

Cougar Connection

A Publication of Helen Keller Middle School and the Easton PTA
February 2011

"One can never consent to creep when one feels an impulse to soar.."
— Helen A. Keller



Interim Principal's Pen

Dear Parent/Guardians,

On January 14, HKMS staff worked throughout the day on a variety of professional development activities that are focused on improving students' academic achievement. For example, the ILA teachers analyzed your children's reading and writing assessments while the Math team also analyzed student work; teachers then use this information to design more effective lesson plans and activities. Science teachers in all three grades worked together to develop a common lab report format, and the Social Studies team reviewed expository writing samples. The World Language team created editing and revising assessments in French and Spanish, and the FPA team worked on integrating writing within their courses.

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CALENDAR @ A GLANCE

- 2/3 Principal's Coffee 9:30 am
- 2/3 Choral Concert 6:30-7:30 pm
- 2/4 Ski Trip
- 2/6 Super Bowl
- 2/8 BOE Meeting 7:30-9:30 pm
- 2/9 BOE Budget Workshop 7:30-9:30 pm
- 2/10 Instrumental Concert 6:30-7:30 pm
- 2/11 PTA Meeting at Easton Public Library Community Room 9:15 am
- 2/21 - 2/25 WINTER RECESS



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The Cougar Connection is a monthly publication of Helen Keller Middle School and the Easton PTA.

Previous issues of the Cougar Connection can be found on the Helen Keller Middle School website at:

<http://www.helenkellerps.org>

and the Easton PTA website at:

<http://www.eastonpta.com>

Please submit information in MS Word format by the 25th of the preceding month to Caroline D'Agostino at:
cd@d-agostinodesign.com

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The teachers appreciated this time to work collaboratively, and we know that your students will be the beneficiaries of all their hard work on January 14.

It is that time of year again...budget season! Our kick off meetings on the budget process began on January 11 with a BOE meeting where the superintendent presented the 2011-2012 budget proposal. It was followed by the January 13 BOE budget workshop where the Board members deliberated Dr. Cicchetti's 3.84% increase. If parents would like to have input into the budget process, they may attend the next BOE meeting on February 8 at 7:30 and another budget workshop on February 9 at 7:30; both meetings will be held in the Media Center at HKMS.

Due to numerous snow days this year, and limited seating and parking capacity the Winter Music Concert has been rescheduled. The Chorus Concert will be on Thursday, February 3 in our gym from 6:30 to 7:30 pm. The Band Concert will be on February 10 6:30 to 7:30 pm. Please come and enjoy your children's instrumental, choral, and jazz band performances.

One last request from Mrs. Kaplan: she pleads, "If anyone has control over the weather, please make the snow stop!"

Best regards,

Adeline Merrill,
amerrill@eastonps.org
Helen Keller Middle School Interim Principal



News from the PTA Presidents

Dear Parents,

What a crazy January! With more snow than we know what to do with, we are trying our best to keep (our sanity and) keep the wheels in motion.

There's a a lot of momentum building this month as the school budget process starts. We encourage each of you to learn as much as you can as early as you can about the school budget. Realizing it's hard to attend the evening meetings, any awareness you can build through board of ed, board of finance, PTA or principal coffees meetings is greatly encouraged. See details below re: dates.

As always, please contact us with any thoughts, questions or ideas.

Very sincerely,

Heidi Adair (hadair@optonline.net)
and Laura T. Jones (stoneybell@sbcglobal.net)
Easton PTA HKMS Co-Presidents

Please join us for February Board of Ed Meetings

Please join us this month as we discuss upcoming events as well as listen to reports on the Board of Education Meeting and Budget Workshop.

The next Board of Ed meeting is **Tues., Feb. 8th**, followed by a Budget Workshop meeting the following evening, **Wed., Feb. 9th**. This will again be another very challenging budget year, and now is the time in the education budget planning process where parent input is most vital. So if you have thoughts on budget issues to share with the Board, please don't wait until the budget request is already determined to speak up. Both meetings begin at 7:30 pm at HKMS.

