



Burning Issues

President's Message

Drum roll please....we have a PTA website! The address is

www.BurningTreePTA.org. We finally have a central place to find all things PTA. You can now simply download a PTA form or sign-up sheet, and with the click of a mouse find a wealth of information about your PTA and its programs and events. The entire school community has parent Karen van Loon to thank for making our lives a little easier. Karen designed the website, added all of the content and will continue to maintain it this year. On the website you can learn about the PTA, find contact information for the executive board, chairs of committees and event organizers, find explanations of programs and events, locate current and past *Friday Updates* and *Burning Issues*, PTA meeting minutes, the calendar of events, useful resources for you and your children, and more! Please use this website often and well!

The PTA would like to thank the teachers and staff for inviting us into the classrooms at Back To School Night and the Columbus Day Open House. A wonderful aspect of Burning Tree is that the teachers and staff make the parents feel so welcome.

There are great PTA events coming up. **BINGO NIGHT IS TONIGHT!** It's at Pyle Middle School and kids can play up to 8 rounds of Bingo and have a chance to win great prizes. Don't worry about cooking dinner, because Armand's Pizza will be serving subs, salads and pizza. The food will be served beginning at 6:15pm and the first Bingo game starts at 7pm. You can buy a pack of Bingo cards for \$5, or a family pack for \$27.

INTERNATIONAL NIGHT is October 18. The organizers have already been sending home a lot of information about this incredible night. (You can also now go to the PTA Website, go to PTA Programs and Events, go to International Night, and get all the information!) International Night is an evening not to miss. The school is transformed into a party of nations, with a parade of nations to start it off, and then a feast of learning and tasting of ethnic foods when you walk inside!

BEAUTIFY BURNING TREE is the next great family event. On Saturday October 27, bring your whole family to do some community service at our school. We rely on parent volunteers to mulch, prune and weed our grounds! Thank you for your support. Have a wonderful October.

Lisa Sanfuentes, PTA Co-President.

Bingo Night



Join us tonight at Pyle Middle School for Bingo Night! Doors will open at 6:15pm for game card sales and pizza, subs, salads and more provided by Armand's Pizza. Games will start promptly at 7:00pm and over 150

great prizes will be awarded to the winners. No child will go home empty handed...all kids will receive a door prize at the end of the evening (approximately 8:30pm). Raffle tickets will be sold to win a newly redesigned, silver, 4GB iPod Nano valued at over \$150. The raffle ticket prices are 1 for \$3, 2 for \$5 or 5 for \$10. The drawing will take place after the 7th Bingo game. You do not need to be present to win. Hope to see you there!



Christine Brake, Tracey Fitzsimmons and Laura Weiss, Bingo Night Co-Chairs

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Student Directories Are Coming

The highly anticipated 2007-2008 Burning Tree student directory is almost ready. If your family has joined the BT PTA, you will receive one. More than 300 families have already become members of the PTA. If you have not joined yet, do not despair. Now it is the time to join and receive a copy of the directory (membership dues are \$25 – each additional directory is \$5). Just fill out a membership form and send it along with your dues. By becoming a member of this group, you support all the worthy PTA programs and functions.

For further information, please contact the PTA Membership Secretary Katerina Papaioannou, at (301) 229-4286 or mkpapaioannou@yahoo.com.

School Based Programs - Big Thank You to All

Thank you to Joan Wolf-Chiaverini and Debra Rubin for coordinating all After School Activities. It is a big job, but students, parents and teachers alike really appreciate all your work. Thanks to you many kids enjoy many activities!

Thank you to Robin Gonzales, the back to school picnic was great fun. Weather was great, pizza and subs tasted delicious, the organization was impeccable, and the students, teacher and parents got to know each other better and make lots of new friends!

Thank you to Don Connors for getting the chess club going yet once again. Nothing more fun than beating a King that early in the morning!

Thank you to Roseanna Morrison for keeping all those creative writers very busy. We are looking forward to the beautiful magazine!

Thank you to Aparna Gude, Patti Klepp and Ruby Lee for keeping track of all those students who come in before school to receive French, Spanish and/or Chinese lessons. Thanks to you we start another successful FLES year at Burning Tree!

