

Burning Issues

President's Message

On behalf of the PTA I would like to welcome Ms. Nancy Erdrich as our incoming Principal. I

hope that many of you had a chance to meet her at the PTA meeting last week. Ms. Erdrich is currently the principal intern at Goshen Elementary School in Gaithersburg. She brings a wealth of experience to Burning Tree; her experience includes being a special education teacher at elementary and high school levels, a regular education teacher, a teacher at a highly gifted center and a staff development teacher. We are very fortunate in that Ms. Erdrich will be able to work with Dr. Chaset and get to know our school before Dr. Chaset leaves.

We would like to invite you to farewell celebrations for Dr. Chaset! Please be on the look out for your invitation to the **PTA Hail and Farewell Dinner**, where we will have a special tribute to Dr. Chaset. The event is in the evening on Friday, June 6, and current and former parents at Burning Tree Elementary School are invited for the potluck dinner to honor the PTA board and committees, and toast Dr. Chaset! In addition, from 4:30pm-6:30pm on Friday, June 6, kids and parents (past and present) are invited to attend an Open House in honor of Dr. Chaset at Burning Tree. We hope you can attend one or both of these celebrations of Dr. Chaset's 8 years at Burning Tree.

Unbelievably, we are wrapping up another school year. There are many fun events coming up! We recognize that the PTA and Burning Tree Staff are asking for many volunteers this time of year. Please volunteer for what you are interested in, and do not feel as though you must volunteer for everything! We need to spread the wealth of our parents who are so generous with their time! There are many opportunities to choose from: the Spring Fair is on Saturday, May 17, Field Days for K-2 and 3-5 are on June 16th and June 30th and the Arts Festival is on May 28th. Without parent volunteers, these events would not be possible – your children will thank you for helping to make them happen!

Sincerely,
Lisa Sanfuentes, PTA Co-President

Landscape & Grounds Update

A great big thank you to Michael Abert, owner of **Landscape Projects, Inc.** for working with us on the newly landscaped beds in front of the school and in the adjacent parking lot bed. The plan was designed by landscape designer, Marion Oxford-Dearth, and includes fairly low maintenance plants such as otto luyken, knockout roses, oak leaf and endless summer hydrangeas, azaleas, rhododendron, forsythia and a new dogwood tree. These plants were also selected to provide on going color and beauty during the months we are in school. The terrific crew at Landscape Projects also went above and beyond by transplanting liriopie (originally from the parking lot bed) along the steps to the kindergarten playground. While this is a sturdy plant, please give it a chance to grow by not stepping on its new growth! The goal is for this ground cover to keep the dirt (and mud) from accumulating on the steps.

Thank you to Nic Ryba and her kids, Anna, Tom and William, Alison Ellis, and Agnes de Gonville for helping to spruce up the grounds for the Gym Dedication Ceremony. A big thank you to Kirsten



Martin for planting the front sign to make the school entrance look attractive for the event. Perennial plants/shrubs used to decorate the stage for the Gym Dedication Ceremony were also added to various beds around the school.

If you are interested in being a part of the team that takes pride in our school's appearance and/or organizing events such as Beautify Burning Tree, please contact Lisa Baker at bakewoman@aol.com.

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FUN draising NEWS...

It's hard to believe that the Spring Fair is next week (May 17th 12:00-4:00 rain or shine). Hasn't the school year flown by! Thanks so much to Ellie Abramowitz and Kristen Farren for all their hard work in planning this fun-filled day! It's not too late for YOU to help also. Look at the check list below and make sure you have done some (or all) of the following (and thanks in advance for your support)

- Volunteer your time the day of the fair. Please contact Melinda Gray ASAP to be scheduled to volunteer at the Fair (mgray40@verizon.net);
- Donate one or two or ten (!) **Bag-O-Mania** goodie bags. Put bags in the **Bag-O-Mania** box in the front lobby;
- Attend a **Bag-O-Mania** stuffing party. Parties will be held Tuesday, May 13th from 9:30-12:30 at the home of Cindy Campbell, and Thursday, May 15th from 7:00am-9:30 (ish) at the home of Teresa Halabi, 7508 Leesburg Place, 301-229-4850. This party could be shorter! Please contact Cindy or Teresa for directions or to RSVP CampbellHannegan@comcast.net or Teresa Halabi at More2Much@aol.com;
- Donate a cake or yummy dessert to Cakewalk. Send the Cakewalk form to school marked Cakewalk or contact Jodi Rasch with questions;
- Donate a dish from your home country to the International Café. Send an International Café form to school marked International Café or contact Mary Jacquotte or Georgina Val Mas with questions;
- Plan to buy your tickets early and get a discount. Tickets will be sold on Thursday, May 15th and Friday, May 16th in the school lobby before school (8:45 – 9:15 AM) and at lunch time (12:20 – 1:50 pm). When you buy \$10 worth of tickets in advance you get 4 FREE tickets!