The PTA Needs a Few Volunteers.....

It is already time to plan our **Spring Social** and form a **Nominating Committee** for next year's board. We need: 2-3 committee chairs who might have a great idea for the Spring Social and 3-5 committee members to be on the Nominating Committee - this means you help find people willing to run for the open board positions for the 2011-2012 board – please note you would not need to be on the board just help finding the people. Find a friend and join a committee together!!!!

If you are interested in either please contact Sharon Stemme at sharonstemme@yahoo.com or 203-371- 4491. Thanks for considering it, we would appreciate any help you could give!!

Joel Barlow's PTSA Presents a Screening of "Race to Nowhere"

Many of you have heard about the film, "Race to Nowhere". In this documentary, "a concerned mother turned filmmaker aims her camera at the high-stakes, high- pressure culture that has invaded our schools and our children's lives...

"Race to Nowhere" is a call to action for families, educators, and policy makers to challenge current assumptions on how to best prepare the youth of America to become healthy, bright, contributing and leading citizens." Please join us on Feb. 11th and be part of a grassroots effort for progress in our educational system.

In offering the screening of this film, the Joel Barlow PTSA has made a deliberate effort to bring people together - from Easton and Redding, from within and outside of our school system. We ask you to support our district's effort to empower us all and become an ally for change and progress in our culture. Please join us on Thurs., Feb. 10th (snow date is Feb. 17th) at 7 pm at Joel Barlow High School; \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door.

For more information & to pre-order tickets, visit <http://rtnjoelbarlowhs.eventbrite.com/>

Ski Club News

FINALLY after (ironically) our first two ski dates being snowed out, the HKMS Ski Club had its first trek up to Ski Sundown on Jan. 28th! With an amazing amount of help from our parent chaperones our new crop of skiers learned the ropes, received their season passes and had TONS of snow to play in on Friday night! We look forward to everything now being in place and "smooth skiing" for the next three Fridays.



BE INVOLVED

Board of Ed meeting **Tues., Feb. 8th**
(7:30 pm, HKMS)

Budget Workshop meeting **Wed., Feb. 9th**
(7:30 pm, HKMS)

"Race to Nowhere" **Thurs., Feb. 10th**
(7 pm at Joel Barlow High School)

PTA Meeting, **Fri, Feb. 11th**
(Easton Public Library)

Reminder to Grade 6 Parents.....

The grade 6 health assessment form, (physical form) is due by the last day of school which is now, June 23, 2011. If you have not handed in your child's grade 6 physical, please make your appointments early, as doctor's appointments fill up quickly as we move closer to spring. You may print a copy of the physical form from the HKMS website, by scrolling down under the "Nurse" title, and following the links to Health Information and Physical Form. Physicals must be dated after June 1, 2010, to be accepted, otherwise you will be required to complete another physical.

Please be aware that there are new state immunization requirements for incoming 7th grade students for the Fall of 2011, and the requirements apply and start with this grade 6 students. The requirements include a second dose of varicella (the chicken pox vaccine) or proof of immunity to the disease, a recent dose of Tdap (tetanus booster), and MCV4 (meningococcal vaccine) prior to grade 7 . If you have any questions about the physical or the new immunization requirements, please do not hesitate to contact the HKMS nurse at 268-8651 ext 6.

Mary Jane Bellenot,
Nurse,
mbellenot@eastonps.org



2011 Little League Registration

What: Little League Spring Baseball and Winter Baseball Clinics

Where: Helen Keller Middle School Cafeteria

When: Saturday January 22th (9:00am – 12:00pm)

Saturday January 29th (9:00am – 12:00pm)

Please register online at:

<http://www.leagueunited.com/lu/orghome.seam?sportId=131&cid=2261>

Open to boys and girls residing in Easton and born between May 1st, 1998 and Apr 30th, 2007

T-Ball is now open to 4 year olds!

