



# Douglas Digest

News of the C.T. Douglas School

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Douglas Digest

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## Late Night Circus Ballet

At 9:00 PM, I walked out of the house in my bathrobe to the car to retrieve a forgotten item. There were two elements in play which I had not anticipated or even considered as possibilities:

1. Every surface—wooden porch, stone walkway, and, of course, blacktop driveway—had a micro-thin glaze of clear ice on it.
2. Just off the porch on the lawn was a herd of ten deer quietly eating the fallout from the bird feeder. They are never this close to the house in winter, and I had no idea they were in the vicinity.

You can see where this is going already....

AAAGHHH! BAM—thud, thud, thud, slide! Snort, scamper, scamper, snort!

So I'm on my rear on the walkway making sounds unfit for a principal, and the deer have exploded in terror—airborne, white tails shimmering in the moonlight as they frantically ballet into the safety of neighboring trees.

I could see my wife through the glass doors, staring out into the night, wondering, "What is going on out there?"

Well, dear, I was practicing my circus act!

And why describe this particular circus act? Because it was not what I expected.

In my mind, I was just going to the car to retrieve some little much needed item before turning in for the evening. I don't even remember what it was, but such a trip is usually quiet and uneventful. But within seconds, two totally unexpected events sent my heart into overdrive.

Of course, the events of that evening are a more realistic suggestion of what's coming for the rest of the year.

Probably not what I expect.

Surprise is always on the way.

It can be painful, or it can be beautiful, or it can be painfully beautiful!

Once again I have been reminded: The world turns in unexpected ways. Even if it knocks you on your rear, it still has some amazing things to share.

*C. Whitbeck*

## **February PTO News**

It is that time of year again when Douglas opens its doors to parents who are going through the sometimes difficult decision process about where to send their kindergartner. This year, the kindergarten tours started on January 19 and end on February 8. Many thanks to Dr. Whitbeck and Christine Phillips for leading the tours and helping the prospective families feel comfortable at Douglas and well-informed. Thanks also to Terry Martins for coordinating the much appreciated snacks and drinks for the parents. A special thank you goes out to the Douglas staff that always opens their classrooms to the tours and through their warmth and knowledge, help show why Douglas is an excellent choice.

There are many events in the cold of winter that also show why Douglas is a great school to attend. One such exciting event takes place on Saturday, February 5. Kathy McCullen, our Newcomers Committee Chair, has organized a sledding get together at NARA Park at 10:30 AM. Everyone is invited!

And what could be more fun than watching a movie in your PJs with your friends in the Douglas cafetorium? Our annual grade level movie nights will take place over the next few weeks (see page 5 for dates). Watch for more information in your child's backpack about these fun, social events at Douglas organized by our PTO Movie Night Coordinators, Jen Aufiero and Bridget Steinkrauss.

We are looking forward to our 2011 Spirit Day on Friday, February 4, where students can show their spirit by wearing blue and/or gold, or their Spiritwear. Thanks to Debbie Maffei for organizing our February Spirit Day. Keep a look out for a Spiritwear survey asking for your feedback soon!

We are looking forward to the Read Aloud Day headed by Marcia Towey (toweymarcia@yahoo.com) and Kim Shamah (knsshamah@verizon.net) and to the March Reading Challenge coordinated by Stacey Smith (sbtsmith@verizon.net), Lee Ann Layton (layton.family@yahoo.com) and Kim Shamah. If you would like to help with either the Read Aloud Day or the March Reading Challenge, please contact one of the coordinators.

Our next PTO General Meeting will be on March 22 in conjunction with our Joint Speaker Series with Gates Elementary, which will be at Douglas this year. The night will begin at 7 PM with each school's respective PTO meetings, followed by presentations of interest to elementary school parents. More information will be sent home about this fun and informative event.

Please let us know if you have any questions or comments. Thank You!

*Kristan Smith-Park, ksmith068@gmail.com,  
Deanne O'Sullivan, deannewos@gmail.com  
2010-2011 PTO Co-Chairs*

## **Weekly Email Communication**

As you know, the Constant Contact weekly messages from the PTO and School Office are one of the primary ways we communicate events and news for the coming week and month. Please make sure that you open the messages every Sunday and at least skim the subject titles to make sure that you are aware of any announcements that may pertain to your family. Of the 480 or so email addresses we have entered into the Constant Contact system, only about half of the recipients open the messages each week. We want to make sure we are fulfilling the PTO's mission to reach each family with timely information while remaining committed to reducing paper usage. Please let us know if you have any feedback on how we can better communicate via the Constant Contact email message system.

