



# TODAY

News today that shapes the future..  
Students and employees in the  
West Allegheny Schools..  
Information for residents of Findlay  
and North Fayette Townships and  
Oakdale Borough

## School, Community Sponsor Read Across America Events

The West Allegheny School District participated in the national celebration, Read Across America, with a variety of activities and displays promoting reading on February 26 and 27 at the Mall at Robinson and again on Wednesday, March 2 at the schools. The date marks the 101st birthday of the popular children's book author Dr. Seuss, whose books provided the theme for the celebration.

A wide array of Read Across America events entertained children from 12:00 to 4:00 pm at The Mall at Robinson. Attendees had their faces painted, created a variety of art projects, and listened to Dr. Seuss stories. Group reading



sessions attracted listeners, who also received children's book lists. The West Allegheny Food Service Department provided cookies. High school students from the Art Club, Key Club, National Honor Society, and Future Teachers of America helped with reading the stories and supervising the art activities.

Throughout the day on March 2, a series of fun and educational classroom activities, including games, puzzles, artwork, and learning exercises--Dr. Seuss style--emphasized reading at Donaldson, McKee, and Wilson Elementary Schools. This year the elementary

schools sponsored a contest to encourage students to wear Dr. Seuss clothing or items. Those who dressed up had a chance to win a Barnes & Noble gift certificate.

A district-wide book drive was conducted at all the buildings in conjunction with the Half Price Books store at The Point. The books (new or gently used) will be donated to Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. Students who donated at least one book will have a chance to enter a drawing for a gift certificate to Half Price Books.

West Allegheny teachers Lorraine Burns, Laurie Cole, Robin Gilden, Karen Horwatt, Colleen Kinevey,  
*-continued on page 5-*



*Wilson Elementary third graders Taylor Caruso and Jessica Dethlefs and first grader Brooke Caruso celebrated Dr. Seuss's birthday with reading and art activities at The Mall at Robinson on February 27 as part of the Read Across America event.*



*West Allegheny reading aide Lynn Huebner visited the elementary schools (Wilson on February 22, Donaldson on the 23rd, and McKee on the 24th) to read her original Dr. Seuss-style story to the students as part of the celebration of Read Across America Day.*

# Board Recognition Night Celebrates Student Achievement

Board President John Scott presided at the February 28 Board Recognition Night held to acknowledge students and staff for performing various arts and athletic achievements. These included

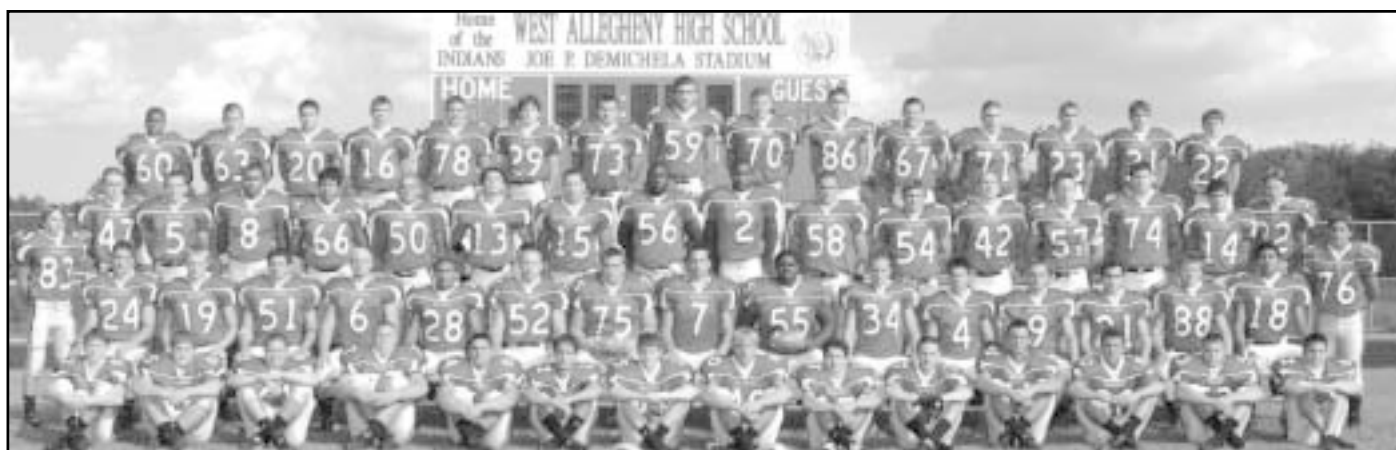
PMEA Honors Band, Bands of America National Honors Band, and PMEA Region I Band participants. Individual accomplishments were recognized in both indoor track and football. In addition, the entire

football team and coaches were honored for winning the WPIAL Conference Championship and for qualifying for WPIAL AAA Playoff Semifinalist status.

