



River Valley Current

November 11, 2014 No. 393

*"Use the talents you possess, for the woods would be a very silent place if no birds sang except the best."
--- Henry van Dyke*

School Calendar

This Week

Tuesday, Nov 11

Martinmas Lantern Walk – Kindergarten 4:45 pm

Saturday, Nov 15

6th grade Workday

Looking Ahead

Thursday, Nov 20

School Tour 9:00 am

Friday, Nov 21

Fall Assembly 6:30 pm

Saturday, Nov 22

Bridgeton Hill Holiday Bazaar 11:00 am-4:00 pm

Monday & Tuesday, Nov 24 & 25

No School – Parent-Teacher Conferences

November 26, 27, 28

No School – Thanksgiving Holiday

Friday, Nov 21

Fall Assembly 6:30 pm

How to Contact Us

info@rivervalleyschool.org
lc@rivervalleyschool.org
bot@rivervalleyschool.org
pc@rivervalleyschool.org

Parent Council Update

The next Parent Council meeting will take place on November 19th at 6:30 at the Ship Inn in Milford, NJ

Secret Project

Please bring your empty, washed tuna and cat food cans to the box in the lobby. They will be used for a very special project in preparation for the Winter Concert on Tuesday, December 16th in which the 4th - 8th grade students will be bringing beautiful, uplifting music for the holiday season. Thanks in advance for your participation in this "secret" project! Mrs. Diven

Bridgeton Hill Holiday Bazaar & Café Saturday, November 22nd, from 11am - 4pm

You're sure to find something for everyone amongst more than 30 carefully selected local artisans & vendors.

Browse through a cornucopia brimming with jewelry, beeswax candles, handmade dolls & doll clothes, pottery, felted fairies, henna, hand-knit items, natural cleaning products, hand-crafted brooms, handmade toys, wooden treasures, artful notecards, luxurious soaps, up-cycled clothing, Ulla's BAGS, papercrafts and....

Delicious wholesome food by Nelli Rae's Kitchen!

Martinmas Lantern Walk

The Early Childhood Lantern Walk will take place on Tuesday, November 11th at 4:45 pm.

Teachers will provide class parents with details about the events. Here you will find a description of the festival and why it is celebrated by Waldorf Schools around the world.

Martinmas, is the Festival of St. Martin, which falls each year on November 11th. St. Martin was known for his great kindness to the sick and the poor. As a young Roman officer, he cut his own cloak in two and offered half to a freezing beggar. He put down his arms and, though ridiculed and berated by his former Roman comrades, walked ahead of the Roman army holding only a wooden cross for his defense - the army of the Gauls retreated. He faced off against an emperor in defense of his Home for the Poor and angels brought a pillar of fire to declare his rightness. He was so humble that when a delegation came to declare him Bishop, he hid in a goose house to avoid them. A goose ran honking from the house giving up his hiding place and, as a result, he became a bishop. (For this reason goose is eaten in some countries on Martinmas!)

The Lantern Walk reminds us of the great goodness of St. Martin. It illuminates for us that we must strive for empathy and kindness toward others; that our hearts must glow brightly even as the days grow darker and that each of us has a divine spark that we must ferry out into the world and share with others. As such it is a reverent, peaceful and beautiful festival traditionally celebrated with a bonfire, Martinmas songs, and a walk with colorful lanterns that the children have created with their own hands. A mood of quiet reverence is essential to bringing the true meaning of the festival home to the children. It is particularly relevant to 1st and 2nd grade children who live so strongly in the feeling realm and strive so mightily with social relationships as they move slowly toward true empathy for others.

From Administration

Shop at Giant Food Store?

There's a really easy way to raise funds for RVWS, every time you shop at Giant and use your Giant member card. Just register your member card on their website.

Here is the link:

<http://www.giantfoodstores.com/aplus/>

Our school ID number is: 06546

If you registered last year you do not have to re-register this year.

This is an easy way to earn money for RVWS without any cost to you, so please register right away!

Shop at ShopRite?

