

# Volunteers of the Year committed to helping Walla Walla youth

*Special thanks to our Art Regier Award recipients for their dedication and exceptional service*



**Karol Matson, Walla Walla High School Drama Program Costumer**

• Designed and sewed hundreds of costumes the past 10 years; drama program volunteer coordinator; student mentor

**What do you enjoy most about volunteering?**

“I enjoy being surrounded by dedicated, talented and enthusiastic students who have a passion for the theatre. I also enjoy having the opportunity to be part of a talented and creative production team.”



**Dan Reid, Co-Chair, Community Facilities Task Force**

• Prepared 10 year facilities plan; Long-time *Citizens for Schools* member; Sharpstein Bond Committee member

**What do you enjoy most about volunteering?**

“I volunteer to help with projects that I support, and education of our children is at the top of my list. A secondary benefit to volunteering is the pleasure of working with positive people who share a common desire to give a little bit back to our wonderful community.”



**Albert Schueller, Edison Elementary PTSA Treasurer**

• Frequent classroom volunteer; Math Curriculum committee member; activities coordinator; classroom tutor

**What do you enjoy most about volunteering?**

“It’s part of good parenting, being involved in the schools and community. The teachers and staff at Edison make it easy to get involved. You always feel welcome and useful. It makes it easy to participate and contribute.”



**Laura Schueller, Edison Elementary PTSA President**

• Helped coordinate Family Reading Night; organized Edison carnival; classroom tutor; helps teach math

**What do you enjoy most about volunteering?**

“It’s what we do. So many people give so much to the community that we benefit from, we feel we need to do our part. We recognize there are hundreds more doing this type of work. We’re just doing what we can to make Walla Walla better. We want to set an example for children to follow as far as what it is to be a good citizen.”

## Walla Walla Public Schools

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“All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth.”

**Aristotle**

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WALLA WALLA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# Focus on Education

Your School District Newsletter

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## Plan to find time for teachers to learn together now official

*Board unanimously approves plan set to begin next year*

Success stories of schools with soaring test scores and higher student achievement goals have one thing in common. Leaders at these schools value and make time for teachers to learn together. School board members



Middle and high school students will be in classes a few minutes longer each day to prevent loss of class time and supervised study halls will be open every Wednesday morning so parents may drop their children off before work.

in February took a bold step to ensure teachers in Walla Walla have this much needed time by unanimously approving a plan for enhanced teacher collaboration and professional development.

Per the plan scheduled to begin next school year, elementary class schedules will remain the same, while secondary students will have a one-hour delayed start each Wednesday.

The proposal also calls for eliminating all but two of the district’s early release half days. This allows seven half days of instruction to be given back to elementary students, resulting in nearly 18 hours of additional classroom time.

Middle and high school students will be in classes a few minutes longer each day to prevent loss of class time and study halls will be open every Wednesday morning so parents may drop their children off before work.

## District among best for workplace safety

*Few claims free thousands of dollars for academic use*

A commitment to safety in the workplace has taken Walla Walla Public Schools to the top of the charts for the fewest Labor and Industries claims in Southeast Washington.

The district’s track record for few L&I insurance claims are not by chance, according to Business Manager **Aron Rausch**, who heads the district’s Labor and In-

dustries Safety Committee.

“We have a regimented program to keep district employees out of harm’s way,” Rausch said. “We meet regularly to review district claims cases and national and regional safety issues. We then work as a team to implement any changes that are needed.”

This proactive stance to workplace safety has helped the district save several thousand dollars each

See **L&I Claims** - page 4

## Blue Ridge honored

*Innovative learning strategies lead to Distinguished Title I recognition*

High expectations with clear and shared focus paved the way for Blue Ridge Elementary to be named a *2003 Distinguished Title I School*.

Staff members teamed with Principal **Linda Boggs** to prepare a comprehensive overview of the school per requirements of the federal award submission package. Numerous meetings and significant hours after the normal work day were spent on the submission. The hard work paid off for Blue Ridge staff in March upon being notified it received the prestigious distinction.

Blue Ridge was able to adopt a Schoolwide Title I program because more than 50 percent of its students come from low-income families. Schoolwide Title I programs help expand the flexibility of program delivery and use of funding sources to improve the quality of the education offered to students.

Blue Ridge for years has been working on reforming its school. Innovative scheduling and curriculum delivery have lead to huge gains in

See **Blue Ridge** - page 5

## Hansen named Northwest PE Teacher of the Year

Blue Ridge Elementary School Physical Education Teacher **Sue Hansen** was recently named the Northwest Elementary Physical Education *Teacher of the Year*.