## Honorees who attended Board Recognition Night on February 28:

(first row) Coach Ed Marcelles, Josh Shelton, Josh Diven, Greg Marshall, Joe Gizoni, Jamie Schumacher, (second row) Rob Werner, Mike Clemens, Scott Ruperto, Rob Giles, Jack Seifert, Steve Cooney, (third row) Emanuel (C.J.) Davis, Dorin Dickerson, Matt Lutz, DeWayne Chandler, Will Bowers, and Coach Bob Palko (left)

West Allegheny High School Football Team: WPIAL Parkway Conference Champions and WPIAL AAA Playoff Semifinalist (below)



## Resources Available for Families In Need of Help

The West Allegheny Family Support Committee was formed to help district families with school-age children. If you are aware of any family with school-age children living in the district, who may be in need of

support services, please contact the following: Lynn Birnie, high school, 724-695-5252; Kristen Martin, middle school, 724-695-8979, Ext. 2233; Kristen Newell, Donaldson, 724-213-1014; JoAnn Biscan,

McKee, 724-695-5267; Karen Tracy, Wilson, 724-695-3300, Ext. 5304; and Meredith Gillo, District Office, 724-695-5219. Recommendations for help may be anonymous and will remain confidential.

# A Message from the Superintendent

## Past Successes, New Challenges, a Bright Future

It won't be long until our beautiful snow-covered countryside turns to green and the trees, plants, and flowers burst into the colors of a new season. Nature's life cycle will once again energize us as the warm sunshine gradually brings us out of our winter doldrums into a time of great anticipation, spring! Just two months ago, I came to West Allegheny with great anticipation, excited to assume leadership of the District, yet not knowing what to fully expect. I must tell you that my time here has been very positive. Everyone that I have come in contact with--the board, staff, students, parents, law enforcement officers, municipal officials, and community leaders--have been most gracious to me. I would also like to recognize the dedication and record of accomplishments of my predecessor, Dr. Charles Hughey. He has been nothing but supportive during the transition for which I am very appreciative. Undoubtedly, a common theme has echoed from the folks I have met. All are very proud of the school system and its neighborhoods. Numerous people have told me "You're going to like it here." I believe they're right.

I have found people to be open, honest, and caring. They want what is best for the youth of the community. Rest assured, so do I. It has been a pleasure getting to know our students through meetings, eating lunch together, participating in a concert, and attending many athletic events. I look on with pride as teachers, administrators, and the support staff

enter the schools each day committed to assuring that all students have every opportunity to be successful. That success can be seen everywhere from test scores and individual achievement to

**“With...growth comes a responsibility to provide the facilities, programs, and personnel that will enable the district to continue delivering the high quality programs and services that the community has come to expect.”**

*—Dr. John S. DiSanti*

extracurricular accomplishments. No wonder you are proud!

As we look ahead, I believe the future is bright. Certainly, there are challenges, but none that we cannot manage successfully. We are a growing organization. The School District's fine reputation along with available land and infrastructure has attracted many families to new developments which seem to be emerging

everywhere. With that growth comes a responsibility to provide the facilities, programs, and personnel that will enable the district to continue delivering the high quality programs and services that the community has come to expect.

The Board recently took a major step

in the development of a Master Facilities Plan by hiring a demographer to perform a comprehensive statistical analysis of population and enrollment trends. This information will ultimately determine the breadth and scope of future construction/renovation while assuring that the District realizes maximum reimbursement from the State Department of Education. During the next year, the Board's plan for accommodating anticipated growth will be unveiled. It promises to be an initiative that will responsibly meet the needs of our growing student population.

I would like to again thank the Board, staff, students and community for welcoming me with open arms. I look forward to building on the successes of those who preceded me and developing a Vision for the Future so that the District may continue to be one of the region's leading public school systems.



*Dr. John S. DiSanti, Superintendent, joins Mrs. Ellen Campbell's kindergarten students for story time on Read Across America Day.*

## High School Announces SHASDA Award Winner

West Allegheny high school sophomore Tammy Thompson has been selected as West Allegheny's 2005 SHASDA Student Performance Award winner. This award is designed to recognize improvement relative to expected performance. Areas of improvement used by administrators and staff in the evaluation process include attendance, grades, achievement test scores, academic subjects, and the practical and fine arts. Thompson will be honored at the SHASDA (South Hills Area School Districts



Tammy Thompson

Association) Conference on Saturday, April 23, at Linden Hall in Dawson, Pennsylvania. In recognition of Thompson's

determination to significantly improve her academic status and reduce absence and tardiness, the Student Support Team unanimously selected her for the award. Prioritizing attendance this year, she achieved a 3.3 QPA for the second grading period with a 3.1 semester average. Thompson is the daughter of George and Ulrike Thompson and currently resides with William and Nancy Beaumont of Oakdale. While undecided on a specific career, she hopes to work with animals in some way.

## Superintendent Experienced in Educational Leadership

On January 12, 2005, the West Allegheny Board of School Directors hired Dr. John S. DiSanti as Superintendent of Schools for a three-year term. With 18 years of experience as a school superintendent, Dr. DiSanti comes to West Allegheny from Derry Township School District in Hershey, Pennsylvania where he served for seven years in the position. Before that, he worked for 11 years as superintendent of the Deer Lakes School District where he started as an associate building principal. He began his teaching career in the West Middlesex School District where he was the Director of Vocal Music as well as a baseball and strength/conditioning coach.

