

School board members say good-bye



Retiring school board member **Tim Donaldson** presents long-time school board secretary **Marilyn Brown** with an etched glass vase and beautiful bouquet of flowers as a thank you for her help the past eight years.

Last night was the final school board meeting for Donaldson and fellow retiring school board member **Toni Rudnick**. The two served two terms on the school board from 1999 to 2007.

Superintendent **Rich Carter** highlighted some of the district's accomplishments during their tenure on the school board.

Carter said he would miss their leadership and guidance, but more importantly their friendship.

"We are forever indebted for your commitment to our school district and for your belief children are our most precious resource," Carter said.

New school board members **Jim Lehmann** and **Max Carrera** begin their terms Dec. 18.

November 20 • School Board Meeting Recap

YMCA buys Support Services property

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

The YMCA agreed to pay \$580,000 for the property which represents the appraised market value.

The YMCA also set-up a long-term lease agreement with the district per the land and property purchase deal.

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

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

Staff levy presentations begin next week

Superintendent **Rich Carter** reported to school board members he will begin meeting with district staff members next week to inform them about the February 19 replacement M&O Levy.

Carter celebrated with the school board on the apparent passage of the Simple Majority ballot issue which changes the approval requirements to 50% + 1 vote.

Carter said the district will have levy information on the website next week, begin printing fact sheets and schedule community visits.

He also reported *Citizens for Schools* Chairs **Katie Christianson** and **Jennifer Northam** are getting organized to help educate the community on this issue.

In other School Board meeting business...

Board members:

- approved minutes of the board meetings of November 6 & 9, 2007, Personnel Report, Out of State travel, Board meeting schedule, Resolution #17-2007, Intergovernmental Cooperative Purchasing Agreement, and Approval of November Bills and Payroll.
- received an update from Superintendent Carter on the Edison construction project. Bids are expected to go out in February.

Personnel Report

• New Hires

(Certificated) **None to report**

(Classified) **Michael Lorang**, Custodian, Various Locations
Yajaira Page, Para-Educator, Green Park

• Resignations/Retirements

None to report

• Leave of Absence

(Classified) **None to report**

Quote of the Week

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

Darcy Weisner

Walla Walla High School Principal

Cameras key to Wa-Hi security improvements

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

Weisner said the addition of the cameras has been the most significant change made to improve safety. Since the system is web-based, cameras can be viewed at any time and at any location as long as there is internet connectivity. The user friendly system also stores information which allows for easy review of incidents. Operators also have the ability to pan cameras from side-to-side and up and down to better zoom in on a situation.

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

Weisner also thanked new custodian **Mike Dill** for his efforts to trim tree limbs and bushes for better campus visibility.

Weisner also developed a new, color-coded hall pass system. The system divides the campus into zones and assigns different colors for the zones. Students wear the colorful passes around their necks to make the passes easy to see.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sharpstein authors learn second language

Last night Sharpstein fourth grade students from **Jackie Martinez** and **Terri Gilbert’s** dual language class read stories they have written in their second language.

Students learn in English during the morning in Gilbert’s class and then shift to Spanish instruction in the afternoon with Martinez.

The students featured last night are at the top of their class according to Gilbert and Martinez. They have mastered how to speak, read and write in a second language.

Transition program helps Wa-Hi freshmen

Wa-Hi Assistant Principal **Mira Gobel** reported to school board members on last summer’s transition program which helped students get off to a good start at their new school.

Gobel said 362 students participated in the orientation. Students learned about graduation requirements, how to navigate the Wa-Hi website, study skills, campus features and more.

Gobel said they also made the all day sessions fun by organizing an assembly and teaching the students the school fight song.

School board meeting dates set

January 15

February 5 & 19

March 4 & 18

April 15

May 6 & May 20

June 3 & June 17

All meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. unless changed by the school board. Meetings are held in the district’s board room -- 364 S. Park Street.

School board meeting are open to the public.