



# Roger Sherman Elementary

October 2009

## Principal's Corner

L. Moss



The beginning of the school year has flown by and here we are into October. Students are working very hard in all subject areas and earning PBS tickets for regular respectful behavior. Teachers meet regularly to discuss student work and how they can improve student learning. We have certified teachers/tutors who come to Sherman to work with small groups of students. We have activities for families at Sherman too. Our TPT (Teachers and Parents Together) is holding the fundraiser pick-up on October 29. It will be in conjunction with a Family Pumpkin Painting Night.

The week of October 26-30<sup>th</sup> we will run a TPT membership drive for our families and teachers to join the TPT. The cost to join the TPT is \$3.00. By joining the TPT and becoming an active parent your child will see that you feel school is important. We have a wonderful, but small group of parents who could really use your help. There are so many ways to help. You could attend meetings or volunteer to help at the family events. Please join the TPT this week. Let's make the TPT have the largest membership and be the most successful yet.

We have been monitoring bus safety since the beginning of the year. Seats are assigned and bus drivers report when students are consistently following bus rules. Here's how you can support us in keeping all children safe on the bus. Please review the following rules with your children on a regular basis:

1. Students should stay seated in their assigned seats.
2. Students should keep hands, feet, and objects to themselves.
3. Students should use indoor voices and always speak respectfully to each other and the bus driver.
4. Students should remain in their seats until the bus comes to a complete stop.

With Halloween quickly approaching there are a few safety tips to follow: Help your child pick out or make a costume that will be safe. Make it fire proof, the eye holes should be large enough for good peripheral vision. Make sure if your child is carrying a prop, that the tips are smooth and flexible enough to not cause injury if fallen on.

Trick or treating isn't what it used to be. It's not as safe to let kids walk the streets alone. Send a responsible adult or older teenager with them. Teach your kids basic everyday safety such as not getting into cars or talking to strangers, watching both ways before crossing streets and crossing when the lights tell you to, will help make them safer when they are out Trick or Treating.

Treating your kids to a spooky Halloween dinner will make them less likely to eat the candy they collect before you have the chance to check it for them.

Let's keep our kids safe!

## Pre-K and Kindergarten

S. Conway, M. Rarey,  
K. Nitkowski, R. Natcher

In Preparation for the field trip to Norton Brothers Farm Mrs. Rarey's class studied about apples. Everyone brought in an apple and we sorted them by colors, tasted them, and even did art projects with them (apple printing!). We had fun cutting them up, cooking them and putting them through a food mill to make applesauce for snack, yum!. We made a big book called Apple Happy.



Tatiana, Gurshan, Emmy, and Savannah making applesauce.

Each student made an apple with a happy, a sad, a sleepy, or a mad face. Now, we are each having a turn to take the book home and read it to our family.

The preschool classes of Mrs. Rarey and Mrs. Conway went on an autumn field trip to Norton Brothers Farm and Orchard on Tuesday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. It was a beautiful, fall day. The weather cooperated for our wonderful, fun filled adventures. The hayride took us through the apple orchards with a gorgeous view. Students, teachers and parent chaperones were given bags to fill with a variety of apples. We feasted on delicious apple fritter donut holes and apple cider. We viewed a large bee hive in the store. Yes. We spotted the queen bee! We toured the refrigerated compartment where the crates of packaged apples are stored. And finally, to end a wonderful experience, we all picked our very own pumpkin to take home. Our sincere thank you to the many parent chaperones that assisted in supervising the students.

The experience was a

pleasant relation to our autumn/fall theme. We had been discussing the changes in our weather; clothing we are wearing; animals we see outdoors; fruits and vegetables of the season; markets, farms, fairs and the like for this time of year. We are learning seasonal songs. We are drawing and painting pictures of autumn things and tasting seasonal items such as pumpkin seeds; pumpkin bread; and apple sauce. What a wonderful and beautiful time of year.

Coming upon us soon will be our Thanksgiving holiday. We will be discussing "food groups and nutrition." Followed by our December Parent-Teacher conferences we are looking forward to having.

In Kindergarten we are learning about reading strategies. These strategies help our students to read. Looking at picture cues is a strategy that helps improve comprehension and aids in reading unknown words. Tracking, or pointing to words as they read, is a strategy that keeps the reader focused and prevents adding or deleting words when reading. The third strategy that we are learning about is to look at the initial sound of a word to help read that word. As the year progresses, more strategies will be taught. Students have a perfect opportunity to practice these strategies in our March of Dimes Reading Challenge. Whether the books are from the library or from their home browser box,

students can utilize their new skills while simultaneously earning a medal from the March of Dimes. By recording the titles of books they read or books that others read to them, they will quickly discover how reading books expands their language, opens new ideas, and is just fun!

