuesday, October 7th at 9am**.

First grade will be going on a field trip to the Stone Zoo to enjoy a bats program. They are studying bats this month and just in time for Halloween! This field trip will be in October.



The 3rd grade enjoyed a mapping and geography program on the 3rd and 4th of Oct by our own stellar Stratton parent, Marilyn Oberhardt. Thank you Marilyn! This is the fourth year running for Marilyn’s mapping programs and the kids and teachers alike love it.

Finally, on October 24th we will have our annual Pumpkin Carving and we have a street performer and magician coming to entertain the kids in the gym. His name is Lucky Bob and you can check him out at www.luckybob.com.

That’s all for this month. But we do have a Science Night in the planning stages for the spring. If there are any science minded or non science minded folks who would love to get involved in Science Night at Stratton, email Taryn or Joe (see above addresses) and join us for a meeting in November (date and time tbd.)

Fall Book Fair – Mrs. Rodd

Please join us for the Fall Book Fair at Stratton, Wednesday Nov. 12 through Friday Nov. 14. This is a fundraising event for literacy programs at Stratton and just in time for holiday book giving! Students will visit the Book Fair with their teacher or library class. Fair hours will be Wednesday 8-3, Thursday 7:15-3 and Friday 7:15-3. As in past years we’ll need volunteer support during the fair; please contact Leanne Rodd at 781-xxx-xxxx (xxxx@xxxx.com) if you are able to help.



Arlington Educational Enrichment Fund (AEEF) – Ms. Briggett and Mrs. Moses

Hopefully people got a chance to stop by the AEEF booth at Town Day. We gave out gummy worms as part of our worm celebration! We were showcasing one of the projects we funded last year: a worm composting bin that the kindergarteners at Hardy worked on.

Which brings us to the important news: the next AEEF grant cycle is coming up!

Applications will be available on our website (www.aeeef-arlington.org) in mid-October and due on November 11. We're looking for innovative and creative projects to fund (e.g. the Stratton Pride program got off the ground thanks to an AEEF grant). This cycle has no limit in terms of amount funded from each school. Stratton teachers, administrators and parents are encouraged to apply. If anyone has any questions, please feel free to call or e-mail me (xxxx@xxxx.com).

Stratton Scene – Mrs. Mateos

Thank you to all of the editors who have signed up to work on the Stratton Scene this year. We welcome Kalyani Seth as a new member of our committee. We also thank our returning editors Terri Brosius, Steve Roels, Mary Sprague, and Cheryl Sweeney.



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

<u>Issue Date</u>	<u>Editor</u>
Nov 14	Cheryl Sweeney
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 xxxx@xxxx.com or 781-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)

All of our new kindergartners are making excellent progress in their adjustments to their new routines. Some of our new routines include our daily work board, meeting our Art, Library, Music and Physical Education specialists, eating lunch in school and making new friends. Each kindergarten classroom has established classroom rules and introduced the children to Open



Circle (our social skills program). Additionally, we began our school by reviewing colors and shapes with some formal instruction on simple patterns. We also began FUNdations, our formal phonics program which was introduced during our second week of school. Thus far the children have met Mother Echo and Baby Echo, our two FUNdations owls who will be helping us all year with our great phonics adventures. Our daily FUNdations activities include drilling all of the introduced letters using our letter-picture-sound cards as well as practicing the lower case letter formation for each of the introduced letters. We are well into our first FUNdations unit with seven letters in our budding repertoires. FUNdations Unit I will last for twelve weeks. All twenty-six lower case letters will be introduced. Our classrooms are also supporting the FUNdations format with letter of the week activities.

With great anticipation and a re-schedule due to rain, the kindergartens will be traveling to Honey Pot Orchard for our first field trip. Bus transportation for the children will be provided through the generosity of the Stratton PTO. Because of the high interest in apple picking, this field trip is open to anyone who wishes to come. For the price of admission (and their own transportation) interested parents, siblings and relatives are also welcome. Several of our center activities for the past few weeks have included an apple "flavor" to them. We have painted paper apples; taste tested three different kinds/colors of apples and learned an apple poem – to name a few!



