

# Coop Scoop

• December 2008 •



Newsletter for the Cooperative Playschool • 611 East Prospect Avenue • State College, PA 16801 • 238-3922

## *December at a Glance*

18	Cookie exchange
18	Board Meeting 6:30
19	MWF Holiday Party
22	Cultural Exchange, Hanukkah Party at JCC
23	TR Holiday Party
23	<b>Last Day of Fall Session</b>

## *Theme Weeks*

2-5	Letters and Numbers
8-12	Festivals of Light
15-19	Festivals of Light

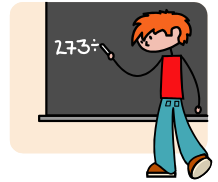
## *December Birthdays*

## *Looking ahead*

Jan 5	First Day of Spring Session
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on this enthusiasm for a trickster as we make a gingerbread character who will be a veritable escape artist. I'm just giving you a heads up, because you might hear about this at home.

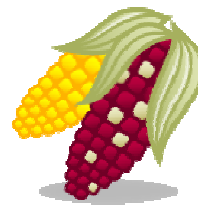
November has had us add two new languages to count in for our calendar time- Hindu and Korean. The kids are getting quite good at naming the days and counting up and down. We have reached our 50 day mark and will be looking forward to celebrating our 100<sup>th</sup> day. Using dimes we practice counting by tens. Many of your kids are very good with numbers and languages!



In honor of Thanksgiving we read several stories related to feasts and the theme of Stone Soup. The kids all dictated stories about what they will bring to the feast and painted pictures. We made Indian drums and drumsticks, and watched a puppet show based on the book: The Rough Faced Girl, which is a Native American Cinderella story.

## Red Team Notes

As Red Team counts down from one holiday to the next on our fall calendar, the kids are enjoying holiday related small group times. The popularity of Brunhilda with this group of kids far exceeded any I had seen before. She became the subject of many snack conversations and the kids all had their speculations about where she went and what tricks she played on us. We began November searching for things she had 'borrowed' and left in the friendly woods. Soon everything that was misplaced was due to her. Many outside times were spent looking for her calling out her name hoping she would show up. So for those of you who never met her, she's a doll who visits Coop around Halloween and we always have to look for the song cards or the names at circle time because she has been up to her tricks. I first introduced her a few years ago. Her character was inspired by a Waldorf teacher who used this at her circle time. Our next few weeks (looking toward December) will build



The Thankful Soup was a great culmination of our snack parents work with these kids. Many 'harvested' potatoes from under a blanket Mrs. Lori provided for inspiration, trucked them to the market, washed and later cubed and peeled them for our soup. Paulina

had a line of kids waiting turns to slice vegetables, and the yummy rolls were baked throughout the fall and stored for our celebration. Thank you all who shouldered so much of the work with such grace. I hope all of you continue to enjoy good company and food prepared with love throughout the holiday season!

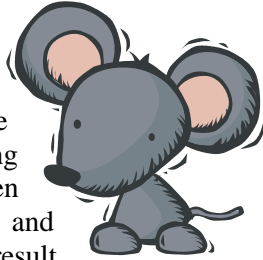
Mrs. Kat



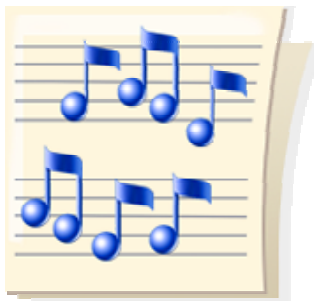
# Green Team Notes

. . . 'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house was a terrible mess . . . made by a mouse!

If the month ahead is anything like November with the Green Team, the proof will be in the plum pudding that young children love repetition! One of our favorite snack time books toward the end of October had been "Mouse Mess" by Linnea Riley.



As Election Day arrived and we explored the idea of making choices and voting. The Green Team unanimously voted again and again for "Mouse Mess"! As a result, many of our small group activities following snack time revolved around sequencing, identifying patterns and silly games involving story comprehension and letter/sound recognition.



Our Native American theme offered some wonderful opportunities for dancing, chanting and using a variety of instruments to explore sound and rhythm.

