

ATKINSON ACADEMY - November/December, 2008

17 Academy Avenue, Atkinson, NH 03811

(603) 362-5521

NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PRINCIPALS:

Snow is in the air and students are predicting when the first snow day will arrive. That means fall is giving way to winter and the holiday season is upon us. We were honored to have our 4th and 5th grade band and chorus students participate in the tree lighting at the Atkinson Country Club. The night was beautiful and our students added to the festive atmosphere with their voices and instruments.

We want to thank all those families who have donated clothing, coats, hats & gloves to help those who are in need. Other opportunities to help those in need are coming. Students can contribute to Mealey's Meals by bringing extra change to school and putting it in the large container in the office. Teachers are also looking to help food pantries keep their shelves stocked this winter season. We know times are tough, but appreciate anything you choose to contribute.

Our most recent Monday Morning Meeting included a visit from Smokey the Bear. The Atkinson Garden Club sponsored a poetry/poster contest and presented certificates to participants and winners as follows:

Poetry: 1st Place, Rose Anderson, grade 3

1st Place, Lily Anderson, grade 5

Poster: 1st place, Jessica Mezquita, grade 3

2nd place, Delaney Ripley, grade 3

Woodsy Owl:

1st place, Jenna Hill, grade 5

2nd place, Hannah Marden, grade 5

Smokey Bear:

1st place, Connor Suech, grade 5

2nd place, Austin Witley, grade 5

3rd place, Cassidy Murphy, grade 5

In an effort to reduce the amount of paper used in our school building, we are trying to make our publications paperless wherever possible. Starting after our Winter Break, this newsletter will be made available online at www.atkinsonacademy.com. Anyone interested in still receiving a paper copy may do so by contacting the office at 362-5521 X300. Also, in an effort to support recycling, you may see future papers with an X through one side of the paper; this is recycled paper.

With December comes the possibility of inclement weather that may impact school. If school is canceled, you will receive an Alertnow phone message. The SAU tries to get that message out around 5:45 am, if the decision is made by that time. In the event of an early dismissal, there will also be an Alertnow call to the numbers that you have

given the school; home, both parent's cell and both parent's work. It is very important that you keep the school updated with any changes to phone numbers. In the event of an unscheduled early release, please call the school if there will be a change in your student's transportation or if you have questions. Weather may cause a delay in our buses. Please be aware that buses may be delayed at least 30 minutes on snowy days. Please make sure that you have a plan in place for your child in the event that you are delayed in getting home due to poor weather. Please call the school if you have questions.

Our entire teaching staff should be commended for their efforts to improve the educational experience each of our students has on a daily basis. Many hours have been dedicated to giving teachers the chance to collaborate in small groups. We look forward to seeing continued improvements throughout the rest of the year. Our staff has been busy becoming better practitioners specifically in math and writing instruction. Kindergarten and first grade teachers have been implementing the Handwriting Without Tears writing program this fall. They will continue to receive support from a certified consultant this year. Math training continues at all grade levels with EveryDay Math consultant, Jeannene Mason.

When you are thinking of a special gift idea for your child, may we suggest the gift of time. Time that you spend together as a family is priceless and will create memories that will last long after the holiday season is gone.

We wish you the very best holiday season and a healthy and Happy New Year.

Kathie Dayotis, Principal

Chris Snyder, Assistant Principal



FROM THE NURSE'S OFFICE

It is hard for children to concentrate when they are not feeling well. Here are some guidelines to help you determine when you should keep your child home:

- If your child has had a fever of 99.5 or more within the last 24 hours.
- If your child has had diarrhea or vomiting within the last 24 hours.
- If your child has a contagious illness, i.e. strep throat or conjunctivitis and has not been on an antibiotic for 24 hours.

Remember, if you keep your child home, you must call the school at 362-5521, Extension 303. Please feel free to call me with any questions- 362-5521, Extension 314.

