

ATKINSON ACADEMY - May, 2009

17 Academy Avenue, Atkinson, NH 03811

(603) 362-5521

NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PRINCIPALS

Each year seems to go by quickly and this year certainly has been no exception. The end of this school year is in sight and we have many activities that are planned to help students wrap up their learning and transition to the next grade. Parents are always invited to the many plays and assemblies that are planned; please be sure to check the calendar of events. The staff would like to thank Karin Kirsch, PTA Teacher Appreciation Coordinator, for a wonderful week of treats for them and the parents that volunteered to help with the baked goods and the extra daily raffles prizes. It was just awesome to arrive each day to a surprise. Chris and I along with the staff always feel appreciated by the wonderful support and kind words that we receive from you. The PTA, Night Owls (DADS THAT GIVE A HOOT!), have launched a website with many pictures featuring our students attending lip syncs, the ice cream social and book bingo nights. Their smiling faces tell it all. Special thanks to Wendy Barker and Lisa Ambrosio that donated their time to design and build the website for all to enjoy. The website is:

www.nightowls.atkinsonacademymypta.com.

One of the most important activities that we are involved in at this time of year is to begin to form next year's classes. You have an important role in this process. You have information about your child and your hopes for their future education that may need to be included in our decision making. Our goal is to create classrooms that will function as successful learning communities. Chris and I will attempt to make classes that are well- balanced and represent a variety of strengths, styles and personalities. If you would like to give us input about your child, please e-mail me at kathleen.dayotis@timberlane.net. Your input should concentrate on learning styles, academic or social behaviors rather than requesting a specific teacher.

Even though the warm weather is upon us, remember that it is important that children dress appropriately for school. We are a place for learning and children should enjoy classroom activities, recess and gym without feeling self conscious about their clothing. Shorts should be longer than a student's fingertips when their arms are held down. Shirts should cover midriffs and have appropriate wording printed on them. Please try to put your child's name in their clothing so it will be easy to return.

It is with great sadness that we learned of Richard Adie's passing this week. He was a special person in the lives of not only his own family, Kerry, David and Ricky, but touched the lives of many of the boys that he coached in baseball. Now that the warm weather and longer days are here, take time to go for a walk or read a book outside with your child. Memories last forever and will never be forgotten.

Kathie Dayotis, Principal

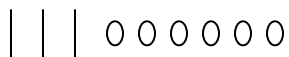
Chris Snyder, Assistant Principal

News from Everyday Mathematics

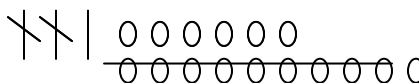
Tools and Techniques for Understanding Numbers and Operations

Everyday Mathematics encourages the use of tools to help children make sense of numbers and to understand the arithmetic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. These tools include base-10 blocks, number grids, number lines, and in grades 4 and 5, fraction sticks. In addition to these tools, students are taught to draw pictures and diagrams to help them solve problems, including simple representations of base-10 blocks. The following is an example of subtraction using pictures to represent base ten blocks.

When performing whole number operations, the small cube is used to represent 1. The "long" is ten cubes in a stick with markings to show the individual cubes. The long is then worth 10. The flat block is 100 cubes arranged in a square that is 10 x 10. To represent a cube, we just draw a small circle or a dot since it takes longer to draw squares. Some students still prefer to draw small squares, which is fine! The long is represented by a line segment, the flat by a large square. Here is an example of a model to show the solution to $36 - 19$:

 represents 36
We now have to subtract or take away 19.

Since our brains prefer to add and subtract numbers from left to right, most children will take away the 10, or 1 long, first. Then they will trade a long for 10 ones or cubes, and, finally, take away the 9 ones. This leaves the correct answer of 1 ten and 7 ones or 17. The model below shows the first long crossed out or taken away, the second long crossed out and traded for 10 ones or cubes, and the 9 ones crossed out or taken away, leaving the answer.