Thank you to Robin Gonzales for coordinating the walk to school day. We will miss those BTnet messages! We had a great and safe walk to school and can't wait for next year!

Karen van Loon, VP School-based Programs

International Night

On Thursday, October 18th from 6:30 to 9pm, Burning Tree will be transformed into a fascinating multicultural center! Our school has students from - last count - 47 different countries (including the USA...)! A lot of the BT students will participate in the parade, set up a booth to represent their country/state or participate in the performances (this year we will showcase a Bollywood dance, and a Chinese Dragon dance, and lots more).

Please take a minute to fill out a form, saying that you will participate in this year's International Night. Also, please don't forget to send in a decoration for our Tree of Nations!

If you need more information, or need a flyer and/or sign-up sheet, please go to the PTA website at www.BurningTreePTA.org. Or call or e-mail one of the co-chairs:

The Americas: Nikki De Castro (240) 396 1532 nikkidecastro@yahoo.com and Maria Silvero-Lopez 301-320-8182 mlopezsilvero@aol.com

Europe: Allison Ellis (240) 396 6480 allison_ellisuk@yahoo.co.uk

Asia, Oceania and Antarctica: Karen van Loon (301) 320 4223 karenavanloon@verizon.net

Middle East and Africa: Tanaz Jalinoos 301-469-6449 tanazroxy@yahoo.com

Walk to School a Big hit

What is 235? Total number of Burning Tree Walkers for Walk-to-School Day!

Our 6th annual trek to school went off without a hitch. Many of you wore your Burning Tree green, and enjoyed the reflectors from the County and organic snacks donated by Snikiddy Snacks, based in Bethesda and available at Whole Foods. We greatly appreciated the safety items and treats, which add a nice touch to the event. We also had the added benefit of music with the word "walk" in each song, thanks to the Schechter/Curry family, who are new to our school, but are veteran Walk-to-School Day coordinators.

Ask your children what they learned from the pedestrian safety tips that were on the announcements each day this week, and try to walk to or from school whenever possible. If you have any comments about this year's walk to school, and/or suggestions for next

year's walk, please contact Robin Rosenblum:
robin@buypromos.com.

Beautify Burning Tree

Please bring the whole family on **Saturday, October 27th** from 9am – noon for the second annual Beautify Burning Tree event. This is a great opportunity for the school community to come together to demonstrate school pride by cleaning up the school grounds. No experience is necessary. There is work to be done all around the school building. Members of the Landscape & Grounds Committee will be on hand to offer instruction and assistance. If you have any garden tools in your garage, even if you don't know how to use them, please bring them along! This is a great opportunity for dads to help out at school, as we will need their strength for some of the beautification projects.



There will be coffee, snacks and refreshments available. All children will be given bulbs to plant to make the school grounds more beautiful in the spring. We will also be giving away a giant pumpkin! Even if you only have an hour to spare, you can make a difference. If you have any questions or wish to join the Landscape & Grounds Committee, please contact Lisa Baker (bakewoman@aol.com) or Lisa Norwalk (lhnorwalk@gmail.com).

Volunteers' Corner

Lice checking -- Thank you very much to the parents who helped with the Fall lice checking. With their help, and the cooperation of the children, we were able to get through all students in three mornings.

Thanks to: Cindy Campbell, Jo Chang, Angeles Cuevas, Michele Greenberg, Santi Karamchetty, Pi-Yu Kuo, Olivia Lai, Lisa Norwalk, Tammy Pasquinelli, Jamie Pierce, Kelly Rose, Debby Rubin, Nic Ryba, Lisa Sanfuentes, Sharon Tompkins, Mary Zambri, and Julie Zembrak.

Room Parents -- If you enjoyed spending time with your children in their classrooms on Open House Day and would like to see more, why not become a room parent? It's never too late to get involved and a number of vacancies still exist. Contact Room parents are still needed for the following classes: Ms. Wolny, Mrs. Borg, Ms. Levenstein, Ms. Jones and Mrs. Flicker. Treasurers are still needed for these classes:

Ms Bernstein, Ms. Carone, Ms. Soriton and Ms. Jones. General Room parents (who support the Contact Room parents) are also required in these classes: Ms. Wolny, Mrs. Borg, Ms. Jones, Ms. Driscoll, Mrs. Flicker and Ms. Shapiro.