The following information is from the New Hampshire Department of Health & Human Services:

What can I do to protect myself against the flu?

By far, the single best way to prevent the flu is for individuals, especially persons at high risk for serious complications from the flu, to get the flu vaccine each fall. In the absence of a flu vaccine, there are still many things people can and should be doing to avoid catching the flu:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, especially before touching food, after using the bathroom, and after changing diapers.
- Use an antibacterial hand gel for the times you cannot wash your hands with soap and water.

- Use a tissue to cover your nose and mouth when you sneeze, throw away the tissue, and then wash your hands.
- Stay home from work or school if you have flu-like symptoms until 48 hours after the symptoms stop.
- As much as possible, stay away from people who have flu-like symptoms.
- Eat right, exercise, and get plenty of sleep.
- Wash frequently touched objects, such as door handles, kitchen and bathroom surfaces, and phone receivers, with a household disinfectant.
- Avoid sharing utensils, such as cups and spoons.

Wishing you a happy & healthy holiday season!

Paula Amante
Nurse

FROM THE GYM

With the recent snow flurries and colder temperatures it seems that winter has finally arrived. All PE classes will be conducted in our nice cozy gym until after mud season in the spring. Please help your child remember to bring sneakers to school on gym days.

Following a two lesson field hockey unit, all students have now been taking part in an educational gymnastics unit. We began with a lesson focusing on balance. The children got to do many different solo balances, partner balances, and finally small group balances. As always, I stress the importance of effort, cooperation, and safety. In lesson number two the kids got to be creative by demonstrating animal walks, many

different kinds of rolls, and even some inverted skills such as cartwheels and round-offs. Our final lesson in the gymnastics unit provides the students with the opportunity to try a variety of apparatus and equipment. Among the choices are: cargo net, vaulting box, tunnel, balance beam and boards, climbing rope, partner balance station, and the wedge mat. The kids have a lot of fun with this one. It is a great last lesson before the holiday break.

I wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday season.

Jeff Goddard
PE Teacher

LIBRARIAN'S REVIEW

Too Many Toys

Written and illustrated by David Shannon

Spencer's mother is frustrated by all of the toys that are lying around the house and even spilling out into the backyard. They keep coming - from relatives, friends, birthday party hosts, even fast food joints. There seems to be no end. Spencer even has a use (or excuse) for keeping all the broken toys. With Mom getting increasingly frustrated, Spencer creates a unique and surprise solution to the problem. Caldecott honor winner Shannon has created another popular story using lots of color and his trademark big head, small body characters (No, David!). What an appropriate book for the holidays!

Christmas in the Trenches

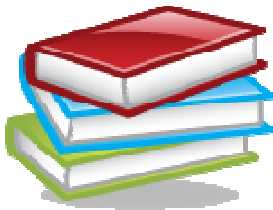
Written by John McCutcheon
Illustrated by Henri Sorensen

A grandfather tells his grandchildren a story about his unforgettable wartime experience in 1914, when German and Allied soldiers called a

temporary truce on Christmas Eve. Considered a fictional narrative, and related in a song written by folksinger John McCutcheon, it tells about the soldiers coming out of the trenches to play a game of soccer, share photos, small gifts, and sing "Silent Night", knowing full well that in the morning the fighting will resume. Beautiful sepia drawings depict young soldiers that look like old photographs. An accompanying CD includes that well known folksong, Silent Night (Stille Nacht), and a reading of the story. Accompanying notes confirm that there are eyewitness accounts that this event actually happened. This would make a great holiday gift for an older child.

Our annual school book fair is scheduled for the first week in February during the school day. It will also be open Tuesday, Feb. 3 and Wednesday, Feb. 4 from 3-7 PM. Volunteers are needed to help the children with book selection and cashing out. This is a great opportunity for the busy parent who might be interested in a one time commitment. Please call the school library at ext. 308 if you are available for a morning, afternoon, or early evening anytime that week.

