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NEW STATE REGULATIONS ON GIFT GIVING AND ACCEPTANCE

The State Ethics Commission has approved new amendments to the State Ethic Regulations on gift giving to public employees including teachers. Classroom gifts -- to be used in the class -- are preferable. CPS is recommending no personal gifts to avoid an inadvertent violation and Ethics Commission complaint. Here is an overview of some of the explicitly-stated changes in the regulations:

*Gift giving is cumulative over the year. So, while \$50 is still considered a “substantial value”, the \$50 is cumulative over the year. For example, if a person decides to give a teacher a personal gift worth \$50, that person could not give another gift for the remainder of the year. (This includes all school employees.)

*This cumulative rule applies to class gifts also. The good news is that class gifts are allowed, when the actual participants are not identified, with a maximum value of \$150 per year. So, if you give a class gift card of \$150, you will be unable to give an end of year gift.

*One big change is that a gift of any value given to a teacher by a current student will require the teacher to file a disclosure. This is clearly stated in the regulations.

*It seems that personal or class gifts can be bought for the classroom. These will not require disclosure by the teacher, but the gifts are considered the property of the district. Also, if a gift card is given for class supplies, the teacher is required to save receipts and document what was bought with the card to prove that it was used specifically for the class and all items are “owned” by the district.

If you have any questions, please contact your room parents, PTG co-presidents, or Kelly Clough. Thanks for your assistance

2011 ANNUAL THOREAU SCHOOL SPELLING BEE

All 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders are invited to participate in our Annual Thoreau Spelling Bee, **Saturday, February 12**. This is always a fun and low-pressure Bee, so be sure to give it a whirl! Third and fourth graders may participate in teams of three; fifth graders compete individually. Bee start times are: Grade 3 - 3:30; Grade 4 - 5:00; Grade 5 - 6:30. So form your teams and look for the registration form in your child’s backpack (and on www.thoreauptg.org) soon! Please return one registration form per team **no later than Friday, January 14**.

*Suzy Symons
Spelling Bee Chair*

PTG FUNDRAISING UPDATE

One of the nicest gifts you can give this season is the gift of education and enrichment to your children. Please donate to the Thoreau Annual Appeal. You can donate at www.thoreauptg.org using PayPal or by check to the Thoreau PTG.

Thank you to the following families for their generous donations this past week to the Annual Appeal: Houston, Richer, Lee, Dillon, and Sablak.

Congratulations to the winners of the Thoreau fleece vests: Glazer, Feinstein, Decker, Yamartino, Johnson, and Shi.

For your online shopping, don't forget you can access many retailers through the "Thoreau Store" on the PTG website, www.thoreauptg.org/thoreaustore.html. These companies will donate a portion of your purchases to Thoreau.

Natalie Gekle and Maria Scichilone, Fundraising Co-chairs

COATS FOR KIDS

Concord Middle School's annual charity drive is underway. This year we are participating in the Coats for Kids program. Families and children are in need of warm, winter coats, especially now that wintry weather has set in. Please donate gently used, good quality winter coats or ski jackets to help a good cause this holiday season. Coats may be dropped off at the middle school, and a drop-off bin has been placed in Thoreau School for your convenience. Coats will be collected until **January 6**. Thanks for your support and generosity.

MCAS SCHEDULE – SPRING 2011

March 22	Gr. 4 Long Composition
March 23	Gr. 3 and Gr. 5 ELA
March 24	Gr. 4 ELA
March 25	Gr. 3 and Gr. 5 ELA
March 28	Gr. 4 ELA
May 9	Gr. 3 and Gr. 5 Math
May 11	Gr. 3 and Gr. 5 Math
May 12	Gr. 4 Math
May 13	Gr. 4 Math
May 18	Gr. 5 Science
May 19	Gr. 5 Science

Please be mindful of these dates, and make every effort to have your child(ren) in school on time. Thank you for your cooperation in this effort.

GIFT BOOK PROGRAM

With the holidays just around the corner, now is the perfect time to give the gift of a book for our Thoreau school library. You can make a gift in honor of a teacher or your child, if you like. Drop by the library to check out the great selection of gift books. For suggestions or more information contact Laurie Garrison at chrisandlaurie@comcast.net.

METCO MESSENGER

REMINDER! Our December late bus Family Friends Tuesday is **December 21!** Please remember that for playdates, each family (Concord and Boston) should send a signed, dated note to the school office at the beginning of school on the Tuesday of the late bus. The notes should include the plans for the afternoon and the names and telephone numbers of both families. Boston children can ride Concord children's buses with a note from the Boston parents granting permission. To catch the late bus, please have students at the Alcott School playground by 4:20pm for the 4:30 bus to Boston.

THE GEOGRAPHY QUEST IS COMING SOON

Get ready to take a journey around the world collecting the ingredients to make an apple cake! The annual Geography Quest is a PTG-sponsored event designed to let families explore geography together while learning a bit about history and how to use reference tools. The 2011 Geography Quest will be distributed to students after the winter recess and should be returned to school by **February 8**.

