



BOBCAT NEWS

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 1 - SEPTEMBER 2009

President's Message

By Julie Tribolet, President

Welcome back to school! Although Mark Twain looks the same, you may start to notice changes due to the state and district budget cuts. Now more than ever schools are turning to their parent groups and asking for help. So what can you do?

First, join the PTSA! Your vote adds credence when advocating for education at the state legislature. The bigger the membership, the bigger the voice! This was proven last spring when parents completed a LWSU survey regarding the budget cuts. The result? They listened and protected teaching jobs and classroom size. That's what a big voice can do at the district level...think what we can do in Olympia!

Second, fundraise. In these tough economic times many families need to be budget conscience. So we will continue to offer eScrip and PACE as easy, more economical fundraising options. Last year these programs raised \$4,800. Added to your generous Pass the Hat contributions and matching funds, we raised over \$16,000! This funded all of our PTSA programs as well as a \$1725 academic tutoring stipend and a \$2800 field trip transportation grant. And in accordance with PTA best practices, we reduced our reserves by granting \$13,725 to the district benefiting our school as follows:

- \$10,225 Purchase of microscope, Risograph machine, Grade 1 Readwell, student chairs, triple beam balance, listening stations, pencil sharpeners
- \$500 Emergency preparedness supplies
- \$500 Reading room supplies
- \$2,500 Library materials

Third, get involved. Volunteering is free but invaluable. Research shows students of parents who are actively involved in their education perform better at school and socially. The PTSA has over 30 committees benefiting our students and staff, and all of them need volunteers. It's also a great way to meet other parents in our community. Strong communities build strong schools.

Information on PTSA membership, fundraising and volunteer opportunities was included in your first day packet. I also encourage you to attend the first General Membership meeting on Sept. 17th at 6:00 pm. Your Board of Directors will be presenting changes to our standing rules and budget, both of which require general membership approval.

Now is the time to get involved...together, we can accomplish great things. Thank you!

Contents

President's Message 1

Lost and Found 1

Staff Birthdays 2

Reflections..... 2

Picture Taking 2

Sixth Grade Celebration 2

Craft Fair 2

PTSA Events 3

Explore Art!..... 3

"The Gift of a Struggle"..... 4

Parent Ed Opportunities 5

Lake WA Schools Foundation 5

Skate Party..... 5

Reducing Kid-Mail 6

Chess Club..... 6

After School Programs 6

Family Fun Committee 7

Staff Appreciation 7

"Did you know that..." 8

Calendar 8

PTSA Membership 2009-10 8

UNIT 2.8.65

MARK TWAIN

PTSA[®]

everychild.onevoice.

Lost and Found: Every year lots of items end up in Lost and Found. To cut down on this we ask that you please write your child's name inside coats and sweatshirts so they can be more easily returned.



Staff Birthdays

September

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| Leslie Kelley | 2 |
| Lynette Droke | 8 |
| Ann Herendeen | 9 |
| Virginia Andrews | 16 |
| Christi Miret | 24 |
| Brett Wisdom | 29 |

October

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| Rick Burden | 2 |
| Debbie Drake | 12 |
| Susan Preston | 12 |
| Doris Reeves | 12 |
| Christy Darveau | 13 |
| Susan Worthen | 31 |



Picture Taking

Got a camera?

Do you find yourself at all the school parties?

Is your child involved in any of the activities offered at Twain?

We would love your help capturing the students of Twain through photographs throughout the school year for the yearbook. If you are interested in helping out, please email Tammy at tammygilliam@gmail.com for the specific criteria we need for optimal photos.

2009 Reflections

By MaryLee Berthon, Julie Tribolet & Vanessa Banks co-Chairs

Does your child dream of displaying his drawings or photography in a special exhibit? Does she express her creativity through story or music? Then participate in the PTSA Reflections Program! Reflections is a cultural arts competition. Students submit original works of art for judging based on this year's theme, "Beauty is..."

This year we are accepting entries for Visual Arts, Photography, Literature and Music Composition. Entries are judged anonymously by volunteers unaffiliated with Mark Twain. Recipients will be chosen in each category and age group for the Outstanding Interpretation Award as well as Awards of Excellence and Awards of Merit.

