



The Pony Express

President: Catherine Houck

Editor: Kathleen Horr

Mt. Erie PTA, Chapt. 8.2.37
1313 41st St, Anacortes, WA
360-293-9541
mtepta@gmail.com
<http://www.mteriepta.org>

Volume 9, Issue 7
MARCH 2011

PTA Executive Board

President: Catherine Houck
chouck8@msn.com
Vice Pres: Silja Shjarback
shjaresa@fidalgo.net
Secretary: Leslie Tysseling
casaverdegi@hotmail.com
Treasurer: Joan Ockerman
joan@candjos.com

Board of Directors

Family Night/Auction Chair:

Suzy Gilbert
suzygilbert@gmail.com

Hospitality/Teacher

Appreciation:

Megan Atterberry
lucalily@comcast.net

Membership:

Kristen Murphy
vauxmur@frontier.com

Membership Co-chair:

Emily Hylton
emilyhylton@comcast.net

Communication:

Kathleen Horr
kathandruss@msn.com

Website: Sarah Nichols

sarah@aquarianaudio.com

Volunteer Coordinator:

Jessica Notaro
JessicaNotaro@me.com

Dads of Great Students

(DOGS): Silja Shjarback

shjaresa@fidalgo.net

Legislative: Tanya Twete

dttwete@gmail.com

Fundraising: **Open**

Ad-Hoc Committees

Winter Reading Program:

John Dumas
lucalily@verizon.net

Reflections: Kristen Murphy

vauxmur@frontier.com

Reading is Fundamental:

Gina Thomas
ginat123@comcast.net

Missoula Children's Theater

(MCT): Ashley King

ashleydk@gmail.com

and Silja Shjarback

shjaresa@fidalgo.net

Science Discovery Program:

Bob Linder
islandtug@hotmail.com

Box Tops: Sunni Ausland

ausland@comcast.net

and Ellen Kline

ellenkline@comcast.net

eScrip: Beth Holiway

bholiway@comcast.net

T-shirt Sales: Gina Thomas

ginat123@comcast.net

Mustang Points: Amy Sikic

asikic@aol.com

Yearbook: Melinda Moore

mmoore@asd103.org

From the Principal, Mr. Steve Bruland

Congratulations to the Mt. Erie school community! You have successfully completed the search for a new Principal and I could not be happier with the selection. Mr. Donaldson has been working as an intern at Mt. Erie this past year and has proven himself to be effective with children and teachers as well as supportive of parents. I am proud of his accomplishments and I know he will take Mt. Erie to the next level of professional growth and success. He is intelligent, hardworking, and approachable. You have hired the best. Special thanks to the hiring committee and good job.

On a different note, I would like to talk to everyone about homework. Many families are now beginning to feel the pressure of school assignments. Homework is an important part of the school experience but staff and parents may have differing opinions about it. Homework can be a positive educational experience or a disruption to family time in the evening. The last thing any school wants, though, is to disrupt family life or be the cause of conflict so try to establish some basic homework guidelines to keep things positive. If your child spends more than forty-five minutes a day on homework, consider setting up a conference with your child's teacher to discuss ways to limit it to thirty minutes, either by improving the focus of time set aside for homework, figuring out how to shorten the amount of homework, or adjusting the assignment.

Secondly, do not hesitate to meet with the teacher. Parents or children can make arrangements to meet with teachers anytime to clarify assignments or ask for help. This is not unusual and I would invite you to contact your child's teacher if you find yourself in a position of conflict within the home because of schoolwork. It is not the wish or intention of any teacher to cause discomfort in the home. We are here to help and we want to be partners with parents in their children's education. If you have any questions or are uncomfortable with this process, please contact me, Mr. Bruland, for help. I know every teacher at Mt. Erie will work with you if homework is causing family stress so please contact us. Thank you.

From the President

Sometimes good things happen and sometimes **great** things happen. Mr. Peter Donaldson, Mt. Erie Elementary School's new principal, is one of those great things to happen. Mt. Erie will strive toward greatness with Mr. Donaldson's vision and direction coupled with a supportive parent-teacher community. Come meet Mr. Donaldson and learn about our path to greatness!

Who: **Mr. "D"** (as he is fondly referred to by his students)

When: **Tuesday, March 22nd, 6:30pm**

Where: **Mt. Erie Library**

Why: **Inspiration and put a face with a name-- you don't want to miss out!**

Details: Childcare will be provided by Americorps Volunteers and the 6th grade service club. Refreshments will be served and there will be a brief PTA meeting including electing next year's officers at the conclusion of the evening.

March is a flurry of activity. The Missoula Children's Theater tryouts, rehearsals, and performances are all this week. If you are not in the show, come see your fellow students perform.

