

Whitman students promote healthy living

Volunteer Jim Russo recruits college students to produce information packed parent newsletter

Whitman Science Professor **Jim Russo** spends most of his days helping tomorrow's leaders gain a solid foundation in nature and the physical world. He also has a passion for health and nutrition.

Russo's most recent project as volunteer chair of the district's *School Health Advisory Committee* is developing a parent newsletter featuring information on Nutrition and Fitness. Through his Whitman College connection, he has secured the support of college students to help create this new parent learning resource.

Russo hopes to produce and distribute the newsletter three times per year, with the first set to go out this spring. Parents will learn more about the district's efforts to curb childhood obesity, tips for staying healthy, recipes for healthy meals and more.

To learn more about the new WWPS Fitness and Nutrition Policy and Procedures visit the following link on the district's website: http://www.wwps.org/support/nutrition_fitness.htm



Jim Russo



Jim Russo reviews a draft of the new Nutrition and Fitness parent newsletter with Whitman College Senior and publication editor **Nicole Bates**.

The partnership with Whitman College to help produce this publication supports the district's Strategic Plan which encourages community involvement to enhance learning.

"I was excited to apply my scientific knowledge and interest in health in a way that would truly serve the community. And the experience it has given me will serve me well in my future."

Whitman College Student Nicole Bates

Walla Walla Public Schools

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

website: www.wwps.org

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What to look for next school year...

- Four-year M&O Levy election
- Edison construction project planning
- Boundary review/planning
(To allow for more students at new Edison Elementary)
- "Paperless" board meetings (improve efficiencies, cut costs)
- Comprehensive High School study

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In This Issue

- Golden on national board 2
- Wa-Hi pottery helps Helpline 3
- Volunteers of Year named 4
- High tech parent information 5
- Volunteer PAO helps JROTC 6
- City donates tree to school 7
- End-of-Year Celebrations 7
- Whitman students pitch-in 8

New Edison design taking shape

Project on schedule for June 2008 groundbreaking

"The district sold bonds to fund the Edison construction project at a fixed interest rate just over four percent.

This extremely low interest rate means Walla Walla taxpayers will pay less than originally projected to fund the project."
Business Manager Aron Rausch

Although it's still one year away before heavy equipment takes over the landscape at Edison Elementary, plenty of behind the scenes work is taking place to ensure a June 2008 groundbreaking.

Project architects from Architects West are busy meeting with staff and district administrators to discuss design needs to best support educational programs.

"How exciting it is to be part of the decision-making process as we plan our new school," Edison First Grade Teacher **Sara Erwin** said. "We appreciate the fact that the staff has a voice in all of the planning stages."

According to Lead Architect **John Evans**, the success of the

See **Edison** page 4



Above: Edison Principal **Nancy Withycombe** and Architect **John Evans** discuss site development for the new Edison.



Left: Edison teachers **Sara Erwin** (L) and **Debora Rossi** (R) review design needs with Architect **John Evans**. This valuable input will be key to a successful design.

Energy Management hits \$2 million savings mark

Energy usage down 24 percent

The district continues to save money and support strategies to conserve energy as represented by a 24 percent slash in energy usage since the Energy Management program began in 1999. The district has saved nearly a \$2 million in the past seven years thanks to the sizable drop in usage.

"We have established an energy ethic with each teacher, employee, and administrator," District Energy Manager **John Butenhoff** said. "People determine and control the use of energy and we are committed as a district to conserving energy."

Keys to success

- Turning off computers, lights and office equipment when not used.
- Detailed scheduling: Buildings are not lighted, heated or cooled when unoccupied.

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

*Thanks for a
great year!*

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Leadership changes healthy

By Superintendent Rich Carter

We have made some exciting administrative changes this spring as we strive to raise student achievement and continue offering students a first-class education.

After spending more than 20 years at Garrison Middle School as a teacher and administrator, **Jim Sporleder** will lead the district's Alternative Education programs next school year. Jim has a passion for helping students find ways to be successful and has unique skills to motivate staff to be their best. He also has a proven record of building parent, community and agency relations. We are fortunate to have some of his integrity and experience lead these programs.

I've promoted Garrison Assistant Principal **Gina Yonts** and Dean of Students **Esteban Florian** to the principal and assistant principal positions, respectively. Gina has been mentored by Jim Sporleder for four years and has developed a positive rapport with staff, students and parents. Esteban has proved he is ready for this leadership opportunity. He has developed tremendous connections with our Latino population and we want to strengthen these relationships.

I continue to be impressed by first year Wa-Hi Principal **Darcy Weisner** and his administrative team. He is working hard to develop positive student relations and build trust with staff and parents through open, honest and meaningful communication and involvement. We are excited about the district's future and learning opportunities for students.

