

Holland Brook Happenings

September 2007

Thoughts From The Principal...

Dear Holland Brook School Community,

Welcome to the October edition of the Holland Brook Happenings for the 2007 & 2008 school year. I hope you enjoy all of the great articles written by our very own staff. You'll read about Art, Music, PE, Social Studies, Science and many other fascinating content areas.



This year at Holland Brook School we are going the extra mile to support a clean and healthy environment for all of our Bobcats. Therefore, all Holland Brook Happenings will be posted online and will be available on our website for you to review without wasting paper. By posting the October edition online we are doing our part for the environment. Help us make this a worthwhile project by not downloading and printing the October edition. Read and enjoy it on your computer at home, at work, or for students during free time in class.

You also may have noticed that all Holland Brook Club applications were handled via our website. Parents and students had the opportunity to review informational flyers for every club and then download only the club forms that they were interested in. This environmentally friendly process drastically reduced the amount of paper being sent home. As the year continues, I look forward to decreasing the amount of paper sent home and increase the use of our website to communicate news and programs. Visit the HBS website often as we are constantly updating the site with new information.

In education,

Alfonso Llano

FROM OUR TEACHERS

Fabulous Fourth Grade

The Weather Unit has begun with great excitement! The fourth grade scientists have begun to explore the Water Cycle and how we affect it. They can even sing about it! Evaporation, Condensation, and Precipitation are being explored as we experiment with water.

The class trips to the South Branch Raritan River are underway. All the students are well prepared to explore the water environment. The South Branch Watershed facilitators have been to all classrooms to discuss the investigations that are done at the river site. The students are collecting macroinvertebrates at the river site, and make conclusions about the water quality of the river. Several classes have gone and have been successful investigators. Thanks to all the chaperones for your assistance on this trip. It is a fun trip for everyone!

Our students are busy with Reading and Writing Workshops. During reading workshop, they are engaging in independent reading, guided reading and literature study activities. Our students are participating in various spelling and word work activities to enhance their working vocabulary. We spend a lot of time talking about new words and how to use them. One selection students have recently been reading, *Donovan's Word Jar*,

demonstrates the power of words in an enjoyable realistic fictional story. Our young writers have been exploring various places where they might find stories of their own experiences. They are using a writer's notebook to record their ideas and thoughts. Classrooms are working to develop a community of writers where students have an opportunity to receive help from others. Students will be writing in a variety of genres and sharing their work with each other. They will write independently as well as in guided writing situations. They will also be doing investigations across the curriculum to integrate their writing into other content areas.

In social studies, the fourth graders have been introduced to the various types of landforms that create our beautiful country. We have been exploring climate and weather, mountain ranges, and discussing the importance of our natural resources. In the upcoming weeks, we will be starting our journey across America with our study of the Northeast region! Get ready for a fun filled trip across the United States!

Our mathematicians in fourth grade have been hard at work! They have been creating line segments, rays, polygons, and three-dimensional figures! Wow! They have also learned how to identify edges, vertices, and all the properties of these polygons. Please continue to practice those multiplication facts at home, as it will be very helpful as we continue into our program this year. Keep up the amazing work, Bobcats!



Fifth Grade Features

Social Studies

As the students begin to navigate themselves through the halls, so begins our study of The Five Themes of Geography. Our students have been immersed in activities and projects centered on geography. The Five Themes of Geography are **MR. HELP**, an acronym for **M**ovement, **R**egions, **H**uman-**E**nvironment Interaction, **L**ocation, and **P**lace. In many of our fifth-grade classes students are actively involved in activities such as Why is This Place Famous, Create-a-Stamp, and Flat Stanley. These activities are designed to make connections to what the students are learning in class to their everyday lives and the world around them. By incorporating these activities into their study of geography, the students are able to heighten their awareness of the many places and regions of the world as well as how humans affect and adapt to their environment.



