



Douglas Digest

News of the C.T. Douglas School

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Douglas Digest

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Of Mice and Men

I can't tell you where or when, but they've been after me for a long time. They torture my loved ones and defile everything I oversee, all in an attempt to slowly, deliberately drive me mad. At night, I dream that I can hear them plotting, running back and forth, organizing, gnawing at my tenuous hold on sanity. In the morning, I find small clues that they've been there, black pellets across a table, traps that I set untouched.

Yes, I am being tormented by mice!

They have it in for me. One morning, before my family moved to Acton, I sat eating breakfast alone in the kitchen. Something stirred on the stove, but there were no burners on, the oven was off. In fact, I was eating a bowl of cold cereal and had not cooked anything that morning. And yet I looked over to the burner to see what could be making the noise. A mouse head peeked back at me from inside the burner of the stove! We both screamed! The mouse sought a less conspicuous hiding place (our walls), and I moved the family to Acton.

Today a kindergarten student got off the bus and stopped to tell me that her family found a dead mouse in the middle of their house! The mice seem to be trying to get to me through everyone that I know. But I will prevail. Much like a mama lion protecting her cub, I shall vanquish my rodent foes!

When added to the other stresses of managing a school, this mouse problem has at times pushed me over the edge. At my very worst point this week, I stepped outside to watch recess. There was the usual football game, a soccer game, the basketball courts were all full and the climbing structure was a swarming mass of bodies. At the top of the hill was a single student, swaying like an old man doing tai chi, one leg up, the other barely balancing a gently waving mass of arms.

"Excuse me, what are you doing?"

"I'm conducting the wind. I'm trying to get it to wrap around my body. I love the way that it feels. When I've had a hard morning, I conduct the wind."

Another boy joined in. Two old men conducting the wind. Enticing it to wrap around their bodies and gently rock the anxiety from their bodies.

I'd like to say that I joined them, that I had enough self-esteem to sway with them in front of 138 other children. But I didn't. Still, I felt better just having watched them. And I thought about the mice and then about the student's bad morning. I'm reminded that living with any creature, even one of your own species, requires endless compromise and grace. Sometimes you have to conduct the wind. Live and let live is easy to say, but not always easy to practice. Feel fortunate when you can sometimes, somehow manage that.

C. Whitbeck

December 2009 PTO News

As we enter the month of December and prepare to spend the holidays with family and friends, we look back on 2009 and look towards what 2010 has to bring.

Thank you to all of the Douglas parents for their generous participation in our Direct Solicitation Campaign. We feel very fortunate in these difficult times that our families continue to show their support for Douglas School and the PTO. As of the first of December, we have almost reached our goal of \$14,000. We will continue to accept donations towards this campaign to help fund our Classroom Assistants, Library Assistants, and Technology Assistants. Remember that your donation is tax-deductible and that many companies offer a gift matching program.

Thank you to the parents and teachers who attended our PTO General Meeting on November 9. Thank you also to the parents who continue to supply baked goods for these meetings and to Jan Immerman and Ellen Hurley, our hospitality volunteers, for setting up for the meetings. **Our next PTO General Meeting will be a morning meeting at Douglas on Thursday, January 21, 11:30am. Dr. Stephen Mills, Superintendent of the Acton-Boxborough schools will be our guest at the meeting** and will provide an update on the school budgets and how they will affect our school, staff, and children.

In November, we enjoyed the much anticipated Ice Cream Social, Purposeful Change, and the Veterans Day Program at Douglas.

Thank you to the following volunteers for their help on these events.

