



# Douglas Digest

News of the C.T. Douglas School

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Principal: Dr. Christopher Whitbeck

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Douglas Digest

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## New Year's Sponge Cake

Winter in Buffalo is awful! It's cold—cold and windy—with blowing, deep snow. You don't go out to play on a whim. When you do go out, you're covered from head to toe—much like Ralphie in his snow suit from the classic movie "A Christmas Story." And so, I was looking for warmth when I went out to play some music with friends near my family home in Buffalo last month. At about 12:30 AM everyone had just about emptied out. Two guys came in having a friendly argument:

"I don't care what you think, it's a Christmas song to me."

"No, no, you've lost your mind."

"Hey, Christmas songs are about generosity and self-knowledge, you know."

"Huh? Don't get all philosophical on me."

"No, I'm not. It's plain English."

"Whatever. It's still not a Christmas song."

"Yes it is! It makes me feel the same way I do when I sing 'Jingle Bells'."

"Well...OK...maybe...but it's not the same as 'Silent Night'."

The Christmas song under scrutiny is "Margaritaville" by Jimmy Buffett. They're from Biloxi, Mississippi, now in tiny Maple Springs (NY) with their wives who come from Western New York.

We break into Margaritaville:

*Nibblin' on sponge cake,*

*watchin' the sun bake;*

*All of those tourists covered with oil...*

*Some people claim that there's a woman to blame,*

*But I know it's nobody's fault.*

We're all singing it. Reveling in the warmth and thoughts of what it would be like to be in the Florida Keys instead of snowy, windy, cold, awful Buffalo. The warmth carried us home impervious to the wind. In fact my family and I sang Margaritaville together at the stroke of midnight welcoming in the New Year with warmth and a very rousing and happy song.

And so, this New Year, think about what the world means to you. What makes you happy? What keeps you warm? Create new traditions, revel in the joy that you invent, stake your claim to a new holiday song, invent a wacky way to solve a math problem, or make a new friendship that no one would have predicted. The world is what we make of it—let's make it a good and warm one that we can all enjoy.

*C. Whitbeck*

## December 2009 PTO News

As we begin the 2010 school year, we want to welcome everyone back to Douglas! We hope you had a wonderful vacation and that everyone is well rested after celebrating the holidays.

With winter now officially here, we would like to give a special thanks to our custodians, John Pacelli and Dave Bouchard, for keeping the icy walkways safe for our parents, staff, and students as well as for keeping the inside of the school clean. The ice, slush, snow, and mud keep them extra busy in the winter months, and we are grateful for their extra effort during these sloppy times.

In November, the children put together their spare change for the Purposeful Change effort. With the money raised this year, Dr. Whitbeck will be purchasing new software for the new computers, and we will donate the rest to Cradles for Crayons. Special thanks again to Paula Conquest and Julia Kline for their work on this important event.

Special thanks to Laura Fay, Tanaz Hashemi, Maureen Cannata, and all of the volunteers who helped put together and run the successful Scholastic Book Fair in December. It was a great opportunity for parents and students to shop for their favorite books and to pick up holiday gifts at the same time.

The Douglas PTO is looking forward to some great events in 2010. The Spring Social and Auction is the PTO's largest parent social and fundraiser and is being planned now. If you would like to help with the event, please contact the Spring Social and Auction Co-Chairs, Anya Fillion ([anyawfillion@yahoo.com](mailto:anyawfillion@yahoo.com), 978.929.9376) or Naomi Martin ([neasullivan@aol.com](mailto:neasullivan@aol.com), 978.263.8352).

On Sunday, January 24, Douglas will have its annual outing to the Lowell Devils hockey game. This is a great event where families can enjoy an afternoon of semi-pro hockey and catch up with friends. Ticket order forms will be sent home in early January. If you have any questions about the Lowell Devils event, please contact Candace Doncaster ([caster326@aol.com](mailto:caster326@aol.com), 978.264.9408).