Language Arts

Calling all readers and writers! As a new year begins there are so many new ideas to write about, as well as so many new books to discover. Our students are continuing to use the Writers' Workshop approach to writing. As we begin the year, the students are drawing from personal experiences and creating memoirs and personal narratives. In language arts literacy class, the students are experiencing some new and exciting approaches to spelling or word study. They are also being introduced to a workshop model that enables them to be more active readers. Our language arts program, Harcourt, continues to be incorporated into our daily activities. As the year progresses, our students will be producing many pieces of writing, and learning about the different genres of writing. Also, throughout the year in reading, they will have the opportunity to enjoy and share numerous books.



All About Art

The fifth and fourth graders have gotten off to a great start! The fifth grade started the year by making “Initial Designs”, which focused on design, layout, and complimentary pairs of color. Their next project will focus on Pablo Picasso and his cubist/abstract portraits. The fourth grade completed a review in color theory. They reviewed primary, secondary and warm/cool colors. They learned which two primary colors mixed together create a certain secondary color and incorporated that into a shape design. They will next learn about Keith Haring and recreate

his simple outline figures. Great start in art, Bobcats!!

Ms. Coyle



Science Bits and Bytes

Fourth Grade

Our fourth grade scientists began the year learning how to use microscopes in the science lab. Each pair of students became detectives and solved the Mystery: Who stole the milk and cookies from the science lab? Our detectives examined 5 different clues ranging from a strand of blonde hair to a red thread from a sweater. Our detectives used the clues found at the scene of the crime to determine the culprit. All of our detectives determined that Mrs. Smiles stole the milk and cookies from the science lab. She had blonde hair and was wearing a red sweater.

Our next activities will focus on the 6 simple machines found in our everyday life. Our scientists will use this knowledge to design an invention using compound machines. All work will be kept in an invention portfolio in the science lab.

Fifth Grade

Our fifth grade scientists began the school year with a refresher course on microscopy. Each pair of students learned how to make slides and examined them under the microscopes. We started out simple by observing a small letter “e” cut out of the local newspaper. Our microscope experts then took a piece of onion and observed the plant cells. Many of our teams saw the nucleus. Our last item required the students to take a sample of the inside of their mouth (cheek). We saw our very own cells and even a few nucleuses.

Our next activity began our unit on Food and Nutrition. We will learn how to test for acid, sugar, vitamin C, and starch in foods and household items. We will learn a variety of methods. Our 1st experiments required our scientists to test household items for acid. Each pair of partners used red cabbage juice (a natural indicator) to determine whether the item was an acid, neutral, or base. We then tested the accuracy of the red cabbage juice by utilizing more reliable pH paper. We will follow-up this experiment by testing these items and several more for acid by utilizing baking soda as an indicator. It is sure to be an acidic experience.

Science Activities for Home:

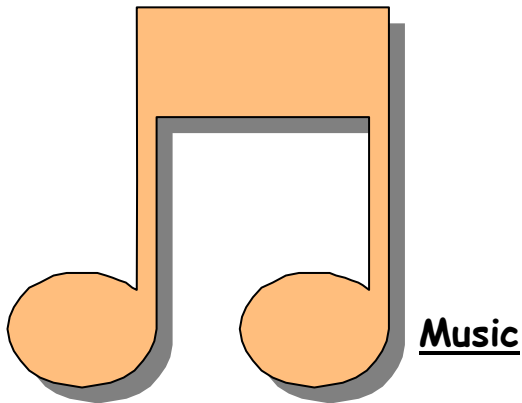
Ice Cube Race

Materials Needed: 3 ice cubes,
2 pieces of cloth—1 light, 1 dark,
3 flat dishes, timer.

1. Put ice cubes in different dishes.
2. Cover one with each material and leave one uncovered.
3. Observe what happens to the ice.

Key Science Questions:

1. What did you notice?
2. What did you find interesting?
3. What surprised you?
4. What patterns do you see?
5. What do you predict will happen?
6. What does this remind you of?
7. What are you wondering?