Ellen Beckwith
Library Media Specialist



Music News

Thank you for transporting your holiday band and chorus students to the Atkinson Country Club for a tree lighting performance. They did a great job and had fun too! Thank you boys and girls for volunteering.

Third graders have received recorders. They should practice at least once a week at home so they will learn the notes. Please help them to remember to bring the recorder to school on the day they have music.

Our winter concert for fourth and fifth grade chorus and third to fifth grade instrumentalists is Monday, January 12, 2009 at the Performing Arts Center. Save the date!

Joyce Peavey, Music Teacher



Band News

Save Monday evening January 12, 2009 for the Atkinson Winter Concert! The concert will be held at the Timberlane Performing Arts Center at 7:00 pm and will feature the Band, Strings and Chorus. All strings will report at 6:15 pm to tune.

Band members have received a list of concert songs that you should be hearing over and over in preparation of the BIG event! Help your band member find a time to practice their concert music so they will feel comfortable at our first big performance of the year! See you at the PAC!

Debbie Lincoln
Band Teacher

Marjorie Nelson
Strings

Computer/Health

It's hard to believe that we are almost half way through the year. Third, fourth and fifth grade students are working hard in technology. Besides Mavis Beacon keyboarding the third graders made some wonderful books about the Cherokee Indians. The students researched from provided websites to learn about the lives of the Cherokee. They used this information to create booklets.

Fourth graders have made "wanted" posters about animals native to New Hampshire. They learned such functions as borders, bulleting, centering, and inserting clipart from websites. The students were also required to correctly site where they found their information. It was fun to see the rewards that students offered for their "missing" animal.

Fifth graders are in the process of creating brochures about Atkinson Academy. They will be taking digital pictures around the school to insert into their brochures. When the brochures are finished, we will be exchanging them with other fifth grade classes at one of the other schools in the district. The students love this opportunity to correspond with other Timberlane students. We will also be meeting them via distance learning.

First and second graders have become very informed about the importance of good health. We have studied about the new food pyramid and the benefits of a well-balanced diet. First graders have just finished a unit on good dental health and the second graders are learning about how germs work and how we can prevent germs from spreading.

A few sites for you to check out with your kids:

Fun School: <http://funschool.kaboose.com/>

Black Dog: <http://www.blackdog.net/>

Jan Brett: www.janbrett.com

Learn about Reindeer:

<http://www.reindeer.ws/photos.htm>

Have a healthy vacation. See you in 2009!

Anna Lizier

Computer/Health Teacher

Counselor's Corner

The theme for December is tolerance. In all the classes we have been focusing on how people are more alike than they are different. We have been learning that what matters is how we are on the inside (kind, considerate, fair, etc).

Mrs. Alexander and I are working with the fourth graders this month in the ART room. The students are making houses reflecting their individuality and personality using different textures. We are going to put all the houses together to make a village. The village is a visualization of how people's differences are important to our multicultural, multicolored world.

The holidays are quickly approaching. They can be an exciting, fun-filled time for some people, and for others, a time filled with stress and depression.

To make the holidays enjoyable for you and your family, please consider the following tips:

1. Take time to rest, exercise and eat healthy foods. Your body needs extra attention at this hectic time. Remember: Flu season is upon us.

2. Give yourself a break. The holidays are traditionally a family time, so let the entire family pitch in to decorate, shop, bake, clean, etc. This allows the family to spend extra time together.
3. Have some fun with your family. This doesn't have to cost anything. Jump in a pile of leaves, go skating on your street, take a hike in the woods, go biking, etc.
4. Have realistic expectations at this time. Our children become anxious at this time and are apt to be more active. Maintaining family rules will help your children stay settled. We want all our children to have a memorable holiday, but at what expense? Gifts are only material things. The best memories can be made with quality time spent with our family.
5. Take time for yourself. Read a book. Take a bubble bath. Go for a walk. Do something for yourself that will reduce your stress and regenerate your energy.

