

# Burning Issues

## President's Message

“At Burning Tree we celebrate our community”– these words from our loved Burning Tree theme song could not have

been truer this past weekend. What better way to celebrate and show respect for our school and our community than by Beautifying Burning Tree. This past Saturday, more than 120 volunteer parents, students and staff took time out of their busy weekend schedules to pick up trash, weed, mulch, plant and just generally spruce up our school. Thanks to Chair Pam Janssen (who is new to BTES this year!) and her hard working Landscape and Grounds committee, who did an amazing job of organizing the event and finding tasks for even the novice gardeners. And by the way, the pumpkin weighed a lofty 67lbs (that’s a lot of pumpkin pie!). Congratulations to David Isaacs who won it! Thanks to everyone who worked so hard on a perfect autumn day to show how much we care about our community.

Speaking of perfect autumn days, how much more perfect could the night have been at our Back to School Picnic? Although we were all disappointed when it had to be postponed because of bad weather, it surely was worth the wait. Thanks so much to co-chairs Robin Gonzales and Nancy Samit for organizing this fun-filled community-building activity. It is so nice to see the kids having so much carefree fun with their friends - and even nicer for the adults to have a chance to talk to other BT parents and our great staff. Thanks Robin and Nancy for a great night!

Two more fun-filled events are just around the corner. **International Night** is Thursday, October 16th (no school Friday!). You can tour the globe without even leaving our school driveway. Dozens of countries will be represented at this special night where we get to celebrate our diverse Burning Tree community, eat yummy food and learn about the many different countries and cultures that make up the Burning Tree Community. Last year, more than 50 countries were represented. On Friday, November 7th join us for a raucous good time at **Bingo Night** at Pyle Middle School. Don’t worry about cooking dinner, because you can support BT by buying delicious pizza, subs, salads and dessert. So come

hungry and be ready to have a great (albeit noisy!) time.

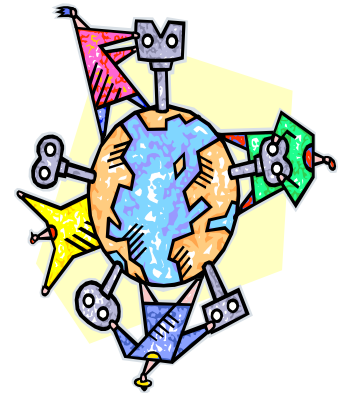
A round of applause goes to Mrs. Erdrich and Mr. Tark for their tenacity in securing an additional first grade teacher. The PTA would like to welcome our new first grade teacher, Ms. Jennifer Lopez, who has allowed the first grade class size to shrink and give an atmosphere where our children can better learn and grow. The PTA would also like to thank the teachers and staff for inviting us into the classrooms at Back to School Night. A wonderful aspect of Burning Tree is that the teachers, staff and parents work so closely together and the teachers and staff make the parents feel so welcome. “Burning Tree oh’ Burning Tree, We Love Thee...”

*Cindy Campbell,  
PTA President-Elect*

## International Night 2008

On Thursday, October 16 from 6:30 to 8.30pm, we will travel the globe!

Burning Tree's International Night is a celebration of our diverse school community, our world, and our desire to understand and appreciate our differences and similarities. International Night gives our children and families a chance to explore the cultures from around world through the eyes of Burning Tree families who, last year, represented over 50 different countries. All of you are invited to join the parade, to perform, and/or to set up a booth representing your country. (Continued page 2)



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## International Night *(Cont'd from page 1)*

You will find the flyer and the brochure attached to this Burning Issues or on the PTA website. For more information please contact one of the co-chairs: Please return this form to the appropriate person listed below:

### EUROPE:

Allison Ellis (240) 396-6480  
allison\_ellisuk@yahoo.co.uk

### THE AMERICAS:

Agnes de Gonneville (240) 396-6732  
aedego@hotmail.com

### AFRICA & MIDDLE EAST:

Santi Karamchetty (301) 320-0594  
abasu19@starpower.net

### ASIA & OCEANIA:

Karen van Loon (301) 320-4223  
karenvanloon@verizon.net

## FUNdraising Update

Sally Foster Deadline Extended!!

