

School-based health center expands to Blue Ridge

Center aims to improve access to care
School board members gave the The Health Center the green light to expand and develop a school-based health center at Blue Ridge Elementary.

The Health Center at Blue Ridge will be open Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. and serve P-5 students.

The staff will share space with the Blue Ridge Health Clinician who provides service to the school during the morning hours. The school currently does not have coverage in the afternoon.

School board members will receive a progress report in June to review the number of referrals and the center's impact on local medical providers. The school-based health center at Lincoln High School is beginning year four.

“The Health Center at Blue Ridge will reduce barriers to access and help students and their families develop healthier lifestyles.”

Holly Howard
Executive Director, The Health Center



(L-R) Volunteer Health Center Medical Director **Alison Kirby** and Executive Director **Holly Howard** are busy setting up the new school-based health center at Blue Ridge Elementary.

Howard says they plan to foster stronger partnerships in the community and work hard to deliver stronger health care for Blue Ridge students.

Kirby believes the center will serve as a conduit to area medical providers to enhance care.

**Walla Walla
Public
Schools**

Focus on Education

Excellence in Every Classroom

Your School District Newsletter | Fall 2012 | Volume 15 | Issue 1

Wa-Hi student state's top BMX racer

Katie Forss is pedaling for a college scholarship through biking

With a normally quiet demeanor, Walla Walla High School Junior **Katie Forss** lets her riding do the talking when she competes across the state in BMX racing.

Forss is currently ranked number one in Washington for girls in her age group. She says the aggressive world of bike racing is fun.

“The rush is amazing,” said Forss, who began BMX racing at age seven. “I like it because it’s an individual sport and it’s up to me to perform.”

“I take all honors and advanced placement courses. I love math and science and would like to pursue a career in the medical field.”

Katie Forss

See **Forss BMX** page 6



Walla Walla High School junior **Katie Forss** continues to gain respect across the state in BMX racing and currently is ranked 7th in the nation for 16-year-old girls.

District science test scores above state average

Wa-Hi graduation rate 16 percentage points higher than state average

Spring state test scores revealed positive trends in elementary reading, math and science and results for high school assessments were above the state average in all but one subject.

WWPS 5th grade science scores were above the state average for the second year in a row. Blue Ridge and Prospect Point Elementary results were at or above 87 percent. Especially notable

is Blue Ridge's improvement from only 11 percent meeting science standards in 2010.

Wa-Hi continues to vastly outperform the state graduation rate with an impressive 92 percent on-time rate. The state graduation rate is 76.6 percent. For a complete listing of state test scores, visit the district web site at www.wwps.org.

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District rejects Skill Center bids

School board members rejected all bids for the Southeast Area Technical Skill Center after general contractor bids for the \$7.7 million construction project came in approximately \$1.1 million over estimations.

Superintendent **Mick Miller** says the district will work with Architects West to scale the project back to reduce costs and then put it out for bid.

Last spring, the Washington State Legislature allocated \$10.3 million to fund the High School Skill Center. These funds will also pay for equipment, furniture and other costs associated with the project.

The Southeast Area Technical Skill Center is expected to open in the Fall of 2014 and will serve regional high school students at its Walla Walla Community College location. It will offer construction trades, welding, renewable resources and health occupation programs.

The Skill Center will be a branch campus of the Kennewick School District's Tri-Tech Skills Center.

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

Quality | Integrity | Accountability | Respect
Courtesy | Innovation | Diversity

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

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Message from Superintendent Mick Miller

Welcome to the 2012-13 school year!

For an educator, the cooling autumn weather signals the beginning of another school year. As I enter into my 47th school year (13 as a K-12 student, 4 as a college student, and 30 as an educator), I am more energized than ever. I am so excited for the children of our district to experience this school year as they grow, mature and learn. It is truly an honor to be part of their lives.

First, however, I want to reflect back upon the 2011-2012 school year. It was a great year that was crowned with the graduation of over 490 seniors from Walla Walla and Lincoln High Schools. Each and every graduate had to overcome obstacles on their path to commencement and each met rigorous state standards. I need to thank our graduates for their hard work and perseverance, their teachers for all their efforts on behalf of our students and to the parents and community for their support.

