

Special needs student considered All Star teacher's aide

Brian Hough's love for school keeps him busy

With his favorite bright blue “Senior Power” Walla Walla High School t-shirt proudly on display, **Brian Hough** sorts through school mail with the precision of an automated system as part of his Teacher’s Assistant job.



Brian Hough

Hough, who has Down’s Syndrome, has excelled in the Special Education program both in the classroom and beyond. “School is fun,” 19-year-old Hough said with a big grin on his face. “Everybody is nice to me here.”

Hough maintains a very active lifestyle at school and at home. He even works at Dairy Queen when he’s not in school to keep busy. “I am very proud of Brian,” Wa-Hi Special Education teacher **Gretchen Baker** said. “Brian is very pro-active about his school schedule because HE LOVES SCHOOL! He has already made a list of classes that he wants to take at Walla Walla Community College next year.”

Hough continues to inspire his classmates and teachers with his positive attitude, love for life and care for those around him.

“Brian is an outstanding Teacher’s Assistant. He loves to do nice things for people. One of the ways he has found to do that is to deliver the mail to teachers. Wa-Hi is a better place because of Brian.”

Sarah Stone, Copy Center Technician



Special Education student Brian Hough delivers packages to teachers, sorts mail and pitches in as needed as part of his Copy Center job.

He attended Prospect Point Elementary and Garrison Middle School before becoming a Blue Devil.

School Closure Announcements

Here's what to expect...

- Parents get automated call by 6:15 a.m.
- Website updated by 6:15 a.m. (www.wwps.org)
- Radio and television messages on air
- E-News members receive e-mail messages

NON PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
WALLA WALLA, WA 99362
Permit No. 35

Walla Walla Public Schools

364 South Park Street
Walla Walla, WA 99362
509.529.7713 (FAX)
509.527.3000

website: www.wwps.org

Focus on Education community newsletter is published tri-annually by Walla Walla Public Schools.

Board of Directors

Max Carrera
Mary Jo Geidl
Anne Golden
Jim Lehmann
Cindy Meyer

Walla Walla Public Schools is an Equal Opportunity Employer and complies with all the requirements of the ADA

Walla Walla
Public
Schools

Focus on Education

Your School District Newsletter | Winter 2008 | Volume 9 | Issue 2

City partnership puts safety first Police officer and working dog now on duty full-time



Since the early 1980s police officer **Steve Echevarria** has worked to help keep the citizens of Walla Walla safe. Thanks to a new partnership between the City of Walla Walla and Walla Walla Public Schools, Echevarria, and his working dog *Beamer* (above), will put their years of experience to task helping students

have a safe learning environment. The district will split Echevarria’s salary with the city. Echevarria’s office will be at Lincoln Alternative High School, but his beat will also include support to Garrison and Pioneer Middle Schools.

See **SRO** page 3

Prospect Point kindergarteners to get new playground Principal Rick Nebeker and family donate \$10,000 to fundraiser

Prospect Point Principal **Rick Nebeker** and his family recently donated \$10,000 to replace the existing 40-year-old kindergarten playground equipment. Nebeker said it was something they believed in and wanted to support.

The new equipment will be installed in April 2008. Headed by **Staci Wanichek**, several local businesses and individuals also contributed to this worthwhile privately funded project.

See **Prospect Point** page 5

In This Issue

High School Task Force	2
Wa-Hi beefs up security	3
Replacement Operations Levy .	4
Breast cancer beware	5
Boundary study begins	6
YMCA buys property	7
National teaching certifications	7
Special Needs “All Star”	8

Replacement Levy on February Ballot

Remember to vote! February 19
(Ballots mail out February 1)

Replacement Levy: The voter-approved 2004 Programs and Operations Levy, which passed at 67.4%, expires in December 2008 and this Levy would replace it.

Quality Programs: This proposed Levy would help maintain the current level of teaching and educational programs. Levies are different than bonds. Bonds = brick and mortar (Edison project). Levies = people and programs.

Lower class size: Walla Walla’s levy pays for approximately 30 additional teachers, thus lowering class size and offering more specialized instruction.