The National PTA has strict guidelines for entries. To participate, please acquire the official rules and an entry form by doing one of the following:

- Under "Events" on the Twain website at www.lwsd.org/school/Twain; select the Oct. 19 Reflections announcement & click on the attachment
- Pick up the forms in the front entryway bulletin board
- Send a request to Julie Tribolet to have a packet sent home with your student, julietrib@clearwire.net / 425-822-2101

Please read all the rules so your student's entry won't be disqualified. The most important rule is that it must be the ORIGINAL work of ONE STUDENT!

Entries should be submitted to the school office October 19-23rd. Please be sure to include the entry form. Submissions will be on display in the school library. Judging will be in early November, followed by a Reflections Celebration TBA. All participants will receive a ribbon, and award recipients will be announced and have their entries submitted to the Lake Washington PTA Council for subsequent judging. Council award recipients will then move on to state and possibly national judging!

Sixth Grade Celebration

Twain has a history of sending off the sixth graders with a fabulous celebration and moving up ceremony at the end of the school year. This year the Six Grade Celebration Committee currently has no chairpersons. Grab a few friends and get involved! There is plenty of previous years information to get you on the right track, but you need to get started soon to secure venues and get a plan together! If you are interested in making history for this year's sixth graders, please contact Tammy (tammygilliam@gmail.com) or Shawn (shawn.palmer@lpl.com) for more information.

Craft Fair—December 5th

By Holly Hawkins, Chair

The "Craft Fair" committee needs your help! Who doesn't love the Craft Fair? I know it's a favorite of my kids. We need a few good volunteers to continue this great Twain tradition. Looking for....

- DAD's (or Moms) who like working with power tools
- Craft Leads to help pull the supplies of a designated craft
- Volunteers to help out on Fair day

Please contact Holly Hawkins at (425) 576-8282 or holly@dana-co.com if you can help.

2009-10 PTSA EVENTS

- Sept 17th: General Membership Mtg – 6pm in the school library
- Sept 18th: Twain shirt orders due
- Oct 5-9th: Walk to School Week
- Oct 19th: School Pictures
- Oct 21st: Skate Party
- Oct 23rd: Reflections entries due (Judging and Celebration TBA)
- Nov 14th: Pancake Breakfast
- Nov 20-21st, 23-24th: Book Fair – new this year: Saturday hours!
- Dec 3rd: Picture Retakes
- Dec 5th: Craft Fair
- Jan 20th:: Skate Party
- Jan 21st: General Membership Meeting
- Feb 4th: Science Fair
- Mar 19-20th: Studio East performances (auditions in February)
- May 3-7th: Staff Appreciation Week (note: May 7th is a LEAP day)
- May 20th: General Membership Meeting
- May 17-21st: Dance Week during P.E. / School Dance on May 21st
- June 2nd: Skate Party
- June 3rd: Gallery Walk

* NOTE: These are the scheduled dates, however if the unexpected happens they are subject to change. Keep checking the Twain website, PTSA web page and school bulletin board for new postings!

Mark Twain PTSA General Membership Meeting

**Thurs, September 17th
6:00 p.m.
School Library**

(preceding Curriculum Night)

Please join us for our first PTSA GM Meeting of the school year. Your Board of Directors will be proposing changes to the budget and standing rules, both of which need your approval so be sure to come!

Because children are not invited to Curriculum Night, childcare will NOT be provided at this meeting.

Questions? Contact PTSA President Julie Tribolet at julietrib@clearwire.net or 425-822-2101.



ExploreArt Needs You!

Welcome back to another great year of ExploreArt! For those of you new to Twain, EA is our parent volunteer-led program that brings art history, technique, and lessons into the classroom every month. The kids love it and it is a great part of their education. Our parent volunteers are neither teachers nor artists: we have great in-house training, established lesson plans, and seasoned docents to get you on your way - you'll have fun AND make a difference!

We will be having a training session at the end of September (look in the next Twain Times for date, time, and location). We are looking forward to working with all our current art docents again this year, and would love to bring some new parents aboard too!