Registrations Fees:

Up to and including January 29, 2011: \$170 (baseball) / \$100 (T-ball)

**Maximum fee capped at \$340 per family for registrations through January 29*

After January 29: \$195 (baseball) / \$125 (T-ball)

**Maximum fee capped at \$390 per family for registrations*

Spring season fees include games, practices, uniforms, and end of season picnic

Reservations for Winter pitching, hitting and fielding clinics will also be taken

Winter clinics are subject to space availability and are first-come-first-served so register early!!

Summer All-Star and Travel ball, and Fall ball fees are to be determined, and are not included.



Redding-Easton

Softball 2011



Sign up by January 14 for a \$10 Discount!

Online registration for the 2011 Spring Season of Redding-Easton Softball is now OPEN!

We had a great first year in 2010, with more girls playing softball in Easton and Redding than ever before. We also had two summer teams advance to District 1 Championship games and a Juniors team who won the District 2 Fall Season Championship!

To get us started building on that success this Spring, we are offering an early registration discount for families signed up by January 14, 2011.

The Spring Season of Redding-Easton Softball in 2011 will include:

NEW: After-school Skill Building Clinics

For Spring 2011, we will offer free after-school skills clinics for each age division. Run by professional instructors, the weekly sessions will include age-appropriate instruction designed to improve all aspects of our girls' softball skills in a fun and active way.

NEW: Clinics for Coaches (and Parents)

Building on last year's coaching clinics, Redding-Easton Softball will offer a series of free coaching and parent sessions conducted by the Positive Coaching Alliance and The Clubhouse. Instruction will include suggested practice plans, tips on making games and practice drills fun, as well as philosophies for positive coaching and parenting.

Four Age Divisions

Redding-Easton Softball is open to girls ages 6 to 14. Each girl's age as of January 1, 2011 determines her age group level, according to Little League Softball guidelines.

- *Rookie*: Ages 7 and Under (Born 2003 and earlier)
- *Minors*: Ages 8-10 (2000, 2001, 2002)
- *Majors*: Ages 11-12 (1998, 1999)
- *Juniors*: Ages 13-14 (1996, 1997)

Fees

Standard registration fees: \$150 for Rookies, \$175 for Minors/Majors/Juniors. Sign up online at our new Redding-Easton Softball web site: www.redding-eastonsoftball.org.

**Early Registration Deadline:
FRIDAY, JANUARY 14, 2011**

If you have any questions, please email us at reddingeastonsoftball@gmail.com or call the Redding Boys & Girls Club at 938-3166. Go RESB!



Chartwells School Dining Services

Nutrition Newsletter

Easton, Redding and Region 9 School Districts

School Lunch: Convenience, Value & Quality

By Meg Whitbeck, Resident Dietitian

Everyone has to watch their money these days, and grocery bills are among the highest bills of the month. When planning your child's school lunch, think about buying from the cafeteria! It will help reduce your grocery bills without increasing costs elsewhere.

As a budget-savvy person, I took the time to price out the average cost of packing a lunch and compared it with not just the price, but the quality of the items included in our school lunch. Some parents share with me that they purchase organic and top-brand names while others always go for the best price. I took this into consideration. The prices are represented in a range. The lower price has been calculated from sale items, conventional produce and traditional milk boxes; while the upper price range is for top brands, organic milk and breads. I priced out several area grocery stores as well, including Costco, Stop and Shop, Caraluzzi's, Bethel Food and other local markets. Here are my results!

Packed Lunch:

Ham and cheese sandwich on whole wheat bread with a piece of fresh fruit and a milk-box. Price Range: \$2.72-4.10 per meal. This does not include the cost of sandwich baggies, condiments, desserts or snacks packed with the lunch. The lower price range is the store brand cold cuts and cheeses while the upper end is Thumann's and Boar's Head. The cheapest milk-box is Horizon Organic purchased from Costco, while the upper end milk-box prices are those purchased from grocery stores.