Golden to hold national school board position

Longtime school board member and current President **Anne Golden** was recently elected to a three year term as the Pacific Region "Director-at-Large" for the National School Board Association. NSBA's mission is to foster excellence and equity in public education through school board leadership.

"I'm committed to using my experience to help ensure all school boards are successful," Golden said.

Golden's Board Highlights:

- 20 years on Walla Walla board
- Past President, Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA)
- Past Chair, Pacific Region
- School board trainer for WSSDA
- Chair, Student Achievement Task Force (WSSDA)
- Member, Governor's K-12 Advisory Council (funding study)

City preserves tree heritage



City Urban Forestry Advisory Commission Chair **Donna Johannessen** helps Blue Ridge students plant green ash seedlings as part of the school's Arbor Day celebration.

The City of WW also donated a red maple tree to the school in support of the city's long heritage of planting and caring for trees in the valley.

"The City of Walla Walla promotes Arbor Day because of the great heritage trees have given to this community over many years," said Councilman and Mayor Pro Tem **Dan Johnson**. "Our students need to share in the understanding that trees service us with clean air, beauty, and protection for wildlife. We as citizens need to maintain and increase our urban forest in this community for generations to come. Plant a tree, it's the right thing to do!"

"We as citizens need to maintain and increase our urban forest in this community for generations to come."

Dan Johnson, City of Walla Walla Mayor Pro Tem

Blue Ridge 5th grade students under the direction of teachers **Jennie Dyerly**, **Amy Hartford** and **Margaret Yount** provided musical entertainment during the Arbor Day Celebration following Principal **Connie Taylor-Randall's** reading of an inspirational poem about how people can learn from trees.

Members of the City of Walla Walla Urban Forestry Advisory Commission were also in attendance and helped students prepare green ash seedlings to take home and grow.

District to form community Task Force for high school study

Group to help develop vision for high school experience

School board members recently began what is expected to be a lengthy and comprehensive process to develop a common vision for Walla Walla's high school experience.

School board President **Anne Golden** last month during a public work session explained how post-election feedback following the rejected May 2006 bond issue pushed for this study. She said community and staff input called for more information on options for high school programs, facilities and concepts.

Superintendent **Rich Carter** has detailed an organization plan for creating a community led Task Force to oversee and manage the study. His plan includes a school board led process for identifying Task Force leaders and members.

He recommended a third-party facilitator to help maintain objectivity and provide support to the Task Force. His plan also calls on district administrators and staff to serve as technical advisors.

Golden said the next step is to develop a timeline to keep the process moving along.

The following common themes surfaced from the school board's fall Listening Campaign. These areas, and others, are expected to be studied by the High School Task Force.

- Replace vs. remodel existing Wa-Hi buildings
- Second high school option
- College Place High School (future potential)
- Alternative Education (programs & facilities)
- Vocational Tech Center possibilities
- Athletic facility options

Community Connections

Community involvement helps district develop new Technology Plan to support 21st Century learning

The district recently concluded a year-long effort to develop a new, three year Technology & Learning Plan. (View at: <http://resources.wwps.org/>)

The process, which included input and involvement from community leaders, school board, staff, parents and others, focused on the integration of technology in the classroom.

"Our goal is to support technology literacy as one of the 21st Century learning outcomes, preparing and empowering our students for success in the global workplace," Technology Director **Janis Barton** said.

Special thanks to:

- **Jack Morris**, ESD 123 IT Coordinator (facilitator)

Community/Business Volunteers

Punkey Adams, WW County Library Director
Todd Brandenburg, Pocket iNet Owner
Tom McMakin, Doyle Telecom Owner
Jeffrey Rask, Qwest Global Account Manager

Community invited to End-of-Year celebrations

Wa-Hi Baccalaureate

Sunday, June 3 - Blue Mt. Community Church, 6 p.m.

Wa-Hi Academic Recognition

Wednesday, June 6 - Wa-Hi Auditorium, 7 p.m.

Graduates of Distinction Reception

Wednesday, June 6 - Board Room, 3:30 to 5 p.m.

Opportunity Program Senior Celebration Luncheon

Wednesday, June 6 - 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (919 S. 2nd)

Paine High School Commencement

Thursday, June 7 - Paine Gym, 6:00 p.m.

Wa-Hi Commencement

Friday, June 8 - Wa-Hi campus, 7:30 p.m.

Pioneer 8th Grade Recognition

Tuesday, June 12 - Wa-Hi Auditorium, 7:30 p.m.

Garrison 8th Grade Recognition

Wednesday, June 13 - Cordiner Hall, 7:00 p.m.