For more information, or just to talk about ExploreArt, contact one of the four ExploreArt co-chairs:

| | | |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| Laura Bartoletti | 425-827-3539 | slbartoletti@yahoo.com |
| Cindy Neils | 425-822-3141 | mcneils95@verizon.net |
| Cindy Uthus | 425-828-6147 | grnseahorse@yahoo.com |
| Tracy Johnsen | 425-827-6779 | tracyjohnsen@hotmail.com |



The Gift of a Struggle

By Melanie Miller, M.Ed., Certified Positive Discipline,
Parent Educator and School Counselor, Melanie_miller@verizon.net, 206.579.2172

The school year has started. For many students this is an exciting time as they eagerly shop for school supplies, clothes and the perfect backpack. Parents too may breathe a sigh of relief as the fall routine returns. For other students, returning to school can be stressful. Some students might be thinking, "Will I ever be able to keep up?", "Are those same kids going to pick on me?", "Will anyone play with me at recess or will I just be all alone?" As individual as our children are, their school experience can be just as unique.

School offers children many opportunities that go beyond academics. Each day they are learning about their physical, mental and social/emotional limits and strengths. They are making decisions about themselves in regards to their abilities to make and keep friends, learn new math concepts and endure new challenges. Each school year their world changes and the struggles can become more difficult. Math gets more complicated and so does friendship. A child that was once great at math is now struggling to learn long division. Long time friends move towards a new group, leaving old friends behind. A child who was once a star soccer player, now gets bumped out of their position by the new kid.

Along with the opportunities come challenges. Challenges are a part of life, so much a part of life that they are all around us in the natural world. Take for example the caterpillar that becomes a butterfly. After time in the chrysalis, the butterfly begins to emerge. Struggling against the cramped walls of the chrysalis, the butterfly emerges with wrinkled and damp wings, unable to fly. If, at this point, we step in to help the struggling butterfly and gently touch their wings trying to straighten them, we actually harm the wings and take away the butterfly's ability to fly. Instead, the butterfly needs to experience the struggle. He needs to find his own strength, and in his own time straighten his wings and fly away.

Watching a butterfly struggle can be difficult. Watching our children struggle can be traumatic. Following are some thoughts that might help you as a parent, not step in to fix your child's struggle, but support them through whatever struggle may come their way.

Match their emotions: If your child is struggling with a subject, accept and recognize their struggle. Rather than glossing over the challenge by saying "oh, don't worry, you'll get better", or "come on it's not that big of a deal", match their emotions. Recognize and validate their struggle. "It must be hard to watch the other students catch on to math so easily", "It sounds like you're really having a hard time with reading this year". By "matching their emotions", we allow them the space to have their feelings. Our kids notice this and they feel valued because we have made space for them to be themselves and own their feelings.

Listen: Driving your kids to and from school or walking with them, hang up the cell phone and put away your mental to-do list. Make those few short minutes a time to listen to their dreams for their day...or perhaps their fears. When your child is done sharing ask "Is there anything else you want me to know?" And if your child shares a struggle, ask "Do you want help with this or did you just want me to listen?" As an adult, have you ever noticed that often times you just want someone to listen? No advice, no opinions, just listen. We often find solutions to our problems just by sharing our stories....our kids do that too! (If you take the letters of L.I.S.T.E.N and turn them around, they spell S.I.L.E.N.T.)

Be Mindful: Just like every other year, this year will go quickly too! Find moments to be "mindful" with your children. Being mindful is being present in the moment. All your focus and attention is on the present moment with no thought of what to make for dinner, what time is that presentation at work, or did I pay the electrical bill? Our lives are busy with lots of interruptions. Close off the outside world and enjoy a bike ride, shooting hoops, or sharing a hobby. Connect, connect, connect and be in the moment. It will build your relationship with your child and open the door for them to trust you with their struggles.

Don't do for your Children what they can do for themselves: Have faith in your child's ability to solve their own problems. Offer a listening ear, ask if they want your help and be willing to step back when they don't. Before getting involved in your child's issues, ask yourself, "what is my motive?" Is it to save them from developmentally appropriate disappointment? Is it because you think you have all the answers and they won't be able to handle this? Is it because you are embarrassed and wonder what other parents and teachers will think? If so, talk to a trusted friend; ask for help in having courage to not do for your children what they can do for themselves.

