

DOUGLAS DIGEST

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Douglas Digest

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The Douglas School PTO publishes the Digest seven times each school year. **Next issue: March 6.**

We welcome ideas and feedback.
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From the PTO

Welcome back from your winter break! The PTO has been busy planning—including some of our must fun events for the year. Please mark your calendars and join us for the following:

- Our next general meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 24, at 7:30pm. At this meeting, we will have members from the Acton Finance Committee and the Acton-Boxborough School Committee to discuss Fin-Com's Point of View document. The committee members will also be able to answer some questions about the group's take on the district's master plan.
- Our Spring Social and Auction takes place Saturday, March 25, at 6pm. This is our largest fundraiser of the year, and we need many volunteers and auction donations from parents and our business community to make this event a success. Please keep an eye out for instructions on how to purchase your tickets, line up your sitter, share your donation ideas, and help us plan for the fiesta! To find out more or to share an idea, email the auction co-chairs, Tiffany Petranto and Paige Johnson, at auction@douglasschoolpto.org.
- The Festival of Cultures will be held on Saturday, April 8, from 5–8:30pm at RJ Grey. See the Spotlight section on page 2 for lots of information and great opportunities to participate in this special evening!
- Movie Night is on the horizon! Grades K-2 take over the gym on Friday, January 27, with Looney Tunes at 6pm and the feature film at 6:30. The Grade 3-5 Movie Night is Friday, February 10, same bat time. The kids love watching the movie, eating free popcorn, and meeting friends. A link to vote for the movie will be coming soon!

—Annie Hamill and Tracey Zachary,
PTO Co-Chairs

The Meanwhile Factor

The Winter Solstice put me in a state combining mild euphoria and self-reflection. The Greek philosopher Epictetus said, way back in the 1st century BC: "Why worry about being a nobody when what matters is being a somebody in those areas of your life over which you have control, and in which you can make a difference?" I attend to my corner of the world as best I can with the tools I have. But now, as much as ever, ugliness exists in everyone's corner of the world. A tsunami of information flows over us in journalism, punditry, blogs, and editorials from newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, and the internet. We're pretty well covered on the negative side of the ongoing human enterprise. Wars, corruption, crime, disease, disaster, and all the other manifestations of evil in the world are well publicized, well documented, and well deplored. There are plenty of reasons for pessimism. The wrongs of the world are clear.

However, I do not shut my eyes and turn away. I'm as outraged and frustrated as most of us are. I've started to use *The Meanwhile Factor*:

Meanwhile... I remain astonished at the good and lovely that does exist. Most of it is free and readily available if I'll look for it.

Meanwhile... I am warmed by a student who leans on me during an assembly.

Meanwhile... I smile back at a bus driver who has just emptied a very loud bus.

Meanwhile... I am profoundly grateful to those who inspire hope—a muscular, active hope that acknowledges noble human accomplishments in the past and the ongoing possibilities in the foreseeable future. Spencer West kind of hope or Ilhan Ohmar kind of hope. (Don't know their stories? Take a moment to feel hopeful and look them up.)

I choose to focus on the positive side of human experience—on the possibilities in the small events of a given day that might lift the spirits of those around me. I am a storyteller at heart. I try to be awake to the news of the immediate ordinary world; to make sense of what I see; to pass my thoughts along. And to offer praise where praise is due. I want to have credible, worthy answers to the three Great Questions:

What on Earth have you done?

What will you think of next?

Who do you think you are?

I search for the good stuff in the world in my own life. I want to be open to what comes next; I don't want to miss it. And when I find it, I pass it on. I am often the one who laughs.

Meanwhile... I welcome you to join me.

C. Whitbeck

Dates to Remember

Tuesday, January 10

School Council Meeting, 3:15pm
General Kindergarten Meeting, ABRHS auditorium, 7pm (snow date: Weds. 1/11, Parker Damon cafetorium)

Thursday, January 12

AB School Committee, RJ Grey, 7pm

Friday, January 13

All-School Pajama Day

Monday, January 16

NO SCHOOL—Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Tuesday, January 17

Exhibitions: Grade 4 and Mrs. Hubbell's Grade 6 class, 6-6:30pm

January 17 & 23, February 8 & 13

Kindergarten Tours

Wednesday, January 18

Exhibitions: Grade K, 6-6:30pm; Grade 3, 6:30-7:00pm

Thursday, January 19

EARLY RELEASE (elementary only)
Exhibitions: Grade 1, 6-6:30pm; Grade 2, 6:30-7pm, and Grade 5, 7-7:30pm

Saturday, January 21

Budget Saturday, RJ Grey, 9am-2pm

Tuesday, January 24

PTO General Meeting, 7:30pm

Friday, January 27

Movie Night (Grades K-2) 6pm

Thursday, February 2

EARLY RELEASE (elementary only)
AB School Committee Budget Hearing, RJ Grey, 7pm

Friday, February 10

Movie Night (Grades 3-5) 6pm

Thursday, February 16

EARLY RELEASE (elementary only)
AB School Committee Budget Hearing, RJ Grey, 7pm

February 20-24

NO SCHOOL (Winter Break)

