

**LA JOLLA HIGH SCHOOL PTA
GENERAL MEETING MINUTES
December 5, 2008**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by President Sarah Schrier.

President's Report - Sarah announced the following:

- Ellen Brice, Cal Mann and Linda Dowley volunteered to be readers of the minutes.
- Beth Behnke, Director of Guidance in the LJHS Counseling Center, will make a presentation later during the meeting. As a result, Principal Dana Shelburne will not make a formal report at the meeting, but he will be available after the meeting to answer any questions.
- Parent directories are available for sale for \$6 each.

Treasurer's Report – Amy Heap presented the Treasurer's Report, explaining total income of \$8,595 and total expenses of \$1,288 placing the balance of the LJHS PTA checking account at approximately \$35,225 and the balance of the savings account at approximately \$10,495. A motion to approve the Treasurer's December Report and ratify the checks as written was seconded and carried. Amy also reviewed the variations between the amounts budgeted and the amounts actually expended. (Note: the actual report is filed with these minutes.)

Programs – Tina Greenberg, Vice President of Programs, reported as follows:

- An evening education program for parents with guest speaker Fred Becker on the subject of "How to Raise a Responsible, Self-reliant Child" will be presented in the Parker Auditorium on March 3, 2009.
- The next two Principal's Chat sessions of the school year will be held on January 15 and May 14, 2009.
- On May 27, 2009, a college preparation night for parents and students will be hosted by the PTA featuring a panel of parents.

ASB Report – Sarah introduced Raquel Saxe, ASB President, who reported as follows:

- Homecoming was a big success. Following the Las Vegas theme, gaming tables were placed in the upper gym, and students had a good time. Raquel expressed her thanks for all of the help provided by volunteers.
- The Powder Puff Football Game will be played during 5th period next Friday. It should be lots of fun with girls as players and boys as cheerleaders. Participants are required to submit their permission slips no later than Monday at school.
- The annual Canned Food Drive is underway. Last year, LJHS won the bronze award in City Schools for making the third largest donation of canned goods to the food bank. The LJHS second period class that donates the most food items will win a pizza party.
- A book drive is being sponsored by the LJHS Sister School Club to provide books to students in Uganda.
- ASB and class merchandise are for sale, and make great gifts for the holidays.
- Raquel solicited suggestions, and explained that they can be sent via e-mail to ljhsASB@gmail.com.
- Upcoming activities include Air Band in February 2009, with lipsynching and dancing.
- Thank you again for all of the help that parents are providing to the students at LJHS.

Sarah thanked Raquel for her report.

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Membership – Linda Rutgard announced that 939 members had joined the LJHS PTA – the goal is 1009 this year (in honor of the Class of '09). Applications from new members are still being accepted, so Linda asked attendees to have others join the PTA. Linda also distributed discount passes to Legoland Amusement Park in Carlsbad, CA.

Historian – Sandra Sloan reminded attendees to list any and all volunteer hours for LJHS activities.

Band Liaison – Jackie Wigle reported as follows:

- On December 17, the LJHS Band and Choir will perform in an evening concert in Parker Auditorium.
- On February 25, 2009, the LJHS Jazz Band will receive a visit from local professional jazz musicians to work with the Jazz Band. It is the third year that such tutoring has occurred thanks to the La Jolla Rotary Club.
- In May, 2009, the LJHS Band and Choir will travel to San Francisco for a competition.
- All students are eligible and encouraged to participate in the LJHS Jazz Band, which meets twice weekly to practice during lunchtime.
- Muirlands Middle School has 40 sixth grade students enthusiastically participating in band, but many fewer take band class as an elective in the seventh and eighth grades because they often take foreign language instead.
- The LJHS Band is exploring fundraising opportunities for 2009.

E-Waste Collection Event – Sarah introduced Bee Mittermiller who described last year's successful E-Waste Donation Day staged with the assistance of the LJHS Clean Campus Club. Bee located a company that will send trucks to receive all donations of electronic equipment such as computers, monitors, televisions, and anything with a screen, but no appliances or batteries. Last year's event was so successful that three trucks were filled with donations, which were disassembled and recycled or disposed of safely. In addition, the LJHS PTA received approximately \$800. This year's event will be held on Saturday, February 21, 2009, probably from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Proceeds this year will go toward the purchase of sea-gull-proof trash cans for the school campus.

CPR Training – Patty Cohen reported that CPR training of sophomore students will occur again this school year during a ten-day period shortly after the winter holiday break. Patty explained that 63 more volunteers are needed. She circulated a list for volunteers and indicated that volunteers will receive information via e-mail.