On behalf of our students, staff, and Board of Directors, I am privileged to say “thank you” to the Walla Walla community for its support of our educational Programs and Operations Levy. The 64.3% “yes” vote was incredibly encouraging.

We have many challenges as we enter this school year. Like all school districts in the state of Washington, we are facing continuing budget challenges as the state wrestles with budget shortfalls.

We are embarking upon a new teacher and principal evaluation

system and working on a 2014-2015 transition to the College and Career Ready Common Core Curriculum Standards. Further, as our high school facilities continue to age, our Board of Directors will be determining a course of action to present to our community. Finally, we will continue to work to improve student achievement for all of our students.

I would like to thank Dr. Jim Lehmann for his service as a school director for the past five years. Dr. Lehmann relocated to the East Coast this fall and had to resign his board seat. His contributions to the district were numerous and he will be missed. I would also like to welcome Ruth Ladderud to the board. Mrs. Ladderud was selected by the school board at a special meeting on September 25 to replace Dr. Lehmann.

It is such a privilege to have the opportunity to serve as superintendent of Walla Walla Public Schools. We have so many wonderful kids, staff members, and programs in our district.

I would love to hear from you. If you have a question, concern, comment, criticism or compliment regarding our district, please let me know. My direct number is 526-6714 and email is mmiller@wwps.org.

“The Pulse” Video Series

Superintendent Miller keeps the community informed by traveling to schools each month to provide updates

Superintendent **Mick Miller** welcomes everyone back to school for a new year via his “The Pulse” monthly video series. Each month Superintendent Miller will produce “The Pulse” to help inform parents, students, staff and community members on district issues.

Visit the district website (www.wwps.org) or the district’s YouTube page to watch “The Pulse.”

2012-2013 Schedule

- September 2012: Walla Walla High School
- October 2012: Blue Ridge Elementary
- November 2012: Pioneer Middle School
- December 2012: Berney Elementary
- January 2013: Lincoln High School
- February 2013: Garrison Middle School
- March 2013: Edison Elementary
- April 2013: Prospect Point Elementary
- May 2013: Green Park Elementary
- June 2013: Sharpstein Elementary

Opportunity Program returns Program helps students earn a diploma

Veteran teachers **Tom Porter** and **Jerry Quaresma** are once again leading the Opportunity Program to offer area students another choice for completing their education.

The Opportunity Program is an off-site alternative learning program to offer area high school students more choices for earning credits en route to graduation. It targets 5th and 6th year seniors, credit deficient students and students in need of a flexible schedule.

The Opportunity Program is a contract-based program which offers students more flexibility to meet their scheduling needs, a chance to work one-on-one with a teacher for a portion of the week and an off-site location. Opportunity students work at their own pace on subject areas related to their specific academic needs. Contract-based programming is also used at Walla Walla High School and Lincoln High School for credit retrieval.

Opportunity students work at their own pace on subject areas related to their specific academic needs.

This community-based, off-site program is being operated in the Walla Walla Public Schools district office at 364 S. Park St. Former Opportunity Program teachers Tom Porter and Jerry Quaresma are once again serving as the program teachers and student advisors.

“It is our intention to keep students in the Walla Walla School District connected with public school education and to reconnect those students who have previously dropped out or have not been successful,” Porter said. “Course content and graduation requirements are aligned with Walla Walla High School.”



For more information:

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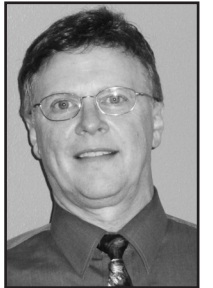
Community Connections

TOC earns district copier contract

Walla Walla Public Schools recently elected to renew its digital copier and print management contract with Total Office Concepts, Inc., of Walla Walla.

The new three-year contract includes the related support services over the term of the contract.

