



# Douglas Digest

News of the C.T. Douglas School  
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November  
2008

## IBEN

We were talking at dinner last night when my youngest son chimed in.

"Dad, who's Ben?"

"What do you mean, Milo?"

"The song about Ben, who's Ben?"

"I don't think I know a song about Ben." Everyone else is eating, not helping me a bit.

"The song about Ben and the train... What's an IBen?"

"Huh? An IBen?" I'm trying not to laugh now. "I don't know. Can you sing it?"

With gusto he sings, "IBen workin' on the railroad!"

We laughed wildly – so did Milo.

One of the most admirable and valuable characteristics that children bring to school is that kids are willing to take a chance. At some age they are not frightened of being wrong. Milo didn't know what an IBen was and he wasn't afraid to ask. It made perfect sense to him and he loved that he made a mistake.

I've asked Kindergarteners, "Can you draw a cow?"

"Yes – do you want a purple one or a blue one?"

"Horse?"

"Sure – long neck or short?"

"A moose eating a car?"

"Bring it on!"

Of course none of them looked remotely like a cow, pig or moose eating a car. They were spectacular failures! But, if you're not prepared to be wrong you will never come up with anything original! You'll also never learn to learn.

We need to revel in our children's failures and connect them to their strengths. We are focused on receiving A's when the grade at the top of the paper means very little. We can only teach when we pay attention to two things – analyzing those mistakes that children make and focusing on what they DO know because it is that which makes sense to them.

Thank you for reminding me, Milo – and, by the way, Iben might be Iben Hjejle. She is best known for appearing in the Danish television sitcom *Langt fra Las Vegas* – Far from Las Vegas – but perhaps that's not who you were thinking about – perhaps I'm mistaken.

*C. Whitbeck*

### Douglas Digest

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Submissions are welcome and may be sent via email to Sharon Kautz at [sharon\\_douglas\\_digest@yahoo.com](mailto:sharon_douglas_digest@yahoo.com).

**Deadline for  
November Digest:**

**Wednesday  
November 26**

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## PTO NEWS

November is the month for giving thanks and there is a lot for which the PTO is thankful! We would like to thank the Douglas Community – students, teachers, staff & parents – for giving your time, sharing your knowledge & talents, and participating in fundraisers. It is your interest and investment in the education of our children which makes Douglas School a better place for everyone.



Many parents volunteer in the classroom as room parents or help with library, computer lab and nature walks. So many of you touch the lives of our students and teachers directly! Some parents serve as Committee Coordinators for which you play a major role in planning an event whether it is a school social or tradition, a fundraiser or both!

- Thank you to Linda Ahern for organizing the Spirit Wear Sale and thank you to all who participated in this fundraiser.
- Thank you to Nancie Boudreau for her time and attention to detail organizing our School Picture Day. Nancie will be retiring from this volunteer job so please let us know if you would like to help coordinate this day of many smiles next year.
- Thank you to Roberta Bizier & Lori Fassman for coordinating our Veterans Day program. This celebration is a special tradition at Douglas as it provides a meaningful ceremony and passes along a sense of history and honor to the next generation. The Veterans Day ceremony took place on Thursday, November 6<sup>th</sup> featuring music provided by the 5<sup>th</sup> graders under the direction of Mr. Broggi and a speech delivered by Veteran speaker Lt. Col. Gary Grossi, US Army. It was wonderful seeing the proud faces of all.
- Thank you to our fun loving Ice Cream Social Chairs: Donna Yost, Dawn Gomez & Todd Marvin. The Ice Cream Social was held Friday, November 7<sup>th</sup> and was a great opportunity for parents and students to enjoy a social evening of fun and games!
- Some parents volunteer behind the scenes to ensure that the Douglas Community stays informed and connected. Communication is essential and we would like to take this moment to thank them for this important job that they do!
- Thank you to our Douglas Digest Team for the great job you do every month: Sharon Kautz & Lori Fassman are fantastic editors; Michelle Deng prepares a professional layout and then Allen Nitschelm prints over 370 issues with a generous donation of his resources.
- Thank you to our Technology Secretary, Christine Phillips, and Douglas Administrator, Sharon Armistead, who manage the ongoing efforts of informing the Douglas Community with the Weekly School Announcements, and thank you to Webmaster Janice Ward for keeping the Douglas website current.
- Thank you to Michelle Daniell for updating our Monthly Calendar in the lobby and distributing the Digest.

We are fortunate to have many means to communicate to keep you up to date with events or changes.

Please NOTE the NEW DATE and LOCATION for our next PTO GENERAL MEETING, now scheduled for Tuesday, November 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm in the Library Modular (downstairs past the Kindergarten Classrooms). Jayne Carter, Douglas's Speech and Language Specialist, will present "Up Close & Personal". She will be describing a new initiative she has designed to help create stronger connections between the diverse families within our school, and looks forward to sharing her rationales and plans to make this come alive. Dr. Whitbeck's Principal Report will include a demonstration of the SmartBoard technology which is now being used in the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, & 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculums as well as in Library and Music. He will also provide an update on the most recent MCAS results. We look forward to seeing you on Tuesday, November 18th!