## *First Grade*

**A. Weaver, W. McKay,  
B. St. John, K. Kalber**

Grade one students continue to be very busy as well as putting their best effort forward. We just finished our first Anthology and through reading a variety of stories we focused on details, drawing conclusions, making inferences and sequencing.

In writing we have been sequencing stories and now learning what information needs to be in the beginning, the middle, and the end of the story.

In math, we have been graphing data such as our favorite colors, favorite apples, favorite animals, and how we get to school along with reviewing patterning and ordinal numbers. We now are focusing on addition concepts and strategies.

In social studies we are learning about economics and how choices affect our lives. Students are able to learn through our school's PBS initiative to purchase rewards such as extra recess, lunch with their teacher etc. Students use individual yellow tickets as money to pay for monthly activities.

Our field trip to the Meriden Library was very exciting. Mrs. Matsil, the librarian, read a story to us and gave us a tour of the library. Each student received their own library card to sign out books, along with a gift bag which included a bookmark, a pencil, a free book, and information regarding the library. Each student was able to sign out a book using their new card which is due back to the library by November 13th. We hope all our students and their families will visit the library monthly to support their education.

### *Second Grade*

**K. Baransky, A. Jensen,  
J. Crouse, A. Sharnick**

The second grade classes have been learning about sequencing stories and learning how to write details in our writing. We have been learning about Main Idea and are learning to incorporate our senses into our writing. We are still working on sequencing even in our writing. We have also been learning about the naming part of a sentence and the telling part of a sentence. Ask us which is which.

Math has been fun so far this year. We have been learning about patterns with shapes and numbers. We have been learning about number sense and what the value of digits in a number is. Did you know that the value of 9 in 49 is 9?

We have been busy reading our Time for Kids, and learning about current events. We have been using our

schema and evidence from a text to infer about what is happening in a picture or story.



### *Third Grade*

**B. Higley, A. Bryers,  
K. Wilson, B. Cabell**

Greetings from third grade! We have been very busy throughout October, fulfilling many objectives and earning lots of tickets through PBS.

In Language Arts, we have been studying such ideas as synonyms, antonyms, using a dictionary, and writing complete sentences. While we read, we have been reviewing and using several strategies, such as decoding, reading ahead, summarizing, and making & confirming predictions. All of us have been reading, reading, reading!



We have read great books such as The Olympic Games, Turtle Bay, and Balto, the Dog Who Saved Nome, among many others. We have also focused on the physical and personality traits of the

characters we read about, such as Princess Elizabeth from The Paper Bag Princess. Additionally, we studied addition and subtraction patterns with and without regrouping, tables and graphs, and place value in math. The Grade 3 Team is happy to note that Mr. Hutchinson, our District's Math Facilitator, will be working with, and modeling for, our students throughout the year to reinforce math skills! We also took the Meriden District-wide Assessment in Math, Reading Comprehension, and Editing/Revising to assist in guiding instruction throughout the year based on the students' results.

Our classes have been soaring with PBS, both individually and as whole classes. All of the third grade classes surpassed their class ticket benchmarks and earned their individual class rewards, such as an ice cream sundae party or pumpkin painting! This month, students had the option to "buy" an opportunity to wear their Halloween costumes for a parade for 20 of their individual star tickets, or 15 with a donation of a canned good. Next month, they will have an opportunity to purchase a new reward.

We are looking forward to many other great learning opportunities throughout November. Check back next month to see what we are doing!

## *Fourth Grade*

**A. DiGennaro, K. Fedora, F. Wagner**

Things are in full swing in fourth grade. In language arts students have started their second theme in Harcourt. The theme is entitled "Side by Side" and the anthology stories feature characters that benefit from teamwork. In reading, the grade level focus is character traits. Students are working to find ways to describe characters in stories, not physically, but based on their actions and personalities. It is important that when they identify a trait, they also include textual support. For the coming weeks, we will continue to focus on narrative writing - both personal and fictional narratives. Students should not start essays with "Once upon a time..." or "One sunny day..." but rather look to find creative ways of hooking the reader in so that they will read on.

