

# ATKINSON ACADEMY - April, 2008

17 Academy Avenue, Atkinson, NH 03811

(603) 362-5521

## NEWSLETTER

### *FROM THE PRINCIPAL:*

After an endless snowy winter the end of the year is fast approaching. What a relief it is to have sunny warm recesses and to see classes enjoying the outdoor classroom. As I write today it is Earth Day, and our fourth and fifth grade students have raked leaves and cleaned up in the front of the old section of the school. We look very spiffy!

In the last newsletter I mentioned that I would be e-mailing monthly newsletters to students from Malaysia. I hope that this personal connection will enhance their learning about another part of the world. If you would like to receive these e-mails, send your e-mail address to me at [websterinmalaysia@gmail.com](mailto:websterinmalaysia@gmail.com). I will acknowledge all requests, so try again if you don't hear from me.

Thank you all for our wonderful staff appreciation week. In the grip of a very cold and dreary March, it felt wonderful to be pampered. I personally believe that the staff here is very special and deserves recognition every day. I'm going to miss them all.

Please note that our school handbook states that students should not bring electronics of any kind to school. This includes cell phones.

I will continue to be involved with planning for next year, and am accepting your input on class placement by the end of May. If you speak to someone other than me I don't always get the message, so I appreciate your e-mailing me with your remarks.

As the school year winds down, I frequently find myself thinking "this is the last...." as events go by. One of the strongest impressions I will leave with from Atkinson Academy is the extent of parent involvement. You make all our events very special, and I know how hard you work with your children at home. I know that it is not always easy to fit everything in, and I thank you for your role in making our school a better place.

Best wishes for a warm and relaxing spring break!

Best regards,

Heidi Webster  
Principal



## FROM THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Well, finally spring has arrived! Our students enjoyed Earth Week this past week learning how to become caretakers of the earth. On enrichment day (April 24<sup>th</sup>), students circulated around to various activities related to "staying green". Students learned how to make simple bird feeders while others experienced demonstrations on passive and solar energy. Students used conservation maps to plan for land use, watched videos on composting and planted flowers and trees to beautify the grounds. What a great day! Thank you to all the parents, teachers and students that participated.

Fourth graders will once again be taking the NECAP Science test. The test will be administered the week of May 19<sup>th</sup>. It consists of two tests of about ninety minutes long and the third session involves students collecting data using experiments. The purpose of the science test is to determine if our school is helping students meet the NH standards and grade level expectations.

As children start their vacation, a good book is a must, along with a journal to reflect on daily activities.

Have a great vacation week. See you in May.

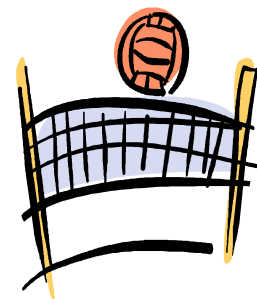
Kathie Dayotis  
Assistant Principal/Curriculum Coordinator

## FROM THE GYM

Since our last newsletter all grades spent their PE time volleying. While the game of volleyball is very difficult, we explored many different ways to perform the actual skill of volleying. The children used paddles, punch balloons, nerf balls, and beach balls. They practiced solo, with partners, in small groups, and using the volleyball net with the entire class. We eventually got to play modified volleyball games. All of us finished the unit with a greater appreciation for the high degree of skill required for the "real" game of volleyball and an understanding that the skill of volleying is used in many other sports and activities.

I hope everyone has a relaxing April vacation. Please look for information concerning our upcoming field days on June 19<sup>th</sup>. Any help that you can provide would be appreciated. Thank you in advance.

Jeff Goddard  
PE Teacher



## FROM THE NURSE'S OFFICE

Yes-spring is here but with the sunshine, warmth, budding trees and flowers are allergies. Below is a guide to tell the difference between allergies vs. a cold:

Managing allergies:

1. **Get the best treatment.** Visit the doctor to discuss using a non drowsy allergy medicine that helps control symptoms.
2. **Reduce exposure to allergens.** Keep windows closed, use air conditioners, change filter regularly, and shower after playing outdoors.
3. **Check the pollen count.** If possible stay indoors on high pollen days

If allergy medication is advised by the doctor it can make your child feel better and able to concentrate in school.

Linda Tobin  
Nurse



## LIBRARIAN'S REVIEW

### **Dog and Bear: Two Friends, Three Stories**

Written and illustrated by Laura Vaccaro Seeger

A frisky dachshund and a stuffed bear are best friends. Minimal, well-chosen words make up the three chapters about the joys, challenges and compromises needed to maintain their friendship. For example, in "Play with Me! Play with Me!" Bear is quietly reading his book (about a dog and a bear) while Dog keeps harassing him about needing attention. When Bear reluctantly puts down his book to give Bear the attention he craves, all Bear wants is to be read to. Dog and Bear won the Boston Globe Hornbook Award for best picture book this year. It is a very charming beginning chapter book for emergent readers. A subsequent Dog and Bear story is also out - Dog and Bear: Two's Company.