The Acton Public School (APS) Committee Meeting will be held on Thursday, November 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm at the Merriam School. We encourage our parent community to listen and participate in the APS Meetings to understand issues that affect the Acton Public Schools and consider the potential effect of this economic downturn on the APS Operational Budget.

In this time of economic uncertainties, the PTO is extremely grateful for the continued support from our Douglas parents and your fundraising contributions. Thank you to all the families that have contributed to the PTO Direct Solicitation Campaign. We are just over halfway to our goal of \$16,000 and remind everyone that it is never too late to contribute! 100% of the funds donated go directly to support assistants in the classroom, library and computer lab as well as to cultural enrichment, curriculum enrichment and other projects that enhance the elementary school experience of each of our students! Please consider making a donation to this very important fundraiser for the PTO.

As always, please feel free to share your comments and questions with us!  
Cassie Stewart [cassie\\_stewart@comcast.net](mailto:cassie_stewart@comcast.net) and Cheryl Witty [ckwitty@verizon.net](mailto:ckwitty@verizon.net)  
PTO Co-Chairs

### **EAGLE'S NEST SCHOOL STORE – FALL UPDATE**

Thank you to all who have stopped by and purchased items from the Eagles Nest School Store! We've been open for almost one month and the kids are having a great deal of fun...we certainly have some good salespeople! Just a reminder that the school store is open on Tuesday and Friday mornings from 8:15 to 8:30 and is completely run by the Douglas fourth graders and their parents.

Thank you to all who have worked so hard thus far. If you are a 4<sup>th</sup> grade parent and would like to be involved, please contact Erica Cahill at 978-635-1093 or [cahillhome@verizon.net](mailto:cahillhome@verizon.net). --Erica Cahill – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade School Store Manager

### **SCRIP PROGRAM**

Included in this issue of the Digest is an order form for Scrip. Scrip is a term that means, "substitute money". When you purchase Scrip you are purchasing pre-paid gift cards. The Douglas School PTO purchases the gift cards from Great Lakes Scrip center at a discount (between 1 and 17%) and sells them to the school community at face value. There are well over 100 retailers involved in this program including Gap, iTunes, Blockbuster and Roche Brothers. Get your holiday shopping done early and help out Douglas at the same time. If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Quinn at (978)635-9553 or [quinnlj@yahoo.com](mailto:quinnlj@yahoo.com).



### **DOUGLAS BOOK FAIR**

The Scholastic Book Fair will be open for business beginning Tuesday December 2nd – Friday December 5th. Stop by anytime the fair is open or visit with your child's class and take advantage of this fundraising opportunity. This is an excellent time to shop for the holidays, and books always make welcome gifts for teachers. (To make your gift shopping easier we'll put aside a "wish bag" full of books for each teacher/specialist.)

More information and flyers will be sent home soon indicating each class's date and time at the Book Fair, and showing a sampling of the many books at this year's event. The Book Fair will once again include our popular Thursday Family Night!  
--Laura Fay – 978-635-3766, [laurapfay@comcast.net](mailto:laurapfay@comcast.net)

### **BREAKFAST CLUB, WORK AND PLAY AND ENRICHMENT CLASSES**

Students at Work and Play have been having a blast. We have two tenth-grade student volunteers who lead special crafts and play games on the playground every week. This month we decorated pumpkins (generously donated by the Porten family, thank you!) with glitter glue, markers, bows and cloth. The pumpkins left sporting caps and mustaches! Remember Breakfast Club and Work and Play are always available on a pre-booked and drop-in basis and all profits benefit Douglas School.

Please remember there are no enrichment classes on early release days.  
Breakfast Club and Work and Play contact Chris Borgman at [cborgman@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:cborgman@mail.ab.mec.edu)  
Enrichment Classes contact Sasha DeMello at [sdemello@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:sdemello@mail.ab.mec.edu)

## FESTIVAL OF CULTURES UPDATE

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, which is sponsored by Douglas and Conant schools, will be held in early spring. 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. 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 me as soon as possible if you are interested in being an ambassador, know of a group of children who would like to perform or if you are willing to help during the event. Please contact Kristan Smith-Park at (978)263-3514 or [ksmith068@aol.com](mailto:ksmith068@aol.com). Thanks to all who have already signed up to volunteer!

