

**Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake PTA Council**  
**January 12, 2009**

**Call to Order:** Paula Van Buren called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Present:** Amy Agan, Darcy Baumbach, Barb Becker, Lori Sautter-Danz, Linda Fieldhouse, Mary Beth Frewin, Laurie Kruppenbacher, Kathy Lynch, Rocco Montesano, Erin Pezzulo, Lauren Roecker, Ann Slocum, Bob Speck, Paula Van Buren, Lynnette Ziskin.

**President's Report: Paula Van Buren.**

~Paula reported that she received an e-mail from Kim Vilardi (Associate Director, Northeastern Region PTA) with information about an incentive for units to win a free laptop. Unit registrations are much lower than expected, and this competition encourages units to increase their membership. The unit reps will take the following information back to their PTAs:

-To qualify for the contest, PTA units must have registered their total membership as of December 31, 2008 with the national office.

-Registration must be completed online at [www.pta.org/laptops\\_register/](http://www.pta.org/laptops_register/) between Jan. 1 and Jan. 15, 2009.

-The 12 units which post the largest percentage increase in membership (over their registered number) as of March 31, 2009 will be awarded a laptop in mid-May.

-Winners will be chosen from five pre-determined categories (based on unit size).

~Paula encouraged everyone to support the budget by all possible means: attend the upcoming forums, write letters or make phone calls to state legislators (see list below), or at least send an e-mail or the district's form letter (less effective, but still meaningful), and circulate the list of legislators' addresses so that many other voices can also be heard from.

~The PTA Council received a thank you note from Nancy Della Pia acknowledging the Appreciation Basket that all BOE members received.

~Paula reiterated the importance of parents' attendance at Board meetings. Please attend, especially when the BOE meetings are at your home school. Subsequent meeting dates are as follows:

- January 13 – Middle School
- January 27 – Pashley
- February 10 – High School
- February 24 – Charlton Heights
- March 10 – Stevens
- March 24 – Middle School
- April 7 – Pashley
- April 21 - High School
- May 12 - High School
- May 26 – Charlton Heights
- June 9 – Middle School
- June 23 - Stevens

**Secretary's Report: Lynnette Ziskin.**

~The minutes of the November 17 Council meeting were distributed via e-mail; with the few corrections that were noted at tonight's meeting, the minutes were voted on and approved at the

January 12 (tonight's) meeting. They will be sent to Christy Multer for inclusion on the BH-BL website.

**Treasurer's Report: Amy Agan.**

~Amy's report consisted of the following:

1. The Balance Sheet as of January 11, 2009 which reflects the following:
  - Checking Account: \$9,038.59
  - Savings Account: \$8,709.62
  - Total Assets: \$17,748.21
2. The Profit & Loss July 1, 2008 – January 11, 2009.
3. The 2008-2009 Theatre for Children Income and Expenses report.
4. Amy reported that all units have paid their annual dues to Council.
5. Expected payments include those due for Founders Day recipients' flowers.

**~School Board Liaison's Report: Bob Speck.**

~After the resignation of Nancy Della Pia, the Board reorganized in December with newly elected Board member Patre Kuziak. Patre is the liaison with Charlton Heights PTA, worked with Board president Bob Speck on policy review, and is the Wellness Committee representative for the district.

~The next BOE meeting will be tomorrow, Tuesday January 13, 7:30 p.m. at the middle school.

~The first public Budget Forum is scheduled for Tuesday January 20, 7:00 p.m. at the Ballston Town Hall.

~Bob spoke of the future of the Hostetter Building; no decisions can be made regarding the repair until the condition(s) of the building is evaluated by the insurance company. A lot of the staff that were housed in that building are working in portable trailers that were placed there shortly after the water main break damaged the building.

~ The Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Board of Education is very concerned about what the Governor's proposed state aid cuts would mean for our school district in 2009-10.

~BH-BL residents and staff are urged to share their concerns with state leaders; the Board wants an open process/open discussion. They wish to involve everyone in future decisions.

~Regarding the imminent budget cuts, Bob mentioned certain state mandates which we have no control of, such as special education. Given the state of our current budget situation, the district is facing possible staff reductions.

