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District Stories

Walla Walla voters pass replacement Levy

Walla Walla voters delivered a strong message of support Tuesday by passing the replacement levy with a 64 percent yes count. This secures levy funding for the next four years. The Educational Programs and Operations Replacement Levy helps maintain the current level of teaching and educational programs by funding nearly 20 percent of the district's General Fund.

"My heartfelt thanks to all who helped with the levy," Superintendent Mick Miller said. "The district's efforts to build relationships, offer excellent customer service and raise student achievement have been acknowledged by our community. Our community truly cares about education and its children."

Levy by the numbers (as of 2/14/12):

Yes: 5,594 (63.88%)

No: 3,163 (36.12%)

Ballots Cast: 8,757

Voter turnout: 46%

Thanks to members of Walla Walla Citizens for Schools, especially co-chairs Shauna Bogley and Peter Swant, for all their hard work raising awareness of the importance of this funding source.

"What a wonderful Valentine to the students of Walla Walla," Bogley said. "We are so appreciative for the support. Thanks to the committee, voters and staff for working so hard to ensure academic excellence in Walla Walla."

Mid-winter break: No School Friday & Monday

There is no school Friday, Feb. 17 (mid-winter break) and Monday, Feb. 20 (Presidents Day). Classes resume at all schools Tuesday, Feb. 21.

School board public work session and meeting Tuesday, Feb. 21

- Tuesday, Feb. 21
- 5:30 p.m.: Public work session discussing non-bond facilities prioritization and Skills Center update
- 6:30 p.m.: Regularly scheduled meeting
- Location: District board room (364 S. Park St.)
- Both meetings open to the public

Explorer Nomination/Referral Period Now Open

Nomination/referral materials are now available in all district elementary and middle schools for the 2012-13 Explorer (Gifted Education) Program. Parents with students in grades 2 through 7 may contact their child's teacher or school learning specialist/middle school counselor for more information. Program information is also available on the district website, using the following link: <http://www.wwps.org/programs/explorers.htm>

Walla Walla School District's Explorer Program provides students of high academic and intellectual ability with designated time to explore concepts in greater depth. Classes are currently offered for students in grade 3 through 8.

The goal of the Explorer Program is to encourage the development of higher level thinking skills. Students learn to become responsible for their own learning, to develop their creative thinking and critical reasoning power and to strive to reach their potential. The Explorer curriculum for third through fifth grades focuses primarily on mathematics, science, oral and written communication and critical thinking skills. Elementary students are bussed to Sharpstein Elementary School for two half-days per week. At each middle school, curriculum focuses on the humanities, drawn from the areas of language arts and social studies, and offers advanced, but parallel, learning opportunities.

The nomination/referral deadline this year is March 14, 2012. All referred students will take a norm-referenced standardized test and those who qualify for further testing will participate in cognitive abilities testing, also at their home schools. In all cases, parents will be notified of the results of the process, and a child not selected one year may be referred again in subsequent years. For more information, please contact the Walla Walla School District Curriculum and Instruction office: 509-526-6735.

Host families needed for Sasayama Japan student visit

Sasayama Sister City Affiliation Committee is looking for host families for students arriving from Sasayama, Japan on March 24, 2012. Eleven girls and four boys will visit Walla Walla from March 24 through April 3. Host families provide room and board and transport their student to the daily drop off and pick up point. An informational meeting will be announced after we receive the student profiles from Japan and have the required host family commitments. If your family would like to experience hosting a student from our sister city, Sasayama, please contact Robert Keatts by email; robert_wwscc@yahoo.com or phone 525-0049.

Dorn to Apply for No Child Left Behind Waiver

OSPI OLYMPIA — State Superintendent Randy Dorn announced today that he would apply for a waiver from the federal No Child Left Behind sanctions.

“My office looked at hundreds of comments from the general public,” Dorn said. “I talked to many people in districts and schools and worked closely with the State Board of Education on the application. Schools need to be relieved from the burden of No Child Left Behind and focus their time and energy on helping our students succeed.”

