

# Wolf Times

Volume 9, Issue 2

October, 2011



## From the Desk of: Mrs. Jacqueline Norcel, Principal

It is important for both home and school to work together to build strong character in our children. Clearly, when it comes to character building, the family is the key. There is simply no substitute for a mother and/or father, or guardian, who forms a loving and supportive circle around the child, providing loving guidance and defining for their child, both by what they say and how they live, standards of good conduct.

Schools have a strong supportive role to play in character building. Schools must not only help children become literate and well informed, they must also help them develop the capacity to be responsible and demonstrate good problem solving skills in situations of ethical conflict. Schools can reinforce those universal values we all cherish and which we hope our children will demonstrate when we are not around. When they are on their own, we want them to demonstrate universal character traits in their daily lives, such as:

**Responsibility, Caring, Perseverance, Honesty, Kindness, Tolerance, Respect, Cooperation, and Initiative.** These character traits will enable them to be successful in life. Our goal this year is “Bee” a person of good character.

At Frenchtown, we have selected an attribute to highlight and reinforce in our students for the school year and one attitude to be studied for every month. Ten great ways to “Bee-Have” are:

1. “Bee” friendly
2. “Bee” honest
3. “Bee” fair
4. “Bee” kind
5. “Bee” trustworthy
6. “Bee” responsible
7. “Bee” respectful
8. “Bee” helpful
9. “Bee” nice
10. “Bee” caring



This year the staff and PTA has again selected the attribute of “citizenship” as the character builder on which we will focus all year. One of the most important challenges parents face is to help our children develop “citizenship.” Here are a few simple ideas to start with:

1. Use the word citizenship with your child. This way your child will become familiar with the concept and will absorb the word into his or her vocabulary. Talk often about being a good citizen, using examples.
2. Tell your child that you want him or her to be a good citizen. You expect it. If you notice your child, yourself, or others being good citizens or bad citizens, point this out to your child. Talk about the consequences of the behavior, both good and bad.
3. Be careful and conscious about setting a good example by being a good citizen in everything you do and say. What you do and don't do sends a message to your child.
4. Provide opportunities for your child to participate in helping the community. You might join a one-day community work project or clean-up project. Perhaps your child can make a contribution to some kind of community cause, or, you can attend a community fundraiser together. Just make sure your child knows that the proceeds from the event



Just make sure your child knows that the proceeds from the event

will be used for a community project.

Here are some concepts about citizenship that the Frenchtown Staff will help your child understand. Good citizens:

- Do their share
- Help their communities
- Follow rules and laws
- Respect authority
- Take care of the environment

Students recite the Pledge of Allegiance every day and they recite the Frenchtown School Pledge on Mondays and Fridays.

During the month of October we will study Brazil. If you have any photographs, flags, artifacts, souvenirs, native dress, music, etc. to lend us we would love to share them in our large display case in our front lobby and play the music during morning exercises or during lunch.



During the week of September 12<sup>th</sup> every child experienced civic lessons on the Constitution. September 17 is officially Constitution Day. During the

month of October we will continue our study on the character pillar of citizenship with an emphasis on Democracy Day.

During October, the curriculum areas of Social Studies and Science will afford the children an opportunity to investigate the lives, values, and principles of men and women who dared to chart new paths. Christopher Columbus, Henry Ford, Jonas Salk, Neil Armstrong, Pablo Picasso, Molly Pitcher, and Eleanor Roosevelt are among those who will be discussed.

Teachers also will be highlighting the curriculum areas of health and safety. Children will be discussing fire prevention, Halloween safety, nutritious foods and snacks, proper dress for fall weather, and the needs of a healthy body. Grades K – 2 will have a visit from the Fire Department on October 19<sup>th</sup>.

In this newsletter will be copies of Trumbull's new grades 3, 4 and 5 standards based report cards. The district will be holding parent meetings to introduce and explain the new progress report.

Learning is a life-long process. Our school mission statement states that we want our students

to be life-long learners. The business of education is learning and the school's job is to help students connect or apply that learning or knowledge to real life situations. For teachers to be effective educators, they need to be life-long learners. They need to continue extending and expanding their knowledge about the teaching process.