For more information on how you can help please contact Ellie at ellie.abramowitz@verizon.net or Kristen at Farrens5@comcast.net. Hope to see you at this fun family day!

Save the Date: Ben & Jerry's Dine Out:

Want something cool to do with the kids on the last day of school (June 12th)? Then join your BTES friends at Ben & Jerry's in Bethesda from 1pm - 4pm and celebrate the beginning of summer! Your kids will love the treat and you'll love knowing that

you're supporting BTES one more time since a percentage of your purchase will go to our school. Be on the lookout for more information. Thanks Lisa Sanfuentes for the great idea and for organizing this tasty and fun event!

FUN-draising Updates...

A Taste Of Italy: One final and heartfelt thank you to my fantastic co-chairs, Surya Shah, Erin Deric and Michael Chelst. The Adult Fundraiser provides for nearly half of our PTA's budget and this year we netted over \$25,000! And we would not have been able to do this without our many amazing volunteers, fundraisers, donors and attendees and without the support of our wonderful teachers, staff and Dr. Chaset and Mr. Tark. Gratzie!!

Dine Out At Ledo's: Our two nights of Dine Out's at Ledo's Pizza raised lots of "dough" for Burning Tree--\$504 to be exact!! Thanks to all the families who helped out by eating at Ledo's. Many thanks to Nancy Sandler for organizing another successful Dine Out!!

Original Works Art Sale: Once again we had the opportunity to turn our children's precious artwork into wonderful keepsakes (in plenty of time for Mother's Day!) thanks to our hardworking chairpersons Britta Battaile and Marianne Katinas. Sales were great, raising over \$2,000 for the PTA! Thank you, Britta and Marianne, for a fantastic job!

Plant Sale: Our annual plant sale was held in April and once again, Lisa Baker and Mary Kunst led a record breaking event! Even more people ordered plants than last year which means we raised even more money and more BTES families will have beautiful flowers and yummy vegetables in our gardens this year. Many thanks to all who helped with the sale and to everyone who participated by purchasing the plants at the sale. Thanks to Lisa and Mary for their hard work!

As the year comes to an end I want to once again thank all of my amazing co-chairs. It was a pleasure working with such dedicated and energetic people! I look forward to working with you all again next year (I hope!) I also want to invite and encourage other people to consider co-chairing one of our many FUN-draising events. Please contact me if you are (or think you may be!) interested in getting more involved with these events. Thanks!

*Cindy Campbell, VP for Fundraising
campbellhannegan@comcast.net or 301-469-0252*

Another Successful Spring Cleanup!

...as you can probably tell by the huge pile of debris and lawn bags near the cafeteria! The weather was terrific on Saturday, April 26th for our second **Annual Spring Cleanup**. We had a terrific turnout this year with nearly 100 participants - double last year's turnout! Some of our hardworking volunteers tackled the side of the school that borders Winterberry Lane, removing dead limbs, trash and debris; others worked on cutting down invasive Wisteria vines that are threatening the trees along this area. We had groups that cleaned up around the portables and others that planted donated annuals (Thank you Garcia family!) to brighten up the picnic table area. Still other volunteers tackled weeding around the shrubs and flower beds and raking up leaves and debris all around the school. Thanks to a few Dads and some strong Pyle students, some overgrown ornamental grasses were removed from the front lobby bed and transplanted to the back of the school.

Special thanks to Allison Ellis, Elizabeth Grimsley, Amy Brown, Agnes de Gonville, and Greg Baker for directing all our volunteers. Also a huge thank you to Olivia Lai for checking in all the Pyle Students and issuing their SSL forms. And of course, a big thank you to all the parents, students, teachers and Pyle students who participated - we couldn't have done it without you!