*Christine Phillips, PTO Technology Secretary  
hylandphillips@verizon.net*

*Kristan Smith-Park and Deanne O'Sullivan,  
PTO Co Chairs*

## **Sled Away Those Winter Blues!**

Please join us at NARA Park on Saturday, February 5, 10:30 AM, for some serious sledding with the Douglas Newcomers group! Come with a sled and a smile and be prepared to have some fun! We hope to see our new families from Kindergarten and Grades 1-6. And as always, all Douglas families are invited. Please note that sledding at NARA is held on the hill where the amphitheatre is. Parking is typically at the soccer fields. Let's keep our fingers crossed for the snow to stay so we can play! See you there.

*Kathy McCullen  
Newcomers Coordinator  
k.mccullen@comcast.net  
978.264.1947*

## ***Emergency Dismissal***

If the Douglas School needs to dismiss school early, due to snow or an emergency condition, we will make every effort to contact you through the ConnectEd System. If you see a call from Douglas, check your messages. Please do not call the school. Also, please try to keep your online emergency card information updated at all times. Your child will be dismissed based on the Emergency Dismissal information you provided in September on the pink Emergency Dismissal Form. The options include sending your child:

**Home on their bus.** Please have a plan and review it with your child in case no one is there when your child arrives home. You may plan to be at home, but may be delayed yourself due to weather conditions. The best plan for your child is to go to a neighbor's house.

**Regularly scheduled daycare.** Please do not assume that your daycare will remain open. You should confirm that they will stay open during inclement weather.

**Douglas Work & Play.** Douglas at Dawn/Dusk enrichment classes will be cancelled, but Work & Play will remain open until 6 PM. If you do not remember the arrangements that you made, or have changes, please call the office as soon as possible. We will gladly provide the information. Please do not wait until an early release day to call.

Also, please note that all bus passes and walker passes will be cancelled.

Remember, we may not be able to call parents via ConnectEd in the event of an emergency dismissal. Please keep in mind that our response during these unusual situations is often limited by time, access to telephones, and the number of students needing attention.

*Thank you,*

*Dr. Chris Whitbeck, Sharon Armistead, and Sharen Crooks*



## ***Spirit Day—New Date! Friday, February 4***

Due to a snow day, the date has changed for Spirit Day. We will now celebrate Douglas on Friday, February 4! Come to school that day ready to show your school spirit. Remind your kids to wear Douglas Spiritwear or anything blue and/or yellow. It should be a fun day.

*Debbie Maffei, d.maffei@verizon.net, 978.635.8396*

## ***This month's recipe from Eating Well Magazine: Chocolate Crunch***



Crunchy wheat cereal, pretzels, and almonds coated in bittersweet chocolate make an addictive sweet-salty snack.

4 servings, about 3/4 cup each. Active time: 5 minutes; Total time: 35 minutes

- 1 cup wheat Chex cereal (2 ounces)
- 1 cup pretzel sticks, broken in half (2 ounces)
- 1/4 cup salted roasted almonds (2 1/2 ounces)
- 3 tablespoons bittersweet chocolate chips, melted (see Tip)

Combine Chex, pretzels and almonds in a medium bowl. Drizzle with melted chocolate; stir to combine. Spread the mixture on a wax paper-lined baking sheet and refrigerate until the chocolate is set, about 30 minutes.

- ◆ Tip: To melt chocolate, microwave on medium for 1 minute. Stir, then continue microwaving on medium in 20-second intervals until melted, stirring after each interval. Or place in the top of a double boiler over hot, but not boiling water. Stir until melted.
- ◆ Make-ahead tip: refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

Nutrition Information per serving: calories: 218, total fat: 8g (2g sat, 3g mono), cholesterol: 0mg, carbohydrates: 35g, protein: 5g, fiber: 3g, sodium: 397mg, potassium: 176mg. 2 carbohydrate servings.