As we begin October, our theme will shift to pumpkins, spiders, bats and skeletons. Columbus Day and Halloween will be discussed and celebrated. Our Halloween celebration will include a costume parade. The children will certainly be doing lots of thinking and learning about the new fall season.

Finally, thanks to all of the parents who so generously contributed supplies to our kindergarten rooms. We appreciate your generosity every day. We would also like to thank everyone who attended our parent curriculum night. It was great to have such a successful turn out. Thanks also for your amazing children. We are off to a wonderful start to our school year.

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

BATTEN' down the hatches! Our cross-curricular thematic unit on bats has begun! This unit includes

many exciting activities in science, reading, writing, and art. Here are some of the facts that the children are learning: Bats are the only mammals that can fly. Some bats use echolocation to navigate at night and to locate their prey. Bats are beneficial to people and the environment. Ask a first grader more facts about bats!

In October, we will be taking a trip to the Stone Zoo to learn more about bats. We will have a thirty-minute presentation and a visit to the bat exhibit. Each class will be asking for parent chaperones. A letter will be sent home or has already been sent requesting chaperones.

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 will learn to record, graph, and summarize weather features, including cloud cover, precipitation, wind, and temperature. The children will also learn in this unit how to read a thermometer, a difficult skill for many 6- and 7-year-olds as it involves counting by two's. The children will be exposed to many opportunities to practice. For example, we will measure, record, and compare the temperature inside the classroom and outside. In upcoming lessons, we will do experiments with thermometers and rain gauges and study different types of clouds.



We are continuing with our Foundations unit. We finished the review unit that covered letter identification, sound and formation. Please make sure that you continue to practice these skills at home. All of your extra effort will help your child become a better reader. Our current unit is focusing on tapping out and spelling three letter words.

Work Board time has begun! During this time, children practice skills independently while the teacher pulls small reading groups. Please make sure that your child is reading each night and reading and returning any books that are sent home from their reading group. Read, read and read!!!



Our first math unit called Building Number Sense has begun. This unit is focused on understanding how numbers can be made from other numbers and making number combinations. For example, 6 can be made from 3 and 3

or 4 and 2. We will do many activities and play games that emphasize these ideas. These games will be sent home for homework. Keep the games in a safe place and play them often.

Later in the unit the children will begin to solve addition and subtraction story problems. Each student will be encouraged to find their own strategies to solve these problems using math manipulatives (cubes, counters), drawing pictures or using words.

Thank you for coming to the Open House. We hope that you found the information helpful. If you have any other questions please contact your teacher. Keep up the good work at home. We truly appreciate your support and all the effort you put forth. Have a wonderful October!

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

We would like to welcome back all the second graders, as we look forward to a wonderful year of learning together, and we would also like to formally welcome our new second grade teacher Miss Brambilla. The first few days of school were spent establishing rules and expectations of the second grade, and each classroom has discussed routines and procedures which will be important in ensuring every child is provided with an optimal learning environment. The children seem to be adjusting to all of these changes well after the relaxed schedule of the summer. It takes all of us a little while to get back in to the school routine!



In order to help the children maximize their learning, we would like to suggest an early bedtime, (8pm is appropriate for children of this age), a healthy breakfast before school, a snack packed for mid-morning and reminders about your own behavior expectations while children are in school. Please remind children that it is now moving in to cooler weather, and all children should have a jacket or sweatshirt at school every day. If we can collaborate on your children's education, we can only expect great things!

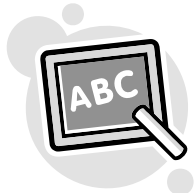
We have already leaped in to our first thematic curriculum unit, the Lifecycle of the Frog. This unit of study has been our focus for science: lifecycles are an important theme in the Massachusetts frameworks for second grade. This unit will be integrated into other areas of the curriculum, giving us a "theme". In Language Arts we are reading the wonderful work of Arnold Lobel, as two friends Frog and Toad have

simple, humorous adventures which the second graders can relate to and enjoy. Second graders will be asked to examine the stories closely, looking carefully at character development, beginning, middle and end of stories, and how they can make self to text connections with the situations and the characters. This unit will culminate with the children writing their own Frog and Toad stories.



