



McCarthy-Towne Bulletin

March 4, 2011
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Back into the Groove

by David Krane, McT Principal

It is raining outside this morning, the kind of cold, gray rain that I have never looked forward to seeing. But today I welcome it simply because it is not snow. The rain is also an indicator that maybe, just maybe, we are moving out of winter and heading towards spring. The days are certainly longer and we have already had a brief taste of warmer temperatures, so there is always hope.

March, on the edge of spring, is about hope and change. The seven upcoming weeks between now and April's Spring Recess will be filled with more exploration and discovery as the children and the teachers move into the second half of the year. The weather in January caused a fitful series of stops and starts and so we can now look forward to some continuity and sustained focus. There are certain events that always mark the springtime at McCarthy-Towne and we always anticipate their arrival. At school, we will be looking forward to the beginning of the variety shows that will be offered at our monthly assemblies and, out of school, there is, of course, the Auction. The Auction is an amazing example of the McCarthy-Towne community. While the auction is only one evening, the hard work behind the scenes begins almost a

year before. Recently, in the classrooms, the kids have been working on their contributions and the pride in their effort is apparent. It's also fun and fun is an important feature of this annual event. As I walk around and visit the rooms, I get to see this art in its various stages of unfolding and the excitement of its creation. This makes it fun for me, too. Teachers enjoy this part of the process, as well, and it is all an illustration of the joy that we all believe is essential to school and to learning.

As we have just returned from a school vacation and also having missed five school days because of the weather, I'd like to speak briefly about recreational absences when school is in session. I wrote about this last year, too, but it bears repeating. With MCAS looming this month and next, this is an important reminder. Teachers work hard to prepare instruction that is sequential. Missing substantial chunks of school time due to family vacations sends the wrong message to students and, it's important to add, to teachers, too. Children deserve to be part of every classroom endeavor and it puts kids at a disadvantage by being deliberately out of school for reasons of vacation. Please try and keep this in mind as you make family plans.

Mark Your Calendar

MARCH

- 8, Tuesday
Acution Raffle Tickets due
- 9, Wednesday
PTSO Meeting, 7 PM
- 13, Sunday
Worcester Art Museum
Student Reception, 1-4 PM
- 16, Wednesday
Community Assembly
Auction ticket orders due
Scrip orders due
- 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

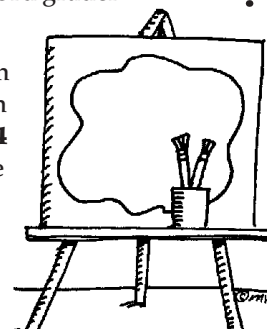
APRIL

- 2, Saturday
Lip Sync Extravaganza,
4:30-6:15 PM
- 7, Thursday
CPAC Performance
- 13, Wednesday
Community Assembly
PTSO Meeting, 7 PM
- 18-22
NO SCHOOL,
Spring Recess

McT Students in Art Exhibit

March is *Youth Art Month* and once again, five students from McT have been chosen to exhibit artwork created in sloyd class in a month-long celebration at the Worcester Art Museum. Congratulations to: Kindergartener Kacie Benn, 2nd grader Lily Vlajinac, 3rd grader Cooper Matthews, 6th grader Amy Thorpe and 6th grader Oliver Kehm!

The exhibit will be on display for the entire month in the Higgins Education Wing near the Lancaster Street entrance to the museum and admission is free. **A student reception will be on Sunday, March 13, from 1-4 PM.** For more information, check out www.worcesterart.org or call the museum at 508-799-4406. Hope to see you there!



from Tammy Sarnelli and Michele Caterina, PTSO co-chairs

Welcome back from winter recess! Have you noticed the sunlight is lasting longer in the sky? No longer is it dark in the middle of the afternoon; sundown isn't coming these days until after 5:30 PM. Just a simple reminder that spring is around the corner, with warmer, longer days filled with sunshine.

Speaking of sunshine, we have our **"Life's a Beach" auction coming up this month on Saturday, March 19 at 5:30 PM** to help move us into the spirit of summer! If you've never been to the auction, please come this year. It is a great way to get to know people—the parents of the kids in your kids' classes, people you've waited behind on the pick-up line, even those you've volunteered with at school, but never got their name. Maybe you'll meet your new BFF sipping margaritas and bidding on those great auction items! The Devens Commons is a beautiful hotel and the Decorations Committee does an amazing job of transforming a nice hotel ballroom into summertime dreamland. **The Auction is our biggest fundraiser of the year** and we'd love to see a sell-crowd that night. Come to schmooze, eat well, and bid often on all the wonderful items we've rounded up from local businesses, vacation spots, museums, teacher experiences, as well as your own generous and creative donations! Hope to see you there.