### **The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain**

Written and Illustrated by Peter Sis

This autobiographical picture book is based on Peter Sis' childhood growing up in communist Poland during the Cold War. Spare use of color (black, white and Communist red) illustrate the differences between what he experienced and what he learned about the outside world as it started filtering in. Older children will be shocked at what was mandatory in Sis' education, and the lack of rights that we all take for granted. This is not a book that most children, especially older ones, would necessarily pick up and read, but, in light of the recent incidents surrounding the summer Olympics in Beijing, it can be the catalyst for discussion around the dinner table. It is not too early to introduce older children to cultures that do not enjoy the freedoms that we have. Peter Sis has won numerous awards (including NY Times Best Illustrated Book - 6 times). This book was awarded the Caldecott Honor for 2007.

Ellen Beckwith  
Library Media Specialist

# Music News

First graders have enjoyed watching the video, *Tobby the Tuba*, and acting out the musical story of *Rabbit and Mousie*.

Second graders learned about rondo form in music. They showed the design using shapes and danced it in *La Raspa*.

Third graders have learned seven notes on the recorder and have enjoyed playing Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*.

Fourth graders have learned about different styles of jazz and its roots. They also experienced variation form in music.

Fifth graders have learned a few Civil War songs. We are finishing up 19<sup>th</sup> century American music and will be dancing the Charleston from the 1920's after vacation.

Joyce Peavey  
Music Teacher



# Computer/Health

Happy spring! We certainly have waited long enough for the warm weather to return!

We are making our final switch in health and technology. Grades two, three and five will finish the year with health class. The second graders will be learning more about drugs and the dangers of drugs. Third and fifth graders will focus on nutrition and making healthy choices.

The first and fourth graders will finish the year in the computer lab. The first graders have already started making wonderful ABC books as they learn about the font tool and inserting clipart. It's amazing how quickly they grasp these skills. They are doing a wonderful job. The fourth graders will be learning about more programs such as Photo Story and Microsoft PowerPoint to create a variety of presentations. I am anticipating some impressive work!

To go along with the recent enrichment day to celebrate the earth I would like to share some sites. I hope that you will enjoy with your children.

Miss Maggie's Earth Adventures:

<http://www.missmaggie.org/>

National Geographic for Kids:

<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/>

Journey North:

<http://www.fws.gov/educators/students.html>

Secret Lives of Wild Animals:

[http://nsf.gov/news/special\\_reports/animals/index.jsp](http://nsf.gov/news/special_reports/animals/index.jsp)

Anna Lizier  
Computer/Health Teacher

# ART

We are finishing a busy month in the art room and we are looking forward to the bright, warm weather ahead.

Our first graders are starting to learn about weaving. We learned to make a paper weaving, now we are moving onto a weaving card, yarn and tapestry needle.

Second graders are continuing on with Mexican arts and crafts. We are now making a tissue paper collage placemat and learning to say colors in Spanish.

Third graders are just finishing up their Native American arts and crafts. We are transitioning on to color mixing.

Fourth graders are finishing up cylinder drawings in pastel chalk. After vacation they will be using a slab construction technique to make a clay cylinder.

Fifth graders are in the process of glazing their clay cubes. After vacation they will be learning to draw using one-point perspective.

Kindergarteners have been learning to draw portraits and people. We have been having a lot of fun learning different ways to draw a person. It goes along with their classroom curriculum of art and writing.

Pam Alexander  
Art Teacher



## Counselor's Corner

The warm weather is here and along with it begins late nights with sports activities, playing outdoors and just enjoying the weather. Just a reminder that school is still in session and the school routines you have established are vital to your child's continued success.

Planning at night for the next day is important especially if you are out late at a practice or a ballgame. Choose the next day's outfit before bed - head to toe. Pack school supplies and even have breakfast, lunch and snacks ready to go the night before.

Set the alarm. Have your child go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day. Give your child an alarm clock to build independence and move things along. Make sure your child is in his or her classroom by 8:30. Your child is marked tardy at 8:31. If you are driving to school, leave 10 minutes earlier so you don't get stuck in the drop off line. I have seen a big jump in the number of tardies since the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester.

Homework is given until the last day of school and it plays a key role in your child's success. Doing it in the car while rushing to practice or late at night after practice or the game sets a bad example for your child. Children should see and learn that education takes precedence in their life and yours.