You can register to earn e-Box Tops for River Valley! This is Box Tops earnings in addition to the paper ones we collect. Go to the link below to register.

<http://shopriteformyschool.com/>

God and Other Men

One of our past teachers and Stephanie Smith's mother, Myrna Smith, has written a book!!! *God and Other Men: Religion, Romance, and the Search for Self-Love* has just been published and is available on Amazon.

Elizabeth Gilbert writes, "Myrna J Smith writes with lucidity and intelligence about a subject which — all too often — can be marked by blurriness and vacuousness: the search for God in a human life. Her lifetime of seeking is as impressive as is thorough. Tirelessly, honestly, and with clear eyes, Smith has spent decades exploring Christianity, Yoga, the Guru system, Buddhism, mind-body healing, and the modern American self-empowerment movement."

Myrna began writing her memoir when she was teaching language arts to our middle schoolers. Maybe they provided the inspiration for the book!

Condolences

Our condolences go out to the Holtz family for the loss of Aiden (G7) and Jevin's (G2) great grandmother, Josh's grandmother. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all.

Lost and Found

Once again our Lost and Found is overflowing. Please check for items in the basket in the All Purpose Room. On Friday morning after 9, take what you can use and at the end of the day items will be donated.

Thank you

Thank you, Josh Holtz, for spontaneously wiping up a spill in the hallway when you came to pick up your children. Your random act of kindness was greatly appreciated.

From the Leadership Council

What are we working on?

- Grades teacher evaluation and "looping" with TDC
- Strategic Planning and Site Planning with Board and Faculty
- Early Childhood programs with EC faculty

From the Faculty

WHAT ARE THE CHILDREN LEARNING?

First Grade: Language Arts

Second Grade: Language Arts

Third Grade: Math/Shelters/Hebrew Stories

Fourth Grade: Language Arts/Norse Mythology

Fifth Grade: North American History and Geography

Sixth Grade: History

Seventh Grade: Algebra

Eighth Grade: Chemistry

Get Ready for Winter Fair Secret Garden and Learn New Crafts!

Get your Secret Garden treasures finished early. Join Miss Till in the Handwork room Friday mornings after drop off, 9 am-10:15 am, on Saturday, November 22nd, 9:30-11 before the Holiday Bazaar and Friday morning, December 5th while waiting for the Spiral of Light. Cost is \$10 for materials. Please RSVP to Miss Till (MKT4160@yahoo.com) or leave her a note at the Handwork Room.

Class Fundraisers

Attention Pizza Lovers

Pizza Monday will be changing to Pizza Thursday starting in December for the remainder of the school year. Grandy is ready to start providing a third day of hot lunch which will be on Monday's. Look for the December hot lunch forms coming out soon!

8G Trip Fundraiser: Snack Mondays & Wednesdays!

Problem: You are a Super Parent. But lack of sleep and too much work mean that you are flat out on healthy snack ideas. *Solution:* Send kids to school with a couple bucks for 8G Snack Mondays & Wednesdays!

Problem: You deliver your jewels to school before class begins but your caffeine buzz, alarmingly, is wearing off.

Solution: Get a cup of high-octane joe and a slice of pumpkin bread to go thanks to 8G Snack Mondays & Wednesdays!

Problem: Your darlings are exhausted and their blood sugar levels are precipitously dropping at pick up.

Solution: Don't call Dr. Jo. Grab a warm baby burrito for the ride home at 8G Snack Mondays & Wednesdays!

8G snack offerings EVERY Monday and Wednesday morning and afternoon in the lobby at drop-off and pick-up:

Hummus w/Carrot & Celery sticks \$2.75

Organic Corn Chips \$1

Organic Chips & Salsa \$1.75

Cheese Cubes \$1.50

Slice of homemade sweet bread (pumpkin, banana,...) \$2

Warm Ready-to-Eat Baby Burrito \$3

Homemade Beef Jerky \$2

From Parent Council

Save the date!

