



General Meeting Minutes for the 2008 - 2009 Academic School Year
January 13, 2009 @ 7:30 p.m.
Wilkins School Library

PTA Board Members *in* attendance:

Co-Presidents: Krista Hanks
Christine Poisson
Secretary: Jil Romano
Treasurer: Michele Donoghue

PTA Total Members *not* in attendance: Gillian Smith

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m.

President's Report

- Pledge of Allegiance.
- Introduction of everyone in attendance.
- Discussed the upcoming PTA events (Family Math Night, Chili Cook-Off, Art to Remember) and the need for volunteer help.

Secretary's Report

The committee chairs received copies of the November 2008--2009 minutes via Email a week prior to the January General Meeting. Copies were also available at the January General Meeting. (Please note that there is not a General Meeting in December). The November minutes were reviewed. Jil Romano requested a motion to receive the minutes. Irene Alton moved to accept the minutes. Shelly Kayser seconded the motion. The November 2008-2009 minutes were accepted.

The **Magazine Drive** chair people are looking for "shadows" to chair or co-chair this committee for the 2009-2010 school year. This committee event has historically been the biggest PTA fundraiser, which makes most of the PTA sponsored programs and events possible. Students collect orders from families, friends, and relatives. The committee is responsible for the accounting, processing, and filing of magazine orders for students and teachers. By mid-September, preparations are being made for the drive but most of the work is done the first two weeks of October. The Magazine Drive itself lasts two weeks. If you are interested, please contact the Board at ptaboard.org@amherstpta.org for a complete job description.

Treasurer's Report

November: Magazine Drive funds in (the PTA receives 40% of income on all orders.) Slight administrative expenses and for Family Science Night were paid. The Clark and Wilkins playground equipment is paid. *December:* Curriculum Enrichment and Play expenses for Peter Pan came in. Copies of the Treasurer's report for November 2008 were available at the January 2009 general meeting. Michele Donoghue requested a motion to accept the budget and Porter Dodge second the motion.

Principal's Report

Gerry St. Amand -- Clark & Wilkins Schools

- Meg Trainer, Assistant Principal of Wilkins School wanted to recognize all children who participated at The Reflections program for a wonderful job!
- RTI response to intervention (committee and group with specific plan in mind that pertain children with learning challenges.)
- The January 12, 2009 "Late Start Professional Development" for staff members at Clark-Wilkins focused on Response to Intervention and the process we will be following to support the needs of all students.
- Tentative proposals for the make-up of instructional days lost to the ice storm and snow days have been presented to the ASB (Amherst School Board) for consideration. Suggestions include extending the school day by twenty minutes and having students attend school on February 16th, which was originally an In-Service Day for faculty only.
- The additional time added to each school day will match the number of instructional hours lost. This does not include: lunch, snack, recess, passing in the halls, etc.
- All School administrators are getting calls about how we are making up the school days lost from the ice storm. Met on Tuesday to develop proposal regarding the make-up of lost time.
- Currently, the last day of school is Monday, June 15th.
- The Public Hearing to discuss the Amherst School District 2010 Budget proposal will take place at Souhegan High School on Wednesday, January 14, 2009 @ 7 P.M.
- Fourth grade finalists in the Wilkins National Geographic Geography Bee will participate in the school level competition on Thursday, January 15, 2009. The winner of that competition will take a written exam to see if he/she qualifies to move ahead to the state level competition.
- Second quarter report cards will go home with all students on **Friday, February 6, 2009**. Teacher narratives, along with specific subject grades, will be included for all students in Kindergarten through grade four.
- The January 2009 Principal's Newsletter will be emailed to all families on Friday, January 16, 2009.
- In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, there will be no school on Monday, January 19, 2009.
- Teachers must inform parents/guardians if they are even remotely considering a child for grade level retention by January 31, 2009.