Thank you to Starbucks for donating coffee for this event. Thank you to Maureen Ballock for donating Norway Spruce Saplings in honor of Earth Day.

The Spring Cleanup is a fabulous opportunity at Burning Tree for the whole family to participate and the school greatly benefits. If you were unable to attend the Spring Cleanup, look for our annual Beautify Burning Tree event in the fall!

Lisa Baker & Lisa Norwalk, Landscape and Grounds Committee Co-Chairs

Make a Wish For Burning Tree!

What do you wish for? Make a wish for items or improvements you think Burning Tree Elementary School needs and send it to the PTA. The PTA maintains a "wish-list" for items we would like to fund with money we raise. Wish list items can be granted only after a majority vote by the PTA and only if we have excess funds to cover the cost of the item. Last year's wish list items included a new front playground, two climbing walls for the back

playground, an upgrade to the media center's television studio and equipment for our new gym. We raise the money to spend it on our kids, the teachers and staff, and your input is very important! Email Lisa Sanfuentes at Lisa.Rizzolo@verizon.net for any items you would like to see on the Wish List!

Plant Sale

Many thanks to all who either helped out or bought plants during our annual **Plant Sale** Fundraiser. This year's event, held last Saturday on April 26th, was more successful than ever, with over \$2,700 in profit and over 86 pre-orders placed. Now, that's a lot of begonias and impatiens! In addition, we had many members of our community stop by to purchase additional plants. We couldn't have done it without the help of many wonderful volunteers. Lisa Baker and I would particularly like to thank Darrin Hartzler, Julie Garcia, Pam Gibbs, The Khaghani Family, Jacinta Chuang, Agnes De Gonville, Kirsten Martin, and Rebecca Smith; we couldn't have unloaded that huge truck at 6:00am and sorted all those orders without you! You truly made the event a success. We look forward to working with everyone again next year!

Gym Dedication Ceremony Thank You's

Were you able to attend the gym dedication ceremony? The weather could not have been better, the entertainment was fantastic thanks to Nada Brahma and our wonderful Burning Tree volunteer chorus, and the dignitaries and sports stars who spoke (including former Redskins player and Burning Tree grandparent, Brig Owens!) made this truly a momentous occasion. Many thanks are also due to the Giant Food on Arlington Blvd. In Bethesda, Snikiddy Snacks and Bethesda Water Store for their generous donation of healthy snacks and water for the ceremony.

Volunteer Corner

Landscape and Grounds

Thank you very much to Lisa Baker, Lisa Norwalk and all the members of the Landscape and Grounds Committee for all their hard work this Spring. The school looks beautiful and was particularly stunning for the gym dedication last month. Thanks to the team for also coordinating the Spring Clean Up and plant

sale – if only your green thumbs had been on sale with the plants!!

Staff Appreciation

Thanks to Kathy Chelst, Beth Martino and all their volunteers for coordinating our Staff Appreciation Week efforts. The Staff Breakfast was another huge success and the perfect start to the week's celebrations in the classrooms.

Room Parents Review

Thanks to all the parents who contributed valuable feedback to our review of the roles and responsibilities of room parents. We have some terrific ideas to clarify the roles, and share the pleasure and workload of being a room parent. We look forward to discussing them with you at the next PTA meeting.

Hearing and Sight Tests

Finally, thanks to the parents who helped with the hearing and sight tests and made the whole process a lot quicker and easier for all our children. The parents who helped me were Michele Greenberg, Nancy Khaghani, Lisa Sanfuentes and Donella Kay.

*Brenda Conroy
VP for Volunteers*

“Positions Vacant”!

The PTA is already making plans for the next school year. Would you like to be involved?

Volunteering on a committee is a great way to get to know other parents and to contribute to the success of our school.

Below is a list of committees looking for co-chairs in 2008-09. There's something for everyone on this list: community service, school support, event planning or fundraising; and many of the positions can be done at home, after hours.

We hope you will join us in 2008-09 and contribute your time and talents to enriching the Burning Tree experience for all our children. We literally can't do these programs without you!

