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Manor School

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Manor Elementary PTA Executive Board

Anne Capron -- President
Danielle Fogel – Volunteer Coordinator
Shelley Hamilton – Special Events Co-Chair
Ann Kennedy – Teacher Representative
Tracy Lavoie – Treasurer
Gretchen Mathis – Teacher Representative
Deborah Read – Garden Circle Chair
Heather Sotnick -- Special Events Co-Chair
Glynns Thomas -- Communications

Dear Manor Parents:

When my son, Case, started school five years ago, I watched him walk bravely through the door to Room One to begin his new life as a Big Boy, sniffed, dried my eyes ... and then went for coffee. Woo hoo!!! It wasn't until a little later I realized, Gosh, I have a lot of questions.

What should I be doing, I wondered, now that I'm packing lunches instead of changing diapers? What should I expect from our new school (and will they be expecting something from me)? Are there weird, unspoken rules for parents? Who do I go to with questions? Do we have a Parent Club? A master calendar? Bake sales? What will I be expected to pay for? When is Back to School Night? What on Earth is Lap-a-Thon? And Winter Faire? And the Science Fair? And the Book Fair? And Birthday Books? And do I bring birthday treats? One question lead to another and pretty soon ... Gah!

You can certainly gather the answers to most of these (and soooo many other) questions from friends, from your teacher, from the PTA website, or even from your child, but I thought it might be handy to have them all collected in one spot for you, right at the beginning of the year, so you can feel a bit more connected to and informed about all the many things that go on around here. I, personally, have found that the more information I have, the happier I am.

So. This booklet contains a brief description of most of the year's main events, as well as some assembled bits of information about things you might want to know. You don't have to read it all at once. Heck, you don't have to read it at all. I just thought it might be nice.

With Best Wishes for an Awesome Year,
Anne Capron
(Case's Mom)

WHAT'S EXPECTED OF YOU

Technically, nothing is “expected” at all, besides bringing your child to school, on time and wearing clothing, most days. If you do that, you have fulfilled your parental mandate.

But there are some things that you can do that will make your role as a parent-participant in the life of the school a little easier on you (and everyone else). They’re simple tips. Habits, really. Most of them are just efficiency issues. But think how good you feel when you know you’re one of the “organized” mommies and daddies. Here’s a little list of practical ways to feel on top of things:

- Get to school a little early so you have time to park and saunter instead of fighting last-minute traffic and muttering; even better, bike or walk all or part of the way to school as many days as you can to help lessen the latecomers’ congestion problem.
- Come a bit early for pick-up, too ... it’s a lovely chance to chat with other parents.
- Be sure to call the office if your child is going to be absent
- Check your child’s head regularly for lice (it’s so much easier on everyone if you catch them early) and let your friends know if you find anything yucky.
- Pack healthy, tasty foods for your child’s snack and lunch, then check to see if he/she has eaten what you sent.
- Sign forms/permission slips/report cards *the day you receive them* so you don’t forget.
- Put in the time and effort needed to create a strong, friendly working relationship with your child’s teacher at the very beginning of the year.

- Write important dates (like those contained in this booklet, in the Master Calendar, and on the RVSD and PTA websites) in your home calendar *right now*.
- Make a deal with another parent to be each other's back-up plan so if you ever have an emergency, you know just whom to call.
- Read the weekly Manor School newsletter. I know there's always a bunch of stuff that doesn't directly affect you in there, but really, truly, there's usually also something that does. Just page through it. It's a total bummer to be the one who's baffled by an early release day or to miss the Parent Ed night you had really hoped to go to. Here, I'll say it again: *Read your newsletter*.

NEWSLETTER

Manor will send home a paper newsletter every Wednesday via "Backpack Mail". We are also planning to have the Manor News available online for those of you who prefer receiving your news that way. You'll find the link at the PTA website: www.manorpta.org. Important information is always contained in there, so, however you prefer to access it, give it a good once-over every week.

Contact: Robin Goldman robin@robingoldman.com

HOW THE MONEY WORKS

There are five schools in the Ross Valley School District: White Hill Middle School; Wade Thomas Elementary; Brookside Upper; Brookside Lower; and Manor. Some raise more money than others in a given year. In order to insure equity among the schools, the ***Round Table*** was established.

The *Round Table Agreement* states that each school's parent club will keep, from the pot of money they bring in through their fundraising efforts, \$85 per student to use as it sees fit on things like teacher stipends, community building events, landscaping, and other (previously state provided) niceties. At Manor, this money is distributed through the PTA. The remainder of monies raised through the efforts of each campus community (at Manor, this means Winter Faire, mostly) are then given over to the YES foundation. Why? Read on.

THE YES FOUNDATION

Because money is always tight in public education, a lot of funding was cut for things considered by the state to be dispensable, like, oh, Art and Music and libraries.

