

Lyon/Pleasant Ridge PTA Minutes
December 12, 2006

President Chris Northwick opened the meeting at 9:15 a.m. in the Pleasant Ridge Library.

In Attendance: Kevin Dorken, Matthew Rich, Sue Raben, Judy Johnson, Chris Northwick, Liz Price, Robin Hinrichs, Brett Clark, Kristin Borth, Eileen Grant, Gloria Pedrelli, Kristi Carroll, Kristen Borth, Jen Farber, Deb McMahon, Susie Feldstein, Stacy Saef, Miriam Biales, Ana Cassorla, Gina Brunswick, Cheryl Kasner, Debbie Berg, Leslie Howell, Michelle Coletta

I. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of the November 12, 2006 meeting were approved.

II. Officer's Reports

Treasurer—The treasurer's report was tabled until the next meeting due to Dee Dee's absence. Chris Northwick noted that extra committee expenditure needs to be approved by PTA in advance. Contact Chris or Liz if you think you will exceed your budget.

President—Chris Northwick thanked Stacy Saef and Susie Feldstein for an awesome Book Fair. She also thanked Meg Carpenter and Rula Marziani for arranging the holiday luncheon. It will be held after this meeting at Megs' house 1707 Kedvale lane.

Chris announced the following schedule changes: Kimberley Radzinski, District 34 Director of Food Services, who was scheduled to speak today has been rescheduled for the March meeting. Today John O'Connor, the District 34, Executive Director of buildings and Grounds, will be here to discuss the addition to Pleasant Ridge and the new office configuration at Lyon School. In January, Sue Ellen Bohac Galligan, President of the District 34 Board of Education will be here to present information about the District's strategic plan and Bob Vincenti, Executive Director of Operational Services, will talk a little about the District's financial situation.

1st Vice President—Liz Price encouraged all committee chairs to check their mailboxes. She noted that Supplies, Book fair, and Volunteers have a lot of mail to collect.

III. Teacher's Representative Reports

Judy Johnson—Judy Johnson represented the PR teachers. She reported that Pleasant Ridge had completed vision and hearing on all the students last month. She thanked the great volunteers who helped. Since this was a screening reports are sent home as needed, but not to everyone. Pleasant Ridge also hosted the state supported dental program. 20 families took advantage of this, receiving a free

dental examination and cleaning. Ms. Johnson also thanked the PTA for the wonderful Book Fair. The 5th graders had a wonderful time performing on the second night, and the teachers appreciated the wish list books. The 3rd grade students just finished TCS testing.

Sue Raben—Sue Raben gave the Lyon School report. She expressed deep thanks to the “book fair ladies” and the PTA. All the staff was impressed with the decorations, the books, and the special events. The Lyon teachers also said thank you for the PTA grant funds. At Lyon the Kindergarten students have been studying about friends and had their Thanksgiving feast. The 1st grade is studying pioneers and has learned that old times were a lot harder than now. They just went on their pioneer trip to the Grove. The next 2nd grade unit is Folk tales and fairy tales. Some are beginning that now, and some are some will begin in January. All the students are rehearsing for the holiday program. This year the same program is being presented in the morning and the afternoon. Parents can attend either one. The theme is peace. Susan Steven Tremble is coming for an author visit on February 27th.

IV. Committee Chair Reports

Lyon/PR Fall Book Fair—Susie Feldstein and Stacey Saef reported that the Lyon/PR Fall Book Fair was a success. Stacy was pleased to see so many kids getting excited about reading. At the end of the Book Fair, Susie and Stacy were encouraged to enter the Scholastic Book Fair contest. To enter, a committee is supposed to submit their best idea for publicizing the book fair; however, the Scholastic rep told Susie and Stacy to send all their ideas because Scholastic was so impressed by their efforts. They have submitted all their publicity ideas, including a 10-page photo album of pictures from the book fair. If they win top prize, they will get an author visit by Walter Wick (who does I Spy books) and a shopping spree. This was, we believe, Scholastic’s most successful book fair in the country. We did total sales of almost \$31,000. The PTA gave \$1400 of books to teachers and \$600 of books to free and reduced lunch students. The library also received about \$700 of books. We will have a voucher for another \$800 for the library that will be coming. The teacher’s wish list netted \$200 of books for the classrooms, and the “One for Books” drive earned \$460 for the Debra Gelfand fund and books donated by Scholastic to Katrina victims. Thanks to everybody who helped.

