

Martin a hit at neighborhood school

Walla Walla Symphony Director orchestrates Green Park PTA efforts

As a child growing up in the little farming town of Logan, Oregon (*near Oregon City*), Russ Martin and his 48 elementary classmates had an influential volunteer regularly visit their tiny, two-room schoolhouse.

By having the PTA President and local school hero as a father, Russ Martin, now the Executive Director of the Walla Walla Symphony, says it was his dad who inspired him to get involved in the Green Park PTA.

"I was very proud of him and felt good about his PTA activities," said Martin who moved to Walla Walla from Bainbridge Island in the fall of 2001.

Martin's son Nicholas is in Jim Lux's 5th grade class at Green Park Elementary and his 21-year-old daughter Heather is attending Seattle Community College. Martin says he saw a need for more fathers to be involved in PTA. He decided to do something about it by getting involved in the Green Park PTA. Now he's president.

"Studies indicate that the more parents are in tune with school activities and programs, the more likely their children will have a positive experi-

ence" Martin said. "It shows your children that you care about them – and their school."

Martin is in his fourth decade in the music business. He has owned record stores, been in radio and eventually managed the Northwest territory for Capitol Records, Inc. where he had the chance to meet and work with some of the biggest names in music.

Martin has been married to Penni for 14 years. He enjoys collecting U.S. presidential memorabilia, records and music related art. He also plays racquetball, gardens and loves watching the Seattle Mariners.

Thanks to his volunteer efforts at Green Park, Martin is keeping PTA all in the family.



Russ Martin
Green Park PTA President

"As I have come to know the men and women in the Walla Walla Public Schools I am pleased to find the level of commitment and caring that exists at all levels.

From Superintendent Rich Carter to the part time playground assistants, these are people who give of themselves far and above what we ask of them and that's what makes Walla Walla schools successful."

Russ Martin

Walla Walla Public Schools

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Your School District Newsletter

Replacement Levy 2004

On Tuesday, February 3, 2004, Walla Walla residents will vote on an issue affecting children in our community. The replacement Maintenance and Operations Levy helps maintain essential educational student programs and activities not funded by State and Federal dollars.

The replacement levy represents 13% of the Walla Walla Public Schools operating budget. Additional funding contingent on levy passage, together with the proposed M&O Levy, make up about 17% of the district's operating budget. Please take a moment to learn more about the facts of this important community issue.

See 2004 Levy - pages 4 & 5

Election Date • February 3, 2004



State Superintendent praises WW schools

Community support recognized for improving achievement

After witnessing double digit gains at some schools in reading and math on last spring's Washington Assessment of Student Learning tests, State Superintendent of Public Instruction **Dr. Terry Bergeson** took notice by saluting Walla Walla Public Schools during her 2003 State of Education Address at the Washington State School Directors Association annual meeting last November in Seattle.

"The district - from the school board on down - has taken a systemic approach to improving student achievement," Bergeson said while speaking to a crowd of more than

1,000 school board members, administrators, educators and students. "All decisions - from budget to maintenance to curriculum - aim at raising achievement."

During her address, Bergeson noted four themes she felt are making a difference in Walla Walla; a caring, collaborative environment with high student expectations, strong leadership, teaching the standards intentionally, and using student data to improve.

Highlights of Bergeson's State of Education speech and video clips are available on the district's website at: www.wwps.org.

"Bottom line: The district culture has changed. No one asks 'if' students can achieve - there is an expectation that all students can achieve."

Terry Bergeson - State Superintendent

Bledsoe auction keynote speaker

Barbara Bledsoe, mother of NFL All-Pro quarterback Drew Bledsoe and critically acclaimed parenting expert and educator, is the scheduled keynote speaker at the *Citizens for Schools* Silent Auction/Dinner Saturday, January 24 from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. at the WW Fairgrounds Community Building.

Bledsoe, a former teacher at Pioneer Middle School who also helped coordinate the shift from a junior high to middle school, will discuss parenting strategies and other contemporary issues facing families.

Bledsoe is currently a teacher in the *Parenting with Dignity* program, which her husband Mac Bledsoe created and produced with her collaboration based on real life experience with their own sons and her students.

For ticket information contact *Citizens for Schools* Co-chairs Cindy Meyer, 529-0952 or Bob Hill, 522-7087.

Citizens for Schools
Silent Auction/Dinner
Saturday, Jan. 24
WW Fairgrounds
7:00 - 10:00 p.m.
Tickets - \$35 each
529-0952

Our Core Values are more than mere words; they're our business!