The parent community of the RVSD, however, did not agree that these things are unimportant, and a group of them huddled up and hatched a plan to privately provide, through tireless, diligent, and very effective fundraising and organizational efforts, a more well-rounded educational experience for our kids. That's how YES got started.

YES, which is still parent-run and parent-driven, is now *the exclusive funding source for Arts programs in the Ross Valley School District*.

It is because of YES that Manor has (as have all the other schools within the district) a thriving Arts scene, K-5 style. The kids all have access to well-stocked libraries and get to go to weekly Art and Music classes. They have assemblies and the chance to participate in the school play. Basically, their days are full of more than just numbers and letters, which pretty much everyone agrees is a very good thing.

The YES folks (who, I might add, are just a bunch of "us" who've agreed to put in some hours) work tirelessly to promote and provide

Arts education. They are always out there looking for ways to do it. They cultivate relationships with local businesses and do a big, festive Gala. And they run the Family Giving Campaign. That's where families pitch in to help pay for their kid's participation in all the cool programs funded by YES. Family Giving raises more than half of the total YES funding nut.

Your contribution is not mandatory, but it is certainly extremely important to the continued success of the YES Foundation. You will be asked to contribute. If you don't, you will be asked again. No one is trying to harass you, they simply want you to understand that, without your support, there will be no Arts education at Manor. Take a look at all the fabulous benefits your child will receive and please consider saying "yes" when YES comes calling.

How can you help? In addition to writing that check, you can hang art for the big YES Fest in April, help organize the Gala at the end of the year, become the YES liaison for your room, sew costumes for the play ... if you love art, there's no limit to the creativity they can put to use. (Did I mention you can also write a check?)

Contact: Danielle Fogel: d.fogel@comcast.net; Anne Capron: annecapron@sbcglobal.net

PTA

The Manor Elementary PTA is just a fancy title for the catch-all volunteer organizing body here at school. Sure we have meetings with baked goods every now and then, we vote on things like sand boxes and new computer carts, but most of the work is basically just parents doing stuff for their community. If you drive on a field trip or help out at reading time, you're PTA-ing. If you work in the flower beds with the Garden Circle, you're PTA-ing. If you paint faces at Winter Faire, manage the budget, write newsletter items, sit on committees, or cook

dogs at the barbecue, yep, you're PTA-ing.

My point is, don't let the name put you off. Manor's Parent Teacher Association is made up, logically enough, of Manor parents and teachers. That means it's just "us" and we can have things the way we like 'em, so there's no need to run out and buy a twin set and a string of pearls. Although it might be kind of amusing.

Because most of the volunteering on campus is done through the PTA, it's a great first stop in deciding where you might best fit in. The volunteer coordinator, Danielle Fogel, knows everything there is to do and can help you decide what might be fun and useful at the same time. Or you can always ask Case's Mom. She loves to talk and almost nothing makes her happier than sucking a new recruit into the happy machine of volunteerism. Really, just go up to her, or email (annecapron@sbcglobal.net), or call. You'll make her day.

And I know it can feel daunting to approach someone new, even as a grown-up. It's easy to think that there must be some weird, unspoken rules for inclusion in "the group" ... but you know what? There aren't. There isn't even a "group". There's just us. Manor Folk. And you're already "in". Everyone can play. It's what we teach our kids and it's how the big people roll, too. Be brave. Say hi.

But what about the official stuff? And how can I help?

Well, there is a PTA Executive Board. It's made up, to tell you the truth, of just about anyone who's willing to step up and take on a role in deciding things like budgeting and scheduling and logistics within the parent-teacher community. If you have the bandwidth, pull up a chair.

Come to the general meetings. All big and most small decisions are voted on by membership, so you can be heard loud and clear just by showing up and taking part. (And there are always goodies.)

Join. You'll get your name on the PTA distribution list and receive useful updates throughout the year. Six bucks. That's all.

Or just show up and do stuff for the school. I don't much care, frankly, what you call yourself, as long as you feel like part of something. (And even better if you want to pitch in!)

Contact: Anne Capron annecapron@sbcglobal.net or just go to the PTA website: www.manorpta.org

MAP and K-5

Manor is home to two distinct yet equally awesome programs. Roughly one third of our students, 6 classrooms out of 18, are enrolled in MAP (the Multi-Age Program), while two thirds are in the K-5 classes. All of them are Manor Kids. Just like there are boys and girls and all of them are children.

So what's the difference, you ask? The biggest distinction is that MAP classes are "loops". That means there are two grades within a classroom and the kids stay with the same teacher for two years. Most of the K-5 classes are single-grade and the kids switch teachers each year (although some of the K-5 4th and 5th graders are also in "loops").

Another difference is that MAP is a "Program of Choice" -- meaning all families within the Ross Valley School District are eligible for enrollment, regardless of neighborhood of residence. The MAP kids who will make up each year's incoming kindergarten class are selected by lottery every spring from the pool of all interested district families.

