



McCarthy-Towne Bulletin

February 5, 2016
Volume 45, No 6

Slip Sliding Into February

by David Krane, McT Principal

New England weather is often a study in contrasts. Looking out of my office window after a morning recess, I see coats and mittens scattered all over the front circle, reminiscent of late fall behaviors. Fifty-degree temperatures at the beginning of February can certainly be distracting, but we will not be fooled. Last year at this time, we already had had a couple of snow days and I believe that there was at least six feet of snow on the ground, or maybe even ten feet.

We have begun our tours and, unlike last year, we don't anticipate a constant scheduling and rescheduling due to snow related cancellations... at least that is the hope. Last year, we had our Kindergarten Night here at McT first among all six of the AB schools, but this year we will be last, with our Kindergarten Night slated for March 1. Our tours have been packed this year, with attendance higher than in past years. Although there are many factors that may contribute to this, it is true that our tour numbers have been increasing over the years. We have a remarkable staff and we are doing innovative things here at McT, in the classrooms, as artists, musicians and as a community who cares about physical health through cooperative practice. I am not at all surprised that increasing numbers of prospective parents are taking notice of what we do for children, both academically and socially. I'm not surprised, but I am certainly very proud of our faculty and staff, our incredibly supportive parent community, and, of course, all of our students.

This will be my seventh year to lead our Kindergarten Evening and each year it becomes more of a pleasure. As I said, there is a lot to be proud of at our school and it is fun to have so many faculty members, parents and Student Council members, all be a part of showing off who we are as a school. We can talk about how our community is

indeed a large part of raising a responsible child, one who is invested in her learning. When the Student Council members can articulate so clearly what it is they do in their classrooms and how it helps them grow, socially and academically, then we know we have achieved some measure of success. In the end, it is the children who will tell us if we have succeeded in our efforts, and hearing those students speak to our visitors, I believe we are doing all the right things. The tours are a chance for people to visit and see all of this in action. The teaching in the classrooms, the hard work displayed on the walls and the interactions between kids and their teachers and all the other adults in our school all are terrific examples of who we are as a school. Thank you so much to Tracey Smith, our Parent Involvement Coordinator, Carol Chytil, our amazing Office Assistant, Astrid Trostorff, our incredible School Office Administrator, parent touring volunteers, and to the teachers who have all been part of the process of showing off our school! The feedback from visitors has been hugely positive.

I enjoy my role in bringing up the points of pride about McT during these tour days. 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. Knowing that learning 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. Process displayed in various forms on the walls of our school as we guide curious visitors through the school is one of the biggest points of pride here.

Mark Your Calendar

FEBRUARY

- 5, Friday**
Book Swap, 6–8 PM
- 8, Monday**
Winter Band Concert
(New Date), 9:30 AM
PTSO Meeting, 9:30 AM
- 12, Friday**
Box Tops Due
Lip Sync Sign-Up Forms Due
- 15–19**
NO SCHOOL, Winter Recess
- 26, Friday**
McT Family Movie Night,
6:30–9 PM

MARCH

- 3, Thursday**
Early Dismissal (12:20 PM)
- 15, Tuesday**
PTSO Meeting, 7 PM
- 17, Thursday**
Early Dismissal (12:20 PM)
- 19, Saturday**
Lip Sync Extravaganza, 4 PM
- 25, Friday**
NO SCHOOL, Good Friday
- 29, Tuesday**
MCAS: English Language
Arts Comprehension
(Grades 5 & 6)
- 30, Wednesday**
MCAS: English Language
Arts Comprehension
(Grades 5 & 6)

continued on page 2

continued from page 1

One bit of housekeeping that I feel compelled to bring up on an annual basis as we approach February break:

This is a time of year when some families will take “unofficial” family vacations. I cannot emphasize enough how important every minute of every day is at school. Teachers work hard to prepare instruction that is sequential. Missing substantial chunks of school time due to these

“unofficial” 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.

Here’s to the next wonderful half of the school year!



from Julie Weir and Julie Hobbs, PTSO co-chairs

Welcome to February McT! We have officially started the second half of the year, and we are looking forward to an exciting spring.