~The BOE may have executive sessions; certain issues will not be addressed during an agenda meeting. A concerted effort will be made to end all BOE meetings by 10:00 p.m.

~Student enrollment appears to be flat throughout the district.

**Superintendent's Report: Jim Schultz.**

~Jim was unable to attend but sent the following report:

~With the Governor's proposal to reduce school aid to BH-BL by \$1.6 million, this will be the most difficult budget our district has ever faced. The district has been proactive with actions already in place such as lowering the heat in buildings by a few degrees, freezing all conference attendance by staff, and evaluating the necessity of each expenditure. PTAs are needed to be involved in the process from lobbying the legislature to voicing their suggestions for cost savings. The first community Forum will be held on Tuesday January 20 at 7:30 p.m. at the Ballston Town Hall. Everyone is strongly encouraged to attend.

~Jim reminded the PTAs about being responsible for the events we choose to sponsor. There is currently a parent from Stevens who is seeking reimbursement for an operation that her dog needs as a result of swallowing a product sold at the Stevens Holiday Shop. The sponsoring agent (PTA) of such an event needs to be aware of any products sold at Craft/Holiday Fairs.

~A letter was sent home to elementary and middle school parents regarding snow delays and closures reminding parents about having child care available in the event that school might close early due to bad weather. The district works closely with weather forecasts, county road crews and other districts to get the best information in order to make a decision for the safety of students. Thus far, we've had 5 days with delays or closures. Parents are strongly recommended to sign up for the School News Notifier (SNN) on the district website, which allows e-mail notification to any e-mail system regarding delays and closures.

### **Teacher Representative's Report: Rocco Montesano.**

~Rocco's report was entirely regarding the BH-BL budget situation.

~With the upcoming budget process, Rocco encouraged all of us to let our voices be heard, especially to state legislators. Residents and staff can help send the message that aid cuts will hurt BH-BL students. The BH-BL community: PTA, staff, parents, etc. must form coalitions and communicate with state officials on the urgent issues which are threatening our schools. Typically, the Teacher's Association leadership is not effective unless everyone acts.

~Unfortunately, this budget crisis is a multi-year problem; the situation has the potential of being very serious for a long period of time.

~One of the alluring faults is the 4% tax cap; 4% would be devastating to BH-BL district.

~There is great potential for the elimination of 20 staff positions at BH-BL.

~Governor Paterson wants the state budget done by March 1.

~NYSUT is communicating with legislators in an effort to secure \$5 million.

### Rocco's recommendations:

~Please attend the upcoming Budget Forums: January 20, 7:30 p.m. at the Ballston Town Hall, February 26, 7:30 p.m. at BH-BL High School and March 31 at 7:00 p.m. at the East Glensville Fire Hall, Route 50, Glensville

~Please attend the Finance Committee meetings. This is the start of discussing budget requests; every penny spent by our district is agonized over. The meetings are scheduled for February 3, 7:00 p.m. at BH-BL High School library, and March 12 at 7:00 p.m. at BH-BL High School library.

~PTAs, please consider having a meeting dedicated to this topic only.

~PTAs, please include a form letter with the next issue of your PTA newsletter; it's a simple way to encourage involvement from people.

~**Please write a letter or call any/all of the key state leaders:** (e-mail, form letters less effective)

### *Governor*

Governor David Paterson  
State Capitol  
Albany, NY 12224  
(518) 474-8390

To email, go to [www.ny.gov/governor](http://www.ny.gov/governor) & click "Contact"

*Senator representing the BH-BL area*

Senator Hugh T. Farley

Room 412, LOB

Albany, NY 12247

(518) 455-2181 or (800) 224-5201

To email, go to [www.senatorfarley.com](http://www.senatorfarley.com) & click "Contact"

*Leader of the NY State Senate*

Senator Malcolm A. Smith

Room 909, LOB

Albany, NY 12247

(518) 455-2701

Email: [masmith@senate.state.ny.us](mailto:masmith@senate.state.ny.us) OR go to [www.nyssenate14.com](http://www.nyssenate14.com) & click "Contact"