Similar drawings can be made for addition, multiplication, and division problems when children are trying to make sense of the work they are doing and/or showing their thinking.



Kathy Fowler
Elementary Math Coach

NURSE

Physical activity helps young children's brain release natural chemicals that enhance learning. The following are tips taken from the Healthy NH 5210 Program to increase physical activity.

- Make gradual changes every day to increase your activity level.
- Every step counts. Take the stairs instead of the elevator or walk anywhere you can instead of riding in a car.
- Keep it fun. Do activities you enjoy and encouraged your children to do the same.
- Be active as a family. Make activities, such as walks and bike rides, part of your daily routine.
- Turn off the tube. Substitute physical activity for one hour of television each day.
- Be consistent. If you decide to set aside a specific time for activity...stick to it.

I hope everyone has the chance to get outside and enjoy the nice weather!

Attached to this newsletter is additional information from the NH Department of Health and Human Services on the health benefits of reducing TV time.

Paula Amante
School Nurse



FROM THE GYM

It is hard to believe that we are already into May!

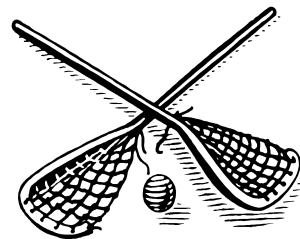
Following a soggy first week, we have finally gotten outside. Students in first and second grades have been learning to throw and catch with scoops made from plastic bottles. We are also playing several different games with the scoops: throw ball, ultimate scoop, and scoop baseball. This unit serves as a stepping stone to Lacrosse, which we start here in the Third Grade.

At this time, all of the upper grades are doing Lacrosse. Unless a child has brought their own stick from home, they are provided with a Softcrosse stick which is designed for educational use. All of the kids learn the basics of throwing, catching, and picking up ground balls. They even get to play in a controlled scrimmage if they so choose. Lacrosse has been a Varsity sport at the High School for a few years now for both boys and girls. There are several Atkinson Academy graduates currently playing on these teams. For any child seeking an alternative to traditional sports, lacrosse is a fun option.

Please be watching for upcoming information concerning Field Day on June 23rd at Pope Field. We will need many volunteers to make it a success. For fifth grade, we have the hike to Mt. Major on Thursday, June 18th.

Thanks for your support.

Jeff Goddard
PE Teacher



LIBRARIAN'S REVIEW

Duck and Goose

Written and Illustrated by Jackie Urbanovic

Max the duck (previously in Duck at the Door and Duck Soup) is playing with his animal friends at Irene's house when Harold, a large green alligator, knocks on the door. He begs the animals to hide him since he has mistakenly been accused of eating someone's dog. Although the animals fear Harold's real motive, Max reminds them that they came to his rescue when he needed help. Completely ridiculous solutions ensue. When a detective arrives to question Irene, she innocently answers that she hasn't seen Max. All the while, the reader can easily see how the animals are hiding him. After trying to fool the detective the next day, the animals find out that there has been a huge misunderstanding. While the story can stand alone, there is plenty to enjoy with the expressive animals and their exaggerated antics. And while Max is exonerated in the end, readers will totally enjoy how the animals try to come to Max's defense by all dressing in alligator costumes.

Going, Going, Gone! With the Pain and the Great One

Written by Judy Blume

Illustrated by James Stevenson

The author, known best for Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing, has written about a popular theme in this third book in the Pain and the Great One series - sibling rivalry. "The Pain" is what older sister Abigail calls her 1st grade brother and "The Great One" is what younger brother Jake calls his older sister. This book has the kids in the emergency room (to remove a fuzzy pussy willow from the Pain's nose), trying to walk down an up escalator, riding a boogie board at the beach, and getting lost in the food court at the mall. Most of it is told simply; however, what works is the family dynamics of jealousy, arguments, and the interactions between a mutually irritating and ultimately loving sister and brother. This is a great book for the struggling chapter book reader, because each chapter can stand on its own and can easily be picked up and put down.

