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District Stories

School board meeting Tuesday, March 6

- 6:30 p.m.
- District office board room (364 S. Park St.)
- Open to the public

No School Friday, March 9 - Parent/Teacher Conferences

- Classes resume Monday, March 12

Transportation Department aces surprise inspection

The Washington State Patrol recently conducted a surprise school bus inspection at the Southeast Washington Transportation Cooperative. The fleet received outstanding marks. The Southeast Washington Transportation Cooperative received a Certificate of Achievement this fall for outstanding Washington State Patrol school bus inspections for winter and summer 2011. State patrol officers inspect all safety related items, including brake components, air lines, steering components, fluid leaks, glass, heaters, defrosters, wipers, mirrors, seats and tires. The bus must meet certain specifications or the bus will be put out of service.

“The state bus inspections provide assurance our buses are well maintained for the safety of students,” said Transportation Director Steve Olson. “These inspections are a really good barometer for evaluating the condition of your own fleet.

Walla Walla Public Schools, Dixie School District and Prescott School District school buses are repaired and serviced at the Southeast Washington Transportation Cooperative.

Erickson honored during Garrison Night School graduation

Bilingual Coordinator Diana Erickson, who is retiring at the end of the school year, was showered with praise and flowers at last night's Garrison Night School graduation. Current and former Latino Club students thanked her for making a difference in their lives. Diana has been an educator in this region for more than 30 years.

This year 156 adult students, most who are parents of Walla Walla Public Schools children, graduated from the Garrison Night School. Students were awarded last night for their achievements before being treated to dinner and a concert from Mariachi Huenachi. The Garrison Night School is a community partnership between Walla Walla Public Schools and Walla Walla Community College to provide educational opportunities to the area's increasing Hispanic population. The program was established in 1994 to help Walla Walla's Hispanic population access education that they may not have had the opportunity to gain in their homeland or in the United States.

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>

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.

School Stories

Walla Walla High School Cadet of the Month earns on-the-spot promotion

The Walla Walla High School JROTC “Blue Devils” Cadet Battalion has selected its “Cadet of the Month” for February 2012 and rewarded his achievement with an immediate promotion.

Cadet Sergeant Patrick Kilpatrick, a 16 year old junior, was promoted to this new rank after he won the top spot with a total score of 86 points, according to the presiding official on the board.

The top cadet was selected from three candidates who were inspected and examined in oral interviews by a board of four advanced cadets, according to Lt. Col. Bill Bialozor, Senior Army Instructor for the Walla Walla High School’s Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps program.

Kilpatrick said that he joined JROTC to become a better, more determined citizen. After high school, he plans to go to college for two years and then become a fireman. His hobbies include playing guitar.

”His strongest competitive category was bearing,” said Cadet Command Sgt. Maj. Malachi Matthews. “This Cadet of the Month was a close match, since the Cadets’ performances were outstanding.”

First runner up was Cadet Private First Class Bailey Knapp, a 15 year old sophomore, whose strongest suit was her military knowledge. She came in second with 65 points.

Second runner up was Cadet Private First Class Timothy Howard, a 15 year old sophomore, whose strongest suit was his attitude. He came in third with 60 points.

”After the board tallied the points and the winner was clear, we held a ceremony to promote the winning Cadet one rank higher, to recognize him for his hard work and personal success,” said Bialozor.

Wa-Hi JROTC Cadets participate in the program to develop leadership skills and to strive to be better citizens in society. Many Cadets compete with drill, marksmanship, and physical training teams as well as attend the class. These Cadets get to travel to and compete in drill meets at 16 other schools in the Cascade Division that include Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Navy Cadet programs.

Berney plans “Coins from Caring Kids” fundraiser for Blue Mountain Red Cross

Berney students will once again be organizing a coin drive called, “Coins from Caring Kids.” In the past, the money collected went to help overseas disaster relief. This year all of the money raised will stay local and be donated to the Blue Mountain Red Cross. The American Red Cross teaches lifesaving skills such as CPR and first aid, educates the public about preventing and preparing for emergencies, supports our area service members, Veterans, and their families, connects loved ones through their global tracing services, and provides immediate aid to victims of disasters such as floods and house fires.