All Manor kids have pretty much the same lunch and recess schedules and the same art, music, library, and PE classes. The 4th and 5th graders from each program all mix it up for math. The kids go to

assemblies together, to after-care together, to play practice together ... What I'm getting at is that there's plenty of inter-mingling, and by about 2nd grade, everyone knows everyone out on the playground. And there's no reason on Earth that you can't be friends with families in the "other program". We are, as I believe I have mentioned, all Manor. Fraternize with impunity!

More information about MAP can be found at:

<http://rossvalleyca.fesdev.org/vnews/display.v/ART/2008/05/09/482e0324495ac>

Contact: Rick Meissner ricmeissner@comcast.net or Andrea Sumits, asumits@comcast.net

ROOM PARENTING

Every classroom has one or two room parents who help the teacher keep things running smoothly. Responsibilities include collecting field trip monies, helping to plan parties, communicating with the other parents about class projects and events, and planning the Silent Auction and YES Auction art projects. There is a room parent coordinator (Linda Sibbett) for the K-5 program, and one for MAP (Marissa Cooper), who can help you get things done efficiently and answer any questions you might have about timing or logistics. It's a time commitment of an hour or two most weeks, a bit more during the run-up to the Manor and YES auctions and in the last weeks of school, and it's a great way to play an important part in the day-to-day life of your class. Great way to meet people, too.

Contact:

K-5: Linda Sibbett lindasibbett@yahoo.com

MAP: Marissa Cooper blaaah@adkc.com

FIELD TRIPS

Every classroom goes on several field trips over the course of the year. Field trip days are always very exciting for the kids, but they do require a bit of help from parents to pull them off. Your teacher will give you a list of the year's planned excursions at Back To School Night. Give it a read. See which ones interest you. Then volunteer to drive and chaperone. You'll have to fill out a short form (insurance and logistics stuff) and turn it in to the office. Go ahead and do it now so you're not caught off guard in a last minute decision to drive for a field trip. Ask your teacher or Sheryl for the form. And keep an eye out for field trip permission slips coming home in "backpack mail", get 'em signed and returned promptly so your child won't be left behind while the class goes off on an awesome adventure.

EARLY BIRD/LATE BIRD/SCHEDULES

K-5 kindergarteners are released at noon for the first two weeks in order to allow time for parent intake conferences. For the rest of the year, their schedule is 8:30 – 1:55 every day. For those two weeks, K-5 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders all follow the "Early Bird" schedule.

What's that?

In the K-5 program, 1st and 2nd graders are split into two groups. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, the "Early Birds" start at 8:30 and get out at 1:55 while the "Late Birds" start at 9:30 and finish at 3:05. K-5 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders are "Everything Birds" (I made that up), starting at 8:30 and finishing at 3:05 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.

For the first half of the year, MAP kindergarteners get out at 12:55 every day. Some time around February, they start staying until 1:55.

The rest of the MAP kids are “Everything Birds” (8:30 – 3:05 M, T, Th, F) all year long.

On Wednesdays the whole school is on the “Early Bird” schedule (8:30 – 2:55).

EARLY RELEASE DAYS

Throughout the year there are occasional “Early Release Days” scheduled. These are usually parent-teacher conference days and the last day before vacations. These dates will be published in the newsletter. Please make a note of them.

KID SPORTS

There are three main sports that Manor kids participate in: Soccer in the fall, basketball in the winter, and baseball in spring. All kids, boys and girls, are welcome to participate. No one has to.

Soccer is organized, primarily, through West Marin Youth Soccer League. You can get all the information you need from their website: <http://www.wmarinsoccer.com/> Look into it right away if you’re interested, as the season begins in September.

Basketball is organized by CYO. Here’s the website: <http://athletics.cccyo.org/home/?countyID=2> It usually starts up right after soccer ends and goes through about February.

Baseball. Most Manor kids who want to play baseball do so through West Marin Little League, although some play SABA (San Anselmo Baseball Association). There is Fall Ball, which happens at the same time as soccer, and the traditional spring season, which starts up in

March and goes through the end of the school year and into summer. Here's the WMLL site: <http://www.westmarinlittleleague.com/> And SABA: www.sabaweb.com

How can you help? Ask if the coaches need assistants. They always do. There's no better way to get to know the under-ten set than by helping them learn to play hard, win with grace, lose with dignity, and have fun doing it. Good for the heart in every way.