- Lori Fassman and Roberta Bizier for their work on the Veterans Day Program and to Peter Broggi, Jason Shelkowitz, and the fifth grade students for the beautiful music.
- Donna Yost, Dawn Gomez, Todd and Julie Marvin, and Naomi Martin for heading up another successful Ice Cream Social. Special thanks to Donna and Dawn who managed this event for the last time as their youngest children will graduate from Douglas this spring. Special thanks for many great years of successful Ice Cream Socials!
- Paula Conquest and Julia Kline for organizing Purposeful Change. Money raised this year will help purchase new software for the students to use with the new computers, and also to support Cradles to Crayons, a deserving charity chosen by the students.
- Lori Fassman for coordinating the Staff Appreciation Thanksgiving treats for the Douglas Teachers and Staff and the many parents who provided delicious baked goods.
- Laura Fay, Maureen Cannata, and Tanaz Hashemi for their work on the upcoming book fair, scheduled for the week of December 7.
- Sheryl Fox for coordinating our successful November and December Scrip Fundraisers and all those who participated!

We hope you have a wonderful winter vacation connecting with family and friends.

As always, we welcome your questions or comments and look forward to your continued support in 2010!

Cheryl Witty, ckwitty@verizon.net, 978.266.0177

Kristan Smith-Park, ksmith068@gmail.com, 978.263.3514
2009–2010 PTO Co-Chairs

Work and Play Monthly Events Calendar and Enrichment Classes Update

Work and Play: The December Monthly Events Calendar is available at <http://douglas.ab.mec.edu> with listings of special events and activities or treats for each day of the month. Just pick up a drop-in form at the Douglas office or on the website and join the fun!

Enrichment Classes: The Winter Session of Enrichment Classes begins the week of January 11, and the brochure will be distributed in December. The ending dates for the Fall Session will be distributed on the Douglas School email loop.

Chris Borgman,
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Green Tip of the Month: Pack a “Zero Waste” Lunch

Buy in bulk and portion foods into reusable containers (check out www.snacktaxi.com) instead of putting them in plastic bags or buying “snack size” individually packaged snacks. Send drinks in a thermos or reusable water bottle instead of juice boxes. And pack reusable utensils from home instead of disposable plastic ones. Even consider tossing in a cloth napkin. You’ll save money at the grocery store, and Douglas will save money disposing of the trash!

Do you have a “green tip” that you’d like to share with the Douglas community? If so, please send it to me, and I’ll put it in the Digest.

Sue Cudmore,
susan.cudmore@gmail.com

We hope you had fun at the Ice Cream Social!

We were delighted to have such an enthusiastic crowd for the 2009 Douglas Ice Cream Social. Thank you for your patience and thank you to all who came to socialize and play. The wonderfully painted, tattooed, and smiling faces were a joy to behold. Thank you to all who participated, helped that night, and brought cakes, some of which were amazing. Thank you to spouses and friends who watched the children of the many volunteers who worked that night. A special thank you to the many Douglas students and alumni who helped out the night of the social; it was great to see you continuing to take an active role in your school and having so much fun doing it, thanks!

Thanks once again to my fellow Ice Cream Social chairs: Dawn Gomez, for coordinating the ice cream and kitchen, and Todd Marvin for organizing and running the games. Thank you to Julie Marvin for assisting with games and keeping the fabulous prize buckets stocked all night. Thank you to Naomi Martin for helping with the ice cream and pizza ticket pre-sales and with flyers for the social. Thanks to Cheryl Witty for heading up the famous cake room. Thank you to Corinne Hogseth and Erika Cormier for handling the finances. Thank you to Melinda Vigolo for the bright, beautiful, and informative new signs. Several businesses made donations towards the social including: Donelan's, Friendly's, Roche Brothers, Stop & Stop, Shaw's of Stow, DiCapri's, and The Acton House of Pizza. We truly appreciate their support of our event and our community.

Dawn's e-mail to the kitchen staff sums it up well: "How is it that we served more sundaes than ever and yet things seemed so smooth? Well, it's pretty obvious to me that it was due to the collaborative effort *you* all put into helping out with KP duty! I had started the night by opening a new box of 500 cups and we had those all scooped before 7 pm...but lo and behold the folks kept coming! Ended up scooping another 101 cups from a 2nd box and that's exactly how many sundaes were consumed—601!" Thank you to the amazing kitchen staff: Ghada Bitar, Erica Cahill, Sharen Crooks, Tanaz Hashemi, Susan Mathisen, Scott Maylander, Paulette Stout, Michele Ellicks, Eileen Matarese, Sue Ropiak, Kathleen McDonagh, Ruhan Inanoglu, Sharon Armistead, and Chris Whitbeck. Thank you to Mrs. Murphy for her support and to Tuey Guarnieri for her help in the kitchen the night of the social.

