



# McCarthy-Towne Bulletin

February 4, 2011  
Volume 40, No 6

## Slip Sliding into February

by David Krane, McT Principal

I write this on a snow day, one where an almost a foot of snow has fallen overnight to rest on the huge snow banks already out there. Today marks the fourth snow day in the last nine school days and that has to be a record somewhere. It is, after all, winter in New England and we are supposed to be accustomed to the changes and moveable nature of, well, nature. But sometimes this much nature can feel very weighty, indeed. It has also become harder to develop and maintain a rhythm in the classroom when there are so many starts and stops. But the staff here is remarkable as they guide the kids back into regular and normal routines. Soon enough we will be back in a normal groove and the school day will assume it's more typically bustling and buzzing form.

We have also completed two tour days around the snow days. The tours have become a time that I look forward to as my understanding and knowledge of all things McCarthy-Towne continues to grow. I enjoy my role in bringing up the points of pride about McT. Prominent among these is the way that we look at process in learning. Children bring very individual learning styles to school and teaching children that their learning is an individualized process of guided discovery is part of what we do here at McT. Understanding that learning and understanding is a process can help to remove some of the anxiety that kids may bring to the classroom. Using the visual

arts in the classroom is just one way to illustrate and demonstrate that process. Seeing that process displayed as we guide curious visitors through the school is one of the biggest points of pride here.

This is a good opportunity to encourage all of our McCarthy-Towne families to come out and be a part of the Parker Damon Building International Night celebration on Friday, May 6. This is an authentic community event, one in which everyone can participate. It is a celebration of diversity and heritage, not just within our school, but within Acton, too. I encourage everyone to come and join the festivities.

I close with wonderful news. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) recently emailed Acton Public Schools saying that "...a recalculation of AYP data for certain... students" has resulted in McCarthy-Towne achieving AYP for 2010. Accordingly, McT NCLB status for the math subgroup has been changed to No Status, which is very positive. All of the teachers in this school work incredibly hard in the service of all the children here and that cannot be overstated. I want to thank this entire school community for all your continued support of our amazing staff. I would also like to thank the families of McCarthy-Towne for making this school the unique and remarkable place that it is.

## Emergency Food Drive for the Acton Food Pantry

McCarthy-Towne Student Council is sponsoring an Emergency Food Drive for the Acton Food Pantry. **We will be collecting food in the front lobby through February 17.** Donation needs include cereal, pasta, soup, spaghetti sauce, rice pilaf, canned fruit and macaroni & cheese. If you have any questions, please contact the McT office.



## Mark Your Calendar

### FEBRUARY

#### 9, Wednesday

Early Literacy Fundraiser at Willow Books, 6-8 PM

Bullying and Cyber-Bullying Presentation for parents, 7:30-9PM, R.J. Grey Jr. High Library

#### 10, Thursday

Winter Band Concert, 10 AM (Rescheduled date)

#### 11, Friday

School Spirit Wear orders due

#### 14, Monday

Scrip orders due

#### 16, Wednesday

Community Assembly  
PTSO Meeting, 7 PM

#### 17, Thursday

Food Drive for the Acton Food Pantry Ends

#### 18, Friday

Box Tops Due

#### 21-25

NO SCHOOL, Winter Recess

### MARCH

#### 19, Wednesday

PTSO Meeting, 7PM

#### 16, Wednesday

Community Assembly

#### 19, Saturday

McT Auction, 5:30 PM

#### 22, Tuesday

MCAS Testing, Gr. 3, 4, 5, 6

#### 23, Wednesday

MCAS Testing, Gr. 3, 4, 5, 6

#### 24, Thursday

MCAS Testing, Gr. 4

#### 31, Thursday

Donelan's Receipts due



## from Tammy Sarnelli and Michele Caterina, PTSO co-chairs

Four snow days in three weeks! Temperatures below zero! Right now I am sure we are all wishing for warmer weather. Imagine sunny days, warm sand and a good book on the beach. Sounds great, doesn't it? **Mark your calendars for Saturday March 19 for the McT Auction—Life's a Beach.**

What a perfect theme for a fun-filled evening after the winter we are having. Our auction chairs, Heidi and Jill, have been hard at work with all of the volunteers to make this a wonderful and memorable night!!! Come join the party. You will not be disappointed.

When you are snowed in and feel a bit of cabin fever coming on, think donations to the auction. Handmade items, event tickets, wine baskets, vacation homes... the list goes on and on! Also, check out the auction T-shirts in the office.