From Friday, March 2 through Friday, March 16, students may bring a donation of coins or bills to school. There will be donation buckets in each classroom as well as the main office. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Becky Jo Curtis, Intervention Specialist, Kristen Duede, Elementary School Counselor or Donna Painter, Principal at 509.527.3060.

Books for Babes receives generous donation

Recently Books for Babes received two significant donations of new books for the program's bags this year. Dr. Allison Kirby and The Early Learning Coalition donated 300 or more books to help make the program successful. Thanks for your support!

Future Problem Solving teams advance to state Story by: Madison Nelson & Quinn Anderson (Wa-Hi Journal)

Six Future Problem Solving (FPS) teams, two in the intermediate division and four in the senior division, qualified for the State competition in Stanwood, Wash., on April 12-13. The team members are as follows:

Intermediate Division:

Freshman Kaelie Coleman, Freshman Maggie Buob, Freshman Hannah Mitchell, Freshman Emily Leinweber, Freshman Madyson Gabriel, Freshman Emily Pryor, Freshman Jennifer Cho, Freshman Reilly Beckstrand

Senior Division:

Senior Mac Clifton, Senior Aaron Gogl, Junior Scott Bettencourt, Junior Travis Stinebaugh, Junior Teagan Coleman, Junior Julia Cosma, Junior Robert Miller, Junior Anna Burgess, Sophomore Andrew Bateman, Sophomore Connor Buckley, Sophomore Erik Dohe, Sophomore Zachary Chlipala, Sophomore Lea Davidson, Sophomore Danny Butler, Sophomore Catherine Feistner, Sophomore Jacob Leinweber

The teams have the option to write two practice packets before writing the state qualifying packet at the competition. The packets each contain a single futuristic problem that the team must create solutions as well as an action plan. Only the state qualifying packet is evaluated.

"At first when you start out [writing the packet], it is really calm and everything flows out," Dohe said. "Then you get to the end, and you realize there are only 30 minutes left, and you turn into this angry person who just wants to get it done as soon as possible because you know your deadline is near."

Two scenario writers, junior Julia Cosma and freshman Jennifer Cho, qualified for the International competition at Indiana University on June 7-10.

Cosma wrote about trade barriers in her 1500 word scenario entitled "Where do Ideas Grow?"

"The idea of trade itself is very futuristic and that is one of the criteria of FPS scenarios," Cosma said.

Cho wrote about coral reefs in her 1498 word essay, "Gone."

"I wrote this on one of the topics of FPS. I thought it was a hard topic so many people wouldn't write about it and then it would be something different that the judges hadn't seen yet," Cho said.

According to the Washington state FPS website, "Future Problem Solving Program International (FPSPI) provides tools and strategies for students needing to face the challenges of today and the future." FPS member, sophomore Danny Butler agrees that the club has provided him with this experience.

"During my seventh grade year in FPS, one of the topics was neurotechnology and that's when I realized it's what I want to do when I grow up," Butler said.

John Buissink advises and coaches FPS and has done so for 28 years.

Student drop-off and pick-up changes coming to Berney Elementary

Public meeting scheduled to review changes aimed at improving safety in the school zone

Walla Walla Public Schools has teamed with the City of Walla Walla Public Works Division, city police and parent volunteers from the Safe Travels Alliance to improve school zone safety at Berney Elementary.

The school district is planning a public meeting Thursday, March 22, at 6:30 p.m. in the Berney gym to review changes aimed at improving safety in the school zone. A site map will also be distributed during the meeting detailing the changes. The school zone changes at Berney Elementary will take effect after Spring Break on Monday, April 9.

Berney School Zone Changes: (changes will take effect after Spring Break on Monday, April 9)

- Student drop-off and pick-up areas have been expanded to the front of Berney Elementary on Pleasant Street and will continue around the building to the west-side of School Avenue.

