From the Desk of Mr. Peck

We are well past Christmas now, and students are starting to look forward to March Break, and perhaps a few teachers are looking forward to it too. But there is much work to accomplish before then. Report cards will be coming home on Friday, February 15th, and these will signal the end of just over a half year of learning. It also can signal a fresh start for those students who did not give the first half of the year their best effort. There is time to change gears, time to switch directions, time to set a new course. This is especially true for our grade 8 students who will be taking their final marks with them to high school. But it’s not just about marks. We believe that character is far more important than marks. As I say at every graduation ceremony, quoting from Walker Percy, “He got all A’s, but he flunked life.” Without good character, marks don’t mean a whole lot. Encourage your children to work hard and to aim for a good report card, but more importantly, encourage them to exhibit good character at home, at school and in the community.

Parking and Drop Off

Please follow the signs for parking and drop off. If you don’t, you are jeopardizing student safety. The Town of Bradford may ticket cars parked in contravention of the by-law posted in the drop off lane. Parking is NOT allowed on either side of the drop off island. Have your children prepared to exit on the island side so they can get out quickly and so you can move out of the way for other parents who are waiting behind you.

Lates

We seem to have a group of students who are habitually late. Sometimes this is their fault, and sometimes this is the fault of their parents. Lateness is not a good habit, especially as students get older and begin to prepare for the workforce. We who are parents know that employers don’t look kindly on tardiness. Please ensure that your son or daughter gets to school by 8:50 AM every day. This will give them time to say hello to their friends and get to their entrance door by bell time at 8:55.

Bus Cancellation Notification Process

The Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium posts all information regarding cancelled buses at www.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca. The Transportation Consortium also directly notifies media early on the mornings when school buses are cancelled. The message that schools are OPEN FOR LEARNING on bus cancellation days will continue to be emphasized. To reduce confusion and the volume of messages, bus cancellation and school event cancellation notices will not be posted on or distributed from www.scdsb.on.ca (info@scdsb.on.ca). A direct link to www.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca is also posted on the homepage of www.scdsb.on.ca.
Extra-curricular Activities W. H. Day and at all Ontario Public Schools

With respect to extra-curricular activities, we remain status quo. There have been some new discussions, some new legal developments and a new premier now governs the province. These may or may not have an impact on the situation. Of most concern to our grade 8 parents is the trip to Quebec City. The Elementary Teachers' Federation has indicated to us that they will be reviewing the current policy sometime before March 1st. After that review, we hope to have the information we need to make a decision.

Kindergarten Registration

If you have a child who will be 4 years old by December 31, 2013, then they are eligible to register for their first year of kindergarten. Please call the school to arrange an appointment for registration. Remember: W. H. Day is a Full Day Kindergarten site.

Mrs. Meeuwse

Mrs. Meeuwse has been keeping Simcoe County Schools clean and healthy places to learn since 1979, and she’s decided it’s time to focus on something different. Mrs. Meeuwse is retiring, and her last day at W. H. Day will be Friday, February 22nd. When the staff heard the news there was a collective sigh of sadness. Joyce will be greatly missed by staff and students alike, and she is leaving very big shoes to fill. She hopes to leave the mop and duster behind and give more thought to things like travelling, gardening and sewing. She also hopes to spend more time with her two granddaughters, Maddy and Cassidy. Although we are sad to see Mrs. Meeuwse go, we are certainly happy for her as she begins a new chapter of life. All of us in the W. H. Day Community wish her a long, healthy and prosperous retirement!

Broken New Year’s Resolutions

Does anyone in the community have a rowing machine or stationary bike which they purchased with good intentions, but which is now collecting dust in the garage or basement? We are looking for a donation of one of each to help supplement some of our programming needs. If you have either one of these machines in good shape which you wouldn’t mind parting with, please call Mrs. Mumford at the school. Thanks.

Character Recognition

The Simcoe County District School Board, through the Character Development Project Team, recognizes students, staff and volunteers who demonstrate good character at the annual Character Recognition Awards Evening. Each year nominations from schools, the Education Centre and the community are received highlighting the good character of our community members. From the nominations, 100 students, staff and volunteers are invited to the Education Centre to represent all the nominees in a celebration of all those who exemplify the SCDSB Commit to Character focus. The recognition process begins on January 14, 2013, and ends on February 22, 2013. The form is available on the SCDSB website under Character Education and can be dropped off to Mrs. Golding in the office to be sent to the board.
Changes to Daycare

If you are dropping off students to the YMCA daycare, or if you are picking up students at the daycare, please use the daycare entrance at the west end of the W. H. Day building. If more convenient, you may exit through the W. H. Day main doors.

