

A Note from Mr. Meiss

Dear N.A. Walbran Families,

December has been a very busy month here at N.A. Walbran Elementary School. We celebrated our monthly Positivity Project Assembly, welcomed Regent Patrick Mannion, offered a PK-3rd Grade Holiday Sing Along and PTA/Language Club Movie Night(s).

Congratulations to our 5th and 6th grade students that participated in the winter music concert on Tuesday, December 16th. The band and choir put on an outstanding performance. Thank you to Mr. Davis and the music department for all of their efforts making it a special evening.

Looking ahead to the new year, we are excited to offer a Community Game Night for students and families on Thursday, January 15th from 5:30-7:00 p.m. Permission forms and additional information will come home in your students' take home folder on Monday, January 5th.

The N.A. Walbran faculty and staff would like to extend wishes of happy holidays to our students, families and community. It is hard to believe that we are at the winter recess point of the school year. We are off to a wonderful start and look forward to the new year!

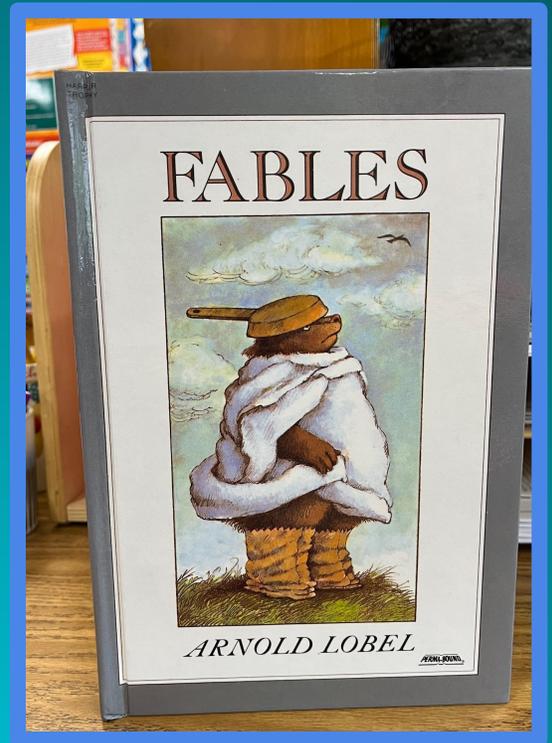
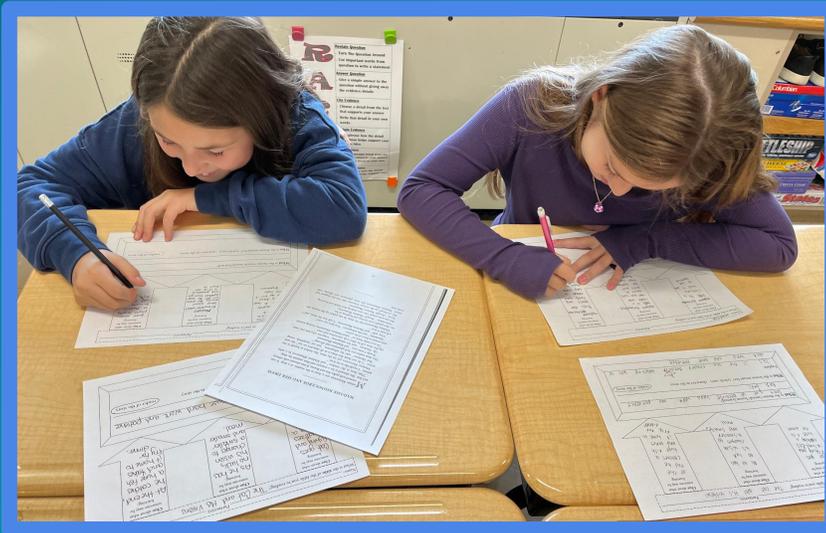
Sincerely,