The month of May is Career month. In **Grade 5**, Jay Hauser from New Hampshire Higher Ed (NHHEAF) will be speaking to our 5<sup>th</sup> graders on preparing for college. In **Grade 4**, Christopher McKee, a conservation officer for the NH Fish and Game Department, will be speaking to the children about animals native to NH. In **Grade 3**, Josh Judge, a meteorologist from WMUR will be speaking to the children about weather. All the presentations align with the grade level curriculums. In **Grade 2**, we are discussing careers A-Z. In **Grade 1** we are investigating reading, writing, math and jobs. In **Kindergarten** I will be reading a picture book about careers.

Have a great spring break. See you in May.

Mary Beth Ditoro  
School Counselor



## Reading Specialist's News

In April, we celebrate both Earth Day and Poetry Month. What a perfect time to read nature poetry! Several enchanting poems can be found in two books by Joyce Sidman, *Song of the Water Boatman and Other Pond Poems*, illustrated by Beckie Prange, and *Butterfly Eyes and Other Secrets of the Meadow*, illustrated by Beth Krommes. Sidman's unique writing style combines poetry with short factual reports about the creatures found in the poems.

*Song of the Water Boatman* leads the reader into the fascinating rhythms of pond life. We begin the exploration in the springtime, listening for those tiny peeping tree frogs "on a wet night, on a rainy night, on a still night." Continuing through the seasons, the reader learns about the strange camouflage of the caddis fly larvae and the dramatic life suspension of the water bear. Prang's hand-colored woodcuts evoke a watery world with shades of blue and green, edged in earthy brown.

In *Butterfly Eyes and Other Secrets of the Meadow*, we spend a dawn to dusk day enjoying butterflies in milkweed and learning about the bubbles of pearl, all in a clustery, bubbly swirl" of the spittlebug. Krommes' scratchboard illustrations provide the depth and rich texture of this unique patch of earth.

Celebrate our beautiful planet this month with a walk near a pond or meadow and a nature poem in your bag.

Arlene Amendolara  
Reading Specialist

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**ATTENTION**

**\*\* CAR PICKUP \*\***

In order for car pickup to run smoothly each day and keep the children safe, please stay in line - and do not cut through the town hall lot. If you are picking up a group of five or more students, you may park and come into the school to gather the group. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

- 4/28 - 5/2 SPRING VACATION
- 5/6 - 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Performance of My Fair Lady at the PAC
- 5/7 - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Class Pictures
  - Josh Judge WMUR Visits 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade
  - Christopher McKee Visits 4<sup>th</sup> Grade
- 5/8 - School Board Meeting, SAU, 7:30 pm
- 5/9 - 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Field Trip - Museum of Science
- 5/13 - PTA Executive Board Mtg., 7:30 pm
  - 'NH Goes to College' Visits 5<sup>th</sup> Grade
- 5/15 - Early Release, 1:00 pm, No Kindergarten All Day
- 5/19-5/21 - 4<sup>th</sup> Grade NECAP Science Testing
- 5/21 - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Field Trip - Freedom Trail
  - Orchestra Concert, Grades 4-8, 7:00 pm
- 5/26 - No School - Memorial Day

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**Don't forget to:**

- Call the school absence line, 362-5521 (x303) when your child will be absent (this saves us a phone call to you).
- School hours are 8:30-3:00. Please do not drop off students before 8:15.

- Send in a note when your student will be dismissed early (please, no later than 2:30).
- Send a note when your student is taking a bus other than his or her assigned bus (change in going home forms can be found online at [www.atkinsonacademy.com](http://www.atkinsonacademy.com)). Please include the student's full name, teacher name and date.
- Update phone numbers and emergency contacts promptly.
- Drop items off at the office and we will deliver them to your child. We prefer that you not go to the classroom directly.
- Sign in and wear a visitor pass if you are going beyond the office.
- Put names in your child's jackets, sweatshirts and other belongings.
- Please note the Monday Morning Meeting start time of **9:15 am**.

**LUNCH SCHEDULE**

The following schedule should help you with plans for lunch with your students:

|                       |  |               |
|-----------------------|--|---------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade |  |               |
| RECESS                |  | 11:45 - 12:05 |
| LUNCH                 |  | 12:10 - 12:30 |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade |  |               |
| LUNCH                 |  | 11:45 - 12:05 |
| RECESS                |  | 12:10 - 12:30 |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade |  |               |
| RECESS                |  | 12:15 - 12:35 |
| LUNCH                 |  | 12:40 - 1:00  |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade |  |               |
| LUNCH                 |  | 11:00 - 11:20 |
| RECESS                |  | 11:25 - 11:45 |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade |  |               |
| RECESS                |  | 11:00 - 11:20 |
| LUNCH                 |  | 11:25 - 11:45 |