Porter Dodge -- Amherst Middle School

- No school January 19th.
- January 20th Geography Bee.
- Regarding lost time, the middle school needed 990 hours compared to 945 hours that was built-in to pick up nine minutes a day. It is broken out by an extra 2 minutes for all classes.
- Strategies for comprehension is separated into groups (9 total) of text protocol presentation of what is read. Best practices and in comprehension for all grades. Mary Westwater reading coordinator and literacy coach oversees this program.
- Next late start is February 10th.
- Music schedule. Three months ago parents and children were concerned about the current music schedule interfering with integrated art vs. foreign language. Another concern is for children with special needs can't be taken out of core studies without impacting special education. New schedule caused stressed for children. Had a meeting concerning this worry and put together a tentative schedule for the remainder of the year. If your children are in band and chorus for 30 days. Any kids in band or chorus will be given back one day back from core studies. January 22nd is the target start point. Compliance of special needs coupled with flexible scheduling changed the break out. Another concern is that is difficult for teachers in the literacy periods because they are missing an extra day of providing instructional support.

School Board

Peg Bennett -- SAU#39 PTA Representative

- Amherst School District Public Hearing is tomorrow night at Souhegan High School at 7pm.
- There are a very limited number of warrant articles on the ballot this year. Operating budget (1.98% increase over this year), 3 year Amherst Support Staff Association agreement, and 10 year Mont Vernon tuition agreement for grades 7 and 8 (to begin on July 1, 2011).
- The Superintendent presented a proposal to the Amherst School Board last Thursday on how to make up the school days missed because of the ice storm. In short, the recommendation was to reinstate Feb 16 as a school day and add 20 minutes to each school day beginning Feb 2nd. All Boards (Amherst, Souhegan, and Mont Vernon) will vote on the proposal/recommendation the last Thursday of this month. A notice of the decision will be sent to families promptly.
- Many options were considered with regard to the days that need to be made up because of the ice storm (e.g., rescheduling teacher in-service days, eliminating school vacation days, etc) but adding minutes to the school day seemed to be the best and easiest solution. Of course there may be ideas that weren't considered and Peg welcomes anyone to get in touch with her if they have ideas to share. She will share any and all ideas with the other board members from Amherst, Souhegan, and Mont Vernon.
- Amherst School District Deliberative Session will be held at Souhegan High School on Thursday, Feb 5 at 7pm.

Committee Reports

Art to Remember. Offers students at Clark and Wilkins the chance to turn their original drawings into great gifts, including mugs, stationery, pot holders and the like. At the end of this month, students at Clark will begin creating art during class time. In mid-February, students at Wilkins will receive packets containing paper and instructions to make their art at home. We have started thinking about ways to encourage participation at Wilkins--but it would be great to get your input too!

They are kicking off the project on Friday, January 23 at Aileen's house (19 Middle Street) at 10 AM. At this meeting, they will confirm the schedule, discuss the process, and sign-up for specific tasks. Via email, they have invited the volunteers who signed up last fall, but there's room for more! If you are interested, feel free to contact Aileen Farris at 672-6704 or Leslie Bennett at 672-4865. Or, just come to the meeting with your ideas and your calendar! They're looking forward to a great fundraiser!

Membership. Start it up early.

Curriculum Enrichment at Clark. They are still trying to nail down a date with Steve "The Science Guy" but it will be booked for April.

Curriculum Enrichment at AMS. The sixth graders had the Chariots of the Sun presentation on January 9th in the SHS auditorium. This was presented in conjunction with the unit on Greece.

Playbill. Playbill is a wonderful information booklet and a major fund raiser (3rd). Two things that primarily bring in the income are advertising usually businesses. Also some nice messaging. Also sponsorships from cast and crew (e.g., shinign stars, dogs, pet memorium, family sponsorships and friends sponsorship). Range of ways to get advertising. Lots of forms that will be on the PTA website. Talk to the cast and due a massive mailing to past supporters. Think about new companies to ask. Volunteer for the committee to send out mailings, Emails, door--to-door. What is the deadline is March 20th.