Remember last year, when you realized in June, that without a doubt, your wrap would run out... Support BT... BUY MORE SALLY FOSTER! And to help you with this, we've extended the deadline for submitting catalog orders for Sally Foster to next Friday, October 17th. Sales are significantly down from last year so please consider placing an order if you have not done so already. The easiest way to increase your sales is to ask just one or two other people to place an order. Remind them that 50% of their Sally Foster purchase goes directly to BTES and that you really appreciate that they are supporting your child's school. Encourage out of town family and friends to order online at:

[www.sallyfoster.com](http://www.sallyfoster.com)



(Make sure they enter #498966 so that BT gets the credit.)

The money you raise funds PTA projects such as the Cultural Arts programs and the Science Fair, and supplements curriculum materials for our children. Last year we raised over \$6,500! With your support, we can do that well again this year! QUESTIONS? Contact Jamie Pierce 301-320-6801

jamiemaray@yahoo.com or Kristen Farren 301-229-2472 farrens5@comcast.net.

## Fill Our Pond News

We have gotten off to an amazing start to our inaugural check-writing campaign. Thanks to the many generous families in our BT community, we have already raised \$19,000!! We hope YOU will help us reach our goal – only \$6,000 to go! If you have not already made a donation, please consider making one today. Please visit the PTA website for more information or if you need a contribution form.

## Upcoming Fall Fundraisers:

### Dine Out - California Tortilla, Tuesday, October 21

Tired of deciding what to make for dinner or don't feel like cooking? Your family can spend a nice evening out together as you join us for the first Dine Out Night at **California Tortilla in Cabin John**. Whether you choose yummy specialty burritos, tacos, salads, fajitas or quesadillas, you're sure to enjoy the meal in a fun, kid-friendly atmosphere while benefiting Burning Tree! See next week's *Weekly Update* for more information.

### Bingo Night, Friday, November 7th

This is a fun-filled community activity for Burning Tree families. Bring the family to Pyle Middle School where you and your kids can play several rounds of Bingo with other BT families and your kids can win lots of cool prizes – plus every child is a winner this year! Enter the raffle to win a new iPod touch! And come hungry - Potomac Pizza will supply lots of their delicious food. Look for more info coming soon in October *Weekly Updates*.

### Original Artwork, November

#### Shipment of Precious Artwork to Arrive Early!

Yes, we have moved Original Artwork from the spring to the fall in order for you to receive your child's original artwork turned into a picture on a pillow, a mug, or a mouse pad - to name a few – just in time for holiday gift giving! Keep an eye out for more information in future *Weekly Updates*.

Thanks to all the committee chairs for their hard work and thanks to all of our BT families for their support! Please call or email me if you have questions or would like to help with any fundraising events - ellie.abramowitz@verizon.net or 301-365-0543.

*Ellie Abramowitz, VP Fundraising*

## Thank You To All Who Made Beautify Burning Tree Possible!!

The Landscape and Grounds Committee would like to thank all of you who came out on Friday October 3rd to distribute mulch and on Saturday, October 4th for the main Beautify Burning Tree event. Our 124 volunteers (from both days) included Burning Tree students, parents, and teachers, girl scouts from Troops 4008 and 6709 (under leader Carmen Serna), boy scouts from cub pack 817 (under leader Ted Torry), and Pyle and Whitman students. Mitch Baker of American Plant passed on some great gardening tips to the early birds. A fun time was had by all and some terrific work was completed!

We must also thank our wonderful, generous sponsors:

**Ben Allnut's Homestead Farm**, who provided the gigantic pumpkin for our "guess the weight" competition. By the way, the lucky winner was 4th-grader David Isaacs, who guessed 67lb. The actual weight was 67.2lb. Well done David!

**Christopher's Hardware of Glen Echo**, who added generously to our collection of hand tools, with a donation that included ten trowels, weeders, forks, and pruners (combined retail value - \$280!!).

**Bethesda Water ("Drink More Water")** who donated 4G of water for our thirsty volunteers.

**Starbucks**, who provided enough coffee for 100 cups to keep us zipping along!

**Bethesda Bagels** who donated 3 dozen delicious bagels.

**Dunkin Donuts** who provided 3 boxes of tasty doughnut holes.

**Safeway** who gave us a generous gift card that allowed us to purchase juice, apples and other snacks for our hardworking volunteers.

**MCPS** who provided us with extra gloves and trash bags.

Please be sure to support these great businesses in our community that have supported us so generously!

