

Horace Mann Executive Board Meeting
Tuesday, April 22, 2003, 9:30AM
MINUTES

Attendees: **Dr. Eileen Mullady**, Head of School, **Marjorie Kuhn**, PA President, **Lisa Fuld**, 1st Vice-President PA, **Lauren Bloom**, 2nd Vice-President, **Pam Stuchin**, Chair Upper Division PA, **Mindy Heyer**, Chair Middle Division PA, **Patty Manoff**, Chair Lower Division PA, **Wendy Stenberg**, Chair Nursery Division PA, **Lynn Koch**, Vice Chair Upper Division PA, **Ronnie Parker**, Vice Chair PA, **Judy Balsam**, Secretary U/M/ Division PA, **Linda Mandel**, PA Administrative Liaison, **Janis Yoss**, Benefit Chair, **Jodi Nass**, Benefit Chair, **Missy Karetsky**, N-12 Coordinator, **Anne Altchek**, Friends of the Visual Arts, **Cathy Rubin**, General Store Liaison and Benefit Online, **Cindy Scheinfeld**, HM Directory Editor, **Barbara Weinstein Bernstein**, Notification Chain and newly elected PA President, **Sun Mok**, Chair Korean Parents League, **Dorothy Bandier**, **Carin Boris**; Members at Large

Marjorie Kuhn: Marjorie Kuhn welcomed everyone to the last meeting, of the year, of the Executive Board. She introduced Dr. Eileen Mullady.

Dr. Eileen Mullady: *The Bellet Teaching Awards* went to teachers, Ken Carpenter, and Sandy Rubinstein. Five other teachers were also nominated.

The Langfan Oratorical Competition for Tenth Graders is an oratory contest which revolves around the issues of the Constitution. Tenth graders study the constitution and then students speak on issues related to the constitution. This year's topic was the Death Penalty. There were 5-7 finalists, who competed, and the winner of the contest was Marissa Toomey.

Josh Dell was named Student Body President.

Pirates of Penzance will be held this coming weekend from Thursday night through Sunday.

This year Stephanie Nass, a (6th grader) will be shadowing Dr. Mullady for a day. This was one of the many prizes that were listed on the online benefit website. It is a challenging assignment for Dr. Mullady, who is busy trying to craft a day of interesting things for Stephanie.

Every senior has a college acceptance at this point. All things considered, it was a very good year. The admissions process will be tough through 2008, because there are so many kids applying. A high percentage of kids got their first choice, in the early rounds, and then many of them got in during the second round.

The admission process to Horace Mann is complete, but a few spots are still being held in different grades, because sometimes interesting people come from overseas, or people

move into New York over the summer. For forty places, Horace Mann always accepts between 112-115 students, because the yield for twenty years was always the same, but not this year. This year, there are fewer 8th graders leaving, and Horace Mann has received many more commitments than expected.

Dr. Mullady is still in the process of visiting all the grades in the entire school. At the present time she is two classes short of finishing the Middle Division. Some of the things she has noticed in her travels are that students make the biggest jump up from seventh to eighth grade. Eighth grade is more thoughtful, and more abstract. In sixth and seventh grade kids are still reactive and not as thoughtful. Their hands are always raised. By eighth grade, students have matured and have the maturity to listen, and then after ask questions. It is a developmental thing. Until eighth grade, teachers have to stop and answer questions frequently. It is not a gender thing. What is a gender thing, is that girls in the middle division say "like" often, while boys do raise their hands wildly in the teacher's face, even while someone else is answering. Dr. Mullady reported that she does not see silent, intimidated girls in any class; girls who sit back and let the boys answer. That is the greatest myth at this school. The teachers are really fair as to whom they call on, but they do so naturally because of the enthusiasm to participate on the part of all the students.

Curriculum in each grade is horizontal which means that the same thing is going on in each class. The teachers are very well coordinated with each other, so topics are being done at the same time in each class. The nice thing about horizontal teaching is that the kids can talk to their peers in other classes about what they all are learning. This makes for a strong curriculum. Looking around, Horace Mann is a nice place for kids to spend 8-10 hours a day.

The new theater has been opened. There was a ribbon cutting ceremony, and also an assembly where the speeches for the election of Student Body President were presented. Gross Hall officially opens on May 7th with the Gross family.

Marjorie Kuhn: The Nominating Committee put together a strong slate for next year. Communication is the key. In the Fall issue of the Bulletin, we hope to profile the seven teachers who were either nominated, or selected for The Bellet Teaching Award. The profiling of these teachers is a way for the PA to show our appreciation to the commitment and dedication that these teachers have shown toward our school and our students.