In math, we just finished our third unit on estimation and rounding. Coming up next our classes will work on money and graphing. However, there continues to be an emphasis on basic fact practice as well as word problems. It is important that students work on their math facts at home, as they are the foundation of many of the other math topics we will explore this year. With word problems, students should look for keywords such as "how many more" and "altogether" that signal what mathematical operation to use to solve the problem. Right now, our grade is

practicing questions from CMT Strand #1 - place value. This is the perfect review of questions and concepts that we worked on at the very start of the year.



Speaker Donovan at the Capital.

In social studies we are wrapping up our unit on Connecticut. We've had a lot of fun exploring our state - from historical times to present. We were fortunate enough to have the opportunity to take a field trip to the Connecticut State Capitol and Museum of Connecticut History, in Hartford, on October 21st. Students had so much fun seeing the Capitol in person, after reading so much about it in class beforehand.

It was such a great surprise to have the opportunity to meet with Meriden Representative Christopher Donovan. Mr. Donovan is Speaker of the House. He spoke to students and taught them about his role in the House, as well as explaining the process that the Representatives use when voting on the state's new laws.



Ms. Wagner's class at the Museum of Connecticut History across from the Capital building in Hartford.

The field trip really helped to tie the information we are learning together.

## *Fifth Grade*

**S. Owen, A. Abbott, R. Tellez**

The fifth grade students in Miss Abbott's, Mrs. Owen's and Mrs. Tellez's classes have been really busy in the month of October! We have been working on mastering all of our multiplication facts. We have learned to multiply multi-digit numbers and how to multiply with money. We were able to do some "shopping" and create grocery lists, recording the running estimate and the actual total. We are looking forward to moving on and mastering our division facts next. This first term has kept us very busy with our math facts!

In reading, we have begun our second theme on "Teamwork". We have read stories about some amazing people who have worked

hard to help others less fortunate than themselves. We learned that not only was Roberto Clemente an amazing baseball player, but he lost his life while trying to help those in other countries who were in need of supplies. We have been introduced to the Iditarod Dog Sled Race and the value of teamwork in perilous situations. We will continue to read stories about families who work together to survive even the most dangerous experiences. It has helped us to realize the importance in working with others.

We have completed our unit on Native Americans in Social Studies. We were able to learn many traits and characteristics that Native American tribes had in common, and differences they had. We compared and contrasted tribes and discussed how the environment played a significant role in the lifestyles Native Americans chose to live. We are looking forward to learning about the early explorers next. We will be determining the significance of the voyages made by the explorers. We may finally figure out which explorers truly "discovered" new areas.

On Friday, October 30th, the fifth grade classes will take part in some "Spooky Science Experiments". Miss Abbott will be demonstrating the scientific method to fifth grade classes, through experimentation. I know all the students are looking forward to that!

Hopefully we will have seen you at the Fall Fundraiser Pickup activity on Thursday, October 29th, from 6:00-7:30. The fifth grade team will be there selling spooky treats, in order to raise money for upcoming fifth grade activities.

We look forward to seeing everyone soon at report card conferences, the first week in December.

*PBS*

PBS Team



The September PBS award of extra recess was a huge success. We are looking forward to our October PBS award which is dressing up in our costumes and having a parade in the gym. Please remind your students to show respect to others, to themselves, and their school.

*MLT, Art, Music,*

*Media, PE*

**M. Muir, M. Ferazzi, B. Kaplan,  
B. Starrett, K. Davis, B. Poggio**



**Grade 1** is busy, busy, busy. Our fine motor skills are getting better with each lesson. Students learned what

geometric shapes are and then used those shapes to create robots, a scene from outer space, and witches!

**Grade 2** has been studying geometric shapes along with adjectives. We created monsters, a spider in a web and now we are working on chameleons.

**Grade 3** is using geometric shapes as architects would do – by designing buildings and putting together a city scene.

**Grade 4** completed a review of geometric and free form shapes. We combined both types of shapes in a printmaking lesson. The students are having a great time learning how to do the art of printmaking!

**Grade 5** is involved in a very complex, detailed design lesson centered on contrast. Students are combining a variety of patterns to create a contrasting design.



Kindergarteners have been utilizing programs that reinforce language arts skills while increasing their comfort on the computers. First graders have explored Spelling City, an online program that reinforces their Harcourt Language Arts program. They also worked on reinforcing upper and lower case letters, initial letter sounds, and some computer

skills. They also had some fun exploring drawing with geometric shapes. Second graders have also used Spelling City and are becoming more independent on it. They also sorted animals as Carnivores and Herbivores in a table, and built on that knowledge by creating a web on animal diets utilizing the program Inspiration.