He is credited with introducing a number of programs during his tenure at Derry including an early intervention program for pre-kindergarten children, student apprenticeships, job shadowing,

school-to-work programs, and a K-12 curriculum Review and Enhancement Initiative. Also familiar with facilities issues, he oversaw the planning and implementation of \$38 million in renovations and new construction there.

Prioritizing educational excellence during his term at Deer Lakes, he was instrumental in increasing the percentage of graduates pursuing college and other post secondary education from less than 50 percent to 87 percent. He also established various support programs for district families, a community service initiative, before and after school child care, and instituted Project Kids, a program to assist preschool children with developmental delays.

In 2002 Dr. DiSanti was selected as the Capital Region's Outstanding Superintendent in the George M. Leader Excellence in Education Awards Program, and under his leadership the Derry Township

Middle School was awarded Blue Ribbon status by the state and federal department of education. For his support of the arts, the Pennsylvania Music Educators' Association (PMEA) recognized Dr. DiSanti with its Outstanding Superintendent Award. A member of AASA, PASA, PASCOD, and ASCD, Dr. DiSanti has been a presenter at various conferences, conventions and colleges/universities.

Dr. DiSanti holds a B.S. Degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, a Masters Degree from Westminster College, and a Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. DiSanti said he is "excited" about taking the district's helm and becoming a part of what he called "a proud tradition of excellence." Originally from Pittsburgh, he said he, his wife Judy and three children are looking forward to returning. In his spare time, he enjoys coaching baseball and ice hockey.

# West Allegheny Weighs Financial Impact of Act 72

On September 3, 2004, the Homeowner Tax Relief Act (Act 72) became law, although the name of the statute may not accurately describe the legislation. If substantial revenues are generated by the slot machine venues, there could be some tax relief. Far more significant, however, than any potential relief are the tax shifts and school district budgetary limitations imposed by the statute. The West Allegheny Board of School Directors has been studying the potential implications of Act 72 for several months. On January 12, 2005, the District hired Public Financial Management Inc. (PFM) a financial advisory firm, to perform a comprehensive analysis of how opting into Act 72 would impact the West Allegheny School District. Given the complexities of the new legislation and its many unknowns, a multitude of Pennsylvania districts have chosen to secure financial advisory firms to assist them in their analysis.

Act 72 purports property tax reductions for home owners. At the same time, it calls for an increase in earned income/personal income taxes. Thus, it is more likely that wage-earning property owners will see more of a shift rather than a reduction in their taxes. While the legislation may seem to favor property owners who are unemployed, it has no provision to reduce taxes for individuals who rent. Their taxes, if they are employed, will increase. Even senior citizens who are retired could be negatively affected if the tax is imposed on all personal income.

On one hand, the legislation proposes distributing funds generated from gambling to districts

Far more significant, however, than any potential relief are the tax shifts and school district budgetary limitations imposed by the statute.

that opt into Act 72. On the other hand, it obligates those same districts to use a voter referendum to raise taxes above a basic cost of living increase. Since the operational costs associated with school districts usually exceed that basic allowance, the referendum issue has serious implications. Historically, states with school referendums have not fared well in their support of schools. Over time, the result of this failure to appropriately fund the schools can be devastating. Students often find themselves attending deteriorating buildings without important programs that have been lost to budget cuts while residents in the community feel the sting of falling home values.

For school districts there is much uncertainty. Act 72 will not generate any additional revenue for the school budget. In fact, higher administrative costs for the school business office will actually reduce the amount of money the district can allocate to educating students. Moody's Investors Service declared that debt

issued under Act 72 will be treated as "limited tax debt," and, as a result, the cost of borrowing money for districts will increase. Furthermore, the budget process would be accelerated by four months making it extremely difficult to accurately project revenues/expenditures.

At this time, West Allegheny's enrollment is rising. Current and projected residential development in both North Fayette and Findlay Townships is attracting more families with school-age children to our community. This growing student population will bring increased costs for building renovation and construction, program development and expansion, and additional staff. Prior to any decision, the Board wants to be fully cognizant of the long-term effect that opting into Act 72 would have on the revenues that are essential to meeting the operational needs of a growing district.

Data provided by the financial consultant will assist the Board in identifying the fiscal option that will be most prudent for the District. After the analysis by PFM is completed, the results will be presented at a public meeting allowing time for the district to carefully consider its choice before the May 30, 2005 state deadline.

## Read Across America Celebrated

*-continued from page 1-*

Karen Meyers, Debbie Turici, Beth Schultz, Tanya Sekelik, Mary Lococo, and Carol Pearlstein coordinated the event. Read Across America is a collaborative effort including the West Allegheny School District, the West Allegheny Education Association (WAEA),

the West Allegheny Education Support Professionals Association (WAESPA), and the Moon Education Association (MEA). WAEA Communications Chairperson Colleen Kinevey applied for a \$2,000 PSEA grant, which was awarded to WAEA to defray the expenses of the program.

# Soldier Returning from Duty in Iraq Thanks Students



*Donaldson Elementary third grader Israel Haugen tries on a Military Police (MP) armband during a visit by Army National Guard Specialist Daren Wooten.*

Specialist Daren Wooten of the Army National Guard visited Donaldson Elementary students on February 17 to thank them for the cards and gifts they sent him while he was stationed in Iraq. He answered questions from the students about his experience with regard to the Iraqi people, the country, the weather, the clothing he wore, and the equipment he used.