“The vote of confidence the district has shown us by awarding us a fourth straight digital print contract, representing a total of 15 continuous years, is a tremendous honor and privilege,” said **Mark Carlile**, Total Office Concepts’ President and Chief Executive Officer.



Mark Carlile

Gillespie Golden Onion recipients named

Berney Elementary physical education teacher **Ryan Van Dyke**, Pioneer Explorer Program teacher **Dan Calzaretta**, and Walla Walla High School science teacher **Pamela McBride** recently received 2011-2012 Gillespie Golden Onion awards and \$500 grants as recognition for their outstanding service to Walla Walla students.

Longtime Walla Walla residents **Dr. Mike Gillespie** and his wife **Sue** established the “Golden Onion Award” to provide school supplies, equipment and professional development funds to district educators.

New school resource officer assumes post

City of Walla Walla Police Officer **Matthew Greenland** is the new school resource officer at Lincoln High School. Greenland will also provide support to other district schools in the city as needed.

“I’m very personable and I like speaking and mingling with students and staff,” Greenland said. “I believe I’ll be a real positive asset to this resource officer position.”

Greenland is a Martial Arts expert, restraint instructor and member of the SWAT team.



Report cards to look different under new Standards Based Grading model

By Dr. Linda Boggs, Assistant Superintendent

This past school year, a district team representing K-12 teachers and administrators and community members worked together in advancing our understanding and use of Standards Based Grading and Reporting in WWPS. As of this fall, the elementary schools are beginning the formal transition to the newly adopted Common Core Standards. Parents and students will experience a revised report card and revised instructional standards. Secondary staff will continue their work in this area, with an anticipated 2014-15 implementation date. Standards are the most critical skills that students are held accountable for mastering.



Standards based grade reporting:

- Student achievement based on content standards
- Student social development and work habits

Standards are important for your child because they provide:

- A clear focus on what students should know and be able to do – even if students move to a different school
- Equal learning opportunities for all students
- A consistent way of communicating about student achievement

As we work to standardize our grading and reporting system, K-5 has identified universal terms for performance in Walla Walla Public Schools K-5 classrooms, physical education and music reports. All scores are reported in terms of the student's performance in attempting to meet standards:

- Advanced Understanding (4)
- Proficient (3)
- Approaching Proficiency (2)
- Below Proficient (1)

It is our belief and our experience, to date, that when students and families clearly understand the expectations, are provided instruction, practice and feedback, students can and do achieve.

More information about the Common Core Standards for all subject areas may be obtained from your school or by visiting the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction website: <http://www.k12.wa.us/corestandards>.

Wa-Hi football players help tackle move



Walla Walla High School football players (L-R) **AJ Crump** and **Logan Reardon** and several of their teammates volunteered to move the Carnegie Picture Lab into its new home at 515 East Main Street.

"Strong and tireless, these guys were great, good humored, and even invited their friends to join the fun," said **Augusta Farnum**, who helps coordinate the program. "Carnegie Picture Lab offers a heartfelt thanks to the team for their help."

Outstanding staff recognized by peers

Congratulations to this year's *Staff Achievement Grant* recipients. Recipients receive a \$1,500 stipend and five days of paid release time for professional growth.

2011-2012 Staff Achievement Recipients

Maria Garcia

- Assessment and RTI Coordinator

Carina Stillman

- English Teacher, Walla Walla High School

Christine Ludwig

- Intervention Specialist, Prospect Point Elementary

Carl Robanske

- PE teacher, Garrison Middle School

Shane Jacobson

- Technology Specialist

School bus driver's job extends beyond navigating area roadways

School bus driver training program focuses on teaching positive social behaviors

District school bus drivers and support staff recently participated in Positive Behavior Intervention and Support training to improve student management on school buses. The purpose of the training is to teach Transportation Department personnel how to positively interact with students and to teach safe school bus riding procedures.

Teaching behavioral expectations and rewarding students for following them is a much more positive approach than waiting for misbehavior to occur before responding, according to Transportation Director **Steve Olson**. He says the purpose of school-wide PBIS is to establish a climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm.