See **M&O Levy** page 4

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

Quality | Integrity | Accountability | Respect | Courtesy



Rich Carter
Superintendent

529-7713 (FAX)
527-3000
rcarter@wwps.org
www.wwps.org

"The goal of education is the advancement of knowledge and the dissemination of truth."

John F. Kennedy

Walla Walla values schools

We are having a very good school year. The district is in sound financial shape and our programs are operating at a very high level.

Walla Walla continues to be recognized at the state level for our strategies to help students be successful in school.

We have a dedicated, caring and committed staff that are focused on student achievement and personalizing education. In my 34 years in education, I've never worked with a better staff than we have right here in Walla Walla. I'm proud to be superintendent of the Walla Walla Schools, this is truly a premiere school district.

The district's four-year Replacement School Programs and Operations Levy is on the ballot Feb. 19. Ballots will mail to your homes Feb. 1.

Levy funding has a direct impact on the success we are witnessing. Levy dollars fund people and programs.

This community has always understood the importance of educating their children. Thank you for being our *Partner in Learning*.

Replacement Levy Ballot Language (as will appear on Feb. 19 issue)

Replacement School Programs and Operations Levy

The Board of Directors of Walla Walla School District No. 140 adopted Resolution No. 16-2007, concerning a proposition to finance school programs and operation expenses.

This proposition would authorize the District to replace an expiring levy and to levy the following excess taxes upon the taxable property with the District, for support of the District's General Fund program and operation expenses.

(See **Levy** page 4 for more information)

YMCA buys Support Services Property

Deal allows district authorization to continue using site

School board members this fall took another step in replacing the district's aging Support Services facility by unanimously approving the sale of the property and building at 325 S. Park St. to the YMCA.

The YMCA agreed to pay \$580,000 for the property which represents the appraised market value. The YMCA also set up a long-term lease agreement with the district per the land and property purchase deal.

The agreement offers the district a five-year lease for \$1 per year. After the five-year period, the district has the option to renew it annually at fair market value.

"This will allow the district to continue using the property until the new site west of 13th Avenue is developed," Superintendent **Rich Carter** said. "This is a win-win situation for the school district and YMCA."

Walla Walla teachers earn national certificates

Walla Walla teachers **Missy Johnson** (Green Park), **Curtis Schafer**, **Casey Monahan**, and **Matt Bayley** (Walla Walla High School) have received certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Requirements include authoring a detailed professional portfolio, video taping classroom instruction and passing a challenging assessment to test subject knowledge.

These teachers earn a 10-year certificate. The district now has a total of 24 teachers with national professional teaching certificates.

Washington State Statistics

- Total -- Nationally Certified: 1,803 (U.S. Rank: 10th)
- Percentage of Nationally Certified in WA: 3.5% (U.S. Rank: 7th)

Note: 164 Washington School Districts, out of 295, have at least one teacher with National Board Certification.

Blue Devil Basketball KTEL 1490 AM

Listen to Boys and Girls
Blue Devil Basketball Live!

Tune to KTEL 1490 AM



Community Connections

McDonald Zaring sponsors sports schedules

Thanks to McDonald Zaring Insurance for being the sponsor of this year's Wa-Hi pocket sports schedules.

Partner Mark Thompson said McDonald Zaring has proudly served the community since 1932 and believes community involvement is at the core of his firm's beliefs and successes.

Community Center for Youth moves to Lincoln

The Community Center for Youth has moved from the Armory and is now open at Lincoln Alternative High School.

Location: Community Center for Youth

Lincoln Alternative High School

421 South 4th Street

Walla Walla, Washington 99362

Phone: (509) 526-2571

E-Mail: ccy@innw.net

CCY Hours:

• Monday - Thursday: 3-7 p.m.

• Friday: 3-9 p.m.

WW Exchange Club honors Wa-Hi seniors

Walla Walla High School Seniors **Cody Smith** and **Dani Weber** were named the Exchange Club of Walla Walla Youth of the Month students this fall.