Winter Fair is Saturday December 13th 11-4

Winter Fair is a beautiful festival celebrating the coming of King Winter. It is a time of magic and celebration. A time to get together with friends and loved ones before the deep freeze and great snows of King Winter set in and we turn towards the coziness and warmth of our hearth and homes.

The success of the festival depends on the creativity and cooperation of River Valley's parent body. Each class hosts an activity and works to make the magic of Winter Fair happen for our children. Your classroom coordinator should know your activity by now so that you may begin preparations.

Secret Garden is one of the most magical places at the festival and one the children look forward to with anticipation. Even though the children awaiting their turn outside of the Secret Garden can be loud and boisterous, inside the Secret Garden is full of quiet, magic, awe, and wonder. Please remember we need 20 Secret Garden items from each family to help further this feeling of awe and wonder. These items can be small and preferably homemade. A list of potential items can be found in the Parent Handbook. Also Mary K Till, our handwork teacher, is having craft workshops for parents to come and make some treasures for Secret Garden (dates and times can be found in the Current).

Please contact your classroom coordinator or the Winter Fair committee with any questions you may have. Your Winter Fair committee: Rebecca Brown, Clare Brunell, Kymm Phibbs or pc@rivervalleyschool.org

WINTER FAIR CAFE STAGE!

We're working on another wonderful lineup of musical entertainment for the Winter Fair Cafe Stage. If you're interested in performing, in joining the RVWS parent choir (no experience necessary), or if you know a musician in the community we should contact, please email Kira Willey (kirawilley@rcn.com). All students wishing to perform on their own, or in small groups, must see Mrs. Diven. Thanks!

From the Community

Snowplow?

Looking for a parent with a snow plow.
Contact Kymm Phibbs @ 267-337-0636.

Yoga Loka

Happy Hip Openers

Friday the 14th, 6:30-8:30 pm

All levels welcome to come and open their hips!

Sunday the 16th, 11:30-4:00 pm

Join Patricia Collins for her annual trunk show. She will be selling imported scarves and handcrafts from Kashmir, India and Nepal.

Thanksgiving Day Benefit Class

Thursday November 27th, 10:00 am-12 noon

All collected funds will go to the Frenchtown Food Pantry

Suggested donation is \$20 (any and all donations will be accepted, early donations appreciated!)

Asana with Bonnie Pariser accompanied with live music by Heidi Beyer and poetry with Warren Cooper

See www.Yoga-Loka.com for more information

MUSIC TEACHER AVAILABLE FOR HOUSE CALLS!

Paul Kendall is a Jazz musician and teacher available for private instruction in your home. Expertise includes Saxophone, Flute, Clarinet, Violin, Cello & Piano.

Recommended by Louanne Willard & Stephanie Smith, Mr. Kendall has been teaching the Willard & Smith children individually for over a year in the disciplines of Flute, Violin, Piano & Cello. Please feel free to contact Mr. Kendall directly & mention that you are a RVWS student referred by Louanne and/or Stephanie.

Paul Kendall phone: 570-839-8975

kendalljazz@yahoo.com kendalljazz.com

For Rent

3 story townhouse with 3 bedrooms and 4 baths. Finished walk-out basement with brick flooring. Large backyard with wooden deck and patio. Spectacular views of the Lehigh River and 4th of July fireworks. 5 minutes from downtown Bethlehem and 25 minutes from River Valley.

For more information, please contact Katherine Schilling at 347-724-8724 or katubela211@yahoo.com

Help Needed

The Hobsons need help unloading a trailer at our new place this weekend. A few strong men would be awesome for heavy bins and furniture. We have a dolly for moving the fridge. Just need help carrying stuff. Trailer comes to our home at 135 Reiglesville Milford Road in Milford, NJ Friday and stays 'til Monday morning. We have 3 days to unload. Please call me, Pamela Hobson @ 609-792-8225 if available.

Items For Sale

- A 3/4 violin for sale. It is German-made, made in 1985, in excellent condition and even has strings marked with colorful rainbow colors for beginner violinist to learn strings. It was bought from David Michi Violin in Philly. It's a well cared for, top of the line instrument. Selling for price I paid. \$600.00
- California King Futon Frame (that is on my trailer), asking \$200.00.
- Wooden children's stove/oven by Elves and Angels. Selling for \$150.00.