AFTER SCHOOL CARE

There are three main programs for before-and-after-school care. All of them are excellent, so if you work, or if your child just can't get enough socializing, here are your options for extended day activities:

YMCA: "The Y" is on site (located by the "big kid" playground) and is open from 7:30am – start of school and from 2:30 – 6pm. They have a full staff of kid-friendly folk who lead various activities throughout the day. You can get complete information either by dropping by or by checking them out online: http://www.ymcasf.org/marin/what_we_offer/for_kids/child_care#contentTab_752-tab

Fairfax-San Anselmo Children's Center: The Children's Center is located in Deer Park. They provide transportation to and from manor. Information is available on their website: <http://fsacc.org/>

Special Enrichment Academy: Run by SA Rec, the SEA is an on-site after-school program for Manor 4th and 5th graders. You can contact Dana Gibson for registration information and questions: dgibson@townofsananselmo.org

STAY AND PLAY

The San Anselmo Rec also offers a bunch of cool after school activities and classes, everything from drama to science to movement, on-site at Manor at various times throughout the year. You can find out all about it by checking out their website:

<http://www.townofsananselmo.org/recreation/>

ASSEMBLIES

The YES Foundation not only funds Manor's fantastic Art and Music programs, but they provide the money that brings in a wide variety of assemblies throughout the year. Manor Mom Britton Walker schedules them and they are really fun. There are also school-wide assemblies for the talent show and spring concert, Author Day, and the school play. They are always free and you are welcome to attend with (or without) your child. I especially recommend stopping by for Boxtales Theater. It's delightful.

How can you help? If you are interested in taking on the scheduling responsibilities when the lovely Britton leaves, let us know and you can learn the ropes while she's still here, making your transition easy-peasy.

Contact: Britton Walker brittonwalker@mac.com

GARDEN CIRCLE

The Manor Garden Circle was started in 2009 by a group of parents who like to see things grow. They meet weekly, grown-ups and their kids, to dig and plant and water and they have lots of fun making Manor look beautiful (and eating their crops). They sponsor events

throughout the year and everyone is welcome to join.

Contact: Deb Read deborah@deborahread.net

WALK AND BIKE TO SCHOOL DAYS

Wednesdays are walk and bike to school days, sponsored by Safe Routes to School. Kids and parents are encouraged to pedal, scooter, stroll, jog, dash, or saunter to and from school, and everyone who does can grab a snack from the welcome table before joining in for ...

WEDNESDAY WELCOME

Every Wednesday morning, weather permitting, the whole school assembles on the blacktop for announcements, updates, pep talks, a joke or two, and a song to start the day. Parents are welcome to stay and participate but do not have to. Jason usually has a few choice words for everyone and the Green Team often has a message as well.

SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

Manor provides hot, organic lunches at no charge for every child who qualifies for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program (forms available from Sheryl in the office), and for around four dollars a day for any child whose family chooses to participate. The food is tasty and convenient, and a menu of the coming month's offerings will be provided in advance so you can see what's in the offing.

Contact: Miss Sheryl in the office

TEACHER GIFTS

You are welcome to give your teacher a gift at the Holidays or the end of the year. Or any other time you think of something (s)he might like or need. You never have to. Your next teacher placement will not be affected. No one is keeping track. If you feel the urge to bring a plate of Hanukah cookies in December or a certificate for three weeks on your private Bahamas island at the end of the year, great! Do it. The teachers are a big part of our (and our kids') lives, so there's no reason not to say thanks if you want to. But there's absolutely no requirement that you do so.

STAFF APPRECIATION EVENTS

Manor is pretty darn lucky when it comes to our teachers and staff. They work their patooties off for our kids, smiling the whole time. We like to let them know, in big ways and small, just how much we value their efforts. We usually schedule a staff appreciation event, a luncheon or breakfast, once a month. The Staff Appreciation Chair brings in a meal (paid for by PTA), sets it up in the staff room, and the teachers get to enjoy a bit of tangible, taste-able appreciation every now and then. Because without our awesome teachers and staff, there wouldn't be much point to any of this, would there?

How can you help? Check your newsletter for the dates as they come up, then swing by the staff room to help set up. Or check with the Staff Appreciation Chair (as soon as we find one) to see if you can do a croissant run or grab a bag of grapes on your way to school. Or just let your teacher know how much you, personally, appreciate his or her involvement in your child's life. Really. Sometimes we forget to tell them. I bet they like to hear it.

VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteerism rocks.

Why? Well, first off, a lot of things get done in this world by people who just decide to pitch in and do them. If you look at this the other way 'round, without the pitcher-inners, there's a whole laundry list of things that simply wouldn't happen. This, in and of itself, is a great argument for helping out. We've got stuff to do!

Even more important, though, is the fact that, by doing something for your community, you not only benefit that community, you cement your place within it.

Libraries full of research has been done demonstrating that humans who feel useful and connected to other humans lead happier, healthier, longer, more fulfilling lives. Isn't that what we all want for ourselves? And isn't that exactly what we want for our kids? Long, happy, satisfying lives? I'm telling you how to help them get there: Volunteer. Show them that it is important. Believe me, they will notice if they see you working at school. It will register in their forming brains that participation is a good thing. And they will learn to participate themselves, giving them a better shot at the happy, healthy life we all hope for them.