The Halloween class parties are just two weeks away. If you can help, please don't be shy. For further information, contact the Room Parent Coordinators:

Grades K-2: Nikki de Castro,
nikkidecastro@yahoo.com or 240-396-1532

Grades 3-5: Shyami DeSilva, sdesilva@usaid.gov
301-320-7876

Babysitting for Principal's Coffee-- The PTA will provide babysitting for the Principal's Coffee evening at 7pm on Wednesday, October 24th. If you would like to use this service, please remind your children that they may bring their own toys and books, but must not touch the classroom's materials. May we also remind parents that babysitting is only for children aged four years and older. This will be strictly enforced. Thank you.

Thank you very much to Dorene Rosenthal who helped supervise the babysitting on Back to School Night. Due to the increasing number of families using the service, the PTA will double the adult supervision next year. We will also offer a third "quiet room" for children who wish to do their homework rather than watch a movie. Any other suggestions would be gratefully received.

Beautify Burning Tree-- Finally, I'd like to invite all families to come to Beautify Burning Tree on Saturday, October 27th between 9:00am and 12:00 noon. Even if you don't have a green thumb, this is a really fun and productive morning. The Landscape and Grounds Committee provides all the equipment and expertise to ensure that even half an hour of your time is well spent. Meet and mingle with other families, get some fresh air and exercise, and help make our school grounds clean and tidy for the Halloween Parade. See you there!

Brenda Conroy, VP Volunteers
brenda.conroy@gol.com

PTA Executive Board Change

Please note that Louise Howe had to step down as MCCPTA Delegate. Pursuant to PTA bylaws on vacancies, the Executive Board elected Darrin Hartzler.

Fundraising Update

Sally Foster—Our Sally Foster sale has wrapped up for the year and enormous thanks go to Ellie Abramowitz and Jamie Pierce for their hard work on our biggest fall fundraiser. It's difficult in August to be organizing a fall fundraiser- thanks to them both for their dedication to the school!

Thanks also to the many families who sold and bought Sally Foster. We wanted to especially thank the Van Clief family and 3rd grader Liza Williams for an OUTSTANDING fundraising job and their support of BTES. For the past two years the Van Clief family has sold over \$600 worth of Sally Foster (!!) and this year Liza took the initiative to personally ask all of her neighbors to support BT and she sold over \$450 worth of Sally Foster! Way to go!!

Upcoming Fall Fundraisers:

Bingo Night

If you're reading this Friday afternoon- make sure you plan to join us tonight at Pyle Middle School for a fun-filled family night. Thanks to Laura Weiss, Christine Brake, and Tracey Fitzsimmons for making this one of our funniest FUNdraisers! (Please see related article for more information on this popular event!)

Fix N' Feast

Change the date!! We will meet at Dream Dinners in Rockville on Thursday, November 8th (not October 15th) to prepare some wonderful take-home dinners! Dream Dinners provides all the ingredients, and then you assemble the meals, take them home, freeze them and have healthy family meals ready for those busy weeknights--just in time for the holidays. Best yet, a portion of the money you spend benefits Burning Tree! Check out Liza Fues' article in the next *Friday Update* for more information and to sign up!

Book Fair

Jeanne Pettanati, Debby Rubin and Heidi Grunwald are busy planning what promises to be another successful Book Fair at Barnes and Noble in Rockville on Thursday, November 29th. They are busy filling teacher wish lists, scheduling teacher readers and planning other fun events for the evening. Keep an eye out for more information in future *Friday Updates*!

Thanks to all the committee chairs for their hard work and thanks to all our BT families for their

support! Please call or email me if you have questions or would like to help with any fundraising events CampbellHannegan@comcast.net or 301-469-0252.

