



MANTUA PTA NEWS

www.mantuapta.org

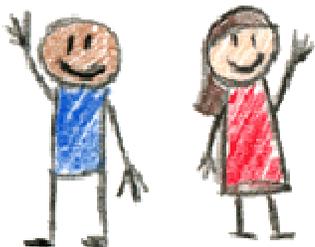
June 2004

Carole Thomas President's Message

Time is a funny thing. In her closing President's Message, one of our past PTA presidents shared a pearl of wisdom her child's kindergarten teacher offered to her... "The days can seem intolerably long but the years, the years will go by as if in a blink of an eye." And so this year did!

With the blink of my eye, I find my "baby", who I swear I just put on the bus for his first ride to Mantua, graduating from kindergarten. The growth that I have seen in my youngest this year is truly amazing and tangible. I can only imagine what you parents of sixth graders must be feeling at this crossroads in your children's lives. The kids have accomplished great things during their time at Mantua. They have established lifetime friendships. They have been leaders in the SCA, on "Good Morning Mantua", in the Safety Patrol program, and as mediators. They have shared their many talents as actors in drama performances, as musicians in strings and band, as singers in chorus, and as athletes in our incredible basketball program. Finally, they've set a high bar for our younger students to emulate in the area of academic achievement. We wish all our wonderful sixth graders continued success and good luck as they move on to middle school, and we thank them and their parents for their many contributions to the Mantua Elementary family. I think we can all be proud that Mantua equips our students with the skills and experiences they need to succeed socially and academically in middle school and beyond.

And with the blink of my eye, I find myself transitioning the PTA Presidency, which I swear I just started, to the extremely capable hands of John Jennison. Joining John on the Executive Board are Nathan Merrells as 1st Vice President, myself as 2nd Vice President, Cheryl May as Treasurer, and Nancy Robinson as Secretary for the 2004-2005 school year. I wish John and the new Board well and wish all of you a rejuvenating and fun-filled summer.



Reflections Art Program Looking for something fun to do in the summer? Have you ever dreamed of having your drawing or photo framed and hung in a special art exhibit at your school? Can you imagine what it would be like to have your story or poem published in a school or PTA newspaper, or to play or sing a song you wrote in front of an audience? The theme for next year's program is "**A Different Kind of Hero**". You can think about the theme and talk with your family and friends about what it means to you. Then create a piece of artwork, take a photo, write a song, or write a story about it. It will be fun! Rules and additional information are available at the PTA bulletin board area. Entries will be collected in November. For more information, contact Deanna Woo at dtwoo@aol.com.

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

As we approach the end of this school year and the beginning of summer activities, many reflections emerge as a part of our closure. In September we greeted 900+ students, each with their own uniqueness and diversity, anxious and eager to accept the challenge that lay before them. The Mantua staff with their knowledge and experience of effective educational practice was well prepared to receive these children and offered them the opportunity to experience a Basic school community with a coherent curriculum, a climate for learning, and a commitment to character.

Throughout the year celebrations abounded. The Ice Cream Social in September readied our families for fun activities that would follow. Back to School Night, the Halloween Parade, the Thanksgiving Luncheon, the Winter Sing-Along, the Spring Carnival, Literacy Night and grade level Boyer celebrations all were activities that gave our school population a sense of community.

Project-based learning activities were prevalent during the year and reinforced specific areas of curriculum. Families in K-2 enjoyed what it was like to become a Mexican artisan, third grade students experienced the Ancient Cultures, fourth grade went back in time to see what life was like during Colonial times, fifth graders created artifacts found in Ancient Greece and Rome, and sixth graders designed and built space stations, and created mythical plays. Specialists and parent supported programs provided additional ways where students could develop and display their many talents. The Drama Club introduced us to Shakespearean based plays, the Music Department delivered excellent vocal performances from the 5th & 6th grade chorus, the band and strings teachers presented two wonderful concerts, and the Art Department displayed beautiful artwork at an Art Show exhibit and throughout the building. In the athletic arena the P.T. A. sponsored Basketball league and the Physical Education department Field Day demonstrated student sportsmanship and athletic prowess.

Each and every grade level had the opportunity to enhance their curriculum by going on field trips both near and far; Baltimore, Williamsburg, Washington, D.C., Gettysburg, Philadelphia, George Mason University, and the WT Woodson planetarium. As the year progressed the students had opportunities to meet with visitors from all over the world. The Distance Learning Center connected us globally with the United Nations where 6th grade students worked with students from many countries to discuss "An Equal Education for All". Third graders continued to visit with a classroom in Ireland and other grade levels met with scientists from Indiana and Ohio. Mantua hosted the Secretary of Education and Ireland's Minister of Education, Educators from Egypt, Pakistan, Sudan and a Tae Kwon Do demonstration team from Korea.