Mr. Thomas Meiss
N. A. Walbran Principal

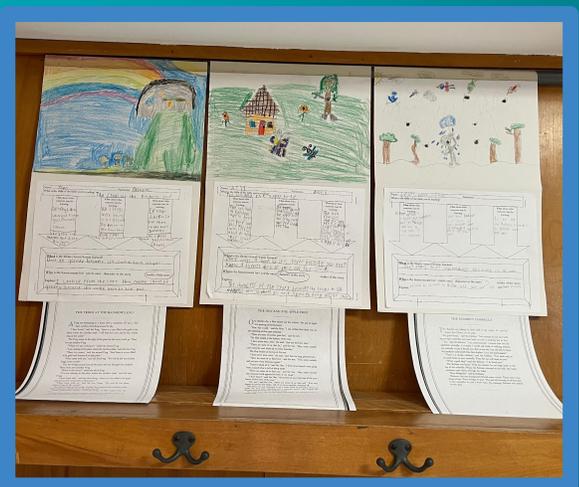
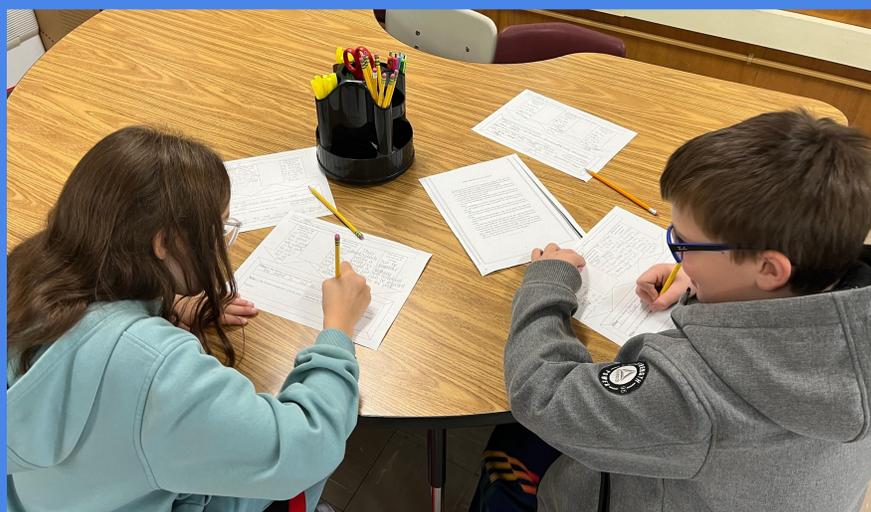


Theme from Arnold Lobel's *Fables*

By Chloe Buehner



In fourth grade ELA WIN, each class read a short story from the book *Fables*, by Arnold Lobel. Before working with partners, they worked in whole group reading one fable together and discussing the clues that helped them discover the theme. Next they worked with partners and read a different fable and then discussed the theme. They looked through the fable for clues to find out the lesson learned. The students talked about how themes repeat through different stories. Once they finished, the students worked on illustrating the fable and attached their graphic organizer to it. Their fable illustration with their graphic organizer was hung in the hall when they finished. They read fables like *The Hen and the Apple Tree* and *The Frogs at the Rainbow's End*.





Mastrovito Hyundai Bookmobile Comes to N. A. Walbran

By Kiley Dousharm and Declan Ciotti

On Monday, November 3rd, the Mastrovito Hyundai Bookmobile came to N.A. Walbran to give all the students free books! Every grade level went out to the bus circle to get a book from the van between 11:00AM to 1:00PM.

The program always aims to promote reading and engaging in the community by giving books to local schools. The Bookmobile is an annual back-to-school celebration, with 2025 being its fourth year! The bookmobile visits many different area elementary schools, including N.A Walbran Elementary.

The schools are chosen by a contest, where on behalf of the school, an educator submits a form for a chance to win a visit! The students at the winning school all get a free book! Thank you to Mastrovito Hyundai for choosing our school and giving away books to all of the students!