Take Care of Yourself: Just like they say on the airplane...."If you are sitting next to a child, please first put on your oxygen mask and then assist your child". When's the last time you put on your oxygen mask? What do you do for fun? How do you connect with friends? What do you do to take care of yourself? Taking care of ourselves models this much needed life skill for our children.

All of us have had our own life challenges. And if we walked through those challenges, rather than around them, over them or under them, we came out stronger. Challenges are gifts. Watch in wonder as your child unwraps their struggle and strengthens his or her wings for having been through it.

Melanie is a *Certified Positive Discipline Associate* and works as a Parent Educator and Grade School Counselor. She offers parenting classes in the Bellevue, Kirkland and Redmond, WA area and is available as a Parent Coach and Trainer of professionals who work with families and in schools. You can contact her at Melanie_miller@verizon.net or 206.579.2172. To find out more about Positive Discipline, visit www.positivediscipline.org or www.sounddiscipline.org.

Mark Twain Parent Education Opportunities Continue

By Parent Ed. Chairperson; Melanie Miller

Throughout the past several years, Twain parents have enjoyed parent education seminars from speakers like Jan Faull and topics from homework and changing families to raising low stress kids in a high stress world.

This year the parenting seminars will continue but look a little different. We will be sharing our parent education nights with Ben Rush Elementary and Rose Hill Elementary. What this means is that one school will plan the event and invite parents from the other two schools. Currently, Rose Hill Elementary is hoping to host a parent seminar in early October. Twain and Rush will then host one in winter and early spring.

Ideas for topics and speakers are welcome! Internet safety, bullying, sibling conflict, power struggles, pre-teen issues...**what would you like to learn about?** Please send your ideas to me at nwmillers@verizon.net or 206.579.2172. Volunteers are also welcome to help coordinate our parent ed. night. Please contact me, or sign up for the parent ed. committee on your PTSA committee form, if you are interested in volunteering.

In addition to the parent ed. seminars, I hope to also provide a parenting article for each Bobcat newsletter. Topics for articles are also welcome! After a few years break as parent ed. chair., I look forward to returning to this position and continuing parent education opportunities for Twain parents!

Lake Washington Schools Foundation

Classroom and School Enrichment Grants make funds available to all schools in the Lake Washington School District (LWSD) for innovative and creative projects that enhance or expand the LWSD curriculum in the classroom. The Foundation awards up to \$1500 for elementary and up to \$3000 for junior high and high school projects that actively engage students. Are you interested in partnering with Mark Twain staff to identify potential projects and help write a grant? The foundation offers grant writing training. Please contact Amy.Maher@gte.net if you'd like more information.

Skate King Party Nights

With popular demand Mark Twain will continue its traditional Skate King party nights for all Twain students and their YOUNGER siblings. The first one will be October 21st 6:30-8:30 at Bellevue Skate King. Skate King has had to raise its rates this year, our new rate will be \$6 admission including roller blades, in-line skate rental will remain at \$4.

Remember to save the following dates for our remaining parties: January 20th, 2010 and June 2nd, 2010. Looking forward to great skating year!

Questions? Contact Amanda Macpherson 425 889 2371.



PTSA Board of Directors

Executive Committee

- President Julie Tribolet
425-822-2101
julietrib@clearwire.net
- co-VP 1..... Laura Bartoletti
425-827-3539
slbartoletti@yahoo.com
- co-VP 1..... Karen Smith
425-822-5939
karen@thenwsmithfamily.com
- co-VP 2..... Amy Maher
425-827-1543
amy.maher@gte.net
- co-VP 2..... Karrin Wikel
425-822-8583
karrinwikel@hotmail.com
- co-VP 3..... Tammy Gilliam
425-614-9745
tammygilliam@gmail.com
- co-VP 3..... Shawn Palmer
425-761-7865
shawn.palmer@lpl.com
- Secretary Teri Colbert
425-827-5039
dtk.colbert@verizon.net
- Treasurer Jilleen Broyles
425-827-3820
jilleenbroyles@comcast.net

Board Members

- Communications..... Tammy Gilliam
- Community Awareness..... OPEN
- Fundraising.... Malia Campbell, Shan Evans
- Legislation OPEN

Reducing Kid-Mail, Reducing Waste

By Julie Tribolet, President

In an effort to reduce waste and expenses, **the PTSA will not distribute informational fliers via kid-mail!** Sending paper copies to advertise events not only uses trees, but it requires usage of the school's copy machine. With district cuts to the building budget, we can make a difference by limiting our photocopying!