A 2001 West Allegheny graduate, Wooten attended Indiana University of Pennsylvania for a year and then enlisted in 2002. He was sent to

Oklahoma for basic training in field artillery and then deployed overseas. After serving briefly in Kuwait, he was sent to Iraq, where he spent almost a year assigned to the military

police. He told the students there is a possibility he will be deployed again. Wilson teachers Karen Meyers, Lisa Barr, and Sara Mead coordinated the visit.

## West Allegheny Fifth Graders Share Valentine Stories with Preschoolers

In the spirit of Valentine's Day, a class of Wilson Elementary fifth graders shared its love of reading and writing with children enrolled in the St. Columbkille Preschool program on February 9. The older children first wrote their own Valentine stories in class and took them along to read to the preschoolers during their visit. They also worked on Valentine art projects with the younger children. After each fifth grader had a chance to lead the class in a song, the group enjoyed refreshments together. Fifth grade teacher



*Wilson fifth grader Josi Sinagoga (right) works on a Valentine art project with a preschooler at St. Columbkille Preschool.*

Nancy Sale and student teacher Susan Traurig coordinated the activity as a class service project.

## Engineer Discusses Uses of Electricity



Mechanical engineer James Guiddy demonstrated various electrical applications for students in Deana Mack's fourth grade class at McKee Elementary School on February 17.

Pictured with Guiddy are Sydney Haines and Alec Thein. Guiddy told the students how he uses electricity on the job and provided some hands-on activities. The discussion included examples of such day-to-day uses of electricity as light switches and ceiling fans. He also explained more complex applications, like remote control devices for televisions and emergency lighting systems activated in the event of power failures. The teacher planned the visit to supplement a science unit on magnetism and electricity.

### → Attention ←

**The district is in need of substitutes for cafeteria workers, clerical support staff, and custodians.**

*For hours and pay rate contact Mary Kelsey, 724-695-5217.*

# District Website Wins Second Consecutive State Award

The West Allegheny School District website received an award of honor in the 2004 Pennsylvania School Public Relations Association (PenSPRA) annual "Excellence in Education" communications competition for the second consecutive year. In a February 28 release from PenSPRA, West Allegheny's site was listed among only five school district websites selected for awards from entries across the state. Last year the district's website was one of only four winners in the competition.

Enhancing the district's communication network, the website continues to expand with new pages and updated information at

[www.westallegheny.k12.pa.us](http://www.westallegheny.k12.pa.us). Among the most recent additions are the new student assessment tools, Scantron and My Access. Also, this year a group of McKee students and teachers teamed up to expand class web pages while others are experimenting with a message board.

For a more user-friendly and consistent appearance, the home page and many of the subpages have been redesigned this year.

Information is kept current through regular updates of on-line curriculum-related activities, like math and science initiatives districtwide. New postings also include high school happenings from

the Future Business Leaders of America club, French classes, and life skills classes.

The school district report card is posted online along with PTA information, a variety of forms, a district map, directions to all school buildings, the school calendar, sports schedules, arts initiatives, and other resources for parents, teachers and students. On the Communications page weekly event listings, school news, an on-line 28-page School and Community Guide and PDF files of the most recent community and employee newsletters are available.

The district welcomes suggestions to improve its website. Please contact Dr. James Hoover, McKee principal, by phone (724-695-5260) or e-mail ([jhoover@westallegheny.k12.pa.us](mailto:jhoover@westallegheny.k12.pa.us).)

## Hot Chocolate Brings Warm Wishes to Bus Drivers from Students



*Middle school student government members Melanie Vargon and Nick Hickmott presented district bus driver Helen Kennedy with a mug of hot chocolate on February 14. The gesture was planned by the group to recognize bus drivers for the important role they play in the lives of students. The students also thanked the bus drivers with a decorative magnet and an oversized bright yellow sign on the outside of the middle school building reading "We appreciate our bus drivers." Debbie Kazar is the student government faculty sponsor.*

## Author to Discuss Writing Career

Children's author Katherine Ayres, affiliated with The Graduate Writing Programs at Chatham College, will visit the three elementary schools to talk about books and writing on April 18, 19, and 21. Her newest books are Matthew's Truck and Up, Down and Around. One of her poems "Creatures of the Water," has been turned into a song and is available on the CD entitled "So Much Fun to Pretend!" The district's elementary librarians, Lin Nalesnick, Nancy Howell, and Beth Schultz are coordinating the presentations. For more information on Katherine Ayers, visit the elementary web pages at [www.westallegheny.k12.pa.us](http://www.westallegheny.k12.pa.us).