Ellen Beckwith
Librarian

Music News

Fifth graders have learned songs from the Civil War such as Goober Peas and Battle Hymn of the Republic. We are getting close to the 20th century. They may share their favorite music with me during the month of June.

Fourth graders have been learning about variations in music. They also played a 12 bar blues piece on the xylophones.

Third graders can now play Ode to Joy and Old McDonald on the recorder. They watched a video of Beethoven as he wrote his ninth symphony.

Second graders learned some Mexican dances and songs. They are looking at some music books to see how notes are written on the staff.

First graders watched a video of Bach. They continue to work on steady beat with singing games.

Joyce Peavey
Music Teacher

Band/Strings

Attention: Parents of current 2nd, 3rd, or 4th grade students.

If your child is interested in learning to play a band or string instrument NEXT YEAR, they must sign up NOW!

Come to the Timberlane Performing Arts Center on ONE of the following days:

Wed. June 10
Fri. June 12 or
Tues. June 16

Stay from 5:00 – 7:00pm to let your child try at least 3 different instruments and sign up for band or strings. (There will be NO fall sign ups.)

Both Band & String instruments are open to current 3rd & 4th graders. String Instruments (violin, viola & cello) are also open to current 2nd graders.

Because a lot of elementary school children have never been exposed to band or stringed instruments before, we have developed the "Start Up Band & Strings Program", which helps young students decide which instrument best fits their body structure and personality.

Experienced instrumentalists and instructors will be available to help you and your child with their decision. Instruments offered are: Violin, Viola, Cello, Flute, Clarinet, Oboe, Alto Saxophone, Trumpet, French Horn, Trombone and Percussion. (Sorry no piano or guitar.)

Once the children have chosen their instrument, they are given the opportunity to rent an instrument (if you do not already have one that's in good working condition). Then we give the children 3 beginning lessons on June 22, 23, 24 from 4:00 – 5:30 pm **OR** 6:00 – 7:30 pm those evenings. The lessons are offered at a reduced rate. The Start Up Program is a wonderful opportunity to try a band or string instrument before you commit yourself to spending the BIG BUCKS!

Look for further information in your weekly school envelopes.

Questions: Deborah.Lincoln@Timberlane.net;
Marjorie.Nelson@Timberlane.net; or
Kim.Cook@Timberlane.net

Advanced 4th and 5th grade strings are preparing for their **All-District Grades 4 through 8 Strings Concert** at the PAC at 7 pm (6:15 pm arrival to tune) on **Wednesday, May 20th**. It is the only opportunity for the 4th and 5th graders from all four elementary schools to play all their parts together. An orchestra is like a giant team: each child prepares his own part and then fits it together in the whole piece! After the 4th and 5th strings perform, we listen to the Timberlane Middle School Orchestra as part of the same concert! We look forward to sharing our music with you May 20th!

Thank you.

Debbie Lincoln, Band
Marjorie Nelson, Stringed Instruments



Computer/Health

We are going full speed in technology and health right now. Your first graders are learning some basic skills using Microsoft Word. Recently they took on the challenge of inserting clipart into a document. They were very proud of themselves as they inserted the clipart. You might want to ask them to share this with you. They love creating a document full of clipart!

In second grade the students made an acrostic poem about their teacher and themselves. Their final product required them to use the different font tools, insert their picture and to put a border around the finished poem. They are now learning some basic skills to create a simple PowerPoint slide show about health food.

Third graders just finished a unit about the dangers of many drugs and how to make wise decisions. Presently we have taken a little break from health. They are doing research about a country in South America with a partner. This information will be used to create a PowerPoint presentation. We will then return to health and will study about the importance of good nutrition.