Governance – Michael Briggs reported as follows:

- The San Diego Unified School District recently approved a contract for a consultant to help the SDUSD design a performance evaluation system for school principals. Some people thought that the contract amount of up to \$250,000 could be spent on higher priorities, and that experienced SDUSD leaders should be able to design and implement a performance evaluation system without spending those funds. Michael indicated that interested attendees could contact the Board of Education about this use of funds. After a request, Michael offered to compose an e-blast message that can be sent to all interested parents at LJHS.
- Michael discussed the efforts of the Governance Committee to develop actions to improve academic integrity at LJHS. He discussed the Josephson Institute for Ethics

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biennial study, whose results were released on November 30th. He explained that LJHS was a participating school this year, and results of LJHS student responses would be made available to interested parents. Michael shared some of the national results of the survey, including the following:

- When asked whether they lied to a parent about something significant in the past year, 26% replied “at least once,” 56% replied “two or more times” and 18% replied “never;”
- When asked whether they lied to a teacher about something significant in the past year, 28% replied “at least once,” 37% replied “two or more times” and 36% replied “never;”
- When asked whether they cheated during a test at school during the past year, 26% replied “at least once,” 38% replied “two or more times” and 36% replied “never;”
- When asked how many questions were answered with complete honesty, 74% replied “answered all honestly” and 26% replied “did not answer all honestly.”

Michael distributed a summary of the study press release with the website address at www.CharacterCounts.com, where national results of the survey are available.

- Michael announced that the next Governance Team meeting will be held on the first Monday in January, at 2:30 p.m. in Room 302, and he invited all parents to attend.

Grade Level Reports

12th Grade –Elizabeth Allen reported as follows:

- College applications are underway.
- “Senior Mom” T-shirts, which Elizabeth modeled, are now available for purchase, and sweatshirts will also be sold.
- Senior Exhibitions are being planned for 2009.

11th Grade – No report.

10th Grade – Cheryl McCarthy announced the following:

- The Sophomore Class float won first prize at the Homecoming Game! As a result, the class was awarded \$500 toward its senior dues budget. Handwritten notes were sent to all of the volunteers who assisted.
- The Sophomore Class is selling “Candy Grams.”
- On November 19th the Counseling Center hosted the 10th grade review night for parents of sophomore students. Information on that evening’s excellent program is available on the Counseling Center webpage.
- PSAT results should arrive soon. A meeting will be held for students and parents on January 9th to review PSAT results.

9th Grade – Jane Wheeler reported as follows:

- The Freshman Class is selling stadium blankets, which Jane displayed. They will be available for purchase at tonight’s basketball game.
- LJHS merchandise can be purchased during lunchtime at the LJHS finance office.

Holiday Breakfast – Alicia Richmond explained that the annual Holiday Breakfast for faculty and staff will be staged on December 19th. Volunteers are needed to provide food. In addition,

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music and holiday candles will be used for the occasion. Alicia circulated a sign-up sheet for volunteers.

Legislation – David Bark explained that no new legislation has been passed because the state legislature and Congress have not been in session, although the California state budget remains a topic of great interest, especially to the public schools. David explained that public officials are very sensitive to the volume of contacts that they receive on subjects, so sending frequent e-mails to elected officials concerning education needs and funding gets a large reaction by elected officials. He encouraged attendees to contact officials to support increased funding for education.

La Jolla Moneybooks – Susan Saeed announced the “last call” for La Jolla Moneybooks that provide savings and free items at restaurants and local stores for only \$20, because sales will conclude this month.

Mailing of Newsletters – Lee Trahan indicated that the mailing of the most recent PTA Newsletter went well. She stated that a new co-chairperson is needed for next year. She explained that the duties involve obtaining the labels, picking up the printed newsletters and then dropping them off at the post office after the mailing labels and postage have been affixed by volunteers.

Senior Exhibitions – Sarah explained that Gail Buechler could not attend the meeting, so Sarah reported that preparations for Senior Exhibitions are underway. Completion of a senior exhibition is required for graduation and students need to demonstrate the ability to write, speak and engage in critical thinking. Parents from all grade levels are needed to serve on three-person panels to review the presentations, which will be scheduled between 12:00 Noon and 3:15 p.m. Sarah circulated a sign-up sheet for volunteers.

Stars in Your Eyes – Sarah introduced Cal Mann, parent of an LJHS student and member of the La Jolla Rotary Club, who announced that the annual *Stars in Your Eyes* program will be held on Friday, January 30th, in Parker Auditorium. It is a collection of talent from the four La Jolla-area high schools, which draws rave reviews each year. The proceeds from the event support the La Jolla Rotary Scholarship Program, which awards approximately \$150,000 in scholarships annually, with over ½ of the funds going to La Jolla High School students. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$10 for students, and Cal circulated a list for attendees who wanted to buy their tickets early since the event sells out every year.

In response to a question about the LJHS Interact Club (which is sponsored by the La Jolla Rotary Club) and its program of building homes in Tijuana, Cal explained that the Interact Club built another house in November, and would be on hiatus until approximately March 2009 because of possible rainy weather.

LJHS Foundation – Sarah introduced Jackie Helm, LJHS Foundation Board Member and liaison to the LJHS PTA. Jackie reported as follows:

- Las Patronas provided a grant in excess of \$15,000 to the LJHS Foundation for a multi-media projector to be installed in Parker Auditorium. Jackie praised the excellent efforts of Sarah Schrier and Linda Dowley for preparing and submitting the grant application.
- The Vines and Vintners fundraiser will be held on January 31st at the La Jolla Country Club from 6:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. Tickets to the very popular event will be sold at \$75 per person. Underwriting donations are welcome as well.