Anne Mullaney and Carla Macy, Thoreau Geography Quest Co-chairs

LUNCH MENU Week of December 20 – December 4

Monday	Meatball Sub
Tuesday	Early Release
Wednesday	Chicken/Cheese Quesadilla
Thursday	Homemade Mac and Cheese
Friday	No School

AROUND TOWN

Community School Winter Activities

The Adult & Community Education program has announced 150 classes for all ages -- before school, after school, evenings, weekends, and during the February recess. K-8 classes include before-school languages, and classes in clay, video, engineering. For adults there are daytime and evening classes in everything from Chekhov to Chinese Medicine; Banjo, Brain Health, Boating or Budgeting; and courses in parenting, first aid, sustainability, reading groups, voice,

storytelling, and more. Information and sign-up is online at www.ace.colonial.net, or call 318-1432.

CCYBS Winter Baseball Clinic

In an effort to support off-season skills development for players of all ages, CCYBS wants help get out the word about the following skills clinic organized CCHS's Varsity Baseball Coach John Kelly. John is the Concord Carlisle H.S. Varsity Coach, Worcester Tornado Pitching Coach, and has spent 17 years in professional baseball.

The clinics begin **January 8**. The 8-week pre-season training clinic spans a 10 week period. We will take two weekends off during February vacation.

2:00 – 3:00 T-Ball

3:00 – 4:00 1st and 2nd Grade

4:00 – 5:00 3rd and 4th Grade

5:00 – 6:00 5th and 6th Grade

Each week the clinic will cover pitching, fielding, and hitting. We will also try to implement a discussion each week on the mental approach, fear of failure, mechanical importance, baseball instincts, and the importance of having fun. Our goal is to teach baseball and to promote a fun and safe environment for everyone involved. We will get better while having fun.

Instructors include John Kelly, Dana D'Agostino (Everett High School Varsity Coach, 2 years playing in Italy. This will be Dana's 3rd year with the winter clinics.), various CCHS baseball players, and professional guest coaches. There may even be a random visit for the younger groups from Twister, the Worcester Tornados Mascot.

The cost of the clinic is \$200.00 with a 20% discount for families with multiple players. All clinics will be held in the CCHS Lower Gym. Register at ccyb.org or contact John Kelly at JK@johnkellybaseball.com or 978-660-5454.

Christmas Tree Pick Up

The Youth in Service at Holy Family Parish and the Concord Boy Scouts will be picking up Christmas Trees on Saturday, **January 8**. To arrange to have your tree picked up please email treepickup2011@gmail.com or call 978-369-2911x4 with your name, address, and phone number. Then put your tree at the end of your driveway by 7:00am on the morning of the pickup with a \$15-\$25 donation attached to the tree in a plastic bag. Make checks payable to Holy Family Parish. All proceeds from the tree pickup will help support the Youth in Service Summer Service trip and many Boy Scouts activities throughout the year.

In order for this fundraiser to be successful many volunteers are needed. If you are an adult willing to drive, have access to a truck, or are an older youth, and would like to volunteer, please email or call Jaclyn Daniels at youthmin55church@aol.com or 978-369-7442 x 228. This is a great opportunity for high school students who need community service hours.

Percussion Instruction for all Ages

Have you got rhythm? Are you just a beginner, or advanced? The Concord Conservatory of Music offers percussion instruction for students of all ages, beginning as early as 5 years through adults. Students who study with Jorge Perez-Albela will be given the opportunity to learn naturally about rhythm and also develop improvisational skills. In addition to studying basic technique, students also develop the equally important areas of ear training and the ability to develop a rhythmic conversation. To learn more about percussion lessons at The Concord Conservatory of Music, please call 978-369-0010, or email info@ConcordConservatory.org. CCM is located at 1317 Main Street in the West Concord Union Church.

www.ConcordConservatory.org

It's Time to Spring into Action!

Registration for Spring 2011 lacrosse is OPEN through January 10th; after the 10th, interested players will be placed on a waitlist. Early registration ends January 3. Registrations received after January 3 will be charged a \$20 late fee. The CCYL Program offers lacrosse to girls in grades 3-8, and boys in grades 1-8. No experience is necessary. New players are always welcome! Volunteers are needed and welcomed, no lacrosse experience necessary. Please visit www.ccyouthlacrosse.com to register.

The next issue of Thoreau Announcements will be edited by Anne Mullaney. To submit an item, email announcements@thoreauptg.org. You will receive an e-mail acknowledgment that your submission has been received. Submissions must be school or community related and not commercial in nature. Submissions should be brief, with minimal formatting – no bullet points or underlining, please! Deadline: 9 pm, Monday, December 20, 2010.

This message was sent to the Thoreau mailing list.

REPLIES GO TO THE LIST ADMINISTRATOR, NOT THE MESSAGE AUTHOR!

For support contact thoreau-owner@lists.ptg-concord.org.

Thoreau School: <http://thoreau.colonial.net/>

Thoreau School PTG: <http://www.thoreauptg.org/>