A huge thank you is also due to all those who helped on the Landscape and Grounds organizing committee for this event: Allison Ellis, Agnes de Gonneville, Lisa Baker, Lisa Norwalk, and Joe Okon. Additional and essential help in securing sponsors or being crew

leaders on the day was provided by: Amy Brown, Ana Kiron, Christine Brake, Elizabeth Grimsley, Ellen Mundell, Erin Derik, Kristen Farren, Kirsten Martin, Matt Wells, Michael Taylor, Olivia Lai, Pam Gibbs, Sharon Curry, and Yumiko Miura. We also recognize the administrative support of Mrs. Erdrich, Mr. Tark, Building services and our PTA leadership.

As you can see, this was truly a community effort from quite a remarkable community!

## MCCPTA

The Montgomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA) supports the work of all the PTAs in Montgomery County and advocates for our kids at the school board and State level. It provides a forum for the local PTAs to join together and influence the education that our kids receive.

As MCCPTA co-delegate, along with Ira Feldman, I will attend the regular meetings which are held on the last Tuesday of every month during the school year. In addition to a business meeting where delegates let the leadership know their opinions on the issues of the day, there is usually a program which gives the delegates in-depth information about a single topic or program of interest.

The first meeting of this school year was held on the 24th of September and was primarily an introduction to the work of MCCPTA for new delegates. Committees focused on specific issues were recruiting for members and a few items from last year were wound up. In addition, delegates were given information about MCCPTA's plans to influence the FY2010 Montgomery County Public School operating budget. Two documents were introduced which focus on the budget priorities for next year which will be discussed at the next meeting, a budget compact and a resolution on MCCPTA priorities. Please feel free to contact me to receive a copy of these documents or to discuss any issues that you feel should be elevated to the MCCPTA for consideration.

The next meeting will be held on October 28th.

*Darrin Hartzler,  
MCCPTA co-delegate for BTES PTA*

## Back to School Family Picnic

I am reminded of the old maxim, "if you can't be good, be lucky," when reflecting on the picnic this year. After a dreary, bleak first try, and a day obsessing over Doppler radar, we bit the bullet and

postponed the event to September 19. As if rewarding us for the decision, the Weather Gods smiled on us for our rescheduled date. The turnout was the best in memory, the weather perfect, the grounds gorgeous (thanks to Building Services and to the indomitable Grounds Committee), the kids' activities bustling, and the pizza and subs plentiful and delicious. All in all, it was a Home Run affair. There are many to thank – so I best get started.

**Potomac Pizza** (Chevy Chase location) – “Snaps” for the food and outrageously great service – we love you guys.

**My platoon of volunteers** (thanks for not feeding my annoying emails to the Spam Shark): Lisa Baker (playing hurt) and daughter Carly, Britta Battaile (i.e., Ms. Reliable) and her mini me, Carly, Wynne Sitrin (and Aliza), John Whalen, Robin Rosenblum (tell Jacob we missed him), Laurie Mackey, Laura Weiss, the Entire House of Fleck (Lisa, Brittany (VP of Signage), Nicole and Lexi (and Peter - just for sharing them)), the Bragales, Shane Pittman (she’s back!), Marianne Katinas, Cindy Campbell, Olivia Lai, and Margie.

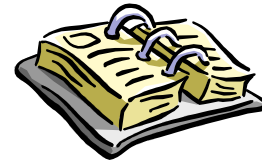
**Our Pyle/Whitman heroes:** Daan Verhoeven, Sara and Hannah Franklin-Gillette, Gregory Papaioannou, Tyler Weiss, Molly Houston (like a daughter to me), Samantha Gonzales (an actual daughter to me) and Jennifer Jung.

**Big thanks to our new commander,** Dr. Erdrich, for her support. And a final Shout Out to Ms. Hurwitz for sharing the speaker and to Ms. Loftus for sharing her toys.

*Robin Gonzales and Nancy Samit (Picnic Co-Chairs)*



## Calendar of Upcoming Events



**Monday, October 13 -- Columbus Day**

Parent Visiting Day 9:15am

**Thursday, October 16th –**

International Night 6:30 – 8:30 pm

**Friday, October 17th -- No School**

MSTA Convention

**Tuesday, October 21 – Dine-Out**

California Tortilla

**Wednesday, October 22**

Principal's Coffee – 9:30am

Individual Student Pictures

**Friday, October 31 – Halloween**

Class Parties

Parade at 2pm

First Marking Period Ends

**Monday, November 3 – No School**

Professional Day

**Tuesday, November 4 – No School**

Election Day

***Burning Issues*** is published monthly by the Burning Tree PTA, 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](mailto:jbusch@urban.org) or call him at 202-261-5569. The deadline for the next newsletter is **Friday, November 7.**