Quality Integrity Accountability Respect Courtesy



Rich Carter
Superintendent

Levy funds essential educational programs and activities

The district's replacement Maintenance and Operations Levy will be on the ballot as voters go to the polls Tuesday, February 3.

This proposal would replace local funding 68 percent of Walla Walla voters approved in February 2002.

Local funding from Maintenance and Operations Levies has been part of district operations for more than 30 consecutive years. Maintenance and Operations funding provides approximately 13 percent of our operating budget and closer to 17 percent when additional funding contingent on levy passage is figured in.

The school board this year has proposed extending the M&O levy from two to four years. Many districts throughout our state, including our neighbors in College Place, have opted to propose four year levies.

Extending the life of the levy has been found to help school districts provide stability to essential educational programs and activities while providing taxpayers a tax rate they can forecast for a longer period of time. A four year levy also saves on expensive election costs and allows staff and community to focus on meeting today's tough educational standards.

Levy funding is no longer just for enrichment, it's a key element of our basic education program. Levy funding pays for elementary music and physical education specialists, school health clinicians, custodians, librarians and home visitors.

Our fine arts programs, including music and drama, receive levy funding. Interscholastic athletics, Future Farmers of America, Explorers Highly Capable program, Special Education and other student activities all utilize levy funding.

All local M&O Levy dollars stay in Walla Walla to support our community schools. Please remember to vote, Tuesday, February 3.

School Board Recognition Month January 2004

Your School Board is making a difference for students and the entire community. Please take time to say thanks for a job well done!



Tim Donaldson



Mary Jo Geidl



Anne Golden



Dr. Richard N. Jacks



Toni Rudnick

The Board of Directors meet regularly on the first and third Tuesdays of each month. Meetings are held in the district board room, 364 S. Park St. Special and study sessions are scheduled as needed. All board meetings begin at 7:30 p.m.

Coming to Kindergarten Parent Information

Are You?

- A parent with a toddler
- A parent with an infant
- A parent with a preschooler

We can help you, help your child...

Parents of young children...

Register NOW and learn how you can help your children be ready for school.

- Simple training
- Fun learning activities for babies and toddlers
- Interactive materials to take home
- Research based information
- Free childcare during the parent session

Schedule

Free classes are offered three times per year

- Winter class - February 5
10:00-11:30 a.m. or 6:00-7:30 p.m. - YMCA
- Spring class - May 6

Registration

- Call 526-6724 or e-mail moleary@wwps.org
- Please indicate whether you want to attend the **morning or evening** session.

Walla Walla students top state average as Washington pilots first WASL science test

Walla Walla 8th and 10th grade students topped the statewide average on Washington's first science test, according to results released earlier this school year from the 2003 science pilot of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning, known as the WASL.

At Garrison Middle School, 42.5 percent of students met standards, while 36 percent of Pioneer Middle School students reached state targets. The state average is 35.8. Walla Walla High School 10th grade students scored 33.9 percent, with the state average resting at 31.8 percent.

Although the 2003 assessment was voluntary for districts and schools, about 95 percent of eighth-graders and 81 percent of 10th-graders took the test across the state. Next spring, all students in grades 8 and 10 will be required to take the science assessment, which determines if students have mastered life, earth/space and physical science standards.

In 2008, high school students will have to meet rigorous standards of the 10th grade WASL in reading, writing and math to earn a diploma. Science proficiency on the WASL will become a graduation requirement in 2010.

Wa-Hi students named Exchange Club of Walla Walla Youth of the Month

Meghan Carlson and Rachel Rudnick of Walla Walla High School were named the Exchange Club of Walla Walla Youth of the Month for the month of October. These students will also be eligible to compete for the Exchange Club of Walla Walla Youth of the Year Awards and special \$1,000 college scholarships. Exchange Club of Walla Walla recognizes that the young people of our nation represent America's greatest treasure.

Meghan Carlson

- AP Academic program - 3.993 GPA
- Advanced Studio Art
- Editor-in-Chief of the WA-HI Journal
- President of Key Club

Parents: Margie and Rusty Reece



Rachel Rudnick

- AP coursework
- Yamate
- Senate Page - Mr. Hewitt
- Amnesty International Club (Officer)
- Swim team
- Girls' League (Officer)
- FFA Ag Issues team
- National Honor Society
- ASB Treasurer

Parents: Sam and Toni Rudnick



Staff Spotlight

Nebeker named Elementary Principals Vice President

Prospect Point Elementary Principal **Rick Nebeker** was named Eastside Vice President for the Elementary School Principals Association of Washington. Nebeker will begin his two year term in May. He will represent Eastern Washington principals and chair the planning committee for the association's annual conference.