In fourth grade the students are involved in learning about good nutrition. This unit involves learning about the five food groups from the New Food Pyramid. They will be learning, among other things, the different nutrients in each food group, health portion sizes, and the importance of combining all five food groups into our daily diet.

Fifth graders continue to gain more technology skills. They have completed their brochures and will be exchanging them with Sandown Central. Presently, they are learning Excel. They will be using data that they collected from Mr. Goddard's P. E. class to make a graph showing the results of some physical activity skills.

Some good websites:

Animal Clipart: Best of the Web http://best-of-web.com/computer/clipart_animals.shtml

Kid Clipart: Clips Ahoy
<http://www.clipsahoy.com/school.htm>

Craft Ideas: Crayola <http://www.crayola.com/>

Enjoy!

Anna Lizier
Computer/Health Teacher

Counselor's Corner

The theme for the month of May is careers. In Grade 5, NH Higher Education Assistance Foundation (NHHEAF) is coming to play college Jeopardy with all the 5th graders. Chris McKee, a conservation officer for the NH Fish and Game Department spoke to the 4th graders about his career and Grade 3 met with Josh Judge, the meteorologist for WMUR to discuss weather. In Grades K-2 students will be learning about different careers and what skills and supplies they may need for each occupation. The important message for all our children is that reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies are important subjects to know for what ever career they may choose.

Recently I was asked the following question, "How much outside activities are too much?" and I would like to address that question with you this month.

First, if you have to ask that question, chances are your child is on overload with activities. While we encourage organized outside activities for children, when the activities interfere with the child's academic performance or school in general you need to rethink your priorities.

Warning signs may include: Doing homework in the car, allowing your child to sleep in (tardy) because the activity was in the evening, a drop in grades, eating in the car (the drive thru at McDonalds's), your child balking at doing the activity, saying it is not fun anymore, and interference with family time.

Moderation is the key. If your child wants to do an activity or 2 or is talented in an area then let them do one or 2 activities. But it is also important for children to experience play where they can use their imaginations and practice their social skills with others in an unstructured, real-life setting. They learn to set limits on their own and use the skills they were taught from you and from their teachers. Outside activities are in contrived settings where children must adhere to the limits set by the organizers of the activity.

Likewise when your child is missing homework, is tardy for school, eating in the car, missing down time at home, you are giving them the message that school and family time are not important.

Everyone needs down time at home where they can relax. If they are scheduled for daily events at the expense of learning and spending time at home, anxiety will occur and the child and the family will suffer.

Look at the available activities out there and together with your child choose one or two that you both agree will be fun and educational. Then fit these activities into your family and school schedule rather than fit family and school into your extracurricular schedule.

I am always available to talk to you. My extension is 313.

Sincerely,
Mary Beth Ditoro
School Counselor

Reading Specialist's News

Spring is the perfect season to help your children start nature journals. Encourage them to record their observations of the earth's renewal in sketches and writing. Talk to them about experiencing an outdoor excursion with as many sensory elements as possible. Ask:

- What do you see? Describe the colors and shapes. Can you compare them to anything?
- What do you hear? Describe the sound. Use "sound" words.
- Take a deep breath. What do you smell? Describe the scent.
- How do you feel? (Sense of touch) What's the weather like? Describe the sky.
- How do you feel? (Emotions)

Close observation and attention to detail are important skills to develop in order to write with rich, poetic language.

Enjoy the spring!

Arlene Amendolara
Reading Specialist

ART

Our fifth graders are hard at work learning about one-point perspective drawings. We have created many 3-D sketches and they are starting their final drawing this week. We are also going to be making 3-D clay cubes.

Our fourth graders are currently busy glazing their clay cylinders. We will be moving on to side portrait and figure drawing.

Third graders are working on a texture pattern drawing and will be starting a unit on color mixing soon.

Second graders are excited about their 3-D mask creations. They have made a symmetrical paper mask colored with cray-pas and are now adding 3-D paper features to it.

First graders have just begun their unit on color and will be learning to mix secondary colors from primary.