Hansen is known for requiring her students to use math and reading skills during PE. She serves as a positive role model epitomizing personal health and fitness.

Hansen will now compete for national Elementary PE Teacher of the Year honors in New Orleans, LA next spring.



Sue Hansen

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

Quality

Integrity

Accountability

Respect

Courtesy



## Economic trends must not taint our vision of successful schools



**Rich Carter**  
Superintendent

rcarter@wwps.org  
527-3000

We face a critical time in public education as decisions we make today will shape the role of public education for generations to come. For a decade, educators throughout Washington state have made a commitment to reforming their public schools through new instructional strategies, aligned curriculum, rigorous assessment, professional training and more.

High stakes state and federal mandates are putting unprecedented pressure on educators to improve. We have made tremendous gains as we strive to find ways for all students to be successful learners. But the work is not completed and we have much yet to do.

The economic downturn of our state and nation now threatens much of what we have worked so hard to accomplish. Vital state funding is in jeopardy as legislators seem committed to putting more responsibilities back on local communities to provide a well-rounded education. This is not good for our nation, state or community. Economic trends must not taint our vision of successful schools. Children are our most precious resource and now more than ever our elected officials must support public education with stable and equitable funding.

I witness daily the support Walla Walla generously offers our public schools. We couldn't open our doors without this meaningful relationship. During this time of uncertainty in our world, let us not forget all our dreams are realized through the eyes of a child. Now more than ever, we must support their future.

*Richard B. Carter*

## School board facilities study builds momentum

### Multiple sites face needs

With box lunches in hand, school board members earlier this spring climbed aboard district vans and set out to take an up close look at district facilities in need of modernization.

This three-hour trek to look deep into the core of the district's greatest facilities concerns included stops at Support Services, Edison Elementary School, Wa-Hi and Paine Campus.

All of these complexes, and a host of others, have been tagged in the Community Facilities Task Force's *10 Year Facilities Plan* as facilities with considerable needs.

The facilities plan states Edison Elementary, Paine Alternative Learning Center, Walla Walla High School, Support Services and the district's PE/Athletics facilities are all in need of modernization.

Superintendent **Rich Carter** has targeted February 2005 as a potential timetable to bring a multiple projects bond before Walla Walla voters.

"We owe it to our students and community to offer 21st Century learning en-

vironments for our students," Carter said. "In a time when students are asked to do more than ever before, we must hold up our end of the bargain."

School board members this school year have taken a proactive approach to getting additional facilities information. Board members have listened to numerous presentations from building administrators, staff and parents regarding needs at their sites.

Two public work sessions have also been organized this school year to provide a platform for further discussion.

These are not simple issues for the school board. Wa-Hi's heating and ventilation system has exceeded its estimated operation lifecycle and could fail at any time, according to the facilities report. The cost of updating this project alone is estimated at \$2.5 million. Estimates to complete the other modernizations have not been calculated.

"Although we don't have an exact dollar figure right now, we know we have several million dollars in need in Walla Walla," Carter said. "My goal is to help the school board gather infor-

mation so we may put together a plan that best meets Walla Walla's needs and expectations."

District Athletic Director **Don Wilkins**, per direction of the school board, has formed a community-based committee to collect more information on the district's Physical Education/Athletics needs. He will present his information to the school board later this year.

Board members are expected to continue gathering information for months to come.



Now 66 years old, Edison has an antiquated heating and cooling system, poor ventilation, leaking roofs, limited storage, cramped restrooms and small playgrounds. Edison was targeted in the district's *Facilities Plan* for modernization.

## Bates and Sirmon join Wa-Hi Athletic Hall of Fame

**Sheri Bates** Class of 1979 - 3.781 G.P.A.

*Volleyball*

- 1<sup>st</sup> Team All Conference 1977 and 1978
- Member of 1977 team that placed 5<sup>th</sup> in State

*Basketball*

- 1<sup>st</sup> Team All Conference in 1978 and 1979
- Played on 1979 State Championship team
- Second in State Tournament in scoring - 1979

*Track*

- State Javelin Champion (new state record) 1979
- Holds school Javelin record 156'9"

*College Athletics*

- Basketball @ University of Pacific – Stockton, CA
- Started every game for all four years
- All time leader in assists and steals - #2 in scoring



