

Royle Blast

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## December 18, 2011

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in this issue

[PRINCIPAL'S CORNER](#)

[PTO THANK YOUS](#)

[SPIRIT DAY - DECEMBER 23rd!!](#)

[ROYLE ROUND UP COOKBOOKS MAKE GREAT HOLIDAY GIFTS](#)

[IDEA WINTER 2011-2012 SCREENING PROCESS](#)

[BLAST OFF MATH NEWS](#)

[MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE FIRST PTO MEETING OF THE NEW YEAR](#)

[ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WORLD LANGUAGE](#)

[HOLIDAY GIFT POLICY AT ROYLE](#)

[ROYLE SCHOOL STORE NEWS](#)

[ROYLE BAND REHEARSALS](#)

[TIP OF THE WEEK](#)

[BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS](#)

[COMMUNITY NEWS](#)

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

The Message Board is a weekly email newsletter that is sent Sundays throughout the school year. It is created by the PTO to keep parents informed about school and community news that is relevant to you and your child at Royle. Submission guidelines are posted at the end of each Message Board for your reference. If your email address changes, please click on the "Update Profile/E-mail address" link at the end of this newsletter to update it. We are pleased to provide this information to all of you and look forward to an exciting year at Royle.

Useful Web Sites:
Darien Public School: www.darienps.org
Royle School: www.darienps.org/royle/
Royle PTO: www.darienps.org/roylepto

Dates to Remember:

DECEMBER

23 Holiday Recess Begins Early Dismissal

JANUARY

3 School Resumes
4 PTO Executive Board Meeting 9:15 a.m.
9 Royle Endeavors Winter Afterschool Program Begins
16 Martin Luther King Jr. Day No School
19 PTO Meeting (new date) 9:15 a.m.
20 Bingo Night

Messages from the PTO...

PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

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From time to time, I will use this space to describe a teaching practice, curriculum, or system that we use at Royle (and likely is practiced throughout the District). My intention is to provide you with a bit of working knowledge about something that you may have heard about, but are unsure of what it means.

This month, I explore the importance of reading aloud to children.

**"What we teach children to love and desire will  
always outweigh what we make them learn."**

**Source: Unknown as found in The Read-aloud Handbook by Jim Trelease**

When I read this statement recently, the first thing that came to mind was how true this is of reading and how I see this as the most important goal of our instructional model, readers workshop. While there are many ways we look to foster this love through the workshop, one of the most significant ways to create this desire is to read aloud to children every day. In the readers workshop, we

make a distinction between reading aloud for the pure enjoyment of exploring a text -the sound and feel of the words as they describe a fictitious world, explore an idea, or construct an argument - from what we call interactive read-aloud.

Interactive read-aloud is essentially a lesson in which the teacher models how s/he thinks about a text or uses a strategy to read a text through a read-aloud. This is a technically sophisticated approach. It takes practice, planning and insight into how students are currently interacting with text. On occasion, the teacher may prompt the class to dialogue about the read-aloud but the majority of the time the teacher is reading. When a teacher reads the text, it frees the student's mind to focus on comprehending the story or to think about the teacher's application of a strategy. Often this practice acts as a preview of sorts to the ideas the class will explore in-depth in readers or writers workshop.

An ordinary read-aloud is a seemingly simpler practice, but this practice is too easily discounted as it appears as if an adult is just reading a book to children. But, imagine if every song you listened to was interrupted by someone who described the significance of a harmony, hook or riff; likely you'd come to resent the interruptions and possibly even the music itself. Reading aloud for the sake of reading helps children fall in love with books. It sends the message that we, "read for pleasure, not for idleness; for pastime but not to kill time: to seek, and find, delight, and enlargement of life in books" (1956 Robertson Davis Battle Cry for Books Lovers The Saturday Evening Post. Expanded and reprinted in a volume from the attic, 1960. New York: Knopf as found in The Read-aloud Handbook by Jim Trelease).