In writer's workshop, our focus is weaving the six traits of writing with small moment writing. We are learning how to take a main idea, add details to it and remember all our conventions! The second graders are enthusiastic about their writing and as the year progresses we look forward to some creative pieces.

Our phonics and spelling program Foundations started during the first week of school and you have probably already noticed that much of the children's homework involves support from this program. Every other week a letter will be sent home to the parents explaining what skills we are currently learning and reviewing. It is critical that you take the time to read this, as it will help you in understanding the work the children are doing at home.



In Math, we are reviewing some of the basic addition and subtraction facts through 20. We would like the children to achieve automaticity with these skills; practicing these at home can help with this. This can be done playing games, using flashcards or simple review on the way to a soccer game! You will see some card games coming home as homework, but these can be used any time to practice math at home. We are working on reviewing our doubles and near doubles, which will lead us in to solving number strings using strategies to make our math thinking more strategic and organized. Ask your second grader what happens when you put something inside the "Magic Pot;" they love this concept!

All second grade classrooms will be using the Open Circle curriculum, which is used to help all children work as a respectful classroom community. We have had a positive experience with this and we look forward to using it again this year.

As we embark on our second grade journey we wish everyone a fantastic year. Thank you to all our volunteers in advance. They don't know yet what they

have signed themselves up for. We can't wait to get to work with you!

We would like to wish all the second graders and their families a happy, healthy year.

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

The third grade teachers would like to welcome you to what we know will be a sensational year. Even though we have only been back to school for a short amount of time, our classes have jumped right into several curriculum units: Combining and Comparing in TERC Math, Mapping, Houghton Mifflin's Lost and Found and Rebecca Sitton's Spelling. Everyone at Stratton would like to congratulate the students for working hard on the Stay Sharp Summer activities. Their work has shown that it really paid off.

Our first social studies unit is a study of mapping skills. By the time we finish we will be experts at creating and reading compass roses, legends/map keys, map grids and have the ability to use and make map scales. The skills learned are not just for climbing Mountain Ave. Our students will be able to navigate museums, zoos, streets and local community attractions. It's a great way to learn how to get around in every day life.



One of our favorite exploration activities is inventing individual themed Island Treasure Maps. It is here that the children design their own island, complete with buried treasure, so start thinking of your theme now. Hint: encourage your children to create a world that is within their interests. Some of our past successes include Volcano Island (don't fall in!), Haunted Sand Castle, Pirates' Cove and more.

We also look forward to our next Social Studies unit on Massachusetts and its location on a map, and will be diving deeper into this subject throughout October. Feel free to share any maps, postcards or pictures you have of our beautiful state!

The third grade has greatly enjoyed our new reading comprehension program this year. The focus of the program is on six important reading strategies. As you are reading with your child at home talk about making connections, predicting outcomes, guessing the story line, figuring out/infering, picturing the story in your mind using your senses and wondering about what is happening in the text.

During our Reading lessons we have discussed how to choose appropriate leveled books to read. The

children are encouraged to read “just right” books as opposed to texts that are too easy or too challenging. The third graders are also writing answers to open response questions. We are working on literature skills such as cause and effect strategies, predicting and spelling. Speaking of which, please note that spelling tests are every Friday. Students have been receiving 12 spelling words to study each week. Five of those words are from the Rebecca Sitton spelling program, and we have been taking the additional seven words from our current curriculum.



The children have also started writing summaries in their Readers' Notebooks and will be sharing with the class how using the strategies have helped them to understand stories better. We have been writing weekly journal entries and have begun our first Writer's Workshop stories about a “Fuzzy Ball Surprise.” During this writing project, the children visualize that they are a round object in every day life. The children tell stories as the “voice” of the object. Our young writers use sensory words to tell the objects' tales. It seems as though we have some future authors and poets among us!