**Peter Sirmon** Class of 1995 - 3.6 G.P.A.

*Football*

- Big Nine Conference Player of the Year 1994
- All State 1<sup>st</sup> Team Defensive Player
- Seattle P-I Defensive Player of the Year
- Selected for East-West All Star game

*College Athletics*

- University of Oregon football - 4 year letterman
- Pacific 10 Conference leading tackler - 1997
- Pacific 10 Conference 1st Team All Conference Linebacker - 1999
- Led U of O in tackles in 1996, 1997 and 1999

*Professional Football*

- Drafted in 2002 by NFL's Tennessee Titans
- Starting Linebacker for the Titans - 2002
- Started in the 2003 AFC Championship game vs Oakland Raiders



## Dr. Seuss Day stresses importance of reading

Even the most finicky of readers seem to always have an appetite for *Green Eggs and Ham* as was evident by the 300 children in attendance for the 1st Annual Dr. Seuss Day - *Read Across America* at Whitman College's Reid Center.

Dr Seuss Day was organized to raise awareness of the importance of early childhood reading. The event was made possible through a partnership between Walla Walla Valley Education Association, Walla Walla Public Library, Children's Home Society and Whitman College.

The Walla Walla Valley Education Association donated a book to each family in attendance. Twenty area teachers joined Whitman students and

other volunteers to tell stories to children, read books and pass out literacy materials.

Walla Walla Public Library Young People's Services Coordinator **Elizabeth George** organized the event. She hopes to build on this year's successes for next year.

"Dr. Seuss Day was awesome," George said. "I'm very excited about making the coordinated Dr. Seuss Day Program an annual event on the Sunday before Dr. Seuss's birthday each year."

Garrison Middle School Library Media Specialist **Jackie George** helped purchase the giveaway books and represented the WWVEA. She also arranged for teacher volunteers.

## Sharpstein teacher receives grant for math development

Sharpstein 1st grade Bilingual Teacher **Carey Knifong** knows it's easy to get her students' attention when she throws a party.

She decided to take advantage of this concept when writing her grant proposal *Learning Mathematics Party*. She was rewarded for her creativity by becoming one of only 35 educators nationwide to receive a \$10,000 Toyota TIME grant.

Knifong plans to use the funds to establish a fun after-school program designed to improve math achievement levels. She also received an all expenses paid trip to San Antonio in April to gain national recognition.



*Carey Knifong*

## Outstanding Wa-Hi student named Exchange Club Youth of the Year

Wa-Hi senior **Alainna Fielding** was one of two local students earning 2003 Exchange Club *Youth of the Year* honors.

Fielding will receive a \$1,000 college scholarship and compete for regional honors. Fielding maintains a 3.8 GPA and is actively involved in Wa-Hi's music and drama programs. She also coordinated a school charity talent show. She plans to attend Brigham Young University next fall to study music.

## I-728 community reports available

The district's 2002-2003 Initiative 728 Community Report is now available at all Walla Walla Public Schools and the District Office, 364 S. Park Street.

The report includes the district's I-728 spending plan for this school year and a detailed overview of how the dollars were spent.

This report is also posted on the district's website at [www.wwps.org](http://www.wwps.org). For more information, contact Communications Director Mark Higgins at 526-6716 or [mhiggins@wwps.org](mailto:mhiggins@wwps.org).

## Correction - Winter Focus on Education

- It was reported John Herr's wife is Linda. Herr's wife is Cheryl Herr.
- It was reported the contract with Energy Education Incorporated costs the district \$140,000 per month. It actually costs the district approximately \$77,000 per year. The district regrets these errors.



# Withycombe settles in at Edison

*Leadership style remains the same despite scenery change*

Much like star struck fans hoping for a quick glimpse of their favorite actress strolling up the red carpet, Edison students eagerly anticipate Principal **Nancy Withycombe's** entrance into the cafeteria for her daily mealtime visits.

'Mrs. Withycombe, Mrs. Withycombe' can be heard ringing through the Edison lunchroom from scores of excited students hoping to see her warm smile or hear gentle words of praise from their beloved principal.

Kids have always gravitated to Withycombe as if she were their favorite aunt. She's a great listener. This is her first year at Edison Elementary after spending six years at the helm of the district's Alternative Learning Programs.

Paine students took her departure hard. They grew to trust their veteran leader and were sad to see her go. Withycombe, who grew up in Gresham, Oregon, in the 1960s before moving on to Oregon College to complete her undergraduate

studies and then on to the University of Oregon for her master's degree in curriculum and instruction, said she was proud of the work she did with the alternative programs, but was ready for a new challenge.

