

Cougar Connection

A Publication of Helen Keller Middle School and the Easton PTA
November 2008

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



Helen Keller Middle School
360 Sport Hill Road
Easton, CT 06612
<http://er9.org/hkms>

Phone:
(203) 268-8651

Fax:
(203)-268-6105

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 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

School Climate Project – An Anti-Bullying Project

Dear Parents:

As you know, we have made it a major priority this year to implement a sophisticated “school climate” monitoring system in an effort to protect our students from bullying. If you have not had the time to sign your child up for this valuable program, please do so now by going online to www.SchoolClimateProject.com. The Parental Consent Form only takes 30 seconds to complete!

As you know, this project has two purposes: to provide individual help to students who are having difficulties with bullying and, secondly, to supply our community with overall information regarding HKMS's school climate.

Purpose #1: Personalized Support

Many of you have already given permission for your children to participate in the questionnaire, and if needed, in the follow-up

VideoBook which will be offered to children who the questionnaire highlights as having difficulties with bullying.

Purpose #2: Overall School Climate Information

For those of you who made the decision online to opt out of the School Climate Program (less than 1% of you), your child will be excused from the School Climate Project program.

For those of you who have not opted into the program, your child will complete the online questionnaire (along with all other students) but their **name will not be entered into the School Climate Project database.**

This means that your child's (anonymous) responses to the questionnaire will be part of the overall school aggregate data set, but that your child will not be eligible for any of

(continued on page 2)

Contents

Principal's Pen	1
Cougar Connection Deadline	1
News from the PTA Presidents	2
Media Center Update.....	3
Keller Teller Newspaper.....	4
Easton Public Library Book Sale	4
November 2008 Calendar	5
December 2008 Calendar.....	6
Big Y Express Campaign.....	http://www.eastonpta.com/pdf/big_y.pdf
Birthday Book Club Form.....	http://www.eastonpta.com/pdf/hkms_birthday_book_club.pdf
PTA Membership Form	http://www.eastonpta.com/pdf/membership_2008.pdf
Uno Chicago Grill Voucher – November	http://www.eastonpta.com/pdf/uno_chicago_grill_november_18_2008.pdf
Uno Chicago Grill Voucher – December	http://www.eastonpta.com/pdf/uno_chicago_grill_december_17_2008.pdf
Easton Learning Foundation STARS Form.....	http://eastonlearningfoundation.org/stars_hkms.pdf

the support services provided by the School Climate Project as the database will not identify them by name.

We are eager to begin the School Climate Project. In addition to the help for students identified as needing support, the School Climate Project data set will provide us with valuable aggregate information to improve our school, ranging from how connected our students feel to our school, to whether our students feel they can approach our teachers for support if they are being bullied, to whether they have ever wanted to avoid

school for fear of getting picked on, to which grades are most concerned with cyber-bullying, to how bystanders feel when they witness meanness at school, etc. The overall data set will allow us to better understand and manage our school's climate.

Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Sincerely,

—Mrs. Joan C. Parker,
Helen Keller Middle School Principal



News from the PTA Presidents

Wrestling Coach Wanted

The famous HKMS wrestling club started by Mr. David Breyer is in need of a new advisor. Experience preferred. We have 30 interested students who wish to participate. If you have a lead, please call Principal, Joan Parker or Kathleen Wasmer, PTA Co-President.

November 14th PTA Meeting

Please note the location for the upcoming November 14 PTA meeting has changed to the Easton Community Center in the cafeteria, at 9:15.

November 14	9:15 AM	Easton Community Center, Cafeteria
December 12	9:15 AM	Easton Town Library Community Room
January 9	9:15 AM	Easton Town Library Community Room
February 20	9:15 AM	Easton Town Library Community Room
March 13	9:15 AM	Easton Town Library Community Room
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

Brick Dedication Coordinator Needed

We are looking for a parent or parents from each grade who will coordinate the campaign to graduating families of 8th graders and others in the spring. The materials are all prepared for this venture. Bricks are dedicated to graduating class members and installed around the flagpole area at the pickup loop. Call Margot Abrams 459-4759 for more information.