## **12th Annual Douglas Spring Social and Auction Update**

The 2011 Spring Social and Auction committee is in full gear preparing for our biggest annual fundraising event. Invitations and RSVP forms went out via backpack in January, we have started soliciting businesses to contribute auction items, and we are in the process of acquiring some great raffle prizes.

The money we receive from this fundraiser pays for important school services, such as computer lab, teachers' assistants, and much more. Active participation from the Douglas community is essential for success. We're hoping for a lot of parent participation this year, **starting right now**.

Whether you plan to attend or not, there are many ways to be involved, including:

- ◆ **RSVP now** if you plan to attend the event on April 2. There is limited space, and the event has sold out in the past, so secure your spot early! Also, auction paddle numbers are assigned in the order the tickets are sold, and the lower the number, the sooner you can check out during the event. RSVP now to ensure you get a low number!
- ◆ **Consider donating** an auction item. Some examples include a theme basket, an unused gift card, a dinner party or food-of-the-month offering, a handmade craft, or lessons in your area of expertise. When it comes to auction items, creativity—not cost—is the key to success. See the list of last year's auction items on the auction web site for some great ideas.
- ◆ Look for **raffle tickets** in your child's backpack in the next couple of weeks, and help us sell tickets to friends and family. As always, there are going to be some hard-to-resist raffle items this year!

Check out the web site for more background and information: [www.douglasauction.webs.com](http://www.douglasauction.webs.com). Thank you for supporting Douglas!

*Anya Fillion and Naomi Martin, Auction Co-Chairs*

## **Festival of Cultures**

The Festival of Cultures is approaching! On Saturday, May 14, we will celebrate our rich ethnic and cultural diversity. We are looking for families to be "ambassadors" and represent cultures and countries from all areas of the globe. Ambassadors set up booths where children and adults can visit and learn from different countries. The booths typically have items of clothing, books, music, photographs, artwork, and games from the country being represented. Last year we had countries from all over the world! We would love to see you all again and welcome new ones, so our kids can travel even further!

Additionally, the evening includes a program featuring Douglas and Conant students performing music and dance from around the world. The performance spots go early so please sign up as soon as possible by contacting me at the below phone number or email address. To make this event happen, we need help from all of you! If you are willing to help out before, during, and/or after the event, please let me know. Thanks to all who have already signed up to volunteer!

*Maria Albarran, 978.263.6807, [rivero\\_albarran@yahoo.com](mailto:rivero_albarran@yahoo.com)*

## **February Vacation Program**

Sign up now for our second annual February Vacation Program here at Douglas School! Our week of fun will include surprise guests, a field trip on foot on Thursday, story time, hot chocolate with marshmallows, science experiments, foreign language lessons, arts and crafts...and much more!

You pick and choose the day(s) your child(ren) will attend, Tuesday–Friday, February 22–25. Registration forms are available at the Douglas School Office. You can sign up for one day or all four! Extended hours available.

Direct any questions to Chris Borgman ([cborgman@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:cborgman@mail.ab.mec.edu)) or Sasha DeMello ([sdemello@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:sdemello@mail.ab.mec.edu)).

## **PIP Activities**

Learn more about PIP, a volunteer group of parents, educators, and community partners, and our activities enriching Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education spanning grades K–12. For Acton-Boxborough PIP info and meeting dates (new volunteers are always welcome!) or to preview the math games, visit [www.actonpip.org](http://www.actonpip.org) or email [actonpip@yahoo.com](mailto:actonpip@yahoo.com).

### **Upcoming Events:**

PIP Book Club, February 3

*How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci* at The Discovery Museums. Adults & Teens.

5th Grade Market Math, February 8

Advanced "super" market event at Roche Bros.

## ***New Year's Raffle at Eagle's Nest School Store***

The school store is happy to announce a New Year's Raffle starting Tuesday, January 25. We will be raffling a basketful of our best school store supplies, a \$5 Willow Books gift certificate, and an exciting Hexbug (estimated value \$25). Come by on Tuesday and Friday mornings at 8:15 to buy your \$0.50 raffle ticket and shop our great new inventory! The drawing will be held Friday, February 18. Don't miss out on this exciting event!

January was a slow month because of snow days so we hope to see new and returning customers in February. Remember school store gift certificates are \$1 and make great valentines for any Douglas student!

Our 4th graders and their parents are working very hard to meet your shopping expectations. A portion of the proceeds from the store help to defray the cost of a 4th grade field trip. The remainder of the funds is given to Douglas and/or a local charity.