"Elementary students are excited about learning and life, and that hopefulness brightens my day," Withycombe said.

As a mother of two who's been married for 33 years, Withycombe has always used positive reinforcement to build up her staff and students. She said her years at Paine helped her realize the importance of having high expectations for all students.

"My years at Paine reinforced my belief that teachers need to know each student well, not to make or accept excuses for slow progress, but to meet students where they are, and provide both a nurturing and challenging academic program," Withycombe said.

When she's not working she enjoys walking, spending time with her family and taking well deserved naps.

*"The greatest difference between Paine and Edison, aside from the age of the students, is the increased parent involvement at Edison. We have an active and supportive PTA, and it has been great to be able to work closely with parents."*

**Principal Nancy Withycombe**  
Edison Elementary



**L&I claims** continued from page 1

year, according to Rausch.

"We're able to put these dollars directly back in to the classroom to enhance our education program.

Trip hazards are the number one safety issue in the nation according to Rausch. He said L&I Safety Committee members continually review district facilities to eliminate these hazards.

"This equates to a safer environment for our staff and students and results in substantial cost savings for our tax payers and district," Rausch added.

Walla Walla Public Schools also has an excellent liability insurance record. Within

the district's 20 school district insurance pool, Walla Walla Public Schools is at the top for fewest liability claims.

This also saves the district a substantial amount of money in insurance claims each year according to Rausch.

"Liability insurance issues, such as playground safety, are also included in our L&I Safety Committee overview," Rausch explained. "I'm proud of our record. We couldn't do this alone. It takes a committed team to identify areas and take action to eliminate the risks. Ultimately we all win as result of our efforts."

# Bieloh named to state athletics Hall of Fame

You'll rarely see Bill Bieloh sitting at a Wa-Hi athletic contest. He's not your regular fan. With a quick glance at the scoreboard, Bieloh



Bieloh

can't help but study the action just like he like he did when led dominant Wa-Hi basketball and baseball teams in the 60s and 70s. Coach Bieloh's

passion for athletics will now burn forever after being enshrined in the *Washington Secondary Schools Athletic Administrators Association Hall of Fame*.

Bieloh's endless list of accomplishments as a coach and athletic director more closely resemble a textbook than a resume. During his 18 year run as Wa-Hi's athletic director, Bieloh received numerous accolades including National Federation of High School Associations Citation. Bieloh is one of only two athletic directors from the State of Washington to serve on the National Interscholastic Athletics Administrators Association Executive Board.

Highlights of his 13 year coaching career include capturing four Big Nine Baseball Championships and his basketball teams regularly competed for Big Nine titles. Bieloh says former Wa-Hi coach and athletic director Felix Fletcher was his greatest inspiration.

"He taught me more about kids and people than anyone else ever came close to teaching me," Bieloh said.

Bieloh currently serves as the district's Personnel Director. Even now, he reflects on his days spent working with Wa-Hi student-athletes.

"When I walk into the school gyms or onto the practice fields and see hundreds of boys and girls choosing to participate in interscholastic activities and realize I helped to make it possible, that's pretty special," he said. "I'm touched by this honor."

# Tri-State Steelheaders help students protect endangered species

*Students provide group valuable information for fish restoration*

As appropriately described in its Native American name, Walla Walla is known as the *land of many waters*.

Students in our area have a greater appreciation for the wildlife in our numerous streams and rivers thanks to a partnership with the Tri-State Steelheaders.

Organized in the mid-1960's by a group of salmon and steelhead anglers wishing to preserve and enhance both species in this region, Tri-State Steelheaders have coordinated multiple educational outreach programs to teach students the importance of protecting these endangered fish.

Tri-State Steelheaders is a non-profit organization consisting of 160 individual members and 55 area businesses. Approximately 90 percent of its members reside in Walla Walla and Milton-Freewater.

"We want ever increasing numbers of salmon and steelhead returning to area streams," Tri-State Steelheader Executive Director **John Geidl** said. "We believe the best way of accomplishing this goal is working with willing landowners restoring riparian and in-stream habitat, educating public and private school students about the role habitat plays in supporting steelhead and



John Geidl

salmon populations, and involving community volunteers in hands-on salmon restoration efforts."

Geidl is no stranger to education. Upon retiring in 1992 from Walla Walla High School after a 25 year career as a social studies teacher, he fully dedicates his professional skills to protecting endangered fish species. Geidl says students assist in this effort by helping record environmental changes in area waterways.

