



Mantua PTA News

www.mantuapta.org

October 2003

Carole Thomas President's Message

Much like companies "re-engineer" their business processes to become more effective and efficient, your PTA Board continues to analyze its processes to come up with ways to improve the PTA's effectiveness in supporting its parent and teacher members.

Educating Parents The PTA has worked earnestly in the past to communicate important information to its members via publications, Principal Coffees, Parent Education seminars and its website. We are striving to continue to improve by:

- Putting more information on the PTA website (for example, the November election information is now on the website).
- Changing the format of the PTA meetings to abbreviate the main "business" meeting to allow time for an open discussion with the Principal on a specific topic of interest to parents
- Posting the minutes of the PTA meetings on the website so that people unable to attend a meeting can be informed of the meeting content

What can you do? Read the publications. Attend the PTA meetings. Let the PTA know what topics you would like more information on, what questions you need answered, what issues are concerning you, or what suggestions you have by writing to MantuaPTA@aol.com. Unless you speak up, the PTA cannot help address your concerns.

Reducing the Backpack "Black Hole" Are you ever overwhelmed with how much paper is in your child's Tuesday folder? Do you ever wonder if you are receiving everything you should be or whether the things you are sending to school actually find their way to the right place? In the last few years, the PTA has reduced the paper sent home by:

- Eliminating flyers by using the Alert News to convey information
- Sending the Alert News electronically and posting the PTA Newsletter on the PTA website (our distribution list currently has 643 e-mail addresses). We have reduced our copying costs 50% using electronic distribution.

This year the PTA has implemented two new processes to further reduce the paperwork:

- Offering online forms so that paper forms do not have to be sent back to school (for example, you can register for basketball, make an auction donation, and purchase auction tickets online)
- Processing credit card payments so your child doesn't have to carry checks or cash payments to school (for example, you can pay for basketball registration or purchase raffle tickets online)

What can you do? If you have access to a computer, register to receive information electronically by writing to MantuaPTA@aol.com. "Paper lovers", give it a try and remember...you can always print something out if you really need the paper. When given a choice of filling out a paper form or filling in an online form, choose the online option.

Improving Other Processes There are other ways the PTA is doing things differently with the goal of better serving its members. Last year, the PTA sent student directory information home for parents to validate of which 90% was validated. This year, the PTA has improved the process by providing parents a chance to preview the student directory on the PTA website prior to the directory being published.

What can you do? Log onto the PTA website and make sure your child's student directory information is correct.

Thank you parents who have openly voiced their concerns/suggestions...without you, opportunities to improve might have slipped by. And thank you parents who have worked so hard this past month implementing these improvements...you make a difference!

Jan-Marie Fernandez, Cheryl Thompson, and Tina Tingler **Notes From the Mantua Principals' Office**

We enjoyed having parents here for our Back-to-School Nights. This year was our first year hosting two Back to School Nights. It seemed to work well and alleviated parking issues, therefore we will continue with two Back to School Nights for next year. In last month's article we invited parents to send in questions or topics you would like to read about in the monthly newsletter. One such question related to our quads, a four-classroom structure located behind the gymnasium near the other learning cottages. We understand there were parent concerns regarding a leak in the roof of the quad. Facilities is aware of the leak and has fixed the leak twice already. We are optimistic that the third time will do the trick. Additionally, we are having wiring upgrades to all of the learning cottages that will allow teachers and students to have more efficient use of their computers.

Another concern that was brought up in emails and at the first PTA meeting was in regards to the amount of time for recess and teachers' policies regarding losing recess time for not completing homework. These comments and questions have actually sparked an important discussion among grade level teams regarding homework policies, possible consequences for not being responsible in completing homework, and the importance of recess for children. We do want to remind parents that students receive two periods of PE each week. During this time of year, students often have the opportunity to be outside during physical education. A recent survey of all classroom teachers regarding recess revealed that students at all grade levels with the exception of fifth and sixth grade students have an adequate amount of time for recess (15-20 minutes). Our new schedule for fifth and sixth grade imposes some new limitations regarding recess. However, we are working on a creative idea that will give fifth and sixth grade students the opportunity for a longer recess time. Grade level teams will soon be letting parents know about their new homework policies and we will keep you posted regarding our plan for fifth and sixth grade recess.

Ongoing communication about what parents want to know about is important to us. Keep your questions coming!

