



MANTUA PTA NEWS

www.mantuapta.org

May 2004

Carole Thomas President's Message

I was recently asked to speak about the PTA to parents of rising kindergartners at the Kindergarten Orientation. I tried to articulate in a few short minutes the essence of our organization. I believe the PTA is an organization where parents *and* teachers work together to fulfill the organization's mission of securing the highest advantages in mental, physical, social, and spiritual education for all children. The relationship between parents and teachers is one of trust and cooperation. We parents entrust the staff with the people most precious to us, our children. We not only expect them to teach our children reading, writing and arithmetic; we also expect them to nurture our children's self-esteem, develop their sense of responsibility and accountability, and help them grow into good citizens. Luckily for Mantua parents, our trust is well placed in the hands of our amazing teachers, specialists and administrators.

In turn, the teachers expect us parents to support and build on their school hour efforts by being available to our children to talk about their school day, help with homework, and reinforce lessons taught at school. We parents further help in the education of our children in many ways:

- *Lending extra hands in the classrooms* (e.g., take home reading, computer lab and art assistance, helping out at school events such as Field Day, etc.)
- *Raising money to fund items and services not provided for in the school budget* (e.g., auction, Sally Foster fundraiser, carnival, Original Arts, etc.)
- *Sponsoring enrichment programs for our children* (e.g., FLEX, Hands on Science, Drama Club, Basketball, Odyssey of the Mind, Reflections, etc.)
- *Developing a sense of community in Mantua's students by reaching out to our school families and the surrounding community* (e.g., Kids Care Club, Mentorworks, Community Care Fund, New Family Buddy Program, Woodson Coalition, etc.)
- *Advocating for our children and their school* (e.g. representing Mantua at FCPS and county meetings).

As the school year comes to a close, I reflect on all WE did together to enrich the education of our children and find it absolutely incredible! Kudos to each of you who contributed your time and effort to our school! I encourage you to continue being involved in the PTA and our school by serving in a PTA Board position next year...please visit our website (www.mantuapta.org) to find a position that suits your interests and skills. And I especially urge those of you who have not yet become active in the PTA to do so...the PTA *always* benefits when people with different experiences and new ideas join in our efforts.

WordMasters

A team of students representing Mantua School recently won highest honors in the WordMasters Challenge – a national language arts competition with over 240,000 students entered annually, which consists of three separate meets held at intervals during the school year.

Competing in the very difficult Gold Division of the Challenge, and supervised by Kristen Toth, the school's fifth graders placed second in the nation in the year's second meet, held in February, among 295 school teams competing at this grade level and in the division.

Four of the school's students won highest honors for individual achievement as well: **Maura Brennan, Eva Schell, Julia Truelove, and Kelly Yoo** all earned perfect scores in the meet, where nationwide only 59 fifth graders did so.

Others students who achieved outstanding results in the meet include third grader **Brian Yudkin**; fourth graders **Robert Champion, Daniel Kim, Huy Le, Becca Meeker, Mayank Jain, Jee Soo Kim, Jacqueline Nguyen, Betsy Ryan, Michael Schneider, and Brant Thomas**; fifth graders **Daniel Kong, Hannah Konigsberg, Ian Mills, Andreas Moffett, J. J. Parker, John Schoof, Brian Sondt, Marc Krumbein, Swetha Rao, Mina Tavakoli, Katy Williams, Thomas McKeown, S. T. Gilbert, and Sarah Hill**. Congratulations to all who participated!

SCA News This school year, the SCA has been very busy. The SCA has sponsored a food drive, collected items (ie. stationery, soap, etc.) for troops fighting overseas, and made a big banner saying, "You are Our Superheroes". SCA representatives and SCA officers decorated the banner with paint and pictures from comic books that symbolize heroes. We have signed our names and are planning to have more students sign it before it is sent to the troops. Also, every month there is a Spirit Day. Some of these Spirit Days include Mardi Gras Day (just wearing beads), Patriotic Day, the annual Halloween Parade, and School Spirit Day. We had also purchased a chess board and a chess book to donate to the Chess Club sponsored by Ms. Conselatore.

We also have sponsored the biennial fundraiser called Human-I-Tees. Every item we order, 10 square feet of threatened forest land will be preserved! Plans for the upcoming weeks include more Spirit Days, and the end-of-the-year elections for SCA President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Thanks for supporting the SCA.



GIRL SCOUTING: A World of Friendship

Want to know the secret to getting your daughter in a Girl Scout Troop? You have questions, we have answers.... Call Barb Hinton 703-385-0682 or email chevalmom@hotmail.com to learn how to put your daughter at the top of the list!



**Mantua Band and Strings
Spring Concert**
Tuesday, June 1
W.T. Woodson auditorium
starting at 7:00 p.m.

Counselor's Corner

For our last Guidance lessons this year, the counselors will be teaching and reviewing safety strategies with the students from Kindergarten through the 6th grade. These strategies will focus on things that children can do if strangers approach them and their parents are not around. The strategies are based on information provided by police and professionals in the field of child safety.

