

**Meriwether Lewis Elementary School**  
**PTO Meeting**  
**October 12, 2011**

In Attendance: Mary Chinn, Jenny Commins, Kim Cousins, Rick Emery, Susan Park, Debbie Parmelee, Nancy Paulson, Brandi Piccirilli, Sue Ann Sarpy, James Younger

**I. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

A. Approval of minutes was tabled until November meeting since there was not a voting quorum present.

**II. Principals' Report**

**A. School Status:** Ms. Cousins reported that everything was going really well at MLS. There are a lot of new families that are really excited to be a part of MLS and the staff and teachers are working to help them feel comfortable at their new school.

**B. T-shirts:** Ms. Cousins asked that next fall the PTO set aside shirts for the new families to purchase and/or be gifted (if a financial need is identified by Betsy Bell). Also, when ordering thematic t-shirts, please check with Ms. Bell in advance to see if funds have been identified for the purchase of t-shirts for financially challenged families. There was a concern expressed by Ms. Cousins that a few students had been told they were receiving Fun Fair t-shirts but the t-shirts may not have been pulled from the order before all the t-shirts were sold. Jenny Commins said she would follow-up on this concern and Board members offered to trade pre-ordered shirts back in for a reimbursement if there were children who were expecting shirts and the request could not be fulfilled. Ms. Commins will speak to Skye O'Donnell about the orders and clarify the situation.

**C. Silva Henderson:** Ms. Cousins reported the sad news that former principal Sylvia Henderson has been hospitalized with a brain tumor and was undergoing surgery. Ms. Henderson was expected to be in intensive care at Martha Jefferson. Nancy Paulson volunteered to send a card on behalf of the MLS PTO (3326 Arbor Place, 22911).

**D. Picture Day:** Ms. Piccirilli report a successful picture day.

**III. Presidents' Report**

*Note: In Skye O'Donnell and Clark Smith's absence the meeting was chaired by the Vice Presidents.*

**IV. Vice Presidents' Report**

**A. Volunteer of the Month.** There are two individuals in contention, Mary Chinn just needs to confirm that neither one have received the award before. She will send the name of the nominee by email. This year, a small basket of yummy treats from FEAST will be given to the volunteer of the month.

V. **Volunteer Coordinator's report**

VI. **Secretary's Report**

A. **Correspondence:** Nancy Paulson read the notes of thanks received from teachers over the past few months for holiday and year-end gifts from the PTO.

VII. **Treasurer's Report**

A. Rick Emery reported cash flows from July 1 through September 30, 2011. Beginning Balance: \$41,547.95. Ending balance: \$32,020.01. This reflects a net operating loss of \$(9,527.94).

B. Funding proposals from the MLS Library were tabled until next meeting.

VIII. **Directors' Reports**

A. **Fundraising Committees**

1. Fun Fair: Susan Park reported that the Fun Fair planning is going well. Big Jim's will be providing BBQ and additional sandwich wraps will be coming from UVA catering. T-shirt sales were a huge success with approximately 200 t-shirts sold. There will be 2 bounce houses (with 2 bounce house staff), a tent for the "dance party," and not-so-spooky maze. The committee is currently planning for all activities to take place indoors in case of bad weather (items can be moved outdoors on the day if weather is good). Homeroom parents have been contacted by Joanne Rome about what each class has a responsibility for the fun fair. Ms. Cousins requested a "layout" of the planned activities so she could request classroom from teachers that are scheduled for activities. Susan reported that a volunteer sign-up sheet had been emailed to all parents who indicated an interest in helping with the Fun Fair. Ms. Parmelee asked that a sign-up sheet for teacher volunteers with times/locations be placed at the front desk so teachers could sign-up to help. Susan indicated they would be making trees out of the front pillars and Mary Chinn announced the Girl Scout Daisy Troop would also be creating designing trees for decoration. Announcements have gone out in backpack mail and via Meriwether Matters about the presale of tickets and the make-a-scarecrow contest. Ms. Cousin also requested that Susan meet with Mr. Napier early next week to go over decorating plans.

2. Original Works: Mary Chinn reported that the event is officially moving to late February/early March. The committee has been collecting samples from parents of their favorite artwork that was used for an Original Works item. Mary has met with Mr. Sheroigan about some of the ideas and he is on-board about coordinating the project again this year.