Walla Walla Public Schools name 2007 *Volunteers of the Year* Special thanks to our Art Regier Award recipients for their dedication and exceptional service



Dr. Howard "Howie" Blessing - Dental Health Programs

Nominators - Jennifer Douglas, Terri Gilbert

Volunteer Highlights

- Member of the volunteer Dental Health Program for more than 15 years
- Known for his joyful, entertaining and humorous approach to educating students
- Presents 5th grade smokeless tobacco educational program in support of the Great American Smokeout
- Provides sealants, exams and helps promote good oral health for thousands of district students



Vanessa Prull - Chair, Citizens for Schools & President of the Edison PTA

Nominators: Ladema Myers and Nancy Withycombe

Volunteer Highlights

- Chair, Citizens for Schools Committee -- Key to a successful Edison Bond election
- Leads Edison PTA efforts (current Edison PTA President)
- Active in Edison's literacy improvement efforts
- Volunteers daily for the school's designated reading hour



Jim Russo - Chair, School Health Advisory Committee

Nominators: Linda Boggs, Jean Carwile Masteller, Jennifer Douglas, and Julie Jones

Volunteer Highlights

- As chair of the *School Health Advisory Committee*, he has been very active in the development and implementation of the district's Nutrition and Physical Fitness Policy and Procedure
- Dedicated to researching and providing important information which helped the district establish improved Nutrition and Fitness standards that are in place today
- Volunteers at Berney with hands-on science projects and other positive learning activities

Edison continued from page 1

time intensive design process relies on many experts and entities.

"The design process will involve somewhere between 20-25 different design professionals and staff," Evans said.

These include architects, landscape architects, civil engineers, geotechnical engineers, surveyors, traffic engineers, structural engineers, electrical engineers, mechanical engineers, acoustical engineers, lighting designers, kitchen consultants, hardware consultants, interior designers, draftsmen, and specification writers.

In addition there are city building officials such as health, planning, parks and recreation, utility, building officials, fire and more that will review the design

team's work for compliance, according to Evans.

"To accurately coordinate all the design team members, meet the city codes and reviews as well as meet with staff regularly and meet state requirements, it will take about 12-14 months," Evans said. "If you consider that there are only about 250 work days in a year this process will require every day to meet that schedule."

The district also recently sold bonds to fund the project and is finalizing contracts as needed to proceed with the detailed work schedule.

Site studies and surveying work will continue this spring as the district eyes a June 2008 groundbreaking.

Edison Project Public Meetings Scheduled

May 9 - 7 to 8 p.m.
Parent/Community presentation by Architect John Evans.

May 23 - Open House - 3:30 to 5 p.m. Parents and community members are invited. Great opportunity to meet and ask questions of Architect John Evans.

June 6 - Open House - 3:30 to 5 p.m. Parents and community members are invited. Great opportunity to meet and ask questions of Architect John Evans.

Technology & Telecommunications enhance district information sharing

By Janis Barton
Director, Technology, Telecommunications & Library Media Services



Walla Walla Public Schools has been gearing up to provide parents with timely, proactive communications that will help to bridge the school-to-home communication gap.

For the past two years district educators have worked collaboratively with the Technology Department to refine and implement the use of EasyGrade Pro to allow parents access to their students' grades and progress reports. **Dennis Bennett**, Computer Coordinator and Master Technology Teacher, has successfully supported this effort with the entire teaching staff at Pioneer Middle School. Skyward, the student information system, also includes a parent access component which has been used at the high school.

Implementation of the latest upgrades to EasyGrade Pro and the ability for parents to view student grades through a single online portal will be in place this fall after these products have been fully tested and the district support systems are in place.

Another communication tool, an automated parent notification service, which can send voice and email messages, has been successfully tested at the high school by **Dennis DeBroeck**, CTE Technology Teacher. Now



The Dennis and Dennis show! (L-R) Wa-Hi Technology teacher Dennis DeBroeck and Pioneer Science Teacher and Technology Coordinator Dennis Bennett have played key roles in helping the district use technology to improve communication with parents, staff, students and the public.

the district's goal is to determine which notification system can serve the entire school district for daily absence and other general phone and email notifications as well as for rapid emergency notifications. Ease of use, seamless import from Skyward, versatility, efficiency, and reasonable cost are primary considerations.

All of these communication enhancements support the District Strategic Plan goals to improve two-way communication and optimize the use of technology in Walla Walla Public Schools.

Willcuts receives Science Education Award

District elementary science coordinator **Peggy Willcuts** recently received the Washington State Laser 2006 Science Education Advocate Award and a \$5000 check to use for district science related educational activities.

"I have the vision that we could empower each student to become a scientifically literate person - someone who has an understanding of science and the nature of science such that it allows them the excitement and passion for the world around them," Willcuts said.