Benefit—Jen Farber reported that the benefit save the date cards have gone out.

There are 17 leaders committed for the various benefit subcommittees, but we still need someone to chair the raffle. Contact Jen if you are interested. Jen stated that 93 people responded to the online survey about the benefit. After reviewing the data, the committee discussed online bidding, teacher gifts, and classroom gifts. There was good feedback about conducting some online bidding, but after considering the learning curve for the new auction software, the committee decided to wait to institute online bidding for the 2008 auction. The teacher gifts will continue to be auctioned the traditional way, but may be auctioned online in

2008. In the survey, 73% of the people wanted classroom gifts, but most wanted to make them more practical and to have fewer of them. Based on this feedback, the committee will be taking a new approach to the Classroom Gifts auction. Laura Olson and Cathy O'Schaughnessy, the Classroom Gift Chairs, are arranging for each grade to offer 2 to 3 themed gift baskets put together by our Classroom Gifts volunteers. The baskets will contain items and gift certificates donated by parents and local businesses as well as a custom item personalized by the children from that basket's classrooms. There will be only 12 gift baskets offered instead of one for each of the 24 classrooms. We expect these baskets to be valued at \$500 or more and to be in great demand. Look for more information in your child's backpack for how you can contribute. Jen also reminded parents that there was a benefit donation card sent home in the backpacks. This is due back at school by December 15. She noted that another push for donations will go out that would be due January 8th. The committee will also be looking for more business solicitations in January as well.

Chris thanked the committee for doing the survey and trying some new ideas.

Cultural Enrichment— Gloria Pedrelli announced that Lyon will have an assembly Dec 21. It is a hip, non-religious, blues version of the Charles Dickens classic, "A Christmas Carol" by Head Cheese Fat Boss Productions. There will be two performances at Lyon School, one at 10:00 a.m., and the other at 1:15 p.m. All parents are welcome and encouraged to attend. We also have a few dates already scheduled for next year. These will be sent to Mr. Dorken. The next event at Pleasant Ridge will be a visit by Victor Pacinni. He will conduct 2 inspirational assemblies and then he go into every classroom and have the kids draw their dreams. He will be at Pleasant Ridge starting January 17th.

Holiday Helper—Deb McMahan reported that the Holiday Helper program will be continuing to collect food and gifts through this Friday. We have been assigned 65 families to help this year. The big challenge is that we still have 14 large families that need sponsors, and the pickup date is Monday. This year we have had fewer people volunteer to sponsor families, so the committee will be shopping for a lot of the necessary items to fill the baskets. We are doing pretty well with food donations since Kraft and Peapod are donating food. However, we have 40 kids who still need a toy, gloves, hat, and a pair of snow pants. Deb asked for donations of money, wrapping paper, grocery gift certificates, tape, gift tags, and large gift bags. She also passed around a sign-up sheet for people to buy a specific toy for a child. Any donations should be left with Mrs. B in the Lyon School office. She also announced that the wrapping party would be held Saturday from 9-12 at Lyon. PTA members are welcome to come and help. A couple of kids who need some service hours would be helpful for wrapping as well.

In January we will talk about how to reorganize some publicity and marketing for this project. This is one of the most valuable projects we do for our school community. All of the families we serve are in our school community and many

of them really need some food and items for the holidays. The program provides a hat, gloves, snow pants, a present, and a book for each child as well as a basket of food for the family. In January we will also discuss restructuring the project some. We may want to do outerwear earlier in the fall for next year so the children are prepared when it gets cold.

Recognizing the present needs, a motion was unanimously passed to allocate up to an extra \$1000. to the Holiday Helper fund for this year if needed.