Introducing a Naturopath/Homeopath in our Community

Julie Lachman, ND is a Naturopath and homeopath in Doylestown, PA. Homeopathy and Naturopathy have both shown to resolve symptoms ranging from ADHD and Autism to constipation and headaches, without the side effects of drugs. Individualized care is best. 267-895-1733. www.drlachman.com 196 W. Ashland St. Ste. 301, Doylestown, PA 18901.

Heal yourself, heal the world!

Take some time to nourish yourself. You will learn simple techniques to decrease stress and increase well-being. I will be offering classes in Gendai Reiki Ho, Japanese reiki direct from Japan. Classes will be held in Emmaus. Everyone has the innate ability to share reiki- join us and open or deepen your connection! Call or email Molly Watson for prerequisites and pricing. 484-241-5343 or mwatson416@gmail.com.

Reiki 1 Thursday Nov 13, 6:30-8 pm, Friday Nov. 13, 9 am-12 pm

Reiki 2 Friday Nov. 14 1-7 pm

Reiki 3 Saturday Nov. 15, 9 am- 4 pm

Reiki 4 Sunday, Nov. 16, 9 am- 4 pm

Ottsville Traditional Arts Center Events

Friday December 19
House Concert with Lissa, Glen and Bethany

Saturday December 20th
Workshop/Concert with Daniel Hawkins

Wednesdays
Mirjam Ingolfsson...Cello lessons in collaboration with Daniel Hawkins
For lesson information contact mirjam.ingolfsson@gmail.com

Mondays
Afternoon Lessons with Jane Rothfield - Fiddle, Guitar, Banjo beginners and advanced students welcome. For lesson information contact janerothfield@gmail.com

Wednesday Jams / Song swaps 6:00-8:00
Please join the Jam! All levels welcome. Bring strings, pipes, squeezebox whatever you got! Tunes and songs, \$5 suggested donation. ottsvilletradarts.weebly.com for song and tunes selections.

Check out our Ottsville Tradarts Calendar of events for more Information. ottsvilletradarts.weebly.com
danielhhawkins.com

OTAC 250 Durham Road Ottsville across from Kimberton Whole Foods

"You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees or the stars...."

Is there anything more lovely than time-honored words of wisdom lettered beautifully by hand? Catherine Lent is delighted to offer a new limited-edition calligraphic print of Max Ehrmann's "Desiderata," or desired things. Chock full of good advice ("Be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others..." as well as "Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself."), this poem has been cherished and shared by many for generations, and is now rendered in full-color calligraphy in a palette of watercolor blue, green, purple, and burgundy hues. Each print is embellished by hand with gold accents, signed and numbered by the artist, and accompanied with a certificate of authenticity. Available alone, matted, or framed, the artwork is 13 by 15 inches, 16 by 20 matted or framed. The regular prices are \$60, matted \$78, and framed \$165. Order by November 1st for the introductory offer of 20% off: print \$48, matted \$62, fully framed \$132. Contact Catherine at 908-328-4460 or catherine@calligraphybycatherine.com for images of the artwork, mat and frame options, and any other information you might need.

Art in the Library

Expression through Printmaking

with Ponder Goembel, Saturday, November 15 10am – noon

Open to ages 12 to 18

The workshop focuses on expressing yourself by printing on textiles and paper using handmade stamps and found objects. You will learn how to print on clothing and paper in an expressive way using color, shape and design. Please bring objects found in your home, garden, or woods with interesting shapes and textures that could translate into interesting. Please also bring a pre-washed cotton t-shirt or other cotton garment to adorn with your print art. We will supply additional printing materials and paint. (Don't forget your smock and a snack!)