SSES School Calendars for Sale, \$5

School system holidays and SSES special days are listed on this 11 x 8 inches monthly wall calendar. It

does not include HKMS special days. Copies are available at the SSES school store or call SSES Presidents Christine Cremin (371-1125) or Claire-Anne Meskers (374-5566) to buy copies.

Presidents Message

We hope that all of our communication tools have been effective in keeping you up-to-date on happenings in our school community. We also hope to bring you important information that will benefit our families directly, whether it is parent education or student enrichment activities. Please email us to let us know what you would like to see in the future.

Please utilize our PTA website by going to <http://www.eastonpta.com> for up-to-date information and school newsletters. If you are having problems downloading a newsletter from the website, see our troubleshooting page at <http://www.eastonpta.com/troubleshooting.html>.

From the PTA website, you can email any member of the Executive Board with questions or concerns you have about our services. Some people have advised us that they are having difficulty receiving or reading the newsletters or the list serve announcements. Please email one of us with your phone number if you are having difficulties so we may help to troubleshoot the problem with you.

The Big Y Express campaign has started. Please register at Big Y so HKMS can receive useful products and supplies. Every time you shop at Big Y, HKMS will earn points toward useful supplies. See complete details at http://www.eastonpta.com/pdf/big_y.pdf.

The forms are being sent home this week. Simply register online or using the form. You must register using one of our school numbers:

- HKMS #5175
- SSES #5174

(continued on page 3)

Go to <http://www.bigy.com> and look or the yellow Education Express Bus for more details.

Thank you to those who ordered pies during our pie sale. You can pick up your pies Monday, November 24, between the hours of 2:30–5 PM in the HKMS cafeteria (the flagpole side of the building).

We are still looking for grade parent volunteers for grades 7 and 8. If you are interested, let us know.

Gift giving opportunities provided by the Easton PTA include those already mentioned and our very own Birthday Book Club where you may not only recognize your student's birthday and reward them with a voucher to the cafeteria, but provide the HKMS media center with the needed books to expand our collection. (See the HKMS Birthday Book Club form at http://www.eastonpta.com/pdf/hkms_birthday_book_club.pdf.)

Thank you to:

- **Denise Sherwood** and her committee for producing a great Student Directory this year.
- **Kathleen Wasmer** and her committee for coordinating the Gift-Wrap campaign adding approximately \$14,000 to the PTA bottom line.
- **Gina Orticelli** for coordinating school supplies ordered by families raising \$3000.
- **Dina Massey** for securing an increase in membership to 80% of our families.

Remember, Easton has one PTA that supports programs at Helen Keller Middle School and Samuel Staples Elementary School. Renew your PTA membership if you haven't already. Go to <http://www.eastonpta.com/membership.html>.

Please let us know how we are doing!

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

Media Center Update

HKMS December Book Fair

Our Book Fair will be held December 8–13th in the Media Center. This is a perfect opportunity for purchasing gifts for the holidays for your family or a teacher. New this year, we will have a table displaying the "Wish Lists" of our Keller teachers. Feel free to purchase a book in celebration of one of your children's favorite teachers. Our doors are always open and we look forward to seeing you at the Fair. Note our special hours on Saturday morning during the 8th Grade Pancake breakfast.

Dates: Monday, December 8th – Friday, December 12th. We are open 8:00 AM–3:00 PM daily.

We will have extended hours until 4:30 PM on Tuesday, December 9th, and 8 AM–12 noon during the HKMS 8th Grade Pancake Breakfast.

We look forward to seeing you at the Fair.

Words from the Media Center

Flash drives are still available in the Media Center for \$15. We will install an anti-virus program on them when students purchase them which will be one more way to keep us all safe and virus-free.