Many parents of young children think that there will not be any times in which their children would be by themselves, but sometimes unforeseen things do happen. We do get reports of young children who wander off in stores or malls, and who fortunately have been returned to their worried parents by "nice" strangers. Likewise, parents of older elementary students often think that their children are now too big to be bothered by strangers, when in fact, this age group is the most targeted by potential kidnappers (this age group is usually out and about on bikes or walking with a friend and are much more "available").

When we teach strategies to the students, we do not do so in an "alarmist" fashion, rather we compare it to a fire drill or a tornado drill. We are hoping that these things never happen at Mantua, but we are prepared in case we need to know what to do. In fact, there have been students in Mantua who have used these strategies when in danger, and have been able to keep themselves safe from harm. To give parents more information about this safety program, we provided an evening workshop on May 17 to explain these strategies to parents.

Ms. Jones will also be doing "transition" lessons for the 6th graders, in which the students discuss their questions about moving on to middle school, and they actually get to practice with real combination locks (one of the big anxieties). Ms. Jones will be sending home a booklet entitled "Moving Up" with all the 6th graders so that you may also discuss these questions with them. It is recommended that students purchase a combination lock over the summer so that they can practice and gain confidence with it. Many schools require the 7th graders to bring a combination lock for their p.e. lockers, so that if the student gets their lock early, they will be fully confident that they can use it.

The PTA Parenting Library is up and running, and parents are already checking out books. Please come by and see for yourself; the bookshelf is located in our library, to the left as you come in the library doors. The PTA is hoping to build the library selections over time. If you know of any good parenting or child development books that we do not have, please give your suggestions to Pam Promisel (PTA) for future purchases.



4th Annual Mantua Raccoon Run ANOTHER HISTORICAL EVENT!

What a beautiful morning! Perfect weather for a race (much nicer than last year's rain!). Racers started to gather at 7:00 am to join the many volunteers who had already been there for an hour. The whole operation ran smoothly and efficiently. The Fun Run started promptly at 8:00 am with over 280 runners. Logan Hancock was the Fun Run winner followed closely by Michael and Joseph Muldoon and Jacob Luftglass. In the end, all the runners were winners, each receiving a medal as they crossed the finish line! The 5K race with 181 runners followed at 8:30 am and just 17 minutes and 47 seconds later, Richard Floisand crossed the finish line. Teha Kennard, the female winner, finished in 19:09. Great times for both!

The Kids Care Club thanks it's many sponsors for their generous donations: Sarah and Anne Harrington of Long and Foster Realtors for the classy water bottles, Glory Days for great prizes, Chesapeake Bagel Bakery for their yummy bagels, CCI Screen printing for the fabulous T-shirts, Metro Run Walk for the race tags and door prizes, and Christopher Companies, The Hunter Family, Interstate Hotels, Burke Family Practice, Freedom Bank, and Dr. Janice Emery for their generous contributions, all of which made our 4th annual race possible.

Thanks to Jennifer Cooper, the terrific race committee, Ms. Fernadez and staff for their support, Ms. Thompson for her fabulous emceeing, all the wonderful volunteers and the runners whose support and camaraderie helped a worthy cause. See you next year!

Freedom to Fly The Annual Teacher Appreciation Luncheon was held on Friday, May 7, 2004 in the Mantua Library. Many volunteers arrived mid-morning and helped transform the library into a blaze of butterflies, balloons and color! Food arrived throughout the morning as parents offered their thanks to all our wonderful teachers and staff. From yummy appetizers to carefully prepared desserts, our parents displayed their thanks in style. The teachers lined up in anticipation of the annual event. In each classroom, other volunteers staffed the classrooms so that our teachers could enjoy a FULL hour for a lunch break.

Elaine Gallo, Chip Bubeck and Cindy Wallin entertained on the piano throughout the luncheon and our volunteer servers were so attentive. Each teacher received a small gift as they left so that they could remember our theme and decorate their garden or classroom. One teacher from each table "won" a beautiful centerpiece with a lovely butterfly garden stake. And to top it off, we raffled off two baskets with the theme "Freedom to Fly."

Many more volunteers helped with the clean up. With the help of countless volunteers, the teachers were again thanked for their efforts and work in educating our children and letting their minds SOAR!



Field Day Volunteers Needed

Field Day is a full day of outdoor fun, **rain or shine**. Classes are divided into teams and compete against each other in games like tug-of-war, sack races, etc. The sixth graders run the games, but parent volunteers are needed to walk the children around the game course and keep score. There are two sessions; morning (9:00 a.m. – noon) and afternoon (12:45 p.m. - 3:00). Each Kindergarten through 2nd grade class needs **3 volunteers** for each session and 3rd through 6th grade need **2 volunteers** each session. Volunteers should report to the gym for a brief orientation (10 minutes or so) at the beginning of each session.

Tuesday, June 1	Kindergarten thru Second Grade
Wednesday, June 2	Third & Fourth Grades
Thursday, June 3	Fifth & Sixth Grades

If you are interested in volunteering in your child's class, please email cheryl.dickison@cox.net for K-2 and email Kathy Frongello at robertjfrongello@cox.net for grades 3-6.