On some days as time allowed after snack and story, we joined at our "make it table" to enjoy creative expression – stringing noodles in a pattern to make necklaces, constructing shapes into paper flags for marching, and designing our own Native American Indian-inspired ankle bracelets and totems. We played counting and color sorting games with an assortment of beans, beads, colored corn and other items and played hide and seek with stars, stripes (rectangles) and other shapes.

Our science exploration involved indoor and outdoor fun including cutting open pumpkins and gourds to examine with fingers and magnifying glasses all the parts – dry,

wet, smooth and slimy. On most days, we started our outdoor fun with a trip to "the secret garden" to look for our bird friends, Mr. Squirrel, to round the boulder three times and crunch through the leaves back to the playground to join the Red Team.

And of course we ended our month with Thankful Soup and full tummies and hearts!

I look forward to the magic of December when we will read and sing and pretend and create – many things planned and most (if judging by the past two months) spontaneous as I follow the lead of your curious, funny, energetic children.

Blessings of the season,  
Mrs. Lori





## Notes from the Teachers

November was such a satisfying month – for hands, heads and hearts, not to mention tummies – with so many special activities, songs and participatory events to enjoy. From our Election Day cider stand to food preparation for our family feast, from arts and crafts, teepee camping, and planting bulbs to the care and feeding, of babies, the children had many options for serious play. The kind of play that makes one really hungry for snack time!

We've seen new relationships blooming and children expanding their interests as they become more confident and comfortable with their surroundings and the rhythm of their morning.

Our Thankful Soup celebration was a terrific way to end the month by relaxing and enjoying simple food, lovingly prepared, and it provided an opportunity to chat about life and things other than Board Meeting minutes or fundraising plans. We are thankful indeed for your contributions making the celebration a success and for taking time from your work and home schedules to join us. Special thanks to the parents who volunteered each day in preparing the meal, cleaning up afterwards and tending to the little extras throughout the morning.

As the December holidays approach you'll hear more about our special theme celebrations, a visit to the JCC, our holiday circle time, food bank drive and more. Please refer to the weekly reminders and notices in the arrival area for more details.

Families have begun to inquire about gift giving at the Coop. Several years ago, we began a tradition of filling a basket of gifts for the school. We were able to keep our supply budget down as a result and the children really enjoyed opening the gifts that they will be sharing with their friends at school. In past years we filled the basket with craft supplies. One year we bought a digital camera. This year we will generate a list of items families can purchase and place in our gift basket. (As we realize everyone's gift-giving budgets are different, we'll do our best to offer suggestions in different price ranges.) We will 'open' the basket with the children before our holiday break. Look for our gift list on the parent's bulletin board in early December. Please see Mrs. Kat for further clarification or instructions. This collection is meant to substitute for holiday gift giving to the teachers. Please give us gifts that will help us make Coop a more enjoyable place to work and play. This is a much appreciated way of thanking us for working with your children!

***Kat and Lori***





Happy  
Holidays



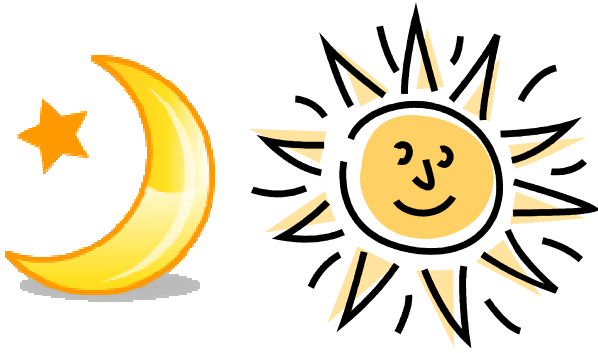
### Thoughts on Upcoming Theme Weeks

**December 3-7: Letters and Numbers.** All aboard the number train. Come prepared to count, stack, write and play with letters and numbers. Consult with Dara Lavalley for ideas or be sure to see what we have displayed on our resource shelf.

**December 19-20: Festivals of Light.** The days are getting shorter, and people everywhere are celebrating with light. We plan on honoring three major festivals held near this time each year: Hanukkah and Advent/Christmas. Our focus will be on cultural crafts, foods and songs. If you have items to share with us for our cultural displays, books, songs, games from other lands, or recipes, please contact us.