Grade 5 and 6 Basketball Intramurals

By Gaidan Schneider



In the month of November, the boys and girls got together on different days (boys and girls separately) to participate after school for some basketball fun. At each grouping of intramurals, they started by dribbling a basketball around the gym. When they were finished, they met up with a partner and played Around the World. After that, the PE teachers, Mr. Enos (for the boys intramurals) and Mrs. Brown, (for the girls intramurals) gave some tips on how to shoot better. When they were done they did another two minutes of shooting, they then did 1 versus 1, followed by 2 versus 2s. After that they played Knockout and King of the Court. By then, everybody was on the court in two teams. Finally when there was about ten minutes left, everyone lined up on one wall and the PE teachers took a photo of them.



First Graders Celebrate the 50th Day of School by Rockin' the 50s!

By Elise Knight

Recently, all of the first graders had a very exciting 50's Day! It was celebrated on the fiftieth day of school (woo hoo!), when they participated in some special fifties-themed lessons within the English Language Arts and Mathematics curriculum. These young ladies and lads were encouraged to dress up straight out of the fifties-- T-birds and Pink Ladies, while also being introduced to the 1950s. They learned about the 1950s and also did activities to do with the number fifty. They finished this wonderful day with root beer floats, while listening to music and learning about the toys from this exciting decade.



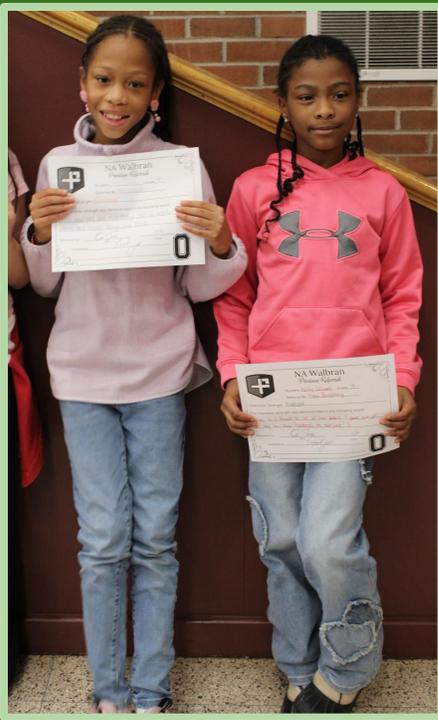


December Positivity Project Assembly

By Declan Ciotti and Kiley Daucharm

On Thursday, December 4th, all grades went down to the cafeteria for an assembly! The assembly kicked off with Ms. Waskiewicz talking about the different fire prevention activities and drills we have practiced. Then, she talked about the stuffed animal drive we did throughout November and December. There were 381 collected in total! Two firefighters, Mr. Dobler and Mr. Rieben, came in to collect them. The reason we collected all these stuffed animals is because when kids lose their house to fire, their belongings are all gone, so we give these stuffed animals to the firefighters so they can give them to the kids that are in need of a little snuggle buddy.





Through November and December, character trait certificates were given out to the students who best demonstrated those acts. Bravery, gratitude, kindness, self-control, and creativity were all the character traits. The special area teachers handed out banners to the classes who best showed those traits within their classrooms.



Art: Ms. Closinski

Technology: Ms. Bell

Library: Mrs. Gray

Physical Education: Ms. Rieben

Music: Ms. Waskiewicz



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December Skyhawk of the Month: Ms. Koenig

By Caidan Schneider

The Skyhawk of the Month for December is Ms. Koenig. She is a second grade teacher at N. A. Walbran Elementary School. Some things she likes to do with her students are anything science- or social studies-related. Her students love hands-on activities in the classroom and learning about different things like people and places.

If she could go anywhere in the world with her students, she says she would want to go to London because she studied abroad there during her undergraduate career. She was inspired to become a teacher because she loves helping kids and seeing them learn and grow. She loves walking her two Dachshunds named Lily and Oliver. Reading is one of her favorite hobbies and her favorite author is Stephen King. She also enjoys traveling and hiking.

November Student of the Month: Sylvie Baker

By Kennedy Albin

The November student of the month is Sylvie Baker. Sylvie's teacher is Ms. Waskiewicz, and Sylvie is in second grade. Sylvie's favorite subject is math. Her favorite color is black, and her favorite season is summer. One of Sylvie's favorite specials is music, and Sylvie loves dogs. Sylvie was not thinking she would be the student of the month, so Sylvie was happy and surprised when she found out she was the student of the month. There will be another student of the month next month, so stay tuned.



