

# DOUGLAS DIGEST

office: 978.266.2560  
principal: Dr. Christopher Whitbeck  
school: <http://douglas.abschools.org>  
PTO: <http://www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org>

May 2, 2016

## Douglas Digest

### Editors:

Sharon Metzger  
Jill Maxwell

### Distribution:

Michele Walsh  
Sarah Protopopov  
Robin Curley

The Douglas School PTO publishes the Digest seven times each school year.

**Next issue: June 8**

We welcome ideas and feedback at [sharon.metzger@gmail.com](mailto:sharon.metzger@gmail.com).

## Ask Me to Sing

The Farmers Market is about to start and I hope it will be as crowded and busy as it was in the fall when I met a young man. He was handsomely dressed in a blue blazer. I didn't know him, but he was probably ten years old. Pinned to his jacket was a sign: "Ask Me to Sing."

So I asked and in a high, sweet, smooth voice he sang "Home on the Range." No instrument or recorded backup—he just closed his eyes and sang forth. And I gave him some money, and thanked him for his voice and song. As I said that I admired his courage, I saw his little brother and I asked him if he also sang. "No, not yet," he replied.

Turned out the older brother was raising money to support his choir. Not seeking funds for himself, but for his group—to purchase sheet music and jackets for fellow singers who cannot afford to buy them.

I enjoyed the song, and I walked on with a light heart. My route took me around to the other end of the market and to my surprise, I found what I thought was the same young man with the same sign offering to sing, and the same little brother standing by.

"Oh," said I, "You've moved. Remember me?"

"You must have met my twin brother who is working the other side of the market."

"What about the little guy—is he a twin, too?"

"No, he just wanders back and forth to give each of us his support."

"And I still don't sing," said the little guy.

So I bought another song—"America the Beautiful." And in that place, in that moment, on that day it was just that—beautiful.

It's a long-standing personal rule of mine to give money to people or groups making music out on the street. They are not begging. They have something to give. They keep my world from being drab and joyless and ordinary. I'm grateful for having live music from live people as part of my day. And I'm grateful to be in the presence of those who overcome their inner anxiety and get out in public and take the chance that people like me will notice them, appreciate them, affirm them, and put money in a hat or an instrument case. Not only do I always contribute, but—and this is really important—I stand and listen for a while, and applaud them at the end of a song.

I play a few instruments reasonably well, and my singing is reasonably acceptable. But I cannot imagine working myself up into a state of mind where I would risk busking out on the street alone. I considered giving it a try, but asked the question all buskers have to endure: "What if nobody notices—what if nobody puts money in my hat?" And if I was ten years old? Well, forget that...

To those who can sing and play and to those who take their chances out on the street: Thank you! You add graceful notes to your corners of the world.

Don't pass them by. Stop. Look. Listen. And always pay your dues. You won't be sorry if you do—only sorry if you don't and just pass on by.

*C. Whitbeck*

## From the PTO

We're out of the winter doldrums and into the crazy fun of spring. Hooray! This may mean pulling the lacrosse stick out of the garage or planting seeds for the garden—but in PTO land, it means a fabulous time full of fantastic people. Just think of this:

The happiest hoedown east of the Mississippi' (also known as the 17th Annual Spring Social & Auction on April 2) had us kickin' our heels and jawin' with friends all night long. When we rode off into the sunset after, we had also raised about \$40,000—a nice chunka change for our trusty classroom assistants. Hats off to our fearless rodeo queens, Tiffany Petranto and Paige Johnson, for putting it together, along with their rodeo court, who wrangled donations, classroom art projects, decorations, and so much more. (And if you city-slickers doubt us, rodeo courts really are a thing.) And a giant tip o' the hat to all of you who came, donated, and/or bid on items. Without you, we would've just had a pile of burlap instead of a rip-snortin' good time.

We may not have invited any students on April 2, but they've been plenty entertained, too. Grades 3–6 have already wowed us with their extremely diverse abilities during their Talent Shows, and the downstairs grades are polishing their acts for one last show in May. This year, sixth-graders are even emceeding the events!

And all Douglas students got to shine in the March Reading Challenge. Our bookworms read so much that their spaceship "traveled" round trip from Jupiter to the Sun and part-way back again! They capped it off with an all-school celebration that was out of this world. (Ask your student to tell you about the NASA engineer who came and about Dr. Whitbeck's culinary astronaut adventure.)

With so many readers, it's no surprise that our first-ever Willow Books Night was a gargantuan success, too! We packed the store and raised money, while raising readers in the process. Thanks especially to Mrs. Smith, Dr. Whitbeck, Mrs. Giannetto, and Mr. Foley for reading so eloquently to the admiring throngs.

There's so much Douglas happiness that happens every day, and we're lucky to be part of this amazingly active and fun community. Spring has just begun, so keep an eye out for the many more events on the horizon—the Festival of Cultures, Douglas Day, Lowell Spinners, and more. We hope to see you there!