Third graders are exploring our natural resources, and the role of humans in preserving them. In MLT, they are looking at WATER, its importance, the states of water, its uses, the water cycle, and how we can conserve water. Fourth graders are finalizing the very lengthy exploration of their own state of Connecticut. Fifth graders looked at how to interpret the information on a weather website, and turn the information into a table and graph in Excel.

Continue to celebrate your child's success by looking at the projects that they have completed, and the rubric highlighting the skills that they are mastering.

If you want to look at Spelling City, go to this website:

[www.spellingcity.com](http://www.spellingcity.com)

Choose Find a List from the tabs. Type in MLT for first grade, MLT2 for second grade, MLT3 for third grade, MLT4 for fourth grade, or MLT5 for grade 5. Hit Search. Under "Teacher Name", click onto the ml letters in blue. A list of books will pop up. Choose the current book. Your child can start with Teach Me, and move on to the games.



The Library Media Center appreciates the payment for lost books which some parents have respectfully paid. If your student later finds their lost Library Media book, we will refund your payment. Keep reading.

## Volunteer Information

**B. Higley, B. Poggio,  
N. Murray, A. Edson**

Any questions about the Volunteer Program can be directed to Mrs. Edson, Mrs. Higley, Mrs. Poggio, or Mrs. Murray at (203) 238 - 1286.



*TPT*

**Executive Board**

Sign up to be a member of the TPT. It is only \$3.00 per family. You can send in a note to your child's teacher to receive another form for membership.

## October 26-30<sup>th</sup> TPT Membership Drive



## From the Nurse's Office

Please feel free to call the nurse's office with any questions. 639 - 5533.



## Math Minute

**The Roger Sherman Math Team**

Over the next month, students will be covering different concepts to improve their skills in Math. Students in Kindergarten will focus on naming quantities that are MORE, LESS, and the SAME. They will also be studying the comparison of lengths. In first grade, students will be working on patterns, odd and even numbers, and beginning to explore subtraction. Second grade will be identifying coins and naming the value of coin combinations. They will also be practicing their facts from 0 to 18. By the end of the month, second graders will be starting to add 2-digit numbers. For grade three, their focus will be adding and subtracting multi-digit numbers as well as telling time to the quarter hour and solving elapsed time problems. The fourth grade team will be starting tables and graphs. They will explore numeric and geometric patterns and conclude the month by starting

multiplication. Fifth graders will be improving and expanding their division skills and at the end of the month, they will be starting geometry.

Here are a few helpful hints that can help your child improve their basic math skills:

1. Allow your child to count your change after a purchase.
2. While riding in the car, ask your child math facts in addition and subtraction (upper grades can do multiplication and division).
3. Estimate the cost of an item by rounding the price to the nearest whole dollar.

## Reading Department

J. Flood, M. Larsen, A. Luz,  
S. Oneto, L. Torres



Background knowledge is what a child knows before reading a story. For example, if a child has a lot of background knowledge on space, she will have an easier time reading a book about astronauts. You can help build your child's background knowledge by talking to her about ordinary events. Here are some key points to keep in mind when holding a conversation with your child:

Use higher level vocabulary words.

Ex. If you take a nature walk and you pass a tree, talk about it using rich language. Vocabulary terms you might

use are bark, roots, branches, leaves, deciduous, photosynthesis, and chlorophyll.

Point out specific details.

Ex. Talk about how the leaves on deciduous trees change colors in the fall. Discuss how the roots gather water to provide nourishment for the tree.

Gather more information on the subject.

Example: If you need more in-depth information, consider visiting the public library to take out books on trees. You may also go online to find further information.

There are so many opportunities for building background knowledge. Take your children places and discuss what you see. You can go to a beach, park, library, sporting event, apple orchard, or even the grocery store. At home, look through magazines or books and discuss what you see in the pictures. Remember, building background knowledge will help your child understand what she is reading.

## Other Information

There are wonderful resources on our school website that can accessed through the internet. Please check out the website. One great resource on the website is an interactive website called TumbleBooks.

To get to the school website please go to <http://sherman.meriden.k12.ct.us>

Along the yellow band at the top of the page click on resources. Then click on the word Tumblebooks. Then click on the picture for the Tumblebook Library.

TumbleBooks is an online collection of animated; talking picture books which teach children the joy of reading in a format they'll love. TumbleBooks are created by adding animation, sound, music and narration to existing picture books in order to produce an electronic picture book which you can read, or have read to you.



**Remember to  
participate in our  
March of Dimes  
Reading  
Challenge.**



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