## MCAS DATES - 2009

Dear Parents of 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students:

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

Grade 3: March 30, 31, April 1, 3, May 11, 12, 13  
Grade 4: March 30, 31, April 1, 3, 6, May 11, 12, 13  
Grade 5: March 30, 31, April 1, 3, May 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 21  
Grade 6: March 30, 31, April 1, 3, May 11, 12, 13

Please make every effort to have your children attend school on these dates. Your support is appreciated.  
Dr. Christopher Whitbeck

## FOOD SERVICE NEWS.....

[This Month's Healthy Snack Recipe was found on Eating Well.com](#)



This speedy homemade applesauce is fabulous as a healthy snack for kids. Serve the applesauce with cinnamon pita chips and you have a delicious snack!

Makes 2 cups  
ACTIVE TIME: 15 minutes  
TOTAL TIME: 15 minutes  
EASE OF PREPARATION: Easy  
4 McIntosh apples, peeled and chopped  
1 tablespoon brown sugar, or more to taste (optional)  
Pinch of cinnamon

Place apple pieces in a medium microwaveable bowl. Cover and microwave until softened, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a food processor, add brown sugar, if using, and cinnamon and puree until desired consistency.

NUTRITION INFORMATION: Per tablespoon: 9 calories; 0 g fat (0 g sat, 0 g mono); 0 mg cholesterol; 2 g carbohydrate; 0 g protein; 0 g fiber; 0 mg sodium.  
0 Carbohydrate Servings



## **LOOKOUT FOR LICE: A GUIDE FOR PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF HEAD LICE WHAT ARE HEAD LICE?**

Head lice (pediculosis) are tiny, wingless, elongated insects that are tan to grayish-white, but may take on a reddish-brown color after feeding on their host. They are about the size of a small sesame seed, and their six legs have claws for grasping hair. They cannot fly nor can they jump. Head lice, which have a life span of about 30 days on a host, are parasites that feed on human blood. The lice bites cause itching, which is often the first sign of infestation.

A female louse lays 100 or more eggs (“nits”), which hatch in 7-10 days. Nits are oval or teardrop shaped, and may be colored yellowish-brown, white, or silver. They are quite tiny, about the size of the period at the end of this sentence. Lice attach nits at an angle to the side of a hair shaft with a water-proof, cement-like substance; therefore, nits cannot be washed or brushed out of hair like dandruff or other debris.

### *HOW ARE HEAD LICE SPREAD?*

Head lice are most often spread through close contact with an infested person or by sharing personal items such as hats, clothing, combs and hair accessories. Not surprisingly, head lice can be spread in schools among play-mates.

### *HOW DO I CHECK FOR HEAD LICE?*

Because head lice move so quickly, they are difficult to see, so the diagnosis of infestation is usually made on the basis of finding nits. Nits are barely visible to the naked eye. It can be especially difficult to see nits in light-colored hair. It may be helpful to use a magnifying glass to search for them. It is also essential to use a bright source of light, with natural sunlight being optimal. Comb carefully through the hair, looking for nits. Pay close attention to the back of the head, nape of the neck, and behind the ears. Nits are most commonly clustered in these areas, but examine the entire scalp. In rare, severe cases, nits may be found in eyebrows and eyelashes. Nits are usually found close to the scalp, about 1/4” to 1/2” away, but they can be found at any distance along the hair shaft, attached securely.

### *PROCEDURE OF THE ACTON PUBLIC AND ACTON-BOXBOROUGH-REGIONAL SCHOOLS*

Like many school systems, the Acton and Acton-Boxborough Schools have a “No-Nit” procedure recommending that students have no nits in their hair in order to attend school. This increases the likelihood that the child is truly rid of the infestation.

**\*\*\*\* IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS AND GUARDIANS TO REPORT ALL CASES OF HEAD LICE INFESTATION AND REINFESTATION TO THEIR CHILD’S SCHOOL NURSE IMMEDIATELY. \*\*\*\***

Only then can steps be taken to prevent increased transmission within the school environment. These steps include:

- \* Notification of parents/guardians of the presence of lice in the classroom.
- \* Individual head checks.
- \* Classroom decontamination following environmentally sound procedures.



## ***Douglas Dates***

***November 4*** – Professional Day – NO SCHOOL

***November 6*** – Veterans Day Remembrance Ceremony

***November 7*** – Ice Cream Social

***November 11*** – Veterans Day – NO SCHOOL

***November 14*** – School Picture Retake Day

***November 18*** – PTO General Meeting, 7:30PM in Library Modular

***November 26*** – Early Dismissal – Baked goods provided for Teachers/Staff

***November 27-28*** – Thanksgiving Recess – NO SCHOOL

***December 2-5*** – Book Fair

## **SNACK CART DONATIONS**

11/6/08 Pretzel Day

11/13/08 Mrs. Rand, Mrs. Simeone, Ms. Hunt, Ms. Fitzpatrick

11/20/08 Mrs. Bloom, Mrs. Breslin, Mrs. Littlefield, Mrs. Tajima

11/27/08 No School - Thanksgiving

12/4/08 Mrs. Sharp, Mr. Cail, Mrs. Oxnard, Mrs. Kay

12/11/08 Pretzel Day