Our next PTSO meeting will take place on Wednesday, March 9 at 7 PM in the Faculty Room (the room at the top of the stairs). We welcome everyone who wants to attend to learn about the activities of the PTSO and how it supports the well-being of our school. This month we are pleased to welcome candidates for the Acton School Committee—Dennis Bruce, Kim McOsker, and Paul Murphy. They will be joining for a question-and-answer session about their candidacies for the school committee. It should be a lively discussion, so come and join us.

And remember that you can always find PTSO information on our website—mctptso.org. See you at the Auction on March 19!

Lunch Loan Program

The McCarthy-Towne School is beginning a new program on Monday, February 28, 2011 to track students who want a lunch from the cafeteria but do not have money or a lunch ticket with them.

If a student says they do not have lunch or payment to buy lunch, they must come to the office at the beginning of their lunch time to fill out a Lunch Loan slip. They will take the completed slip to the cafeteria and receive a pre-determined lunch: cheese sandwich, milk, fruit, carrot sticks.

Students must repay the cafeteria staff directly and the cafeteria will notify the McCarthy-Towne office.

If a student has two or more unpaid tickets, the McCarthy-Towne office will notify the student's parent/guardian.

Assistance is available for those families eligible for the Free and Reduced Lunch program through the Acton Public Schools.

If you have any questions, please contact the Astrid Trostorff in the McCarthy-Towne office at 978-264-3377.



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

Lip-Sync Extravaganza

Our 4th Annual Lip-Sync Extravaganza is scheduled for Saturday, April 2 from 4:30–6:15 PM. This has been a huge hit in the past with 25 performances by both McT children and staff. Don't miss out this year! We have had a lot of people already express interest in performing this year and we have to limit how many performances we can take.

We will be sending information out in March to sign up for the Lip-Sync Extravaganza but it is not TOO EARLY to start thinking about what song you would like to perform, if you would like to do it individually or in a group, and to start practicing.

We again need to limit each song to a maximum of 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. Children need to be 2nd grade or higher to perform a song individually.

NEW THIS YEAR: Lyrics MUST to be submitted with the sign up sheet (we need to make sure the lyrics are appropriate). The full list of guidelines (when dress rehearsal and such) can be found on the PTISO website—www.mctptso.org/fundraising/lip-sync. Any questions, please contact Lynne Densen (lynne.densen@verizon.net, 978-266-2952) or Karen Anderson (canders67@aol.com, 978-274-2012).



Spring Clean for McT

Get a head start on your spring cleaning! **The annual McT Yard Sale is Saturday, May 21.** Planning is underway with a kickoff volunteer meeting scheduled on Wednesday, March 16 at the Acton Memorial Library. Look for a flyer with more information in backpacks. You can help by saving clothing, sporting equipment, household goods, garden supplies, bikes, baby equipment, furniture and books to donate. **All your tax deductible donations can be dropped off on Friday, May 20 after 4 PM.** If you would like to volunteer at the sale or have questions, please contact either Suzy Eppling (suzyte@yahoo.com) or Carol Watson (cwatson4@verizon.net).

Willow Books Storytime Success

from Sharon Ryan, McT Reading Specialist

Thank you to the entire McT community for making the McT Willow Books Storytime a HUGE success! Thanks to your generosity, **McT earned \$411 to use toward the Teachers and Families as Literacy Partners Program.**

Special thanks to Jean, Cheryl, Callie, Nancy, Heather W., Jen, Heather M., Robin, Carolyn, Abby, David K., Vin, Chris, and Vanessa for generously sharing their time and talent. Sincere thanks to the McT PTISO's Maureen Jones and Lynne Densen for co-ordinating this effort to support our youngest literacy learners as well as Willow Books for hosting this event!

Also, I'd like to add a special thank you to *The Friends of Acton Public Libraries* for their incredibly generous grant of \$275 to support literacy initiatives at McT via the *Teachers and Friends as Literacy Partners Program!*

Immunization Requirements: Important Notice to Parent/Guardians of 6th Graders

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has the following requirements for all students entering Grade 7 in September 2011:

- **MMR** 2 doses
- **Varicella** A physician-certified history of chicken pox disease or 2 doses of varicella-containing vaccine for children < 13 years if age
- **Hepatitis B** 3 doses
- **Tdap** A single dose of Tetanus, Diphtheria and acellular Pertussis (Tdap) vaccine.
- **A copy of an up- to-date physical examination** will also be required for all students before entering Grade 7.

