**SMPTO Monthly Meeting**

**December 13, 2012**

**Iron Forge Educational Center Library**

**Meeting started at approximately 7:00 p.m. and ended at approximately 8:20 p.m.**

1. **Call to Order/Welcome**

Principals Dave Boley and Janet Adams, the SMPTO board, Miss Strawley, Teacher Representative, Iron Forge and Ms. Kuhn, Teacher Representative, Rice in addition to three parents were present. Special guests, Mr. Tom Merlie, president, South Middleton School Board and Dr. Fred Withum, assistant superintendent.

Elizabeth announced that the South Middleton School Board had created a liaison position to SMPTO. The liaison(s) will attend future SMPTO meetings as they are able. She welcomed Mr. Merlie to the meeting and invited him to share the school board’s reasons for creating this role.

Mr. Merlie explained that several months ago, parent and former SMPTO board member, Meredith Rauhut, e-mailed him inquiring about the South Middleton School Board attending SMPTO meetings in an effort to improve communication between the board and elementary school parents. Mr. Merlie noted the School Board recently underwent a reorganization allowing them to create this liaison position. In the future, Mr. Merlie or fellow board member Mrs. Shelly Capozzi will attend SMPTO meetings. Mr. Merlie shared that the intent of this role is to answer any questions parents might have of the school board and that the board can stay in touch with issues concerning the parents of the district’s youngest students. He shared that while the school board must maintain discretion regarding personnel matters, the school board hopes to become more transparent to the parents of the district. Mr. Merlie noted the idea of a PTO liaison from the school board is a two-way street. He hopes that information, objectives and goals of the school board are meeting parents’ expectations and that the school board and SMPTO will have a harmonious working relationship. It was noted that the school board has created a new web page to feature school board business on the district’s main web page. Mr. Merlie added that the food service contract for the district is currently a “hot topic” on the website for those wanting to learn more. He then opened the floor for questions. Mr. Merlie was asked about the status of the yet determined teacher contract. Again Mr. Merlie noted that he is limited by what information he can share as negotiations are underway, but he feels that progress is being made and hopes for a resolution soon.

Dr. Withum explained the school district’s strategic planning committee will present the strategic plan to the School Board before being presented to the state. The larger umbrella plan of the strategic planning committee will be broken down and be applied to each school.

Additionally, Dr. Withum noted that the Student Safety Task Force is focused on addressing drug/alcohol, bullying and safety and security issues within the district. The initial policy is pending approval and is scheduled to go before the school board for a reading. Once completed the Student Safety Task Force will have a bi-annual formal evaluation. The next meeting of the Student Safety Task Force is scheduled for January 30, 2013 in the board room at IFEC.

Lastly, Dr. Withum shared that all public education faculty and staff are presently dealing with new K-12 Math and English requirements that will become effective in the next school year. Specifically, students presently in 8th grade and below will now be required to pass a standardized math test in order to graduate from high school. Dr. Withum noted the efforts and morale by the teachers and staff and expressed gratitude for their efforts. Dr. Withum feels that when all of the changes are implemented, South Middleton School District will be the district of choice for parents/students. Mr. Merlie also added that he cannot adequately express all the changes the school district is undergoing from curriculum to culture. Elizabeth invited Dr. Withum to return to a future meeting to explain in further detail what these changes will mean to the curriculum for our students.

1. **Principal Reports**

**Mr. Boley, Principal, Rice Elementary**

Mr. Boley thanked the coordinators and parents for a successful Secret Santa Shop. In the upcoming week, SMPTO will host its Breakfast with Santa on December 15, 2012 at Boiling Springs High School. On December 17, 2012, the high school concert choir will perform for the students. On December 19, 2012, Rice will be hosting an Elementary Sing-A-Long for all grades. Mr. Scharlau is scheduled to play Santa and Mrs. Ranck is to play a sleeping child. On December 20, 2012, the school will hold its holiday parties and on December 21st, school will be dismissed half-day for the start of winter break.

Mr. Boley noted the traditional holiday program was changed this school year only from December until Spring of 2013. The 1st grade classes will perform in the spring event. By moving the holiday program to the spring, allowed Mrs. Garland, the new music teacher, time to work with the kids. The event does not presently have a name. Next year, December 2013, will return the event back to its traditional holiday program and the 3rd grade will have the opportunity to take part in the event. Mr. Boley noted the return to December next year will not interfere with 3rd graders taking PSSA’s in the spring.

Mr. Boley gave Mrs. Adams report for Iron Forge Educational Center as Mrs. Adams had to leave the meeting early. Iron Forge will undergo universal screening/monitoring of student progress starting next week and wrapping up sometime in January. In addition, the 5th graders will be taking their field trip to Allenberry during the week leading up to winter break.

1. **Open Floor**
2. **Correspondence**
3. **Treasurer’s Report**

Jen reported SMPTO has a checking account balance of $36,182.62 and a savings account balance of $15,002.58. SMPTO paid Gertrude Hawk $17,000 and paid the licensing fee for the Groovy Movies. In addition, SMPTO issued a check to Little Egg Harbor School District, from the Groovy Movie proceeds. Little Egg Harbor School District was directly and dramatically affected by Hurricane Sandy.

In addition, SMPTO offered reimbursements for the teacher appreciation dinner, collected $4,000 for Secret Santa. It is noted Secret Santa is not a fundraiser. Money taken in is used to cover the cost of items purchased at the event. Donations were asked to help offset the cost to cover children unable to pay for the Secret Santa Shop. SMPTO received a very generous response and collected approximately $520.00. The money was used to cover the sponsored children and the remaining money was used to purchase food gift cards off of the school’s giving tree for families in our district in financial need. Jen noted in past years the Secret Santa Shop has been over budget. So it was agreed that more effort would be made to make smarter shopping decisions and move more product. Spirit Gear sold approximately $300 at the fall book fair.

1. **Committee Reports**
   1. Fundraising: A meeting was held at the end of November to discuss the spring fundraiser. The turnout for the meeting was a success and many ideas were explored. It was decided that SMPTO would not be selling chocolate in the spring. Instead a yet to be named walk/read a thon will take place on March 22nd during a modified recess at the schools. Students will email or send form letters to family/friends letting them know about their participation and in turn the students will give up a recess to take part in the event. The details of the prize structure and marketing need to be worked out. It is the hope of the SMPTO board that PTO members will step forward to chair this event. Another fundraising meeting will take place in January 2013.
   2. **Box Tops:** Will start a Box Tops Across America event after the winter break. More information to follow. We are currently tracking on par with box tops raised last year (~$4,000)
   3. **Spirit Gear:** Will be sold during the Breakfast with Santa event on Saturday, December 15, 2012.
   4. **Breakfast with Santa:** (December 15, 2012)
2. **Old Business**
3. **New Business**
4. **Open Floor**

The pilot program of Teacher’s Favorite Things was discussed. They are still being received and uploaded on a daily basis. Additionally, it was discussed that the Teacher’s Top 5 also applies to teachers at Iron Forge.

1. **Adjournment**

**The next SMPTO meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 10,2013, in the IFEC Library. Babysitting provided by Interact Club.**

**Meeting Minutes pending approval January 10, 2013**

**Kerrie Truax**

**Secretary, SMPTO**