The staff at Mantua are devoted and dedicated to our students. Each and every day they provided the students with a high-level educational experience and spent tireless hours during nights and weekends planning for a sound educational program. Teachers worked overtime to provide the Deaf and Hard of Hearing students and their families with an after school program. Other teachers displayed their talents at the Talent Show while many participated in the Silent Auction, Carnival activities and the Raccoon Run. At the end of the school year we were pleased to honor two of our finest teachers, Ms. Ronnie Hanpeter and Ms. Susan Kaplan, in a celebration for the Teacher of the Year award.

Our school as a community could not function without the Parent Teacher Association and parents as our partners. We are so grateful for the enormous amount of time that is spent over the course of the year in volunteer hours. Whether working in a classroom, helping with the day to day operations, sponsoring clubs, teaching special classes, providing financial support, or organizing events and activities, our staff is truly fortunate to embrace the partnership we share. We could not end our reflections of this year without giving special thanks to our P.T.A. officers, Carole Thomas, Kandy Barham, Pam Promisel, Robert Luftglass, Beth McKeown and Laura Mead for their untiring devotion to the students, staff, and parents of this community.

Mantua, its Administration, and staff would like to wish each of you a safe and happy summer!

Vacation Time is Reading Time

Summertime can be a wonderful time of the year to encourage the reading habit! Not only is it important for children to continue reading so they maintain their reading skills over the summer, but reading can be loads of fun. Here are a few ideas to keep your child reading:

- Join the Fairfax County library summer program or read books on their summer reading list. Go to <http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/library> for more information.
- Involve your child in planning summer trips. This is a great way to ask children to read for a purpose--that of finding out information the family will use on its vacation. When you get home your child may want to make a scrapbook from all the pamphlets, brochures, travel guides, and pictures the family took.
- Continue your family reading activities from the school year. This gives the message that reading is important in our lives, not just important during the school year. Making time to read while enjoying all the other exciting summer activities will ensure your child is ready to come back to school in September!

Counselor's Corner

We are finally at the end of the school year, and the beginning of summer 'vacation.' There are many 'mixed feelings' associated with this transition, for both children and parents (and teachers!) It's important to remember this as we all take our time changing gears. We want to share with you some interesting and effective ideas for parents, that appeared in the article, "Positive Parenting Tips For Summer," by Dr. Trish Hatch, in the American School Counselor Journal (May-June 2004).

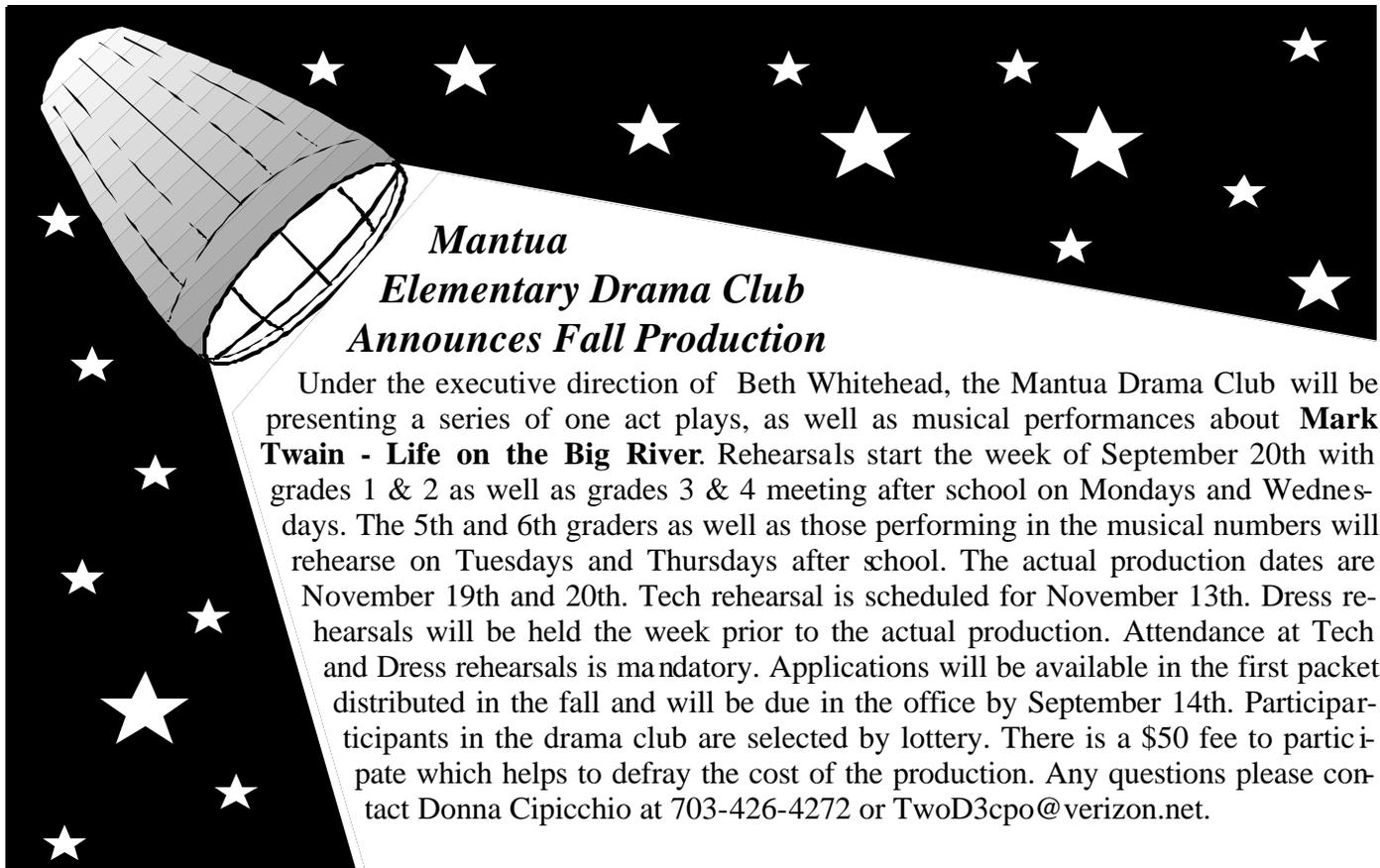
1. Sibling conflicts. Since conflict is inevitable, this is an opportunity to help teach verbal ways to resolve it. The author suggests that parents stay on the sidelines as much as possible and reinforce the use of "I messages" that the children have learned about at school. A brother may say to a sister: "I feel angry when you call me a name. I want you to stop." Hopefully, the sister will listen, and maybe even have an "I message" of her own to give back. Older children may say that "I messages" are 'babyish.' They can say "I don't like it when . . ." instead of sharing their feeling, if they want. "I messages" are also great for parents to use with their children and with other adults. Try it and see what happens (you may be surprised!)

