



# McCarthy-Towne Bulletin

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## A Long Winter's Nap

*By Marcia FitzGerald, MCT Principal*

This time of the year is such an exciting time for children. There are celebrations and holidays to anticipate. The weather is changing and the possibility of the first snowfall (and a snow day) is in the air. All of this excitement and activity can be exhausting! I want to take this opportunity to encourage everyone to enjoy the holidays while keeping life as "normal" as possible. When your children are advocating to stay up "just a little bit longer" this article may help you.

## Sleep Essential for Creative Thinking

*by William McCall, Associated Press*

Everybody feels refreshed following a good night's sleep. But can you wake up smarter? More artistic perhaps? German scientists say they have demonstrated for the first time that our sleeping brains continue working on problems that baffle us during the day, and the right answer may come easily after 8 hours of rest.

The German study is considered to be the first hard evidence supporting the common sense notion that creativity and problem solving appear to be directly linked to adequate sleep, scientists say. Other researchers who did not contribute to the experiment say it provides a valuable reminder for overtired workers and students that sleep is often the best medicine.

Previous studies have shown that 7 million Americans are sleep-deprived, contributing to increased accidents, worsening health and lower test scores. But the new German experiment takes the subject a step further to show how sleep can help to turn yesterday's problem into today's solution.

"A single study never settles an issue once and for all, but I would say this study does advance the field significantly," said Dr. Carl E. Hunt, director of the National Center on Sleep Disorders Research at the National Institutes of Health. "It's going to have potentially important results for children for school performance and for adults for work performance," Hunt said.

Scientists at the University of Lubeck in Germany found that volunteers taking a simple math test were three times more likely than sleep-deprived participants to figure out a hidden rule for converting the numbers into the right answer if they had eight hours of sleep. The results appear in Thursday's issue of the Journal "Nature."

The group that got eight hours of sleep before tackling the problem was nearly three times more likely to figure out the rule than the group that stayed awake at night. Jan Born, who led the study, said the results support biochemical studies of the brain that indicate memories are restructured before they are stored. Creativity also appears to be enhanced in the process, he said. "This restructuring might be occurring in such a way that the problem is easier to solve," Born said. Born said the exact process in the sleeping brain for sharpening these abilities remains unclear. The changes leading to creativity or problem-solving insight occur during "slow wave" or deep sleep that typically occurs in the first four hours of the sleep cycle, he said.

The results also may explain the memory problems associated with aging because older people typically have trouble getting enough sleep, especially the kind of deep sleep needed to process memories, Born said. "Even gradual decreases in the total time for slow wave sleep and deep sleep correlated to a kind of decrease in memory function, and in turn to a decrease in the ability to recognize hidden structures or the awareness of such things," Born said. Other researchers said they have long suspected that sleep helps to consolidate memories and sharpen thoughts. But until now it had been difficult to design an experiment that would test how it improves insight.

History is dotted with incidents where artists and scientists have awakened to make their most notable contributions after long periods of frustration. For example, that's how Russian chemist Dmitri Mendeleev established the periodic table of elements and British poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote his epic "Kubla Khan." Born and his team "have applied a clever test that allows them to determine exactly when insight occurs," wrote Pierre Maquet and Pierre Ruby at the University of Leige in a commentary on the research, also published in "Nature."

Maquet and Ruby both say the study should be considered a warning to schools, employers and government agencies that sleep makes a huge difference in mental performance. "The results give us good reason to fully respect our periods of sleep - especially given the current trend to recklessly curtail them," they said.



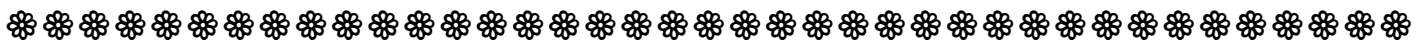
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Before you shop, go to [www.mctptso.org](http://www.mctptso.org), click on schoolpop, and explore all the many places that will help us raise money! You'll be glad you did!



## Mark your calendar for the McCarthy-Towne Auction: Saturday, March 1st, 2008!

Once again, it will be held at the Devens Common Center! Notice that the date is the first Saturday after February Break. This is a very fun evening and our school's largest fundraiser!

Although it is still a few months away, the Business Donations Committee is still in need of a few groovy folks to help in December and early January. A letter has already been mailed to local businesses. Now, all we need is some help contacting the businesses and making arrangements to pick up their donations! If you can spare a few hours of your time for this important part of the auction, please contact Carolyn Imperato at [carolynimperato@comcast.net](mailto:carolynimperato@comcast.net)



Put your thinking caps on because Parent Donation forms will be coming home soon. McCarthy-Towne is fortunate to have many creative parent donations! In January, we will be sending home ticket reservations, raffle tickets and more! Please check your child's backpack so that you will be kept up to date!