If approved, Washington state would be relieved of Adequate Yearly Progress rules. Current AYP rules include increasing consequences for Title I schools and districts that do not meet certain percentage levels of students passing state tests each year. In 2011, roughly two out of every three schools in Washington did not meet AYP. Schools that do not meet AYP two or more years in a row are considered in a “step” of improvement. Those schools must set aside 20 percent of their Title I money for supplemental educational services and for students who might request school choice. A waiver would eliminate the set-aside requirement.

As an alternative to current AYP rules, Washington would set annual measurable objectives that focus on the proficiency gaps between different groups of students. By 2017, the gaps would be half of what they were in 2011.

“By looking at the achievement gap, our plan focuses on the students most in need,” Dorn said. “Our intent is for the 20 percent of set-aside money to get those students individualized help.”

States requesting a waiver must establish and meet four principles:

1. College and career-ready expectations for all students;
2. State-developed differentiated recognition, accountability and support;
3. Support for effective instruction and leadership; and
4. Reduction in duplication and unnecessary burden.

Washington has met all four principles. In 2011, the state adopted the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and math, and it is a lead state in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium. The state is adopting a new accountability system. It also passed historical legislation in 2010 that will change the way teachers and principals are evaluated. Finally, reducing duplication is an ongoing task in all states.

No Child Left Behind refers to the 2002 iteration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), first passed by the U.S. Congress in the mid-1960s. NCLB was scheduled to be reauthorized in 2007, but Congress could not agree on a reauthorization package, which meant the existing law stayed in effect.

“Congress really needs to do its job and rewrite No Child Left Behind,” Dorn said. “The law raised a lot of awareness that all students need to be proficient in math and reading. Unfortunately, it also punished schools and districts unfairly, and it set unrealistic goals that no school or district can meet.”

Earlier this month, the U.S. Department of Education announced that 10 of the 11 states that initially applied for waivers were approved, and the department is working with the 11th state.

A copy of the draft of Washington’s waiver application can be found at <http://www.k12.wa.us/ESEA/Pubdocs/DraftFlexibilityRequest.pdf>. The final application is due Feb. 28.

School Stories

Public invited to free Mariachi Huenachi concert March 2

The Walla Walla School District and the Walla Walla High School Latino Club will be hosting Mariachi Huenachi for a series of concerts on March 1 and 2. Mariachi Huenachi is the advanced mariachi music class at Wenatchee High School and has earned a reputation as the best high school mariachi in the State of Washington. This will be the third year the group has come to Walla Walla.

Concert Schedule

Thursday, March 1

- The group will be part of the Garrison Night School celebration at 6 p.m. and provide entertainment for those adults who are completing the night school's 10 week education program.

Friday, March 2

- The group will perform at Blue Ridge Elementary, Edison Elementary School, and then perform a concert at 9:30 a.m. at Cordiner Hall on the Whitman College Campus for the Green Park, Sharpstein, Prospect Point and Berney Elementary Schools. The group will then perform during first and second lunch at Walla Walla High School. In the afternoon Mariachi Huenachi will be at Pioneer Middle School.

- The public is invited to an evening concert that will be held at the Walla Walla High School Auditorium on March 2, 2012, starting at 7 p.m. Admission is free. An opportunity to support this event through a donation will be made available during the concert.

The Wenatchee School District's Mariachi Program has over 300 students district wide, 100 of which are Wenatchee High School students. Last year the group performed at over 40 events and festivals including the Seattle Seahawks, Mariners, and Chivas de Guadalajara games, Washington State University, University of Idaho, Orcas Island, Space Needle, Folklife Festival, EMP, and for Governor Gregoire. In summer of 2009, Mariachi Huenachi shared the stage with the renowned group Los Tigres Del Norte.