**December Student
of the Month:
Adelyn Copperwheat
By Asteria Gotham**

For the month of December, one of the Students of the Month was Adelyn Copperwheat, a student in Ms. Ricci's 1st grade classroom. She was nominated by the three first grade teachers, Ms. Ricci, Mrs. Gray, and Mrs. Caruso. She said that she was very excited and surprised when she was called up to be officially chosen as one of the December Students of the Month!

Her favorite subject is ELA, and her favorite special is music. Her favorite animals are deer, and her favorite season of the year is summer! And finally, her three favorite colors are pink, purple, and yellow.

There will be another nominee for the January student of the month soon, so make sure to stay around for when the time comes!

**December Student of the
Month: Teagan Decker
By John Dunham**

One of the Students of the Month for December is Teagan Decker. She is a first grade student in Mrs. Caruso's class. She was nominated by the first grade teachers, Mrs. Caruso, Mrs. Gray and Ms. Ricci. Teagan says she feels great because she was chosen to be a student of the month. Teagan's favorite subject is science, and her favorite special is art. Her favorite animal is a cheetah "because it does cool tricks." Her favorite season is summer because she likes splash pads and pools. When I asked Teagan what her favorite color was, she replied, "Pink is my vibe!"



Student Council Food Drive

By Teghan Schneider & Olivia Tuttle

The student council organized a food drive for local families in need. All donations were due no later than December 2, 2025. The donations went to different organizations throughout Oneida County. Thank you to the Rome Rescue Mission for distributing all the donations.