## Everyone is welcome at PTSO Meetings!

Wednesdays, 7 pm, Faculty Lounge (top of stairs, top floor).

12/19, 1/16, 2/13, 3/19, 4/16, 5/21, 6/18

Bring your questions and your ideas!

## Selected Facts about Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)

*Summarized by APS/AB School Nurses*

**Description**—Staph are bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. About 25-30% of the US population carries staph on their bodies at any time. MRSA is a rare type of staph that is resistant to some antibiotics. Severe infections with MRSA are rare and are more commonly seen in health care settings, not in schools.

**Transmission**—Staph, including MRSA, are spread by direct skin-to-skin contact. It can also be spread by contact with items that have been touched or used by people with staph such as shared towels, razors, and athletic equipment. Most people who have staph or MRSA on their skin do not have infections or illness. Staph infections, including MRSA, start when staph enter a cut or break in the skin.

**Symptoms**—Minor staph infections may cause ordinary boils, pimples and rashes, such as impetigo. Severe staph infections are uncommon in healthy children. Signs of more serious infection could include high fever, headache, fatigue, heat and pain around a wound. The symptoms of MRSA are the same as the symptoms of other staph infections.

**Treatment**—See your doctor if the infection is large, painful, swollen, red and does not heal by itself. Your doctor will determine if you need antibiotics. Students with a MRSA infection can attend school as long as the wound is covered and they are receiving proper treatment.

**Reducing Risk**—Practicing good hygiene is the best way to prevent getting and spreading MRSA infections. Keep hands clean by washing them frequently with soap and warm water. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer gel when soap and water are not available. Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.

For more information about MRSA, visit the MDPH website at [www.mass.gov/dph](http://www.mass.gov/dph).

## Scrip Store Card Reminder

There is still time to get your Scrip order in for December. The deadline is Wednesday, December 12th at 9:00am SHARP!!! PLEASE don't wait until Tuesday night to send your order in with your child (we had a few come in late last month that way). SCRIP cards ordered in December SHOULD be in by Wednesday, December 21ST (possibly sooner). Scrip order forms can be found at <http://mctptso.org/fundraising/scrip>.

Please contact Lynne Densen at 978-266-2952, [lynne.densen@verizon.net](mailto:lynne.densen@verizon.net) or Maureen Jones at 978-266-2874, [maureen.jones1@verizon.net](mailto:maureen.jones1@verizon.net) if you have any questions about Scrips.

## O'Naturals Fundraiser

MCT is pleased to pair up with O'Naturals for a fundraiser during the entire month of December. MCT will be sending home a page of coupons that you give to the cashier at O'Naturals each time you eat there during December. O'Naturals will keep a tally of what is spent with "coupons" and give MCT a percentage of the total at the end of the month. Feel free to print more copies and keep them in your car and hand them out to your friends and family who may eat there as well. Copies of the coupon can also be printed from the MCT website.

## 2007 Book Fair

*from Susan Lerner and Julie Jannke*

The McT/Scholastic Book Fair was a BIG success thanks to the many volunteers who made it happen and all the McT families, teachers and students who bought so many books! Our total sales were \$8284 with a profit of \$2367 for the McCarthy-Towne PTSO.

Once again, our McT families made the WISH LIST program a great success. All the teachers (and the library) received books for their classrooms as a result of your generosity.

Many thanks to Marcia Fitzgerald, Jean Onorato, Robyn Winick and Astrid Trostorff for all their help and to all the teachers for bringing their classes to the Book Fair. It is the volunteers who make this event possible and so successful year after year. Many, many thanks to: Pauline Thorpe, Melissa Grigsby, Ebit Speers, Lisa Gundlach, Jane Grover, Eleanne Roosenberg, Laura Loverud, Tina Watlington, Cathy Griffin, Qi Fan, Paula Freni, Lauren Richardt, Suzanne Ward, Maria Ledebor, Elyse Pryke, Karen Benn, Stacy Harris, Amy Hedison, Sandy Billings, Bridget Matz, Amanda Dindel, Marie Clougher, and Patty Lee.

## Turn Your Holiday Cooking Into Art Supplies for McT!

With the upcoming holiday season, most of us will be spending a lot of time and money at the supermarket, buying the ingredients for delicious treats to share with our friends and family. With the Register Tapes for Education Program at Donelan's Supermarkets, those groceries can now also help our school! For every dollar spent, McCarthy-Towne will earn points redeemable for free educational equipment, including art supplies and books.