Sixth graders enjoyed quite a day in the Media Center on Thursday, October 23. As a culmination to the first third of the first quarter of 21st Century with Mrs. Weinshel, 6th graders presented PowerPoints entitled Cyberbullying, The Spoofs and Keeping Personal Information Private. These presentations will be available for viewing on our website under 21st Century

- Mrs. Weinshel. Although all grades participated in the Power to Learn Internet Smarts Program sponsored by Cablevision, only the 6th graders presented to State Senator John McKinney and the Education/Government Officials of Cablevision. These students received a certificate declaring HKMS 6th Grade as certified in the Internet Smarts Program. The morning's festivities will be aired on local television. Stay tuned for details. All students in the school will have an opportunity to rotate through this program during the year and hopefully, our guests will return for presentations.

In the afternoon of the same day, Marc Tyler Nobleman, Author of "The Boys of Steel -- The Creators of Superman" spoke to the 6th graders about the trials and tribulations of writing. He talked about rejections, revisions, edits, and the ultimate acceptance of his creations. Mr. Nobleman encouraged the students to be persistent in their efforts in achieving their goals and told them that success does not come easily. Although the book is a picture book (with higher level content), the story is incredible, interesting, informative and very educational. This program was yet another one offered in collaboration with the Easton Public Library. We will be taking special orders for this book during the Book Fair.

—Carol Weinshel,
Director, Learning Resources and Technology
(cweinshel@eastonps.org)

Easton Public Library Book Sale

Easton's New and Improved Once-a-Year Hardcover/Softcover Book Sale Bonanza

Get ready for a new and improved 2-day hardcover AND paperback book sale bonanza at the Easton Public Library on Saturday, November 15th, 10 AM–4 PM, and Sunday, November 16th, 11 AM–4 PM. No admission will be charged during these hours. A special preview hour will be held on Saturday, November 15th, 9–10 AM, during which a \$10 admission fee will be charged. Admission will be waived for those members of Friends who present their Book Sale postcard.

Whereas in past years the Easton Public Library held separate book sales for hardcover and paperback books, the sponsors, the Friends of the Easton Library, have now merged the two into one big book sale. Accordingly, the selection is expected to be more extensive and the prices will remain low as most books will be priced between 50 cents and \$3.00 apiece.

Fiction will be sorted by author while non-fiction will be sorted by category. For more information, feel free to phone Gail at (203) 459-9964.

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.)

The staff is hard at work on our first issue and looking forward to our November 10th meeting when we will have a guest speaker, Elise Broach, children's author and Easton resident, join us.


The *Keller Teller* recently received a Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) award. Congratulations to all of last year's members!

—Lisa DeVoto,
Newspaper Club Parent Advisor

November 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
A, B, C, D, E, F indicates class schedule for that day (subject to schedule changes)						1 Pie Sale Orders Due
2	3 C 7:30–8 AM— Newspaper Club 2:45–3:45 PM—Math Club 3–4:30 PM—Volleyball Club	4 D 7:30–8 AM—Yearbook Club 7:35–8 AM—Select Choir	5 E 7:30–8 AM—8 th Grade Govt 7:40–8 AM—Student Council 2:45–3:45 PM—Art Club 2:45–3:45—Debate Club 2:45–3:45—Weather Club 3–4:30 PM—Volleyball Club	6 F 7:30–8 AM—Gang Green 3–4 PM—Play Tryouts	7 A REPORT CARDS 7:30–8 AM—8 th Grade Govt 7:30–8 AM—Jazz Band Student Council Masquerade Dance	8
9	10 B 7:30–8 AM— Newspaper Club 2:45–3:45 PM—Math Club 3–4:30 PM—Volleyball Club	11 NO SCHOOL (Veterans Day)	12 C 7:30–8 AM—8 th Grade Govt 2:45–3:45 PM—Art Club 2:45–3:45—Debate Club 2:45–3:45—Weather Club 3–4:30 PM—Volleyball Club	13 D 7:30–8 AM—8 th Grade Govt 7:30–8 AM—Gang Green	14 E 7:30–8 AM—8 th Grade Govt 7:30–8 AM—Jazz Band 9:15 AM—PTA Meeting 8 th Grade Government Girls Night Out	15 10 AM–4 PM— Easton Public Library Book Sale
16 11 AM–4 PM— Easton Public Library Book Sale	17 F 7:30–8 AM— Newspaper Club 2:45–3:45 PM—Math Club 3–4:30 PM—Volleyball Club	18 A 7:30–8 AM—Yearbook Club 7:35–8 AM—Select Choir	19 B 7:30–8 AM—8 th Grade Govt 7:40–8 AM—Student Council 2:45–3:45 PM—Art Club 2:45–3:45—Debate Club 2:45–3:45—Weather Club 3–4:30 PM—Volleyball Club	20 C 7:30–8 AM—Gang Green	21 D 7:30–8 AM—8 th Grade Govt 7:30–8 AM—Jazz Band 8 th Grade Government Boys Night Out	22
23	24 E 7:30–8 AM—Newspaper Club 9:15 AM—Principal's Coffee 2:30–5 PM—Pick Up Pies 2:45–3:45 PM—Math Club 3–4:30 PM—Volleyball Club	25 F 7:30–8 AM—Yearbook Club 7:35–8 AM—Select Choir	26 A 7:30–8 AM—8 th Grade Govt EARLY DISMISSAL	27 NO SCHOOL (Thanksgiving Recess)	28 NO SCHOOL (Thanksgiving Recess)	29
30						

