

Walt Whitman High School PTSA Meeting
Minutes
May 15, 2007

PTSA co-President **Sarah Koines** called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm. She recognized this month's Exceptional Viking volunteers: Tyler Whitmore for the Festival of the Arts, and the Post-Prom team, Karla Dolan and Bonnie Harkness. The minutes of the April meeting were approved.

SGA report

Incoming SGA President **Eve Rosenbaum** introduced herself. She was class president for three years and is on the varsity swim/dive and softball teams. She spoke about how much fun the Mr. Whitman pageant is and noted that current students can sign up as tour guides for incoming students and families.

Regarding the SGA's recycling, John Floyd suggested that they could get big blue bins free from the county and chain them in appropriate places.

Principal's Report

Prom and Post-Prom. Principal **Alan Goodwin** described the Prom as lovely and Post-Prom as a great success. All students got home safely. He noted the importance of parent volunteers to the success of Post-Prom and other activities, and said that discussions will be held on ways to lower the cost. He reported that Magruder High School has the same Post-Prom theme and will be using many of our decorations.

School Events. Dr. Goodwin thanked the PTSA for the staff appreciation events, including "lots of food" on Monday. He encouraged everyone to come to the Festival of the Arts later that week – a 20-year tradition that also reflects immense work on the part of many people. The Whitman Education Fund and Art Boosters collectively raised \$20,000 for new, lightweight flats for displaying art, which will debut at the Festival.

Other fun events following the Arts Festival are the Fashion Show on Friday night (which is usually standing room only) and the Mr. Whitman pageant on Saturday. He explained that the Mr. Whitman contestants are escorted on stage by their mothers, and the events include modeling, talent, interview, and answering a question on the spot.

Sports. Dr. Goodwin said that sports are winding down for the end of the year. The tennis team won the county championship for the first time in 15 years; Daniel Stahl beat the favorite (from Churchill HS) to win the individual championship. Mixed doubles and another doubles team also did well and will be moving on to the regionals.

Testing. AP testing, going on during the week of the PTSA meeting, is going well, though the 3-hour test can be hard on the students, Dr. Goodwin said. The HSAs will be given the following week, and senior exams start on the Thursday of HSA week.

Graduation. All classes are canceled on June 6, the day graduation is held in the evening (in part to make it easier for teachers to attend). There are some seniors who are not expected to graduate. Next year Whitman will experiment with holding Prom on the last Friday in May, which is also the last day of class for seniors. Students who misbehave at Prom will not be allowed to walk on stage for graduation.

In response to a parent question, Dr. Goodwin replied that attendance at graduation rehearsal is mandatory for graduating seniors. Students with air-tight excuses may have their parents stand in at rehearsal and pick up their caps and gowns. Rehearsal lasts about 2 hours.

Staff Turnover. Dr. Goodwin reported on departing teachers: Jan Bowman (English, Black and White advisor), Jean Eagleton (English), Dave Magathan (athletic director), and Peg Cothorn (counselor) are retiring. Emily Tangorre (English) will stay home with her new baby, Neil Serafenas (Satellite/E.D. cluster) is transferring to Blake High School, Danielle Pate (English) is going to graduate school, and Marianne Kabes (Foreign Language) is transferring to Hoover Middle School. [Later news is that Assistant Principal Jennifer Baker was promoted to principal at Tilden Middle School, and Assistant Principal Ben Ouyang was promoted to principal at Parkland Middle School.]

College Courses Offered. Walter Johnson and Walt Whitman High Schools have made a joint arrangement with the University of Maryland to do a pilot test providing one course each semester for the two schools. In the first semester, at Whitman, the university will offer a political science course on international diplomacy; the second semester course, at WJ, will be on entrepreneurship. The charge for these classes, including books, will be about \$1,000. They will be as demanding as AP classes and are worth 3 college credits. Each class has a maximum of 15 students.

Election of PTSA Officers

Liz Sobrino, filling in for Carley Lee, head of the nominating committee, read the slate of nominees:

Co-Presidents: Laura Cecala, Sarah Koines
Vice Presidents for Membership: Jay Kaufman, Betty Lee
Vice Presidents for Volunteers: Joan Kristol, Sue Schneider
Treasurer: Lisa Bernhard
Recording Secretary: Janice Mehler
Corresponding Secretary/Whitnet Moderator: John Floyd

The slate was voted on and approved.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer **Lise Bernhard** reported that about \$2,000 in excess funds were available. It was voted on, and approved to allocate \$350 to purchase a second cordless microphone, as requested

by Chris Rogers, media services technician.

Dr. Goodwin reported that the Walt Whitman theater group was one of 50 chosen to perform in Edinburgh, Scotland, in late July or August 2008. He noted that the lighting in the Whitman auditorium needs to be replaced at a cost of about \$100,000; it was not renovated with the rest of the school and the county won't pay for new lighting. The Drama Department has been renting lighting from Delaware for its shows. The department also has a list of other needs. The PTSA voted to reallocate funds to provide \$3,000 to the Drama Department to apply to its top priority needs.

To reduce costs, the year's final issue of the *Viking Voice* PTSA newsletter will be printed in smaller quantities, which will not be mailed home but will be available in the school. PTSA members are encouraged to read the *Viking Voice* online, which – unlike the printed copies – is in color. Co-editors Eckhard Hellbeck and Mindy Buria-Hellbeck noted that the cost per copy goes up when the number of copies goes down, so they will ask via whitnet for leads on finding a new printer to reduce costs.

“College Conscious”

Kimberly Pappandrea spoke about a course she will be offering for 30 students at Walt Whitman, lasting 10 hours over 4 days in July. She bases the “College Conscious” course on things she wished she knew as a freshman. She noted that there is a 50% dropout rate among freshman at her university, Penn State. If the course goes well, it will be offered again in the fall.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Janice Mehler, co-Recording Secretary*