So every time you shop at Donelan's Supermarkets, save your receipts! Simply send in your receipts in with your child or drop them in the collection box in the office. Receipts dated September 1, 2007 – March 31, 2008 are eligible.

Even if you aren't a regular shopper at Donelan's consider either shopping there during the promotional period or asking your friends and neighbors to give you their Donelan's receipts.

Remember... The more you spend, the more we earn!

Thank you for your support! If you have any questions, please contact Wendy Schaad at [ws.schaad@gmail.com](mailto:ws.schaad@gmail.com).

## Tidbits from Tina

*by Tina Morgan, McT School Counselor*

More insight from Jane Nelsen's book, Positive Discipline A-Z:

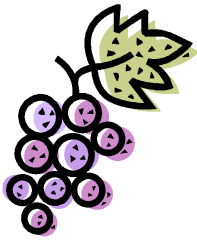
Tool #5: Replace Punishment with Information and Opportunities to Learn from Mistakes.

Jane Nelsen states, "punishment is not the most effective way to teach positive outcomes. Instead it hurts, it makes others feel bad, and it uses fear as a motivator." She describes the reasons so many parents continue to use punishment to teach their children—it gives a sense of control to parents; it seems to work, at least in the short term; it's a habit and something we saw our parents use. Overall Dr. Nelsen finds punishment disrespectful, anger provoking, and, most importantly, ineffective (parents often find themselves punishing the child over and over for the same behavior, pointing out that the punishment hasn't worked to teach the child to change that behavior). She states, "Discipline, to be effective, needs to be rational and loving (kind and firm at the same time). While it is fine to tell your child you are angry about a particular behavior, it is counterproductive to scream out a punishment in anger."

Instead of punishing your child, Dr. Nelsen describes various specific cases where the parent models proper behavior; removes a toy or playmate if interactions are too rough; uses firm limits to get the correct response. She emphasizes that parents don't ignore problems, but they remain calm as they help their child learn what is expected.

# Box Tops for Education

Thanks to everyone who has contributed Box Tops so far this year! Our first check earned was for \$600. That is great, but we know that we can do even better! This holiday season as you are baking pies and other items, remember that Pillsbury containers are Box Tops sources so you can bake your pie crusts for the holidays and clip your Box Tops and help MCT at the same time! Please continue clipping and our next big collection will be in March. If you have any questions feel free to contact Sue Sheehan ([andrew\\_sheehan\\_1999@yahoo.com](mailto:andrew_sheehan_1999@yahoo.com)) or Maura Champigny ([champsfam@yahoo.com](mailto:champsfam@yahoo.com)).



## Food Service News

Visit our website to view our new Food Service Newsletter!

<http://ab.mec.edu/departments/food/foodmenus.shtml>

Would you like to work part time? We are looking for Food Service Substitutes to be on-call for any of our seven kitchens. If you would like to find out more information please contact: Kirsten Nelson @ 978-264-4700 x 3221. We would love to have you join our team!

## This month's healthy snack recipe: Turkey Kebabs

Kids and adults alike will appreciate this skewered snack.

Makes 1 serving.

ACTIVE TIME: 5 minutes

TOTAL TIME: 5 minutes

EASE OF PREPARATION: Easy

1/2 ounce cubed roasted deli turkey

1/2 ounce cubed Cheddar cheese

1/4 cup grapes

6 dried apricots

Thread turkey, cheese, grapes and apricots onto a wooden skewer.

NUTRITION INFORMATION: Per serving: 218 calories; 5 g fat (3 g sat, 1 g mono); 20 mg cholesterol; 37 g carbohydrate; 7 g protein; 5 g fiber; 247 mg sodium; 714 mg potassium.

What you get: Protein, fiber, calcium, potassium.

2 Carbohydrate Servings

This recipe was taken from: [http://www.eatingwell.com/recipes/quick\\_kebab.html](http://www.eatingwell.com/recipes/quick_kebab.html)

## MCAS Dates for Spring 2008

Please note the MCAS test schedule for next spring. If you have children in grade 3 - 6, avoid scheduling appointments and travel during MCAS test periods.

English Language Arts, grades 3, 4, 5, 6..... 3/24 - 4/4

English Composition, grade 4..... 3/25

Math, grades 3, 4, 5, 6..... 5/12-16

Science; History & Social Science, grade 5..... 5/19 - 23