- School buses are being relocated to a school bus loop west of the school.

- The parking lot west of Berney is now an “enter only” lot for staff and visitors. Motorists will leave the parking lot using the new one way exit loop.

- The bus lane/car exit area is NOT a student drop-off and pick-up area.

- A new crosswalk is being installed on the north side of Pleasant Street at Sycamore Street.

- Flashing School Zone Speed limit signs will be installed on Pleasant Street and School Avenue.

- City of Walla Walla crews will repaint all crosswalks to improve visibility and curbing to indicate no parking zones.

- Additional signage is being installed to better identify student drop-off and pick-up areas.

For more information, contact Berney Elementary Principal Donna Painter at 527-3060 or by email at: dpainter@wwps.org

Sign ups now accepted for Lincoln High School’s Sweet Onion Jam

Music festival benefits district music program

Plans are in place to have a one day music festival Sunday, April 15 from 2 to 5 p.m. at the YMCA grounds in coordination with Lincoln High School’s after-school program “The Lift” and AmeriCorp. The Sweet Onion Jam is open to elementary through college aged students. The festival will benefit Walla Walla Public School music programs.

Different music groups or soloists will play for approximately five minutes and the audience can vote for the group they like best by donating a dollar per vote. All styles of music are welcome. The groups that raise the most money in their respective age groups -- elementary, middle school, high school, college -- are the winners and can win amazing prizes donated by members of the community. Laetitia Lehman-Pearsall is coordinating the event. Sign up forms are available at district schools.

Email forms to llehmanpearsall@gmail.com or drop them off to Walla Walla music teachers at school by March 1. Participation also costs \$5 dollars per group to help with expenses. The audition is March 10 from 7-9 p.m. or March 11 from 12 noon-3 p.m. at Lincoln High School.

If you cannot make either of those times, feel free to send a You Tube link, a video clip, or an audio clip to llehmanpearsall@gmail.com of your music instead.

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 public concert March 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.

Friday, March 2

- The public is invited to an evening concert that will be held at the Walla Walla High School Auditorium Friday, 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. Sharpstein Elementary students in the marimba musical group will perform prior to the mariachi 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.

Edison families celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday

On Tuesday evening, around 350 people came to celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday at Edison Elementary. Families were treated to Green Eggs and Ham and birthday cake. With narration from Liz George from the Walla Walla Public Library, students from Mrs. Peasley's 5th grade class acted out the Cat in the Hat.

The celebration was sponsored by the Edison Title 1 staff and organized by Title 1 Teachers Amy Ford and Carrie LaRoy. The Edison PTA co-sponsored the event that included a visit from the Grinch and the Cat in the Hat.

Edison students participating in fundraiser to help children in orphanages

Edison students raised funds to provide 1,215 meals for children in orphanages around the world during the past month. Students Mia and Lynn Piefer worked during the month of February to involve Edison students in a Rice Bowl fund-raiser.

The girls planned, organized, and encouraged participation by Edison students and staff. Rice Bowl piggy banks were distributed in all classrooms and students were encouraged to, "Make Some Change" by bringing in their coin money to place in the rice bowls. Rice Bowls is a non-profit organization that distributes funds to orphanages around the world.

The highlight was the breaking of the Rice Bowl piggy banks to collect the change for counting. A meal can be provided to the children in orphanages for every 25 cents raised. The students and staff at Edison donated more than \$300. Mia and Lynn with the help of the Edison students did "Make Some Change."

<http://ricebowls.org/>

Community Stories

YMCA Corporate Cup encourages employers to promote healthy living

THE EVENT

The YMCA Corporate Cup is a physical and mental challenge to corporations and businesses organized by the Walla Walla YMCA with the assistance of dedicated volunteers and local supervisors. The Walla Walla YMCA Corporate Cup aims to promote community-wide interest and involvement in fitness and health activities. Employers will benefit from healthier employees who gain greater awareness of fitness benefits, both personally and professionally.