We have had a wonderful beginning to the school year in the music room! We are learning to build rhythms, read music from the staff, move to experience and show musical concepts, find our way around keyboards and printed music, and sing new songs from different genres and cultures. Much of our learning is being enhanced by new technologies in the music room. Our smart board has helped us to build parts to play, our projector brings us pictures of faraway places, and our sound system broadcasts accompaniments and musical examples. Some of us have even heard ourselves sing from recordings done and played back on the IPOD. Visit the website for upcoming dates and news from the music room. Our new technology will

be opening a whole new world of experiences for our musical bobcats!

For your calendar! The 4th grade winter concerts will be December 18th at 9:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

The 5th grade winter concerts will be on December 19th at 9:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

You may choose to attend the concert that is most convenient for you.

Chorus

The HBS chorus met for the first time on September 25, 2007. Our risers were filled to capacity and the sound was wonderful! We are already busy preparing for upcoming performances. All chorus news will be posted and kept up-to-date on the music/chorus page of the school website.



School website for lesson and rehearsal schedules, notices, and more.

Mr. Schwam

World Language News

Bienvenue!! French classes are off to an exciting and energetic start this year.

Throughout the year in Holland Brook Happenings, I will give you updates about your child's language learning, cultural topics we are covering, and upcoming events. In this issue, however, I would like to focus to the frequently asked Questions about our program at HBS.

Q: When does my child have World Language?

A: The world language program at HBS is called FLEX or Exploratory. FLEX is primarily a language/culture/motivational language program. In grades 4 & 5, we offer the opportunity for your child to explore the beauty of the French language and culture. I meet with your child once a week for 45 minutes.

Q: "When I studied a language, I conjugated verbs." Why isn't my child doing the same?

A: Our goal is for your child to communicate in the language, not in conjugating verbs and translating. Many people who have studied a world language in the past are unable to communicate in that language. Our hope is that your child will be a successful language learner who can take the knowledge and use it to communicate.

Q: How can I help with language learning at home?



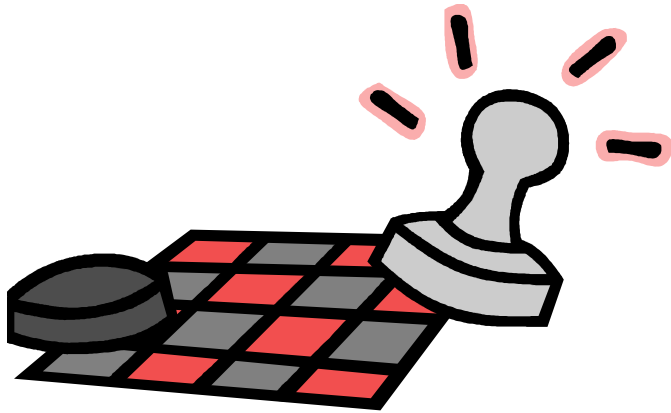
Instrumental Music

The 5th Grade Instrumental Music program at Holland Brook School is in full gear! From violins and cellos, to oboes, French horns, trumpets and more, we have 200 students signed up on a wide range of instruments. Lessons have begun earlier than ever due to signing students up in June rather than September. Students are learning how to put together, maintain, and play their new instruments. At this point in the year, students should be practicing at least 10-15 minutes a day, 4-5 days a week. All practicing should be recorded in the parent-initialed practice log each week. As a reminder, all students should drop off their instrument in Mr. Schwam's room as they come in to school on their lesson day, and pick them up on the way to the bus. All instruments should go home the day they come in! Don't forget to check out the Instrumental Music page of the Holland Brook

A: As you learn about new words and cultural topics we are studying in French class through Holland Brook Happenings, please take any and all opportunities to ask your child questions about cultural topics and to practice new vocabulary. The practice should take place in everyday situations. Make practice FUN! For instance, count table settings, count foods, and ask what color something is. Practice makes progress! Thank you for your efforts!

I encourage you to visit my world language website on our district website www.readington.k12.nj.us. On the website there is an opportunity for you and your child to blog about a different topic each month. You will also find interesting websites about France and her culture.