Theme: *"America's Youth: Expanding Our Horizons"*

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.



Task Force seeks answers

Community takes close look at high school facilities

Following last year's listening campaign, Walla Walla Public Schools Board of Directors promised to complete a comprehensive study of the district's high school facilities.

A High School Facilities Task Force was formed last summer and has been meeting regularly this school year to ask questions and find answers. School board member **Cindy Meyer** and **John Rowley** of Nelson Irrigation are serving as co-chairs.

The topics of study were generated from the school board's listening campaign, district surveys and feedback members of the Task Force have heard.

The group is studying both district high school facilities (Wa-Hi and Lincoln Alternative) to better determine how their condition impacts student learning.

During the next and final phase set to begin in January, Task Force members will study options for improving facilities. This effort will eventually lead to recommendations for school board members to consider.

"We need to find a good fit for our students and our community," Meyer said. "We are looking at all options."

Task Force Topics of Study

Phase One Topics (completed)

What is?

- High School facilities condition report
- College Place future high school plans
- Deferred maintenance report
- Facility impact on learning
- Safety and security report

See these complete reports online:

District Website: www.wwps.org

(A to Z section - High School Task Force)

Phase Two Topics (completed)

What should be?

- Quality high schools research
- Small schools & small learning communities
- Career & Technical Education

Phase Three Topics (set to begin)

This phase seeks to narrow the difference between what is and what should be. The phase will eventually produce recommendations for the Board of Directors to consider.

Programs & Operations Replacement Levy Facts

Levy Goal - Provide best education possible for Walla Walla students

What do school levies pay for?

Local levies support school needs. Our levy pays for approximately 14 percent of the District's operating budget.

In Walla Walla, the M&O levy helps to support education programs and school operations such as:

- approximately 30 teachers
- approximately 50 non-certificated staff
- school safety staff
- elementary music specialists
- health clinicians
- library-media specialists
- elementary physical education specialists
- school supplies
- building maintenance and grounds
- technology
- extra-curricular programs (athletics, music, drama, FFA and more)
- transportation for school activities



Levy dollars help the district lower class sizes by funding approximately 30 teachers. These include elementary music and PE Specialists and Library-Media teachers.

Summary of 2008 Replacement Levy Proposal

(Projected rates similar to those approved in 2004)

2009 - \$8,278,000 (projected rate \$3.42 per \$1,000)
 2010 - \$8,828,000 (projected rate \$3.56 per \$1,000)
 2011 - \$9,378,000 (projected rate \$3.69 per \$1,000)
 2012 - \$9,978,000 (projected rate \$3.83 per \$1,000)

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

Law prohibits collection of more money than the total figure approved by voters - even if property assessments increase.

Election Information

- Election date: Tuesday, February 19
- Ballots mailed: Friday, February 1
- 50% + 1 vote required for approval
- Call Communications Director Mark Higgins at 526-6716 or e-mail: mhiggins@wwps.org
- Information Online: www.wwps.org



Walla Walla voters approved the 2004 Levy with a nearly 68 percent approval rate.

Breast Cancer Beware!

Volleyball team on a mission to cure

With their motto "We Believe" and Blue Ridge Elementary teacher **Tina Holbrook** as their local inspiration, Walla Walla High School's Volleyball team is on a mission to beat breast cancer.

Holbrook is battling the disease which has impacted women and their families worldwide. Holbrook's daughter Corrine is a junior and a member of the volleyball team.