Perhaps the most important Spring topic is the budget for the upcoming school year. Our administrators kicked off budget season on Saturday, January 23 and will continue to work hard for the next several months at deciding what will be in the budget. An important part of McT’s budget is the money given by the PTSO every year. This is the money that helps to enhance the educational experience of our children and create the “McT Difference”. Thanks to our amazing volunteers and your generous donations, the PTSO has earned over \$15,000 but we still need your help!

First of all, it isn’t too late to donate to the Annual Appeal. Just visit www.mctptso.org and click on the green “DONATE NOW!” button or send a check made out to McT PTSO to the school via your child or mail to 11 Charter Rd, Acton, MA 01720. Secondly, we are still looking for volunteers to chair the Scrip program and the Tag sale (April 30th). Both of these fundraisers bring in about \$2,000 each but also provide a service to our community. It would be sad to see them discontinued. Please contact Tracey Smith or Julie Weir if you are interested. Remember the more we raise this year the more we can do in the future!

Here are some important events coming up:

Book Swap: Tonight (February 5). Its FREE to attend and FREE to take books.

Lip Sync: March 19 at 4 PM. Sign up forms were sent out last week and must be turned in by Friday February 12. Please note there is a mandatory rehearsal on March 17 after school. Contact Deb Verner, Bridget Matz or Lisa Thermidor with any questions.

Roarin’ 20’s McT Auction: April 9 at 5 PM, Devens Common Center. By now you have all saved the date for the biggest fundraiser of the year! Class projects are underway, business donations are wrapping up, and parent/student donation forms have been sent home. Visit www.mctptso.org for copies of the letters and forms that have been distributed.

Our next PTSO meeting will be Monday, February 8 at 9:30 AM in the faculty lounge (double doors at the top of the stairs). Our March meeting will be held on the 15th at 7 PM in the school library. Our special guests in March will be the Acton Finance Committee.

Don’t forget to like us on Facebook (McCarthy-Towne School) and subscribe to our weekly Howler email service at www.mctptso.org to keep up to the date conversations regarding field trips, events, fundraisers and community news!

McT Family Movie Night

Calling all Disney movie fans! **The McT Movie Night hosted by the 6th Grade will be Friday, February 26th from 6:30–9 PM** in the PDB Cafetorium. Admission is free and open to all McT students and family members (not a drop off event). This year's movie we are going Disney classic with a showing of *The Lion King*. Bring your blankets, sleeping bags or other comfy seating. Pizza, beverages and baked goods will be sold at the event, which is a fundraiser for the 6th Grade's Thompson Island end of the year field trip.



Volunteer Needed to Video the 2017 Lip Sync Show

Do you have knowledge of taking videos, or just enjoy the hobby of taking video of your family? This is the last year our current videographer, Wade Callison, will video the Lip Sync, and The Lip Sync Extravaganza organizers are searching for a dependable volunteer to video and create DVDs for next year's show (2017). Wade is available this year as a mentor during the show should you want to come along to learn and become familiar with the production. You don't need fancy equipment—most newer DSLR cameras or video cameras will work well (along with a tripod). If interested, please contact Deb Verner (debverner@gmail.com or 978.263.6794).

Spring 2016 MCAS Dates

Students in grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 will be taking MCAS tests this spring. 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. The schedule is as follows:

English Language Arts Comprehension (Grades 5 & 6)

Tuesday, March 29 and Wednesday, March 30

English Language Arts Comprehension (Grades 3 & 4)

Monday, April 4 and Tuesday, April 5

Math (Grades 3 and 4)

Tuesday, May 10 and Wednesday, May 11

Math (Grades 5 and 6)

Monday, May 16 and Tuesday, May 17

Science, Technology & Engineering (Grade 5 only)

Tuesday, May 10 and Wednesday, May 11

Lip Sync Extravaganza Sign-up!

The McT Lip Sync forms, including sign up form and *Rules and Requirements*, came home in backpacks last Friday. Traditionally, sign ups occur quickly so submit your group, your song and your lyrics soon! Don't forget to include \$10 if you would like to order a DVD of the extravaganza! **All sign ups must be received by Friday, February 12th.**

The performance this year will take place on **Saturday, March 19 from 4–6 PM.**

March is National Youth Art Month!

The AB Regional School District Art Department will be celebrating the arts with 4 art exhibits around town and beyond. Be sure to stop by and support the arts!

Acton Senior Center

January 29–February 26. Gallery reception February 5, 4–5 PM. Three student works from McT are included in the show.

