

February 2011 Blanchard Bits

Blanchard Calendar

February

- 1 PTF Grants Committee Mtg. 7:00 p.m.
- 3 Half Day. Noon dismissal. No lunch served.
- 3 Teacher Appreciation Luncheon.
- 3 Beginning Band Concert. 7:00 p.m. Blanchard Gym.
- 3 SEPAC Mtg. 7:00 p.m. Sargent Library.
- 7 BoxTops contest ends.
- 8 PTF Grants Committee Mtg. 7:00 p.m.
- 10 School Committee Meeting. 7:30 p.m.
- 21-25 February Vacation. School Closed.

March

- 2 Dr. Seuss Day
- 3 3rd Grade Biography Social.
- 3 Half Day. Noon dismissal. No lunch served.
- 10 School Committee Meeting. 7:30 p.m.
- 17-18 Half Day. Parent/Teacher Conferences. No lunch served.
- 28 School Council Meeting. 5:30 p.m.

PTF Updates by: Jennifer Campbell

The PTF is very excited about ***Get Out and Move – Exercise your Mind and Body***, a family-oriented fundraiser which will take place on Saturday April 30 from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. This event will be fun for the kids, and will include many opportunities for them to walk, read, and do other activities in order to earn pledges to raise money for the PTF.

This will be the PTF's largest fundraiser of the year. We have a goal of \$20,000, which will be used towards the many enrichment programs and other support the PTF provides to the school, including Arts Enrichment (Potato Hill Poetry, 3rd Grade Black and White Photography, and community meeting presenters such as Ball in the House & much more), Science Enrichment (Kindergarten Tide Pools, Mr. Money Fossil program,

and much more), and Grants (Smart Board and Eno Board equipment, the Library reading terrace, and more).

We will need a lot of help in the planning stages and on the day of. Many jobs take only a few hours and can be done on your own time, so please consider signing up to help as a chair or volunteer. We have identified the following chairs and committees:

- **Poster Contest coordinator:** Will work with art teacher to organize a poster contest among all grades. Posters will be used to decorate the school as well as spread around town to advertise the event. (1-2 people)
- **Business solicitations:** Responsible for asking local businesses for sponsorship contributions, as well as donations of food and prizes. (1 chair, 2-3 committee members)
- **Entertainment coordinator:** Responsibilities - coordinating music and dunk tank. (1 person)
- **Logistics:** Volunteers needed for pre-event setup up and post-event cleanup. (1 chair, many committee members needed)
- **Pledge coordinator:** Create, distribute, and collect pledge packets. (1 chair, 3-5 committee members)
- **50/50 raffle:** Get license for raffle, create and sell tickets, collect money. (1 chair, 3-5 committee members)
- **Concessions:** Help coordinate collection and sale of food donations, baked goods, and cooked items. (1 chair, 5 committee members)
- **Games coordinator:** Oversee the activities (dance area, etc.), including set-up and equipment purchase. (1 chair, 3 committee members)
- **Volunteer coordinator:** Help place volunteers where needed, coordinate timing, etc. (1 person)
- **Room Parent Coordinator:** Help organize various responsibilities with room parents (1 person)

Please contact Marissa Picca (Marissa.picca@lionbridge.com) and Kathy Gotthelf (kathygotthelf@hotmail.com) to let them know what you are able to help with. We appreciate everyone's time and effort that will go into making this fundraiser a success!

PTF Updates by: Jennifer Campbell

Thanks to everyone who came out to the PTF meeting last week. We had a great parent kickoff for ***Get Out and Move – Exercise your Mind & Body***, our big spring fundraiser. We will be sending out an e-mail in the next few days outlining the volunteer jobs we need. There will be lots of help needed to prepare for this event, as well as day of. We have a goal of \$20,000 in order to keep our current level of support of [enrichment activities](#) at the school. It should be fun, and a great way to get the kids involved!

Thank you to Sharon Coverdale, Kathy Luce, and Holly Stephens for organizing this year's movie night. It was a great evening!

Reminder that next week is the Faculty/Staff luncheon, sponsored by the PTF. A letter was sent via backpack and e-mail asking for contributions by grade. Thanks to everyone who brought food or contributions, or volunteered for this event, and to Laura Ristaino and Sue Giaconia for chairing.

Check out our Web site for updates, www.blanchardptf.org, as well as our Facebook page to stay informed.

Blanchard News

From Second Grade:

Thanks to the efforts of the PTF, Grade 2 students have two exciting opportunities this month. They will discover the "Reasons for Seasons" with naturalist Pete Money from the Natural Discoveries program. Students will learn about migration, hibernation and the secrets of the seasons.

