

In the spotlight of “Celebrating Literacy” for the week of January 18th:
Meanings of Maple

Gluskbe and the Maple Tree and *The Many*

STORY TELLING IN GRADE 4 -

In early January, Abenaki culture permeates almost every corner of the 4th grade classroom. As Mr. Herr connects social studies with a storytelling unit, students are hearing and reading Native American legends and practicing the art of retelling those stories. One of Mr. Herr’s favorite books to use during this unit is *The Faithful Hunter: Abenaki Stories*, a compilation of tales by Joesph Bruchac about animal trickster, human heroes, origins and landscape.

A particular favorite and one that holds the attention of 4th graders is the story of *Gluskbe and the Maple Trees*; a funny story of how maple syrup once flowed directly out of trees all year long and why, because the tribe became fat and lazy from overindulgence, things were changed to the present day system of people relying on the necessary weather conditions for a few weeks in order to use muscle-power to gather and boil sap into syrup.

After students have heard and read a variety of stories and discussed themes, morals, and character traits, and used a response to text format to write about what they are reading, each student chooses a favorite legend and depicts the sequence of the story by drawing a story map. They then practice telling the story until they are ready to share the retelling with their classmates at the class’s Story Telling Festival.

Also included in the social studies unit is comparing and contrasting what is part of the Abenaki culture and what is not and researching and writing a research paper about another Native American tribe.

THE MANY MEANINGS OF MAPLE IN VERMONT –

Michael Lange, a professional of anthropology and folklore at Champlain College in Burlington, VT and a speaker for the Vermont Humanities Council will be presenting a talk titled, *The Many Meanings of Maple in Vermont* in the school gym on April 12, 2016 at 6:30 PM. This hour-long presentation will be part of the Community Literacy Week.

In this talk Mr. Lange will “examine the many meanings of maple sugaring. Maple is enormously important to Vermont’s economy, ecology, and heritage.” Mr. Lange will “discuss sugaring ethnographically, based on over five years of research among sugar makers all over the state, to learn from them what sugaring really means to Vermont. Rather than discussing the practical aspects of sugaring, such as how to tap a tree or how an evaporator works, his talk focuses on how and why maple has become so important to Vermont’s identity, and how and why it helps us shape who we are as Vermonter”.