I wish you and your family a Blessed Holiday Season filled with Love and Happiness.

Mary Beth Ditoro
School Counselor



Reading Specialist's News

The Lump of Coal

By Snicket

Illustrated by Brett Helquist

Lemony Snicket brings a new twist to the dreaded "lump of coal" in the Christmas stockings of the naughty. Fans of the *Unfortunate Events Series* will enjoy Snicket's unique humor in this book when an artistic lump of coal, "who for the sake of argument could think, talk, and move itself around," is looking for a Christmas miracle. Along with Brett Helquist's illustrations, the author keeps readers smiling as the lump of coal travels through the city looking for an outlet for his artistic talent. When he does eventually find himself in the Christmas stocking of a "very disobedient boy" something quite unexpected and miraculous happens for both boy and lump of coal. Anyone with a taste for Lemony Snicket's humor will enjoy this holiday "gem."

Christmas Cookies: Bite-size Holiday Lessons

By Amy K. Rosenthal

Illustrated by Jane Dyer

The tradition of holiday baking unfolds through vocabulary words that express a season of kindness and understanding. Amy Rosenthal uses different vocabulary words on each page to impart a small but important lesson: "Appreciation means, Thank you so much for taking the time to bake," and "Gracious means, putting out a plate for our special guest." Coupled with Jane Dyer's deliciously detailed and whimsical illustrations, Rosenthal's words get readers in the mood to pull out the cookie sheets and share their "prosperity" with the neighborhood.

Enjoy!

Arlene Amendolara
Reading Specialist

ART

Our fifth graders are finishing up their art journal units on value. They are completing a still life of geometric shapes. They are using charcoal to shade in areas of darks and lights to create the illusion of depth in their drawings.

Fourth graders continue to work on their landscape paintings but we have taken a break to work on a special project with Mrs. Ditoro. The students are learning about tolerance with Mrs. Ditoro and together we are creating a textured 3-D house collage to compare and appreciate individual differences. We are going to make a village with our houses around the art room.

Third graders are working on Native American picture writing. This is an integrated lesson with their social studies unit. Each student is creating a story through picture symbols. Some stories will be drawn on a shield and others on animal hides.

Second and first grade students have begun a unit on texture. First graders are learning to identify textures on the surface of objects and learn how to create a texture pattern. Second graders are learning how artists use textures in a variety of ways. They have begun a texture drawing of their own using cray-pas.

Our new year in art will be collaborating with Mrs. Ditoro on our theme of peace. Students will be creating art projects that teach them how to communicate and get along with each other.

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday!

Pam Alexander
Art Teacher

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

"Motor Break"

Well, winter seems to have arrived, and with it, there are an abundance of play opportunities for children. There are the obvious benefits of winter sports, but even the non-skier can enjoy these everyday activities:

...walking in the snow provides a great opportunity to develop leg and trunk strength as well as balance skills.

...shoveling can improve upper body strength as well as the ability to coordinate both sides of the body.

...sledding is an excellent activity for many different reasons, depending on the position of the child and the type of sled used. It provides information to the movement (vestibular) system through receptors in the inner ear. This information is processed to form the basis for many higher level motor and academic tasks such as balance, muscle tone, eye movements and higher level perceptual skills. Different body positions (sitting, kneeling, and lying on stomach) develop balance, trunk strength and muscle tone.

...throwing snowballs to a target helps improve eye tracking and eye to hand coordination.

...making snow angels helps develop coordination of both sides of the body.

When thinking about holiday gifts, think back to some of the toys that you used to play with as a child. Many of these toys are still available, and popular with kids! Some ideas include: wind-up toys, tiddly winks, play-doh, pick-up sticks, coloring books, dot-to-dots and mazes.