As part of a PTF grant, each class will experience Picture Writing Workshops with our artist in residence, Mrs. Barnett. The children will be learning sketching and watercolor techniques that tie into our reading and writing program. Students will connect their science observation skills to the winter habitats and sky right around us here at Blanchard and at home.

Social Networking and Elementary School Students

By: Peggy Harvey, Instructional Technology Specialist
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With more than 500 million users, there's no doubt that Facebook is having a powerful impact on how people connect in today's society. If Facebook were a country, it would now have the 3rd largest population (after China and India), making it bigger than the United States. 50% of active users login to Facebook every day, and the average user has 130 friends. Facebook's global reach is extensive: 70% of Facebook users live outside the US.

Technically, Blanchard students are not Facebook users. The terms of agreement for Facebook, and other social networking sites, like MySpace, explicitly prohibit use by anyone under the age of 13. We advise students that Facebook is not age-appropriate. That being said, there's no denying that young children can, and sometimes do, have Facebook accounts, and that they are signing up at younger and younger ages. Students are also likely to explore other social networking sites, which, like Facebook, may include inappropriate content, and provide tempting opportunities to exchange private information or engage in cyberbullying.

While social networking is here to stay, and, in controlled situations, can provide some positive interactions, families should establish rules and talk about appropriate use of networking sites. Here are a few suggested guidelines:

- Stay current on the digital influences in your kids' lives. Be aware of what media they may be using so that you can manage its use.
- Keep your family computer in a visible place in your home.
- Tell your children to never respond to messages from strangers, and to never download images from someone they do not know.
- Consider installing an Internet filter on your home computer and/or your child's smartphone. There are many to choose from, but I have been impressed with K-9 Web Protection, which is free: <http://www1.k9webprotection.com/>
- If you do permit your children to use Facebook, ask them to show you their profile. Talk to them about the ramifications of sharing information with essentially the whole world. Remind them to never reveal private information about themselves or their family.
- Make sure the privacy settings are at the highest level. A guide for Facebook privacy settings can be found at: <http://www.allfacebook.com/facebook-privacy-2009-02>

- Go online yourself. If your child is on Facebook, set up an account for yourself and require that you be in your child's friend network. Alternately, ask your child to show you anything he or she posts, and all messages received from other Facebook users.
- Tell your children to always think before posting. Remind your children that they should never post anything that they would not say to someone in person, or that they wouldn't want someone to say about them. Kindness should be the golden rule.
- Tell your children to tell immediately if something happens online to make them feel uncomfortable.
- Recognize that Chat Rooms are difficult to monitor, as are cell phone text messages and other forms of synchronous communication.
- Refer to the numerous resources available to help parents and educators advise kids about social networking. Here are just a few:

Safe Families: <http://www.safefamilies.org/socialnetworking.php>

Federal Trade Commission Social Networking Safety Tips:
<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/tech/tec14.shtm>

Tween Parent: <http://www.tweenparent.com/articles/view/169>

Common Sense Media: <http://www.common sense media.org/social-networking-tips>

- Consider social networking sites that are more age-appropriate than Facebook and include strong safety features. Here are a few suggestions.

Panwapa: This Sesame Workshop site is a highly interactive, fun and safe introduction to simple social networking, and is a part of a global initiative to teach kids how to be good world citizens. Appropriate for ages 5-8.
<http://www.panwapa.com/>

Secret Builders: A safe virtual world for children ages 5-14
<http://www.secretbuilders.com/>

Dizzywood: a safe, fun virtual world that promotes positive social values for children ages 8 and up.
<http://www.dizzywood.com/>

Club Penguin: A fun and very popular site that introduces children to social networking and avatars, but otherwise does not have much educational value.

<http://www.clubpenguin.com/>

Library News: What have our students been learning about since November?

6th graders:

- Began a unit on Internet safety including issues such as: privacy, cyber-bullying, and netiquette
- Lessons on how to evaluate websites
- Google Earth – Introduction and activity
- Bibliographies – Online

After learning how to use electronic templates and NoodleTools to create a bibliography electronically, students put their knowledge to practice and were required to create a bibliography to accompany their Egyptian projects.

5th graders:

- Westward Expansion study. Completed Lewis and Clark Expedition research, draft and final newspaper article in Word applying several newly learned formatting techniques.