The read-aloud provides students with a model of what expert reading sounds like, and like interactive read-aloud it frees the student's mind to focus on comprehension. At several PTO and school meetings at Royle, and over the last several years elsewhere through the district, I have celebrated the importance of reading aloud to our children from kindergarten through high school. Often, the mentioning of high school raises eyebrows in the audience. But this is something I do believe I hope to sustain for my own children. Jim Trelease, in The Read Aloud Handbook, suggests that we think of the read-aloud as advertising. He states, "McDonald's spends .... more than \$1 million per day. Its marketing people never think, 'Everyone has heard our message. They should be coming to us on their own, instead of spending all this money on advertising'". Yet we often cut our "advertising" as children become older. Just recently, Royle's "Writer in Residence", Donato D'Albis also emphasized the importance of this. He spoke of reading aloud with his high school son the works of Shakespeare. He noted that this interaction with language not only celebrates reading but builds his relationship with his son.

According to the National Endowment for the Arts 2007 report, "To Read or Not to Read" our nation's greatest reading challenge is not a challenge of illiteracy but of aliteracy. That is, we can read, and in a place like Darien we can read very well when asked to do so on a test, but outside of these prescribed times, we simply choose not to. The 2008 Darien Youth Survey (sometimes referred to as the 40 Assets Survey) found reading for pleasure to be an area of concern as our elementary children become adolescents, essentially a consistent finding with the aforementioned national survey.

I see celebrating the read-aloud as a way to break this trend. If we can instill "love and desire" it "will always outweigh what we make them learn." This however, cannot be accomplished solely during the school day. Reading aloud to children every night should be as fundamental as brushing teeth. Even ten minutes a night spent reading to our children will advertise this essential life habit.

During the next column I will expand on the value of the read-aloud and provide some ways to support your child as you read together nightly.

**PTO THANK YOUS**

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Thank you to Jennie Hewitt, Courtney Darby and the entire Royle Endeavors Team for a great Fall session! Winter registration will be happening soon with many new classes being offered. Thank you also to Shelly Skoglund and Lynne Andren for organizing Gingerbread House Decorating. So many children enjoyed three fun-filled afternoons creatively decorating their very own houses.

Finally, thank you to Julie Forsyth and Sue Hayes and all the families for organizing and donating toys and gift cards for the Holiday Hope Chest Drive last week. Thank you for helping those close to home!

SPIRIT DAY - DECEMBER 23rd!!!

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Student Council is sponsoring a Red and Green Spirit Day for Friday, December 23rd. Wear your best and appropriate red and green!

**ROYLE ROUND UP COOKBOOKS MAKE GREAT HOLIDAY GIFTS**

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Looking for the gift for that person who has everything? Look no further than the fabulous Royle Round Up Cookbook. At an affordable \$8 per book or two copies for \$15, it is the gift that keeps on giving recipe after recipe. Contact Karen Brennan at kbrennan15@aol.com and copies will be delivered to your mailbox! Happy Holidays from the Royle Round Up Team!

IDEA WINTER 2011-2012 SCREENING PROCESS

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Throughout the next few weeks, IDEA will be accepting recommendations for their winter screening process. The winter process is open to all students in grades 1-5 who have not been recommended this past fall. Recommendations will be accepted between December 15th-January 9th, 2012

If you believe your child may be a candidate for IDEA, please let you classroom teacher or building administrator know. To further assist you in your deliberations, you are encouraged to visit the IDEA Program website at [www.darienps.org/ideaprogram](http://www.darienps.org/ideaprogram) for more information about the program and the identification process.

Parents, who are interested in recommending their child for the gifted program, should follow the steps below:

- Write a brief nomination letter to your child's teacher
- Download, complete, and attach the "Parent Questionnaire" form found on the IDEA website
- Submit these documents to Mrs. Heffron's Main Office mailbox no later than January 9th, 2012.
- Once all nominations are received, the screening process will begin.

Gifted students, in the Darien Public Schools, are those students in grades 1 through 9 who demonstrate or show potential for exceptional intellectual or specific academic capability. They comprise 5 to 8% of the general student population and their needs cannot be met fully in the mainstream education environment.

**BLAST OFF MATH NEWS**

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Attention parents! DAEG (Darien Advocates for the Education of the Gifted) is offering a second semester of the math enrichment program "Blast off Math" for 5th graders at Royle starting the week of January 23rd. This program is designed for students who are interested in working in a small team to solve challenging math problems. We welcome existing and new students! This 10 week session will begin with a quick review of key concepts covered in the first half before moving on to new math concepts. This course will be taught by Keith Satter on Wednesday afternoons from 3:00 to 4:00 pm. Registration will be available online after the Holiday break. If you have any questions please email Patty Uhlman at p_uhlman@yahoo.com for more information.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE FIRST PTO MEETING OF THE NEW YEAR!