Did you know... you can access the Amazon website through the PTSO website? You will find the link on the right side of the homepage. Every time you buy through the Amazon link, McT receives revenue. You only have to buy what you would normally buy. Check it out. There is no sign-up necessary and no extra fees.

**Our next PTSO meeting will take place on Wednesday, February 16 at 7 PM** in the Faculty Room (the room at the top of the stairs). Come and join the discussion. We hope to see you there. And remember that you can always find PTSO information on our website—[mctptso.org](http://mctptso.org).

### International Night Q&A

Save the date for International Night—**Friday, May 6 at 6 PM**, Parker Damon Building. Here are some answers to a couple frequently asked questions:

**Question:** My family moved to America generations ago. I do not identify myself as "international". Can I then be a part of "International" Night?

**Answer:** International Night is for ALL families from McCarthy-Towne and Merriam schools. We are all Americans first and then have our roots in some other corner of the world. International Night proudly celebrates America as a part of the International community and encourages you to come and enjoy the evening as an American. If you can relate to another country as your cultural ethnicity and would like to share the culture with the community, that's wonderful as well.

**Question:** I am an American citizen. Can I represent our country 'USA' in International Night?

**Answer:** American culture and heritage has a unique position in the world. American culture encompasses our rich history, our preferences for sports, our scientific and technological innovations, our popular culture that has expressed itself through movies, music, fashion, theater, architecture etc. Even American cuisine is distinctive in many ways.

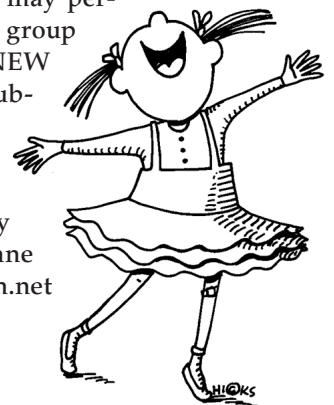
Come celebrate America as a nation, by putting up a booth on USA in the global village or having your kids dressing up or putting up a performance representing an American icon. Bring in a food like a pie, salad, barbecue, seafood to share with in our international potluck.

### Lip-Sync Extravaganza—Save the Date

**Mark your calendars for our 4th Annual McT Lip-Sync Extravaganza, scheduled for Saturday, April 2 from 4:30-6:15 PM.** This is always a favorite for the kids and you don't want to miss it!

To participate: Sign-up sheets will be going out in March BUT it is not TOO EARLY to start thinking about what song you would like to perform, and if you would like to do it individually or in a group. Take the February break, especially if you are going to perform in a group, to pick your song and start practicing.

We will once again be limiting the songs to 2-2½ minutes so as to accommodate all the groups that want to perform. We will also be limiting each group to just one song, although individuals may perform both individually and in a group or in two different groups. **NEW THIS YEAR**—you will need to submit a copy of the lyrics along with your sign-up sheet (we need to make sure all the lyrics are age appropriate). Any questions, please contact Lynne Densen ([lynne.densen@verizon.net](mailto:lynne.densen@verizon.net) or 978-266-2952).



## Early Literacy Event at Willow Books



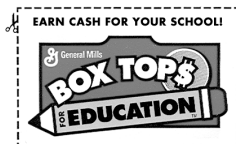
**Come to Willow Books in Acton on Wednesday, February 9 from 6–8 PM** and enjoy stories read by many of your favorite teachers and staff. The exact times for each reader are attached to this bulletin.

This is a terrific and fun event for everyone that directly benefits our youngest literacy learners (this is NOT a PTSSO fundraiser). **Willow Books will be generously donating 15% of all sales during this Story Time event directly to Sharon Ryan's "Teachers and Families as Literacy Partners" seminars for support materials.**

Sharon Ryan, McT's Reading Specialist, will again be providing seminars entitled "Teachers and Families as Literacy Partners" this spring for both incoming Kindergarten parents and parents of current Kindergartners moving on to 1st grade. These seminars will provide parents with resources and skills to use over the summer to nurture literacy in their children. The program will include enjoyable and engaging literacy materials for each family to take home and use over the summer and throughout the year. This exciting evening, hosted by Willow Books, will help to fund these literacy seminars and the fun take-home materials. Thank you in advance for helping our youngest literacy learners.

Please contact Sharon Ryan (sryan@mail.ab.mec.edu) with any questions about the Willow Books event or the literacy seminars.