Lunchables Lunch with a piece of fresh fruit and a milk-box: Price Range: \$3.23-5.23. Yes, I do see a lot of kids bring in a *Lunchables* meal. It is not cost effective at all! The lower end is when there is a sale, while the upper end is normal pricing or for the larger portion *Lunchables* that the older students bring in.

School Lunch:

Custom Made Deli Sandwich (made with Thumann's top quality deli meat with no preservatives and fillers) made on whole grain or whole wheat bread (delivered daily from a local bakery) and topped with fresh lettuce, tomato, baby spinach, peppers, onions and other assorted veggie toppings of your child's choice.

OR

Freshly made hot lunch or salad lunch that utilizes whole grains and locally grown produce, both served with assorted fresh fruit and vegetables. All school lunch options include a choice of fresh local fruit and low fat hormone-free and high fructose corn syrup-free milk! Price Range: \$2.50!

The bottom line: We work hard to make sure that our lunches are truly a valuable offering and a healthy and nutritious option for your children while being a convenient time-saver for you!



CONTACT US!

Ann Metcalf

Director of Dining Services

Phone: (203) 938-0862

E-mail:

ann.metcalf@compass-usa.com

Meg Whitbeck, MS RD CDN

Resident Dietitian

E-mail:

margaret.whitbeck@compass-usa.com

Calling All Pre-K through 12th Grade Visual and Performing Artists and Young Writers!

The *Easton Arts Council* presents The Youth Art and Talent Show and Youth Writing Competition

The Youth Art Show will be held in the Library Community Room
February 26, 2011 - March 27, 2011

Reception will be March 13, 2011 from 3 - 4 PM in the Library Community Room.

Two-dimensional Artwork must be in frames, wired and ready to hang, (no saw tooth hangers please.) Sculptures also accepted.

Receiving date will be Saturday, February 26, 1:00 PM-3:00 PM in the Community Room of the Easton Library.

Questions, Contact Kathy Davidson 203-261-7351

FORM FOR ART SHOW PARTICIPANTS ONLY PLEASE ATTACH TO THE BACK OF YOUR ARTWORK

Name			
Address			
Age	Grade	Phone #	
Title of Work			
Medium	Email		

EASTON ARTS COUNCIL FAMILY (\$25) or youth (\$5) membership is required for ALL PARTICIPANTS. Email: Youthartshow@eastonartscouncil.org for additional information or additional registration forms.

Youth Talent Show will be held March 13 at 2 pm in the Easton Library Community Room. Reception to follow 3 - 4 pm.

Any type of appropriate act is acceptable: instrumental, vocal (no lip synching), dance, acting, etc.

Acts must be four minutes or less. Piano is available.

Singers must bring their own accompanist or CD.

First rehearsal is on Sunday, March 6 at 2:00 pm in the Community Room.

Dress rehearsal is on March 12 at 2 pm in the Community Room.

Please fill out form below and mail in by Friday, Feb. 25, 2011

Questions, Contact Joanne Kant 261-9160

FORM FOR TALENT SHOW PARTICIPANTS ONLY

Name			
Address			
Age	Grade	Phone #	
Act	# of persons in act	Email	

EASTON ARTS COUNCIL FAMILY (\$25) OR YOUTH (\$5) MEMBERSHIP IS REQUIRED FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS. FAMILY MEMBERSHIP ENTITLES YOU TO A PROFESSIONAL QUALITY VIDEO TAPE OR DVD OF THE TALENT SHOW
Mail to: Easton Arts Council, P.O. Box 142, Easton, CT 06612

**Calling All Visual Artists
Pre-K through 12th Grade**

The *Easton Arts Council* presents

THE 2011 YOUTH ART SHOW

The Youth Art Show will be held in the Library Community Room

February 26, 2011 - March 27, 2011

Reception will be March 13, 2011 from 3 - 4 PM in the Library Community Room.