Family Math Night. Tuesday, January 27th event geared for students and parents K - 4. Repeating last years theme the "Math Carnival" with some new ideas. Planning is under control. The need set-up help from 3:15 pm - 5 pm that afternoon. Evening of the event 6 pm - 8 pm to help with stations.

PTA Play

Auditions: Auditions were held January 6th and 8th at Clark School. We had a tremendous turnout – 160 – despite a snowy January 7, when we were forced to postpone. A special thanks goes out to our webmaster, Leigh Ann Evans, who not only designed a beautiful site for Peter Pan, but continues to be on call for the play, posting bulletins as necessary, as was the case for our postponed auditions. Approximately 90 children and 70 adults auditioned. About 90 actors were cast. It was difficult to not cast so many who tried out, but we can only reasonably handle a cast of this size.

Production Staff: we are all set with our production staff for Peter Pan and are still looking for a ticket coordinator. I have a few people to follow up with. I expect to have someone lined up in the next few weeks. Special thanks goes to Rita Piotrowski and Jennifer Whitney for producing this year's play. They are the unsung heroes of a show like this. Director Meg Petersen, Music director, Jim Emmond, Choreographer Liz Calabria, and Costume designer, Michelle Withers have been working for several months already on the show which promises to be one of our best!

Trinkets for sale? The last time we had a blockbuster show, the Wizard of Oz, we offered for sale a trinket memento during the show (ruby red slipper pins). The PTA may want to consider something similar for Peter Pan. While we may not want to nickel and dime everyone to death, this will be a special show and an inexpensive trinket would help defray expenses and serve as a nice memory for the young children who attend.

NH Theater Awards: The 2008 play, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, was honored with three top ten nominations for the NH Theater Awards: Michelle Emmond and Cathy McKay for best supporting actress in a musical and Aimee Chester for choreography. The awards will be presented February 6 at the Palace Theater in Manchester.

2010 Play: Within the next week, I will be sending out an announcement inviting potential directors for the 2010 play to submit proposals. The goal will be to have a play and director secured by April 1. If the PTA Board has a preference for a play, they should let me know as soon as possible.

Reflections. Last Thursday was the ceremony. Well attended. Thanks to everyone! This year they received 226 entries (100 kids participating in total) compared to 152 entries last year. Thirty-three entries are going onto State to be judged at the state level. Next year's theme: Beauty is . . .

Holiday Story Time. The Chairs would like to thank everyone for their help and for making the night a big success. Nicer over at Clark with cozier setting.

Health Fair. The nurses are still trying to come up with a format that will work with everyone. Still brainstorming.

Hospitality. Committee chair wanted to thank everybody who helped with donations for the Reflections Program last week. Our next Hospitality event will be for the PTA play in April.

Staff Appreciation Clark & Wilkins. Unfortunately, due to personal circumstances and the ice storm the plan for December was cancelled. The goal is to plan an event for the staff for February instead.

Staff Appreciation AMS. Working on something this month.

Chili Cook Off. OFFICIAL TIME CHANGE! Cook off will be from 2-4 pm this year!!! We hope this will bring more people to the event. So far a DJ, face painter, and a balloon animal artist are scheduled for entertainment. Chili is being donated by Amigos in Milford, and the chair is currently working with two other restaurants as well to see about chili donations. Three judges have also been booked. Emails will be going out in the next day or so to advertise for more cooks. Middle school event, which is a contest. They also have AMS jazz band. Looking for help with baking cornbread, chili, and clean-up.

Adjournment

Cathy Leighton made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Gail Jordan seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Submitted by:

Jil Romano
Secretary

Next Meeting: February 10, 2009 @ 7:30 p.m. Wilkins Library

Contact Information

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Bellringer Newsletter ~ ellenbr68@alumni.umass.edu