## Box Tops Due in February!



Thank you for taking the time to clip and collect Box Tops. Those little 10¢ Box Tops really do add up! **The next collection due date is Friday, February 18.** This is a very easy way we can raise money for our school.

It's really simple: Just clip Box Tops off the product package and collect them in an envelope or Ziploc bag. Send them to school with your child or drop-off collections in the large, collection box just inside the main office. Please label the collection with your child's name, grade and teacher. This important information is used to track rewards for the classroom contest! You can also drop them in a blue box labeled "McCarthy-Towne Box Tops" at either Roche Bros or Donelan's supermarkets.

If you have any questions please contact Julie Driscoll (bobina44@comcast.net).

## McT Spirit Wear Sale is Here!

Have you seen the samples of the new McT Spirit Wear in the office? Have your kids been talking about some of the new items they would like? Keeping meaning to turn in your order form?



Well, it is not too late to take advantage of this very popular sale! **The deadline to order is Friday, February 11** (orders should be sent home by March 14). We have a great selection of items including the McT 40th Anniversary long-sleeve T-shirt, jersey blankets, fleece jackets and the very popular flannel pants. Samples can be viewed either at the PTSSO website or in the office. Most items can be personalized for an additional charge. Order forms went home last week, but additional order forms are available in the office or on the PTSSO website—[www.mctptso.org/store](http://www.mctptso.org/store).

Please remember that items are not returnable as they are customized for our school. If you are unsure of a size, it is recommended to order a size larger. Please contact Kerry Bremer (kbremer@mail.ab.mec.edu) with any questions.

## MCAS Dates for Spring 2011

Students in grades 3, 4, 5 and 6 will be taking MCAS tests in the spring of 2011. Please avoid scheduling trips and appointments during the MCAS testing periods. Testing begins at the beginning of the school day, so students should avoid late arrival to school. If they arrive after their class begins the test, they will not be able to take the test that day.

### English Language Arts Reading Comprehension

Grades 3, 5, 6: Tuesday March 22 and Wednesday, March 23

Grade 4: Wednesday, March 23 and Thursday, March 24

### English Language Arts Composition (grade 4)

Tuesday, March 22  
Make-up date—Thursday, March 31

### Mathematics (grades 3, 4, 5, 6)

Tuesday, May 10 and Wednesday, May 11

### Science, Technology & Engineering (grade 5)

Tuesday, May 17 and Wednesday, May 18

## School Committee Update

by Chris Hanlon

A portion of the day-long school committee meeting on January 22 focused on the Acton Public Schools (APS) budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Here are a few of the topics discussed that should be of interest to MCT families:

Building principals and district administration presented a preliminary priority list for needs to be included in the upcoming budget as funds are available. The top three priorities are equipping remaining 3rd grade classrooms with Interactive whiteboards (SMART boards), purchasing K-5 science textbooks (first of a three year cycle), and equipping all 1st and 2nd grade classrooms with SMART boards. Adding mathematics assistants who would provide math support for regular education students and increasing classroom assistant hours by 18 hours per week per school are the next two priorities. It was noted that this list is subject to change as the budget process continues.

School committee members restated their opinion that the school district should ideally be in a position to budget for the necessary number of assistant hours. Then PTSO funds could be used for other purposes such as student enrichment. This position was stated as an ideal, however, not an impending change in the upcoming budget.

Administrators also commented on the continued need to provide professional development opportunities for the staff.

The next meeting for the APS School Committee is February 17, at which meeting parents could contribute their opinions to the ongoing budget process. Parents interested in running for one of three open seats on next year's school committee are encouraged to begin the process. Discussions with current or former committee members are a great way to investigate the responsibilities and requirements of the position. To e-mail all members of the Acton Public School Committee, write to [apsc@acton-ma.gov](mailto:apsc@acton-ma.gov). To e-mail all members of the Acton -Boxborough Regional School Committee, write to <mailto:abrsc@acton-ma.gov>.

### Donelan's Receipts—Keep Collecting!



Thank you all for the great response to our call for Donelan's receipts. The number of receipts turned in so far is simply amazing. **Please continue to collect and turn in the receipts until March 31, 2011.** Please contact Nicole Lippa ([lippanicole2008@comcast.net](mailto:lippanicole2008@comcast.net)) if you have any questions. Please keep up the great work collecting those receipts. It really adds up!