After School Programs

At least two enthusiastic and hardworking co chairs are needed to help recruit, streamline and keep track of after school programs. The PTA sponsors and coordinates after school programs such as theater workshops, physical education classes and study skills. For further information, contact Joan Wolf-

Chiaverini joanwolfjoanwolf@aol.com or (301) 252 8088.

Arts Festival

A co-chair is needed to run the bake-sale. Our annual Arts Festival is a large exhibit of student artwork. The walls of Burning Tree are transformed into a beautiful art gallery. Don't miss this evening event when friends and family can view the many different mediums the students explore in art class. For further information, contact Mary Zambri mzambri@comcast.net or (301) 365 2367.

Back to School Picnic

A co-chair is needed to help organize Burning Tree's kick-off family activity! The Picnic brings Burning Tree families together early in the fall to renew acquaintances and make new friends. The kids have a great time seeing old and new friends outside the classroom! For further information, contact Robin Gonzales gonzales.robin@arentfox.com or (301) 320 7448.

Bulletin Boards

Express your creativity and delight the children by taking on responsibility for the PTA bulletin board in the front hall. The board entices and informs parents and students about upcoming Burning Tree events such as International Night and the Spring Fair. For further information, contact Brenda Conroy brenda.conroy@gol.com or (301) 229 1703.

Calendar Editor

An editor(s) is needed to coordinate the design and production of the indispensable Burning Tree Calendar which lists all BTES and MCPS events. For further information, contact Brenda Conroy brenda.conroy@gol.com or (301) 229 1703.

Chess Club

A new chair is needed for the chess club which meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month (barring a holiday or school closing) from 8am to -9 am. Players of all levels, including beginners, are welcome to join the club. The only requirement is an interest in the game. For the more serious players there will also be opportunities for competition both within the club (there will be a rating ladder), and also against players from other schools. Parent volunteers will be sought to help with administrative tasks. We ask that for each family participating, a parent volunteer works one meeting during the course

of the year. For further information, contact Don Connors don.connors@mac.com or (301) 263 0211.

Child Care for PTA Meetings

A chair is needed to recruit and coordinate Pyle student volunteers to provide free, on-site childcare for children aged 4 and over during PTA meetings and Back-to-School nights. For further information, contact Brenda Conroy brenda.conroy@gol.com or (301) 229 1703.

Creative Writing Club.

The Burning Tree Creative Writing Club needs a co-chair to apprentice. The club welcomes poets, novelists, mystery writers, and humorists in 2nd through 5th grade. It meets every other Tuesday from 3:30 to 4:45 p.m. starting October 9. Club members are given the opportunity to write poems, short stories, songs, puzzles, and more, and they publish a magazine in the spring. The club is led by a Burning Tree mom and is limited to 22 students. Registrations are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Registrations are sent out in the *Friday Update* in mid-September. For further information, contact Rosanna Morrison (301) 469 5949.

Cultural Arts

One or two co-chairs are needed to assist with booking and follow-up. The PTA organizes various cultural arts assemblies throughout the year for the kids. Art, dance, drama, history, music & science programs at Burning Tree are enhanced through these events, which bring outside artists and scientists into Burning Tree. For further information, contact Joan Wolf-Chiaverini joanwolfjoanwolf@aol.com or (301) 252 8088.

Family To Family – New Families

A chair is needed to oversee this program through which current Burning Tree families welcome families new to the school and introduce them to the community & to Burning Tree's programs and events. There is also a new family get-together at the beginning of the school year. For further information, contact Karen van Loon karenvanloon@verizon.net or (301) 320 4223.

Family-To-Family - Kindergarten

Four or five volunteers are needed to help with this program which is specifically tailored to incoming Kindergarten Families new to our school. The PTA solicits current Burning Tree families to serve as "buddies" for the incoming Kindergarten families.

The "buddies" call to welcome the incoming Kindergarten families to the BTES community, and are available to answer questions about Kindergarten during the summer before the school year begins. For further information, contact Julie Zebrack zebrakjulie@yahoo.com or (301) 469 0445.

Fifth Grade Farewell

Two or three 4th grade parents are needed to organize next year's farewell events for our outgoing 5th graders. For further information, contact Karen van Loon karenvanloon@verizon.net or (301) 320 4223.