In the games area, we really appreciate all the parents, students, alumni, and teachers who enjoyed playing with the enthusiastic crowds. Thank you Ayla Quinn and Seth Kaplan who helped their moms (Lisa Quinn and Judy Kaplan) in the bowling lanes. Thank you Matt Bizier, Nick Reinhardt, Ryan Yost, Tim Hurley, and Jim Hurley who may be getting summer jobs in Las Vegas dealing blackjack. Thank you Maryanne Chase and Claire Howe who may be on their way to their second careers as Bingo callers. Everyone was giving it their all in the games rooms the night of the social—thank you Kara Letourneau, Ramona Taylor, Joe Taylor, Tracy West, LeeAnn Donnelly-Gabrielli and family, Sarah O'Callaghan, Darlene Crowley, Liz Schaller, Ed Yost, Ray Yost, Ethan Marvin, Keiran Marvin, Anne Littlefield, Mary O'Brien, Maura Sharp, Maureen Latham, Matt Carotenuto, Dave Davidson, and Anne Fulginiti. Thank you Santiago Rivero who helped with bowling (the best unsolicited help by a third-grader we ever got)! Thank you to the amazing face painters and tattoo artists Nicole Latham, Katherine Curran, Michele Calvert, and Liz Brew. Thank you everyone else who jumped in to help that night when needed! We could not have done it without you. It was really fun to have the sixth graders and Douglas graduates helping with the games, tattoos, and face painting, thanks!

The event could not have happened without so many volunteers from the Douglas Community. Thank you to Margaret Kohin, Kathleen Shirley, and Christine Phillips who jumped in to help with the enthusiastic crowds at the start of the social and to Heather Harer, Kristan Smith-Park, and Ellen Schemerhorn for also helping with game stamps, ice cream and pizza ticket sales the night of the social. Thanks to Cheryl Witty, Jeremy and Danielle Witty, Anne Heinlein, Lewis Heinlein, Judy Rowland, Julia and Jack Rowland, Martha Papalia, Anna and Dom Papalia, Jill Wolf, and Becky Nitschelm for their help in the cake room. Thanks to Valerie Bauer Gore, Virginia (Steven Calvert's grandmother), Jennifer Aufiero, Sarah Clabault, Erika Cormier, and Cassie Stewart, for keeping us well fed and hydrated with pizza, water, and cake. Thanks to Alison Tobin for making our bold cake walk numbers again which receive hundreds of stomps every year. Thank you Danielle Buss, Lauren Goorno, Linda Gower, Megan Pesce, Linda Borghesani, Christine Fox, Alison Bullock, Jacqui Burak, Judy White, Terri Carotenuto, Susan Haverstock, Karen Sullivan, Meg Sullivan, Susie Ellicks, and Hanneke vanWalsem for keeping everyone safe and having a good time with the cake walks for grades K-2 in the cafeteria and grades 3-6 in the Douglas gym. Thanks to the Purposeful Change crew at the social: Julia Kline, Paula Conquest, and Santhi Sonthi.

I know there were a few others who jumped in to help and in all the excitement I apologize that I did not get to write down your names, but truly, thank you, thank you, thank you!

Special thanks to Dr. Whitbeck, Mrs. Armistead and Mrs. Crooks for their support and help. Thank you to Mr. Bouchard and Mr. Pacelli for helping to get the school ready for the social, for setting up and cleaning up after the social. Thanks to Mrs. Bethel and her class for the use of room 12 for the Cakery, and to Mrs. Sharp and her class for the use of room 21 for Bingo. It was a great evening. Thanks to the wonderful families who attended and volunteered.

Sincerely,

Donna Yost, Dawn Gomez, and Todd Marvin

Your Energetic, Inspired, but now tired Ice Cream Social Co-Chairs

Purposeful Change...A Success!