Medic Alert

The Canadian MedicAlert® Foundation is a provider of emergency medical information services linked to customized medical bracelets and necklets. The StudentsFIRST program ensures that children across Canada, with medical conditions, allergies or special needs are protected by MedicAlert. With the rise in childhood asthma, diabetes and allergies, it is estimated that one in five children has a medical condition, allergy or special need that should be communicated in an emergency situation. The StudentsFIRST program has been created to provide students ages 4-18 with the 24-hour protection of the MedicAlert emergency medical information service at a discounted rate.

For more information on this program, please visit http://www.medicalert.ca/studentsfirst/

Additionally, registered First Nations and recognized Inuit people may be eligible for coverage for this program under Health Canada’s Non-Insured Health Benefits Program (NIHB). For more information, please visit http://www.medicalert.ca/firstnations/

Holidays during School Time

Parents often ask, “Is it OK for us to take our child out of school for a week. We are going on holidays.” The answer we are obliged to provide is “No”, even though we might be a little jealous. The Education Act (the laws which govern education in Ontario) states that “…every child…shall attend an elementary or secondary school on every school day from the first school day in September…until the last school day in June…” Unfortunately, holidays during school time are not government approved.

There are many reasons why parents take their kids on vacation during school time: off-season lower costs, family schedules, once in a lifetime opportunities, etc. Many vacations are wonderful learning experiences; other vacations are simply much needed lazy times on the beach. Regardless of the reason or the type of holiday, a week of missed school is a week of missed learning at school.

Many parents realize this and ask for work to be sent home. Generally speaking, we have found this to be unsatisfactory. First, making kids do homework on a vacation often creates the very stress you are trying to escape; secondly, the work package created by the teacher is often incomplete when the child returns (who wants to do homework on holidays?); thirdly, a teacher’s plans change according to how well the individuals in the class are progressing, so it is difficult to predict the nature of future lessons; and finally, what takes place in the classroom can rarely be duplicated with a pencil and paper task.

If you are planning on being away during school time, please notify your child’s homeroom teacher. He or she will send home a small notebook to use as a journal
and a list of possible activities which will help your child exercise his or her brain while away. If there happens to be some work that can be completed easily outside of the classroom, the teacher may include that as well.

**Errol Lee Concert – tickets are still available**

On **Tuesday February 12, 2013** from **7:00-8:00 pm**, W.H. Day is taking part in a **We Care Community Concert**. All of our families are welcome to attend to celebrate community caring together! **We Care Community Concerts** bring the greater school community together to participate in a creative blend of song and dance that supports character development, equity, inclusive education and bully prevention.

During the day students will be participating in presentations with Errol Lee specific to their divisions.

**Grades 5-8 Presentation: Give Respect, Get Respect**

Respect is the compilation of all the character qualities demonstrated with willingness, genuinely from the heart. Young people learn to be an example of respect. Supports character development, bully prevention, equity and inclusive education.

**Level: K-GR 4 Presentation: Golden Rule**

This concert presentation is accompanied by a song book written by Errol Lee, focusing on the importance of developing the character quality of empathy. Empathy helps us to understand how our behaviour feels to other people. The Law of Empathy is The Golden Rule. Children will be reading along with the songbook, singing along with the songs, dancing to the music and learning “The HERO Club Hand Signs.”

These will be followed by two afternoon workshops, one for Junior and one for Intermediate students.

For more information about Errol Lee, feel free to visit his website [http://errollee.com/](http://errollee.com/)

On the evening of the concert, books, CDs, posters and T-Shirts will be available for purchase. Taxes are included in all pricing and range from $5 to $20.

Space is limited! Tickets for the evening concert will be sold on a **first-come, first-served** basis. If you would like to attend, please return this form to the school office in a sealed envelope or baggie.

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Youngest child at school: _________________________

Teacher: ____________________________

(we will send your tickets home with your youngest child)

Total number attending: ________ X $2.00 = ________ (amount A)

I have included a cheque or cash for amount A. Please make cheques payable to W. H. Day Elementary School.

**NOTE:** students may only attend if accompanied by parents.
Important Upcoming Dates

February 15  Report Cards go home
February 18  Family Day – no classes
February 21  Mental Health Presentations for grade 8 students
February 22  Grade 8 Graduation Pictures
February 22  Family Movie Night (watch for information coming home)
March 11 – 15  March Break – no classes this week
March 20  The First Day of Spring!