

# Cougar Connection

A Publication of Helen Keller Middle School and the Easton PTA  
March 2009

*"One can never consent to creep when one feels an impulse to soar."*

— Helen A. Keller



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**Cougar Connection Deadline**—The Cougar Connection is a monthly publication of Helen Keller Middle School and the Easton PTA. We welcome submissions from the HKMS community. Send your school-related and PTA-related articles to Lisa DeVoto at [lisadevoto@optonline.net](mailto:lisadevoto@optonline.net) one week before the first of the month. Previous issues of the Cougar Connection can be found on the Helen Keller Middle School website at <http://er9.org/hkms> and the PTA website at <http://www.eastonpta.com>.

## Principal's Pen

Dear Parents:

The 2009 Connecticut Mastery Tests will be administered at Helen Keller Middle School from Tuesday, March 3, though Wednesday, March 18.

I want to inform you of the dates for these tests so that you can avoid making medical/dental appointments which may cause your children to be absent during the CMTs.

The following tests will be administered from 8:25 AM until about 10:00 AM and will be taken by all 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders:

March 3: Direct Assessment of Writing  
March 4: Reading Comprehension I  
March 5: Reading Comprehension II  
March 6: Degrees of Reading Power  
March 10: Math I  
March 11: Math II  
March 12: Math III  
March 13: Editing and Revising  
March 17: Science (8<sup>th</sup> grade only)

March 18: Degrees of Reading Power (supplemental for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades only)

March 18: Direct Assessment of Writing (supplemental for 8<sup>th</sup> grade only)

The CMT is administered in order to inform students and their families about their progress in four areas: reading, writing, science, and mathematics. Analysis of aggregate results allows the school to make data-driven decisions about program improvements.

The CMT is also how Connecticut meets its obligations to the federal No Child Left behind (NCLB) legislation. By performing at the level of goal or advanced on these assessments, a student's course selection at HKMS and at Joel Barlow High School is greatly enhanced.

During this testing period, it is important for student to get a good

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PTA Membership Form.....	<a href="http://www.eastonpta.com/pdf/membership_2008.pdf">http://www.eastonpta.com/pdf/membership_2008.pdf</a>
HIKMS Birthday Book Club Form .....	<a href="http://www.eastonpta.com/pdf/hkms_birthday_book_club.pdf">http://www.eastonpta.com/pdf/hkms_birthday_book_club.pdf</a>
Easton Learning Foundation STARS Form.....	<a href="http://eastonlearningfoundation.org/stars_hkms.pdf">http://eastonlearningfoundation.org/stars_hkms.pdf</a>

night's rest each evening, to eat a good breakfast each morning, and to come to school with extra Number 2 pencils.

Students who are absent during the CMTs on any of the above dates will be able to make up tests, but they will have to miss regularly scheduled classes in order to do so. Make up test sessions will be ongoing from March 13<sup>th</sup> until the end of the testing window. CMT results will be mailed to districts during the summer, and parents will be given copies of their children's scores in the fall.

Thank you for helping your child do his or her personal best!

—Joan C. Parker,  
Helen Keller Middle School Principal

**Thank You!**  
**Thank you to the PTA**  
**for purchasing**  
**a new sound system**  
**for the HKMS gym.**  
**It has recently been installed,**  
**and what a difference it has**  
**made for communicating with**  
**students and staff**  
**in that space!**

## News from the PTA Presidents



Thank you to **Stephanie Frangenes** for organizing the Globetrotters evening for our schools and arranging for a special autograph session for the families. A big thank you to **Donna Allen** for coordinating the CD and poster sales for the Choral concert at HKMS. Both activities were a big success!

Coming up this spring are the bulb sale and cookie dough sale. Details will be announced. Please support our fundraisers as they bring in funds directly to benefit our students.

Teacher Appreciation in May will require many volunteers. Please call co-chairwomen, Laura Jones or Eleanor Burns, if you would like to help out.