*Chair of the Senate Education Committee*

Senator Stephen Saland

Room 708, LOB

Albany, NY 12247

(518) 455-2411

To email, go to [www.senatorsaland.com](http://www.senatorsaland.com) & click "Contact"

*Assemblyman representing the BH-BL area*

Assemblyman James Tedisco

Room 933, LOB

Albany, NY 12248

(518) 455-3751

Email: [tediscj@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:tediscj@assembly.state.ny.us)

*Leader of the NY State Assembly*

Assemblyman Sheldon Silver

Room 932, LOB

Albany, NY 12248

(518) 455-3791

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*Chair of Assembly Education Committee*

Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan

Room 836, LOB

Albany, NY 12248

(518) 455-4851

Email: [nolanc@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:nolanc@assembly.state.ny.us)

**Committee Reports:**

**Audit Committee: Karen Smith.**

~No report. (A complete report will take place at the March meeting.)

**Eileen Briggs Award: Ann Slocum.**

~Because of the questions posed several meetings ago regarding this award, Ann again initiated conversation regarding the proposed changes/continuance of the Eileen Briggs award:

-Eileen Briggs was a Charlton Heights parent, and the award is a humanitarian award given to a student who has been giving of their time and energy for the people of our community.

-Little attention is paid to this award; there are very few nominations for it each year.

-She reported that it is not an award students are knowledgeable about; they do not apply for this award, it is an award of nomination by a staff member or community member.

-Should the Council consider changing this to include middle school students?

-Further discussion on this topic is tabled; it will continue at the March meeting.

### **Arts & Enrichment: Rita Snively.**

~Rita was unable to attend, and instead of enclosing a comprehensive listing of all programs that are scheduled at the schools, sent a report which stated that the Arts & Enrichment program is facing possible funding cuts at the state level. This issue is significant and may merit some future discussion as to whether or not we want to conduct a letter campaign to state legislators. Two weeks ago, the Schenectady Gazette included an article on the proposed cuts.

~All three elementary schools were awarded a \$2,000 grant from the Saratoga Arts Council for residency programs. Charlton Heights' program is with Chris Holder for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade class; Stevens and Pashley will host the Ellen Sinopoli dance troupe for their 4<sup>th</sup> grades classes. We were fortunate to receive these grants. Due to the state's economic crisis, funding is being cut to Arts organizations. Organizations that were slated to receive their funds in October and December will not be getting their funds. Those that received their funding in May and July were funded. Fortunately, the Saratoga Arts Council is one of the groups with the early receipt date. It is unclear what will happen next year. If these grants are discontinued it will have a significant impact on A & E programming and what we can offer our students.

### **Founders Day: Erin Pezzulo & Lauren Roecker.**

~The Founders Day dinner will be held on Thursday February 5, 2009 at the Edison Country Club in Rexford.

~The format has been changed from a formal sit-down dinner to hearty hors d'oeuvres. The evening will begin at 5:45 p.m.; the ceremony will start promptly at 7:00 p.m. The tickets and sign-up sheets are currently at all schools. Reservations and payment of \$20 per person can be made through any school secretary or Founders Day representative. Entertainment will be provided by the BH-BL high school jazz band.

~The Founders Day winners are as follows:

- Charlton Heights – Sonja Thomson
- Pashley: volunteer award – Christina Longo-Porter; staff award – Jill Bonacio
- Stevens: Cathy Todd
- O'Rourke Middle School – Carolyn Guyer
- BH-BL High School: volunteer award – Dr. Larry Lewis; staff award – Ellie Culpepper
- PTA Council – Suzanne Rayome

### **After-school Enrichment Clubs: Karen Smith.** (Mary Beth Frewin reported for Karen.)

~Pashley Elementary has chosen not to participate in the program.

~Stevens After-school Enrichment Clubs begin this week; Charlton Heights started last week.

~The program enlists the help of high school ROCK students. Laurie Kruppenbacher has the current list of available ROCK students. Each elementary school must let Laurie know how many ROCK students are needed and for which days.