**Please join us for our next PTO General Meeting which will be a morning meeting at Douglas, Thursday, January 21, 11:30 AM. Dr. Mills, the Superintendent of the Acton schools, will be our guest and will give an update on the school budgets. We hope that you can join us for this meeting to meet Dr. Mills and learn more about how the economy will affect the schools and Douglas.**

As always, please let us know if you have any comments or questions!

*Cheryl Witty, [ckwitty@verizon.net](mailto:ckwitty@verizon.net), 978.266.0177*

*Kristan Smith-Park, [ksmith068@gmail.com](mailto:ksmith068@gmail.com), 978.263.3514*

### First February Vacation Program—2010

Sign up now for our first ever February Vacation Program! Our April Vacation Program has been such a success that we are expanding into February. The week of fun will include snow sculptures, sledding, hot chocolate, cooking activities, cup stacking games, theater workshops, surprise guests, and more! You can pick and choose the day(s) your child(ren) will attend. For more information, please contact Chris or Sasha (508.596.0585).

**Work and Play Update:** The January Activities Calendar is now available on the Douglas School website. Join in the fun!

**Enrichment Classes:** The Winter Session of Enrichment Classes begins on Monday, January 11. Please visit the Douglas School website for a brochure and registration form!

*Chris Borgman, [cborgman@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:cborgman@mail.ab.mec.edu)*

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

### Sledding Fun!



Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow! So far, so good in the snow department. Saturday, January 30, 10 AM, the Newcomer team will be out at NARA Park sledding (as long as there is snow)!

All Douglas families are invited. We hope to see our new families from Kindergarten and Grades 1–6! Please note that sledding at NARA is held on the hill where the amphitheatre is. Parking is typically at the soccer fields.

Let's hope for some nice soft snow, yet suitable for snowman making! See you there.

*Deanne O'Sullivan, Newcomer Coordinator*  
*[deannewos@comcast.net](mailto:deannewos@comcast.net) 978.274.2558*

## **11th Annual Douglas Spring Social and Auction Kick-off**

It's already time to start preparing for the 11th Annual Douglas Spring Social and Auction! The auction will take place on Saturday, April 10, 6:30–11 PM, once again at the beautiful Wedgewood Pines Country Club in Stow. Mark your calendars for Douglas School's biggest annual fundraiser, always a fun night out for Douglas parents.

More than ever this year, we are going green. We will rely less on paper backpack communications to get you invitations, forms, and other materials. Our primary sources of updates and information will be Christine Phillips' regular e-mails and the Auction Web site, which will soon be refreshed and posted.

Please note that Wedgewood Pines has a capacity limit which means that there are a finite number of tickets available. Last year, we sold out and had a waiting list. Secure your ticket early; R.S.V.P. forms will be available soon at [douglas.ab.mec.edu](http://douglas.ab.mec.edu). Once you print and submit your form and payment, you will receive email confirmation within 7 days. If you have any questions about tickets, please contact Cheryl Witty ([ckwitty@verizon.net](mailto:ckwitty@verizon.net), 978.266.0177).

We still need volunteers in many areas to help make this event a success. Whether you just have a few minutes to help with a simple project, or you want to take the lead on a critical auction assignment, we would love to hear from you. Please contact auction co-chairs Anya Fillion ([anyawfillion@yahoo.com](mailto:anyawfillion@yahoo.com), 978.929.9376) or Naomi Martin ([neasullivan@aol.com](mailto:neasullivan@aol.com), 978.263.8352) and they'll find the right job for you.

### **We need your help and creative donations!**

This year's auction will once again feature a silent auction, a mini-live auction (Quickie Boards), and multiple raffles. *We are always looking for fresh ideas!!* If you think of an interesting auction item, or know someone who can donate a raffle item that will boost ticket sales, please let us know! Remember, no donation is ever too small. Consider pooling your resources with other Douglas parents to make a combined donation. Please contact Anya and Naomi with any questions.