Wendy Stenberg: An upcoming event in the Nursery will be the carnival at the Lower School on May 10th. The theme will be Water World. Nursery is working on an underwater tunnel. This year's Book Fair made over \$10,000. The Parent Outreach Committee organized many relevant coffee hours. The highlights this year were the community service projects, which were specifically designed for nursery aged students.

Marjorie Kuhn: The title *Family Outreach Program* was standardized for all divisions, so now nursery, lower, middle, and upper all share the same heading. We are all

ambassadors of the school, and we need to welcome all new families and we should let new parents know that we are accessible to them.

Patty Manoff: This year's highlights included line dancing at a county fair, discussions with Dr. Wolk about cliques, and Caring in Action Day; a day when students are taught to give back to their community. Students visited the aged, visited emotionally challenged kids, and decorated and donated toiletries to the homeless. The Lower Division brought back the live Book Fair, and within 1 ½ hours sold \$10,000 worth of books. The Lower Division skated at Wollman's Ice Skating Rink. Coffee with Steve Tobolsky, and the Parents in Action meetings were well attended. PA meeting for Lower Division has been rescheduled for May 5th. Our guest speaker will be Congresswoman Anita Lowey, who sits on the Homeland Security Committee. She will speak about "*What is Really Being Done to Keep New York City Safe from Terrorism*". The Lower Division carnival is going back to having booths done per class, something that was not done last year.

Mindy Heyer: The Parent Seminar with Wendy Reiter, head of Middle Division Guidance will take place the following evening. The topic is "*Perils of Parenting*" with Dr. Ann Rassmusen. There will be a panel made up of parents, students, faculty and teachers.

This year, a big theme in the Middle Division, is the theme of *Letting Go*. Students need to own their own events, so this year children advertised and ran their own events. Parents need to allow their children to do their own thing, instead of jumping in and doing it for them. That is the challenge that the parents must face. The Middle Mania event made a profit from their bake and pizza sale. The students ran the entire event, including collecting the money. The money was used to create a Middle Division banner. A contest was held to create the banner, and the winner's banner will be displayed in the school.

Community Service in eighth grade is a requirement. Mindy asked that parents save bonuses that come with purchased cosmetics until next November, and to donate them to the eighth graders, who will then give these items to people who live in shelters. French students in the Middle Division went to a French restaurant, while the Spanish students in the seventh grade will be attending the Picasso and Matisse exhibits. Middle Division students have requested a desire to learn Italian, and Mrs. Linden informed them that if a teacher can be found, Italian may be a possibility.

Middle Memories, an evening for graduating eighth grade students will be held on June 5th. Volunteers are needed to video eighth grade events at the school in the coming years.

Pam Stuchin: During this year, the Upper and Middle Division really connected with the guidance department, and we discovered that there are people at the school who really do respond to our questions and concerns. The final workshop with Dr. Jeremy Leeds, for

parents of Upper Division students, will take place on May 13th at 5:30pm. Fathers should come, and eighth grade parents are also invited.

This year, a very successful program has been *the Roundtable Discussions with Larry Weiss*. Anywhere from 20-40 people were in attendance at all the meetings, and the intimate atmosphere led to many interesting questions and answers. Dr. Weiss is very open and involved in the process of letting parents know what is going on in the school.

Parent Outreach mentor family members are busy now reaching out to parents of newly admitted students.

Collection is under way for used textbooks. When Middle and Upper Division students finish their finals, have them drop off their books. Students receive half of the sale price of the book sold, while the rest goes to the Student Assistance Fund. The Recycled Textbook website will be revamped this year to run more efficiently.

An evening for graduating seniors and their parents called *Letting Go* will take place May 20th, at the school. Faculty and advisors will provide guidelines to help parents deal with the process of letting go when their children go off to college, and figuring out a structure for keeping up communication with our children while they are away.

The Parents Association presented the film *Dying High* to the parents of Upper Division students. It is a film about the dangers of teen alcohol abuse, and it was viewed by all students in the Upper Division.

The Upper Division Parents Association is in the process of filling positions on the Board. Anyone who is interested in working on any committee should notify Pam Stuchin, Lynn Koch, or Judy Balsam.

Marjorie Kuhn: Once again, book sales will be online. Last year, our students let us know that Varsity Books prices were expensive, and informed us of other places to search for and purchase books. You can download or write down the list of books needed from Varsity and then purchase the books somewhere else. Varsity was selected because they gave us the best package. The PA doesn't get a percentage of any money from Varsity, but all money collected from the Textbook Recycling Committee goes to Student Services.