# ★ Beyond West Allegheny: Alumni Update ★

## *Sharing the Accomplishments of our Graduates*

★ **Lance Corporal Brad Ferrie '02** - was welcomed back from the war in Iraq by Wilson first graders in Carol Rozum's class at a Veteran's Day program on November 9, 2004, at the school. The students thanked him for his service to the country and presented him with cards they made in class. Ferrie answered questions and showed the students photographs and articles related to his duty in Iraq. A member of the Marine Corps Reserve Unit near Erie, Pennsylvania, and a student at Edinboro University, Ferrie was stationed outside of Fallujah, Iraq, where he worked as a driver in the Truck Company responsible for troop movements in and out of Iraq as part of the insertion and extraction team. Ferrie spent seven months in Iraq, one month in Kuwait, and six weeks in Camp Pendleton, California.

★ **Michael Johns '99** - directed an independent film entitled "The Balance," which premiered at Lowes Theatre at the Waterfront on January 27 with three shows at 7:00 p.m., 8:30 p.m., and 10:00 p.m. A portion of the ticket proceeds benefited the World of Hope Foundation. On his website ([www.thebalancefilm.com](http://www.thebalancefilm.com)) Johns provides information on the production, which he also produced,

co-wrote and coedited. The plot reflects the struggle of a man who loses everything and involves the characters "in a ride that never lets up from beginning to end." Appearing in the film are Joe Geragi, Lani Cataldi, Groover and other talent from the Pittsburgh area.

*This column is an effort to share*

*with the community what our graduates do after they leave West Allegheny. Please contact Carol Bonnar, Communications Coordinator, (Phone - 724-695-5274, Fax - 724-695-3788, e-mail [cbonnar@westallegheny.k12.pa.us](mailto:cbonnar@westallegheny.k12.pa.us)) if you would like to include an alumni update in a future issue.*

## Spring Musical "Into the Woods" Features Fairy Tale Characters



Pictured are the students playing the lead and supporting roles in the 2005 spring musical production of "Into the Woods," presented on March 11-13 and 17-19 in the Stewart Morgan Auditorium at West Allegheny High School: (first row) Sharon Rice, Carrie Lowery, Anika Bell, David Gorski, and Mary Monroe; (second row) Josh Isenberg, Rachel Knarr, Stephanie Martinez, Steven



Cosnek, Kristin Love, Kyle Helliard, Nikki Miele, and Mike Timcheck; (third row) Ross Rohbeck, Rhiannon Snyder, Molly DePew, Pat Timon, and Shane Glass; (fourth row) Sarah Carr, Shannon Pack, Tiffani Gambone, Chelsea Christopher, and Rob Gregg. A complimentary luncheon and admission to the March 13 matinee performance of the show are provided for nearly 200 members of the district's Gold Card Club.

Added Safety Measure

**Tip Hotline**

**724-695-5235**

for reporting concerns

# Future Business Leaders Qualify for State Competition

On January 21, members of the West Allegheny High School chapter of Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) attended the Region Leadership Conference at Bishop Canevin High School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Out of the twenty-two attendees, thirteen qualified for the State Leadership Conference to be held April 13-16 at Seven Springs Mountain Resort in Champion, Pennsylvania.

The results for the state qualifiers are as follows: Beth Wilking (second place, Business Calculations), Nick Zemanek (first place, C++ Programming), Jamie Schumacher and Mike Serventi (first place, Desktop Publishing), Christina Orr and Heather Detwiler (second place, Desktop Publishing), Maranda Wodzinski, Arianna Carrington, and Phil Gertz (first place, Emerging Business Issues), Tim Pearce (second place, Java Programming), Adrienne McGraw (first place, Job Interview), Shawn Sehgal (first place, Word Processing I), and Greg Marshall (second place, Word Processing II).

Also placing in their events were Syed Haque (third place, Word Processing I), Patrick Cannon (fourth place, Public Speaking I) and Evan Corcoran (fifth place, Accounting II). In addition, Maranda Wodzinski (WA FBLA President) and Jamie Schumacher (WA FBLA Secretary) were awarded Who's Who in FBLA awards. West Allegheny High School also took second place in the Outstanding Chapter Competition. Club sponsors are Lisa Monzo and Dennis Catrain.



## Students Experience Atmosphere of America's Southeast Region

*Volunteer Lenny Jones (grandfather of fourth grader Jeff Lipinski) helps fourth graders Nathan Hubauer, Sydney Haines, Steven Metott, and Kevin Handy make peanut butter.*



McKee fourth graders explored the Southeast region of the United States by participating in various activities integrating social studies, art, music, and language arts. With the help of family members, the students had an opportunity to taste food indigenous to each of the 12 southeastern states, like apple butter from West Virginia's apples, peanut butter from Georgia's peanuts, and pecan cookies from Alabama's pecans. Since North Carolina is his-

torically recognized as the first state using air flight, another activity involved making and flying model airplanes. Students were, likewise, introduced to bead-stringing from Florida and karaoke from Tennessee. They also experienced Louisiana and the Mardi Gras by making Mardi Gras masks. Fourth grade teachers Robin Gilden, Deana Mack, Melissa Pratt, Tina Seybold, and Bill Welsh coordinated the event on January 31.