Teacher staff development is an important factor that contributes to the excellent reputation of our district's teaching staff. The

Trumbull School District hires outstanding teachers and continues to provide training to assist them in continually upgrading their instructional strategies and teaching skills, as well as in implementing new curriculum mandated by state frameworks. The content of the staff development days comes from our school plan and our district's long-range curriculum plan.

The purpose of our professional staff days is to provide teachers large, uninterrupted blocks of time for concentrated training to enhance their skills and effectiveness in the classroom. The days spent for staff development are rigorous in content and provide teachers with new skills and training to use in the classroom with students. They also have an opportunity to plan with their colleagues to implement new teaching strategies in their classrooms.

By challenging teachers to think critically about curriculum, to explore new teaching strategies, and to evaluate what works or doesn't work with children, we provide them the stimulation and encouragement to continue to excel as teachers.

Remember to check our website [www.frenchtownelementary.com](http://www.frenchtownelementary.com). Mrs. Liebowitz is continually updating the site. She would welcome any suggestions or ideas you might have on how to make our site even more user friendly.

If you have any questions, please contact us at school. Call the office, 452-4227 and we'll get back to you.



Character Corner—

Mr. Weitzman,

Social Worker



"Bee" Honest

## Kindergarten News...

Mrs. Alves



My Goodness, What a way to begin the school year! The children did just fine and we are well on our way to an exciting Kindergarten year. The children seem to be adjusting nicely and they are making new friends. We are working hard on routines, following directions and learning each other's names.

Thank you for coming to Back To School Night. It was nice to talk with so many of you. Thank you also for sending in supplies. We have enough for right now. I will let you know if we get low on anything. Thank you.

Check out my website. Go to the Frenchtown Elementary School Website and from there you can link on to mine. Please sign up for the News Flash page. I will use that from time to time to get in touch with you.

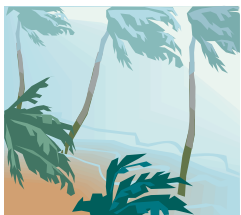
For Halloween, the children are welcome to wear costumes. I will send home a special note with more details later.

Parent/Teacher Conferences are in November. If you need an evening conference, please write me a note as soon as you can.

We've been very excited about our butterflies. Most of the chrysalises have hatched into butterflies and we let them go. It was remarkable! Who knows, maybe they will even get to Mexico! Ask your little one about the butterflies. It's all very exciting!! They have learned some really big words!!

## Kindergarten News...

Mrs. Crawford



Welcome to Frenchtown School! It was an interesting way to start the year after a hurricane, but the kindergartners are moving right along. It takes at least a month or so for the children to really learn all our routines and expectations. They do learn to be quite

independent, but they are not there yet. All in due time!



Has your child been talking about monarch butterflies? I hope you are getting to see the same enthusiasm and excitement that I am seeing in the classroom! We always begin the kindergarten year with this science unit and it seems to "hook" them into the fun of learning. The children come in each day and go right to our containers to observe the caterpillars. You should have heard about how we released our monarchs so they can fly to Mexico. Did your child teach you about metamorphosis? Did you know that butterflies come out of a chrysalis and moths come out of cocoons? Did they tell you how to identify a boy monarch? Has your child used the words "symmetry" and proboscis (butterfly tongue)? Ask your child to provide you an update!

After doing some general alphabet activities the first few weeks, we jumped right into our new Language Arts program, entitled, *Fundations*. Echo and Baby Echo are puppets that will help the children learn their letters and sounds. We will be focusing a lot on the correct way to hold a pencil and the correct way to form letters. We will begin with lowercase t, b, and f. We will also be doing a lot of skywriting. Ask your child how to make the letter t in the air.

We began Calendar Math the second day of school and have officially begun to count how many days we are in school. We are working on number recognition, patterning, days of the week, months of the year and counting by groups of ten. We are on our way already!

I just want to thank all of you for taking the time to come to Back-to-School Night. I gave you an awful lot of information, so do not hesitate to ask questions if need be. **Thank you** for the supplies that you have sent in as well. I truly appreciate your donations.

Don't forget to sign up for my News Flash on my website. I really want to start using it very soon to provide you updates and reminders.

Homework will start soon, but until then, read to your child each night and give him/her time to practice name writing. It takes a while for the

children to learn to write their name properly. Keep working on correct pencil grasp and scissor grasp as well!

Halloween is almost here!