Volunteer. Doesn't matter how. Doesn't have to be perfect. Just pick something you think would be both fun and useful, gather up your best intentions, and ... do it. It's good for everyone, for "us", for you, and for our kids. Honest.

OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR'S EVENTS

Things start off with a bang (and a lot of events) in the first few months of the year, get quiet for a while after the holidays, then pick back up again in spring. The first and last eight weeks can get pretty darn busy, so try to schedule your time accordingly. Here is a chronological list of the 2010-11 big-ticket happenings:

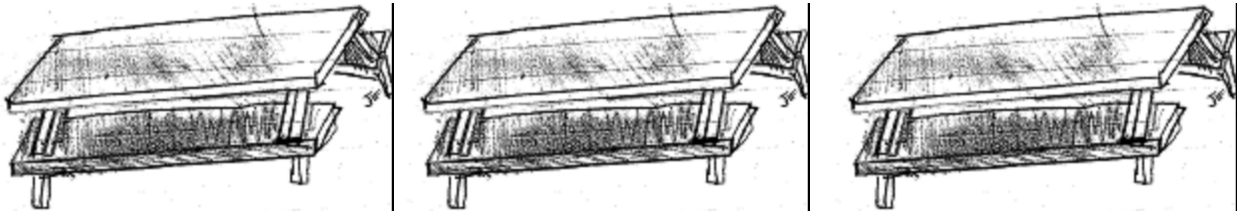
EARLY RELEASE DAYS – August 23-September 3

For the first two weeks of school, K-5 Kindergarteners are released at 12:00. This gives them a chance to acclimate to their new big-kid reality and it allows time for parent-teacher intake conferences.

Additionally, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders all follow the “Early Bird” schedule for these two weeks, meaning they begin the day at 8:30 and finish at 1:55.

BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT – September 1

The big kick-off. No one's going to write you up if you miss it ... but don't. There's some rah-rah and some rallying, but mostly it's a chance, right at the start of the year, to find out what's going to happen in the coming months. The principal, Mr. Kerber (that's Jason to you and me), will speak to everyone in the Multi (so you can get a good look at him) and then you'll go off and get a packet of important information from your teacher, including schedules, forms, and other juicy bits. Take the packet, fill in the forms, get a feel for the classroom, meet some other parents, then call it a night. Do go, though. It's important.



BACK-TO-SCHOOL BARBECUE – September 17

There is a big barbecue at the beginning of the year, then another one (with movie night and a campout on the field) at the end. The PTA provides the burgers and dogs and the community brings potluck for the rest. We usually have a band, everyone hangs out, and it's lots of fun.

How can you help? Just come! Bring the family, bring a dish to share, listen to some music, maybe wash a plate or two afterwards ... couldn't be easier! (And next year we'll hit you up to help organize.)

Contact: Mark Spilsbury spilsee@yahoo.com

BOOK FAIR – September 17-24

The Scholastic Book people cart in a vast array of books and educational materials every year, we set 'em all up in the library, and the kids come browse and select some reading materials (and the occasional bug-o-scope) for the year. The proceeds go to YES (we raised over \$6,000 last year) and the kids and teachers just *love* it. The teachers will all post their wish lists for classroom books, so you are welcome to buy a little gift for your child's class while you are there assembling your pile of goodies. (Please notice that we have cleverly scheduled the Book Fair to begin on the evening of the Barbecue, so you can have a leisurely perusal of the offerings while you're feeling all cozy and full.)

How can you help? Do a shift selling books. Help set up the shelves. Bring your child by after school to have a look and pick out some goodies. Or if you're really feeling bibliophilic, we can connect you with the Book Fair Chair and you can learn how to run the show for next year. Manor legend Tanya Nordstrom did this job (among others) for years and not only lived to tell about it, but swears it was really fun. You'll see everyone in the Manor community, teachers, parents, and kids, come through the doors during your tenure as the proprietor of Manor's own clean, well-lighted place.

Contact: TBD

PICTURE DAY – September 29

We take pictures of all the students at the beginning of every year. That way, you can have some to send off in holiday cards, and Manor can have some for the office files. As you can imagine, cranking out 380 precious keepsakes in a single day (that's our goal this year) takes a bit of doing. But we always get it done.

How can you help? Get your child to school well-rested and looking the way you'd like him/her to look in your photo album. And consider signing up to assist the photographer on the day of the shoot. We need volunteers to fetch each class when it's their turn, to help keep the kids on-track while they are waiting to be photographed, and to fill in the occasional piece of paperwork for the picture folks. You'll get to see a lot of kids in a short time, and even chat with a few. (Conversation starter tip: Halloween costume plans.)