### **Theatre for Children: Kathy Lynch.**

~Celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

~The show is "Grease Jr." (the school version) a musical production.

~There are 28 cast members, including the elementary principals and Mr. Schultz.

~Show times are 7:00 p.m. on Friday April 3, and 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on Saturday April 4.

~Tickets will be offered for sale at the elementary schools via backpack mail.

~The original founder (Jane Coffey) would like to have a scholarship program for the Theatre for Children. The recipient will be a BH-BL theatre/music student.

**Odyssey of the Mind: Jean Smith.**

~Jean was unable to attend but sent a report stating the district has two OM teams at the high school level and one team at Stevens Elementary. The Odyssey of the Mind regional competition will take place on February 28, 2009 at Mohonason High School.

**Council Delegate Reports:**

**High School PTA Council Rep: Laurie Kruppenbacher.**

~The last meeting was held January 5, 2009.

~Mrs. Symer noted that the BH-BL fall sports teams had an astounding season; the girls volleyball team had an exceptional 96.2 GPA, which ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in New York State.

~The after-school tutor program happens on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

~The issue of student attire/inappropriate dress was discussed at length; PTAs are asked to get this important message across to all parents.

~The final meeting of the school year is scheduled for May 4. Attendance to this meeting is important because a quorum is necessary to vote in the new slate of PTA officers.

**Middle School PTA Council Rep: Mary Beth Frewin.**

~Poppy received an offer for high-volume printing; if anyone would like to take advantage of this offer contact Kevin Valade 399-3626.

~Report cards will be sent home via backpack mail; the district will save \$800 on postage. End-of-the-year report cards will continue to be mailed home.

~In an effort to cut costs, the middle school has lowered the temperature by 3 degrees.

~The Building Council is currently evaluating charitable contributions at the middle school.

They deliberated over the issue of solicitation by and support of charitable organizations and persons in need. Research was completed on District policies and the law, past building practice was reviewed, and the principles and practices of other buildings were discussed.

~The annual Food Drive gathered 2,174 canned goods. (Last year was 2,895.)

~Possible fundraisers to replace the Monopoly fundraiser will be considered at future meetings.

~One foosball table has been repaired; the second table is usable but not complete.

~7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade Rec Night attendance was extremely low. Discussion ensued as to ways of attracting more students to the event, including an entertainment change to a "garage" band or a quiz game show.

~The classroom representatives for Class Night have been picked. There are still many volunteer opportunities for parents to assist with the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Class Night.

**Charlton Heights PTA Council Rep: Barb Becker.**

~After-school Enrichment Clubs will be held three days each week for four weeks; some clubs have low enrollment, one club was canceled.

~December's Holiday Shop was successful.

**Pashley PTA Council Rep: Darcy Baumbach.**

~The Holiday Shop went well.

~The Buffalo Chips (an all-male a cappella group) are scheduled to come.

~Chris Holder is scheduled to come in February.

~The annual Pancake Breakfast is scheduled for January 31, 2009; proceeds will be donated to the music department in order to purchase new instruments.

**Stevens PTA Council Rep: Linda Fieldhouse.**

~Family Fun Night will be held on Friday January 23. The entertainment will be “Ball in the House”, a Boston-based a cappella pop group.

~The craft table at the Holiday Shop to support the 5<sup>th</sup> grade party netted \$350.

~The ELAs are being given this week.

~The 4-week long After-school Enrichment Clubs start this week and will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

~Stevens Goes Green will be held on May 16; 4-H funding for this event is being discussed.

~The Arts & Enrichment program received a grant for \$2,000 in order to help fund the Ellen Sinopoli program scheduled for the spring.

**Vice-president: Erin Pezzulo.**

~No report.

**2nd Vice-president: Laurie Kruppenbacher.**

No report.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Vice-president: Lauren Roecker.**

No report.

**Unfinished Business:**

None.

**New Business:**

None.

**Meeting Adjourned: 8:50 p.m.**

The next PTA Council meeting will be held on Monday March 16, 2009 in the Principal’s Conference Room at the High School.

The last PTA Council meeting scheduled for this school year will be held on May 19, 2009.

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