### Nominating Committee 2009

Thank you to Joni Ballas, Tina Cortina, Tina Salzberg and Michele Koubeck for agreeing to serve on this year's Nominating Committee. Please call Michele Koubeck (member) or email [mkoubeck@optonline.net](mailto:mkoubeck@optonline.net), if you are interested in an Executive Board Position. Vacancies are available for President at HKMS, Co-President at SSES, Recording Secretary, Membership, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer.

The slate will be presented at the April meeting by the Nominating Committee.

### Open Positions for 2009–2010

The PTA will have several openings for the 2009–2010 school year in the Executive Board as well as chair people positions for events and fundraisers. If you are interested in learning more about these positions, please contact Kathleen Wasmer at 452-8211 or Margot Abrams 459-4759.

### Volunteers Needed for EdCom

Budget season is upon us and EdCom needs your help! The PTA's Education Committee (EdCom) is dedicated to supporting and enhancing Easton's public schools,

with respect for the needs of the entire community. (See <http://www.eastonpta.com/edcom.html>.) EdCom is committed to providing factual information to the public to ensure that voters make informed decisions on education issues. We encourage participation of all segments of Easton's population, because we believe that the well-being of the whole town depends on the health of its schools. A good public education is not only Easton's obligation to its children, but also the town's gift to the future.

Please contact Melanie St. Raymond at 372-0233 or [sstraymond@aol.com](mailto:sstraymond@aol.com) if you are interested in volunteering. Help is needed in the following areas: research and dissemination of education issues, representation at town meetings, phone calls, and signage.

### Upcoming PTA Meetings

Please note the change in the next PTA meeting. It will be held on the second Friday of next month on March 13th at 9:15 AM in the Easton Town Library Community Room. The guest speaker for March will be a representative from the Connecticut Association for the Gifted (CAG).

Future planned PTA meetings are as follows:

April 24	9:15 AM	Easton Town Library Community Room
May 15	9:15 AM	Easton Town Library Community Room
June 5	9:15 AM	Easton Town Library Community Room

### Upcoming Board of Education Meetings

Easton Board of Education meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM at HKMS and are open to the public.

Upcoming dates for Easton Board of Education meetings:

- March 10
- April 21
- May 19
- June 9

Check the ER9.org website for agendas, minutes and changes to the schedule at <http://www.er9.org/boe/EastonBOE/Easton%20BOE.html>.

### Legacy Bricks are Back at HKMS!

Help expand the HKMS Walk of Fame around the flagpole at the "pick-up" area.

- Honor someone special
- Advertise your business
- Remember a loved one
- Recognize achievement
- Thank a mentor
- Commemorate a special occasion
- Support students and enrichment programs at HKMS

Details to follow in April (chairwoman Nancy Rosenthal).

### Spring Bulb Fundraiser

The spring bulb sale order forms are available in the main office at HKMS. The orders are due by April 1. The bulbs will be in by the end of April. The PTA receives 50% profit on all bulbs sold. Please contact Sharon Stemme at [sharonstemme@earthlink.net](mailto:sharonstemme@earthlink.net) or 371-4491 if you have any questions. Thanks for your support!

### HKMS Birthday Book Club

Make a special gift to your child (and the Media Center at the same time) in honor of his/her birthday each year! The HKMS Birthday Book Club gives you the opportunity to do both! The Media Center will buy a book with your contribution and your child will receive a voucher to be used in the cafeteria. See the form at [http://www.eastonpta.com/pdf/hkms\\_birthday\\_book\\_club.pdf](http://www.eastonpta.com/pdf/hkms_birthday_book_club.pdf).

### Big Y

Please remember to choose our school when you shop at the BIG Y. We earn points which we can exchange for supplies.

### Shopping Online?

Please think Box Tops and start at [www.btf.com](http://www.btf.com)! When you link through the Box Tops for Education Marketplace, you save time and energy and earn cash for our school, too. HKMS will receive a donation of up to 8% back on every qualifying purchase, at no additional cost to you. Some of the dozens of participating retailers are Lands' End, Pottery Barn Kids, Gap, Williams Sonoma!