Two-dimensional Artwork must be in frames, wired and ready to hang, (no saw tooth hangers please.) Sculptures also accepted.

Receiving date will be Saturday, February 26, 1:00 PM-3:00 PM
in the Community Room of the Easton Library.

Questions, Contact Kathy Davidson 203-261-7351

FORM #1 FOR ART SHOW PARTICIPANTS ONLY
PLEASE ATTACH TO THE BACK OF YOUR ARTWORK

Name		
Address		
Age	Grade	Phone #
Title of Work		
Medium	Email	

FORM #2 FOR ART SHOW PARTICIPANTS ONLY
PLEASE ATTACH TO THE BACK OF YOUR ARTWORK

Name		
Address		
Age	Grade	Phone #
Title of Work		
Medium	Email	

If you don't have artwork for the show, you may want to join me in a workshop at the ECC Feb 5 at noon - We will supply all materials needed.

EASTON ARTS COUNCIL FAMILY (\$25) or youth (\$5) membership is required for ALL PARTICIPANTS.

Email: youthartshow@eastonartscouncil.org for additional information.

**Calling All Performing Artists, Actors, Dancers, Musicians
Pre-K through 12th Grade**

The *Easton Arts Council* presents

THE 2011 YOUTH TALENT SHOW

The Youth Talent Show will be held March 13 at 2 pm in the Easton Library Community Room. Art and Talent reception to follow.

Any type of appropriate act is acceptable: instrumental, vocal (no lip synching), dance, acting, etc.

Acts must be four minutes or less. Piano is available.

Singers must bring their own accompanist or CD.

AUDITION: Sunday, March 6 at 2 pm in the Community Room.

DRESS REJEARSAL: Saturday, March 12 at 2 pm in the Community Room.

Pre-registration is required. Please fill out form below and mail in by Friday, Feb. 25, 2011

Questions, Contact Joanne Kant 261-9160

FORM #1 FOR TALENT SHOW PARTICIPANTS ONLY

Name			
Address			
Age	Grade	Phone #	
Act	# of persons in act		Email

FORM #2 FOR TALENT SHOW PARTICIPANTS ONLY

Name	
Address	

Age	Grade	Phone #	
Act		# of persons in act	Email

EASTON ARTS COUNCIL FAMILY (\$25) OR YOUTH (\$5) MEMBERSHIP IS REQUIRED FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS. FAMILY MEMBERSHIP ENTITLES YOU TO A PROFESSIONAL QUALITY VIDEO TAPE OR DVD OF THE TALENT SHOW

Mail to: Easton Arts Council, P.O. Box 142, Easton, CT 06612

Easton Arts Council
Young Writers Competition
2011

For Students Residing in
Easton, Redding, Newtown, Monroe, Trumbull, Fairfield & Weston

Your most memorable "Hometown Experience," real or imagined:
Prose, Poetry, Play or Screenplay

Three \$50 Prizes -- One Winner at each Level

Three Levels of Competition:
Elementary School, Grades 3-5
Middle School, Grades 6-8
High School, Grades 9-12

Submission Guidelines:
Entries will be evaluated on originality, quality of writing and interpretation
of theme

Submission Deadline: February 11th, 2011

Typed Manuscripts, 5 Pages Maximum

** Submit to: YWC@eastonartscouncil.org **

Judged by Award-Winning Authors
Elise Broach, Patricia Hubble & Karen Thorsen

Winning Submissions will be Announced on March 7th, 2011

and
Read Aloud at the
Easton Arts Council
Youth Art & Talent Show
March 13th, 2011