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The first PTO meeting of 2012 will be held on **Thursday, January 19th**. Please note the change of date. Assistant Principal Natasha Torre-Heffron will be our guest speaker. She will talk in detail about the SRBI program. We hope to see you there!

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WORLD LANGUAGE UPDATE**

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The Board of Education voted in favor of the district administration's Proposed World Language Program for Elementary Schools at their December 13th meeting. The implementation of this program will still be subject to review during the 2012-2013 school district budget process which commences in January.

HOLIDAY GIFT POLICY AT ROYLE

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At Royle, we encourage each child to give a homemade holiday card and/or gift because it is a wonderful way for the children to show their appreciation for their teachers and aides. If you choose to purchase gifts instead, we ask that you please limit them to no greater than \$15 in value.

We have asked that no class collection be made for a teacher or aide gift at this time. A class collection may be made in the Spring for year-end gifts. Room Parents will contact you at that time.

**ROYLE SCHOOL STORE NEWS**

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Come by the school store for your last-minute shopping needs. It's a great place for "little treats" like Snowman bean bags, Holiday finger puppets, Jingle bell bead bracelets, Hanukkah kickballs, Snowflake slap bracelets, Polar Bear pop-ups and Snowflake stacking crayons. Also last call for Holiday Gift Bags, only a few left! Normally located in the cafeteria, the store is open Wednesdays from 8:05 - 8:25am. Contact Stephanie McGraw at tsmcgraw@optonline.net or 655-6585 with any questions.

ROYLE BAND REHEARSALS

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Fifth Grade Advanced Band rehearsals on Tuesdays at 7:30am in the Instrumental Music Portable.

Instrument Lessons for a few 4<sup>th</sup> and all 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Band students on Tuesdays during the school day. Please remember to bring your Band instrument to school.

Instrument Lessons for 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Band students on Wednesdays during the school day. Please remember to bring your Band instrument to school.

**TIP OF THE WEEK**

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What do you think makes a family close?

For more information, go to www.communityfunddarien.org.

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

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Upcoming elementary school highlights include:

January 10th, 2012, 7:30 p.m., Board of Education Conference Room

- Presentation of the Superintendent's Proposed Budget for 2012-2013
- Discussion of Personnel, Operating and Equipment 2012-2013 Recommended Budgets of Music, Physical Education, and Darien High School
- Approval of Board Master Calendar for February - August 2012

For the agendas and minutes of past Board of Education Meetings, please refer to the following link:

[http://www.darienps.org/current/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=164&Itemid=120](http://www.darienps.org/current/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=164&Itemid=120)

**COMMUNITY NEWS**

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DARIEN LIBRARY NEWS

StoryTubes Competition

StoryTubes is a video-creation competition in which kids create two-minute films about a book they love. Videos can take different forms: animated clip, dramatic performance, or just a simple booktalk (where kids tell the audience a little about the book and why it's so great). The Children's Library will make a camera and a room available for groups to film with in December and January. Entries are accepted between January 20 and February 20, and the contest is open to kids ages 5 to 18. For more information, please visit darienlibrary.org/youth.

Nutmeg Book Group - The Key to Rondo by Emily Rodda

Wednesday, December 21 at 6:15 p.m.

Join us this month for pizza, a discussion of the fairy tale fantasy, The Key to Rondo, and a book-related activity. Ages 9 to 12.

Nutmeg @ Night 2012

Tuesday, January 10 at 6 p.m.

The Children's Library invites kids in Grades 4 to 6 to a night celebrating a year of Nutmeg nominees! Join us for trivia, puzzles, and challenges, and the chance to win prizes as a group and an individual. Registration begins on Monday, December 19 at darienlibrary.org/youth.

DARIEN BASEBALL / SOFTBALL SPRING REGISTRATION -

Last chance for regular registration!! Registration fees increase with a late fee after December 31st.

To register, please go to www.dybs.org and select Register Online on the left hand side of the page, then select the appropriate registration program for your child.