Many of the above vaccines may have been administered while your child was in elementary school. Please check with your Healthcare Provider to be certain that your child's immunizations are up-to-date and documented in his/her record. Send a copy of the exam and updated information record to your elementary school health office and the information will be included in your child's health record when it is transferred to the Junior High School in June. If you do not have the necessary paperwork completed before the end of school, send it to the school nurse at the Junior High School by August 26, 2011.

Scrip Gift Card Program



Thank you to all the families who ordered Scrips last month. Scrips continues to be a great way to help McT 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. **So far we have raised over \$2,900 ytd!**

Attached is the order form with all the participating vendors. If you need an additional form (for a family member or friend), you can also get an order form online at www.mctptso.org/fundraising/scrip.

The March orders are due on Wednesday, March 16. If you have any questions, please contact Lynne Densen (lynne.densen@verizon.net or 978-266-2952) or Maureen Jones (mjones@mail.ab.mec.edu or 978-266-2874).

Thank You

by Patty Lee, Parent Involvement Coordinator

Thank you to all the members of our community who volunteer in many ways. Recently, there have been many projects and tasks where volunteers came forward to help our school, including (but not limited to):

Sue Donahue, Lena Saetre-Grant, Michele Caterina, Susan Lerner, Tracey Smith, Tammy Sarnelli, Mary Beilman and Stacy Harris for being school tour guides for prospective kindergarten parents;

Lynne Densen and the Hospitality Committee for providing food, drinks and flowers for McT’s Parent Information Night for prospective kindergarten parents;

Student Council members Annette Aronoff, Danny Donohue, Finn Murray, Natalie Maggs, Anna McCarthy, Devon Miller, Sam Mayer, Gus Teran, Melissa Cron, Anna Cataldo Holmes, Ruben Barrios, Molly Durand, Brendan Cron, Evelyn McCammon and Liam Murray for doing a wonderful job showing McT to prospective kindergarten parents on McT’s Kindergarten Information Night;

Tammy Sarnelli, Mary Beilman, Julia Hanna, Michele Caterina, Susan Lerner and Sue Donahue for also helping answer questions of prospective kindergarten parents during our Kindergarten Information Night;

Shannon Callison, Amy Miles, Elizabeth Crowley, Gail Gecawicz, Patty Sullivan and Maureen Jones for responding to a Pinch Hitter request and stapling auction raffle tickets, stuffing and labeling envelopes;

Ana Kerr and Maria Ledebouer-Cid for supervising the voting table and collecting donations on McT Read Across America Day.

Tidbits from Tina

from Tina Morgan, McT School Counselor

My Third Child as Teacher

Just as I learned from my first and second born, my youngest also became my teacher. (Just think how wise I would be if I continued to have more kids!) Wayne, now a twenty-something, took me far out of my comfort zone with the choices he made. My husband and I had raised an independent, responsible and team-focused son, and we reaped the benefits when he chose to join ROTC and become an officer in the US Army. His freshman year in college our country shook with the 9/11 attacks, and he became even more committed to making this world a better place through the military.

Wayne is a courageous young man, courageous not only in doing his job as an infantry platoon leader on the front lines of Afghanistan, but courageous in the choices he has made. There aren’t too many Acton-Boxborough seniors who choose a military career. His choices and his courage forced me to open my mind to other perspectives, and required that I, too, develop a bit of courage. As he went off to war, I had to fight off the temptation to hold onto him both physically and emotionally, and, instead, cheer him on. I needed the courage to find ways to support him and to help myself cope with the mommy-fears that come when your child chooses a potentially dangerous path. I soon sought out others who had sons and daughters serving in the military, and I found a common understanding that only comes from traveling a similar road. I am embarrassed to admit that I had no understanding of what military families face every day, no appreciation for the lives they lead. Now I do, and I learned that through a son who made a noble choice.

I wonder what your children will teach you?

Donelan’s Receipts for Education



As you shop at Donelan’s over the next couple weeks, please remember to save your receipts! Send the receipts in with your child or drop them off at the McT office yourself. They’ll be redeemed for free educational equipment including art supplies and books.

Please continue to collect and turn in the receipts dated up to March 31, 2011. Please contact Nicole Lippa (lippanicole2008@comcast.net) if you have any questions. Please keep up the great work collecting those receipts. It really adds up!

Auction Update

Reserve your babysitter yet? Time is ticking away!

Only 15 Days to go until the 20th Annual McCarthy-Towne Auction! **The Auction will be held on Saturday, March 19 at the Devens Commons Center in Devens, MA.** Be prepared to have an evening of fun in the, er, sun? How about the sand and the surf? Come, Relax, and enjoy some time being with friends we rarely get to see without any kids in tow and support our school at the same time!

