



Douglas Digest

News of the C.T. Douglas School

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Douglas Digest

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CHECK ENGINE

About a month ago, the “Check Engine” light came on in my car. The light is yellow that means caution. OK, I’m cautious, but do I need to do anything else? The owner’s manual tells me that it means I should “visit my nearest Honda dealer.” I’m slightly suspicious. This seems scammy to me. The “Check Engine” light may have been thrown in just to sell parts. Does it come on periodically so that I spend money and keep Honda from needing a bailout?

What if the light meant something quite obvious and simple? Check the engine. So, I opened the hood and yes, the engine was still there! I slammed the hood down, climbed into the car, and turned the key. No warning light! No problem. Ha!

This has now gone on for a month. Same routine. Light goes on. Open hood. Say hello to engine. Slam hood. Light goes off. Fixed. What would you do? If it’s simple, but it works, stick with simple, right?

I know that eventually something will happen, and my car and I will end up at my mechanic. He’ll ask me, “How long has your check engine light been on?” I’ll tell him that it was on for about a minute every morning. I’ll explain my routine and he’ll roll his eyes. He’ll hook it up to his computer and he’ll either find a \$1500 problem or won’t find anything at all and he’ll say, “Bring it back the next time it goes on.” I won’t.

I’ve come to believe that the check engine light is like the MCAS. Once in a while a student performs poorly on the MCAS. Their check engine light comes on. Usually there isn’t a huge problem. We look at their math and language arts scores at school, we look under their hood, we make sure that they have the skills that they need to get to the next grade, we kick their tires and we move on. It’s one tool, only one indicator light of understanding.

I haven’t run to my mechanic yet. The engine is happy to see me every morning. I’m sure that my neighbors wonder about my routine, but they never ask. My engine and I get from place to place – we seem happy checking on one another. Sometimes that’s enough.

EARTH HOUR...BE A PART OF SOMETHING BIG!

On March 28th, 2009 starting at 8:30pm, millions of people around the world will turn off all non-essential lighting for one hour during Earth Hour, a unified effort to call for global action on climate change. The Town of Acton and the Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools have committed to go dark for one hour. Acton-Boxborough Parent Involvement Project (PIP) and the Town of Acton Outdoor Lighting Education Committee (OLEC) support Earth Hour as a stepping stone to energy conservation. Do your part to save energy and reduce your family’s carbon footprint. Visit the AB PIP Earth Hour web page <http://www.actonpip.org/earthhour.php> or e-mail abearthhour@yahoo.com for family-friendly Earth Hour tips and eco-activities and learn how you can make a difference.

PTO NEWS



We hope that everyone had an enjoyable February vacation. Now that the kids are back in school, there are many exciting events coming up for both parents and students at Douglas.

March 1st is the kick off of our March Reading Challenge. Thank you to first grade teacher Stephanie Ingraham, librarians Sasha DeMello and Sue Stewart and Douglas parent Laurie Maylander for all of their work in putting together what will prove to be a very exciting challenge this year as the students “Read Across America.” It should be both exciting and rewarding as the students of Douglas track their reading efforts.

Read Aloud Day will take place on Monday, March 16th. Special thanks to Marne Geller, Marcia Towey and Kimberly Powers for putting together a list of wonderful community leaders who will be reading to our children that day.

On Wednesday March 18th, Douglas will team up with Gates School to provide a special Speakers Series Evening at Douglas. We will start at 7:00 pm with a brief PTO Meeting followed by a series of presentations that parents will be able to choose from. More information will be coming home via back pack about the Speaker Series. The seminar choices will be 5th Grade Human Growth and Development Movie, 6th Grade Human Growth and Development Movie, How Children Learn to Read, Second Step Program / Bullying K-5, Help Your Child Lead a Healthy and Balanced Life, and Building Healthy Communication with your Children.

Thank you to Sarah Clabault and Jennifer Aufiero for organizing the entertaining Movie Night Socials. On February 6th, Kindergarten and First Grade students enjoyed the movie “Space Chimps”. On February 27th, Grades Four through Six took in “The Pink Panther” and on March 20th the Second and Third Grades will have the opportunity to view their movie of choice at their grade-wide movie night.