WWHS JROTC Shooting team brings home hardware from Ohio

Sarah Jameson takes first place in the overall category

Shooters from the Walla Walla High School rifle team are champions of the Western U.S. Army Junior ROTC Match, held Friday and Saturday at Camp Perry, Ohio. The five members of the Wa-Hi precision team won first place overall among the 11 teams in their category throughout the western United States. The five shooters on the sporter team captured third overall out of 20 teams.

The Wa-Hi traveling marksmanship team members are:- Precision Team: Cadet Capt. Rishi, senior, 17 (team captain); c/Capt. Karri Mickelson, senior, 18; c/Sgt. Caitlyn Lasseigne, junior, 17; c/Sgt. Sarah Jameson, sophomore, 16; c/Sgt. Allison Juergensen, sophomore, 16.- Sporter Team: c/Master Sgt. Nicki Thomas, senior, 17 (team captain); c/Sgt. Emily Bendix, junior, 17; c/Corporal Andrew Jenkins, sophomore, 16; c/Pvt. 1st Class Isaiah Ziegler, sophomore, 15; c/Pvt. 1st Class Olivia Holm, freshman, 15.

Their coaches and advisor are: Sgt. 1st Class Mark Mebes, Master Sgt. Gerry Taylor and Kirk Jameson. Precision shooter Sarah Jameson took first place overall with 1264 of a possible 1300 points, approximately four points ahead of the nearest competitor. Also from the precision team, Allison Juergensen was 5th place and Karri Mickelson 6th at the event. Sporter shooter Emily Bendix took second place with 1150 points. Hardware for the event was presented at ceremonies last Saturday evening in Ohio. Nationals will be held in Alabama next month. Jameson has also received an invite to the Junior Olympics.

Debate team competes in Stanford Invitational - By Coach Jean Tobin

This past weekend six students from Walla Walla High School attended the Stanford Invitational Debate Tournament in San Jose, California. Calvin Brigham (junior), Rosa Tobin (junior) and Kendall Dunovant (sophomore) competed in Lincoln-Douglas Debate.

Calvin and Rosa competed at the Varsity level, Kendall competed at the JV level. Marisol Beck (junior) competed in Congressional Debate at the Varsity level. In Speech, Hope Grant-Herriott (junior) competed in Oratory (a memorized persuasive speech) at the Varsity level and Anna Apostolidis-Morefield (freshman) competed in Expository (a memorized explanatory speech) at the JV level.

Our goal at this tournament was simply to experience National competition in order to better prepare for our National Qualifying tournament in March and (hopefully) Nationals in June. 167 schools competed from 3 countries. We learned a lot and the experience will help our team compete at an even higher level in the future. However, we also had some amazing successes!

In Junior Division, Kendall Dunovant made it to the Octo-Finals round in Lincoln-Douglas debate. She lost the round on a 2-1 decision. The round started at 9:00 at night after a full day of competing! Anna Apostolidis placed 3rd in Expository with a speech on National Anthems.

In Senior Division, Hope Grant-Herriot placed 7th, however in the Finals round 3 out of 7 judges ranked her first in the round. Hope's speech discusses the discrimination that many obese people experience. Hope has already had several colleges contact her because of they have heard about what an incredible competitor she is. She is planning on continuing to work on developing her speech so that she can compete at the National tournament in June.

This weekend (President's Day Weekend) we are traveling to Chiawana High School in Pasco with our whole team to compete at the State Qualifying Tournament.

In slightly older news :) ...

At the Walla Walla High School Tournament, held on Saturday, February 4, WWHS took first in Speech, Debate and Overall.

In DEBATE: Kera Parsons/Julia Cosma took first in PF Debate (they debated Birthright Citizenship); Calvin Brigham, Kendall Dunovant and Rosa Tobin took 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively in LD Debate (they debated if it is morally permissible for victims of domestic violence to kill their abusers); Kate Kuhlman took 2nd in Congressional Debate (she debated a variety of bills during the tournament).