## Kindergarten News...

**Mrs. Capone**

Welcome to Kindergarten! It has been a great start to a new school year! The children are adjusting nicely and are making many new friends. We have been working on creating a warm classroom environment. We have enjoyed reading many stories about kindergarten adventures and the importance of friendship. The children are doing a great job learning the routines and expectations for our classroom.

The warmth of early September was a wonderful time to introduce the life cycle of the monarch butterfly. On a daily basis we have observed the transformation from caterpillar to the butterfly. As little scientists we have learned new words such as chrysalis and metamorphosis. It's thrilling to see the amazement in each child's face as we watch the caterpillars change into beautiful monarch butterflies. As we release our butterflies the children all wave goodbye as they embark on a new journey.

We began our Calendar Math to start off the school year. We've learned new songs to help us remember the days of the week and the months of the year. We have been counting, keeping track of the days in school, and have been exploring patterns, math manipulatives and creating graphs as well.



We have been busy working on alphabet activities and learning all about our Language Arts program, Foundations. The children were so excited to meet and work with our classroom owls, Echo and Baby Echo. Our puppets will be helping us throughout the year learn our letters and their sounds.

Thank you for coming to Back to School Night. It was wonderful to see so many families join us that evening. Thank you to all for donating supplies. We are extremely busy throughout the

year so any donations of wipes, tissues, napkins, and paper towels are greatly appreciated. I am looking forward to a fabulous year together!

## Grade One News...

**Miss Buco, Mrs. Mordecai,  
Mrs. Rodrigues, Mrs. Tuohy,  
Miss Saad**



Frenchtown First Graders are fabulous! We have started the year off in a fantastic way. You can find any one of us looking sharp as we enter the building from our buses, using our walking feet to our classrooms and following our morning routines! We look so grown up and are taking our new responsibilities seriously. First grade classrooms our preparing and learning all the components of "Readers Workshop". If you speak to a Frenchtown first grader you might just hear them tell you all about their reading focus of the day, their response journals, book nooks and book boxes. We are so cool taking our learning seriously.

In math we explored characteristics of cubes, pattern blocks, geoblocks, and power polygons. We are counting sets of objects up to 20. We are truly beginning to build a stronger number sense through all the games and activities that we are participating in. Our "Math Workshop" time is filled with lots of math conversation and learning.

We were given a surprise to observe! Some creepy crawlies made their way to first grade and we are observing and noticing some pretty cool things about our new friends. Ask your first grader just what that surprise was!

We really are off to a magical year. We are setting up our foundation to build strong learners! Frenchtown First Graders are the best!

## Grade Two News ...

**Mrs. Alfano, Mrs. Angon, Ms. Hull,  
Mrs. Pereira, Ms. Sansone, Mrs. Buswell**

The Second Grade teachers would like to welcome everyone! We had a wonderful start to

our new year. The students have adjusted well to their new classes and the new routines that come with being a second grader. They especially love the “big playground” at recess!



We started the year off by reading several favorite books, including, How I Spent My Summer Vacation, and Leo the Late Bloomer along with many other stories. The reading comprehension focus in September was making text-to-self connections. Students have learned the “Five Finger Rule” to find a “Just Right” book for independent reading. As we build our reading community, students are taking responsibility for their learning and behavior, and developing the necessary skill of listening to one another.

Math began with an overview of the many “tools” we will be using throughout the year. Some of the manipulatives we’ve used include cubes, pattern blocks, and money. Students have also learned some new math games: Tens Go Fish, Plus 1 or 2 Bingo, and collect 25 cents. The math games are an exciting and fun way to build important math skills. Please be sure to practice math facts nightly!

We also began our social studies unit, Living in our Country. This unit focuses on the many different things that identify the American people as a nation, as well as events from our history. We discovered that although Americans have different backgrounds and opinions, we have many things in common. We also discussed the responsibilities of the President and brainstormed some things we would change if we could.

We thank everyone who was able to attend Back to School Night. We appreciate all those who volunteered to help us make this year successful and for all supplies that were donated to our classrooms. We are excited and look forward to a terrific year together!

### **Grade Three News...**

**Mrs. Atwood, Mrs. Cretella,  
Mrs. Makoski, Mrs. Martins,  
Mrs. Carley**

We were so happy to meet all of the parents at Back to School Night. It was wonderful to share with you information about our curriculum and programs.