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Counseling Center Report – LJHS Director of Guidance Beth Behnke greeted attendees and expressed her appreciation for being invited to the meeting in order to discuss the LJHS Counseling Center and answer questions (some of which were submitted before the meeting). Beth introduced the other counselors who were present (Ty Eveleth and Cathy Zimmer), and began by distributing a year-by-year student planning calendar, and reported as follows:

- Beth has worked in counseling in the SDUSD since 1974, and the counseling team at LJHS works very well together and is the best counseling staff in SDUSD. The counseling team has won two SPARC awards (the Support Personnel Accountability Report Card), and is a candidate for a third award this year.
- Counseling requires the ability to handle interrupted schedules, for example her appearance was almost cancelled due to an emergency involving a student whose uncle died yesterday.
- Beth is Director of Guidance as well as serving as counselor for approximately 200 students. The other counselors have approximately 500 students to counsel.
- Counselors are advocates for students while also helping with concerns of teachers and students, always striving to do what is best for the students.
- Beth prepares the Master Schedule of classes.
- Beth is a member of the Administration Team at LJHS.
- Counselors advise students, academically and socially.
- Counselors handle testing: STAR, CAHSEE, PSAT, AP.
- Counselors provide the first level of discipline (prior to intervention by a vice principal), except for misbehavior such as fighting.
- The counseling center handles student schedules. Beth noted that the recent requirement that parents approve the class choices of students in the spring has made scheduling easier because there are fewer requested changes in the fall.
- Counselors give college counseling and assist with applications, including assistance with college essays, especially from September through January. Each counselor prepares approximately 50 letters of recommendation for students applying to private colleges each year. Due to the many interruptions in the counseling center, those letters are usually written outside of the school day. LJHS is a highly respected public high school with a marvelous record of having its students accepted into prestigious universities. The counseling center has set aside every Wednesday for half-hour appointments with senior students who want to meet with their counselors. She indicated that current students needed a little more “encouragement” than students in the past.
- Counselors make classroom presentations semi-annually beginning in the 9th grade with a different theme each time.
- Counselors participate in Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings with students and parents, SST meetings to develop individual plans as well as 504 meetings.
- Counselors have lunch supervision responsibilities.
- On a daily basis, a counselor typically has 3-4 scheduled appointments, sees 20 students, receives 40 e-mail messages and 20 phone calls. She explained that using e-mail in order to communicate with a counselor works best, and that parents should expect a response within 48 hours.
- Beth attends the LJHS Administration Team meeting every Monday, SDUSD meetings for counselors 5 times each year, SDUSD meetings for head counselors 5 times each year and holds staff attendance and tardy sessions twice each month.

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- The counseling center has hosted Senior Class student workshops at lunch on a weekly basis in the fall, with average attendance of 60 out of a Senior Class of approximately 400 students.
- The counselors hold workshops for parents in the evening.

Beth introduced Ty Eveleth, who is the technology leader for the counseling center as well as being a counselor. Ty demonstrated the information and links that are available from the LJHS Counseling Center webpage. He stated that the counselors always emphasize to students the importance of submitting documents by the due date, especially regarding college applications.

Questions for Beth Behnke:

- When will PSAT scores be available? PSAT scores should be delivered to LJHS next week. The counseling center will announce to students that they can visit the counseling center to pick up their results. Those results should be brought to the meeting in January when the test and its results are explained to students and parents.
- How would you describe the initiative of students? This generation of students seems to need lots of reinforcement and reminders to keep them on-schedule. They need a pat on the back. They want structure, while also resisting it at times. Also, they want to collaborate with others, especially their peers.
- Is there a process to review the quality of the letters of recommendation? Beth performs spot-checks of letters written by other counselors, and finds their quality to be excellent. Having met with many college admissions officials, Beth believes that the LJHS counselors know what issues to emphasize in order to maximize the letter's effectiveness. If a deserving student is not accepted to a university, Beth often follows up with a phone call to the university or college. Beth described the history of the types of students that were being sought by the most prestigious universities, and noted that currently they are looking for students with passion for learning or involvement in activities.
- How are college representative visits at LJHS handled? Junior and Senior Class students can sign up for up to five on-campus college presentations through Naviance. Naviance also posts college representative visits that are held away from LJHS. Many budget-conscious colleges are holding an evening presentation at San Diego County hotels instead of spending a week visiting many of the local high schools.
- Is there a SDUSD person responsible for monitoring LJHS? No single person is assigned to LJHS, but interested parents can contact the parent liaison office at SDUSD if issues are not resolved at the high school level by Principal Dana Shelburne.
- Should Freshman Class students meet their counselors? It is encouraged and worthwhile.

An announcement was made that the Bloodmobile was on-campus in order to conduct a Blood-drive for students and parent volunteers.

With no further questions or announcements, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 A.M.

Minutes submitted by Michael Briggs, Recording Secretary