Cindy Campbell, VP Fundraising

Back to School Family Picnic

I think all who attended would agree this year's picnic was as good as they come. What fun it was to see all the returning families and to meet new members of our Burning Tree community. Attendance was excellent and the weather cooperated (though a bit warm). Everyone really seemed to be enjoying the relaxed, comfortable flow of the evening. And we are hearing from the kids that the activities (face painting, kickball, sidewalk chalk and more) made the evening fun for them while their parents were busy gabbing. We have many to thank, but let's start with POTOMAC PIZZA, who did a killer job serving us again. The pizza, subs, hot dogs and drinks were plentiful and delicious. Please be sure to visit their new location in Chevy Chase (near Clyde's at Friendship Heights); they deliver to our area (301-951-1127)! And I could not have made it through the evening without the many wonderful volunteers: Lisa Fleck (and Brittany), Amy Lenkin (and the twins), Sheryl Isaacs (and Michelle), Robin Rosenblum (and her Mini Me, Jacob), Mary Jacquotte, Elissa Ginsky, Sujaya Pasic, Cindy Campbell, Ellie Abramowitz, Bud Doran, Lyn Penniman, Laurie Mackey, Melinda Gray, and the many Pyle student volunteers that guided our kids through organized games and activities (and tried to keep others off the goal posts). Thanks also go to Susan Loftus for the excellent play gear, to all the teachers that attended, and to our fearless leader, Dr. Chaset. Finally, thank you to Olivia Lai and Lisa Sanfuentes for their endless patience and support – and problem solving skills.

Robin Gonzales, Picnic Chair

The Learning Center at Burning Tree Elementary

(The first in a series of articles to raise awareness about the Learning Center Program.)

Burning Tree is one of 11 elementary schools in Montgomery County with an Elementary Learning Center serving children with multiple needs in grades K-5. The goal of the Learning Centers is to provide comprehensive special education instruction and

related services to students with multiple needs and varied disabilities to enable students to achieve success in the MCPS curriculum. The types of disabilities served include learning disabilities and language, emotional, visual, hearing and health impairments.

Currently there are 47 students enrolled in the Learning Center in all grades. Burning Tree employs an inclusion model to integrate Learning Center students into the general education classroom. In general terms inclusion is defined as being included; to consider as part of a whole. The inclusion model provides opportunities for students with disabilities to learn and interact with their non disabled peers to the maximum extent possible in general education environments.

Learning Center classes typically have a lower student to teacher ratio and instruction is individualized to meet the needs of the students. Many Learning Center students are fully immersed in a general education classroom or “mainstreamed” into general education classes throughout the day as appropriate.

On back to school night, information regarding inclusion research and the benefits of inclusion was present and made available. A brief summary of the information follows: Research on inclusion point to the positive results of inclusion. Lipsky and Gartner (1997) concluded that the data show “a strong trend toward improved student outcomes (academically, socially, and behaviorally) for both special education and general education students. (pg.197)”

Inclusion benefits both students with disabilities and their non disabled peers. A few of the benefits for students with disabilities include:

- Peer interaction and acceptance,
- Belonging to a group of peers,
- Improved communication skills and social cues,
- Modeling of good, positive behavior, and
- Exposure to real world situations.

The benefits for non disabled peers include:

- Empathy,
- Acceptance of differences and tolerance,
- Opportunity to be a role model, opportunity for leadership,
- Compassion, and

- Develop problem solving skills.

If you have specific questions about the Learning Center please call Dr. Chaset, Mr. Tark or Dana Cook.

Sister School Committee

Many thanks to the Burning Tree community for its generous support of the School Supply Drive for our sister school, Broad Acres. The school supplies were delivered to Broad Acres and will be put to good use. Please watch for the annual winter clothing drive for Broad Acres, which will begin in November. We are looking forward to a terrific year in our partnership with Broad Acres.

Karen Judson, Wynne Sitrin and Sheryl Isaacs

Parent Get Togethers

What a wonderful turnout we had at all of the parent get togethers! Many thanks to Vicki Herson, Lisa and Antoine Sanfuentes, Tammy and Matthew Pasquinelli, and Olivia Lai and Walter Gillcris for hosting the New Parent Coffee, New Parent Social, and the Learning Center and new International families get togethers. For those of you who attended these gatherings, we hope you enjoyed meeting and visiting with Burning Tree parents and staff, and we welcome you to the Burning Tree community!