### Winter Reminders

1. While it is unavoidable that children will catch colds and other illnesses during the winter months, **let's do our best not to spread illnesses at school.**
  - **Keep a very drippy child at home.** A cold that is bad enough to keep a child up at night should keep him/her home as well.
  - **Call school to let us know of any contagious illnesses your child contracts:** strep throat, chicken pox, etc. We will post a note to inform other parents.
  - **Hand washing is essential!** Before children help prepare a snack, or do any type of food preparation make sure they wash their hands. All children should wash their hands thoroughly before snack time as well. Parents and teachers, please wash your hands more frequently throughout the day as well.
2. Don't forget to dress children warmly for outdoor play. Hats, mittens, boots, and even snow pants may be necessary. We will be going outside each day unless it is raining or extremely cold.
3. If children wear boots to school, bring other shoes or slippers to wear indoors. You may keep an extra, labeled pair of shoes or slippers at school and store them under the coat hooks if you like.
4. The Co-op does not use the phone tree if the State College public schools are closed. If you suspect a closing, check the radio or channel 4 on TV. It is important to have your phone tree handy. We will be using it if it is icy and the public schools decide to stay open.



The December holidays involve the lighting of lights and occur during the darkest time of the year, the beginning of our winter season. We wish to talk about how the days are getting shorter and how nice it is to celebrate by lighting lights this time of year.

Our goals in teaching about these holidays are simple. We want the children to learn that different families celebrate different holidays, and that everyone's holidays are fun, special and important. We don't hope or expect to cover all the holidays that exist, but **we would especially like to acknowledge holidays that are important to your families and that you celebrate in your homes.**

We use pictures, songs, crafts and games to teach about the various cultures and holidays. We use materials that contain a minimum of religious and historical information and emphasize family activities at home. We will focus on each festival for two school days and then leave a reminder of this festival in a special area of the room. If you are working during the week of our Festivals of Light theme, we can share our ideas with you. Anyone who has ideas to share with us, please do so!

*Kat and Lori*

### Activities and Celebrations

- **Monday December 22<sup>nd</sup>** we will visit the Jewish Community Center for a Hanukkah celebration at 10:00. We will return from the J.C.C .by 11:30. They have requested that only working parents attend this event.
- We extend an invitation to parents to come to our own holiday celebration on Friday the 19th and Tuesday the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Please come early (11:00 AM) and join us for a holiday sing along with light refreshments.

### Register soon for next year

Believe it or not, January 1<sup>st</sup> begins registration for the Cooperative Playschool for the 2009-2010 school year. Priority Registration goes to currently enrolled children until January 31<sup>st</sup> and then siblings or alumnae children from January 31<sup>st</sup> through February 15<sup>th</sup>. Application packages will be available on the bulletin board starting on January 1<sup>st</sup>. If you have any questions please contact Vicki.

### Upcoming Events



### Holiday Cookie Exchange

Please join us on Thursday, Dec. 18th in the Friends Meeting Hall for a Holiday Cookie Exchange. If you plan to exchange cookies, please package them in batches of 6. You may take home as many half-dozens as you bring.

Don't hesitate to come even if you are not interested in exchanging cookies. There will be yummy treats, coffee and tea, holiday music, and fine company. While T/R playschoolers should remain at the Co-op, all other Co-op family members are welcome—adults, M/W/F playschoolers, and siblings.

Look for the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. Hope to see you there!

# *In Other News* +

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## **From the Co-Chairs**

November is here already with cold and snowy days! These early winter days are my favorites as it seems like the fun of playing in snow never ends and the kids seem to discover new and great ways to enjoy being outside.

This month was a busy one for the Board. In addition to our normal duties, we have been making plans for the celebration of the Playschool's 60th Anniversary in 2009. There are three events planned for early next year, please read the following article for complete details and an invitation to join the fun!

Also, during November, our two fundraisers were a great success! The Election Day Bake Sale lifted our spirits and hearts and raised over \$500. The Cup ½ Full Festival brought us together with alumnae families and community members for a fun filled day and raised over \$700. Kudos to Aileen and Deb for all their hard work and marketing efforts!