Spring is almost here and with its arrival the Douglas Spring Social and Auction Committee is finalizing plans for the big event scheduled for Saturday, April 4th at the Wedgewood Pines Country Club in Stow. This is one of the most popular events for Douglas parents as it is a great opportunity to enjoy a night out with adults while raising funds for the school. PTO funds directly support our teaching assistants, library staff, and computer lab, and help enrich our children’s Douglas experience. A large group of Douglas parents, headed up by Auction Co-Chairs Sarah Clabault and Maryanne Chase, have been working hard since the fall putting together what will certainly be a wonderful evening.

Thank you to Candace Doncaster for organizing the Lowell Devils hockey outing, scheduled for Sunday, March 29th. More information will be coming home about this fun outing.

Music Teacher Peter Broggi and Douglas parent Terri Carotenuto will be running the Douglas Talent Show again this year. The shows will be on March 26th for grades 4-6 and on April 9th for kindergarten- 3rd grade. Peter and Terri do a great job of putting together a wonderful event where children are able to showcase their talents. If you are able to help with either talent show, please contact Terri at jtcarotenuto@verizon.net. The shows will begin at 9:00 a.m.

As always we welcome your questions and comments. Thank you. --PTO co-chairs, Cassie Stewart and Cheryl Witty

TIME TO RENEW YOUR CORI

The end of this school year will mark the last year any existing CORI forms will be valid. Everyone, regardless of when the form was filled out and submitted last, will need to complete a new CORI form and bring it **in person** to me at the Douglas School Office, along with a government issued photographic form of identification such as a driver’s license, passport, alien registration card, employment authorization card or U.S. military I.D. The new forms that will be submitted this spring will be good for the next three-year cycle beginning in September.

On Monday, February 23rd, a new CORI form was sent home to each parent. If there are others in your family who would also like to volunteer, please let me know and I will send home additional forms. Remember, to be able to volunteer in September you will need to submit a new CORI form this spring.

Unfortunately in September, because of the large number of forms being submitted it will take much longer to get CORI approvals back. If you have any questions please call Sharon Armistead, Adm Assistant at 978-266-2560 or email me at sarmistead@mail.ab.mec.edu.

SPRING SOCIAL AND AUCTION UPDATE

The Spring Social and Auction season is off to a great start, and with your help we can make it another successful year of fundraising for Douglas School. With only one month to go, here is all you need to know about this year's event...and what you can do to help.

Who? Douglas parents. The Spring Social is planned and executed by a large committee of parent volunteers. The committee is responsible for getting as many Douglas parents as possible involved in a variety of ways. The Spring Social brings the Douglas Community together.

What? Fun with purpose. The Spring Social is an exciting and rewarding adult evening out where there is something for everyone. The no-pressure silent auction provides a selection of more than 200 items, and the mini-live auction provides options for people who prefer to "get into the game". With beautiful classroom and grade level creations providing "eye candy", the Douglas All-Star Band providing entertainment, a delicious buffet dinner, cash bar, and a range of raffle prizes, it's easy to forget that the event is by far the school's largest annual fund-raiser.

Where? This year's event is at a fresh and elegant new location: The Wedgewood Pines Country Club in Stow, MA. See for yourself at www.wedgewoodpines.com.

When? April 4th from 6:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.

Why? Last year, the Spring Social raised more than \$35,000. All proceeds go toward critical resources and programs that help make C.T. Douglas Elementary such a fine institution. The event helps pay for classroom, computer lab, and library assistants, as well as student enrichment programs like visiting speakers and performers.

How can you help? In a number of ways, such as:

- Whether or not you plan to attend, you can help by selling the raffle tickets that came home last month in your child's folder. An amazing selection of prizes makes the raffle hard to resist. Raffle winners do not have to attend the event.
- Donate an item for the auction. No donation is too small, and creativity is encouraged. Create a themed gift basket, offer lessons in your area of expertise, offer to bake batches of cookies or cook an ethnic dinner. Any item will add to the excitement – and profitability – of the event.
- Donate gift cards you have received but will probably never use.
- Attend and participate in the event.
-

For more information, contact event co-chairs Maryanne Chase (Maryanne.chase@verizon.net) or Sarah Clabault (S.clabault@comcast.net).



THE MARCH READING CHALLENGE IS HERE!

Your child has no doubt already received information regarding the **Douglas Reading Challenge** and is ready to hit the road! The Challenge lasts from March 1 to March 31 and each grade has created unique reading goals.