In reading, children are learning to choose “just right” books, using the five finger rule to help them decide if a book will be appropriate for them. During our Making Meaning read aloud times, partners are discussing the story using their Turn and Talk routines. Students are starting to write about what they are reading and are making meaningful connections to each book. Our Independent Daily Reading time, at least 15 minutes a day, is always a welcome part of our reading block. We hope all the children are reading for 20 minutes every night at home and filling out their FREE calendars.

In math, our focus has been on addition and subtraction strategies. The children are practicing a variety of strategies. These include breaking numbers apart into their tens and ones, using number lines, and using place value blocks. We are using these strategies to solve word problems as well. Make sure your child keeps practicing addition and subtraction facts so they become automatic.

In language arts, our read alouds are giving us lots of ideas for stories. We are using writer's notebooks to keep lists of our ideas as well as to write our stories. In grammar, we have worked on different kinds of sentences, subjects, and predicates. Our Friday spelling homework assignments and tests have been very successful so far.



Science classes are beginning to talk about food chains and food webs. The children are setting up their science notebooks to record their observations and their thinking. They are excited to begin their study of forest ecosystems. Social Studies classes are learning about how oceans and rivers change the land through erosion. The children enjoyed working in teams to complete a scavenger hunt through their textbooks.

As always, we appreciate your contributions of tissues, paper towels, and hand wipes. We are looking forward to a terrific year!



## **Grade Four News...**

**Ms. Weinstein, Mr. Fiore,  
Mrs. Gaspar, Ms. St. John,  
Mrs. Wolfe**

September has been a busy month for the fourth grade! Despite the delay to the new school year, the students have adjusted very well to their new routines. We are looking forward to a wonderful year with your children! We are excited to welcome Mrs. Wolfe, who joined the fourth grade team this year!

We are already underway with our math Investigations program, Unit One, *Factors, Multiples, and Arrays: Multiplication and Division I*. In this unit, students deepen their understanding of the operation of multiplication. Students will use rectangular arrays to represent and model multiplication situations, identify features of numbers (including prime, square, and composite numbers), use what they know to solve problems that increase in size, and focus on solving problems efficiently. Students will also continue to develop fluency with multiplication combination (facts to 12 x 12). Your support at home to encourage the daily practice of math facts will greatly benefit your child throughout the year. Students are encouraged to make their own flash cards at home to reinforce facts they are learning in class.

In science, students are exploring, understanding, and applying the steps of the scientific method. As we begin our first science unit on Force and Motion, students will hear a variety of literature on this topic, as well as participate in engaging, hands-on experiments. In social studies, students are preparing for their trip to the State Capitol in Hartford by learning about the three branches of the government: the Legislative branch is responsible for making laws and is comprised of the Senate and the House of Representatives; the Executive branch carries out laws and is made up of the President, the Vice President, and the cabinet; the Judicial branch evaluates laws and its members include the Supreme Court and other Federal Courts. Ask your children what each branch represents!



Students are establishing themselves as contributing members in both the reading and

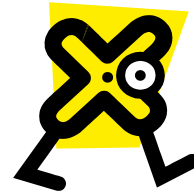
writing communities. In reading, students are hearing and discussing examples of good literature in order to deepen their comprehension and understanding of texts heard and read. In writing, students are getting ideas for writing from read-alouds and then use their writing journals to write about things that interest them.

It was wonderful to see so many parents attend our Back to School Night! We are looking forward to a wonderful year ahead with your children. It will be a year filled with challenging opportunities for growth and learning.

## **Grade Five News...**

**Mrs. Carley, Mrs. Russo,  
Miss Caravetta, Mrs. Windsor,  
Mrs. Demshak**

What a wonderful beginning to a new year! We enjoyed a nice turnout to our fifth grade Back to School Night where we were able to give an overview of the curriculum, expectations, and upcoming events.

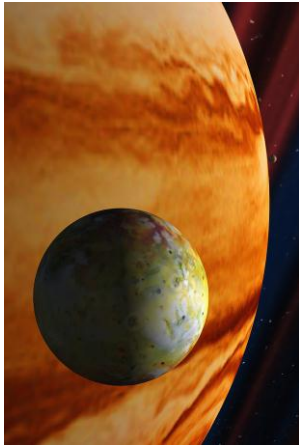


Within the individual subjects, math has begun with a strong focus on multiplication and division strategies. Be on the lookout for investigations homework and letters that will explain the strategies that your children are exploring in class. All of our classes have begun using Calendar Math, which helps children observe math and its uses in an everyday setting while learning new concepts.