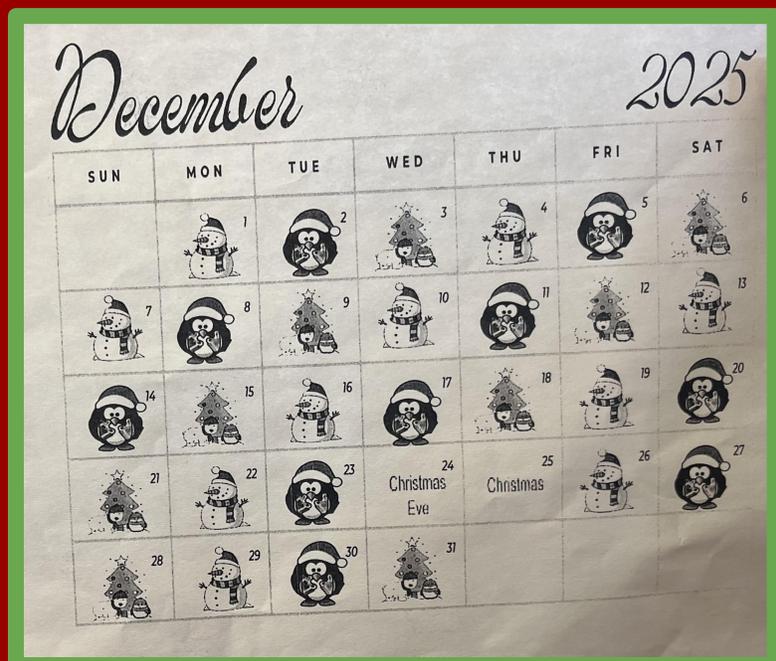


December Fitness Challenge

By Asteria Gotham & John Dunham

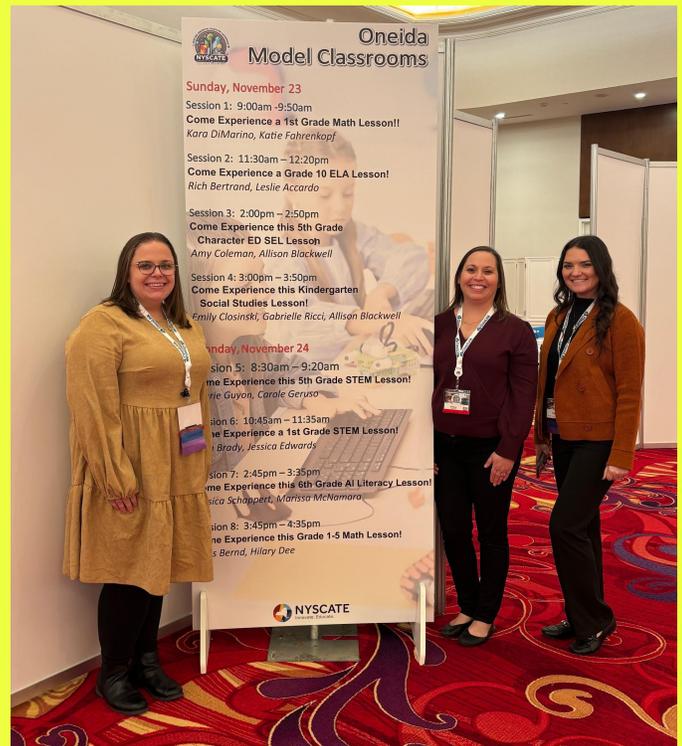
For this year's December Fitness Challenge (also called Mrs. Brown and Mr Enos's Fitmas Challenge), there are many different fun exercises for students to do. Even your friends or family can do it! This calendar covers the entirety of December, where the pictures on the calendar match up to the exercises you're supposed to do. The pictures included are a snowman, a penguin, and a Christmas tree. Once you turn this in at the end of the month (only if it's fully completed), you are able to receive a special certificate! Although, you don't have to do any exercises on Christmas Eve or Christmas, you can if you want to!

If there is a snowman on one of the days, you do 20 ski jumps, 20 seconds of running in place, 30 mountain climbers, 20 seconds of skipping in place, and 20 jumping jacks. If you get a penguin, you do 20 squats, 20 seconds worth of planking, 30 cross jacks, 20 crab kicks, and 30 seconds of running in place. And finally, if you come across a Christmas tree, you have to do 20 burpees, 20 switcheroos, 30 cherry pickers, 20 bicycle crunches, and 30 high knees in place. These exercises might seem hard when you first start but once you get the hang of it you can do it!



N. A. Walbran Teachers Present at NYSCATE Conference

By Teghan Schneider & Olivia Tuttle



Ms. Closinski, Ms. Ricci, and Mrs. Blackwell all did a presentation on Bee Bots for other teachers and technology specialists at the Turning Stone Casino. It was a full house, with about 3,000 people attending from all over the state but about 100 presenting different topics. People presented for roughly 50 minutes. Their presentation was on a kindergarten social studies lesson involving technology. They actually taught this lesson last year and talked about the American symbols the Bee Bots used to move. To add to the fun they used the Bee Bots throughout the presentation.

According to Ms. Ricci, the conference is held "once a year and you have to be invited to be a presenter." The three teachers also learned a meaningful and engaging way to add technology into the classrooms. They liked the fact that they could choose what sessions or presentations they wished to attend. "Overall, this conference was absolutely amazing and we are hoping to be asked to present again next year!"

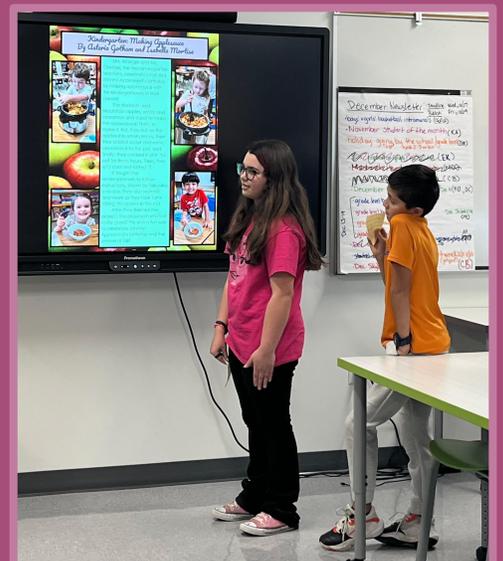
A Visit from Regent Patrick Mannion

By Asteria Gotham

On the 12th of December, our school got a visit from Regent Patrick Mannion, from the New York State Department of Education Board of Regents! He was joined by Dr. Patricia Kilburn, the superintendent of our local Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES. They came down to see how certain parts of our school worked (newsletter, morning announcements), asking questions about said-subjects as he listened!