Counselor's Corner

During the month of October, the counselors in FCPS will be giving lessons about Bullying and Harassment as a follow-up to the Students' Responsibilities and Rights. We will discuss what this means, and what students can do if they see bullying or experience it. We teach the students to be independent problem-solvers in many ways, but also that there are times when they need to get the help of an adult. If you know of problems with bullying and harassment happening to our students, please let us know so that we can act on it quickly.

There are many opportunities for parenting workshops and programs going on now at Mantua, as well as in the community. Our Active Parenting class has already begun. Also, there will be an evening Parent Workshop on Monday, October 27 at 7:00 p.m. Last year, one of our presenters gave an introductory talk on learning styles, and parents expressed interest in hearing about this topic in more depth. Our presenter this year is Dr. Leslie Smith. Dr. Smith is a clinical psychologist from Duke and Boston Universities, who has also been on the teaching staff at Harvard. She specializes in women's issues, anxiety, and parenting ADHD children. This evening she will be focusing on the various learning styles of children and parents, emphasizing how this information can help students be successful. Please be on the lookout for a flyer in the Tuesday folder.

Also, some interesting parent workshops will be taking place at the Lab School in Washington, D.C.: Oct. 15 – "The Neuropsychology of Social Skills Deficits: What Goes Wrong and What to Do About It;" Oct. 29 – "The Explosive Child: Diagnosis and Treatment;" Nov. 12 – "Current Issues in Adult Learning Disabilities and ADHD;" Dec. 3 – "Using Mysteries to Increase Comprehension, Fluency, and Pleasure in Reading." For more information, please call the Lab School at (202)944-3083.

Another parenting program offered by the Department of Family Services is for parents and children, to teach nurturing skills and support family strengths. It is called the "Nurturing Parenting Program." For more information, please call (703)324-7723.

Finally, our counselors are looking for 1 or 2 parents who may be willing to volunteer their services to help with materials and some clerical activities, on an as needed basis. Please let Teresa or Rebecca know if you might be interested.

Mantua Drama Club

Ladies and Gentlemen of Mantua, thou art invited to attend a **Shakespeare Festival** on the grounds of our beloved school. We seek your attendance on **November 21st and 22nd** at the hour of 7 pm. We wish to entreat you with an evening of Shakespeare. Our young performers, highly trained 1st and 2nd graders will perform for you to our famous Bard. Our young apprentices, delight you and catch you "soap" opera's in "As The young troop of 5th and touring to Mantua with Dream", set to a rock and you with music and dance. A Shakespeare ensemble will win performing songs and dances from Kiss Me Kate, a musical version of Taming of the Shrew. We would wish you, entreat you and invite you to attend. If you have any questions about our playbill, please address our producer, Mistress Whitehead at 703-573-8618.

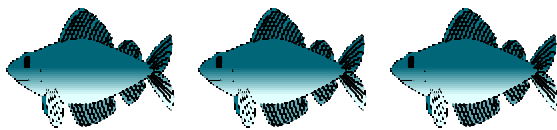


your pleasure an introduction called "Hello Shakespeare". The 3rd and 4th graders, will up on your Shakespeare Bard Turns". We have a 6th graders who will be "Midsummer Nights roll theme. And to entertain our Musical Shakespearean hearts by



The next **Principal's Coffee** will be held at 9:30 AM on **Wednesday, November 12th** at the home of Barb Suidikas. The topic for this session will be on "**Professional Learning Communities (PLC)**". The grade level teams are implementing some of the concepts of PLC this year. We will be discussing how PLC integrates with Dr. Boyer's philosophy of best practices in elementary education. RSVP to Barb at 703-385-0358 or Suidibarb@aol.com.

Get Hooked on Sally Foster!



As our annual Sally Foster fundraising campaign winds down, remember that on-line orders will continue through January 15, 2004. Many thanks all who made our fall fundraiser a success! We had two exciting, fun Sally Foster contests this year. Our fish-estimating contest winners were: 1st Place: Eric Frumkin (grade 6); 2nd Place: Rebecca Cho (grade 2); 3rd Place: David Pierce and Chris Fanet (grade 3/jointly submitted) tied with Jacqueline Nguyen (grade 4); and Runners-up: Michael Schneider (grade 4), Rocky Granum (grade 6), and Katrina McTigue (grade 3). Our second contest, a staff raffle for a basket jam-packed with Sally Foster products, will be announced soon. Congratulations to our winners!