Contact: TBD

HALLOWEEN PARADE – October 29

Witches and fairies and ghouls, oh my! All the kids (and most of the staff) slip into their costumes and parade around the blacktop in anticipation of the night's sugar-fueled frenzy. There's not much to do, volunteer-wise, but consider coming to watch. It is a sight to be seen (and heard, as there's always quite the rhythm section playing under the parade).

WINTER FAIRE – November 13

The lion's share of the Manor School PTA/Community budget – money that pays for things like the Manor Family Dance, the Barbecues, field trip scholarships, teacher stipends, playground equipment, landscaping, all sorts of goodies -- comes from the Winter Faire.

It's also incredibly fun. If you've been, you know. Incredibly fun.



If you haven't been, then here's how it works: First a whole bunch of people work really, really hard for about six weeks to get everything set up. Then, on the day, we bust out the snow slide, craft booths, food, bouncies, giant slide, live entertainment, and Mr. Tim's fabulous Creative Games out on the field, and everyone runs around for hours doing cool stuff. There's a Silent Auction in the library, Chili Cook-off in the Multi, and heaps of live entertainment.

All of the money (up to \$85 per kid, remember) goes to the PTA to be paid out over the year for all the goodies I've already gone on about.

How can you help? If you've got some time to give, consider being part of the preparations. Because Winter Faire happens at the start of the year, it's a great way to meet other parents and get to know them by their first names, as opposed to as someone's mommy. If you have less time to spare, volunteer on the day of the Faire. Believe me, we need everyone! There are lots of ways to help out, so you won't have to do something you find yucky. There will be lists of positions. Pick the one that sounds fun and do that.

You can also donate something cool to the auction. Last year we made over \$17,000 and had a gas doing it. This year we really want the Manor Community to see how many interesting, useful services can be found right here within the parent population. That way we know who does what and next time we need a service, we can check with our own community members first. Pony up and let everyone know what you can do.

Contacts: Angela Vidinsky calegnac@yahoo.com and Lisa Tabb
lisatabb@gmail.com

WREATH MAKING – December 8 (still tentative)

Every December, Manor has a wreath making party in the Multi. We bring in fresh greenery and wreath forms, ribbon and decorations, and parents and kids come by and create lovely Holiday wreaths while chatting with friends and sipping cider. When your festive creation is finished, you can either buy it or donate it to Manor and we will sell it the following day at the drop-off circle.

How can you help? Come early and help tote the boughs of holly in to where the fa la la happens. Buy a door-brightener when you come to school the next day. Or just come make a wreath!

Contact: Marissa Cooper blaah@adkc.com

YES GALA – February 5

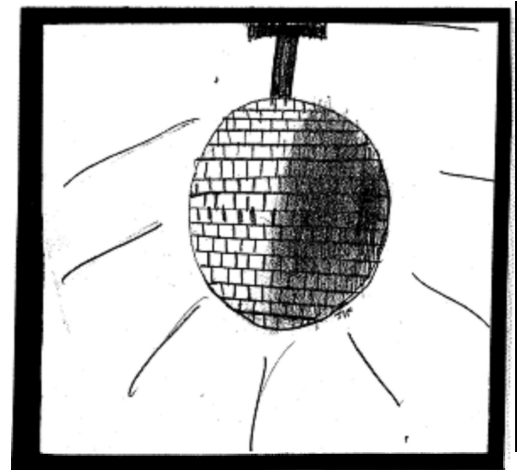
This is a big, blowout parent party put on by the YES people every year. All the grown-ups in the district are invited to slip into something festive and come out for the evening to have some fun and raise a little money for the foundation while they're dancing the night away. There is always a theme, a live band, food and drinks, and some people plan their (often very inventive) outfits for weeks in advance, although you can certainly go in regular party attire.

MAP PARENT PARTY – February 12

A chance for the MAP parents to kick up their heels and party kid-free. What happens at the Fairfax Women's Club stays at the Fairfax Women's Club. 'Nuff said.

MANOR FAMILY DANCE – March 26

Just what it sounds like, the Manor Family Dance is a big ole shindig with music and food. Everyone is welcome, kids, parents, grandparents, everyone. It happens in the Fairfax Pavilion on a Saturday night and sweaty, silly, body-moving fun is had by all. A small voluntary donation of \$10 per family is requested but not required to help cover the rental of the hall and the purchase of food and drinks.



How can you help? Come set up and decorate the Pavilion on the afternoon of the dance; help serve food; stay after a few minutes to clean up a bit; take the cash at the door; and did I mention, COME

Contact: Heather Sotnick heather@ddv.com

SCIENCE FAIR – April 20-21

Every spring, Manor has a Science Fair. Your teacher will tell you all about it as the time grows near, but for now, just know that it's coming. Your child will be asked to create a project that demonstrates scientific process. For little kids, this can be as simple as putting food coloring in water and watching a bouquet of white daisies change to purple. Bigger kids might like to explore electricity, magnets, gravity, you name it. It's a fun and interesting, hands-on lesson in the weird and wonderful ways of the natural world ... but it'll be stressful if you don't plan in advance to devote a couple hours to the project.