### Support Group for Families with Children with Autism

Anyone interested in participating or for more information please contact Stacy Varvaro 373-9411 or [pvsav@optonline.net](mailto:pvsav@optonline.net).

—Margot Abrams  
([margotaz@optonline.net](mailto:margotaz@optonline.net))  
and Kathleen Wasmer  
([kathleenmom@optonline.net](mailto:kathleenmom@optonline.net)),  
Easton PTA HKMS Co-Presidents

## Town Library Events

The following events are coming up at the Easton Town Library.

### Easton's Family Fun Night

WHEN: Friday, April 24th 2009, 6 PM

WHERE: The Easton Public Library's Community Room

WHAT: The Tanglewood Marionettes, from Ware, MA, to perform the show "Dragon King" using life size puppets. (For more information, please visit [www.tanglewoodmarionettes.com](http://www.tanglewoodmarionettes.com).)

Pizza and salad dinner, 6–6:45 PM, followed by the 50 minute performance, and then dessert. Note: Each family is asked to bring a dessert to share at the end of the show.

Families must be members of Friends of the Library to attend. To become a member, complete a registration card available at the Library Front Desk. (Registration cards were mailed to Easton residents too.) Admittance to show is on a first come first served basis. To reserve a spot, please call the Library's Front Desk at 261-0134.

### Murder 203 - Connecticut's Mystery Festival

Murder 203 – Connecticut's Mystery Festival takes place April 18 and 19. For details, see <http://www.murder203.com/> and <http://www.eastonlibrary.org/home/files/murder203.pdf>.

**Connecticut Association for the Gifted (CAG) Minds in Motion**

See the schedule of events at <http://www.ctgifted.org/events.htm>

For more information, call Anne Manusky at 374-7972 or email Anne at [anne.e.man@sbcglobal.net](mailto:anne.e.man@sbcglobal.net)

## **ECC Gala Honors Dr. Fossbender at "Graduation" on Saturday, March 14**

*The ECC will toast Dr. Allen Fossbender on his impending "graduation" as superintendent of Easton and Redding schools. Cocktails, dinner and dancing at Brooklawn Country Club in Fairfield. Watch for your invitation in the mail!*

## **Easton AYSO Soccer**

Register now for Easton ASYO soccer. Registration is open to all interested players who are at least 4 years old by April 25<sup>th</sup>. Register online at <http://www.eayso.org/>, or in-person Tuesday, March 10, at the ECC, 5:30–7:30 PM. All registrations must be complete by March 20<sup>th</sup>. Any player registered after that date will be placed on a wait list. For questions about registration, contact Elise Nappi at [elisenappi@hotmail.com](mailto:elisenappi@hotmail.com). If interested in volunteering or becoming a referee, contact Tom Auray ([tom@bptfittings.com](mailto:tom@bptfittings.com)).

## **ELF News**

News from the Easton Learning Foundation:

### **SportsCenter Fundraiser**

SportsCenter of Connecticut in Shelton, CT

Saturday, March 28, 10 AM–1:30 PM

<http://eastonlearningfoundation.org/funday.html>

### **First Annual Town-wide Trivia BEE**

ELF First Annual Town-wide Trivia BEE: Thursday, May 14, 7–9 PM at the SSES Cafetorium

BEE curious on our website:

<http://www.eastonlearningfoundation.org>

ELF is looking for worker bees. If you are interested in helping, please call Ann Leibel at 371-4940.

### **Treasurer Needed**

The Easton Learning Foundation (ELF) is seeking a new treasurer. For more information, see

<http://eastonlearningfoundation.org/seekingbd.html>.