Merci! Madame Baldwin



Enrichment News

Enrichment at Holland Brook School is off to a great start. Mrs. Sepesi has visited all Holland Brook School classrooms and acquainted all students with enrichment opportunities available to them this year. All students were given a letter to take home describing these activities as well as a separate sheet about the Invention Convention. If

your child did not bring home either of these letters, please contact Mrs. Sepesi at ext. 624.

Jeopardy and Scrabble

All fourth and fifth grade students have been offered the opportunity to visit the enrichment classroom during lunch to play Jeopardy and Scrabble. Jeopardy has certainly been greatly enhanced with all of the new technology in the Enrichment classroom.

Math Problem of the Week

The Math Problem of the Week has begun!. Please keep in mind that completion of these Math problems is one of the criteria used for entrance into Continental Math League. Students who complete 80% of the Math Problems of the Week will receive a certificate at the end of the school year in recognition of their efforts.

Invention Convention

Students participating in the Invention Convention should submit their ideas to Mrs. Sepesi. After submitting their ideas, students will receive a notice telling them to begin working on their invention.

Science Fest

The fifth grade Science Fest is “right around the corner” and we are looking forward to that wonderful day of Science. This year’s fest will include 20 presenters, most of which are parents and community members. Many thanks to our presenters who took an entire day from their busy schedules to share their knowledge and expertise in an area of science with our students.

We are always looking to enhance our Enrichment program by sharing knowledge that community members have with our students. If you have knowledge in a particular subject and are interested in sharing your knowledge with a group of students, please contact us at ext. 624. As always, we look forward to working with your children this year.



Physical Education

Our Bobcats are being challenged with the Presidential Physical Fitness Test. The test is made up of five challenges. The mile Run-Jog-Walk for 5th graders and the ½ mile Run-Jog-Walk for 4th graders measure their cardiovascular and cardiopulmonary endurance. Their upper arm strength will be measured with pull ups and bent arm hang tests. The shuttle run evaluates their speed and agility while the curl ups challenge shows their level of abdominal strength and endurance. Flexibility is the component featured in the sit and reach test.

The scores our Bobcats receive will be evaluated to determine a percentile score. Students receiving all scores in the 80th percentile will be awarded the President's patch and certificate. All 5 scores above the 50th percentile will serve a national patch and certificate. Students will have the opportunity to improve their scores this Spring. Good Luck, Bobcats!

Mr. D'Alonzo and Mr. Lillia



From Guidance

Let me first take this opportunity to introduce myself, my name is Mr. Skowronek and I am the guidance counselor at Holland Brook School. In the beginning of the school year I went into all the 4th and 5th grade classrooms and introduced myself to the students. I wanted all the students to know who I am and what it is I do here. In the guidance office we discuss many topics such as bullying, making the right decision, conflict resolution, peer pressure, and many more issues. Also I let each student know that if they need some one to talk to that they shouldn't hesitate to come see me because my door is always open no matter what the concern is.



**HOLLAND BROOK SCHOOL
MISSION STATEMENT**

Adopted by HBS Core Committee,
June 1999

*The Mission for Holland Brook School is to provide a
nurturing and challenging environment with high
student and staff expectations.*

*Our school community will become life-long learners
and foster respect for diversity.*

The fourth grade art clubbers are making actual working c

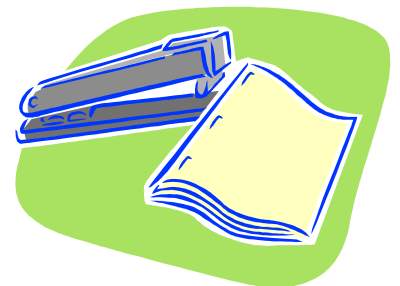
Dates to Remember

October 9th	Board of Ed Meeting 7:30pm
October 10th	Science Fest
October 12th	Walk-a-Thon 2pm
October 16th	H S A Meeting 7pm
October 18 th	Early Dismissal 1:30pm
October 19 th	Halloween Bash 6:45pm-9:00pm
October 30 th	Board of Ed 7:30pm
October 31 st	Halloween Parade 2:15pm-2:45pm

Visit the District website at www.readington.k12.nj.us

IMPORTANT REMINDER

Any items carried on the bus or brought to
school (food, flowers, etc.) should be
brought in an enclosed container.