The theme this year is "**Read Across America**". There will be a large map of the USA in the lobby and, through our love of reading all types of books, we will cover America, mile by mile!

The March Reading Challenge will continue its emphasis on reading towards a personal and school-wide goal that has a purpose beyond the doors of Douglas. This year we have teamed up with **First Book**. First Book is a nonprofit organization that is striving to improve literacy rates in the United States by improving access to books to those in low-income communities. We are excited to be able to celebrate and encourage the love of reading and positive participation in our national community. So, start reading and have fun! Who knows what other surprises there may be!

Sasha DeMello and Sue Stewart (Library Staff), Stephanie Ingraham (Teaching Staff), Laurie Maylander (March Reading Challenge Coordinator), and Cassie Stewart and Cheryl Witty (PTO co –chairs).

NEWS FROM THE HEALTH OFFICE
-from Stacey Waite, RN and Kathi Santis, RN



Happy Spring!! Beginning in September, the nurses of Acton have been completing monthly reports to the Department of Public Health's School Health Unit. The information is totally anonymous and reflects the numbers (and types) of visits that are seen in the health offices.

In January, the Douglas nurses saw 68 children for first aid injuries (mostly minor); 168 visits were for illness, and 156 visits under "other" which includes lost teeth, chapped lips, insect bites, soiled clothing (and anything that doesn't fall into a specific category). Nine of the students seen were sent home. Overall, we are seeing fewer students, but expect to see changes as we head into the flu season.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS: IMPORTANT NOTICE TO PARENT/GUARDIANS OF SIXTH GRADERS

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has the following requirements for all students entering Grade 7 in September 2009:

- MMR 2 doses or 2 doses of measles and one dose of mumps and rubella
- Varicella A physician-certified history of chicken pox disease or one dose of vaccine for students under 13 years old or two doses of vaccine for students over 13 years old.
- Hepatitis B 3 doses
- Td/Tdap one booster dose of Td (tetanus/diphtheria and acellular pertussis) if it has been more than five years since the last dose
- A copy of an up- to-date physical examination will also be required for all students before entering Grade 7.

Many of the above vaccines may have been administered while your child was in elementary school. Please check with your Healthcare Provider to be certain that your child's immunizations are up-to-date and documented in his/her record. Send a copy of the exam and updated information record to your elementary school health office and the information will be included in your child's health record when it is transferred to the Junior High School in June. If you do not have the necessary paperwork completed before the end of school, send it to the school nurse at the Junior High School by August 28, 2009.

2/09 EML

NEWS FROM THE RECYCLING COMMITTEE



Thanks to all staff, teachers, children, and volunteers for making our recycling efforts a success. At Douglas, we are currently recycling paper and cardboard. We have also been recycling cans, plastic and glass bottles that otherwise would go to the garbage.

We are now incorporating a new bin at school to recycle #5 plastic containers (yogurt cups) to be recycled by Preserve, a company that recycles containers and turns them into everyday products like tooth brushes, plastic plates, cups, etc. If your child brings yogurt for lunch, now he/she can recycle its container at school! If you are interested in doing this at home, please check Preserve's website; it is really easy! (www.preserveproducts.com).
Valentine's RED or GREEN???

When you think of Valentine's Day, RED comes to mind! For some students at our school, Valentine's Day was both RED and GREEN. With the help of parent volunteers, students and, of course, the support of Mrs. Savage, Room 6 had a "Green" Valentine's Day celebration by using reusable cups and plates for their party. The party was festive, creative and fun; actually thinking about how to be less wasteful made it even better....it didn't make it less of a party! This idea came to mind after they had a "No Trash" lunch day to participate in a national effort to reduce trash in our schools.

For more information you can check this website about how to reduce trash in our landfills <http://www.greeneducationfoundation.org/>. If you have suggestions, questions, and/or ideas please e-mail Maria Albarran at: rivero_albarran@yahoo.com.

FESTIVAL OF CULTURES UPDATE

Please mark your calendars for the Festival of Cultures on the evening of Saturday, May 16, at RJ Grey Junior High School. This event celebrates our student population's rich ethnic and cultural diversity. We hope to recruit ambassadors from all areas of the globe. Ambassadors set up booths which represent countries that children can visit and learn about. The booths typically have items of clothing, books, music, photographs, artwork, and games from the country being represented. Last year we had representatives from Belgium, China, Ecuador, England, India, Ireland, Pakistan, and Mexico. This year we already have volunteers to represent the following countries: Belgium, China, England, Ireland, Mexico and the Philippines. Thank you so much to those who are willing to be ambassadors!