How can you help? Start keeping an eye out now for a project idea your child might find engaging. There are heaps of suggestions online and in book stores. Couple hours. Something sciency. Fun is good.

Contact: Laura Honda: Hondafamily1@comcast.net

STAR TESTING

It happens every April. 2nd through 5th graders take the California standardized tests in math, reading, and, for the older kids, writing. Our teachers don't "teach to the test". At all. They do spend a couple days preparing the kids so they know what to expect and how to fill in the answer bubble sheets. Mostly it's no big deal. Our kids always do great. A lot of them even think it's kind of fun.

How can you help? Feed your child breakfast and have a little chat about how it's a chance to practice test taking skills that will be useful later. Send a nice, healthy snack. No further action required.

YES FEST – May 15

It's a spectacle, an extravaganza, and a lollapalooza all at once. All the kids from all the schools in the district contribute their talents to one big blowout event in April. It happens at White Hill, which is a pretty big place, and let me tell you, the whole joint is jumpin'. There are paintings hung on most vertical surfaces, bands and orchestras playing their hearts out, and selections from all the school plays being performed. Plus food.

How can you help? This event is so big, there's plenty to keep everyone busy. Shoot Danielle an email. She'll find a job that is interesting and fun for you. There's a lot of choice! You might also consider becoming the YES Fest Coordinator-in-Training. You can work with Danielle planning the event this year and take over next year, confident you know exactly what to do.

Contact: Danielle Fogel d.fogel@comcast.net

LAP-A-THON – May 20 (tentative)

At the end of every school year, Manor puts on the Lap-a-Thon. The kids spend a couple weeks getting pledges from easy targets like doting grandparents and distant uncles and then, on the day of the event, they run like a herd of adorable wildebeests in matching T-shirts out on the field, laughing and joking and eating Popsicles 'til their good and pooped. I'd much rather have a nap, but they seem to love it.

How can you help? Steer your child in the direction of potential sponsors, make sure (s)he has a good night's rest and a healthy breakfast on the big day, and come out to cheer them on or count laps as they run. It's *really* cute. Two thumbs-up from me.

Contact: Shelley Hamilton shelley@marinspace.org

TALENT SHOW – Spring (not yet scheduled)

The Manor Talent Show is a hoot. Most years, upwards of 50 little hams bust out their acts for the enjoyment of the kids and parents of Manor. They rehearse for weeks leading up to the show, then, on the big night, everyone piles into the Multi for some pretty darn awesome entertainment. I've cried at the last three.

How can you help? Contact Maya Butterfield, who has organized the show for the past several years. She can tell you exactly when and where your time and efforts can best be put to use; help your 2nd-5th grade child put together an act; and come watch the show!

Contact: Maya Butterfield mayab@coconutmoon.com

OPEN HOUSE – May 18

At the end of every year, the classrooms are opened up for an evening so you can see what your child has been working on. Artwork is hung, essays are posted, and each class puts on some kind of show or exhibit for the proud parents. Then we all show up and marvel at the awesomeness of our offspring and their pals.

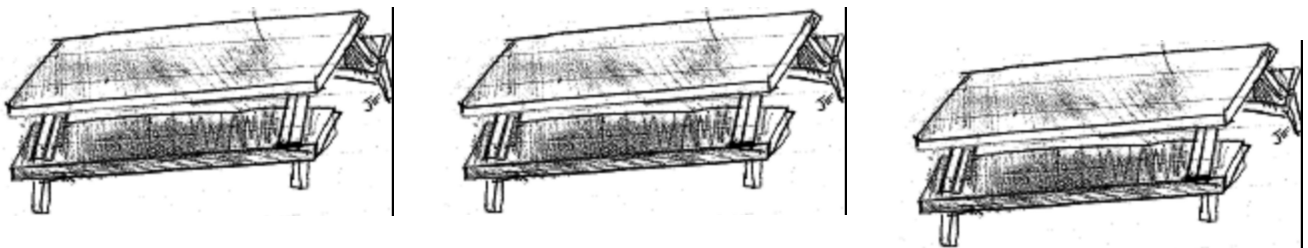
How can you help? Don't book that cruise for the third week of May! The teachers will handle the rest.

FIELD DAY – June 3

All the kids pile out onto the field to sprint, dash, hop, toss, leap, roll, and vault the afternoon away. There are dozens of events for them to try out and the photo ops are endless!

How can you help? Sign up to staff an activity station. We need about 20 grown-ups to time, monitor, officiate, and congratulate.