Willcuts is also a Science Specialist for Pacific Northwest National Labs in Richland. She has dedicated her professional career to serve as an advocate of science education in Washington State by working at the local, regional, state and national levels for education reform. She is also currently pursuing a doctorate from WSU in Educational Leadership.



Peggy Wilcut's \$5,000 award donation will be used to develop district outdoor educational activities.

Success in sight!

Wa-Hi JROTC rifle team member competes against the best shooters in the United States

Wa-Hi Senior Amber Criss tells us about her experiences at the Junior Olympics air-rifle shooting competition. Her qualifying scores ranked among the best in the nation.



I arrived in Colorado Springs with the anticipation of the Junior Olympics biting at my nerves. The first night was spent in a hotel with my Grandparents who have accompanied me to almost every shoot. When morning came we headed toward the Olympic Training Center.

During check-in I saw many shooters that I had competed against in other competitions. This made me realize it was a competition among the best-of-the-best. That night I stayed in the athletic dorms at the training center with another competitor from Nebraska. We both went to bed early knowing the first day of competition would be long.

The next morning dragged on until it was time to shoot. I was on the firing line telling myself it was like any other competition to calm my nerves. Then the command; load - start! My first shot "10" my second "10", when I was finished my 40 shoots, I was confident I had shot well. After the scores were posted, I was tied for fourth! I was proud that I had shot a personal best.

It was hard to sleep that night knowing I had one more day of competition left. The competition came sooner than expected and once again I was on the line ready to shoot.

This time I was feeling the pressure of winning. I wanted it so bad that I was finding it hard to focus. My first shot "10" my next "9" the rest were off and on. I knew I had lost too many points in this tight competition. The scores posted and I had fallen to 35th with 15 points separating me from first place.

I was happy for the opportunity to shoot at the Junior Olympics and went home knowing I had competed with the best!



Criss recently won the National JROTC Individual Precision Air Rifle Championship.

Retired military and federal Public Affairs Officer volunteers to train JROTC students



Duane "Dutch" Meier preps Walla Walla High School Junior **Sheila Hein** for a media visit showcasing the school's JROTC Rifle Team.

When Dutch was handling national media queries for "Kennewick Man" as the Public Affairs Officer for the Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District, he had no idea in retirement he would be passing along his 30 plus years of experience to students interested in communications.

"After being an Army brat, a soldier, an Army reservist, an Army uniformed retiree, an Army civilian employee and retiree from that, too, it seemed like the best and most natural way to keep serving and being a part of the Army family," Meier said when asked why he volunteers his time.

All of Meier's children went through the Walla Walla Public Schools system and graduated from Walla Walla High School. He says he enjoys giving back to the school district and working with these outstanding students.

"These are role model kids and they go quietly about the business of learning to be leaders among their peers," Meier said. "If there was anything that my background could do to help them get some public awareness of their efforts and activities, it's my happy privilege to assist their program in any way I can help."

"Dutch is extremely helpful in showing me how to work with the media. I've learned that media is all about the way you present yourself."

Wa-Hi Junior Sheila Hein

Public Affairs Officer for JROTC Rifle Team

Volunteers lead Edison story time



City of WW Police Officer **Kelly Parsons** volunteers to participate in Edison's B.E.A.R. "Be Enthusiastic About Reading" event earlier this school year.

Edison 2nd grade students in **Mary Klein's** class also had a park ranger, parents and other positive male role models read to them to demonstrate a love for reading.

To China and back... Sharpstein students take virtual trip to Asia



Sharpstein Elementary students in **Ben Woiblet's** fourth grade class (L-R) **Jesus Garcia, Caleb Leitch, Aubrey Barberich, and Adrian Sandoval** parade their handmade dragon throughout the school as part of a cultural awareness assembly to learn about China.

The students performed music, danced, viewed slide shows and even learned how to eat with chop sticks.

Wa-Hi pottery students support annual HelpLine fundraiser

Hungry for cereal or soup, most people without hesitation reach into the cupboard and grab a bowl.

However, there are some less fortunate community members who struggle just to put dishes on the table.

This spring Wa-Hi students in **John Butenhoff's** Pottery class have stepped in to help. Thanks to a partnership with *HelpLine*, a community organization which provides food, shelter and other necessities for those in need, Wa-Hi students donated more than 100 handcrafted bowls they made in their pottery classes to area families in need.

"It is good to know that you are helping people that need help," said student **Jeff Neher**. "To give away a soup bowl means a lot because you took time to make it with your own hands. You feel happiness inside when you give away something you made."



John Butenhoff
Art Teacher



(L-R) Wa-Hi Senior Erin Day and Junior Chelsey Stevens work on bowls they donated to HelpLine. These handcrafted bowls were given to Walla Walla families in need.