# Safety Advice from our Local Police

*Motor Scooters  
Prohibited on Streets*

*Editor's Note: This column contains the seventh in a series of articles from the local police departments on safety issues. This article was submitted by the North Fayette Township Police Department. Look for more articles from Findlay Township and Oakdale Borough in future issues.*

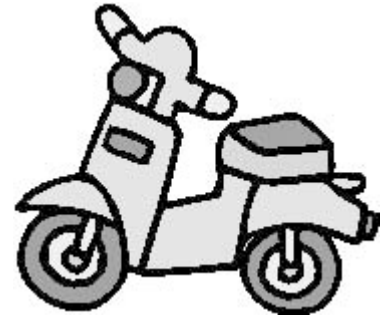
Although motor scooters are most likely on many children's wish lists, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation cautioned that their use on Pennsylvania roadways and public sidewalks is illegal and strictly prohibited.

"While motor scooters have become a popular form of transportation over the past several years with children and teens, their use on public roads and sidewalks can be dangerous, and they are illegal," said Betty L. Serian, Deputy Secretary for Safety Administration at PennDOT. "Parents should consider the safety and restricted use of these vehicles before purchasing."

"While it's legal for foot-powered, non-motorized scooters to be used on sidewalks, electric or gas motor-powered versions can only be ridden on private property," said Serian.

Under the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code, motor scooters are classified as motor vehicles. To be legally operated on the road, a motor scooter is required to be registered, inspected and insured. However, many scooters do not have the equipment requirements needed to pass inspection. Unlike a conventional motor vehicle, motor scooters are unenclosed vehicles that expose the operator to the risk of an immediate, unprotected impact with other motor vehicles and pedestrians, without the benefit of safety equipment such as fenders, turn signals, lights or tires suitable for

highway use. Moreover, many of the motor scooters are not certified to meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, the minimum federal equipment standards required for all new vehicles manufactured for use on the roadways.



**Although** many models exist in today's market, typically a motor scooter is a two tandem-wheeled (one in front of the other) vehicle powered by an engine (gasoline or electric) and may or may not have a seat or saddle for the driver. The term motor scooter includes small motorcycles, mini-bikes, mini-cycles and the more recent "pocket bikes" and "pocket rockets," as well as motorized standing scooters.

"The lack of safety equipment, coupled with the fact that many motor scooters are so small they cannot be seen by other drivers, poses a hazard to the scooter drivers and other motorists," Serian said. "Some scooters stand only 18 inches high or less."

In addition to the registration, inspection, equipment and insurance requirements, scooters may not be operated by unlicensed drivers if driven on highways or public sidewalks. Scooters are commonly purchased for use by children and teens, most of whom do not possess a driver's license.

A common misconception is that scooters that have an engine with less than five brake horsepower do not fall under regulation. However, all scooters, regardless of horsepower, are regulated. Brake horsepower, a measure of power at

the point of delivery, is used to define the power of scooters and mopeds.

There are a few motor scooters, however, manufactured for highway use. These scooters have a certification label on them, which certifies that they meet federal equipment standards. A 17-digit vehicle identification number is also affixed on these scooters by the manufacturer, transferable to the purchaser with either a manufacturer's certificate of ownership or a title. These scooters conform to federal and state vehicle equipment requirements and standards and, when properly registered, inspected and insured, may be operated on the highway by a licensed driver.

*For more information contact John Bates, North Fayette Police Officer, 724-695-5258.*

## Employees Recognized for Service

The district is planning its fourth annual employee recognition dinner for Wednesday, March 30, at Celebrations and More on Steubenville Pike in Imperial. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. with a buffet dinner at 6:30 p.m. followed by a program starting at 7:45 p.m. Donaldson Elementary Principal Patricia Nolan, who chairs the event, is working with the members of the planning committee on finalizing the details.

Dinner will be followed by a recognition program to emphasize the importance of employee service. All school district employees, both instructional and non-instructional,

are eligible for this honor, depending on their length of service on the job. All employees, who have reached designated milestones in their years of service with West Allegheny, receive a complimentary dinner and a small gift. Those marking their 10th, 15th, 20th, 25th, and 30th anniversary will be honored.

The format for the ceremony will include introductions and personal comments about each of those individuals with 25 or 30 years of service. Because of time limitations, a PowerPoint presentation will feature those honorees with 10 to 20 years of service.

## Program Introduces Kindergartners to Children's Hospital Care, Facilities



*Wilson kindergarten student Dylan Bolind gets ready to listen to his heartbeat through a stethoscope during a visit on February 15 by Meredith Friedrich of Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. Awaiting their turn are Nichole Kadlecik and Jacob Potts. Funded by the Wilson PTA, the presentation entitled The Discovery Program is designed to prepare children for hospital treatment. Friedrich talks with the students and uses a video in which puppet characters introduce the people, procedures, and equipment encountered in a hospital emergency room. Kindergarten teachers Suzan Braun and Mary Alice Medlin arranged the visit.*

## Strategy Game Helps Develop Strong Math Skills



*Donaldson Elementary students Samantha Coffaro and Alex Bartha use deductive reasoning to play a math game.*

West Allegheny elementary students in grades two through five have been sharpening their math skills this year using NIM, a strategy game that originated in China. It was given its name by Charles Bouton who named it after an archaic English word meaning to steal or take away. The game is played by taking turns removing objects from a pile, and the winner must avoid having to take the last object. Students have been practicing their NIM skills and learning how to play the game using logic and analysis instead of luck.