"Our Transportation Department personnel reported they felt this was very good training and are looking forward to using the strategies as they interact with students," said Olson. "This training will add more tools for our drivers to use with student management procedures so we may continue to offer safe and reliable transportation."



School bus driver **Barbara Kenny** wants her students to have a positive experience riding the bus and love school. She believes school bus drivers set the tone for the school day by getting them off to a great start.

"It's important to bond and build trust with the students. It's easy to say -- sit down, sit down. It's just as easy to say: you are sitting down today -- good job!"

Barbara Kenny - School Bus Driver

New Lincoln HS science lab supports real world learning

Crime Scene Investigating comes to Lincoln High School this school year as a new science lab allows students to use their sleuthing skills.

To start the lesson in their new Biomedical Engineering class, students investigate the mock death of "Anna Garcia." At first glance the students are led to believe she died from falling off of a ladder.

"They soon learn she has a long list of medical ailments they will need to consider," said teacher **Erik Gordon**.

The new lab features modern learning stations and sinks. The course is supported by sophisticated



Erik Gordon

software to enhance learning.

"This class is more hands-on and career orientated," Gordon said. "Students interested in working in the health sciences fields like Emergency Medical Technician, nursing or physicians assistant will get a lot out of this course."

Students also work in teams and are expected to behave as if they were in the work place. Students are not allowed in the lab without their lab coats and protective equipment.

"It makes us step up and act more mature," said student **Brendon Gilman**. "Mr. Gordon challenges us to work hard and make good decisions."



Lincoln HS freshman **Jamie McDavid** takes photographs of the mock accident scene.

Garrison teacher brings Space Camp lessons home

Hands-on lunar landing mission energizes students

Perched high above the second floor stairwell rail, Garrison Middle School students gently tossed their cardboard lunar landing crafts to eagerly awaiting students below. Parachutes and balloons eased the crafts to the mock cloth "moon surface" on the school's main floor.

Garrison Middle School teacher **Sue Schulz** learned this lesson while at NASA Space Camp at Huntsville, AL this summer. Tucked inside the space craft was an "Eggstronaut"



Garrison Middle School Science teacher Sue Schulz participated in the Honeywell Space Academy for Educators. Schulz trained as an astronaut, conducted science experiments and learned NASA math and science curriculum.

the students used to test the effectiveness of their lunar machine. Did it break? Is it okay? The students above asked their classmates to check on their eggs. The students then logged their data on their payload record sheet as part of the lesson. In addition to learning about space and science concepts through this lesson, the students also used their math and writing skills to complete the assignment.

"I had an amazing experience at Space Camp," Schulz said. "We were surrounded by so many great people."

One benefit of attending Space Camp was receiving proven lessons from educators across the country. Schulz spent part of her summer planning how to use the lessons to support Walla Walla's curriculum.

"I want my students to be able to experience some of what I did at Space Camp," Schulz said. "This lesson sets the tone for what is to come this school year at Garrison and allows my students to use their imaginations."



Eighth grade student Madi Cornia takes measurements as part of Sue Schulz's Lunar Landing lesson.

"This lesson was designed to get students jazzed about science. The students were engaged throughout the lesson and are excited about their learning."

Sue Schulz

Forss BMX continued from page 1

The BMX season begins in the spring and continues through the fall. Katie races every other weekend during the season. She has to race in three state qualifiers throughout the state to be eligible to race in the State Championship. She also competes in six national events to qualify for the Grand National event in Wyoming. She practices riding one hour per day and the YMCA has set up a fitness program to best suit her needs.

Her parents Rod and Karen Forss manage the Walla Walla BMX track and program. Despite her busy schedule, Katie continues to excel in school. She takes Advanced Placement and Honor courses and is in the AVID program. Her goal is to earn a college scholarship through the *USA BMX* scholarship program. She plans to pursue a career in the medical field.



Forss began BMX racing at age seven.

New Pioneer MS boilers save taxpayers money

This summer Valley Mechanical of Walla Walla installed new boilers at Pioneer Middle School. The existing steam boilers were outdated, unreliable and inefficient.