Pam Alexander
Art Teacher

ENRICHMENT

On March 9th the entire 3rd grade class performed “The Weather Show” at the PAC. This musical/play was about an ancient barometer and nicely extended our weather instrument science unit. The students did a wonderful job with their music, acting, and singing. The play required a lot of time, work, and flexibility from Mrs. Peavey and the the 3rd grade teachers. All of us who viewed the performance will never forget our singing groundhog, dancing weather dogs, wind sisters, water drops, Dr. Emmas, storytellers, Mr. Bolt and our sports commentators. It was a fun learning experience for everyone involved.

On June 9th the entire 5th grade will be performing “The 13 Colonies” at the Atkinson Academy Gym. This musical/play is about the history of the United States from exploration to the Revolutionary War. This play will be hosted by George and Martha Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Betsy Ross. The history police will be showing up to make sure the facts of history are accurately presented. There will be visits from Leif Erickson, Ponce de Leon, Ben Franklin, British Soldiers, the Adams Family, Sybil Ludington, Henry Longfellow, Native Americans, and James Madison. There will also be a game show in which we will learn more about which states were NOT original colonies. The 5th grade teachers and Mrs. Peavey are working hard on music, choreography, stage blocking, props, scenery, and costumes. We anticipate this to be another fun learning experience.

Sandra Bauer
Enrichment

Office News

There are several new and old procedures we would like to bring to your attention as follows:

- Please send a note when your student is taking a bus other than his or her assigned bus or will go in the car pickup line (change in going home forms can be found online at www.atkinsonacademy.com; we have also recently sent home blank forms in the shuttle). Please include the student’s full name, teacher name and date. **New Procedure:** Due to safety reasons, we are no longer accepting phone calls or emails with changes to going home. You may either bring a note to the office or come in early and have the student dismissed. This procedure is noted in the Student Handbook. Thank you for your cooperation.

- The bus company has asked that we accept no additional riders for BUS #106. It is full to capacity with regular riders.
- If your child has been designated as a car pickup, please do not park your car and come to the front of the building to wait for your child. You should get in the line of cars formed out front. This is a safety concern. Also, please use your directional lights when leaving the parking lot.
- Notices that are school related will be sent home in the student’s shuttle every Friday. All other flyers will be sent home on Monday’s or Tuesday’s.
- The building closes everyday at 3:45. No one will be permitted into the building for forgotten homework or other items.
- School hours are from 8:40-3:10. Please do not drop off your child before 8:20 AM. The child may be unattended if dropped off earlier.
- Call the school absence line, 362-5521 (x303) when your child will be absent or tardy (this saves us a phone call to you).
- 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 as this disrupts the education process.
- 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 write your child’s name on the memo line of checks that you send to the school. This would be helpful to the cafeteria when recording payments to the student’s lunch account.
- Please note the Monday Morning Meeting start time of **9:00 am.**

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 5/20 - Grades 4-8 Strings Concert, PAC, 7:00 pm
- 5/22 - Leanne Perron's Classroom Author Tea, 1:00 pm
- 5/25 - NO School-Memorial Day**
- 5/26 - Grade 1 & 2 Field Trip, Seacoast Rep. Theatre
- 5/27 - Kindergarten Screening
- 5/28 - Kindergarten Screening
- 6/1 - Chinese Acrobats, Gym, 9:30-10:15 am
- 6/4 - Middle School Parent Info. Night, 6:30-8:30
(Parent's Only)
- Jen Spire's Classroom Author Tea, 1:00 pm
- 6/8 - Volunteer Breakfast, 8:30 am, Computer Lab
- 6/9 - 5th Grade Play, 7:00 pm, Gym
- 6/12 - Hawaiian Day
- 6/15 - Monday Morning Meeting, Gym, 9:00 am
- 6/16 - 4th Grade Field Trip, Seacoast Science Ctr.
- 5th Grade Move-up Day, Middle School
- 6/17 - Grade 3 Field Trip to Plimoth Plantation
- 6/18 - 5th Grade Mt. Major Hike, 7:30am – 2:00 pm
- 6/22 - 5th Grade Celebration
- 6/23 - Field Day at Pope Field
- 6/25 - Rain Date for Field Day
- 6/26 - Last Day of School**