Got Tickets?

Tickets to this year's event are \$26 per person and will be available until Wednesday, March 16.

Bidding on items can sure make you hungry! This year, there are two terrific entrees to choose from. Don't forget to select your meal choice at the bottom of the form! Ticket Reservation Forms can be found on the McT PTSO website—www.mctptso.org/fundraising/auction2011.

Raffle!

Another way to support our Auction is by helping your child sell raffle tickets. There are some great prizes this year like an Apple iPad, Apple iPod Touch, and a Flip Video Camera. **Please return completed raffle stubs, money/checks, as well as unsold tickets no later than Tuesday, March 8.** For more information about the raffle, please contact Kim Clark (kclark1111@yahoo.com).

Call for help!

We are in need of a few volunteers for about 30 minutes after the auction to help take down decorations and be a part of our cleanup crew. For more information or if you are able to help, please contact Auction chairs Jill DeFoe (defoe@verizon.net) or Heidi Dalaklis (hdalaklis@verizon.net).

Finally, thank you for all your generous donations!

We could try, but without the incredible donations from our faculty and staff, our Auction wouldn't be as amazing as it is! Your donations are critical to the success of the auction and are greatly appreciated! All proceeds go to the McCarthy-Towne PTSO which in turn uses it to fund staff and programs for our kids. For more information please contact Auction chairs Heidi Dalaklis (hdalaklis@verizon.net) or Jill DeFoe (defoe@verizon.net).

Thank you all so much for coming out to support our school!

Spirit Wear Sale Success

Thanks to everyone who helped make the 2011 McT Spirit Wear sale a huge success! **We sold 127 items for a total profit of \$652 for the PTSO.** Thanks to Patti, Maureen and Astrid for their help by hanging the samples in the office and sharing their enthusiasm for the sale when people inquired. Finally, thanks to Patti Lee for her help with the bookkeeping and financial aspect of the sale. We all love seeing the children and adults wearing their McT clothing. It looks great on everyone!

School Committee Update

by Chris Hanlon

The Acton Public School Committee meeting of February 17 featured important discussion of next year's budget as well as several impassioned parent comments. Here are a few of the topics discussed:

The School Committee voted in the upcoming budget as Superintendent Dr. Mills requested. This is a level service budget, which allows for a continuation of our current level of service without staff reductions. This level service funding has been accomplished through very limited raises, increased health care costs for employees, and other reductions. Committee members emphasized several times that this budget (and any school budget at this point of the year) is fluid – it is close to the final budget, but will have some adjustments in the upcoming months.

Several committee members stated their opinions that the budget should reach beyond level service. An increase in the number of teaching assistant hours is a main point of emphasis if there were to be a budget increase.

Several parents spoke about services lost in the past few years such as certified library staff and about the pressure on PTSOs to raise funds for teacher assistants. The topic of PTSO funding of teaching assistants was raised in comments from the public, committee members, and the superintendent. Committee members emphasized that both the disparity in PTSO funding at different schools and more specifically the existence of any assistant funding by PTSOs were problems that needed to be resolved.

The McT PTSO meeting on Wednesday, March 9 will feature a question and answer session with some or all of the candidates in the upcoming School Committee election. **The next meeting for the AP School Committee is March 17, at 7:30 PM at Gates School.** The School Committee has continued to ask parents to contribute their opinions to the ongoing budget process. To e-mail all members of the Acton Public School Committee, write to apsc@acton-ma.gov. To e-mail all members of the Acton –Boxborough Regional School Committee, write to abrsc@acton-ma.gov.

McCarthy-Towne School – MARCH 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
6	7	8 Auction Raffle Tickets due	9 PTSO Meeting, 7 PM	10	11	12
13 Worcester Art Museum Student Reception, 1-4 PM	14	15	16 Community Assembly Auction ticket orders due Scrip Orders due	17 AP School Committee Meeting, 7:30 PM at Gates School	18	19 McT Auction, 5:30 PM
20	21	22 MCAS Testing, Gr. 3, 4, 5, & 6	23 MCAS Testing, Gr. 3, 4, 5, & 6	24 MCAS Testing, Gr. 4	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	APRIL 1 April McT Bulletin is published	APRIL 2 Lip Sync Extravaganza, 4:30 PM

Upcoming PTSO Meetings

Mark your calendar now! PTSO meetings are usually held the second Wednesday of each month at 7 PM in the Faculty Lounge (top floor). Everyone is welcome to attend!

April 13th May 11th June 8th