Making the Most of Color - Inspired by the Masters

with Ponder Goembel, Monday, December 1 6:00pm – 9:00pm

Open to Older Teens and Adults

This workshop is designed to help students draw with oil pastels in a rich and vibrant manner inspired by the work of Van Gogh, Monet, and other famous painters. We will discuss the use of color in flower paintings by the masters and continue with a demonstration of mixing colors and how to juxtapose them to produce rich and vibrant art. You will choose one primary form of contrast to create a rich and vibrant piece inspired by your choice of a master's flower painting. It will be stressed that this class is to be inspired, not to copy the master's art, and to use imagination to create a piece of art from gained knowledge. Supplies will be provided, but feel free to bring your own. Please bring a smock to class!

Ponder Goembel is a classically trained, sought after illustrator whose work has been featured in dozens of books. Her wonderful illustrations have earned her notable reviews and honors in the publishing world. She resides in Bucks County, PA.

More Art in the Library

Drawing the Portrait in Charcoal

with George Thompson, November 17 6:00pm – 9:00pm

All levels welcome Open to ages 16 - adult

This three-hour workshop is an introduction to one of most challenging and exciting subjects in art--the human head. We will break down the fundamentals and simplify the anatomy. Step-by-step, we will draw the eye, nose, ears, and mouth and discover the proportions of the face and how to get a likeness from a live model. (Please bring your own supplies. Let us know if you don't have your own so that supplies and materials can be provided.)

Drawing the Portrait in Charcoal

with George Thompson, Tuesday, December 16 6:00pm – 9:00pm

All levels welcome Open to ages 16 - adult

This three-hour workshop is an introduction to one of most challenging and exciting subjects in art--the human head. We will break down the fundamentals and simplify the anatomy. Step-by-step, we will draw the eye, nose, ears, and mouth and discover the proportions of the face and how to get a likeness from a live model. (Please bring your own supplies. Let us know if you don't have your own so that supplies and materials can be provided.)

George Thompson is a nationally recognized, award-winning artist specializing in figure/portrait, landscape, and still life. Thompson has a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from Pratt Institute, and has studied figure drawing and painting at The Art Students League, and The Brooklyn Museum. www.georgethompsongallery.com

Introduction to Monoprinting

with Tracy Cianciola, Wednesday, December 3 11:00am – 2:00pm

Open to Older Teens and Adults

This workshop will begin with an interactive demonstration to show the steps taken to produce a monoprint; then everyone will create their own monoprints under the guidance of the artist/instructor. Please bring a smock to class.

We will take a lunch break—please bring bagged lunch

Tracy Cianciola received her bachelor's degree from The School of Visual Arts in New York and later earned her master's degree from Lehman College. Her work has been seen in many art shows throughout the country, including the prestigious Portfolio 10/Society of Illustrators.

The workshops will be held in the Community Room at Riegelsville Borough Hall, 615 Easton Road. To sign up or for more information, please contact the Riegelsville Library 610-749-2357 or 610-749-2158. RiegelsvilleLibrary.info

Waldorf News from waldorftoday.com

What's Lost as Handwriting Fades

By MARIA KONNIKOVA

Does handwriting matter?

Not very much, according to many educators. The Common Core standards, which have been adopted in most states, call for teaching legible writing, but only in kindergarten and first grade. After that, the emphasis quickly shifts to proficiency on the keyboard. But psychologists and neuroscientists say it is far too soon to declare handwriting a relic of the past. New evidence suggests that the links between handwriting and broader educational development run deep. Children not only learn to read more quickly when they first learn to write by hand, but they also remain better able to generate ideas and retain information. In other words, it's not just what we write that matters — but how.

“When we write, a unique neural circuit is automatically activated,” said Stanislas Dehaene, a psychologist at the Collège de France in Paris. “There is a core recognition of the gesture in the written word, a sort of recognition by mental simulation in your brain.

“And it seems that this circuit is contributing in unique ways we didn't realize,” he continued. “Learning is made easier.”

A 2012 study led by Karin James, a psychologist at Indiana University, lent support to that view. Children who had not yet learned to read and write were presented with a letter or a shape on an index card and asked to reproduce it in one of three ways: trace the image on a page with a dotted outline, draw it on a blank white sheet, or type it on a computer. They were then placed in a brain scanner and shown the image again.