A-Z Learning Activities

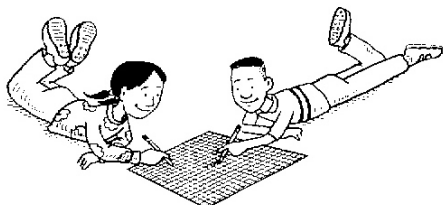


Action math

Have your youngster turn math word problems into mini-skits to act out. For "Annie had five apples; she gave three to Dan; how many does she have left?" she could gather five apples, use dolls to represent Annie and Dan, and create silly dialogue.

Block out

Use graph paper to boost spelling and vocabulary skills. Draw a 15 x 15 box on the paper, and take turns writing words crossword-style until no more words will fit. Score one point for every letter you fill in. High score wins.



Coin counter

Practice money skills when dining out. Example: How many quarters does the chicken dinner cost? Your youngster can use paper and pencil or a calculator to find the answer. (If the dinner costs \$5.75, he would divide 5.75 by .25 for an answer of 23 quarters.)

Describe this

Choose an object, set a timer for one minute, and have everyone list words that describe it. For a rock, your

child might write, "gray, hard, round, rough." When time's up, players compare lists and cross off duplicates. Whoever has the most words left is the winner.

Eavesdropper

Try this game to practice listening skills with a radio or an audiobook. Pick a fairly common word (please, music, table). The first person to hear the word raises her hand and gets to pick the next word to listen for.

Firsts and lasts

Name an animal (alligator). Ask your youngster to name another animal that starts with the last letter of the first animal (rabbit). Continue (tiger, rattlesnake) until one of you is stumped. Then, choose a new topic (movie titles, foods), and play again.

Growing science

Cut a half inch off the tops of two carrots. Put the carrot tops in separate saucers of water. Keep one in a sunny spot and the other in a dark place. Have your youngster check them daily and add water as needed. Which one grows faster?

Hand signals

Use sign language in a home spelling bee. Pick words from your

Looking for an answer to the complaint, "There's nothing to do"? Use these ideas to help beat the boredom blues — and build the skills your child needs to succeed in school.

child's spelling list or a favorite book, and have her sign the letters instead of saying them aloud. Tip: Borrow *Sign Language for Kids* by Lora Heller from the library to learn the sign language alphabet.

Inside, outside

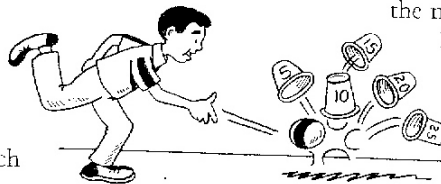
Teach your youngster classification skills. Secretly think of a category (school supplies), and have him figure out what it is by guessing various objects. If his guess belongs in your category (pencils), say, "Inside." If it doesn't (tomatoes), say, "Outside." When your child names the category, he gets to start a new round.

Jumbled numbers

Work on place value and addition with this three-dice game. With your child, take turns rolling the dice and making the largest three-digit number possible. Write down your numbers on a piece of paper as you go. Example: If your youngster rolls 2, 5, and 1 on her first turn, she would write 521. At the end of five rounds, add up your numbers. Whoever has the largest total wins.

Knock five

With a permanent marker, write the numbers 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25 on five paper cups. Stand the cups on the ground 10 feet away.



Take turns rolling a small ball toward them, and score the total on the cups you topple. Then, reset for the next roll.

Letter lookout

Have your youngster list seven random letters on a piece of paper. While in the car, ask him to search for places that start with each letter. *Example:* For "O," your child might write "office supply store" or "Opal Street." *Variation:* Play this at home with a map or road atlas.