Nebeker

"I am very proud to represent the elementary principals from all over Washington," Nebeker said. "Washington principals have done a great job of raising the standards and increasing achievement throughout the state. I want to help continue to assist principals through our association as we all continue to meet the standards."

Wa-Hi's See writes successful PE Grant

Wa-Hi's Physical Education Teacher **Gayle See** has a long list of proficiencies related to fitness, now she can add grant writing to her professional resume. Thanks to See's efforts, the Wa-Hi Department was awarded \$143,932 to purchase PE equipment, computer software and staff training services.

The "Carol White - Physical Education for Progress" grant was made available through the US Department of Education. The funds will be used at the high school for purchasing equipment to improve the fitness center in the balcony of the small gym, software for fitness assessment, and staff training.

"Quality physical education programs are the cornerstones in developing healthy, active lifestyles for our students," said See, a 15 year veteran teacher who also has 12 years of coaching to her credit.

See was born in Bremerton and grew up in Oroville, WA. She enjoys reading, fly fishing and sailing.

Sharpstein's Van Donge earns national certificate

Sharpstein Elementary third grade bilingual teacher Sara Van Donge is one of 8,195 elementary and secondary school teachers nationwide who achieved National Board Certification in 2003.

Van Donge has been a teacher for 6 years and holds degrees in Bilingual Studies, Information and Technology, and Education.

National Board Certification is the highest credential in the teaching profession. A voluntary process established by the National Board, certification is achieved through a rigorous performance-based assessment that takes between one and three years to complete and measures what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do.



Replacement M&O Levy Facts and Information

- The voter approved 2002 M&O Levy which passed at 68% expires in December and this Levy would *replace* it.
- This proposed M&O Levy would help *maintain* the current level of teaching and programs.
- This proposed M&O Levy provides approximately *13%* of the operating budget. In 2004, local M&O Levy money would also bring home about \$1.68 million of taxpayers' state taxes through Levy Equalization. These funds and additional funding contingent on levy passage, together with the proposed M&O Levy, make up about *17%* of the district's operating budget.
- This proposed Levy impacts about *one-sixth* of district programs and services.
- A four-year levy provides *stability* to essential educational programs and activities while providing taxpayers a tax rate they can forecast for a longer period of time.



For additional M&O Levy information contact:
Communications Department 526-6716
www.wwps.org

Levy 2004

Remember to Vote • Tuesday, February 4

Funding Our Future...



Western United States Agriculture Teacher of the Year **Mike Martin** led Wa-Hi's Future Farmers of America program to an unprecedented six state titles last school year. Wa-Hi FFA teams have won national championships the past two school years.

More than 100 students participate in FFA. Local levy dollars help fund this positive and successful extra-curricular program.

What does the levy fund? *Your dollars at work...*

Class Size Reduction & Student Activities

- 27 teachers, at least 50 classified staff positions
- Fine arts programs - band, orchestra, choir, art, and drama
- Special Education, Explorers gifted learning program, JROTC
- Summer school for those in need
- K-5 Physical Education Specialist Teachers & Music Specialist Teachers
- Library Media Specialist Teachers and Instructional Assistants
- K-12 Health services (including health clinicians)

Safety Programs

- Continuation of Safe Schools Programs

Extra-curricular

- Wide range of positive after-school activities programs including sports, clubs, music, FFA and other activities (*Salaries for coaches and advisors*)
- Transportation for field trips, extracurricular activities and sports

Facilities and Technology

- Facility maintenance programs and technology for students and staff

Teacher Support

- Staff training, curriculum adoptions and learning support materials



Walla Walla Public Schools have a long and proud tradition of music in the schools. Students are exposed to a comprehensive music program in grades K-12. Local levy dollars help fund district music and other arts enrichment programs.

Conservative Budgeting Holding the line on levy rates

Walla Walla Public Schools has a proven track record of holding the line on replacement M&O levy rates. Below is a historical look at more than a decade of district replacement levy rates approved by Walla Walla voters.

Year	Rate	Cost (\$100,000 home)
1992	\$4.26	\$426.00
1993	\$4.39	\$439.00
1994	\$4.53	\$453.00
1995	\$4.15	\$415.00
1996	\$3.64	\$364.00
1997	\$3.77	\$377.00
1998	\$4.03	\$403.00
1999	\$3.88	\$388.00
2000	\$3.73	\$373.00
2001	\$3.77	\$377.00
2002	\$3.84	\$384.00
2003	\$3.74	\$374.00
2004	\$3.78 (estimate)	\$378.00 (estimate)

How would this proposed M&O Levy affect my property taxes?