FLES (Foreign Language in the Elementary School)

FLES needs a new chair for the Chinese program. FLES is a program that offers extra curricular language instruction before and after school. The goal of the FLES program is to provide a firm foundation for the continued study of languages in middle and high school, generate an interest in other cultures and impart enthusiasm for participating in our increasingly global community. Sign up sheets for Kindergarten and 1st grade students, and/or for grades 2 to 5, are distributed at the beginning of the school year. For further information, contact Karen van Loon karenvanloon@verizon.net or (301) 320 4223.

Friday Update Photocopying

Two people (or more) are needed to coordinate the photocopying and distribution of the *Friday Update* on Thursday afternoons. For further information, contact Brenda Conroy brenda.conroy@gol.com or (301) 229 1703.

Landscape and Grounds Committee

This committee oversees the maintenance, beautification and safety of our play areas and school grounds. Co-chairs are especially required to help organize the popular **Beautify Burning Tree** event in October 2008 and the **Clean Up Day** in May 2009. For further information, contact Lisa Baker bakewoman@aol.com or (301) 767 1730.

Math Day

Math Day is an all-day event during school hours of hands-on math exploration in a carnival-like atmosphere. The kids love it! Two or three new chairs are needed to work with staff and volunteers to ensure a program that complements the school curriculum. For further information, contact Nic Ryba nicryba@hotmail.com or (301) 229 6637, Amy

Lenkin amylenkin@millerandlong.com or (301) 365 4123 or Sheryl Isaacs bobsherylisaacs@aol.com or (301) 365 2721.

Playground Volunteer Coordinator

A chair is needed to coordinate the monthly roster of parent volunteers who help supervise the school's playgrounds between 12:50pm and 1:50pm each day. For further information, contact Brenda Conroy brenda.conroy@gol.com or (301) 229 1703.

Recess Equipment

The PTA provides a variety of balls and other sporting items for the playgrounds. A chair is needed to ensure the maintenance of the equipment periodically throughout the year. For further information, contact Brenda Conroy brenda.conroy@gol.com or (301) 229 1703.

The Ribbit Report - BT's student newspaper

This before-school program provides an opportunity for students to write articles featuring news about people and activities at Burning Tree. The paper also includes photos, book and movie reviews, and puzzles. It is published four times a year for distribution to the student body. Three or four new chairs are needed to work with our student reporters. Help and support will be provided by current chairs. For further information, contact Ellen Singer ellen@singer.net or (301) 263 3020, Jim Feinerman feinerma@law.georgetown.edu or (301) 951 1020, Aisha Haque aishahaque@comcast.net or (301) 263 9460.

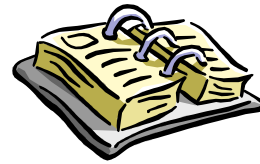
Room Parent Coordinators

Two room parent coordinators (one each for K-2nd Grade and 3rd-5th Grade) are needed to recruit and support the classroom room parents. For further information, contact Brenda Conroy brenda.conroy@gol.com or (301) 229 1703.

Walk to School Day

Whether your concern is safer and improved streets, healthier habits, or cleaner air, **Walk to School Day** events are aimed at bringing forth permanent change to encourage a more "walkable" America — one community at a time. This MCPS sponsored event is looking for a second co-chair, please. For further information, contact Robin Rosenblum robinrosenblum@comcast.net or (301) 320 1757

Calendar of Upcoming Events



Saturday, May 17 – Noon – 4pm

Spring Fair!

Wednesday, May 21 – 9:30am & 7pm

Principal's Coffee

Friday, May 23

K-2 Field Day

Monday, May 26 – No School Day

Memorial Day

Wednesday, May 28 – 6:30 – 9pm

Arts Festival

Thursday, May 29 – 8:30am

Volunteer Breakfast

Friday, May 30

Third – Fifth Grade Field Day

Tuesday, June 3 – 7pm

PTA Meeting

Wednesday, June 4

1st Grade Authors Tea

Friday, June 6 – 7pm

PTA Hail & Farewell Dinner

Burning Issues is published monthly by the Burning Tree PTA, usually the week following each PTA meeting.

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Lisa Sanfuentes 301-320-6214

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Joe Busch 301-767-9786

We welcome your contributions and suggestions. Please send your articles via e-mail to Joe Busch at jbusch@urban.org or call him at 202-261-5569. The deadline for the next newsletter is **Friday, June 6.**