We'd like to extend our thanks to every student and family who gathered up their change and made a donation to this year's Purposeful Change fundraiser. We are proud to announce that together, we were able to raise \$1,117.68! As you know, these funds will be used to purchase computer software for the new school laptops and additionally, we will be able to make a sizable contribution to the Cradles to Crayons children's charity. Top donators will be announced via a Constant Contact email and Radio Douglas!



Thank you for helping us teach the kids that there is greatness in giving and they have the ability to make a difference in the lives of others. Collectively, we have done just that!

*The Purposeful Change Committee
Paula Conquest and Julia Kline*

Save the Date—Spring Social and Auction!

The 11th Annual Douglas Spring Social and Auction will take place at Wedgewood Pines Country Club in Stow on Saturday, April 10. The kick-off meeting for this event will be held on **Tuesday, December 8, 7:30pm**, in the Douglas cafetorium. We still need many volunteers to make this event a success. Please consider joining us to help plan this important fundraiser and fun social event!

If you have any questions or would like to volunteer please contact Naomi Martin or Anya Fillion. Thank you!

*Naomi Martin, neasullivan@aol.com
Anya Fillion, anyawfillion@yahoo.com*

Festival of Cultures

Are you a family who enjoys sharing your culture with others? Does your child participate in a cultural dance group or music group? If yes, then the Festival of Cultures is a great event for you! This year the Festival of Cultures, sponsored by Douglas and Conant schools, will be held on May 15, 2010. This event celebrates our rich ethnic and cultural diversity. We hope to recruit families or "ambassadors" who are originally from all areas of the globe as well as families who have some connection to a global community. Ambassadors set up booths, representing countries, where children can visit and learn.

The booths typically have items of clothing, books, music, photographs, artwork, and games from the country being represented. Additionally, the evening includes a program featuring children performing music and dance from around the world.

Please call or email us as soon as possible if you are interested in being an ambassador, if you know of a group of children who would like to perform, or if you are willing to help during the event. We are always in need of lots of helpers! Please contact Maria Albarran (978-263-6807 or rivero_albarran@yahoo.com) or Kristan Smith-Park (978-263-3514 or ksmith068@gmail.com). Thanks to all who have already signed up to volunteer!

Our December Book Fair is Almost Here!

This is a fantastic fundraiser for the school and a great opportunity to purchase new books for your family & friends during this holiday season. You are invited to come and check out the great selection, either with your child's class or any other time the Book Fair is open.

No sales tax! Cash, checks, and credit cards accepted!

Dates:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Wednesday (12/9) | 9–10:30am; 3:30–6pm |
| Thursday (12/10) | 9am–8:30pm! |
| Friday (12/11) | 8:30am–6pm |
| Thursday Family Night (12/10) | 6:30–8:30pm |

Remember to mark your calendars for our very popular Family Night. This year we will feature a Pajama Bedtime Story Hour with children's author, Beth Raisner Glass, the co-author of *Noises in the Night!* This event is appropriate for all ages...there's something for everyone! Younger children will especially enjoy her dynamic and engaging reading of her book. Older children will appreciate her description of the adventure of bringing a book to print.

*Laura Fay, 978-635-3766
douglasbookfair@gmail.com*



Notes from the Health Office: Breakfast

The most important meal of the day may be breakfast. Current research suggests that eating breakfast improves a child's learning skills, attendance, weight control, cholesterol levels, and physical endurance. Despite the healthful benefits, breakfast may be the meal that is most neglected. Many students, especially adolescents, do not understand the importance of finding the time to eat in the morning.

Breakfast is the first chance that the body has to "refuel." Breakfast-skippers often feel restless and tired and have difficulty concentrating on tasks. According to the American Dietetic Association, quick and easy breakfasts can include the following:

- Ready-to-eat cereal with fruit and milk
- Toasted bagel with cheese
- Fruit filled breakfast bars and yogurt
- Fruit smoothie (fruit and milk mixed in a blender)
- Peanut butter (if not contraindicated because of allergies) on whole wheat toast
- Oatmeal with applesauce
- Fresh fruit topped with yogurt and crispy whole grain cereal

The Importance of Sleep

Why is sleep important to overall wellness?