3. Innisbrook Wrapping Paper: Skye O'Donnell submitted a report via email. In the report she noted that Innisbrook folder would be going home on Friday, October 21<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Cousins noted the distribution date needed to move to a Thursday. It was recommended to distribute the materials on Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. The sale of wrapping paper will last through November 7<sup>th</sup>. Orders will be place online using the EZ option for 50% profit to MLS. For those who don't have web access or cannot use the EZ system, the orders will be entered by Skye and her committee. Products will be delivered to school with no postage fees for pickup after Thanksgiving break. If a person pays online via Innisbrook (instead of EZ system), the school will get 40% -- but the products are delivered to their homes directly (with postage added to order, unless over \$75.00 purchase). Orders made via Innisbrook directly will not

have a cut-off order date.

4. Silent Auction: Via an email report, Val Newcomb reported that the committee has met three times on long range issues. The date is confirmed for Friday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>. A deposit has been made to the King Family Vineyard. The committee is revisiting a number of issues from last year including: the checkout (considering bar coding items), catering options, adding a "no risk"\* category of donation, and considering a raffle at the door (possibly in advance of auction for something big). \*The "non risk" donations took a lot of time last year to lock down and didn't sell. A new idea is to work with an agency which specialized in really fantastic trips (i.e. Nickelodeon Kids Choice Awards). They are high prize, high "wow" and no risk. If they do not sell we do not pay and they take minimal time to put together.

5. Enrichment Zone: James Younger reported the fall classes are going well. There are 28 classes offered and over 200 students are enrolled in at least one class. The income and expenditures will essentially break-even during the fall semester. But, since the coordinator and administrator's stipends are paid entirely in the fall, the profits for the program will be realized in the spring.

6. Box Tops: No official report, but first deadline for collection is soon.

7. Grocery Receipts: No official report, but an email was recently set reminding families to re-connect their loyalty grocery cards at Giant, Kroger, and Harris Teeter to MLS's school number.

8. Kroger Gift Cards: Rick reported a recent receipt of a Kroger Cares check. The amount received appeared to be larger than checks received last year. The Board is hopeful that more families will take advantage of the Kroger Cares program, which could be very lucrative for MLS (5% return on "reloads" to the Kroger Cares Cards).

9. MLS Sportswear: Via written report, Skye told the Board that all of the 74 Live Love Learn t-shirt has been sold. Brooke Donovan (sportswear chair) is considering whether to reorder. Also, Ms. Cousins indicated a number of new families were looking for the traditional MLS t-shirts, sweatshirts, or other such logoed items. Jenny Commins volunteered to relay the interest in new MLS sportswear to Brooke. Also, Ms. Cousins asked about what was the status on providing shirts for the faculty/staff. Jenny said there was some preference to consider a polo-style shirt and we would ask Brooke to research this option as well.

## **B. Community Events Committees**

1. Bingo Night: no report

2. Skate Night: no report

3. Fun Run: no report

4. Kids Market: no report

5. Kids Night Out: Val Newcomb written report indicated that KNO was a great success! There were 157 students. After all expenses, the event made a profit of \$657.00. With this profit, the committee plans to purchase 200 drinks for the next event and to make another flyer promoting all three dates for the year. KNO will no longer take online reservation without pay. So, parents will either pay and enroll online or pay and enroll via the backpack mail form. The budget cushion should allow KNO to continue

the year with 8 teachers, which makes the student/teacher ratio more ideal. Finally, the Henley 8<sup>th</sup>-grade volunteers will be limited to 10. The volunteers must sign-up with the teacher coordinator at Henley and that teacher will coordinate with Betsy Bell. No exceptions!

6. Newcomer's Network: no report

### **C. Staff/School Support Committees**

1. Birthday Book Club: Flyer went out, enrollment underway

2. Art Print: Training of volunteers was conducted by Meg Janucik. The prints are back in order and organized!

3. Copy Center: Volunteers are back on the job in the copy center with the new coordinator Lindsey Halas.

4. Fifth Grade Coordinators: no report

5. Book Fair: no report

6. Hospitality & Staff Appreciation: Initial email from Kenna Boyd was sent to hospitality volunteers.

7. Landscaping: no report

8. Marquee: no report

### **D. Communications Committees** (Jerilyn Teahan submitted the following reports via email)

1. Bulletin Board: Please send flyers to Sherri Whitsett for the bulletin board.

2. Wethervane Newsletter: Jerilyn reported she had received a few submissions for the newsletter (thank you to those who wrote the articles!). However, overall there appears to be little enthusiasm/interest for submitting articles. Jerilyn has asked Board member to email her opinions on whether the Wethervane Newsletter is still necessary now that a robust weekly email and up-to-date website are available for communicating with the MLS community. The discussion on the future of the Wethervane Newsletter will be an agenda topic for the November PTO meeting.