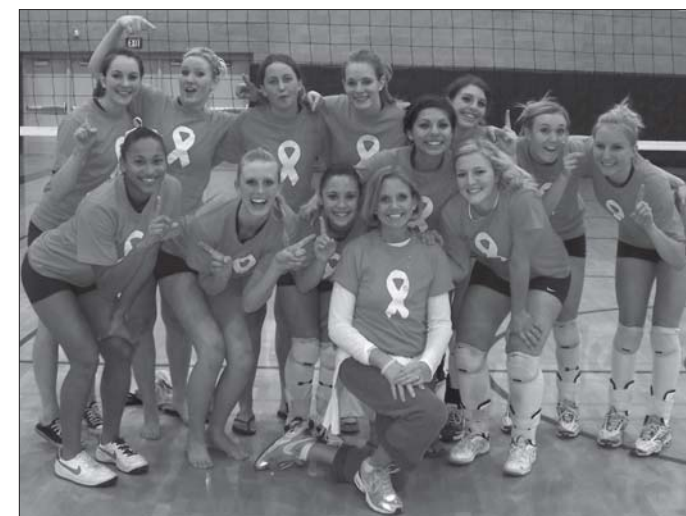
"Knowing that one of her teammates' mom is battling with breast cancer, **Taryn Cummings** started the ball rolling," Coach **Jillian DeBritz** said. "This was driven by our girls and their parents which made it even more powerful."

Parents and team members organized the sale of pink t-shirts that had a white ribbon and "We Believe" on the back. All proceeds went to benefit the Holbrook family.

"I am so proud of our girls, and especially our captains, for orchestrating this event, DeBritz said. "It really shows their huge hearts, and their desire to use their influence to make a positive impact on the world."

"Their desire to reach out to our family speaks volumes of their own families as well as that of their coaches' belief that life is about relationships."

Tina Holbrook



*Blue Ridge teacher **Tina Holbrook** (center) is surrounded by support as girls on the Wa-Hi Varsity Volleyball team model the t-shirts they designed for Breast Cancer Awareness Month.*

The bright pink shirts featuring a white ribbon and "We Believe" printed on the back were part of a fundraising and awareness effort organized by the team.

Exchange Club donates Freedom Shrine



(L-R) Superintendent **Rich Carter**, Garrison Principal **Gina Yonts** and Exchange Club of Walla Walla President **Ron Coffell** celebrate the recent donation of the *Freedom Shrine* to Garrison Middle School.

This impressive, permanently mounted collection of 30 of the most important and historic American documents, including the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Gettysburg Address, is now mounted near the school's entrance.

Prospect Point continued from page 1

New Prospect Point Kindergarten Playground



Thanks to generous contributions from:

- Welch Grant
- Banner Bank
- Evergreen Labs
- Thompson Kreitzberg
- The Home Depot
- Brick Sales
- Roger and Cheryl Corn
- Natural Reclamation Service
- Mary Garner Esary Trust
- Ford of Walla Walla
- Walla Walla Wine Club
- Clarette's Restaurant
- UPS
- Bill and Joan Lewis

Changes offer more options to high school students to meet graduation requirements

Certificate of Academic Achievement Options Overview by Ron Higgins, District Assessment Director



In March 2006, the Washington State Legislature passed Senate Bill 6475, which authorized the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to create three additional options for students to meet state standards required to earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA).

Most students will earn the Certificate by passing the High School Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). Students in the class of 2008 through 2012 must pass the reading and writing portions of the WASL or successfully complete an alternative in order to graduate. The Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) Options are for students who have strong skills, but don't test well or just need another way to show what they know. The options are designed to be as challenging as the WASL. Students must take the WASL at least once before accessing the options.

The three CAA Options are:

- **AP and College Admission Test Scores:** Students may use their scores on the PSAT, SAT, ACT and specified Advanced Placement examinations to show they have key skills in math, reading, and/or writing.
- **Collection of Evidence:** Students compile a set of classroom work samples with the help of a teacher. Collections for students in Career and Technical Education programs can include work from their program and other classes.
- **WASL/Grades Comparison:** A student's grades in math courses and/or English courses are compared with the grades of students who took the same courses AND passed the WASL. This option is available during the senior year to students with an accumulative GPA of 3.2 or higher.

Sharpstein recognized by state as school of distinction

State School Supt. Terry Bergeson applauds Sharpstein as one of 86 "amazing" schools

Sharpstein Elementary has been named one of 86 "Schools of Distinction" by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) for dramatic improvements in student reading and mathematics over the past several years.

"This is a school where everyone works hard and keeps children the focus," Principal **Laure Quaresma** said.