Value of Home	Current Amount Paid	Proposed Replacement Amounts
\$100,000	\$378	\$385 (2005) \$397 (2006) \$411 (2007) \$427 (2008)
\$150,000	\$567	\$577 (2005) \$596 (2006) \$616 (2007) \$640 (2008)

These approximate amounts are based on \$3.85/\$1,000 in 2005, \$3.97/\$1,000 in 2006, \$4.11/\$1,000 in 2007, \$4.27/\$1,000 in 2008.
 NOTE: Law prohibits collection of more money than the total figure approved by voters - even if property assessments increase.

Summary of Replacement Proposal

- 2005 - \$6,428,000 (approximate rate \$3.85 / \$1,000)
- 2006 - \$6,828,000 (approximate rate \$3.97 / \$1,000)
- 2007 - \$7,278,000 (approximate rate \$4.11 / \$1,000)
- 2008 - \$7,778,000 (approximate rate \$4.27 / \$1,000)

Current Levy Amount & Rate

- 2003 - \$5,878,000 - projected rate was \$3.89 per \$1,000 (actual rate in 2003 - \$3.74)
- 2004 - \$6,078,000 - projected rate was \$3.95 per \$1,000 (actual rate in 2004 - \$3.78)

These amounts are based on per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

Garrison leader brings new energy

Support from home helps Yonts pursue passion

In her first year as Assistant Principal of Garrison Middle School, former elementary teacher **Gina Yonts** has learned quickly to appreciate middle school teachers.

"I have discovered it takes a special individual to teach middle school and I have come to truly respect our teaching staff and their ability to keep kids engaged in the learning process," said Yonts who spent the first 12 years of her career across town teaching 5th grade at Berney Elementary.

Yonts said she is still getting used to some of the logistical issues that arise at Garrison, like trying to find students on campus who have seven separate classes.

"It was easy to find children (at Berney) because they are primarily in one classroom all day," said Yonts who is a mother of two elementary aged children (Ryan and Kennedy) and wife to Wa-Hi PE teacher and head football coach Marc Yonts. "I absolutely LOVE the kids. Understandably, coming from elementary, I wasn't sure what to expect. Their energy is fabulous and their opinions are so passionate."

"My husband is incredibly supportive and understands the importance of having passion in what you do professionally. We are a great team and having two young children in school, they get an opportunity to see parents who love what they do, work together to keep the family going and be able to experience balance between the two."



Gina Yonts

Yonts completed her K-12 Principal's Internship Certification program through Washington State University. She says her passion for education and desire to make a difference schoolwide pushed her to pursue a career in administration.

"Pursuing my principal's credential was an extension of my earlier teaching experiences and my desire to want to positively impact an entire school community," said Yonts who grew up in Zillah and earned her undergraduate teaching degree from Central Washington University and master's degree from Northwest Nazarene College.

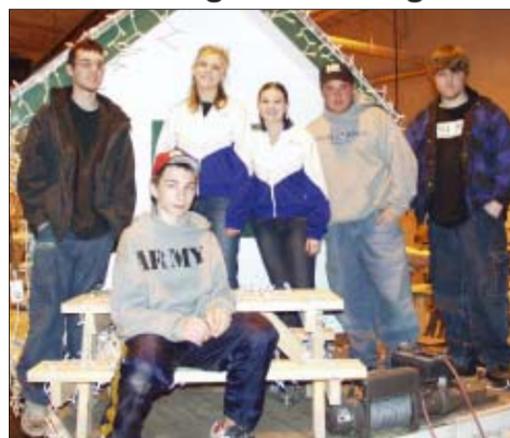
As a young mother with a family at home, Yonts has been fortunate to have the support of her husband throughout her professional career.

"What we do professionally has always been a family experience and I think I am very lucky to have a spouse who really understands that drive for excellence," Yonts said.

Yonts plans to continue working on relationship building with staff, students and parents in future days, months and years to come. She says she is thankful to have encouragement and leadership from her mentor and friend, Principal Jim Sporleder.

"I look forward to coming to work every day," said the energetic Yonts as she zips off to help yet another Garrison student succeed.