From water testing to habitat restoration, students at Garrison Middle School, Walla Walla High School and the Opportunity Program regularly pitch in.

"Students bring extraordinary energy, enthusiasm, and inquisitiveness to any restoration project," Geidl said. "Involving kids in restoration activities is a great insurance policy for the future of the fish."

Tri-State Steelheaders formalized the partnership with area schools in 1999 with the establishment of the Watershed Health Evaluation Program (WHEP).

Through this program, local students use special workbooks and laboratory manuals developed by the Tri-State Steelheaders and Walla Walla County Conservation District to conduct a series of scientific tests. Results are then returned to the Tri-State Steelheaders to support restoration efforts.

A professional scientist trained the teachers about monitoring techniques and use of the scientific instruments supplied by the Tri-State Steelheaders. Once essential wa-



*Wa-Hi Senior **Melissa Cole** (L) and Junior **Bridget Peterson** monitor water quality in the Yellowhawk Creek with sophisticated testing equipment made available from the Tri-State Steelheaders.*

tershed studies are completed, the Steelheaders loan their sophisticated and expensive water monitoring equipment to Walla Walla Public Schools science teachers to enhance their regular curriculum.

"Several teachers take advantage of this opportunity each year," Geidl said. "This allows students to participate in hands-on, real life scientific activities."

Tri-State Steelheaders work throughout southeastern Washington, northeastern Oregon and north central Idaho. The bulk of its work occurs in the Walla Walla River Watershed.

# Dance team state champs

Congratulations to the Wa-Hi Dance Team for taking 1st Place at the State Dance Championships in Yakima in March.

Wa-Hi's Dance Team, under the direction of coach **Nancy Wells**, has earned state titles two of the past three years. The 19 member team has a combined G.P.A. of 3.67.

The team competed against 24 of the state's top teams to take top honors. Wa-Hi's Dance Team wears a variety of colorful, creative costumes throughout the season.



College: Not a Dream! It's a PLAN

## Gear Up program helps Garrison students prepare for college

Trips to the dentist for not so pleasant braces adjustments and long gazes into the mirror to get that perfect look are normal aspects of middle school life. Thanks to the new Gear Up Program, *Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs*, Garrison Middle School 6th and 7th grade students also routinely prepare for college life.

Gear Up objectives center on preparing students to enter and succeed in post secondary education.

Gear Up provides an extended learning program from 3 to 6 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Trained tutors provide academic support, during and after school, to help students complete homework assignments, improve motivation and reach higher achievement levels. A host of well organized activities keeps students interested and helps them make friends.

Gear Up services were made available through funds from a local/federal matching grant from the Department of Education. Washington State University serves as the grant manager responsible for providing contracted services to Walla Walla Public Schools and several

regional school districts.

Gear Up Site Director **Jerri Doyle** brings a wealth of education experience to her position. Doyle, a 1984 Wa-Hi graduate, spent 14 years as a High School Preparation Instructor in a large Southern California school district. She wants to use her experience to help students realize their potential.



Jerri Doyle

“Students have different learning styles and cultural views that make for an exciting challenge of incorporating a program that is diverse and fun, yet still educational,” Doyle said. “The big ‘trick’ is to teach them through activities and field trips, with them not being aware that it is also a learning and growing experience. I tell them, you are the master of your own destiny, it doesn’t matter where you came from, it matters where you are going.”

Nearly 100 students actively participate in the Gear Up Program. Doyle planned several field trips to local businesses and colleges this year. Students visited the Carnegie Art Center Docents Annual Family Exhibit in March and several will travel to Seattle in July to attend the University

of Washington Summer Institute. Students will stay in college dorms to experience a college campus setting, while attending educational activities focused on career interests. Gear Up participants will also gain leadership opportunities through community service activities and enhance their technology skills by working with computers.

“Students will eventually build their own portfolio and capture it on compact disc,” Doyle said. “This portfolio will include academic accomplishments, community service projects, sport awards, career planning and more. Students will also give an oral presentation of their portfolio.”



Former Wa-Hi Social Studies teacher **Al Worthington** is the lead tutor for the Gear Up program. Worthington said the program sounded intriguing and good for kids.

## Students take on leadership roles during Mariners radio spot recordings

Sodo Mojo! Walla Walla Public Schools has once again teamed with KGDC 1320 AM to broadcast student radio announcements on Seattle Mariners baseball games throughout the 2003 season.