Some fourth grade students at Donaldson Elementary School recently participated in a NIM Workshop. They were given the task of gathering mathematical data and discerning patterns. This helped them learn how to describe mathematical expressions visually and algebraically. And all the while, the students thought they were playing a game.

# Odyssey Writing Contest Winners Share Work with Young Listeners

As the winners of the Odyssey Storybook Writing Contest, the following ninth grade students had an opportunity to read a children's story they wrote based on episodes in The Odyssey to students at Donaldson and McKee on February 25:

Raquel Burke, Amanda Leonard, David Ceramina, Katie Sinagoga, Jen Kampetis, Nicole Christ, Lauren Graziano, Tyler Kocuba, Dave Zvirman, and Amanda Kovach.

English teacher Beth Voltz and ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher Erin McGowan sponsored the contest as part of Read Across America Day celebrating the legacy of children's author Dr. Seuss.

*Editor's note: In the right column is a condensed version of one of these stories. Original color illustrations on the cover and throughout the book bring the story to life for young children.*

## Honor Society Pink Dessert Sale Raises Awareness of Breast Cancer



*West Allegheny Middle School students Corina Rozum, Lulu Lajmiri, Marie Dabat, Stacy Teierle, and Shannon Messner helped make and sell pink cotton candy as part of a month-long effort during January to raise money to benefit breast cancer research and treatment. Behind the students guidance counselors Jeff Kiser and Mary Alice Desiderio prepare the next batch of cotton candy. The pink dessert sale sponsored by the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) raised a total of \$750, which was presented to a representative of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation Race for the Cure on January 26.*

**Call the School NEWSLINE: 724-695-5205  
for calendar updates, school delays and closings**



### The Beggar and the Faithful Dog *by Raquel Burke*

The beggar had trained the dog Argos when he was a puppy. But Argos had not seen his master for over 20 years...

The beggar's real name was Odysseus. He was a very powerful man from Ithaca. During those 20 years that Odysseus was gone, Argos waited for his master to come back home.

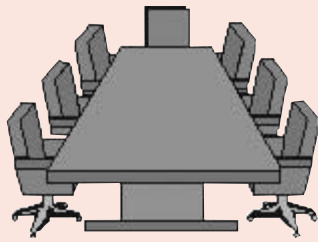
One day Argos heard Odysseus's voice nearby. Although Argos was old, he tried to wag his tail, and his ears slightly perked up. He was the only one that recognized Odysseus.

Odysseus saw his dog and how badly he was treated since the last time he saw him. It made Odysseus sad...

The beggar's new friend tells him of Argos's owner. He explains that they think Odysseus was lost or died during the war.

When Argos's owner was home, he was stronger, faster, and smelled scents that no other dog could smell. Now he is old, slow, and sick because he is not taken care of.

The old dog waited for his master to come home safely. Now that Odysseus is home, Argos can peacefully go to doggie heaven.



### Upcoming School Board Meetings

Next Committee Meetings:  
Wed., Apr. 13, 2005  
Wed., May 11, 2005

Next Regular Meetings:  
Wed., Apr. 20, 2005  
Wed., May 18, 2005

Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m.  
at Donaldson Elementary School  
and are open to the public.

## CSI: Applying Scientific Techniques



*Wilson third graders Lacie Gary, Alaina Fritz, and Nikki Bogden take their own fingerprints during a program called Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) presented by the Carnegie Science Center on February 11. Given a scenario of a million dollar robbery, students learned actual techniques and experiments scientists use to uncover the truth and solve the crime. The Wilson PTA funded the program, which was provided to students at all grade levels.*

## Physical Education Classes Benefit from MAC Grant

West Allegheny Middle School physical education teacher Mary Lococo (front, center) received a \$500 MAC grant from the McDonald's Corporation to use for hands-on learning activities in the classroom. Pictured with Lococo are middle school students (front) Lolene Germany, Ravi Jasti, (back) Emily Fritz, Sam Hartman, and Sarah Seik holding pedometers paid for by the grant.

Students wear the pedometers during physical education classes. As a fitness activity, the different classes are competing against each other to be the first to reach one million steps.

Representatives from McDonald's in Imperial visited the school on

December 17, 2004, to present Lococo with the check and a certificate acknowledging her as the

grant recipient. The MAC Grant program is designed to support teacher initiative in the classroom.



## Concert Features High School Bands



The West Allegheny High School Mid-Winter Band Concert on February 7 featured high school students in grades 9 through 12 in three instrumental groups. Joining forces for the first half of the show, the Concert Band and the Symphonic Band performed the following musical selections: “Westridge Overture,” “They Led my Lord Away,” “Bandology,” “Scaling the North Wall,” and

“Sedona.” The Wind Ensemble concluded the program with “In the Bleak Mid-winter,” “Second Suite in F,” “Their Blossoms Down” (with a narration by Dr. John S. DiSanti, Superintendent), “Florentiner,” and “Variations on a Korean Folk Song.” The concert was recorded as part of a “Year-in-Review” tape, which will be available later this year. Jason Cheskawich is the high school band director.