READ, READ, READ! The Winter Reading Program ends March 11th and the Final Awards Assembly will be later this month. In addition, twenty aspiring Mt. Erie writers head off to the

Young Authors Conference at Skagit Valley Community College this month to partake in six writing workshops and receive guidance on revising, illustrating, and binding their own short (or not so short!) books.

The results of a county-wide study to assess the feasibility of improving nutrition and distribution of school lunches will be presented to the community in early March so stay tuned for more details. Also the PTA is sponsoring a catered meal and other treats for our wonderful teachers and staff during conference week.

Watch D.O.G.S. are in full swing, Mustang Points are piling up, Science Detectives resumes on Wednesday mornings with lots of exciting new things to explore, and the Mt. Erie Talent Show is coming May 13th! So much to see and do!

Mark Your Calendar

Thu, Mar 10th - Tue, Mar 15th Early release for Parent-teacher conferences.
Fri, Mar 11th - Missoula Children's Theater production of "Pinocchio", 7pm in the gym.
Sat, Mar 12th - "Pinocchio", 2pm in the gym..
Tue, Mar 22nd - New principal Meet and Greet, 6:30pm in the library
Thu, Mar 24th - "Lunch Line", a presentation at Lincoln Theatre about healthy school lunches, 7pm
Fri, Apr 15th - Go Green Family Night, 6:30pm



PTA MEMBERSHIP 2010-2011

Month	Members	Goal
February	196	225

Join Mt. Erie PTA

If you know anyone who has NOT joined the PTA, please encourage them to join. Great schools come from great involvement and just joining helps you get involved by being more connected to what is going on at your child's school.

The PTA is responsible for funding field trips and many enriching activities that make our children's education much better. This year's fundraiser was a fantastic success but we have dreams for future projects and can always use more involvement and new ideas. Spread the word and give others the opportunity to join. Information and membership forms can be found on our website, <http://mteriepta.org/home/>, or you can turn in completed forms with a membership payment to the school office. For more information, call Kristen Murphy at 708-5747 or email vauxmur@frontier.com or Emily Hylton at 293-7097 or emilyhylton@comcast.net.

Mustang Points

Very big congratulations to all the students who participated in earning Mustang points! You inspire us all with your hard work earning them. We would especially like to congratulate the top two K-2nd grade classes: Miss Cardinale's and Miss Barrett's, the top 3rd & 4th grade class: Miss Rickson's, and the top 5th & 6th grade class: Miss Moore's. Enjoy your special day and keep participating in this great program!

Focus Day in Olympia

Tanya Twete, Pony Express reporter

After Focus Day in Olympia, I am excited about where our State is headed with education. I was able to meet with Kris Lytton, our district Representative, and our conversation was about one thing, House Bill 1399 or the "RIF" (reduction in force) bill. You may have seen action alerts from the National PTA regarding this issue but both Representative Lytton and Senator McAuliffe had very valid points as to why this bill is a bad idea. Basically it undermines initial House Bill 6696 which started pilot programs to create an evaluation process to define "best teacher" assessments. Anacortes is one of eight such pilot programs in our state which takes into account the viewpoint of teachers, administrators, parents, and communities. In my opinion, we need to allow this process to happen and adopt the best reduction in force evaluation tool when the pilot programs are complete. As a result, we keep the best teachers who have proven themselves to be the best by valid, reliable, and most importantly, fair assessments. To find out more about Focus Day please visit the KOMO-TV website for a full article.

Missoula Children's Theatre



If you have a child in Mrs. Caruso, Cardinale, Boyes, or Olsen's class, ask about the Missoula class this week! Missoula Children's Theatre gives schools three free classes as part of the week's residency and these classes give children an opportunity to learn more about the craft of acting (fourth graders) and the art of stage make up (Kindergartners).

For more on MCT, come see

Pinocchio on Friday March 11th at 7:00pm or Saturday March 12th at 2:00pm in the Mt. Erie Gym.

Watch D.O.G.S



What does a Watch DOG dad/father figure do? He spends one day at school assisting with car drop off and pick up, playing with kids at recesses, eating with his student at lunch and assisting in the lunch room, working in classrooms with kids, walking the campus to ensure doors stay closed and locked, working with some of the specialists such as PE, library, and music as well as filling any need that arises... shoveling snow, for example, to ensure a safe route to the health screening trailer! It not only gives dads and other father figures an opportunity to see what his student is doing all day but also shows paternal involvement in the school. And studies have consistently shown that the more involved a parent is, the more successful children are in school.

We need more dads to sign up for a day!! Check out the calendar at <http://mteriepta.org/watch-d-o-g-s-calendar-2011/> and special thanks to our February Watch DOGS: Brent Peak, Dale King, Jonathan VandeSchuur, Jeff Beltramini, Alex Coble, and Terry Hering.