Orders can be picked up during parent-teacher conferences on November 3rd and 4th. If you're looking for a good workout, help deliver orders to your children's classrooms on October 30 from 10 till 12. To help or if you have any questions, please contact Lynn Richmond at 703-280-0220 or lynnrichmond95@cox.net or Jeannine Davies at 703-383-1256 or j9davies@cox.net.

FYI The following meetings are designed to keep our parent community engaged with our school. Parents are encouraged to attend.

Superintendent's Parent Advisory Committee (SPAC) will meet at Falls Church High School at 7:00 pm on December 9, February 10, and April 13.

The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) for Cluster III will meet at Poe Middle School in the Library at 7:00 pm on October 22 and March 10. For more information, contact the Cluster III office.

Reflections has begun!

Create a piece of art, literature, photography or music to this year's theme: "**I'm Really Happy When....**". The PTA is currently accepting Reflections entries. Bring your entries along with a completed entry form to the teacher mailroom by November 7 and receive FREE ice cream at Baskin Robbins if you are one of the first 25 participants! Forms and rules can be found at the PTA bulletin board. Contact Deanna Woo, dtwoo@aol.com for any questions.

Join the PTA

The Mantua PTA is an organization that believes all children are our children. Your child is touched directly and/or indirectly by the work of the PTA. The annual PTA membership drive is now underway. Dues are \$7.00 for individuals or \$14.00 for family, so please join.



A Taste of the Town Masquerade and Auction

Sunday, October 19, 5:00 to
10:00 p.m. at the
Kena Temple in Fairfax

The night will include **live entertainment** while you enjoy **signature dishes** from many local restaurants including P.J. Skidoos, LifeCafé, Citronelle, China Gourmet, Glory Days, Blue Ocean, Chiangmai Thai, Harris Teeter, Il Lupo, Coyote Grill & Cantina, Pizzeria Uno, Connaught Place, and Noodles & Co., to name a few. You'll find lots of auction items to **bid on including** your favorite getaway, restaurants, faculty fun, services, merchandise and, the always popular, class baskets! Check out www.mantuaPTAuction.org to see the current list of auction items. **Tickets are \$30 per person pre-event** and \$35 per person at the door. And, don't forget to purchase your raffle tickets... the grand prize is a \$750 shopping spree at a local mall... just in time for holiday shopping! Raffle tickets are \$20 and include 5 silver, 2 gold, and 1 platinum level tickets. The PTA would like to thank the following generous sponsors: Platinum sponsor **Judy Wonus** (RE/MAX Horizons), Gold sponsors **Anne and Sarah Harrington** (Long & Foster), and Silver sponsors **Bill Rakow** (RE/MAX Xecutex), **The Fisher Group**, and **Renewal by Andersen**.

VISIT THE MANTUA BOOK FAIR in the school library with hundreds of titles for all ages. Librarian and teacher "wish lists" will be available should you want to make a book donation. Proceeds benefit the school library.

Friday, November 14	8:30 AM to 4PM
Monday, November 17	8:30 AM to 4 PM
Tuesday, November 18	8:30 AM to 8 PM EXTENDED HOURS!!!
Wednesday, November 19	8:30 AM to 4 PM
Thursday, November 20	8:30 AM to 4 PM
Friday, November 21	8:30 AM to 12 noon *

* Please note that the sale ends at noon.

Parents, remember to visit the book fair while at the school for your child's Thanksgiving luncheon.

SIGHTNIGHT The Kids Care Club will be supporting the Lion's Cub and Lenscrafters by collecting old eyeglasses, which will be cleaned, repaired, classified by prescription and delivered to developing countries overseas. Ask friends, relatives, or while Trick or Treating, ask the neighbors, for their old glasses and place them in the box located in the front foyer November 3-7.



JOIN THE KIDS CARE CLUB LEAF RAKING FOR OUR SENIORS DURING NOVEMBER

It's that time of year again—the leaves are falling! AND the Kids Care Club is calling...YOU... to volunteer to help our senior neighbors by raking their leaves. Every year, the Kids Care Club has offered their services for this much appreciated cause. This is a fun and easy way to help those in need and makes a great service project for Community Service hours, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts or other organizations. Throughout the month of November, the Kids Care Club will be asking for your assistance in raking the yards of about 30 of our senior neighbors. You pick the weekend (or weekday) that best suits your schedule, get your group together for a few hours and help out someone who really appreciates the assistance. You tell us when and we'll supply the leaves. Signup on the poster hanging in the front foyer or contact Jennifer Cooper at 703-426-2490 or jalcooper@aol.com to say you'll help.