## Tidbits from Tina

from Tina Morgan, MCT School Counselor

### More Who's Teaching Who?

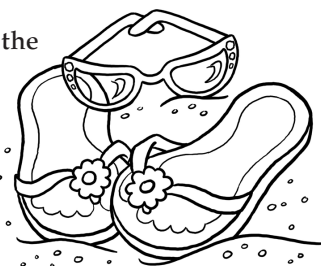
Last month I described some of the things I learned from Kelly, my oldest child. While I thought my job as a parent was to teach, I soon discovered that often times I was the student and my children were the teachers.

Brian, now 30, with his own family, taught me that there are different ways to cope with life. My brain always knew that was true, but my heart seemed to often override that concept. After all, I am a counselor and I firmly believe that it helps to talk to a trusted friend, relative, colleague when I am bothered by something. Of course, I wanted my children to see the benefit of such sharing and I was sure it would make them feel better. It worked for me, so I did my very best to encourage Brian to talk to me when he was upset. He would have none of it! Instead of baring his soul and letting me help him with my experienced active listening skills (ha ha), he would race to his room and close the door. He would not talk. I recall one time he stomped to the basement and spent what seemed like an eternity, pummeling the punching bag we had put up for him. The house shook and I held my breath, wondering what would happen next. A few minutes later he calmly came upstairs and asked me if I would please get him a couple of band-aids. His knuckles were bleeding from all the punching, but he was calm and clearly felt better. To this day I don't know what was bothering him, but I did learn that he copes with life's problems in a very different way than his mother. Physical exercise, including punching a punching bag, works for him. Later he may talk, but not until after he releases the tension inside him.

Because of Brian, I am a better counselor today. While I still believe in talking/listening to cope with life's stresses, I also know that there are other useful strategies. Maybe your child needs to go for a run, paint a picture, build with Legos, read a book, or even punch a punching bag. Sometimes I do my best work at school by NOT talking to your children! You can thank Brian that I truly value these other approaches and your children's right to choose what works for them!

# The Auction is Coming—Get Involved!

**This year's Life's A Beach Auction will be held on Saturday, March 19** at the Devens Commons Center in Devens, MA. The Auction is our largest fundraiser of the year and its success is vital to our school's ability to give our children the support they deserve. In the past, funds that we raise have supplemented the Acton Public Schools budget to support contracted services such as classroom, reading, and library assistants.



Although we have some dedicated individuals on the Auction committee, they can't do it all! **We need YOU!** Besides attending the auction, there are many ways to join us. Please consider donating an item or a service. Items offered by our families in the past have included signed sports memorabilia, theater tickets, beach and other types of house rentals, services such as interior design help, baked goods, and personally designed crafts. We encourage you to donate as individuals or groups (we happen to know that some of the groups that donate have whole evening of fun making or thinking up their donation for the auction!). Please save used items for our spring yard sale!

Not sure what to donate? Please check out last year's auction booklet on the Auction website for inspiration—[www.mctptso.org/fundraising/auction2011](http://www.mctptso.org/fundraising/auction2011).

Another way to help contribute to our success is to help your child sell raffle tickets! Be on the lookout in your child's backpack for the packet that will go home Friday, February 4th. Each student will get two books of tickets. The prices for the tickets are \$2 per ticket or 3 for \$5.

This year's winners will receive an iPad for 1st prize, an iPod Touch for 2nd place, and a Flip video camera for 3rd place. Also, please consider volunteering an hour of your time selling raffle tickets on February weekends at local venues. The schedule and time slots will be listed in McT News! Have more questions about the raffle? Please contact Kim Clark ([kclark1111@yahoo.com](mailto:kclark1111@yahoo.com)) for more information.

## T-SHIRT ALERT!

Get your official 20th annual McCarthy-Towne Auction T-shirt TODAY! This year, there are 2 amazing style choices. Please see samples hanging up in the McCarthy-Towne main office. Prices are \$12 each, 4 or more are only \$10 each. Sizes available: child XS (2-4), S (6-8), M (10-12), L (14-16), XL (18-20) and adult S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL. Downloadable order forms are available on the PTSO Website— [www.mctptso.org/fundraising/auction2011](http://www.mctptso.org/fundraising/auction2011).

For additional information about the McT Life's A Beach Auction, please contact Co-Chairs Heidi Dalaklis (978-635-0421, [hm.dalaklis@verizon.net](mailto:hm.dalaklis@verizon.net)) or Jill Defoe (978-263-4848, [defoe@verizon.net](mailto:defoe@verizon.net)).