4th graders:

- Researched a Caribbean Island or Central American country and created a PowerPoint slide incorporating newly learned formatting techniques.
- Dictionary skills

3rd graders:

- Collaborative project that classroom teachers and Mrs. Long developed: Researched the Puritans and Pilgrims with a culminating activity that compared and contrasted them using the software program, Inspiration
- Selected biographies and completed homework sheet in preparation of creating business cards for biography social

- Review fiction vs. non-fiction with activity that used the Smart Board

2nd Grade

- To support animal research projects: introduction to Explorapedia, a software program about animals and introduction to encyclopedias
- Completed unit on the seven continents and final assessment

1st Grade

- Collaborative Projects: Classroom Teachers and Mrs. Long developed:
 1. All About Me – project created in Kid Pix
 2. Community Helpers – project created in Kid Pix
- Students chose a holiday or celebration and, using Kid Pix software, created a drawing and wrote a sentence

Kindergarten

- A unit exploring fiction vs. non-fiction and a John Collins prompt recalling information (from previous lesson) about penguins
- Literature appreciation and accompanying activities: *Going on a Bear Hunt*, *The Tub People*, and *Emily's Snowball*

Boxborough SEPAC News

Join us for our important B-SEPAC session, **Thursday evening, February 3 from 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the Sargent Library.** All are welcome.

We're welcoming back the ever-popular Dr. Scott Lukas, Professor of Psychiatry and Pharmacology at Harvard Medical School and Director of the Neuroimaging Center and the Behavioral Psychopharmacology Research Laboratory at McLean Hospital. Dr. Lukas will discuss topics of greatest interest to Blanchard parents, including recent research on the developing brain and the effects of medications, including natural alternatives, on children with certain disabilities.

The meeting will kick-off with an opportunity to voice your thoughts as the School Committee assesses options for Blanchard administration models given our declining enrollment and budgetary limitations, especially as they relate to the Director of Pupil Services position. The B-SEPAC is interested in ensuring that Special Education services at Blanchard not be comprised as a result of any changes.

Given the subject matter, this is an “adults-only” session, and we will not be able to accommodate children in the meeting room.

If you have any questions regarding this workshop, please contact Nancy Settle-Murphy (nancy.settlemurphy@verizon.net), Leah Russell (dearleah@comcast.net) or Kathy Luce (kathy_luce@hotmail.com).

Hope to see you there!

Community News

Chinese New Year and Acton’s 275th Anniversary

Come to join us for a grand celebration of Chinese New Year and Acton's 275th Anniversary.

The Town of Acton, Acton Chinese Language School (ACLS) and Acton-Boxborough Cultural Council (ABCC) proudly present "Acton's 275th Anniversary & 2011 Chinese New Year Celebration" on Saturday (2:00-10:00 p.m.), February 19, 2011 at Acton-Boxborough Regional High School.

Events include music and dance performance, festival dinner, and fireworks.

Please visit <http://acls-ma.org> and <http://www.acton-ma.gov/events> for more details.

Many events are free. Dinner and performance tickets can be purchased at http://acls-ma.org/online_buy.php

CPR Class @ Boxborough Fire Department, Feb 12

The Boxborough Fire Department will hold Community CPR and First Aid Training on Saturday February 12 beginning at 8:30 AM for members of the local community. The training will be held at the Boxborough Fire Station, 502 Massachusetts Avenue in Boxborough. Individuals interested in CPR Training will attend from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and First Aid Training will be from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. The cost is \$20 for CPR Training only and

\$30 for CPR and First Aid Training. Individuals that have never been trained as well as those seeking recertification are welcome.

To sign up, please visit www.boxboroughfire.com. Interested residents with questions should contact Lieutenant Jason Malinowski via e-mail at jmalinowski@boxboroughfire.com

Susan B. Anthony-The Invincible!

The Sargent Memorial Library in Boxborough will host a program on the life of Susan B. Anthony on **Tuesday, February 15, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.** The 45 minute dramatization will be performed by actor, director, and educator Sally Matson a resident of Andover MA. Sally Matson has been touring the country for eight years appearing locally at the Old South Meeting House in Boston, University of New Hampshire, Vermont State House, Raytheon Company, several public libraries.

Everyone is welcome to this wonderful program sponsored by the generosity of the Friends of the Boxborough Library.

AtoZ the USA

The Sargent Memorial Library in Boxborough has purchased AtoZ the USA, an online database offering extensive information on all 50 U.S. states, territories, and the District of Columbia.

Our library is proud to offer this rich, colorful content to patrons who seek specific information on the country and its territories or simply just want a good read. With AtoZ the USA, you can quickly locate accurate data and become familiar with the entire United States without leaving your desk. To access AtoZ the USA, follow the link on the library website www.boxlib.org.