Contact: Chris Lyons sealyons@sbcglobal.net



END-OF-YEAR BARBEQUE AND CAMP-OUT – June 3

Just like the one in September, PTA provides the burgers, dogs, and live music, and Manor families provide a big-ole potluck ... but this whole-school bash comes with a chance to sleep out under the stars! After dinner, families can stay and watch a family-friendly movie in the Multi then pile into their tents for the night. In the morning there is breakfast for everyone. The kids love it because they get a chance to run around with their friends in the dark and the parents love it 'cause, well, 'cause it's really fun. Lawn chairs, cozy conversation, and that happy feeling that comes with community.

How can you help? Set up the BBQ, plan movie night, buy the breakfast, or just come eat and sleep (and then eat some more) with your friends.

Contact: You?

MAP GRADUATION -- June 7

Heart's Desire Beach is the site of the big matriculation. Swimsuits, windbreakers, a few tears, lunch, and handshakes all around. The whole MAP community is invited to celebrate this milestone in the kids' development. (Bring warm clothes, just in case.)

How can you help? Ask your teacher or the MAP facilitator what you can do to get the big day set up.

Contact: Rick Meissner ricmeissner@comcast.net

5th GRADE PROMOTION – June 9

All the Manor 5th graders are honored for their years of hard work. They parade two-by-two through the Multi as the band plays and the parents blow through boxes of Kleenex. It's a grand send-off for our biggest kids and well worth your time, even if you have years to go before saying goodbye to Manor yourself. Sniff.

How can you help? Decorate the Multi for the big day! (And practice singing "Sunrise Sunset" from *Fiddler on the Roof*.)

Contact: Anne Capron annecapron@sbcglobal.net

And that's it. The year in a nutshell. You get three months off now. They go fast! (Keep an eye out for information on Summer Camps, it will start circulating in April or so.)

WHAT YOU'LL BE ASKED TO HELP PAY FOR

Throughout the year there will be several requests for financial contributions made by the school, your class, or the YES foundation. Here is a list of things parents are asked to contribute actual money towards. The list is just a heads-up to help you budget your giving; although the money is requested, there is always an option for families who cannot contribute, so please don't panic. I'm not trying to freak you out or guilt you into going into debt ... I just think it's helpful to know what might be coming down the pike, "ask-wise".

Field trips. Each family is asked to send in around \$60 to pay for the field trips planned for his/her class during the year. This form goes out at Back to School Night and we ask that you do your level best to return it (either with your payment or with the completed scholarship form) within a week of receiving it.

Musical Instrument. Each 4th and 5th grader has the opportunity to learn to play an instrument. Families are responsible for renting or buying the instrument selected, and for buying the music books required by your music teacher. Instruments run about \$150 and the books are under \$20. (Younger children and 4th and 5th graders who take part in the vocal/percussion sections will not need an instrument.) Please plan to have your child kitted out with the complete music package by about the second week of school.

YES Family Giving. Yes asks that each family contribute. This can be done at any time during the school year ... but the sooner, the better.

Picture Day. Each family will receive a free class picture. If you would like additional pictures or individual shots of your child, please

plan to set aside somewhere between \$10 and \$50 (depending on how many photos you want to buy)

Silent Auction Classroom Art. Each classroom will create a piece of art or a craft project to be sold at the Silent Auction on the day of the Winter Faire. Parents are asked to contribute a small amount towards the creation of the project, usually in the \$10-\$15 dollar range.

YES Auction Art. Again, each classroom will make something awesome to be auctioned off by YES in Spring. And again, your contribution will be somewhere between \$10-\$15.

YES Gala. It's a big, fun party with food and drinks and fun for all. Tickets are \$50, but that includes your dinner and a rockin' good band, so it all works out pretty well.

Birthday Books. You will be invited to contribute a book to the Manor Library in honor of your child's birthday. Depending on what you decide to buy, it'll be around \$15.

Teacher gifts. Your room parent will organize a "thank you" gift for your child's teacher and ask you for a small contribution towards its purchase. As with all gifts, this is entirely optional. It is usually somewhere around \$20.

Outdoor Ed. The 4th and 5th grade classes all participate in either a Gold Rush or Age of Sail overnight program. The cost for the Gold Rush trip is around \$150; Age of Sail is about \$80. All their food and transportation is covered and the kids really enjoy this outing. The overnights are also tied in very closely with the curriculum, so it's not just fun for fun's sake ... they'll be getting a hands-on experience of what they have learned about all year.

*Oh, and one
more
thing*

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Welcome!

*This booklet was
brought to you
by
the Manor Elementary Parent Teacher Association
(it's **PTA**, baby!)*

*written
by
Anne Capron
(Case's Mom)*

*and illustrated
by
Manor's own*

Jeremiah Franklin

Thanks, Jeremiah ... You ROCK!!!!!!