Missy Karetsky: There will be an outing at a Yankee game for all families at Horace Mann on May 17th at 1:00pm. .

Anne Altcheck: The Horace Mann Art Gallery under the direction of Kim Do, the Art Director is open. Right now there is a Middle Division art show. At end of April there will be an exhibit by Upper Division students. Volunteers are needed. The 2002 senior gift, which will be installed on campus, is a bronze statue of a lion. Last year the senior class gave the most money that has ever been raised; \$17,000.

Marjorie Kuhn: *Parents in Action Committee* became part of the Executive Board this year, and as a result the committee functions more efficiently.

Cindy Scheinfeld: Technology will continue to be a priority. We have done wonderful things with technology and we want more people to experience these wonderful programs such as, Benefit Online, PA Link, etc. A survey was done to determine how families like to get information from the school. The results of the survey showed that 99.7% of parents are online. 70% check their email daily, 20% every other day. The majority want school news from emails and from standard mailings. 55% of parents reported visiting the Horace Mann website, while 43% never visit. Parents who do visit the website, most frequently visit the General Store, Sports Schedule and the PA link. 30% of parents who visited the General Store made a purchase. 91% of parents had not participated in the Benefit Online auction site yet. Only 8% said they were not interested in the Benefit Online at all, while 37% said that they would participate in the future. A discussion is under way to find ways to get more parents to visit the website. Maybe a way to get results is to send an email blast periodically to parents telling them to check out the site for specific news, and include a link to get them to the site, but we must be careful that we do not overdo email blasts.

Marjorie Kuhn: The Green Sheet tells everything that is going on in the school on a weekly basis. There are no more monthly bulk mailing. Instead bulk mailings will be sent once every trimester. The consensus is that there is no one perfect way to reach everyone.

Lisa Fuld: The problem with email addresses in the directory is that email addresses change, and we don't have a way of getting those changes. An effort is being made to correct *The Directions to Away Games* in the directory.

Cathy Rubin: This year people spent \$19,000 on merchandise. Since our profit margin is only 5% that is only \$900. Last year we only made \$3,000 from Textbook Recycling, but that amount has been as much as \$13,000 in the past. The school library will get 300 free books this year for a total of \$2500 savings from the publishing houses as a result of our highlighting their books on the General Store link of the Horace Mann web site. The Benefit Online link that was put together has a 100% profit margin. To date the link provided a profit of \$53,000. This is the result of 100 registered bidders and an average of twelve active bidders for each item. We have got to evaluate all these links. A full time IT person is needed to deal with all the technological issues. We need someone to improve the Recycled Textbook site, consolidate all the links, and create new applications. The Horace Mann Parents Association would like to put Horace Mann merchandise online and sell merchandise online all year. With a 20% margin, there is a tremendous upside.

Janis Yoss: Benefit will take place on April 30th. This year we created memory pages, and made \$12,000, up from last year's take of \$3000. Invitations were sent to all new parents and already 40 of them will attend. They will be identified by name tags, and we encourage everyone to seek them out and welcome them to the school. People on the

Executive Board will also have name tags. On April 23rd all the items in the Benefit Catalogue can be viewed online, but only the first ten items can be bid for online. An absentee bid form can also be downloaded. Next year it is hoped that people will be able to bid on all 180 items online.

Barbara Weinstein Bernstein: There was a lot of activity from the Notification Chain this year, and there were many glitches. The problems that the chain had on March 6th when the school tried to arrange an early dismissal brought us closer to the idea of an automated telephone system. The PACE Communication System, an automatic voice system is being considered, as well as Voice Broadcasting System, in addition to the phone chain.. Both systems have tracking devices, so we will know who is being reached. The system we choose must be flexible, so that even if we have five numbers for a family, the phone system will stop calling once a person is reached.

Marjorie Kuhn: Spoke on behalf of the *Values and Ethics Committee*. The committee serves to identify issues that affect each division in the school, and to provide workshops and discussions to help parents deal with those issues. The Value and Ethics Committee are credited with presenting the film *Dying High* to the Upper Division Parents Association.

Sun Mok: A Korean Food Sale took place at the school and made a profit of \$1327.

Marjorie Kuhn: May 8th there will be a meeting to induct new members of the PA board and also to say goodbye to the outgoing members. The reception will be held in the Olshan Lobby.