Boston Transportation Building hosted by the Mass Art Education Association

February 8–March 31. Reception February 28, 12–4 PM. Five student works from McT are included in the show.

Sargent Memorial Library in Boxborough

February 29–March 31. Reception March 10, 4–5 PM. Three student works from McT are included in the show.

Worcester Art Museum

March 4–April 3. Reception March 6, 12:30–2:30 PM. Three student works from McT are included in the show.

Save the Date—Thursday, June 2nd! McCarthy-Towne Family Field Day!

Join us on Thursday, June 2nd at 5:30 PM for the annual McCarthy-Towne Family Field Day.

Be a part of the McCarthy-Towne community of adults, kids and staff members as we play traditional and silly field games. There will be pizza and Kimball's ice cream for sale at the event. More details to come.

McT Auction 2016!

The most exciting night of the McT school year is only 2 months away! Book your babysitters now for April 9th, 2016! Volunteers have been working hard to create a spectacular night for our Roarin' 20's Auction!

As you all know we held our online Camp Auction last week and it was a great success. If you missed it, don't worry! Any camp that didn't get a bid will be up for auction on April 9th.

In addition to businesses and summer camp donations we need YOU! Parent and student donation forms were sent out last week and people LOVE to bid on those items with a personal connection. If you or your 4th, 5th or 6th grade student(s) wants to contribute to the auction contact Bibiana Knell (bibianaknell@gmail.com). Remember individuals or groups can donate. Some example include:

- Babysitting
- Pet sitting/dog walking
- Yard work (weeding, raking or mowing)
- Home cooked meals or baked goods
- Homemade jewelry or artwork

If you have lost your donation form or any information regarding the Auction all communications can be found at www.mctptso.org under the "Auction 2015-2016" tab.

Auction Trivia

Congratulations to Matt Onken (AGAIN!) who guessed correctly that Charles Lindberg, in his plane The Spirit of St. Louis, was the pilot who made the first non-stop flight from New York to Paris on May 20th, 1927.

This month's question: What novel, portraying the extravagance of the Roaring 20's, did F. Scott Fitzgerald write in 1925?

Be the first person to email the correct answer to Julie Weir (julieannweir@yahoo.com) and you will win an auction drink ticket! Good Luck!

We are always on the lookout for volunteers! If you are interested in helping out with the McT Auction in any way; including but not limited to classroom projects, day of decor, set up/breakdown or even Jr chairing this event, please contact Christine Russell (qofhearts@gmail.com), Samantha Valente-Phillips (luvbgnamom@gmail.com), or Tracey Smith with the committee you would like to be a part of.

Be on the lookout for ticket information coming home in a backpack near you!

10 Steps to Keep Ahead of Head Lice

1. Watch for signs of head lice, such as frequent head scratching, flaky or irritated scalp, scabs, or the presence of nits. Anyone can get lice, mainly from direct head-to-head contact or possibly by sharing hats, brushes, beds, pillows, towels, etc.
2. Check all household members and close contacts for lice and nits (lice eggs) at least once a week.
3. Be sure not to confuse nits with hair debris (i.e., dandruff, hair spray droplets, or hair casts). Nits are yellowish/white, oval-shaped, and are attached at an angle to the side of the hair shaft.
4. Consult a pharmacist, physician, or school nurse before applying pesticides or other lice treatments. If anyone to be treated is pregnant or nursing, has allergies, asthma, or has nits in the eyebrows or lashes, contact your physician. Never use a pesticide or lice treatment on or near the eyes.
5. Consider all of your treatment options. Remember, lice-killing products are pesticides and must be used with caution. If you choose alternative methods, they may not have been studied thoroughly enough to determine long-term outcomes. The most effective and safe alternative is manual removal by combing.
6. Remove all nits. Separate hair sections and remove nits with a lice comb, baby safe scissors, or your fingernails.
7. For lice treatment, follow package directions carefully. Use the products over the sink, not in the tub!
8. Wash bedding and all recently worn clothing in hot water and dry in high heat for at least 30 minutes. Combs and brushes should be soaked in hot water (not boiling) for 10 minutes.
9. Avoid lice sprays! Vacuuming is the safest and best way to remove lice or fallen hairs with attached nits from furniture, rugs, stuffed animals, and car seats.
10. Notify your child's school, camp, child-care provider, play partners, and neighborhood parents. Check for lice on a regular basis.