*Abigail Vargus and Annie Hamill*  
PTO Cochairs

## Dates to Remember

**May 9, 10, and 11**

MCAS testing, Grades 3, 4, 6

**May 9, 10, 11, 16, and 17**

MCAS testing, Grade 5

**Saturday, May 14**

Festival of Cultures

**Tuesday, May 24**

Staff Appreciation Luncheon, 11am

**Thursday, May 26**

K-2 Talent Show, 9:45am

Alumni Reception, 4pm

**Friday, May 27**

Memorial Day Program, 10am

K Screening, Day 1

**Monday, May 30**

Memorial Day, No School

**Tuesday, May 31**

K Screening, Day 2

**Monday, June 6**

Douglas Day

**Tuesday, June 7**

PTO General Meeting, 8pm,

Douglas Cafetorium

## Save the Dates

**Wednesday, June 22**

Last Day of School; early dismissal

Sixth-Grade Graduation

**Friday, June 24**

Canobie Lake Park

**Monday, June 27**

Lowell Spinners, 7pm



## Snack Cart Donations

See snack details on the PTO website.

**May 5** Popcorn; Grade 1

**May 12** Grades K and 6

**May 19** Popcorn; Grade 5

**May 26** Grades 3 and 4

**June 2** Popcorn Day; Grade 2

**June 9** Last day of snack cart

## Scrip

The final Scrip drive starts this week. Order your end-of-year gift cards by Friday, May 13.



## Spotlight: Festival of Cultures

Come celebrate our rich ethnic and cultural diversity in the annual Douglas and Conant Festival of Cultures on May 14, 5-8:30 pm at RJ Grey Junior High. The theme of this year is sports! So come in your traditional clothing, or in your favorite sports jersey if you can!

It may look like you're entering a school, but you'll spend the evening "traveling" from country to country. Ambassadors greet you and share their culture—and their food. (YUM.) Ever wanted

to visit Brazil? Cambodia? China? You can—along with Greece, India, Japan, Mexico, and Russia!—at the Festival of Cultures.

The kids can participate in the scavenger hunt to find a hidden item on each table and get their "passport" stamped. You will feast on mouth-watering international dishes (contributed by attending families), and you will see our own Conant and Douglas students perform a variety of music and dance. It will be amazing to see the wonderful Indian, Russian, Irish and Chinese dances, a real Japanese lion dance, our Douglas K-3 kids in a Japanese mini-play, Conant kindergartners in an African dance, and Chinese and Philippine music. Don't forget the sing-along with Dr. Whitbeck and Mr. Broggi, with all kids on stage, and to top it off, all 500 visitors singing "This Land Is Your Land" together.

Entrance is \$5 per person, and each family is asked to bring a potluck dish for 6-8 people. We also need a lot of volunteers to make this event a success. All information, including a link to [Volunteerspot](http://Volunteerspot), can be found at [foc.douglasschoolpto.org](http://foc.douglasschoolpto.org).

We hope to see you at this very colorful event!

## Thank You...Merci...Gracias! ಧನ್ಯವಾದಗಳು 谢谢

To all of our amazing volunteers who've clipped box tops, popped corn, checked attendance, tended library-goers, and so much more, THANK YOU! We can't let this opportunity go by without recognizing a few big event-makers, too.

**Willow Books Night:** Thanks to **Caitlyn Ryan** and the Eagle Shopping Rewards team for making a first-time event into an instant success!

**Talent Shows:** **Jen Standley** took the reins and made corralling 40 talented third- and fourth-graders look easy. She handed the reins off to **Sangeeta Tipirneni**, who made our fifth- and sixth-graders shine.

**March Reading Challenge and Read Aloud Day:** **Sasha Opel** led an amazing team of volunteers to make sure March never felt boring. It was stellar!

**Spring Clean-Up:** Our windblown beds no longer are hiding anything but plants, thanks to the hard work of the **Reynolds, Spadano-Gasbarro, Xiao/Shen,** and **Zachary** families. What a great way to welcome spring!

## How Will YOU Get Involved Next Year?

Have you been wanting to dip your toe into the Douglas PTO waters, but weren't sure where to begin? We can help! As we think ahead to next year, we are beginning to fill some very exciting PTO roles. Wishing you could get involved but can't come during school hours? So many options—just keep reading!

- In possession of some mad tech skillz? Help with the IT side of the website and email aliases.
- Organized and happiest behind the scenes? Join our Douglas Directory team. Two positions are open to create one of the most-used resources at the school!
- A shopping guru, always looking for a great deal? Coordinate the Scrip gift card program!

If you are all about being in the school with the kids, there's an app for that too!

- Love seeing the whole school get excited? Head up our Cultural Enrichment program, and you'll organize some of the most memorable days of Douglas!

If you would like to get involved, please contact Annie Hamill ([ptoannie@gmail.com](mailto:ptoannie@gmail.com)). We'd love to have you aboard!