(continued on next page)

The researchers found that the initial duplication process mattered a great deal. When children had drawn a letter freehand, they exhibited increased activity in three areas of the brain that are activated in adults when they read and write: the left fusiform gyrus, the inferior frontal gyrus and the posterior parietal cortex. By contrast, children who typed or traced the letter or shape showed no such effect. The activation was significantly weaker.

Dr. James attributes the differences to the messiness inherent in free-form handwriting: Not only must we first plan and execute the action in a way that is not required when we have a traceable outline, but we are also likely to produce a result that is highly variable. That variability may itself be a learning tool. "When a kid produces a messy letter," Dr. James said, "that might help him learn it."

Our brain must understand that each possible iteration of, say, an "a" is the same, no matter how we see it written. Being able to decipher the messiness of each "a" may be more helpful in establishing that eventual representation than seeing the same result repeatedly. "This is one of the first demonstrations of the brain being changed because of that practice," Dr. James said.

In another study, Dr. James is comparing children who physically form letters with those who only watch others doing it. Her observations suggest that it is only the actual effort that engages the brain's motor pathways and delivers the learning benefits of handwriting.

The effect goes well beyond letter recognition. In a study that followed children in grades two through five, Virginia Berninger, a psychologist at the University of Washington, demonstrated that printing, cursive writing, and typing on a keyboard are all associated with distinct and separate brain patterns — and each results in a distinct end product. When the children composed text by hand, they not only consistently produced more words more quickly than they did on a keyboard, but expressed more ideas. And brain imaging in the oldest subjects suggested that the connection between writing and idea generation went even further. When these children were asked to come up with ideas for a composition, the ones with better handwriting exhibited greater neural activation in areas associated with working memory — and increased overall activation in the reading and writing networks.

Samples of handwriting by young children. Dr. James found that when children drew a letter freehand, they exhibited increased activity in three significant areas of the brain, which didn't happen when they traced or typed the letter. It now appears that there may even be a difference between printing and cursive writing — a distinction of particular importance as the teaching of cursive disappears in curriculum after curriculum. In dysgraphia, a condition where the ability to write is impaired, usually after brain injury, the deficit can take on a curious form: In some people, cursive writing remains relatively unimpaired, while in others, printing does.

In alexia, or impaired reading ability, some individuals who are unable to process print can still read cursive, and vice versa — suggesting that the two writing modes activate separate brain networks and engage more cognitive resources than would be the case with a single approach.

Dr. Berninger goes so far as to suggest that cursive writing may train self-control ability in a way that other modes of writing do not, and some researchers argue that it may even be a path to treating dyslexia. A 2012 review suggests that cursive may be particularly effective for individuals with developmental dysgraphia — motor-control difficulties in forming letters — and that it may aid in preventing the reversal and inversion of letters. Cursive or not, the benefits of writing by hand extend beyond childhood. For adults, typing may be a fast and efficient alternative to longhand, but that very efficiency may diminish our ability to process new information. Not only do we learn letters better when we commit them to memory through writing, memory and learning ability in general may benefit.

Two psychologists, Pam A. Mueller of Princeton and Daniel M. Oppenheimer of the University of California, Los Angeles, have reported that in both laboratory settings and real-world classrooms, students learn better when they take notes by hand than when they type on a keyboard. Contrary to earlier studies attributing the difference to the distracting effects of computers, the new research suggests that writing by hand allows the student to process a lecture's contents and reframe it — a process of reflection and manipulation that can lead to better understanding and memory encoding.

Not every expert is persuaded that the long-term benefits of handwriting are as significant as all that. Still, one such skeptic, the Yale psychologist Paul Bloom, says the new research is, at the very least, thought-provoking. "With handwriting, the very act of putting it down forces you to focus on what's important," he said. He added, after pausing to consider, "Maybe it helps you think better."

Maria Konnikova is a contributing writer for The New Yorker online and the author of "Mastermind: How to Think Like Sherlock Holmes." This article originally appeared in the New York Times.