Support Douglas today by sending in your event ticket R.S.V.P. and donation forms early!

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

### **Lowell Devils Hockey Game**

This year our Family Fun Afternoon at the Lowell Devils Hockey Game will be on **Sunday, January 24, 4 PM**, at the Tsongas Arena in Lowell!



This is an event that all of our Douglas families can enjoy! It is appropriate for all ages and a great chance to socialize and support the Douglas spirit.

*Mark your calendars* now for January 24 and look for a flyer to reserve tickets coming home in backpacks soon.

If you have any questions, please contact:

*Candace Doncaster,*  
[caster326@aol.com](mailto:caster326@aol.com)

### **Green Tip: What items are okay to throw in the paper recycling bin?**

Do you sometimes throw paper items in the trash because you are not sure if they can be recycled? If so, take a quick look here to find out: [www.massrecyclespaper.org/paperlist.html](http://www.massrecyclespaper.org/paperlist.html).

You'll find some surprising items listed. For example, it's okay to throw in notebooks with metal spirals or papers with staples. Even paper clips are okay (although, why not remove and reuse them?).

You might also be surprised that paper cups, plates and napkins are on the "no thank you" list. Why not use washable items whenever possible? Also, watch out for Tyvek envelopes. In general, if it can't be easily torn, please don't throw it in the bin or it might contaminate a whole load of otherwise recyclable paper that will end up being thrown in the trash heap.

Thanks for recycling at Douglas!

P.S. Last month I mentioned Snack Taxis ([www.snacktaxi.com](http://www.snacktaxi.com)). If you are interested in purchasing one or more at a volume discount, please contact me and I will put an order together. We could save up to 20% on each one.

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](mailto:susan.cudmore@gmail.com)*



## **PIP Family Math Game Night**

Join us on **Wednesday, January 20, 5–8 PM**, at the Boxborough Public Library (on 111 near Blanchard School), for this fun and free parent-child event—all ages welcome. AB PIP (Parent Involvement Project) invites you to play “Domino math,” Sudoku, KenKen, Math circles, and new this year—explore the connection between art and math with a workshop presented by Village Art. These games are a fun and engaging way for students in all grades to practice their math facts, estimation skills and work with patterns.

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 contact:

*Susan Cudmore, 978.274.2021,  
Douglas PIP representative,  
susan.cudmore@gmail.com*

Upcoming Events:

5th Grade Market Math  
February 9

Advanced “super” market event  
at Roche Bros.

## **From the Health Office: Cold Weather**

It is January and along with that comes the cold winter weather. Our elementary children go outside unless it is raining heavily or very cold. This is an important part of their day because they get the fresh air and a chance to stretch their legs. Hopefully, even a little exercise is involved.



Please make sure that you dress your children appropriately. Coats, hats, and mittens are a must when the weather is cold. It may be a good idea to send in a change of clothes, just in case. The health office has a very limited supply of clothing, and we do our best to keep the students comfortable.

## **Save the date for the Festival of Cultures**

We have a date for this year’s Festival of Cultures! It will be Saturday, May 15. 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. **The performance spots go early so please sign up as soon as possible by contacting me at the below phone number or email address.**

Finally, if you are willing to help out before or during 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*

**This month's recipe from  
Family Fun Magazine:  
Homemade Granola Bars**

These sweet, wholesome treats are sure to be a favorite with your family. Wrap each one in foil for an easy on-the-go breakfast, lunch box addition, or midday snack.

**Ingredients:**

1/2 cup butter or margarine  
1/3 cup sugar  
1/3 cup honey  
1/4 cup flour  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon  
2 cups crisp rice cereal  
2 cups rolled oats  
1 cup dried fruit bits  
1/2 cup sliced almonds

Heat the oven to 350° F. Coat a 9x13-inch pan with nonstick cooking spray and set aside.

Melt the butter or margarine in a large pot over low heat. Remove the pot from the heat and whisk in the sugar, honey, flour, vanilla extract, and cinnamon. Add the remaining ingredients and mix well.