3. Meriwether Matters: Response continues to be positive with 320 subscribers. We have added the Archive feature to our Constant Contact subscription. You can access previous editions from this year via a link on mlspot.org. Please remember that the deadline for submitting items for Meriwether Matters each week is Monday evening. This allows time for follow-up questions to clarify information and proofreading. Meriwether Matters is distributed on Wednesday mornings, typically at 6:30 a.m.

4. School Directory: Laurie Strucko picked up the directories from ALC on Monday and they were distributed via backpack mail.

5. Yearbook: The chairs are starting from scratch and will soon develop a timeline.

6. Parent Council: no update

7. Website: James Younger has beefed up the site this year. Please continue to send him descriptive information for the site when requesting that he set up online payment.

**IX. Unfinished Business & Follow-up**

**A. Lousia County Schools:** Jenny Commins reported that she had emailed the PTO at the elementary school in Lousia that had been closed due to earthquake damage. The woman was very touched by our concern and indicated that a cash donation would likely be better than specific items. The Board discussed if it was appropriate to donate PTO funds to another PTO. Ultimately, the Board did not feel comfortable giving away money that had been collected under the understanding it would be spent at MLS. However, the Board thought it would be a great idea to do targeted fundraising for the other school. Jenny Commins is going to consolidate the various ideas of fundraisers that were brainstormed and come back to the board with a proposal of how we can raise the funds to donate.

**B. Ms. Tichner's Catering prices/funding:** Ms. Parmelee reported she had requested a catering item/price list from Ms. Tichner but had yet to hear a response. She will follow up with Ms. Tichner. Rick Emery also volunteered to look up old invoices to look at pricing and how the billing was processed.

**C. Open Chair Positions:** All positions are now filled with the following changes/additions noted in Skye's handout of PTO Board and Chairs: Linsey Halas, Copy Center Chair; Gigi Michael, Kids Market Co-Chair; Angie Murphy, Grocery/Kroger Co-Chair; Mistei Roebuck, Landscaping.

**D. Snakes Alive Assembly:** no report

**E. Personalized Year Books:** no report (and this appears to be a dead issue with the new yearbook committee, so it will not be moved forward on subsequent agendas).

**X. New Business & Miscellaneous**

**A. Gift Sent:** Jenny Commins reported that a basket of goodies had been sent from the PTO on behalf of the teachers to Mr. Jordan.

**B. Minds in Motions Program:** Nancy Paulson noted she would ask the PE faculty to explore the "Minds in Motion" program that is run by the Richmond Ballet to see if it was something we would like to bring to MLS. Ms. Piccirilli noted that the program is wonderful but it does likely take away from other instruction time.

**XI. Next Meeting – November 9, 6:30 p.m. in the MLS Library**

## ADDENDUM to the OCTOBER 12, 2011 PTO BOARD MEETING

October 25, 2011

Between the dates of October 21 and 24, 2011 member of the PTO Board discussed via email two funding decisions: 1.) the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Rope Course Field Trip (\$1,875.00) and 2.) deodorant for the Family Life/Puberty 5<sup>th</sup> grade seminars (\$80.00). Below is a summary of the on-line conversation and the funding decisions.

**I. 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Ropes Course Field Trip.**

A funding proposal was submitted by Cheryl Whetmore Simpson on behalf of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teaching team. The proposal requested \$1,875.00 to pay for the fifth grade students to participate in a Ropes Course/Team Building field trip at Triple C Camp. Board members reviewed the request and decided against motioning to approve the request. Board members expressed concerns about funding one grade's (in this case 5<sup>th</sup> grade) field trip request. Currently, each grade schedules its own field trips and the cost is paid by the students/families who participate. Board members did not feel PTO funds should be used for one field trip over another. However, all Board members felt it would be appropriate to consider funding for students with financial needs. The request pay for students in need would need to be submitted through Betsy Bell (school counselor). Additionally, some member suggested that the Board could consider allocating funds equitably to each grade (K-5) earmarked for field trips/experiential learning. No vote was taken since there was no desire to motion for approval.

**II. Deodorant for Family Life/Puberty Class.**

A funding proposal was submitted by the MLS school nurse, Susan Howard Smith. Ms. Howard-Smith asked for \$80.00 to purchase individual deodorants to be passed out to the students in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade puberty class. Previously, Proctor and Gamble had donated the deodorant. However, they have eliminated that program. A motion was made by Rick Emery and seconded by Skye O'Donnell. The motion was unanimously approved.