In SPEECH: Hope Grant-Herriot placed 1st in Oratory, Anna Apostolidis was 2nd in Expository, Rosa Tobin and Emily Prull placed 2nd and 3rd in Impromptu Speaking, Marisol Beck and Kera Parsons were 1st and 2nd in Interpretive Reading, Bryan Preston and Rosa Tobin placed 1st and 3rd in Extemporaneous Speaking.

Many other students from the team also made it to Finals in their events, including Konor Clark (Humorous Interpretation), Kendall Dunovant (Extemp and Impromptu), Emily Prull (Extemp), Kate Kuhlmann, Maggie Grant-Herriot, Ben Parsons (Expository), Tristan Moore and Emma Gregoire (Oratory), Marisol Beck and Hope Grant-Herriot (Duo).

Walla Walla Middle School Students Participate in Solo & Ensemble Festival

Congratulations to district middle school musicians for their performances at the 2012 Columbia Basin Music Educators Association. The annual Solo & Ensemble Festival was held last Saturday at McLoughlin Middle School in Pasco.

- Garrison Middle School: Band 21 Entries, 17 Choir entries and 13 Orchestra entries

- Pioneer Middle School: 4 Band entries, 4 Vocal entries and 5 Orchestra entries

These students prepared and performed solos and / or ensembles (duets, trios, quartets etc.) for adjudication. They receive ratings that range from I (Superior), 2 (Excellent), 3 (Good), 4 (Fair) & 5 (Poor).

"Although our scores are not in yet, they all did a marvelous job on their performances," District Music Coordinator Roger Garcia said. "Garrison Middle School had the largest number of students participating in the Columbia Basin Region!"

Walla Walla music students selling citrus

Walla Walla band, orchestra and choir students are taking orders for oranges, grapefruit and tangelos, as part of the 3rd Annual Music Boosters Citrus Sale. Fruit is sold by the 20 lbs. or 40 lbs. box at a cost of \$20 and \$35 respectively. This is the Music Boosters only fundraiser and helps provide the extras that make your Music Program a success.

The fruit is delicious and it is a great way to support our students participating in orchestra, band, choir and music at every level. The sale will run through February 21. For more information find us on Facebook at Walla Walla Public Schools Music Program or call 526-1916.

State director of student achievement keynote speaker for 3rd Annual AVID Academic Recognition Night

3rd Annual AVID Academic Recognition and Family Night

- Presenter: Erin Jones, OSPI Assistant Superintendent of Student Achievement
- Topic: Building bridges between schools, families and communities
- Date: Wednesday, Feb. 22
- Time: 5:30 to 7 p.m. - Free dinner @ 5:30 p.m. / Program begins @ 6 p.m.
- Location: Walla Walla High School Commons
- Spanish translation service available

Erin Jones, OSPI Assistant Superintendent of Student Achievement, returns to Walla Walla to lead a discussion on building bridges between schools, families and communities during the Third Annual AVID Academic Recognition and Family Night Wednesday, Feb. 22 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the Walla Walla High School Commons.

Jones was hired in 2008 as the Director of the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning, where her focus is on creating a repository of best-practices for educators and building bridges between schools,

“The most powerful changes we can make are changes in our own attitudes about kids—all kids can be successful, no exceptions!” said Jones.

AVID, Advancement Via Individual Determination, is an elementary through postsecondary college readiness system that is designed to increase schoolwide learning and performance. AVID students are expected to access rigorous curriculum and the elective class is an avenue for students to acquire the skills in communication, critical thinking, note-taking, peer-tutoring, organization and time-management.

Walla Walla High School students involved in the AVID program will be recognized for academic achievement during the event. Last year, all fifteen of the seniors in the AVID program went on to higher education institutions after high school. The AVID project is a collaborative effort between Washington State University GEAR UP, Walla Walla Public Schools, and our community.

AVID Club announces scholarship opportunity

AVID Club is proud to announce the opening of their first annual Blue Devil College Cup Scholarship! As a result of the Blue Devil College Cup staff vs student soccer game last spring, three worthy Wa-Hi seniors will receive an award.