Magnetic pull

Experiment with different-sized magnets. Let your youngster guess how many small objects (paper clips, pins, nails) each magnet can pick up at once. Have her test each guess. Does the size of the magnet make a difference?

Name game

While waiting in line, challenge your child to make as many sentences as possible. The catch? Each word of the sentence must start with a different letter of his name. *Example:* Eric = Elephants ran into church.

One, two, three

Take turns counting to 30 by one, two, or three numbers at a time. The object of the game is to keep from being the person who has to say "30." *Example:* The first player says "1, 2." The second player can say "3, 4, 5." Keep going until someone is forced to say "30."

Picture writing

At the library, find a book about Egyptian hieroglyphs. Then, ask your youngster to invent a picture language of his own and use it to write you a note. Try to figure out what each symbol means—and ask him if you're right.

Questions, questions

Think of a storybook character your child knows (Wilbur the pig in *Charlotte's Web*). Have her ask questions about the story to guess who it is. For example, if she asks, "What is the character's



problem?" you might say, "He's afraid the farmer will eat him." Limit older children to yes-or-no questions ("Is the character human?"). When your youngster figures it out, it's her turn to pick a character.

Rap rhythms

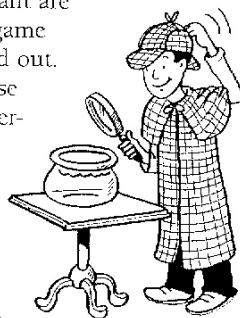
Play with poetry by having your child write rap lyrics to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb." Be sure he keeps the same rhythm. *Example:* "Someday we will travel far" works for the first line; "Some children run from dogs" does not. Show him how to count syllables to get the rhythm right. Then, have him chant his new poem like a rap star.

Save 12

Deal three cards to each player. Take turns drawing from the deck and discarding a card from your hand until someone can make a number sentence totaling 12 ($5 \times 4 - 8 = 12$; $4 + 9 - 1 = 12$). That player scores a point. Play to 10 points. *Note:* Aces = 1, and face cards = 10.

Thief!

How observant are your kids? This game will help you find out. While others close their eyes, one person (the "thief") secretly removes something from the room. When everyone opens their eyes, they try to find what's missing. The first one to guess correctly becomes the next thief.



Uncapped fun

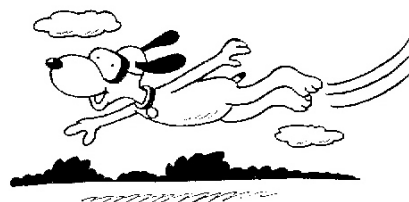
Build spatial skills by removing the lids from 10 or more different-sized plastic containers. Set a timer, and challenge your child to put the lids on the correct containers before time runs out.

Vocabulary view

With your youngster, look out the window and choose a familiar object. Then, each of you writes down everything that makes up the object. For example, a list for "tree" could include branches, leaves, bark, and blossoms. The longest list wins.

What if?

Ask your child a silly question ("What if dogs could fly?"). See if she can come up with a silly answer ("Squirrels couldn't hide in trees"). Then, have her ask you a silly question. Keep going until one of you can't think of an answer—or can't stop laughing.



X-ray writing

Your youngster can make invisible messages by dipping a cotton swab in lemon juice and writing on plain paper. When the "ink" dries, the words will disappear. To read the messages, tell your child to hold the paper under a lamp. The letters will magically reappear!

Yardstick racetrack

Instead of speed, use distance to find the winner of this race. Take turns rolling toy cars across the floor, and have your youngster measure how far they travel with a yardstick or measuring tape. The car that goes the farthest wins the race.

Zany wordplay

Can your child find the hidden meaning of "sock sock" (pair of socks), "cyclecyclecycle" (tricycle) or ^{man}board (man overboard)? Using index cards, create a deck of word mysteries for each other to solve. For extra fun, your youngster can illustrate each card.

Home & School CONNECTION

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