Transfer the mixture to the baking pan. Using a sheet of waxed paper and the palms of your hands, press the granola firmly into the pan, packing it to a flat and even thickness.

Bake for 20 minutes, until golden brown. Allow the granola to cool 1 hour in the pan, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely before cutting into bars. Makes 16 to 24 rectangular bars.



**Diabetes: Understanding the Warning Signs**

Diabetes is one of the most common chronic diseases in children. In the United States 1 in every 400-600 children has Type I diabetes. (National Diabetes Education Program.) **Type 1 (Insulin Dependent)** diabetes is most common in youth. **Type 2 (Insulin Resistance)** diabetes is most common in adults but is on the rise in youth.

*“Diabetes is a chronic disease that impairs the body’s ability to use food properly. Insulin is a hormone produced in the pancreas that is necessary for the body to convert food into energy. In people with diabetes, either the pancreas doesn’t make insulin, the body cannot use the insulin properly, or both. Without insulin, glucose (sugar) builds up in the blood.”*

—American Diabetes Association

**Early detection and knowledge of the warning signs is your greatest weapon against the disease and its complications.**

Behaviors a child might exhibit in school that could indicate *undiagnosed* diabetes are:

- ◆ Excessive urination (frequent trips to the bathroom especially in close sequence, bedwetting)
- ◆ Excessive thirst (frequent trips to the water fountain)
- ◆ Irritability
- ◆ Lack of energy, fatigue, drowsiness
- ◆ Rubs eyes, complains of difficulty seeing the board
- ◆ Difficulty paying attention

Other symptoms may include:

- ◆ Sudden vision changes
- ◆ Fruity/sweet odor to breath or urine
- ◆ Increased appetite
- ◆ Rapid or unexplained weight loss
- ◆ Nausea, vomiting or abdominal pain
- ◆ Tingling or numbness in the legs, feet or fingers
- ◆ Frequent infections of the skin, cuts that are slow to heal
- ◆ Darker patches of skin usually in neck folds
- ◆ Itching of skin and/or genitals

**Note:** Many of these symptoms can be related to illnesses that are not associated with diabetes. Only a healthcare professional can provide appropriate diagnostic tests and treatments.

References:

- ◆ American Diabetes Association at [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)
- ◆ National Diabetes Education Program at [www.ndep.nih.gov](http://www.ndep.nih.gov)
- ◆ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

(Summarized by the APS/ABRHS school nurses, 2/08)

### **Dates to Remember**

- Tuesday, January 12 General Informational Meeting for entering kindergarteners, Parker Damon, 7 PM
- 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
- Sunday, January 24 Lowell Devils Hockey Game
- Monday, January 25 Kindergarten Changeover
- Saturday, January 30 NARA Sledding Newcomer Event, 10 AM
- Saturday, January 30 PIP Family Game Night Open House, Boxborough Library, 5–8 PM
- February 2, 8, 24 Kindergarten Tours
- Tuesday, February 2 Douglas Parent Information Night (for students entering kindergarten in Fall 2010), 7 PM

### **Snack Cart Donations**

- January 7 Mrs. Rand, Mrs. Simeone, Ms. Hunt, Ms. Fitzpatrick
- January 14 **Pretzel Day**
- January 21 Mrs. Christensen, Mrs. Breslin, Mrs. Littlefield, Mrs. Tajima
- January 28 Mrs. Sharp, Mr. Cail, Mrs. Oxnard, Mrs. Kay
- February 4 **Pretzel Day**

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### **Revised 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, and 24  
May 10, 11, and 12
- Grade 4: March 22, 23, 24, and 26  
May 10, 11, and 12
- Grade 5: March 22, 23, and 24  
May 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19, and 21
- Grade 6: March 22, 23, and 24  
May 10, 11, and 12

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

Your support is appreciated.

Dr. Christopher Whitbeck