Our math unit, Combining and Comparing, will review addition and subtraction skills, doubles and near doubles ($8+8$, $6+7$) and will feature our “Math Minute” quizzes on Fridays. Each Monday our classes will make flash cards and students are expected to study the facts at home each night. Students should be able to answer the problems on the flashcards quicker each week until the answers become automatic. Addition and subtraction is the core of many math skills and concepts, so we urge students and their parents to practice, practice, practice! Students will continue to make new flashcards each week. The multiplication and division flashcards will be on the way in the winter. Save the cards in a safe spot such as a Tupperware container or shoe box. Families often refer to the flash cards over the summer.

We are working on discovering the differences between two numbers by using the strategies of subtraction, counting up and counting back. One of our favorite activities in the fall is our 100 Items posters. Students brought in 100 small items from home, such as cheerios, buttons or macaroni pieces and were asked to manipulate the items to form equal groups. The children discovered that there are a number of ways to group 100 objects into equal sections such as 2 groups of 50, 5 groups of 20, 4 groups of 25, 10 groups of 10, etc. The objects were

glued down into the group of choice and displayed for all to see.

In that same manner, students did an experiment to see how many beans they could grab with their right hand, and then compared it to the number of beans that they could grab with their left hand. After individual data was collected, we compared individual results to the rest of the class and graphed our information on a line plot.



Finally, we worked on an activity called “Planning a Party” in which students chose activities to participate in at a birthday party. The trick, though, was that the party could only last from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm. The activities were listed along with what time they started and how long they lasted. Students worked on the concept of elapsed time to figure out when each new activity began. We have just completed our first math assessment on “Combining and Comparing” and will be starting a unit titled “Mathematical Thinking at Grade 3.”

Our classes will be visiting the Jason Russell House the last week in October. Mrs. Trottier's class will attend the trip on October 30th. Mrs. Barth's class will visit the historic house on October 31st. Half of Mrs. Mullen's class will attend on the 30th and the other half will go on the 31st. After our tour of the house and the center of Arlington the coordinators will have a special Halloween activity that has been planned! Permission slips and chaperone volunteer forms will be coming shortly.

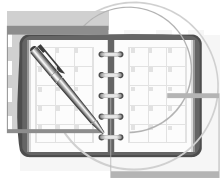
Other than that we are under way with our daily routines. Please note that homework expectations include having work neat, complete, spelling checked, written in full sentences (when required) and please, please sign your child's reading log each night. Academic Tip: provide a healthy snack each day to supply the proper energy your busy bees need to complete their morning subjects.

Thank you to all the parents who attended Back to School Night. It was nice to meet everyone and get our year off to a great start! Also, thank you to all the parents who have volunteered to help in our classrooms this year. Your assistance is greatly appreciated!

Grade 4 News – Ms. Marshall and Ms. Leonard

The fourth grade is settling nicely into the daily routines. Each morning students come in eager for Morning Meeting and Homeworkopoly. Morning Meeting is an integral part of each day. The goal of Morning Meeting is to create a positive community environment by fostering the social, emotional and intellectual learner. During Morning Meeting, we get students' brains moving with a question of the day. During this time, students must practice sharing and listening skills. Also, students spend time complimenting each other on the ways they show PRIDE. We keep track of compliments by writing them down on PRIDE paws and placing them in our PRIDE Jar. When our PRIDE Jar is full we will have a class reward. Please ask your student if they have given or received any compliments lately.

Homeworkopoly is another morning activity that students look forward to each day. If students have all of their homework, including their reading log and all necessary signatures, students are allowed to roll the dice and move their nametag around the board. Not all spaces on the board lead to a reward. However, some are prize spaces, such as "community lunchbox," "chance," "free homework," "mystery prize," "game spot" and "brain binder." Some of the prizes include keep a toy or stuffed animal on your desk, borrow the teacher's chair, write with ink for a day, move your desk to any where in the room and even 5 extra minutes of recess (if everyone has completed homework). Homeworkopoly is a great motivating tool to get students to complete their homework nightly. It also helps hold students accountable for their nightly work because they have to check in with the teacher daily.