This new electronic database was made possible by a donation from the Sargent Memorial Library Foundation

Sargent Memorial Library Announces the Addition of Mango Online Language Learning System

The Sargent Memorial Library in Boxborough now offers the **Mango Languages** online language-learning system. Mango is free for all patrons, and offers a fast and convenient solution for our community's increasing language learning needs.

We are thrilled to offer this resource to our patrons. They can learn a second language for business, travel, or the fun of learning. Additional new courses to be added this year will bring the total number to 70. To learn more about Mango and get a preview of what the program has to offer, stop by the library for an introduction or access Mango via the library website www.boxlib.org. If you have a Sargent Memorial Library card and access to the internet, you can access the actual courses remotely from anywhere!

This new electronic database was made possible by a donation from the Sargent Memorial Library Foundation.

Acton-Boxborough Cultural Council

State Senator for Middlesex and Worcester District, Jamie B. Eldridge and Barbara Estabrook, Chair of the Acton-Boxborough Cultural Council, have announced the award of 25 grants for cultural programs to benefit the communities of Acton and Boxborough.

Grant recipients include the Dancing Wheels performances at Blanchard, Conant, Douglas, Gates, McCarthy-Towne and Merriam Schools; Massachusetts High School Drama Competition Round 1 at ABRHS, the commission of a concert band piece for the ABRHS Music Department and the Boxborough Agricultural Fair. A complete listing of grant recipients will be available online at www.actonboxboroughculturalcouncil.org.

The Acton-Boxborough Cultural Council will seek applications again in the fall. Information and forms are available online at (www.massculturalcouncil.org).

Check It Out @ the Sargent Memorial Library

Early Release Movie, Thursday, February 3 at 1:00 p.m.

Bring a comfy pillow and watch the spectacular journey of an incredible horse **Secretariat**. (Rated PG)

Get Fired Up About Reading!

Beginning in February, the reading wall in the children's room will feature a giant dragon that will list all of the best books children are reading. So check out a book that gets families fired up for reading and stop by the children's room to help us make our dragon grow!

Drop-in Programs, Saturday, February 12

Lego Building @ 10:30 a.m.

Drop-In Valentines Craft @ 1:00 p.m.

3rd & 4th Grade Book Group, Wednesday February 16 @ 4:00 p.m.

Children in third and fourth grade are invited to join our book group. If you would like to sign-up for the book group, please call the Library at 978-263-4680 or email Miss Heather at hwilkins@cwmars.org. The next meeting is Wednesday, February 16th at 4:00 p.m. This month's book is *The Door to Time* by Pierdomenico Baccalario. A healthy snack will be provided.

Monday Morning Story-time & Craft @ 10:45 a.m.

Monday's story-time is for children ages 3 to 5. This program features popular themes, interactive books, and a fun paper craft.

Thursday Morning Story-time with Jane @ 10:30 a.m.

Thursday's story-time is for children of all ages. This program features classic tales as well as new favorites.

School Vacation Week @ Boxborough Library

The Library will be closed on Monday, February 21 in observance of Presidents' Day.

Tuesday, February 22

10:30 a.m. Merry Go Music with Carrie Rowan

An interactive musical program for children ages 2 to 6. This program is 30 minutes.

Wednesday, February 23

1:00 p.m. Afternoon Movie

The Sorcerer's Apprentice (Rated PG)

Thursday, February 24 @ 2:00 p.m. BONAPART MAGIC SHOW

Bonaparte is "Boston's Hottest Magician"; his dazzling, interactive style of magic has captured the hearts and provoked the laughter of thousands of children and adults around the world. Children of all ages will be amazed and astounded as they witness objects mysteriously change places and change colors – right before their eyes! Items Impossibly Vanish and Reappear – visual magic at its absolute best!

Bring the entire family to the Boxborough Library for an amazing magic show.

This program is made possible through the generosity of the Friends of the Boxborough Library.

Saturday, February 26, 1:00 p.m. The Boxborough Family Network Pre-K Program

The BFN is sponsoring a pre-k story-time and craft. Today's theme is friendship.

These programs are possible through the generosity of the Friends of the Boxborough Library.

Blanchard Bits is published by the Blanchard PTF and circulated to all Blanchard families. To submit an article or calendar item, please email Aga Dresser at scottandaga@gmail.com or call 978-264-9709. The submission deadline for the March 2011 Blanchard Bits is **Friday, February 28, 2011**.