Students wrote and recorded these low-cost, informative school announcements. Students talked about their favorite classes, teachers and activities.

Walla Walla Public Schools uses this project to keep community members connected with their public schools.

“The Seattle Mariners radio broadcasts are extremely popular and an excellent vehicle to let people know all the great things that are happening in their local

schools,” Communications Director **Mark Higgins** said. “Smiles on students’ faces make this project worthwhile. They also get to learn more about broadcast radio and take a leadership role in their schools.”

Parents were responsible for bringing their children to the radio station for the recordings. Many proud parents went into the recording studio to watch their child perform.

“I think the parents had as much fun as the students,” Higgins said. “We know parent involvement plays a key role in the academic success of their child. We all win when we connect parents to their child’s education.”



Sharpstein 4th grade student **Courtney Bruner** records her Seattle Mariners school announcement. Students wrote and recorded their own announcements explaining what they like most about school.

## Garrison Night School showcased at Northwest Hispanic conference

What began as private tutoring sessions for Hispanic parents to improve communication with teachers, has blossomed into a dynamic learning program to help Walla Walla’s Hispanic adult population access education that they may not have had the opportunity to gain in their homeland or in the United States.

Now in its 8th year, Garrison Night School is a community partnership program between Walla Walla Public Schools and Walla Walla Community College providing educational opportunities to Walla Walla’s growing Hispanic adult population.

In March school administrators and educators from throughout the Northwest attending the 2003 *Northwest Conference on Celebrating Educational Opportunities for Hispanic Students* listened to success stories from the Garrison Night School.

District Bilingual Program Coordinator **Cindy Gregoire** and Garrison Night School program

### Night School Goals

- Stronger parent support
- Parent involvement
- Adult higher education
- Citizenship opportunities
- Traffic safety education

coordinators **Javier and Salvador Hernandez**, who have been directors of the program since its inception, organized the conference presentation.

The conference was designed to showcase programs that have been successful in raising academic achievement for Hispanic students.

Garrison Night School serves more than 300 adult students annually. Students enroll in pre-General Education Diploma (GED) courses. WWCC arranges for GED testing and quick turn around on the scoring. WWCC also pays for instructors.

Many Garrison Night School graduates successfully attain their GED and go on to attend higher education programs.

## End-of-year activities scheduled

### June 2003

- 2 Wa-Hi Baccalaureate • Cordiner Hall • 7:30 p.m.
- 3 Opportunity Senior Dinner • District Office • 6:00 p.m.
- 4 Wa-Hi Academic Recognition • Auditorium • 7:00 p.m.
- 5 Paine Campus Senior Celebration • Paine gym • 7:00 p.m.
- 6 Graduates of Distinction reception • District Office • 2 p.m.
- 6 Wa-Hi Commencement • Wa-Hi Commons area • 7:30 p.m.
- 10 Pioneer 8th Grade Recognition • Cordiner Hall • 7:30 p.m.
- 11 Garrison 8th Grade Recognition • Cordiner Hall • 7:00 p.m.
- 12 LAST DAY OF SCHOOL • Early dismissal for students
- 13 All-Staff breakfast • Wa-Hi Commons • 7:00 a.m.

Activities schedule online  
[www.wwps.org](http://www.wwps.org)

## CSI comes to Walla Walla

Wa-Hi students create mock crime lab



Much of Wa-Hi Science teacher **Anne Swant**’s college life was not exactly glamorous as she spent endless hours in a lab hunched over a microscope.

Thanks to popular TV shows like *CSI - Crime Scene Investigation* - the life of a forensic scientist is now more alluring in the eyes of a teenager.

Swant took advantage of the media hype to enhance learning by establishing a mock crime scene in her classroom. Students became Crime Scene Investigators and learned numerous scientific procedures to solve the class mystery.

“I’ve had kids say I want to be a forensic scientist,” Swant said. “This project helps kids see there’s more to biology than just sitting in a lab. When they hear about DNA, they can relate because they understand how it works.”

Based on the clues they received from Swant, the students had to piece together the mystery and solve the crime. Students learned how to read DNA markings to bust the criminal.



Wa-Hi Science Teacher **Anne Swant**, a.k.a. Edna N. Zyme to her students during the crime lab project, shows Sophomore **Lindsey Stilson** how to read DNA samples.

“It’s not just a boring science class, we’re actually doing something that can solve a crime,” **Sophomore Kristen Mitchell** said. “Maybe a few of us will enter this profession just because of Mrs. Swant’s crime scene project.”