Eligible Darien Little League Baseball players are those boys who are a minimum of 5 years-old (and in Kindergarten) and not older than 12 years-old, each as of April 30, 2012. Eligible Darien Little League Softball players are those girls who are a minimum of 5 years-old (and in Kindergarten) and not older than 14 years-old, each as of December 31, 2011.

For 2nd through 9th Graders, regular registration will remain open until December 31, 2011, after which late fees will apply. For Kindergartners and 1st Graders, regular registration will remain open until January 31, 2012, after which late fees will apply.

For questions regarding Little League Baseball registration, please contact David Williams at atdwbbc@optonline.net or Andrew Bogdan at abogdan@optonline.net. For Softball registration questions, please contact Alison Feeley at feeley@optonline.net.

PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED

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NEW YEAR PROGRAMS AT DARIEN TOWN HALL - DARIEN RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Fit Fridays -Boys & Girls-Darien Town Hall 1/6-3/16, 4-5pm Ages 5-9 \$100/10 wk session

Rebounding, Zumba, Hula Hoop Dance, Yoga/Yoga Circus and Boogie Box, Kids with Jump Rope Sports (single & Chinese) are all added to the mix in this fun high energy, and never boring fitness program for kids that includes age appropriate nutrition and healthy lifestyle education. Our exercise topic will change every two weeks so the kids can experience many different way to exercise & stay fit.

Fit Fridays - Girls ages 10-14 1/6-3/16 \$100/10wk session

Rebounding, Zumba, Hula Hoop Dance, Yoga/Yoga Circus and Boogie Box, Kids with Jump Rope Sports (single & Chinese) are all added to the mix in this fun high energy, and never boring fitness program for kids that includes age appropriate nutrition and healthy lifestyle education. Our exercise topic will change every two weeks so the kids can experience many different way to exercise & stay fit.

To register or for more information, please visit: www.darienct.gov/parkrec or call Parks & Recreation at 203-656-7325.

Regular Registration for 2012 Darien Youth Lacrosse

Regular registration for 2012 Darien Youth Lacrosse is closing on December 23, 2011.

From December 24, 2011 through January 15, 2012, a late fee of \$35 per player will apply. Parents can register their children via the Register Online tab on the DYLA website, <http://www.dylax.com>. The program is open to boys and girls in Grades 1 - 8, and descriptions of each program can be found on the website. Mail-in and drop-off registrations and non-credit card payments will not be accepted except with prior permission from the Registrar. Need-based scholarships are available, for which more information can be found on the website or by contacting Andrew Barnard, abarnard66@gmail.com. For any questions, please contact the Registrar at dylaxregistrar@gmail.com.

SNOWBIRDS ALERT!

Holiday Vacation Program at the Darien Nature Center, December 19 ~ 22, 9:30 am ~ 1:30 pm. To register call The Darien Nature Center 655-7459 or go to www.dariennaturecenter.org.

DHS JOB OFFICE IS NOW ONLINE

The Darien High School Jobs Office is now online and Ready to Help you Fill your Employment Needs! If you are looking for some help, part time or full time, after school or summer, we have over 350 students registered and eager to work for you! Log onto

www.darienps.org/dhsjobs and complete our employer registration form. Your job posting will be accessible to all our registered students. Babysitting, retail, office work, holiday gift wrapping, restaurant, intern, yardwork, odd jobs, party help, tutoring, sports coaching, computer help, pet sitting, childcare, etc. Any questions, call 203-424-0652 or dhsjobsoffice@gmail.com.

ROYLE BLAST SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

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If you would like to post a message in the Royle Blast, please note the following guidelines:

- Send information to [roylemsgboard@gmail.com](mailto:roylemsgboard@gmail.com)
- Please no attachments, limit submission to 1 paragraph, include contact name/phone/email
- Must be related to school activity or approved non-profit community event
- Must be e-mailed no later than Thursday at 5pm
- Editor has final discretion as to whether information is appropriate for the Message Board

For questions or comments on the Royle Blast, please send an email to [roylemsgboard@gmail.com](mailto:roylemsgboard@gmail.com)

*Annie Necakov, Mary Canaday and Jennifer Shea  
Royle Blast Editors*

**USEFUL LINKS**

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- [Royle Lunch Menu](#)
- [Royle PTO Website](#)
- [Royle School Website](#)
- [Royle Rags](#)

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email: [roylemsgboard@gmail.com](mailto:roylemsgboard@gmail.com)

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