Parade of Lights Shining Stars



(L to R) Senior **Thomas Pleyo**, Sophomore **Michael Fjermestead**, Senior **Jill Blakemore**, Senior **Lindsay Ferraro**, Junior **Patrick Brownfield** and Sophomore **Scott Dinsmore** from Wa-Hi's Career and Technical Education construction class helped build this year's winning float for the *Best High School Category* in the annual downtown Parade of Lights.

Students also tossed out 3,000 candy canes thanks to a generous donation from Lumbermen's Building Center.

Teacher **Bob Maib** taught the students how to build and decorate the award winning playhouse as part of the course curriculum and to satisfy the students' community involvement goals.

Prospect Point student writes winning essay, wins computer for classmates

Prospect Point 5th grade student **Conner Holbrook** used his writing skills to best more than 800 fifth and sixth graders from throughout Washington and Oregon to win the Kellogg/Keebler youth essay contest.

Holbrook's task in the writing contest was to name five reasons his class needed a new computer. Holbrook's efforts netted a much needed computer for his classroom and a new computer for his home. His classmates also received snacks and other goodies from the award.

Holbrook learned of the contest while shopping with his family at Eastgate Albertsons.



Conner Holbrook opens his grand prize new computer.

Treble Ensemble earns select invite



The Wa-Hi Treble Ensemble has been selected to perform February 14 in Yakima at the State Music Educators Conference *Choral Banquet*. Student singing groups from around the state submitted audition tapes to a reviewing committee hoping to be selected to perform at this prestigious event.

(Row 1 L-R) Kelsie Davisson, Malia Suzui, Jennifer Tuia, Katherine Truscott, Sharon Rowley, Andrea Bughi, Norb Rossi. (Row 2 L-R) Jennifer Mead, Kaitlyn Schmidt, Mindy Juergensen, Oksana German, Charlotte Emigh, Jenna Watts, Bailee Terry, Deva Parrish, Kelsie Kinion.

(Not pictured) Lyn Bechtold, Bethany Brown, Jessica Brown, Nicolette Calton, Geneva Skeen, Ashlee Taylor, Jamie Lee Wallingford.

Garrison's French finds peace on the ski trails of the Blue Mountains

As a college student carving up back country snow while cross country skiing along side his brother, Garrison Middle School 7th grade teacher **Ted French** had no idea his passion for the outdoors would later in life help him balance a career as an educator.

Now in his 18th year as a classroom teacher and counselor, French daily feels the hustle and bustle of middle school life.

From the moment French opens his classroom door until he turns out the lights to go home, he's racing through the school serving students. French says cross country skiing throughout the Pacific Northwest helps him be a better teacher.

"Skiing is a great way to balance the stress and noise that comes with teaching. I enjoy the quiet and serenity when I'm skiing in the mountains.

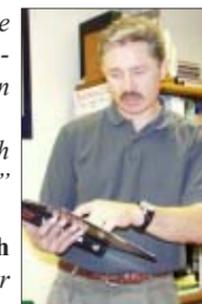
I come back to work on Monday with more mental energy and a better attitude," he said.

French also enjoys backpacking, mountain biking, fishing and bird hunting. He grew up in La Grande, Oregon and graduated from Eastern Oregon State College. He is married to Gwen and has two children, Sonja and Robert.

When the work he loves so dearly is finished, you'll find French scanning area weather reports in search of fresh powder.

"Skiing is a great way to balance the stress and noise that comes with teaching. I enjoy the quiet and serenity when I'm skiing in the mountains. I come back to work on Monday with more mental energy and a better attitude."

Ted French
Garrison 7th Grade Teacher



Wa-Hi students support troops in Iraq through letter writing campaign

Military men and women serving in Iraq this holiday season had letters of support from home thanks to students in Wa-Hi's Computer Applications course.

Business and Occupational Education Teacher **Rhonda Olson**, with the help of 80 motivated students, are supporting the national *Adopt-a-Platoon* program locally by writing letters to support military personnel serving abroad.

"We ask that you participate in this program in the spirit of American patriotism knowing that your soldier may not be able to correspond with you. We support them asking nothing in return except for the honor of letting them know they are appreciated and never forgotten!"

Adopt-a-Platoon Program Statement

Letters from Wa-Hi students are being sent to a platoon consisting of 33 troops who are serving in Iraq until this spring.

"In addition to learning about what it must be like to be a soldier in Iraq, I hope my students are also learning that they can make a difference by writing and sharing their gratitude and support with others," Olson said.

Olson said her students also learned valuable writing skills through the *Adopt-a-Platoon* program.

"We were able to create a meaningful writing experience and practice letter writing and formatting skills."

