

Walt Whitman High School PTSA Meeting
April 15, 2008

PTSA co-President **Laura Cecala** called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm and announced this month's Exceptional Viking Volunteers: **Gail Shannahan** and **Karen Schaefer**, who were responsible for the successful and profitable Post-Prom Yard Sale the prior weekend, and for whom preparations were an all-consuming job.

Student Government Association

Eve Rosenbaum, president of the Student Government Association, gave her report while legitimately wearing a Harvard Softball shirt; congratulations, Eve! In the final stretch of the 2008-09 school year, SGA still has a lot going on:

- The following Monday (April 21) is the spring blood drive. Parents may go to the small gym to donate blood between 7 am and 1 pm.
- Seniors (including Elliot Rosenbaum) will compete for the title of Mr. Whitman on Saturday evening, May 17; funds raised will go to charity.
- Spring Fair will be held on Wednesday, May 21, from 4-8 pm. It will feature a moon bounce, rock wall, carnival games, dunk tank, temporary tattoos, etc.; food from Armand's, Chick-Fil-A, and others; and is open to the entire Whitman and feeder school community.
- SGA executive board elections will take place soon, and Eve will be succeeded as president in the next couple of weeks.
- The boys varsity baseball team will play its final home game against B-CC in Washington Nationals Park on Tuesday, May 6. The players will have to sell a certain number of tickets to future Nationals games, but admission to the Whitman game is free.

Assistant Principal **Kathlyn Carroll** reported that graduation rehearsal was moved from May 30 to 29, the same day as senior picnic. Voter registration forms are available in the office, and students may leave them in the office or mail them in. She noted that the senior boys competing for Mr. Whitman will learn dance routines from the Poms squad. At the Senior Banquet, there will be voting for superlatives (e.g., best smile, most likely to save the world) and for Mr. Whitman finalists.

Post Prom

Leslie Shedlin and **Joan Kristal** reported on plans for Post-Prom. It will take place from 1-5 am on Saturday, immediately following Prom on Friday night. Its purpose is to prevent party-hopping and the associated drinking, driving, and car crashes. Some schools rent a place like Dave and Busters for Post-Prom, but at Whitman it is run and financed by parents.

Kids love Post-Prom, and hearing good things from upperclassmen makes the underclassmen want to come in their graduation year. In fact, more students (typically 500-600) come to Post-Prom than to Prom. It's free to students (seniors and their guests); however, once they leave they are not allowed back in.

Door prizes given at Post-Prom will increase in value as the evening goes on (to encourage students to stay), ending with a laptop computer. The Post-Prom committee could use cash, iPods, iPod Nano or accessories, XBox, XBox games, gift certificates to stores such as Bed Bath and Beyond or Container Store, or anything else a college-bound student might want.

Parent volunteers work in two shifts (12:30-3 am; 2:30-5 am) and can choose among many activities: casinos, food, raffles, moonbounce, tattoos, and so on. If that's too late for you, parents are needed to guard the gym in 2-hour shifts beginning at 6, 8, and 10 pm on Friday, or to decorate the gym on Thursday. Laura Cecala noted that with hundreds of kids and about 100 parents in the room, students who don't want to see their parents will have no difficulty avoiding them.

Invited Speaker: Marjorie Scott, Art Resource Teacher

Marjorie Scott is the resource teacher for Computer Science as well as for Art. Starting with the 2008 incoming 9th graders, computer classes will not count toward the technology requirement (though it will for the older classes, even if they have not taken computer classes yet). The county is changing its focus toward limiting technology courses to engineering, both in high school and with Project Lead the Way in middle school. Some computer science teachers are taking training in tech ed.

The offered Art courses will remain the same next year. Not enough students signed up for Digital Art in 2007-08, but there are enough students so that it will be given next year. Not enough students signed up for Art History for next year; perhaps more will sign up the following year. This year and next year there is an extra photography class, which Mike Seymour was recruited from the PE department to teach. A handout is available to help students who want to take 4 years of Art plan their schedules.

The Festival of the Arts will be on May 14-15, with setup on Tuesday from the end of school until 8 pm and on Wednesday during the day. All family members are encouraged to come. Music will be in the cafeteria both nights, with instrumental and vocal groups alternating. A silent auction will be held on both nights, and advanced drama will perform in the Whittier Woods auditorium on Thursday. There will be an awards ceremony on May 15 to recognize students for their contributions to art. Although the winners will not be informed, their parents will be notified so that they can arrange for their children to be there. Student, faculty, and alumni art will be for sale.