Our reading program has kicked off with Reader's Workshop and Making Meaning. Children are investigating the various genres open to them as well as learning to select books on their reading level. There is a significant difference in pleasure reading, independent reading, and instructional reading. We are hoping children begin to select books in their independent levels, so they will continue to grow as readers. We will be using guided reading in the classroom at the child's instructional level to help them learn and implement new strategies.

This year we are introducing students to expository writing. Expository is different from narrative in purpose, organization, and tone. Expository writing is crafted for the purpose of informing an audience. The details need to be well

organized in a logical and sequential manner. Organization is very straightforward and clearly focused on a topic. The piece should still have style and a unique voice that hooks and holds the readers' attention". Any time you are reading and notice some good examples of expository writing, please share this with your child!



Our science curriculum has begun with an introduction to the science process. Children will focus on the solar system and the phases of the moon as it relates to the effects on Earth. We will also study the sun and its importance on our daily survival.

This month our character counts focus is "Bee Friendly"! Please continue to discuss what it means to be friendly to others, what it looks like, sounds like, and feels like in your every day interactions with the kids. We look forward to what lies ahead. Please continue signing assignment pads nightly and signing those reading logs.

## **From the Library...**

**Ms. Albro**



Each and every Frenchtown student comes to Library Media Class. Throughout the year, in addition to managing the library collection, I deliver the district-wide library media curriculum to all our

students. The goal of this curriculum is to enable students to develop information literacy, literature appreciation, and technology skills through lessons that support all curricular areas, including Internet safety. Through my lessons, my personal goal is to help students develop skills that they will need to succeed, not just here at Frenchtown, but throughout their academic life, such as note taking, creating a bibliography, evaluating websites, researching efficiently, and, of course, developing a love of reading.

If you have any questions or if you are interested in helping out in the library just

stop in, email (albroe@trumbullps.org) or call 452-4232.

## **From the Reading Department...**

**Mrs. Infante, Mrs. Olimpieri,  
Mrs. Knapp, Mrs. Joyce**

Frenchtown reading staff would like to take this time to welcome you to the 2011-2012 school year! We are very excited to be back and working with our students! We were amazed at how much the children have grown over the summer. We hope that you had an enjoyable and relaxing vacation that included reading some great books. We know we did!

We thought that this would be a great time to give you some tips on choosing "just right" books with your child/children. We want them to be reading books independently that are not too hard and not too easy. We are sure that you will hear them using this term and we wanted to give you some suggestions on how to help choose books appropriately.

### **The Five Finger Rule**

1. Choose a book that you think you will enjoy.
2. Read the first couple of pages.
3. Hold up a finger for each word you are not sure of, or did not know.
4. If there are five or more words that you did not know, you should choose an easier book.

### **Choose a book that is a good fit for you!**

Read two or three pages and ask yourself these questions.

#### **Will it be an easy, fun book to read?**

- Do I understand what I am reading?
- Do I know every word?
- When I read it aloud, can I read it smoothly?
- Do I think the topic will interest me?

If most of your answers were "yes", this will be an easy book to read independently by yourself.

#### **Will this book be too hard for me?**

- Are there five or more words on a page that I don't know, or am unsure of?
- Is this book confusing and hard to understand by myself?
- When I read it aloud, does it sound choppy and slow?

If most of your answers were "yes", this book is too hard. You should wait awhile before you read this book. Give the book another try later, or ask an adult to read the book to you.

These are some ways that you can help your child choose books that are "just right" for them. Please continue to look in the Wolf Times each month for more tips and strategies to be a partner in your child's reading. We look forward to the year ahead. As always, if you have any questions or concerns feel free to email us. You may contact us through the Frenchtown website.

## From the Math Department... Mrs. Gidwani, Mrs. Sansone, Mrs. Knapp

### Grades K-1

Below are some suggestions on how to support your children with math at home.