Thankful Soup was another opportunity to enjoy the curiosity and happiness of our children. They enjoyed every little step of preparing lunch for their families: slicing carrots and celery, peeling potatoes, setting the tables. They proudly shared what they brought to the feast, what they cooked, how they helped and how they worked together. And the sing-along was a lovely way to end the morning.

As our kids have settled in their school routines, we hope parents are feeling comfortable as well. You will soon receive the Mid-Year Evaluation as an online form that may take you five minutes to fill out. Please, let us know about your experience at the Playschool. We welcome your input and encourage you to speak up and stay involved. Each family makes a difference!

And finally, if last month was a time for reflection on all the blessings in our lives, then December is an opportunity to share those blessings with others. No matter what holiday you celebrate, a gift of your time, attention or talents is always appreciated. Let your own special light shine during these dark days of winter.

Paulina & Angie



## **The Cooperative Playschool 60th Anniversary Commemoration**

The Board would like to share with you the activities that are being planned and organized around the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Cooperative Playschool. Please, contact the Co-Chairs or any board member if you would like to join us in the organization of these activities. Help is appreciated for all events!

### **1) Summary of Key Ideas**

The 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Cooperative Playschool is a significant milestone in our local educational community. This historic year offers families, educators, supporters and friends a chance to reflect on the unique offerings of the school and the positive impact of their involvement. Through a variety of outreach events and actions, we have an opportunity to grow enrollment to satisfy present day and future needs, raise funds to sustain scholarships and special programs and to gain positive media exposure for raising awareness, allowing the “marketing cycle” to begin again.

### **2) Mission Statement**

To raise awareness and interest – through a variety of year-long events – about the history and philosophy of the Cooperative Playschool for the purpose of cultivating new enrollments, benefactors and community supporters, and to foster a spirit of celebration and community goodwill.

### **3) Strategic Actions**

In every endeavor, the goal of the Cooperative Playschool Anniversary Committee(s) will be to organize and execute events and programs in a professional and strategic manner, taking advantage of opportunities to promote the school to eligible families, raise funds and engage community leaders, media and supporters in dialogue that supports play-based community education and the value of family-based preschool educational programs as offered by the Cooperative Playschool.

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As of December 2008, the following list of events are being planned to kickoff this year-long celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:

▶ **Reunion Dinner & Reminiscences** (*we welcome better names for this event!*):

Founders, previous teachers, alumnae families and current families will get together to celebrate an intimate and informal dinner to share stories, experiences and have fun... because *"the more we get together, the better we will be."*

Childcare will be provided in the preschool.

E-vites will be sent by December 30th.

**Sunday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at 5pm, Friends Meeting Social Hall.**

(this date is still tentative)

▶ **Co-opalooza:**

A family event for the whole State College community. Featuring magic, music and puppetry to entertain children and adults. Admission cost still to be determined.

**Saturday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009 at 1pm, State Theatre.**

▶ **The Power of Play:**

This is an event especially for parents of preschoolers to discuss and provide research based information on play-based education as an appropriate method to reach academic long-term skills. A panel of specialist (including our own teachers) will do a presentation that will be followed by Q&A from the public.

**Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at 2pm, Schlow Library**

▶ **Events to consider for Fall 2009?**

Benefit Dinner  
Silent Auction

## Co-op Community

### Please Upload Coop Related Photos

• Everyone's participation will guarantee a great selection of photos to gaze at each new month of our 2009 Co-op Photo Calendars. We'll also tap into this photo bank for important fundraising and outreach projects throughout the 2008-09 school year.

• So, please upload all photos you've taken from Co-op events or daily school life to <http://www.concepcion-design.com/clients> (username "coop" password "friends"). Amber Concepcion has offered to upload, or resend the brief instructions, as needed (email: [amber.concepcion@gmail.com](mailto:amber.concepcion@gmail.com)).

### Season of Giving- Give to the Co-op While Giving to Others

• Amazon Link - Don't forget to go use the Co-op's Amazon link for holiday purchases (and send the link to your families and friends!). Visit [www.cooperativeplayschool.com](http://www.cooperativeplayschool.com) under Recent Posts.