## Scrip Gift Card Program

Thank you to all the families that ordered Scrips in the month of January. Scrips continues to be a great way to help our school raise money without having to "buy" anything in addition to your usual purchases, so we will continue to offer the Scrip program on a monthly basis until the end of the school year. **We have raised over \$2,800 ytd!**

Order forms went out last week, but can be found on the PTSO website—[www.mctptso.org/fundraising/scrip](http://www.mctptso.org/fundraising/scrip). Please note the early deadline—**February orders are due on Monday, February 14**, and cards will go home by Friday, February 18, before February break. Please contact Lynne Densen ([lynne.densen@verizon.net](mailto:lynne.densen@verizon.net) or 978-266-2952 or Maureen Jones at [mjones@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:mjones@mail.ab.mec.edu) or 978-266-2874) with any questions.



## AB PIP 5th Grade Market Math Mania!

Acton-Boxborough PIP (Parent Involvement Project) invites you to an open house format of **5th Grade Market Math Mania on Tuesday, February 8 from 4:30-7:30 PM** at Roche Bros. (387 Mass. Ave, Acton).

Parents, what's cooler than you, dozens of high school students, and your child exploring math fun? Parents and their 5th graders are cordially invited to this extravaganza of higher level "super" market math activities aligned with the 5th grade math curriculum. Featuring fun, samples, and give-a-ways! All activities can be completed in about an hour. Sponsored by Roche Bros. and AB PIP, see [www.actonpip.org](http://www.actonpip.org) for details.

Learn more about AB PIP, a volunteer group of parents, educators and community partners, and our activities enriching Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education spanning grades K-12. For Acton-Boxborough PIP info and meeting dates (new volunteers are always welcome) or to preview the math games, visit [www.actonpip.org](http://www.actonpip.org) or email [actonpip@yahoo.com](mailto:actonpip@yahoo.com).

## BMI Notification

Because of the Massachusetts mandate (105CMR200.500) passed in April 2009, school nurses will be calculating Body Mass Index (BMI) for students in grades 1, 4, 7, and 10. The BMI is a "weight for height for age" index. BMI can be a useful tool in the early identification of possible health risk factors among developing youth.

BMI does not tell the whole story about your child's health status, and BMI does not distinguish between fat and muscle. For example, if a child is very athletic and has a lot of muscle, his or her BMI may be high even though he or she is not overweight. That is why we will encourage you to share the results with your child's health care provider. Your child's doctor or nurse is in the best position to evaluate his or her overall health and will be able to explain to you the results of the BMI screening.

Notification letters of BMI results and resources will be sent in a confidential manner via backpacks to all parents/guardians of students in grades 1 & 4 who participate in the height and weight screening. Students' privacy will be respected at all times during the process of measuring height and weight, calculating BMI, and notifying parents/guardians of results.

## Lost and Found Fair

It is time again for another Lost and Found Fair! Can't find a coat, hat, mittens, lunch box, etc..., then please stop by the fair. All items found on school property will be on display in the lower level of the Parker Damon Building, at the base of the stairs. Items will be displayed on tables from **Monday, February 14 through Monday February 28**. You can stop by any time during school hours and look for your missing items. Adults will need to sign in at the office first. Please contact Nicole Lippa ([lippanicole2008@comcast.net](mailto:lippanicole2008@comcast.net)) if you have any questions.

Please note that items that remain in the lost and found after the fair dates, will be donated to charity. There are often really nice clothes and jackets in the lost and found, and we can't store them indefinitely. Eventually, we have to donate them. PLEASE take a look during the fair and make sure you claim your lost items. Thank you.

### Food Service Recipe of the Month

## Chocolate Crunch

From "Eating Well Magazine"

Crunchy wheat cereal, pretzels and almonds coated in bittersweet chocolate makes an addictive sweet-salty snack.

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup Wheat Chex cereal (2 ounces)
- 1 cup pretzel sticks broken in half (2 ounces)
- ¼ cup salted roasted almonds (2.5 ounces)
- 3 tablespoons bittersweet chocolate chips, melted

**Directions:** Combine Chex, pretzels and almonds in a medium bowl. Drizzle with melted chocolate; stir to combine. Spread the mixture on a wax paper-lined baking sheet and refrigerate until the chocolate is set, about 30 minutes. Keep refrigerated in an airtight container for up to 5 days. Makes 4 servings, ¾ cups each.

**Nutrition per serving:** 218 calories; 8 g fat (2 g sat, 3 g mono); 0 mg cholesterol; 35 g carbohydrates; 5 g protein; 3 g fiber; 397 mg sodium; 176 mg potassium. 2 Carbohydrate Serving.