1. Encourage your child to participate in the "Monthly Math Contest". Just click on the "Bear" icon on the home page of Frenchtown's website ([www.frenchtownelementary.com](http://www.frenchtownelementary.com)). Click on the "Math Resource" link and then click on the appropriate grade level link. Print and return the contests by the first day of school of the following month.
2. As we discussed on Back to School night, use the Investigations website ([www.pearsonsuccessnet.com](http://www.pearsonsuccessnet.com)) as support. The Student Math Handbook is available as well as many wonderful virtual manipulatives that will support your child with math at home. Both the Username and Password are: FTGRADE1.
3. You can talk with your child about math as you're shopping (counting produce, adding apples & bananas, working with money...), driving (sharing number stories orally, practice skip counting (ex. 5, 10, 15)...), cooking dinner (measuring...). Math is EVERYWHERE!!!

As always, let me know if you have any question or concerns!

Jackie Knapp ([knappj@trumbullps.org](mailto:knappj@trumbullps.org))



### Grades 2-5

Many parents ask "HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD SUCCEED IN MATH CLASS?" See below for an explanation of our at home math practice program.



Here's how the "BEAR FACTS" math



program works...

1. **When will the Bear Facts Program begin?**  
At the beginning of October.
2. **Who will participate in this program?**  
Students in Grades 2 through 5
3. **What will my child receive from Frenchtown?** Your child will receive a copy of each month's bear math calendar at the beginning of each month.
4. **How long does the program last?** It starts at the beginning of October and closes at the end of April.
5. **In years past, my child brought home a monthly packet of papers to complete. Will this continue?** No, we are trying to "go green" this year. You will be able to access the monthly packets via our Math Resource website. You will be able to download and print at home. Or feel free to use flashcards, oral drill and practice, or any other source of enrichment.
6. **How do I access the Math Resource website?** Go to the [www.frenchtownelementary.com](http://www.frenchtownelementary.com) Scroll down to find an icon of a bear, it will say "Math Resource." Click on the bear. Look for "Math Activities" for your child's grade level. For example, if your child is a third grader, you will look under "Math Activities, Grade 3." Click on links for math games.
7. **What does my child need to do?** At least **20 days** out of the month, your child will need to practice math facts. One day you might choose to do flashcards. Another day your child may choose to play an Internet basic facts game or a family board game requiring computation
8. **How do I show that my child completed an activity?** Sign the calendar and note what was done. For example, on October 2, if your child practiced his/her addition

flashcards, you could jot down your initials and “addition flashcards” on October 2.

**9. What if my child loses his/her calendar?**

You will also be able to access calendars on the website. When you get to the Math Resource page (see access directions above), look for the “Bear Math Calendars” link.

- **How will my child receive a prize?**
- Your child must complete **20 days of activities.**
- You must **sign** the calendar and **note** what was done.
- Your child must **return** his/her “BEAR FACTS” Calendar to his/her teacher at the end of the month.

**10. Will there be any recognition for “BEAR FACTS” Calendars at the Awards Assembly at the end of the school year?**

YES! If your child turns in a completed calendar each month of the program, he/she will receive a “bearly” special prize. But you can’t skip a month!

**11. If I have any questions about the “BEAR FACTS” program, whom do I contact?**

You can either email or call one of the math resource teachers with questions.

Michele Sansone

[misansone@trumbullps.org](mailto:misansone@trumbullps.org) or Sangeeta  
Gidwani [gidwanis@trumbullps.org](mailto:gidwanis@trumbullps.org)

**Music...**  
**Ms. Nuzzi**



We are off and running with a great start to the year,  
We are making music that can be heard far and near.

In Kindergarten we have begun learning about steady beat.

We can pat them, clap them, and stamp them with our feet.

In first grade we are recalling rhythms with our musical notation.

We are making up our own rhythms, that calls for a standing ovation!

In second grade, we are warming up our voices in chorus.

We will be practicing for our winter concert, you can come and adore us!

In third grade, besides a rhythm review,  
We learned about our national anthem and associated vocabulary too.

In fourth grade, we danced to a Beyonce song,  
We also rapped with rhythms to feel and hear short vs. long.

In fifth grade, our goal is to be able to identify the elements in music that make a quality piece.  
We analogized these elements to ingredients in a stew, pie, or quiche!

Stayed tuned for more tidbits throughout the year.  
The countdown until next summer has begun, so give a cheer!