## **Housatonic Valley Coalition Against Substance Abuse (HVCASA) Parent Awareness Workshop**

*Regional Drug-Free Schools Committee Presents Workshop*

<http://www.hvcasa.org>

*Wednesday, April 1, 9:30 AM–2:30 PM, Bethel, CT*

<http://www.hvcasa.org/hvcasa%20news%20and%20events.htm>

*RSVP by March 24, 2009*

## **Student Council**

After our February Student Council dance ("Have A Heart" fundraiser), Mrs. Witkins came to the school to pick up over 100 stuffed animals to bring to children in Vietnam. Mrs. Witkins, the Student Council officers, and advisors wish to thank all the students for their compassionate efforts with this drive.

Just a reminder that tickets are available again for the **Sound Tigers Family Night on March 6<sup>th</sup>**. Sarah Osborne has asked us to once again participate in a Sound Tigers' event. In addition, she will be re-issuing new tickets in place of all tickets purchased for our last Tigers' night on December 19<sup>th</sup>. As you may recall, a snow storm canceled school and many people were unable to attend this event. Now, everyone will receive a new ticket. Student Council is selling discounted tickets again for that night, and the incentives program is also in place with opportunities for students to earn prizes, just like last time.

Future Student Council events include: Student Council Penny Wars, May Dinner Theater, and School Spirit Week.

<http://er9.org/hkms>

## **Keller Teller Newspaper**

The Newspaper Club meets Monday mornings before school in the Media Center, 7:30–8 AM. The club publishes the *Keller Teller* several times during the school year. Copies of the newspaper are distributed to the HKMS community. (See previous issues at

[http://www.eastonpta.com/committees\\_a\\_i.html#newspaperclub.](http://www.eastonpta.com/committees_a_i.html#newspaperclub.))

We are wrapping up our second issue of the school year now. All students are welcome to submit an article to the Keller Teller mailbox in the main office.

—Lisa DeVoto,  
Newspaper Club Parent Advisor

## **Easton Volunteer Fire Co.'s 74<sup>th</sup> Carnival**

*Looking for some warm thoughts  
to get you through the chill?*


*Think SUMMER and mark your calendars!*

*Easton Volunteer Fire Co.'s 74th Carnival*

*July 28–August 1, 2009*

<http://www.eastonpta.com>

# March 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
1	2 F  2:45–3:45 PM—Math Club 3–5:15 PM—Wrestling Club	3 A CMTs  7:30–8 AM—Yearbook Club 7:35–8 AM—Select Choir	4 B CMTs  7:40–8 AM—Student Council 2:45–3:45—Debate Club 2:45–3:45—Weather Club 3–6 PM—Play Rehearsal	5 C CMTs  3–6 PM—Play Rehearsal	6 D CMTs 7:30–8 AM—8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Govt 7:30–8 AM—Gang Green 7:30–8 AM—Jazz Band 7:30 AM—Kids Who Care 3–5:15 PM—Wrestling Club 3–6 PM—Play Rehearsal Sound Tigers Family Night	7	
8	9 E  7:30–8 AM— Newspaper Club  2:45–3:45 PM—Math Club 3–5:15 PM—Wrestling Club	10 F CMTs  7:30–8 AM—Yearbook Club 7:35–8 AM—Select Choir  7:30 PM—Board of Ed Mtg	11 A CMTs  2:45–3:45—Debate Club 2:45–3:45—Weather Club 3–6 PM—Play Rehearsal	12 B CMTs  3–6 PM—Play Rehearsal	13 C CMTs 7:30–8 AM—8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Govt 7:30–8 AM—Gang Green 7:30–8 AM—Jazz Band 7:30 AM—Kids Who Care 9:15 AM—PTA Meeting 3–5:15 PM—Wrestling Club 3–6 PM—Play Rehearsal	14   ECC Gala to Honor Superintendent Dr. Fossbender	
15	16 D  7:30–8 AM— Newspaper Club  2:45–3:45 PM—Math Club 3–5:15 PM—Wrestling Club	17 E CMTs  7:30–8 AM—Yearbook Club 7:35–8 AM—Select Choir	18 F CMTs  7:40–8 AM—Student Council 2:45–3:45—Debate Club 2:45–3:45—Weather Club 3–6 PM—Play Rehearsal	19 A  3–6 PM—Play Rehearsal	20 B 7:30–8 AM—8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Govt 7:30–8 AM—Gang Green 7:30–8 AM—Jazz Band 7:30 AM—Kids Who Care 3–5:15 PM—Wrestling Club 3–6 PM—Play Rehearsal	21	
22	23 C  2:45–3:45 PM—Math Club 3–5:15 PM—Wrestling Club	24 D 7:30–8 AM—Yearbook Club 7:35–8 AM—Select Choir  3–6 PM—Play Rehearsal  Uno Chicago Grill Day	25 E  2:45–3:45—Debate Club 2:45–3:45—Weather Club 3–6 PM—Play Rehearsal	26 F  3–6 PM—Play Rehearsal	27 A 7:30–8 AM—8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Govt 7:30–8 AM—Gang Green 7:30–8 AM—Jazz Band 7:30 AM—Kids Who Care  3–5:15 PM—Wrestling Club	28   10 AM–1:30 PM— ELF Fundraiser (SportsCenter in Shelton)	
29	30 B 7:30–8 AM— Newspaper Club  2:45–3:45 PM—Math Club 3–5:15 PM—Wrestling Club 3 PM—Play Rehearsal	31 C  7:35–8 AM—Select Choir  3 PM—Play Rehearsal	A, B, C, D, E, F indicates class schedule for that day (subject to schedule changes)				