Awards:

- One first place award of \$500
- Two runner up awards of \$250

The scholarship is focused on leadership, both in school and out-of-school, and is open to any Walla Walla High School senior with a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher. Scholarship applications will be accepted through March 1. Applications will be available in the library at both the GEAR UP resource counter and the Career Center.

Information:

Miriam Garber, GEAR UP (503) 348-1608

Walla Walla High School Athletic Winter Tournament update

Dance

- State at Yakima: March 23

Wrestling

- State at Tacoma: February 17-18

Basketball

Friday, February 17

- Wa-Hi girls basketball vs. Chiawana at Chiawana @ 7 p.m. (District Championship game)

- Wa-Hi boys basketball vs. Chiawana at Chiawana @ 5 p.m. (this is a loser out game)

****this is a doubleheader and the price is \$7 for adults and \$5 for students/seniors

Saturday, February 18

- Wa-Hi Girls Basketball Team: If the girls team wins Friday night, the Blue Devils are District Champions and await the State Regional Tournament starting February 24. If the girls are defeated by Chiawana on Friday, the Blue Devils will host the winner the winner of the Wenatchee vs. Richland game Saturday night at Wa-Hi's main gym at 6 p.m. (single game prices are \$6 for adults and \$4 for students/seniors)

- Wa-Hi Boys Basketball Team: If the boys team wins, the Blue Devils will play the loser of the Richland vs. Davis game on Saturday night at 7 p.m. at either Richland or Davis. (single game prices are \$6 for adults and \$4 for students/seniors). If the boys are defeated the season is over.

Swimming

- State at Federal Way: February 17-18

Community Stories

AAUW scholarship applications now accepted

Applications are now being accepted for the AAUW Educational Scholarships, established to provide assistance to women who have completed at minimum one year of college (30 semester or 45 quarter credits) and have a desire to complete their undergraduate or post-graduate education. Please note that there must be a break of at least one year at some time during the college education process.

Applications will be accepted from women who meet the following requirements:

- 1) They must be able to provide transcripts from at least one year of college, followed by an interruption (time lapse) in education.
- 2) They must submit two letters of recommendation from someone familiar with their educational background and goals.
- 3) They must be residents of Walla Walla, Columbia, or Umatilla County.

Additional information and the scholarship application can be accessed at the AAUW website: <http://www.aauw-wallawalla.org>

Or contact: Jeanne at 509-525-7401 - beirnejj@charter.net

Completed applications must be received by April 20, 2012.

Send completed applications to:

Debbie Dumont

AAUW Scholarship Committee

827 SE Sentry Dr.

College Place, WA 99324

Walla Walla mom publishes book based on the family cat

Longtime district parent volunteer Kathryn Southwick Hess has published a children's picture book based on how her family cat finds love and a name. The book is titled: *Whitepaws - Fabio Giorgio Don Gato Hess*. Kathryn is planning public book signing event Saturday, March 10 from 3 to 6 p.m. at The Book and Game Company on First and Main in Walla Walla. Kathryn's sister Harvalee Wright Hess of Portland illustrated the book.

"Each elementary school will be given a copy for their library," Southwick Hess said. "Several Edison staff members and students were readers and assistant editors during the writing process."

Whitepaws has even made a classroom visit in the past and might be up for more in the future. Kathryn says a portion of the profits will go to the Blue Mountain Humane Society and Walla Walla Public Library. She says she hopes the book will help children develop a love for animals and reading.

Retirees Association plans Teddy Bear Show and Tea party

The Walla Walla Columbia County School Retirees Association is having the 6th annual Teddy Bear Show and Tea with visiting doll exhibits. Saturday February 25, 2012 at the St. Francis Social Hall at 722 West Alder. Hours will be from 10:00a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

This event features a Gala Tea, Story Corner, Photographer, Raffle, Silent Auction, Doll & Bear exhibits, Teddy Bear Store selling Bearapheralia and more. This event is the primary fund raiser for this association. 2 annual scholarships of \$1,000 each are given out each year. Admission is \$5. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Tickets are available at the door.