December 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 B 7:30–8 AM— Newspaper Club 2:45–3:45 PM—Math Club 3–4:30 PM—Volleyball Club	2 C 7:30–8 AM—Yearbook Club 7:35–8 AM—Select Choir	3 D 7:30–8 AM—8 th Grade Govt 2:45–3:45 PM—Art Club 2:45–3:45—Debate Club 2:45–3:45—Weather Club 3–4:30 PM—Volleyball Club	4 E 7:30–8 AM—Gang Green	5 F 7:30–8 AM—8 th Grade Govt 7:30–8 AM—Jazz Band	6
7	8 A 8 AM–3 PM—Book Fair 2:45–3:45 PM—Math Club 3–4:30 PM—Volleyball Club	9 B 7:30–8 AM—Yearbook Club 7:35–8 AM—Select Choir 8 AM–4:30 PM—Book Fair	10 C 7:30–8 AM—8 th Grade Govt 7:40–8 AM—Student Council 8 AM–3 PM—Book Fair 2:45–3:45 PM—Art Club 2:45–3:45—Debate Club 2:45–3:45—Weather Club 3–4:30 PM—Volleyball Club	11 D 7:30–8 AM—Gang Green 8 AM–3 PM—Book Fair	12 E 7:30–8 AM—8 th Grade Govt 7:30–8 AM—Jazz Band 8 AM–3 PM—Book Fair 9:15 AM—PTA Meeting	13 8 th Grade Pancake Breakfast 8 AM–Noon—Book Fair
14	15 F 7:30–8 AM— Newspaper Club 2:45–3:45 PM—Math Club 3–4:30 PM—Volleyball Club	16 A 7:30–8 AM—Yearbook Club 7:35–8 AM—Select Choir	17 B 7:30–8 AM—8 th Grade Govt 2:45–3:45 PM—Art Club 2:45–3:45—Debate Club 2:45–3:45—Weather Club 3–4:30 PM—Volleyball Club	18 C 7:30–8 AM—Gang Green	19 D 7:30–8 AM—8 th Grade Govt 7:30–8 AM—Jazz Band	20
21	22 E 7:30–8 AM— Newspaper Club 2:45–3:45 PM—Math Club 3–4:30 PM—Volleyball Club	23 F 7:30–8 AM—Yearbook Club 7:35–8 AM—Select Choir	24 NO SCHOOL (Winter Recess)	25 NO SCHOOL (Winter Recess)	26 NO SCHOOL (Winter Recess)	27
28	29 NO SCHOOL (Winter Recess)	30 NO SCHOOL (Winter Recess)	31 NO SCHOOL (Winter Recess)	A, B, C, D, E, F indicates class schedule for that day (subject to schedule changes)		