# April 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>A, B, C, D, E, F indicates class schedule for that day (subject to schedule changes)</b></p>			<p>1 <b>D</b>            Deadline for Spring Bulb Sale            7:30–8 AM—8<sup>th</sup> Grade Govt            7:40–8 AM—Student Council            2:45–3:45—Debate Club            2:45–3:45—Weather Club            3–6 PM—Play Rehearsal</p>	<p>2 <b>E</b>             3 PM—Play Rehearsal</p>	<p>3 <b>F</b>            7:30–8 AM—8<sup>th</sup> Grade Govt            7:30–8 AM—Gang Green            7:30–8 AM—Jazz Band            7:30 AM—Kids Who Care             School Play</p>	<p>4              School Play</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>6 <b>A</b>            7:30–8 AM—Newspaper Club             2:45–3:45 PM—Math Club</p>	<p>7 <b>B</b>             7:35–8 AM—Select Choir</p>	<p>8 <b>C</b>            7:30–8 AM—8<sup>th</sup> Grade Govt             2:45–3:45—Debate Club            2:45–3:45—Weather Club</p>	<p>9 <b>D</b></p>	<p>10             NO SCHOOL</p>	<p>11</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>13             NO SCHOOL</p>	<p>14             NO SCHOOL</p>	<p>15             NO SCHOOL</p>	<p>16             NO SCHOOL</p>	<p>17             NO SCHOOL</p>	<p>18</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>20 <b>E</b>             7:30–8 AM—Newspaper Club             2:45–3:45 PM—Math Club</p>	<p>21 <b>F</b>            7:35–8 AM—Select Choir             7:30 PM—Board of Ed Mtg</p>	<p>22 <b>A</b>            7:30–8 AM—8<sup>th</sup> Grade Govt            7:40–8 AM—Student Council             2:45–3:45—Debate Club            2:45–3:45—Weather Club</p>	<p>23 <b>B</b>             Uno Chicago Grill Day</p>	<p>24 <b>C</b>            7:30–8 AM—8<sup>th</sup> Grade Govt            7:30–8 AM—Gang Green            7:30–8 AM—Jazz Band            7:30 AM—Kids Who Care             9:15 AM—PTA Meeting</p>	<p>25</p>
<p>26</p>	<p>27 <b>D</b>             7:30–8 AM—Newspaper Club             2:45–3:45 PM—Math Club</p>	<p>28 <b>E</b>             7:35–8 AM—Select Choir</p>	<p>29 <b>F</b>            7:30–8 AM—8<sup>th</sup> Grade Govt             2:45–3:45—Debate Club            2:45–3:45—Weather Club</p>	<p>30 <b>A</b></p>	