• Giant & Weiss cards - What more useful gift or charity donation is there than grocery cards?

• Dominos Pizza Discounts - Save money with Dominos' Delivering the Dough pizza cards (coming soon)!

### A Special Thank You ...

• **MUCHO PROFITS** *from Fundraising*

We raised significantly more money than expected with all of our 2008 fundraisers and The Fundraising Committee wants to say thanks to our Co-op families and volunteers who made it all possible.

• Thanks to Kate for photographing the finished pottery which we'll be seeing on various Co-op items (photo calendar, website, thank you gift to 2000 Degrees for the Cup Half-Full).

• Thanks for the great teamwork at the Cup Half-Full: the helper parents Kate, Paulina, Sabine and David; the helper Co-op Kids Nina, Thomas and Evan; and Fundraising Co-Chairs Deb, Aileen and Johnny.

• A special thanks to the families that signed up to bake and work at the Election Day Bake Sale. Many of you put in long hours and it showed! It was a great success and all of your hard work was much appreciated!

### Fundraising Through Groceries



Now is the time to sign up for January's Giant and Weiss Gift Cards. Please sign up (on the bulletin board) for **January's gift cards by December 21st.**

## Holiday Gift Giving

Submitted by Paulina Erices and Ona Feinberg (Alumni)

*Holidays are coming and I start looking around asking where I am going to fit more toys in my house! Sure, I believe that kids learn **through play** so I feel committed to keep an "environment that promotes learning." So I sat down with the 10 catalogs I got by mail and took a look at all those wonderful toys... It is overwhelming! There are so many fun things I would like to get... even some for myself... Plus, the boys enjoy almost everything... they actually have almost everything they can play with... I need help!!!!...*

### Educational toys from Parentmap.com

First, parents should understand that "all toys are educational," according to Danielle Kassow, Ph.D., research associate at Talaris Institute in Seattle. "Playing with rocks and sticks is educational." According to Kassow, the key to learning from play is the human interaction. "Children are learning every moment of their lives. The best kind of learning is through human interaction on a daily basis: cuddling, singing, reading, taking a walk."

What about claims that toys make kids smarter? "Don't buy a toy because you think it will make your child smarter," advises Kassow. "Children are born with a genetic blueprint, but parents have the greatest influence on how they develop. You can't make your child smarter. You can only give a child optimal experiences to enhance learning."

Written by Tera Schreiber

The following are some suggestions of alternative gifts that may be sent to family and friends.

**Spend time together.** Certificates for a day trip to the pool, the zoo, or a special performance are meaningful and special gifts.

**Encourage Children's hobbies.** Talk to the children to discover what they like to do. A class in martial arts, gymnastics, or a day ski pass might be most appreciated.

You can provide transportation and each time they go, remind the children the experience is a gift from you.

**Choose toys that have no real end, or winners and losers.** A box of scarves from a second hand store or irregular handmade building blocks can be surprisingly satisfying to children.

**Choose a toy you remember** loving from childhood and include a story about your memories with it.

**Make something** – a hat, a checkerboard, a kite. Children sense the difference when someone cares enough to make them something.

**Give something really useful.** Age 1: small silverware set. Age 2: flashlight. Age 3: step stool. Age 4: bowls, baskets, sewing kit. Age 5 and up: accessories to encourage your child's natural interests: swim goggles, a new basketball, art supplies, etc.

**Give something alive.** Bulbs in the fall, seeds in the spring, a houseplant or cactus in a hand-painted pot, unique thoughtful gifts. Always check before giving animals.

**Honor the child with a donation to a nonprofit organization** that addresses their concerns. As children get older they have their own concerns that are meaningful to them. Even the very young child can understand the importance of giving.

### Classic Toys, Better Gifts?

Playing cards	Board games
Rubber stamps	Marbles
Jacks	Wooden Toys
Slinkies	Tiddlywinks
Crayons, Markers, Paper	Watercolor paints
Finger-paints	Pick-up sticks
Wooden building blocks	Magnifying glasses
Magnets (larger ones)	Modeling clay
Paper dolls	Jump ropes
Wagons	Blackboards and chalk
Dress-up clothes	Color forms
Felt board and felt figures and shapes	