2. Discipline. One of the greatest challenges of parenting is striving to be consistent. The author reminds us that 'giving in' tells children that they can get what they want if they just keep nagging. Parents do need to be flexible, but keep your eye on the consistency challenge. Another suggestion is to write up the main rules of the family at the beginning of the summer. A lot of children and adults do better with written rules posted. This also helps you to stay out of power struggles when you can point to the rule that's been agreed upon, instead of you being the 'bad guy.'

3. Parent-child conflicts. Keeping directions short and specific is helpful, e.g., "Please feed the dog ." If the child tries to make excuses, the words 'nevertheless' and 'regardless' may help to deflect the argument. For example: "But mom, John never has to do chores," is followed by, "Nevertheless, I want you to feed the dog." Of course, positive behavior really does get reinforced with encouraging phrases, such as, "Thanks a lot. That really helped me;" or "You really did a nice job on that."

4. Family meetings or discussions. It is highly recommended that families plan to hold a meeting or get-together once a week, to plan activities together and discuss any problems that have come up. Fun times together are also like 'money in the bank,' in that they keep relationships positively bonded. This really helps parents and children when conflicts and disappointments arise. You have a much better chance for a positive resolution when the relationships are already being nurtured.

Summer is a great opportunity for all of us. We hope you have a wonderful one!



**Mantua
Elementary Drama Club
Announces Fall Production**

Under the executive direction of Beth Whitehead, the Mantua Drama Club will be presenting a series of one act plays, as well as musical performances about **Mark Twain - Life on the Big River**. Rehearsals start the week of September 20th with grades 1 & 2 as well as grades 3 & 4 meeting after school on Mondays and Wednesdays. The 5th and 6th graders as well as those performing in the musical numbers will rehearse on Tuesdays and Thursdays after school. The actual production dates are November 19th and 20th. Tech rehearsal is scheduled for November 13th. Dress rehearsals will be held the week prior to the actual production. Attendance at Tech and Dress rehearsals is mandatory. Applications will be available in the first packet distributed in the fall and will be due in the office by September 14th. Participants in the drama club are selected by lottery. There is a \$50 fee to participate which helps to defray the cost of the production. Any questions please contact Donna Cipicchio at 703-426-4272 or TwoD3cpo@verizon.net.

While we're about to start summer vacation, here's an abbreviated 2004—2005 school year calendar to help plan for next year. A detailed calendar with explanation of student holidays is posted at the Fairfax County Public School website, www.fcps.edu. Based on experience in the recent winters, the School Board incorporated two additional makeup days into the school year calendar for 2004-05. June 3 and June 6 were selected as the two additional days, as opposed to two days in April or May, to avoid conflicting with SOL testing.

2004 — 2005 Traditional School Year Calendar

September 7	School Begins
October 11	Columbus Day Holiday
October 29	First Grading Period Ends
November 1 & 2	Student Holidays
November 25 & 26	Thanksgiving Holidays
December 23 - 31	Winter Vacation
January 17	King's Birthday Holiday
January 20	Inauguration Day
January 28	Second Grading Period Ends
January 31 & February 1	Student Holidays
February 21	Washington's Birthday Holiday
March 21 - 25	Spring Vacation
April 14	Third Grading Period Ends
April 15	Student Holiday
May 30	Memorial Day Holiday
June 3	Student Holiday
June 6	Student Holiday
June 24	Last Day of School