The Festival of the Arts is followed on Friday, May 16, by the Fashion Show in the auditorium.

Principal's Report

Assistant Principal **Kathlyn Carroll** gave the principal's report for Alan Goodwin, who was attending a Montgomery County Public Schools gala. Celebrations:

- The music department just returned from a trip to Disney World, where they won many awards including Best School (beating McLean School).

- The It's Academic Team won the match that was filmed over the weekend and will be broadcast on May 24.
- The girls' track team took second place.

Regarding tests, the Advanced Placement exams are coming up, followed by the High School Assessments. Remedial sessions are offered for the few students who need them. Most seniors have completed their Student Service Learning requirements; Whitman administrators can find an SSL project for any senior who needs it.

Talent Show will be held April 25-26. The faculty talent show is scheduled for May 20 and will feature Dr. Carroll and others in a line dance from "Sister Act."

Committee Reports

The minutes of the March PTSA meeting were approved.

Treasurer Lise Bernhard was unable to attend; Laura Cecala reported on her behalf that there had been no major activity since the prior meeting (\$65 for folders for the sophomore meeting was perhaps the highlight). A lot of expenses come in at the end of the school year, and the budget is in good shape to cover all expected reimbursement requests.

Beth Isen reported that the **Guidance Advisory Committee** would hold its last monthly meeting on April 23 at 2:15 pm, with a speaker on alcohol. A luncheon for GAC members is scheduled for May 21. A meeting for juniors and their parents will be held April 29, with representatives from Bowdoin, Virginia Tech, Carnegie Mellon, and Dickinson. On May 22 at 7:30, seniors and parents are invited to meet in the auditorium for a program on the transition to college, with a panel of returning Whitman graduates.

Laura reported that **MCCPTA Representative Mary Staley** was asked to present a resolution that would increase middle school emphasis on writing relative to reading. A parent asked what effect the resolution would have on the option for 6th graders to take French or Spanish.

PTSA Bylaws

Janice Mehler and **Sue Kanter**, who served as the **Bylaws Committee**, presented the proposed bylaws for the 3-year period beginning with the 2008-09 school year. The draft bylaws followed a template provided by the Maryland PTA (which indicated with a # the sections that could not be changed) and were approved by the Whitman PTSA Executive Board on April 2. The bylaws largely continue the current policies and procedures.

The template requires the creation of two entities, an Executive Committee (PTSA officers) and a Board of Directors (officers, standing committee chairs, principal, and SGA president), in place of the current Executive Board. The proposed Whitman PTSA bylaws would give more authority to the Executive Committee, with the Board responsible for electing a nominating committee, filling vacancies on the board, and being available to address issues that in the judgment of the executive committee require broader input prior to the general membership

meeting. The other major proposed change is to allow the treasurer to serve up to 3 consecutive terms, unlike other offices for which a person is limited to 2 consecutive terms.

Sarah Koines suggested that the word “consecutive” be dropped so that the terms limits would apply to serving in one position during one’s entire years of PTSA membership. She noted that a person could serve in different positions. Discussion included what the effect would be on a parent whose children did not attend Whitman in consecutive years. The matter was referred to the Executive Board [which decided to retain the word “consecutive”]. The vote on adopting the bylaws will be held at the May 20 PTSA meeting.

Nominations for 2008-09 PTSA Officers

Joan Wolf, chair of the **Nominating Committee**, acknowledged her committee – Emily Jones, Judy Brookes, and Elizabeth Seibel – and presented their slate of PTSA officers for the 2008-09 school year:

President: **Sue Kanter**

Co-VP Membership: **Jay Kaufman, Betty Lee** (incumbents)

Co-VP Volunteers: **Karen Finucan Clarkson, Susan Scholl**

Treasurer: **Janice Mehler**

Recording Secretary: **Noelle McHugh**

Corresponding Secretary: **Peter Hobby**

[Note that after the meeting, **Vicky Strella** was added to the slate as nominee for Executive VP.] Nominations from the floor were invited; none were made. Elections will be held at the May 20 PTSA meeting.

New Business

Laura Cecala reported on two opportunities to hear elected county officials talk about the school budget for next year. County Executive Isiah Leggett will be at Wood Middle School on Monday, April 21, at 7 pm, and the District 16 representatives – State Senator Brian Frosh and Delegates Bronrott, Frick, and Lee – will be at Davis Library on May 28.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Janice Mehler, Recording Secretary