School Board Meeting Report—Kristin Borth reported that the School Board approved the plans for the building additions to the 3 intermediate schools at their last meeting. They also received a current report on the District's finances, which are much better than previous predictions. Additional information about these topics is available on the district website.

Local School Council—Eileen Grant reported that the Local School council had had its first meeting of the year this week. They discussed the district's strategic plans and reviewed the reports on student achievement. They also discussed the climate of the two schools and talked about how to bring them together as one community. One idea was to have an international night. The principals will be talking to the teachers about this and will then bring ideas to the PTA. It will probably consist of a variety of food and maybe activities that reflect the various cultures represented in our schools. PTA has also talked about this, and Chris will pass on the names of parents who expressed an interest in helping with it. Local School Council wants to emphasize that our school community is one that values a culture of diversity. They also wanted to consider ways this idea could be integrated into the classroom. Some teachers have done this in the past, but this would be a school-wide event. Recommendations were made to visit the international that will be held at Henking/Hoffman in the winter and plan our event for April. Recommendations were made to try to expand this to more than a one-night event. Details of sponsorship and the roles for teachers, Local School Council and PTA will be determined later.

Local School Council will meet monthly as needed throughout the year.

Caucus—Stacey Saef reported to the PTA on the Caucus. She explained that the caucus meets to identify good candidates for the School Board election. Chris and Stacy are on Caucus. They announced that the Caucus needs more members. All electoral precincts are allowed 2 members. Only Glen Oak Acres has 2 members. They also announced that anyone can run for school board. If you want to run, contact a caucus member for an application. This will be referred to a committee and then to the total caucus. The caucus will place recommended candidates on the ballot. Stacy reminded us that it is very important to have good people on the school board. If you know anyone who is interested in running, tell them to contact Stacy or Chris.

- V. **Guest Speaker**—John O’Connor, District 34 Executive director of Facilities spoke about the building of an addition to Pleasant Ridge and enhancements to the security of both schools. He also announced that the District will be looking for parents and concerned citizens to staff a committee to plan the new playgrounds for Pleasant Ridge. The Committee will be organized in January or February. Anyone who is interested, contact the District office.

VI. Principals’ Reports

Pleasant Ridge School—Dr. Matthew Rich reported it has been an exciting time at Pleasant ridge this fall. He has been excited to meet the many families in the community and attend the variety of events at the school. Today the 4th graders are off at a field trip on the zoo and Hull House to volunteer. He announced that over the weekend 40 parents were setting up interviews for the 4th grade interview project. As a building, Pleasant Ridge is preparing for the holiday program on the morning and afternoon of the 20th. Dr Rich reminded everyone that this is a hard month for kids. There are a lot of expectations, disappointments, and stress for kids. He encouraged us to take a moment to check that out with our kids. In January some kids will be doing NWEA updates. The ELL kids will also be taking an Access test that is required by the state.

Lyon School—Kevin Dorken reported the holiday program has been an evolutionary process. As a staff, Lyon has been talking about interdependence. Everyone is very proud of the level of commitment and talent exhibited by staff, kids, and parents, but there is awareness that the level of interdependence has been weak. The holiday program has turned into a project on interdependence. It is titled “One small Voice”-- a Lyon School folk tale. This came from a song the kids sang in the pinwheels for peace project at the beginning of the year. It has evolved into a discussion of what this means for each grade. The fine arts teachers and regular teachers have really worked together to give voice to this idea. It should be great. Mr. Dorken announced that both the morning and afternoon performances will be the same so parents can pick which one to attend. It will be crowded because the stage area will be bigger than in previous years. There is also overflow parking behind village hall. January will be a time to revise expectations because it will be like a second beginning of the school year.

VII. Unfinished/New Business

VIII. Announcements—(Calendar Overview)

January 12, 2007 - Next PTA meeting at Lyon School at 9:15 Guest speakers--Sue Ellen Bohac Galligan, President of the District 34 Board of Education will be here to present information about the District’s strategic plan and Bob Vincenti, Executive Director of Operational Services, will talk a little about the District’s financial situation.

March 3, 2007 Benefit. Northbrook Hilton