The group that presented first were some of the writers from the building newsletter, presenting their work along with what they did to publish their writing. The second group that presented were the sixth graders that helped work on the morning announcements, introducing themselves to Regent Mannion and then showing what they did and how the video announcements generally worked, like what each computer did, and what what roles each of the participants have behind the scenes to bring the video announcements to our school community every day.

The meeting went smoothly throughout the whole time it took place, with the representatives of the newsletter and the morning announcements being able to show off their hard work. We would like to thank Regent Mannion for coming to our school so we could showcase some of the great things happening at our school!



N. A. Walbran School Community Gives to Others

By Dmitri Boyko



Thea Bowman House

Students in grades 4-6 donated hats, scarves, mittens, and gloves to Thea Bowman House. Many local kids come to Thea Bowman House with their families and each have unique stories to tell. At The Bowman House, they care for the community's most vulnerable youth. They operate at two different parts in the city of Utica.



Project Jammies

Students in grades 1-3 donated new pajamas. Project Jammies helps by donating new pajamas to The House of the Good Shepherd. They help children and teens in need. They provide those people with warmth and security with warm clothes for the winter.

Sleep in Heavenly Peace

Pre K students donated new bedding and pillows to Sleep in Heavenly Peace, an organization that builds wooden bed frames to make beds for children across the country waiting for a bed donation. They have already built and donated 330,444 beds! Volunteers have given over 500,000 hours of their time. They have national partnerships such as Lowe's, DeWalt, FLEX, Jockey, Foundation Support Works, Ashley, and Serta Simmons Bedding.



Spirit Week Comes to N. A. Walbran Elementary

By Chloe Buehner



First graders were mighty toasty on Tuesday!



Ms. Rieben's fourth graders showed their holiday cheer on Wednesday!

Ms. Zarnoch-Riley & Ms. Ricci's students got "merry" on Monday!



During the week of December 15-19, our students and staff had the opportunity to participate in spirit week. The themes were decided by the N.A. Walbran Student Council. On Monday, there was "Merry Monday," where the students and staff could wear flannel, plaid, or whatever made them happy! Tuesday was "Toasty Tuesday," which was when staff and students were encouraged to wear Christmas sweaters, socks, hats, or headbands. Wednesday was "Holiday Cheer" for holiday shirts or colors. Thursday is the best-known one, "Candy Cane Lane," where the school wore stripes or red and white. On Friday, which is almost everyone's favorite, "Long Winter's Nap" was the theme and everyone could wear holiday pajamas!



Important Upcoming Dates

By Asteria Gotham

Dec. 20th - Jan. 4th : Winter Recess

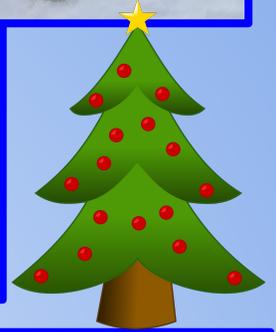
Jan. 15th: Family Game Night, 5:30-7:00 p.m.

Jan. 16th : Elementary Early Dismissal, 1:00 p.m

Jan. 19th : Martin Luther King JR. Day, no school

Jan. 23rd : Marking Period 2 Ends

Jan. 30th : Marking Period 2 Report Cards Distributed



N.A. Walbran Building Newsletter: Meet the



For the 2025-2026 school year, sixth grade students will be helping Ms. Zarnoch-Riley, the Digital Literacy/Writing teacher, to publish the building newsletter!

Special thanks to this newsletter edition's staff: Kennedy Albin, Dmitri Boyko, Chloe Buehner, Declan Ciotti, Kiley Dousharm, John Dunham, Asteria Gotham, Elise Knight, Caidan Schneider, Teghan Schneider, Olivia Tuttle