Last year, the fourth grade helped pilot the new district-wide reading program. In this program, students are tested using the DRA2. This assessment helps teachers get to know your student as a reader. We are able to identify their strengths and weaknesses. We then use this information to guide our teaching practices and to help your student find books that will allow them to successfully practice and improve on their "good reader strategies." Each day, we start reading class with a shared reading. During this time, the teacher will read aloud to the class thinking out loud and modeling the use of good reader strategies. Students are welcomed to join in and practice as a class. Next, students move through reading centers. During these centers students will

work collaboratively, independently and with a teacher in a small group.

In math, students are developing their number sense using the TERC Investigations unit "Landmarks in the Thousands." During this unit students have practiced using information they know in order to make the math they are working on easier. For example, it would be a lot of work to skip count and find all of the factors of 300, but students can easily find the factors of 100 and build upon that information to find the factors for 300. Students have also been using "landmark numbers" to make adding and subtracting easier. As you may have noticed, we are continuing review of key concepts such as place value and elapsed time. Please have your student reading clocks and thinking about time passed as often as possible.

Science has been off to a great start. We are fortunate enough to live in an area that has busy and changing weather patterns. Students have been learning the various parts of the water cycle as well as the difference between weather and climate. Recently we built rain gauges and have been recording rainfall data. We will soon be using the leveled texts bought by the district. During this time, we will use science as an extension to our reading program. Students will not only be learning the information found in the books, but also practicing their good reader strategies on non-fiction texts. We look forward our continued growth as meteorologists.



In writing, we have been working on building a quality paragraph. This includes creating a strong topic sentence, detailed body sentences and a summative closing sentence. Next, we will be jumping to the organization of a five-paragraph essay. Students will be introduced to a five-paragraph essay by dissecting the format of a sample essay. Then students will begin to build their own essays by using graphic organizers to plan their narrative.

We're off to a great start and are looking forward to continued success!

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

Welcome to fifth grade! We are excited about the upcoming year and all of the learning that we have planned. We also extend a warm welcome to all of our students and to any parents who are new fifth grade partners in learning.

It's hard to believe that once again summer passed so quickly. We are all back and ready to discover ourselves as students. This is a year to think carefully about the shift that takes place in learning as we gradually release responsibility to the students. Students must learn that responsibility is an important part of their fifth grade program. We have spent some time thinking about how we learn best, the knowledge and skills that we bring to our learning, and discovering strategies that help us use time productively. We are beginning to understand that knowledge is cumulative. The new school year finds us trying to juggle schedules, calendar time, and or-



ganize all of those materials that the students brought with them on the very first day! Thank you for sending them in so well prepared. The three ring binders are beginning to make sense. The goal is that they will become the archives for science, social studies and math.

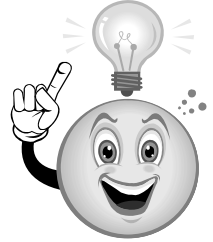
We have been quite busy introducing curriculum. A great amount of time has been devoted to modeling steps in the learning process as well as explaining what constitutes a successful outcome. Thinking deeply, planning & designing projects, participating freely, and asking important questions are all important parts of the learning that will take place this year.

The students have experienced Wordly Wise. Weekly discussions create a context for the words in each list. Everyone has worked through each of the exercises, including the narrative for the first few Word Lists. We shared a helpful strategy to make the narrative work more smoothly. The students have all taken their first few quizzes. Now they are ready to begin slipping these words into their speaking and writing vocabulary. Students are expected to be studying their Wordly Wise note cards for at least 15 minutes a night. Help set your child up for success and study with them each night. It truly does pay off and it is one of the easiest ways to help your child succeed.