Early Learning Coalition Hosts Dinner and Dialogue: A Conversation about Early Learning

Area elementary principals, kindergarten teachers, preschool teachers, and childcare directors are invited to a dinner and dialogue session on Tuesday March 20 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Walla Walla Community College Conference Center. The purpose of the event is to build relationships among early learning professionals; successful transition strategies from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten will also be shared.

Hosted by the Walla Walla Valley Early Learning Coalition, the evening will include a light dinner and presentations by local educators and state agencies. Discussion will focus on WaKids (Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills), early learning collaboration and transitions to kindergarten.

For more information, visit www.earlylearningwallawalla.org or call 509-527-4645 to reserve a place at the table.

The Moms' Network Announces Free Parenting Workshops for Busy Parents

Workshops are open to all families in the community. There will also be Spanish language translation services provided at each event. Free childcare is also available during the workshop. The event is free thanks to the support of The Moms' Network, Walla Walla Public Schools and the YMCA.

To register for this event or for more information contact Beth Swanson at 301-7471 or beth@themomsnetworkww.com.

The Parent Workshop Series schedule is:

- March 21: "Mom to Mom" with local mom Terri Neal
- April 16: "Yoga Stretches for Moms" with yoga instructor Rebecca Thorpe

All workshops take place at the YMCA. The schedule (plus other family-friendly events) is online at www.themomsnetworkww.com.

Anti-bullying film focuses on competition, jealousy and disrespect among girls

- “Find Kind” (an anti-bullying film focusing on competition, jealousy and disrespect among girls)
- Free
- Thursday, Feb. 23 from 6 to 8:30 p.m.
- Walla Walla Valley Academy Auditorium (300 SW Academy Way in College Place)

Parents are encouraged to attend the film *Finding Kind*, an anti-bullying film addressing the issues of competition, jealousy and disrespect among girls. This is a documentary produced by two young ladies who graduated from Pepperdine University and felt a need to discuss these issues.

They traveled the country visiting 60 schools and interviewed girls and women who have been bullied, participated in bullying, or just stood by while watching it happen. The questions posed in the documentary are: Why do we accept this as the norm for our lives? Why not take the KIND pledge? Why not write a KIND apology?

This event is free of charge. Visit their site online to watch the trailer at www.kindcampaign.com.

FOUR TENORS now playing at the Power House Theatre

Four Tenors: Directed and arranged by Sunny Thompson, star of Marilyn: Forever Blonde!

Show date run through February 26, 2012

Power House Theatre
Walla Walla, WA

7 p.m. Evening Performances (Feb. 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26)
3 p.m. Matinee Performances (Feb 18, 19, 25, 26)

Staring Brian Damson, Michael Scott Brooks, Morgan James and Ken Nielson. THE BEST OF BROADWAY, CLASSICAL, COUNTRY, POP & ROCK. The Four Tenors perform the music of Josh Groban, Michael Bubl , The Sons of the Pioneers, Elvis, Maroon 5, Bon Jovi and more!

Ticket prices range from \$50 - \$9 with FLEX Ticket options. For pricing and seating chart details, visit us at www.PHTWW.com or call Box Office at 509-529-6500. Box Office is open Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 3 to 5:30 p.m.

RUSH TICKET PURCHASE OPPORTUNITY!

The Power House Theatre has a RUSH ticket policy. These tickets are \$10 per person – Subject to availability, sold 15 minutes before each performance of The Four Tenors at the Power House Theatre box office. Cash or check only.

Media Contact: Claire Slattery
Claire@PHTWW.com
509-540-0306

Public invited to Dr. Seuss Day festivities

- Celebrate "Read Across America Day and Dr Seuss' Birthday
- Sunday, March 4
- 2 to 3:30 p.m.
- Reid Center (Whitman College)
- Games, crafts and music
- Every family will go home with a book to read together
- Sponsored by: Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority, Whitman College, Walla Walla Public Library