Easton Arts Council
Creative Writing Competition 2011

-- Judge's Bios --

ELISE BROACH

A former history professor at Yale University, Easton resident Elise Broach started writing children's books in 1998. Her books for young children include six picture books and a board book. *When Dinosaurs Came with Everything*, illustrated by David Small, was an ALA Notable Book and won the 2008 E. B. White Read Aloud Award of the Association of Booksellers for Children. Elise has also written for older readers. *Shakespeare's Secret*, a mystery for ages 10-14, was a 2005 Edgar Award Nominee for Best Juvenile Mystery, an ALA Notable Book, and an IRA Teacher's Choice selection. *Desert Crossing*, a mystery/suspense for ages 13 and up, ranked 4th on Amazon's Best Books of 2006 for teens. *Masterpiece*, for ages 8 - 12, was a Junior Library Guild Selection, a Publishers Weekly Best Books of the Year, and winner of the 2009 E.B. White Read Aloud Award of the Association of Booksellers for Children.

PATRICIA HUBBELL

An Easton native, Patricia Hubbell is the author of ten books of poetry for children and of many award-winning rhymed picture books. Her poems appear in numerous anthologies and textbooks worldwide. She began writing poetry in the third grade at Samuel Staples School, and is a graduate of The University of Connecticut. According to SOMETHING ABOUT THE AUTHOR, Ms. Hubbell became a writer "...because I like the sound of the words, the rhythm of the phrases, the delight of playing with words, thoughts, and dreams."

KAREN THORSEN

A former journalist and screenwriter, Easton Resident Karen Thorsen is now an award-winning filmmaker. Premiered by PBS/American Masters, her feature-length documentary, JAMES BALDWIN: THE PRICE OF THE TICKET was described as "Splendid" by Variety, "A video page-turner" by The San Francisco Chronicle, and "A haunting, beautifully made biography" by the Los Angeles Times. "Stays with you after the program ends," said the New York Times. Her second film for PBS – co-directed with Tracie Holder, and scheduled to premiere in 2011 – is JOE PAPP IN FIVE ACTS, a cultural biography of the theatrical mogul who dared to put a very different America on center-stage. In addition to other productions, her ONE SMALL CANDLE, a film history of the Pilgrims and their Native neighbors, is now a permanent installation at Pilgrim Hall Museum in Plymouth, MA – and her current work-in-progress, THOMAS PAINE: VOICE OF THE REVOLUTION, has recently been designated as a National Endowment for the Humanities "We The People" project.



HKMS BIRTHDAY BOOK CLUB

This is a **great** way to support the **HKMS Media Center!**

Your \$25 donation will buy quality books that are hand selected for a great variety of student's interests and with academics in mind!

Honor your student's birthday by donating to the **HKMS Birthday Book Club**. Each book will be marked by a special bookplate inscribed with a dedication to your child in celebration of his/her birthday.

Students will be recognized in their birthday month by receiving \$1 voucher to be used toward the snack of their choice in the HKMS cafeteria. (* Summer birthdays will be recognized in the Fall.)

Join at any time of the school yearor now so you don't forget!!!!

Questions? Please call or e-mail Kim Lenoci (mrskiml@yahoo.com) or Mary O'Connor (toconnor02@snet.net or 524-0108)

Please make checks payable to Easton PTA-HKMS Birthday Book Club and send your check in to HKMS, Attention: HKMS Birthday Book Club

***** tear off

HKMS BIRTHDAY BOOK CLUB

YES! Please include my child/children in the HKMS Birthday Book Club! Each book contributed is \$25. Please include your child's birthday year in the date.

Childs Name _____ Birthdate _____



Homeroom teacher _____ Grade _____

Childs Name _____ Birthdate _____

Homeroom teacher _____ Grade _____

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

February 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 Principal's Coffee 9:30 am Choral Concert 6:30 - 7:30 pm	4 Ski Trip	5	
6 Super Bowl 	7	8 Board of Ed Meeting 7:30 -9:30 pm	9 Board of Ed Meeting Budget Workshop 7:30-9:30 pm	10 Instrumental Concert 6:30 - 7:30 pm	11 PTA Meeting at Easton Public Library Community Room 9:15 am Ski Trip	12
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