We have introduced the Spelling Contract program. The expectation is that the 15 learned words are ALWAYS SPELLED CORRECTLY in every writing task! Time spent reviewing these WILL BE HELPFUL for those who don't yet have ownership of these previous words. Students are beginning to understand our motto: If you do the tasks neatly and correctly the first time, you will have less work in the future!

In math we are off to a great start! Our first unit is titled, Mathematical Thinking At Grade Five. In this unit your child will learn about the number system and about "landmark" numbers – like 100, 1,000, 10,000, and their factors and multiples. Your child will also explore prime and composite numbers, factorization, and lowest common multiples (LCM.)

This year, your child will be solving problems that take a considerable amount of time, thought, and discussion. We expect the children to discuss the problems in their own ways and be able to talk about and write their solutions. They need to know that there are many ways to look at and solve problems. Finding successful problem solving strategies is an important part of mathematical progression. We are looking forward to an exciting year as we create a mathematical community in our classroom.



In Social Studies we briefly reviewed the important features of maps. Our first theme in Social Studies will utilize these geographical skills by focusing on the earliest explorations of the New World. Providing evidence of the Viking explorations and mapping out the routes explorers sought when beginning their journey is an important part of discovering how these explorations changed the image of the world. We have scholarly work ahead of us this year, as we become historians.

Writing is underway. The students will complete a series of district wide on - demand writing samples. Additional writing thus far has been in journal form. However, some students have written a reflective piece of writing that will eventually become part of their portfolio. The students will be writing all year. Some assignments will be focused in content areas across the curriculum; others will be in the Writer's Workshop format where the students will write from personal experience, explore fiction, and dabble in poetry.

We will bridge the reading/writing connection all year. Our avid readers become our authors! We have begun our first of several read aloud books in all of the classes; they are fabulous stories. We will explore the elements of story and share books through our monthly book projects, which you learned more about at the Parent Information Night. Summer reading has put us into gear for Science Camp. Students have been asked to reflect on how they think their experiences at camp will be similar and/or different to the character of their book. We have been

engaged in powerful discussions based on this summer reading and excitement for camp!

In Science, we have discussed the relationships that exist within major ecosystems with our class projects on BIOMES. Students have been researching through a variety of resources, which include non-fiction books and articles, as well as the internet. The outcome is fantastic! Working in groups, students have collaborated to create an informational bulletin board for their classmates to peruse and learn from. In addition to the group project, students have been gathering information to write a paper based on their research, as well as their group members' research. Remember to mark your calendars for October 28-31.... The OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROGRAM at the world-renowned Alton Jones Facility is soon to be underway.

We have a busy year ahead. A gracious "Thank You" to all who have volunteered their time, effort, and energy to make the opening of school go so smoothly. We are looking forward to working with you as your child's partner in learning.

SPECIAL THANKS to the following 5th Grade parents who volunteered to give a helping hand in the classroom by becoming Room Parents and/or Photocopiers: **Mary Hull and Ferriss Donham in Mrs. Gaffey's class; Taryn and Doug**

Weaver, Betsy Riley, and Stewart Deck in Ms. Carbone's class; Mariza Jurgensen, Betsy Rose, and Beth Martin in Ms. Staley's class!

Cub Scouts Pack 306

If you think you might be interested in joining the Cub Scouts, then come to our next Pack Meeting, on Thursday, November 13th, 7-8pm. We meet in the basement of First Baptist Church, Arlington (across the street from Johnny's Foodmaster on Mass Ave.) Our Pack generally meets the 2nd Thursday of each month, same time, same place, and all Arlington boys in grades 1st thru 5th are welcome – along with their families. Plan to join us for a lot of fun at our next Pack Meeting!

If you have any questions contact: Mike Brown, Cubmaster, Pack 306 – Arlington, telephone: 781-xxx-xxxx, email: xxxx@xxxx.com

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 Grace Mateos. The November 14 issue will be edited by Cheryl Sweeney.