For those of you with internet access, PTSA events will be posted on the Twain website: www.lwsd.org/school/twain. Documents, such as registration forms and the newsletter, will also be posted on the PTSA web page. This is accessed by clicking on the "PTSA" link from the Twain website. You can also receive email notifications by registering for ParentOrganizer. Instructions for registration were distributed in the first day packets and are also available on the PTSA page of the Twain website.

For those of you without internet access, please be sure to notify your student's teacher. Paper copies will be distributed to teachers as requested. Information will also be posted on the bulletin board in the front entryway with extra copies available in the school office.

Some paper notices will still be distributed through kid-mail, such as order forms. But this is the only printed edition of the *Bobcat News* for this school year. All subsequent issues of the newsletter will not be printed and instead will be made available as mentioned above. We apologize for the inconvenience, but you can feel good knowing this sacrifice is helping save trees and our school's budget!

Chess Club—Fall Registration

By Doris Lim, Chair

Chess registration for year 2009—2010. The 1st session begins on September 11. Please email Doris @ dlimeng@hotmail.com for registration form and/or questions. Thank you!

After School Programs

By Amy Maher, Chair

We have some exciting after school programs sponsored by the PTSA this fall. Look for information regarding an Impressionism Art Class and Jump Rope Sessions. As a reminder, the PTSA is a volunteer run organization so we'll be asking for your participation as chaperones for the after school activities your children will be attending. It is important to join PTSA as well as complete a Lake Washington School District background check prior to volunteering at an after school PTSA program. It is possible for any adult to substitute in place of the parent, as long as they are PTSA members with a current background check (i.e. grandparent, aunt, caregiver or sibling over 18 years). You will be asked to sign up as a chaperone for at least one class per session.

Thank you for your interest in the after school language program. We currently do not have a coordinator for this program. If you'd like to spearhead this program and organize parent volunteers for each session, please contact Amy.Maher@gte.net

Family Fun Committee is looking for a chair person to organize the Pancake Breakfast on November 14th and finalize the details for the School Dance on May 21st. Please contact Karrin or Amy at karrinwikel@hotmail.com or Amy.Maher@gte.net if you are interested!

Staff Appreciation Committee

By Coco Fulton & Amy Maher, co-chairs

The teachers and staff at Mark Twain challenge our children on a daily basis helping them to excel both academically and socially while ensuring that all the programs and facilities operate smoothly. Who wouldn't want to help out with Staff Appreciation? Our committee strives to thank, honor and reward our fabulous Mark Twain staff. We do so by putting on monthly events for the staff from soup and salad lunches to milk and cookies after school. We also randomly select monthly winners from the staff for generous, themed gift baskets. Our finale is Staff Appreciation Week in May where we spoil the staff each day.

As a committee member, you'll receive a monthly email telling about our upcoming event and requesting food items and/or an occasional hand in helping prepare. We put events on for the staff but we don't join in which makes this committee a great one to be on if you can't actually be at school. Please join us by emailing cocofulton@verizon.net! Can't join but would still like to help? Consider these suggestions:

- Send in any new or partially used Starbucks gift cards to "Staff Appreciation" for an event we're planning for the winter.
- Email cocofulton@verizon.net if you want to create a \$25-30 gift basket for one of the monthly give always – go in with a few friends, neighbors, class friends, bus stop parents!
- Solicit gift certificates we can shower on our teachers – send in to the office attn: "Coco/Amy Staff Appreciation Committee".
- Do you have season tickets to the Mariners, Sounders, Seahawks, Huskies, or maybe you prefer the theater & opera? Consider donating some awesome tickets for our staff drawings!
- Offer up the use of a summer cabin or week away in some fun location you have access to – we'll use as a giveaway in May! How about treating a staff member to an afternoon or evening sail on your boat?
- Other?! We'd love to hear your suggestions!