- **Health:** Not getting enough sleep increases the risk of having high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. During sleep your body produces hormones which fuel growth in children, help build muscle mass, and repair cells and tissues.
- **Mood:** Not getting enough sleep can make you irritable and contributes to bad behavior and difficulty with relationships. People who chronically lack sleep are more likely to be depressed.
- **Learning:** We need sleep to think clearly, react quickly, and create memories. The pathways in the brain that aid with learning and creative problem solving are very active during sleep.
- **Athletic performance:** According to the National Sleep Foundation, sleep deprivation can affect athletic performance by reducing cardiovascular performance, decreasing mental functioning, reducing endurance, impairing motor function, and delaying visual and auditory reaction time.

How much sleep do you really need?

Sleep needs vary from person to person and change throughout the lifespan. According to the National Sleep Foundation: preschoolers (3–5 years) need 11–13 hours of sleep, school-aged children (5–12 years) need 10–11 hours of sleep, teens (13–17 years) need 8.5–9.25 hours of sleep, and adults need between 7–9 hours of sleep each night.

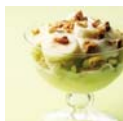
For more information on the importance of sleep visit:

- www.nih.gov (National Institutes of Health)
- www.sleepfoundation.org (National Sleep Foundation)

This month's recipe from eatingwell.com: Ginger snap Banana Frozen Yogurt

Active time: 10 minutes. Total time: 20 minutes.

Stir chopped ginger snaps, sliced bananas and toasted pecans into softened vanilla frozen yogurt for a quick, crowd-pleasing dessert!



- 2 cups vanilla frozen yogurt, softened
- 6 ginger snap cookies, chopped
- 2 bananas, sliced
- 1/4 cup chopped toasted pecans

Layer equal portions of frozen yogurt, chopped ginger snaps, bananas, and pecans into 4 small dessert cups or glasses. Freeze until the yogurt is firm, at least 10 minutes.

Nutrition information: Per serving: 287 calories; 12 g fat (4 g sat, 4 g mono); 15 mg cholesterol; 42 g carbohydrates; 5 g protein; 2 g fiber; 81 mg sodium; 249 mg potassium. 3 Carbohydrate Servings

Exchanges: 2 carbohydrates (others), 1 fruit, 2 fat.

Dates to Remember

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| December 9–11 | Scholastic Book Fair |
| December 24–January 3 | Winter Recess: NO SCHOOL |
| Tuesday, January 12 | General Informational Meeting for entering kindergarteners, Parker Damon |
| Monday, January 18 | Martin Luther King Day: NO SCHOOL |
| Wednesday, January 20 | Kindergarten Tours Start |
| Thursday, January 21 | General PTO Meeting at Douglas 11:30 am |
| Monday, January 25 | Kindergarten Changeover |

Snack Cart Donations

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| December 3 | Mrs. Ingraham, Mrs. Cherkerzian, Mrs. Claffie, Mrs. Ritter |
| December 10 | Pretzel Day |
| December 17 | Mrs. Hubbell, Mrs. Bethel, Mrs. Savage, Mrs. Smith (AMK) |
| December 24, 31 | No School/Vacation |
| January 7 | Mrs. Rand, Mrs. Simeone, Ms. Hunt, Ms. Fitzpatrick |

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MCAS Dates—2010

Dear Parents of 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students:

Your children will be taking the MCAS tests on the following dates:

Grade 3: March 22, 23, 24, and 26

May 10, 11, and 12

Grade 4: March 22, 23, 24, 26, and 29

May 10, 11, and 12

Grade 5: March 22, 23, 24, and 26

May 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19, and 21

Grade 6: March 22, 23, 24, and 26

May 10, 11, and 12

Please make every effort to have your children attend school on these dates and arrive promptly by 9:15am; tests will begin shortly after the start of school.

Your support is appreciated.

Dr. Christopher Whitbeck