## Students Produce History Video



*McKee students Gina Flecker and Brady Roese interviewed their mothers Theresa Merante and Angie Roese, respectively, to record their family history on digital video disks.*

A group of McKee Elementary students premiered an original living history video on January 21. Fourth and fifth grade students, Nia Cheeseboro, Elysse Cimoch, Shannen Ersek, Gina Flecker, Kelsey Matthews, Brady Roese, and Jennifer Zysk participated in a writing program entitled “Living History.” They learned interview techniques and practiced on a teacher and a peer.

The final step was to record family history by interviewing a family member or friend of the family on videotape. Each family provided 6-12 photographs to illustrate the time period being discussed. The finished product is a narrated history video, which runs for 35 minutes. Sheryl Remaly, teacher at McKee and Donaldson, coordinates the program.

## Character Education Stresses Respect

Donaldson guidance counselor Kristen Newell and North Fayette Police Officer John Bates presented a lesson focusing on respect as part the character education curriculum to grades one



through four on February 9. The discussion on self-respect emphasized the importance of rest, nutrition and exercise as well

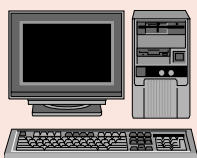
as consideration of feelings. The presentations also included information on respect for others and respect for authority.

# Surveys Complete for Middle States Accreditation

The process for West Allegheny High School's application for Middle States Accreditation involved surveying target audiences for input on meeting the needs of its students. Survey questions focused on the district's mission, beliefs, and philosophy, as well as student learning, facilities, and programs at the high school.

The Middle States Accreditation Committee will use the information from the surveys of students, teachers, the community, the board, and the administration to define two major objectives for continuous improvement of educational opportunities for all students. Once identified, the objectives will be publicized and implemented over the next year.

In February of 2006, a Middle States Accreditation audit team will visit the high school and evaluate its progress in accomplishing these goals. For more information contact committee coordinators Dr. Earl Bradford Smith, assistant principal, and Martin Lestander, technology education teacher.



Visit  
West Allegheny  
online at: [www.westallegheny.k12.pa.us](http://www.westallegheny.k12.pa.us)

# WA Senior Athletes Choose Colleges



At a press conference on February 2 West Allegheny High School senior Emmanuel (C.J.) Davis (sitting, left) signed a letter of intent to play football starting next year at the University of Pittsburgh, and senior Joshua Shelton (sitting, right) committed to play football for Mercyhurst College. Those standing are Athletic Director David McBain, Football Coach Bob Palko, Davis's parents, Emanuel and Diane Davis, Shelton's parents, Debra and David Shelton, and Principal Daniel Smith.

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|  | <p><b>Sports Banquets</b><br/>Girls' Basketball - March 13<br/>Swim Team - April 10</p>                         |  |
|   | <p><b>Senior Class</b><br/>Candy sale benefiting the Prom<br/>March 7 - 31</p>                                  |  |
|  | <p><b>Girls' Soccer Boosters</b><br/>Night at the Races, Findlay Activity Center<br/>March 19</p>               |   |
|   | <p><b>Pow-Wow Committee</b><br/>Sponsoring a Dance<br/>April 2</p>  |  |
|  | <p><b>Student Government</b><br/>Sponsoring a dance at the high school<br/>April 15, 7:00 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.</p> |   |
|   | <p><b>Girls' Softball Boosters</b><br/>Car Wash at McDonald's in Imperial<br/>May 7</p>                         |  |

It is the policy of the District not to discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, color, national origin, age or handicap in its educational programs, services, facilities, activities or employment policies as required by Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments, Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Section 504 Regulations of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Section 204 Regulations of the 1984 Carl D. Perkins Act or any applicable federal statute. For information regarding this policy, contact Compliance Officer, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, West Allegheny School District, P. O. Box 55, Oakdale, PA 15071, 724-695-3422, or the Director of the Office of Civil Rights, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, DC 20201. The school district shall not discriminate in the operations/functions of the district on the basis of sex, color, national origin, religion, marital status, or handicap.

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Newsletter Editor:  
Carol Bonnar



**TODAY**



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| Mr. Thomas Bayly                 | Mr. Jeff Sweet               |
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 Mr. Richard Smith, High School Assistant Principal  
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 Mr. Andrew Oberg, Middle School Assistant Principal  
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 Dr. James Hoover, McKee Elementary Principal  
 Ms. Chrisanne DeCarlo, Donaldson/McKee Dean of Students  
 Mrs. Kathleen Sites, Wilson Elementary Principal  
 Dr. Chris Assetta, Wilson Elementary Assistant Principal

**SCHOOL DIRECTORY**

|                                  |                |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Superintendent                   | (724) 695-5210 |
| Director of Educational Services | 695-5216       |
| Business Manager                 | 695-5212       |
| Pupil Services Coordinator       | 695-5221       |
| District Technology Office       | 695-5222       |
| Communications Coordinator       | 695-5274       |
| West Allegheny High School       | 695-7368       |
| West Allegheny Middle School     | 695-8979       |
| Donaldson Elementary School      | 213-1010       |
| McKee Elementary School          | 693-8451       |
| Wilson Elementary School         | 695-3300       |

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