Additionally, the evening includes a program featuring children performing music and dance from around the world. **The program for this year is quickly filling up so please contact us if you know of a student or group of students who would like to perform.**

We will be having a meeting for the ambassadors and volunteers in the next couple of weeks. Keep an eye out for an email with more details. If you are interested in being an ambassador, or know of someone who would like to perform, please contact Kristan Smith-Park at (978)263-3514 or ksmith068@gmail.com (new email address). Thanks to all who have already emailed me!



DOUGLAS FAMILY OUTING TO THE LOWELL DEVILS HOCKEY GAME

This year our Family Fun Afternoon at the Lowell Devils Hockey Game will be on **Sunday, March 29th with a game start time at 4:05 p.m.** at the Tsongas Arena!

This event is something all our Douglas families will enjoy! It is appropriate for all ages and is a great chance to socialize and support the Douglas spirit! After the game, everyone is invited for a FREE skate so bring your equipment if you would like to participate. **MARK YOUR CALENDARS** now for March 29th and look for a flyer to reserve tickets coming home soon through backpack mail.

Thank you to Candace Doncaster for volunteering to coordinate this event! If your family would like to reserve a block of seats, please contact Candace at caster326@aol.com or call her at (978) 264-9408.

DOUGLAS APRIL VACATION PROGRAM

Sign up now for our second annual Douglas April Vacation Program located here at Douglas School. The program will be offered April 21-24 (Monday, April 20 is a holiday). Our week of fun will include surprise guests, field day events, art instruction, music and movement, exploring world languages, story time, fun foods and much more. You pick and choose the day(s) your child(ren) will attend. The program is available regular hours 8:30am-3:30pm and extended hours 7:30-8:30am and 3:30-6pm. Registrations will be accepted on an ongoing basis. For more information or a sign-up contact:

Chris Borgman cborgman@mail.ab.mec.edu; Sasha DeMello sdemello@mail.ab.mec.edu.

A MESSAGE FROM THE FOOD SERVICE DEPARTMENT

Did you know you can apply for free or reduced lunch at any time throughout the school year?

If your financial situation has changed and you would like to apply for assistance, you can find the application using this link: www.ab.mec.edu/departments/deptspdf/Application.

Please fill out the application and return it to your child's school. You only need to fill out one application per family. If you have any questions regarding the process please contact me.

Kirsten Nelson, Food Service Director
Phone: 978-264-4700 x3221
E-mail: knelson@mail.ab.mec.edu



Douglas Dates

- March 1*** – March Reading Challenge begins
- March 16*** – Read Aloud Day
- March 18*** – 7:00 p.m. Joint PTO meeting w/Gates, hosted at Douglas
- March 20*** – 2nd and 3rd Grade Movie Night
- March 26*** – Grades 4-6 Talent Show
- March 28*** – 8-9 p.m. PIP Event: Earth Hour March
- March 29*** – 2-4 p.m. PIP Event: Family Skate Fundraiser at Nashoba Valley Olympia
- March 31*** – 4:30-7:30 p.m. PIP 3rd Grade Market Math at Roche Brothers
- March 31*** – Reading Challenge Ends
- April 4*** – Douglas Spring Social & Auction – Wedgewood Pines
- April 9*** – K-3 Talent Show
- April 10*** – Good Friday – NO SCHOOL
- April 20-24*** – Spring Recess – NO SCHOOL

SNACK CART DONATIONS

| | | | | |
|-----------|--------------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 3/5/2009 | Pretzel Day | | | |
| 3/12/2009 | Mrs. Hubbell | Mrs. Bethel | Mrs. Savage | Mrs. Smith (AMK) |
| 3/19/2009 | Mrs. Rand | Mrs. Simeone | Miss Hunt | Miss. Fitzpatrick |
| 3/26/2009 | Mrs. Bloom | Mrs. Breslin | Mrs. Littlefield | Mrs. Tajima |
| 4/2/2009 | Pretzel Day | | | |
| 4/9/2009 | Mrs. Sharp | Mr. Cail | Mrs. Oxnard | Mrs. Kay |