For those inclement weather days, be sure to check out these websites for craft ideas:

www.craftsforkids.about.com

www.enchantedlearning.com

Tina Wood
Jane Slade

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 note the Monday Morning Meeting start time of **9:00 am**.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 1/7 - Jump Rope Club, 3:15-4:30 pm
- 1/9 - Ski Club Begins, 3:00-7:00 pm
- 1/12 - Winter Concert, PAC, 7:00 pm
- Monday Morning Meeting, 9:00 am
- 1/14 - Jump Rope Club, 3:15-4:30 pm
- 1/16 - Ski Club, 3:00-7:00 pm
- 1/19 - NO School - Civil Right's Day
- 1/21 - Jump Rope Club, 3:15-4:30 pm
- 1/23 - Ski Club, 3:00-7:00 pm
- Night Owl's Bingo
- 1/26 - Monday Morning Meeting, 9:00 am
- 1/28 - Early Release, 1:10, NO PM Kindergarten
- 1/30 - Ski Club, 3:00-7:00 pm

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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

Early Release Dates

- Below is the schedule for Early Release days, including the AM and PM Kindergarten schedule:
 - * 10/2/08 - AM Kindergarten only, NO PM
 - * 11/20/08 - NO AM or PM Kindergarten
 - * 12/16/08 - NO AM or PM Kindergarten
 - * 1/28/08 - AM Kindergarten only, NO PM
 - * 2/10/08 - NO AM or PM Kindergarten
 - * 3/25/08 - NO AM or PM Kindergarten
 - * 4/21/08 - NO AM or PM Kindergarten
 - * 5/14/08 - AM Kindergarten only, NO PM

Dismissal is at 1:10 pm

PTA NEWS

The holiday season is upon us and we are blessed to have family and friends and to be part of a great school community. The PTA is celebrating the spirit of the season with a family movie night on December 12th. All aboard, the Polar Express is leaving the station, the Dyke Auditorium, at 6PM. We are inviting all families to join us for a special viewing of the movie, free of charge. We will be serving, what else but hot chocolate and sugar cookies. Come on out and enjoy the evening.

Our Scrip fundraiser is underway. Just in time for the holidays we have gift cards for you, your family and friends. As we have written before, the fundraiser is selling gift cards from national chain stores and restaurants. You buy the gift card for face value, \$10 - \$100, and the PTA receives a percentage of that face value. Using these gift cards to shop for your everyday needs and for holiday items can help your children and the school. A calendar was sent home in the shuttle to show ordering dates for December; send in your order with Monday's shuttle and pick up your gift card on either Thursday or Friday, just in time for weekend shopping. It is that easy! If you have any questions, the Scrip Coordinators are Christina Jenkins and Susan Whelan.

For those families that clip Box Tops for education, if you have been saving them, the time to send them in is now. The committee will begin to tally the classroom totals and the classroom contest will end in February. Also, if you clip the Campbell's Soup Labels for Education, just a reminder, the UPC bar code is what we need, not the front label. The company wants the whole bar code in order to tally our points. Please clip the barcode, if you include the little soup guy it is easy for us to spot when separating all the labels we collect. Thanks for doing this little part to help the school.

Lastly, thanks to everyone who participated in the art fair. The PTA made about \$2500 on this fundraiser and the artwork was quite impressive.

Keep a look out as we continue to try new and fun activities in the new year and as always, thank you for your support.

Carolyn Longchamp
Atkinson Academy PTA President

MISCELLANEOUS

- We are collecting quality winter coats on behalf of Anton's Cleaners for kids, adults and babies, too! You can drop them off in the office at the Academy now through December 31st. The coats should be gently used and in good condition. Thank you for your help.
- A flyer is being sent home today in the shuttle regarding donations for the holiday. Please note that as an incentive, students who donate may wear a hat of their choice on December 23rd during the sing-a-long.
- Reminder: 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. Thank you.
- There are still some Atkinson Academy cookbooks available for \$5.00. They'd make nice Christmas gifts! If you're interested in buying one, please call Lisa Ambrosio at 362-4764.