Tuesday, February 28

Douglas Kindergarten Information Night, 7pm

Wednesday, March 1

March Reading Challenge begins

Thursday, March 2

EARLY RELEASE (elementary only)
AB School Committee, RJ Grey, 7pm

Tuesday, March 7

School Council Meeting, 3:15pm

Tuesday, March 14

PTO General Meeting, 7:30pm



Spotlight:

Festival of Cultures

Mark your calendars: the annual Douglas and Conant **Festival of Cultures** lights up RJ Grey on Saturday April 8, 2017, from 5-8:30pm. This

year's theme is "The Arts!"

The Festival of Cultures is a colorful event where you travel from country to country by visiting ambassador tables, feast on mouth-watering international dishes (contributed by attending families), and be dazzled by incredible performances by our own Conant and Douglas children. You can find a video and pictures on the updated Festival of Cultures PTO website, foc.douglasschoolpto.org.

What's new this year? What can you do to get ready?

Ambassadors: Sign-up is now open! Last year we had many of our favorites, including China, India, Japan, Mexico, and Russia, as well as three new countries (Cambodia, Brazil, and Greece)! We would LOVE to keep this momentum going and have a goal of three new tables for 2017, including a USA table. The USA ambassador could focus on a region of the US, such as New England, OR do the entire USA! We have never had a USA table at the FOC, and we would love to have one! NOTE: While most ambassadors do hail

from the countries they represent, this is NOT at all a requirement. If you have knowledge of or are passionate about a country and if you have objects you can show to children (games, art, musical instruments, fashion, etc.), then please consider being an ambassador! New countries are always welcome—or come help at existing tables!

Emcees: We are looking for two or three sixth-grade students who are willing to be the Masters of Ceremonies at this year's festival. Sign-up via email by Tuesday, January 17.

Potluck: Several new restaurants donated to the potluck last year, including True West, Bueno y Sano, Ixtapa, El Huipil, and more! If you have a connection to a restaurant or food business that you think would be willing to donate to the potluck, please contact us.

Performances: Sign-up is now open, but space is limited, so don't delay!

Additional information and sign-up links can be found on the PTO website under the Events tab or at foc.douglasschoolpto.org. Festivalofcultures@douglasschoolpto.org is your go-to email for questions or to sign up for any of the items listed above. Thank you for your support in the past years. We look forward to another great festival on April 8!



Thanks from the PTO

It's hard to believe we're halfway through the school year! Douglas has been busting with activity since day one, and there's no end in sight. A few events have come and gone since our last issue, and we have so many people to thank!

Book Fair: Many of you were able to see and appreciate the logistical magic that goes into getting the Douglas Book Fair set up and broken down (and set up and broken down and set up and broken down...), so you know why we owe a BIG THANK YOU to Sandy Munger, Amber Harvey, and Jennifer Standley (and all their "heavies") for making it look like it's no big deal.

Scrip Giftback Gift Cards: A round of applause to Stacey Smith, who has done a great job organizing the program—and earning us money to boot! Shopping gets even more fun when you can give back at the same time.

Tech Team: Did you ever notice how very many ways there are to find answers to your Douglas questions? From the Eagle Eye Weekly to Facebook to the PTO website, our technology team has things solidly under control. Thank you, Bill Hekking, Jakki Eckmann, Holly Fitzgerald, and Lori Fassman, for keeping cyber-Douglas zipping along!

Parent Volunteers: We also would like to thank the many parent volunteers. We appreciate the hard work of those of you who contribute your time and energy to Douglas School. Whether you re-shelve books in the library, carefully collect Box Tops, guide students through nature walks, donate time to the book fair, shop through AmazonSmile, or give time and energy in any other way, we thank you. 2016 couldn't have happened without you, and 2017 will be better because of you.

Annual Giving: Please accept our heartfelt thanks for your contributions to our Annual Giving Campaign. We are celebrating 30% participation by our Douglas families. To date, we have raised just over \$16,000—plus another \$450 through matching gifts! Those funds will go a long way to support so many incredible programs!

Haven't yet found just the right way to volunteer at Douglas? Browse the "Get Involved" section of www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org or contact Anna McHargue for more information (annackahn@hotmail.com).

...Save these Special Dates

Saturday, March 25

Spring Social & Auction, 6pm

Saturday, April 8

Festival of Cultures, 5pm

Snack Cart Donations

See snack details on the PTO website.

January 12 Grades 2 and 1

January 19 Popcorn Day; Grade K

January 26 Grades 6 and 5

February 2 Popcorn Day; Grade 4

February 9 Grades 3 and 2

February 16 Popcorn Day; Grade 1

February 23 No school

March 2 Popcorn; Grade K

March 9 Grades 6 and 5