Together let's make this a great year for our staff!

PTSA Committee Chairs

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| After School Programs | Amy Maher |
| Book Fair | Pirkko Terao, Julie Tribolet, Dana Neilson |
| Box Tops | Tobi Smith |
| Chess Club | Doris Lim |
| Craft Fair | Diane Galliett, Holly Hawkins, co-chair OPEN |
| Emergency Prep | Shawn Palmer, co-chair OPEN |
| Engineering | Michael Fox |
| Explore Art! | Laura Bartoletti, Tracy Johnsen, Cindy Neils, & Cindy Uthus |
| Family Fun Nights | OPEN |
| Historian/Photo Journalist | Gary Runstadler |
| Hospitality | Karen Brown |
| Mathnificent | sched for 2010 |
| Membership | Sandi Kaiser |
| Parent Education | Melanie Miller |
| Reflections | MaryLee Berthon, Julie Tribolet, Vanessa Banks |
| School Assemblies | Lynn Peterson |
| School Pictures | Tammy Guisness, co-chair OPEN |
| Science Fair | Laura Bartoletti, Amy Maher |
| Sixth Grade Celebration | OPEN |
| Skate Party | Amanda MacPherson |
| Special Needs | Malia Campbell |
| Staff Appreciation | Coco Fulton, Amy Maher |
| Student Directory | Jill Coon, co-chair OPEN |
| Student Safety | Doreis Howard |
| Studio East | Karen Getzinger, Leslie Holle, co-chair OPEN |
| Talent Show | JonErik Johnson |
| Teacher Wish List | Vlasta Hillger |
| Twain Apparel | Pirkko Terao, Jill Miller |
| Vision/Health Screen | Roxanne Raubacher |
| Yearbook | Tammy Gilliam, Leslie Reusser, co-chair OPEN |



Mark Twain

Office..... 425.936.2730
Safe Arrival 425.936.2731

Bobcat News

Tammy Gilliam, Communications
Kim Bourassa, Editor

Send articles to:

Bobcat News
9525 130th Ave NE
Kirkland, WA 98033
or
kkbourassa@hotmail.com

Parent Organizer

Tammy Gilliam, Communications
www.parentorganizer.com

Twain Website

www.lwsd.org/school/twain

Click the PTSA link on the
Twain website for more PTSA info!

State PTSA Website

www.wastatepta.org

Did you know that... LWSd requires all adults to submit a volunteer application every TWO YEARS? If it's time to renew, you can access the forms and instructions online: www.lwsd.org/For-Community

or you can contact LWSd at 425-702-3200. For the safety of our students and staff, you **MUST** be approved by LWSd to volunteer at school so submit your application today!

September 2009

| S | M | Tu | W | Th | F | S |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | | | |

- 9/1: First day of school
- 9/7: Labor Day—no school
- 9/10: Curriculum Night: grades 1-3.....7pm
- 9/17: PTSA General Membership Mtg.....6pm
- 9/17: Curriculum Night: grades 4-6.....7pm
- 9/18: Twain shirt orders due
- 9/28: Explore Art docent training

October 2009

| S | M | Tu | W | Th | F | S |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
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| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |

- 10/2: LEAP Day—no school
- 10/5-9: Walk to School Week
- 10/19: School Pictures
- 10/21: Skate Party.....6:30 pm
- 10/19-23: Submit Reflections entries

■ NO SCHOOL

○ HALF DAY

◻ EVENT – check calendar

2009-10 MARK TWAIN PTSA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Annual membership fees are \$10.00 per individual or \$17.00 per couple. Make checks payable to **Mark Twain PTSA**.* Please submit this form with payment to your child's teacher. Your membership includes a student directory. Thank you!

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Please send my directory home with:

Student's Name: _____ Teacher's Name: _____

I am a returning Mark Twain PTSA member.

*Checks returned for NSF subject to a \$20.00 fee.