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LUNCH SCHEDULE

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

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

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***PTA NEWS***

We had a terrific day on April 18<sup>th</sup> for our first ever Walk-a-thon. We had 108 students plus siblings, parents and friends showing up to help reach our goal of 500,000 measured feet. These were some really dedicated walkers, not only did they exceed the goal we set, almost tripled it without the help of the parents, siblings and friends. The students themselves walked 1,919,580 feet which equals about 363.5 miles. When we include the distance walked by the parents, siblings and friends, our total was 2,307,044 or 417 miles, that is the distance between here and Philadelphia. As this was a fundraiser, we raised about \$3200 that will go into the general fund. We had raffle winners, one sponsor from each grade that won a \$25 gift card to a local restaurant and we had two hole-in-one contest winners that each received \$25 New Balance gift certificates. It was a fabulous day and we will try this fundraiser again next year.

The nominating committee is looking for parents who are interested in running for next year's PTA Executive Board. There are several board and committee chair positions open. If you would like to run for an office, please contact us at [lipfert@hotmail.com](mailto:lipfert@hotmail.com) Please put Atkinson PTA in the subject line. We need to present a slate of officers as follows:

- President
- Vice President
- Recording Secretary
- (Treasurer – Karen Lewis; 2010)**
- Asst. Treasurer
- Corresponding Secretary
- The Nominating Committee: Linda Siemering  
Laura Lipfert  
Anne Mezquita

A slate of officers will be presented to the PTA members to vote on by June 19<sup>th</sup>. Look for this important information in the shuttle by June 12<sup>th</sup>.

The Scrip program will be stopping for the summer but we will bring that back next year when school starts. If you want any gift cards before the end of school, please contact our coordinators, Susan Whelan or Chris Jenkins.

We will place one more sweatshirt order before the end of school. If you want a sweatshirt, the order forms are in the office along with samples of the sweatshirts. They are available in pink, orange, and gray, children's through adult sizes.

Thank you to everyone for the support you provide the PTA executive board.

Carolyn Longchamp  
Atkinson Academy PTA President

**STAFF APPRECIATION WEEK 2009**

Staff Appreciation Week is an opportunity for students and parents to thank our staff for all of the energy and effort they put into making Atkinson Academy a wonderful school for our children. This year's festivities took place from March 30 through April 3<sup>rd</sup>. On Monday, the staff arrived to find a bulletin board of individual thank you cards compiled directly outside of the library. Also, a potted pansy had been placed on each staff member's desk with a note of thanks and a schedule of the weeks activities. On Tuesday, an Italian luncheon of chicken marsala, ziti with meatballs, spinach pie, salads and assorted pastries was served. Thursday brought a breakfast of fruits, quiches, ham, French toast and baked goods. Each day 5 lucky raffle winners were randomly drawn and received fabulous gift cards and gift baskets. As a last token of our appreciation, each staff member arrived Friday to find a box with 6 chocolate truffles on their desks.

This outpouring of gratitude toward the Atkinson Academy staff was only possible through the generosity of families offering to donate food, time, prizes and money. Thank you to all that participated in making this an enjoyable week for the people who give their best to our children each day.

We also need to thank the following businesses for their generous donations:

Grand Rental of Plaistow  
BeanTowne of Hampstead  
Regan Ford of Haverhill  
Mary Beth Abate of Coldwell Banker, Haverhill  
A Hair Better, Newburyport  
Freemont Pizzeria of Freemont

Karin Kirsch  
Staff Appreciation Week Coordinator