Special thanks to our 2010–2011 school store team for donating the raffle items: Cheryl Witty (Purchaser), Shana Brown (Treasurer), and Ann Marie Hanley (Scheduler). Come buy a chance for this exciting raffle!

*Debbie Cox, Fourth Grade School Store Manager*

## ***March Reading Challenge***

March at C.T. Douglas School brings its own form of March Madness! This year the tradition continues with the tenth annual Douglas March Reading Challenge. This year, to tie in with our project to build a school in Kenya, we will be "Reading Our Way to Africa"! And, as in previous years, Dr. Whitbeck will honor all the students who participate in the March Reading Challenge. Will he kiss a pig? Go up in a hot air balloon? Race an Olympic athlete? Stay tuned!

We will have grade level appropriate reading goals, raise money for the school in Africa, and have lots of fun! Please keep an eye out for more information.

If you would like to help out with the Reading Challenge or have any questions, please contact:

*Sasha Demello, [sdemello@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:sdemello@mail.ab.mec.edu)*

*Sue Stewart, [sstewart@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:sstewart@mail.ab.mec.edu)*

## ***Save the Dates: Douglas Movie Nights***



Mark your calendars for a fun night out with Douglas friends while enjoying a good movie and free popcorn! The movie nights, sponsored by the PTO, are scheduled for the following Friday evenings beginning promptly at 6:30 PM for K–1 movie night and at 7:00 pm for the others. Look for a flyer to be sent home via your child's backpack as the dates approach.

February 4: Kindergarten & 1st grade

March 11: 4th–6th grades

March 25: 2nd & 3rd grade

*Jennifer Aufiero & Bridget Steinkrauss*

*Movie Night Committee Co-Chairs*

## ***Box Tops for Education Deadline***

The next Box Tops submission deadline is March 1, so please send in your Box Tops as soon as you can in February so we can get clipping and counting.

Remember that if you shop online, you can go through the Box Tops website and shop at many of your favorite places and give money to Douglas School at the same time. Check the website at [www.boxtops4education.com](http://www.boxtops4education.com) to see all the ways you can help. Keep on clipping and earn cash for Douglas School!



*Michele Walsh, Box Tops Coordinator, [michele\\_walsh@yahoo.com](mailto:michele_walsh@yahoo.com)*

**Dates to Remember**

- Wednesday, February 2 Kindergarten tours (8:30–10 AM, 12:30–2 PM)
- Friday, February 4 Spirit Day—Wear your Douglas colors and Spiritwear
- Friday, February 4 Movie night for K–1, 6:30 PM
- Saturday, February 5 Newcomers sledding playdate, NARA Park, 10:30 AM
- Monday, February 7 Kindergarten tours (8:30–10 AM, 12:30–2 PM)
- Tuesday, February 8 Douglas kindergarten info night for parents of incoming kindergartners
- Tuesday, February 8 5th grade market math event, Roche Bros., sponsored by PIP
- Friday, February 11 Scrip orders due
- Monday, February 14 Douglas Digest deadline for March issue
- February 21–25 Winter recess, NO SCHOOL
- Monday, February 28 4th grade star party sponsored by PIP

**Snack Cart Donations**

- February 3 **Pretzel Day**
- February 10 (Grades 2 and 6) Mrs. Kay, Mrs. Littlefield, Mrs. Savage, Mrs. Oxnard
- February 17 (Grade 1 and AMK) Miss Hunt, Mrs. Ingraham, Mrs. Tajima, Mrs. Smith (spring AMK)
- February 24 NO SCHOOL
- March 3 (Grade 5 and ADK) Mrs. Cherkerzian, Mrs. Rand, Mrs. Sharp, Miss Fitzpatrick

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**MCAS Dates—2011**

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 21, 22, and 23  
 May 9, 10, and 11
- Grade 4: March 21, 22, 23, and 25  
 May 9, 10, and 11
- Grade 5: March 21, 22, and 23  
 May 9, 10, 11, 16, and 17
- Grade 6: March 21, 22, and 23  
 May 9, 10, and 11

Please make every effort to have your children attend school on these dates and arrive promptly by 8:30 AM; tests will begin shortly after the start of school.

Your support is appreciated.

Dr. Christopher Whitbeck