The last shirt order for the year will be due MARCH 31st...so if you would like to be a WATCH DOG and don't have your "uniform" shirt (makes you easily recognizable to staff and students) please order one now. Order forms are available through our website under <http://mteriepta.org/category/watch-d-o-g-s/> and if you have any questions, please ask a Watch DOG or contact Silja Shjarback at shjaresa@fidalgo.net or 588-0866. Also see "Watch D.O.G.S. Schedule" on the next page for a typical school day.

Get involved: even a small amount can make a big impact



RIF in March

Reading is Fundamental (RIF) is coming again to read to students at Mt. Erie Elementary. Our final RIF event of the year is planned for Monday, April 11th just after Spring Break so please mark your calendars. RIF is a highly successful and enjoyable program for Kindergarten, First, Second, and Third graders in our school district as well as many others around the Nation.

At Mt. Erie Elementary, we have already given out over 425 books to students this year through this locally-sponsored program. Students will get another chance to bring home a book of their choice to keep. The books have been purchased with donations from local service clubs, the PTA, and the Friends of the Anacortes Public Library. Reading aloud to your child is one of the most important things a parent can do to encourage young readers. We hope you and your children will enjoy these books together. For more info, contact Gina Thomas at ginat123@comcast.net, or 770-4745.

Watch DOGS Schedule

Here it a sample schedule of what a Watch DOGS day might look like:

- 8:15 Check-in at the office for orientation, receiving schedule and name tag.
- 8:30 Assist with student arrival in the bus and car areas.
- 9:00 Have a photo taken of you and your student(s) for the Wall of Fame.
- 9:15 Volunteer for Mrs. Catlin in room 8.
- 10:00 Patrol hallways, parking lot, buildings and perimeter.
- 10:20 Outside recess
- 10:40 Volunteer for Mrs. Caruso in room 1.
- 11:20 Patrol hallways, parking lot, buildings and perimeter.
- 11:40 Lunch and recess interaction – we encourage you to eat lunch with your own student(s) and visit with the other students during this time.
- 12:40 Patrol hallways, parking lot, buildings and perimeter.
- 1:00 Volunteer for Mrs. Holtgeerts in gym.
- 2:00 Patrol hallways, parking lot, buildings and perimeter.
- 2:20 Outside recess
- 2:40 Volunteer for Mrs. Brynteson in room 19.
- 3:10 Go to the Computer Lab to take the Watch D.O.G.S.® ‘End of Day’ survey and call next week’s WatchDOG to remind him of his day.

Last Chance for Mustang Logo Wear

Mt. Erie PTA is providing one final opportunity for parents, students, staff, and family members to order Mustang Logo Wear. This will be the last chance to order this school year. From simple t-shirts to personalized sweatshirts, we have many choices of logo wear available for ordering including two new logo options.

We have items available in white, royal blue, gray, and black. Please pick up an order form at the front office or from the box outside the Mt. Erie PTA office. All order forms must be turned in by March 18th in order to distribute by Spring Break in April.

Please contact Gina Thomas at ginat123@comcast.net or 770-4745 for additional information. Go Mustangs!

Improving School Lunches Update

At 7pm on Thursday, March 24th there will be a premiere screening of “Lunch Line” at the Lincoln Theatre in Mount Vernon. “Lunch Line” is a documentary about the school lunch program in the United States and the politics of hunger and agriculture. One of the filmmakers will be on hand to hear from a panel of folks who are working on changing the face of school lunches in Skagit County. For additional information, see the Skagit Valley Food Co-op Newsletter at www.skagitfoodcoop.com/newsletters.html.

Annual Mt. Erie Talent Show

Calling all Mt. Erie soloists, jugglers, gym-nasts, pianists, comics, actors, and poets. Mark your calendars for May 13th at 6:30pm for the annual Mt. Erie Talent Show! Come show us your talent during the audition days on April 12th and 13th. After school auditions will be from 3:45 to 5pm and there’s a special morning audition time of 8-9:30am on the 13th. Don't be shy about strutting your stuff either by yourself or with a group of friends... variety is the name of the game. We look forward to seeing you in April! Your Talent Show Committee - Stephanie Magerkurth, Karman Paul, Tina Hoxie, and Marguerite Lavelle.

Spring Book Fair

To benefit the Anacortes School District Libraries

March 25-27, 2011 at **Read Me A Story**

1005 9th Street, Anacortes

Each school’s library will receive **20%** of purchases dedicated to their school.

When you make a purchase, just let the cashier know which school you want to benefit.

Store Hours: 10-6 Monday-Saturday; 11-4 on Sunday
(This is the only spring book fair this year.)