OSPI's Schools of Distinction represent the top 5 percent of elementary, middle and high schools whose students have shown outstanding growth in both reading and mathematics skills during a six-year period.

To be considered for the award, each school had to meet the current year's state learning targets on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning for students in both reading and mathematics.

Sharpstein's Keys to Success

- K-5 Dual Language program
- All Day Kindergarten
- Kindergarten Home Visitor
- Instructional Coaching
- Professional Development
- Three Tier Intervention
- Extended Learning opportunities
- Weekly Collaboration

"Sharpstein Elementary School is driven by a strong sense of community and student success."

Laure Quaresma
Principal

Boundary study begins

Pioneer Middle School Principal **Dana Jones** and District Math Director **Chris Gardea** are leading a boundary review study as the district prepares for the addition of a modernized Edison Elementary.

The new and improved Edison will accommodate up to 200 more students than are in the current Edison boundary.

"This will be a fair and inclusive process," Jones said.

A Boundary Review Committee will be established this winter to begin work on a timeline for final recommendations.

Boundary changes are projected to be in place to start the 2009-2010 school year.

Cameras key to Wa-Hi security improvements

"A safe campus offers our teachers the freedom to teach and our students the confidence to learn."

Darcy Weisner, Wa-Hi Principal

With 44 cameras perched strategically throughout the sprawling Wa-Hi campus, high school administrators now have the ability to closely monitor the campus 24 hours a day, seven days a week, according to a school board report from Principal **Darcy Weisner**.

Weisner said the addition of the cameras has been the most significant change made to improve safety. Since the system is web-based, cameras can be viewed at any time and at any location. Operators also have the ability to pan cameras from side-to-side and up and down to better zoom in on a situation.

Wa-Hi Safety Improvements

- 44 new security cameras
- New hall pass system
- Locker lobbies cleared
- Trees and bushes trimmed
- Student parking lots reduced
- Additional security officer
- Limited cell phone use

"A safe campus offers our teachers the freedom to teach and our students the confidence to learn," Weisner said.

Tree limbs and bushes have also been trimmed for better campus visibility and a new, color-coded hall pass system.

The system divides the campus into zones and assigns different colors for the zones. Students wear color-coded passes around their necks to make the passes easy to see.

"It lets us know immediately if a student is not in the zone they are supposed to be," Weisner said.

Students must also log out and back in every time they leave class during the period to better track where students are at any given time.

Locker lobbies have also been modified by removing the brick center islands. Weisner said this allows for better traffic flow and improved visibility in these areas.

Parking arrangements have also been adjusted to improve safety. Student lots have been reduced from four to two lots to better supervise who is coming and going.



(L-R) Principal Darcy Weisner and Security Officers Bill Fullen and Gary Winston Sr. monitor campus security cameras.

Weisner also eliminated the In-School Suspension program to pay for a third security officer. Security officers now wear uniforms, complete with a badge of the American flag for a more professional appearance.

"This has changed how students view them," Weisner said. "They are treated with more respect."

Weisner said the new electronic device policy has also had a positive impact at Wa-Hi by limiting the use of cell phones.

"We have seen a significant reduction in harassment and fights this year," Weisner said. "We have worked hard to create a safer school environment for our staff and students."

SRO continued from page 1

"My primary mission is the safety of the staff and students," Echevarria said. "My presence in the schools alone will make a big difference."

Echevarria says he loves kids and wants to have a positive impact on the school system. Lincoln Junior **Jessica Taylor** says he already has made the school a safer place.

"There's not as much trouble now, it's more stable" Taylor said. "A safe school helps me focus so I don't have to worry during class and I can concentrate on learning."

Echevarria enjoys playing with his three Labrador retrievers, golfing, spending time with his wife, and watching sports. He also has a back-

ground in coaching wrestling and says he hopes to get back on the mat again now that he works in the schools.

"I coached wrestling at Wa-Hi, Garrison and Pioneer," Echevarria said. "One of my goals is to get back into coaching at the middle schools."

With Echevarria and "Beamer" on duty Walla Walla Schools are in good hands.