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

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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, November 2.**

Burning Tree PTA Minutes -- October 2, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by President Olivia Lai. The August 29, 2007 minutes were approved.

President's Report: Lisa Sanfuentes and Vicki Herson were thanked for hosting the new family coffees. The Learning Center get together, hosted by Tammy and Matthew Pasquinelli, was also well attended. On Wed. Oct. 10, an evening get together for new international families will be held at Olivia Lai's home. The old Kindergarten playground was removed and the climbing wall in the back area should be installed within a few weeks. Katerina Papaioannou reported that PTA Membership is up to 300 members (out of 391 BT families) and that the directory will be ready for the printer in two weeks. Karen van Loon has been working on getting the PTA website up and running. She is currently registering the domain name, and it will hopefully be up and running by the end of the week.

Principal's Report: Mr. Tark stated that MCPS has purchased a web management system called TRON, which allows easy access and management of web pages directly. This system will be a huge time saver. Last week representatives met with Web people to whom info on BT was given. The old site is currently still running. Construction: the crew is laying new drainage pipes, regrading the area, and then they will be seeding. This should be completed in about three weeks. The safety barrier fence has been brought back, and 10 parking spaces have been temporarily taken away. Kids go onto the black top, or, field only during recess. There is a rotating schedule. Dr. Chaset reported that a new ESOL teacher was hired, Popsy Kanagaratnam. She will be working on Fridays, and Monday and Tuesday afternoons. Forty-eight students receive ESOL services. She will be able to give extra attention to those kids who really need it. Karen Judson, Sheryl Isaacs and Wynne Sitrin, on the Sister School Committee, reported on all different kinds of reciprocal relationships. Broad Acres is our sister school. School supplies were sent over to the school, as well as a check for \$1,200. Broad Acres will use that for a behavior incentive program in their school. They would like to have a career day and would like the help of BT. They would also like to visit our International Night, and continue with the winter clothing drive. This is grant writing season – three grants are out for various funding, one is for digital

calculators that help kids master math facts. One is for digital storyboarding. These are Washington Post Education Grants Fund. One is an Arts fund from Washington Post. One is for funding gardening activities for students in the third grade.

Treasurers Report: Lisa Davenport reported that we are already doing better than expected with the sales of ads for the directory. The Kindergarten playground funds are coming out of the Wish list.

Vice President Reports: Fundraising: Cindy Campbell reported that Sally Foster sales are not going well; only \$5631 so far. We are way down from previous years. Parents really need to turn their forms in by this Friday. Bingo Night is on Oct 12. Volunteers are still needed. The food will be served at 6:15. Bingo will start at 7:00. If anyone knows any other fundraisers, please let us know. **School Based Programs:** Karen van Loon reported that some after school classes still have spaces. They start this week. The Chess club has started up, run by Don Connors. FLES-Chinese is starting this Thursday. Spanish starts on the 16th, French starts next week. Every offered class has been filled. Tomorrow is Walk to School Day. Approximately 150 children have signed up. Walk to school will begin at 8:50. International Night is on October 18. More volunteers are needed, and there are many ways in which to participate. Community Based Programs. Vicki Herson reported that Martha's Table is this Thursday. Walk for the Homeless will be on October 25, during the school day. **Volunteers:** Brenda Conroy has received more than 100 volunteer forms from families, and stated that it's never too late to volunteer. This week more help is needed for lice checking on Thursday and Friday mornings. Beautify Burning Tree is a nice opportunity for parents to help out. Several classes still don't have contact parents. There are also many vacancies in the lunchroom volunteer schedule third and fourth week of October. Brenda stressed that at future PTA meetings, babysitting will not accept children under 4 years old.

Pam Mintz from the YMCA Youth and Family Services spoke about "Raising Responsible Children." She stressed that chores, and allowances, were both important to give to your children, enhancing their self-esteem and sense of responsibility within the family.

No new business. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Michele Zweig Greenberg