The new HydroTherm system is 92.7 % efficient. The district received a \$100,000 grant to help fund the project. CFO **Pat Johnston** thanks the community for supporting the project.

Walla Walla High School Class of 1962 graduate establishes scholarship fund

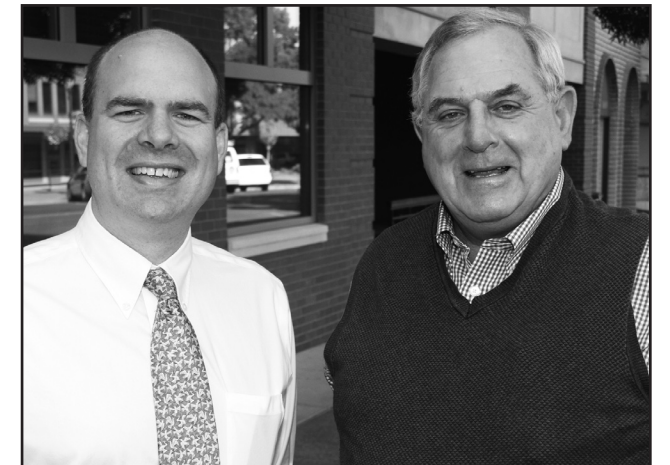
Blue Mountain Community Foundation to manage funds

Walla Walla High School Class of 1962 graduate Jerry Zahl, with the support of classmates and the community, has established a high school scholarship fund to help area graduates get to college. Currently the fund, managed by the Blue Mountain Community Foundation, has \$14,000 with a goal to exceed \$100,000 in the next five years.

"We are working toward opening wider doors so that local public high school students with limited financial resources will be able to acquire additional education beyond high school," Zahl said. "You do not need to be a millionaire to give to this scholarship fund. Each graduate contributing their graduation year in dollars and cents annually would be a good place to start. The acceptance and support from the local community has been absolutely fantastic from the beginning because everybody senses the need."

Zahl says the goal is to make it possible for anybody to contribute any amount, at any time, to this scholarship fund.

"If only 100 students, out of more than 360, from the Class of 1962 were to contribute \$20 per year we would have \$100,000 in 50 years," Zahl said. "The costs of an advanced education are rising, and the establishment of this scholarship fund makes it possible for anyone to help support advanced education while assisting many very capable students in realizing their



(L-R) Blue Mountain Community Foundation Director Lawson Knight and Class of '62 Alum Jerry Zahl celebrate the launching of the new High School Scholarship fund.

potential. All funds will be received and invested through the Blue Mountain Community Foundation.

To make a donation or learn more about the Walla Walla Public High Schools Scholarship fund, visit the Blue Mountain Community Foundation website: www.bluemountainfoundation.org. For additional information, contact Jerry Zahl at: jkzahl@charter.net.

Twenty percent of Walla Walla teachers using new evaluation model this year

Walla Walla Public Schools is participating in a pilot program this school year to develop a model for teacher and principal evaluation (based on requirements of the education reform bill E2SSB 6696) which calls for the introduction of a four-level evaluation ranking. Currently there are only two rankings: satisfactory and unsatisfactory.

The new evaluation system for teachers and principals will feature the following rankings: Unsatisfactory, Basic, Proficient and Distinguished. All districts will be required to adopt evaluation systems in alignment with E2SSB 6696 next year.

The district formed principal and teacher leadership teams to do the research in developing a plan for Walla Walla Public Schools. Now these leadership teams are tailoring a model in line with the state requirements, to meet the needs of our staff and district. Approximately twenty percent of each school's teaching staff -- all new teachers and all principals -- are currently using this model.

"The new evaluation system uses a rubric, which is essentially a step-by-step map for growth. The rubric shows specific, tangible adjustments to make. Since the categories are broken down into small components, it makes it easy to find just the right category to focus on without being overwhelming."



Tina Brennan
4th Grade teacher, Blue Ridge Elementary