THE PURPOSE

- Inform Individuals of the importance of a healthy lifestyle.
- Promote company pride and community spirit among all participants.
- Provide “training” for all participants at the YMCA and encourage a healthy lifestyle
- Inform companies on the importance of wellness in the work place.

THE AUDIENCE

YMCA Corporate Cup seeks to attract participants from Walla Walla County and Milton-Freewater area. Participants will range from law firms, hospitals, banks, industrial firms and government agencies. Along with participants, we invite spectators to come to the YMCA to watch fellow employees compete in all events. Further sponsorship ads will be prominently displayed to over 6,000 members in the YMCA.

TOP TEAM WINNERS

The winning team will receive the Corporate Cup traveling trophy. This trophy will stay at the 1st place winning company for one year and will have the team’s name engraved on it. The trophy will then be up for grabs the next year. Second and third place team trophies will also be awarded.

For more information visit wwymca.org/events

Buckle Up Helper program teaches kids the importance seat belt safety

During February, members of the Walla Walla County Traffic Safety Task Force visited with over 275 area kindergarten students bringing their “Buckle Up Helper” program to the Walla Walla, College Place and Waitsburg classrooms. The “Buckle Up Helper” program was developed by the Task Force to teach kids the importance of buckling up each time they get in a vehicle and how to do so correctly. For kindergarten students, that typically means using a booster seat.

The Task Force has been bringing this program to area schools since 2002. Since that time, over 4,600 students have learned about “Eggie, the unbuckled egg” and what happens when he doesn’t buckle up correctly. Nancy Walters, coordinator for the program, enjoys this part of her job. “I love kindergartners! They are excited about learning, anxious to do things right and want to learn how to be a ‘buckle up helper’ themselves. It can also be interesting. They are pretty honest at this age – sometimes telling us their parents don’t make them buckle up or use a booster seat.”

Over the past 10 years of doing programs, Washington’s child passenger safety law has changed a couple of times. Currently, kids in Washington are required to remain in a “child restraint system” until 8 years old or 4 feet 9 inches or taller. What some parents don’t understand is that even at 8 years old their child may still not fit an adult lap and shoulder belt correctly. If that is the case, children are required to use their booster seat until it does. Children are also required to ride in the back seat where it is practical to do so until age 13.

“Booster seats have become a part of the “growing and going” routine now days. It used to be that kids viewed a booster seat as a “baby seat” and we had to convince them that only older kids were privileged enough to use one, Walters said. “After we explain to them why it is important to be “boosted” in their seat and how a booster seat makes that lap and shoulder belt work the way it is meant to, they are fine with using their booster seat.”

The Traffic Safety Task Force provides child passenger safety programs and classes for children and adults. For more information on classes or proper car seat use, contact the Traffic Safety Task Force at 524-2936. The Task Force will continue their classroom visitations through March.

Violence Prevention Conference set for March 26, 27

The second annual Walla Walla Valley Violence Prevention Coalition Conference, “Stop Violence Now — For Yourself, Your Family, Our Community” will open with a keynote speech by Dr. Vincent Felitti, M.D., noted for his research into the interconnections of childhood trauma — including violence — to problems in adult life. Dr. Felitti’s speech takes place at 7 p.m. Maxey Hall, Whitman College. The conference workshops and panels on violence and its prevention in our community begin at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, March 27, at Reid Campus Center, Whitman College. A Community Fun Night for Families, at which dinner and childcare are provided at no cost, will be held at St. Patrick Church, (415 W. Alder St.) Walla Walla. Details: 509-540-0807. All events are free and open to the public.

Commitment to Community seeks volunteers for annual Children’s Day event

Come join us to celebrate kids! This year is the sixth year that Commitment to Community (C2C) hosts the annual Children’s Day at Washington Park. This year, Children’s Day will be Saturday, April 28 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Activities at the event will include: a soccer tournament, piñata breaking, relays, hula hoop and jump rope contests, arts and crafts, the jumping castle and much more. Children’s Day is a great way to get out into the community and begin to build some fundamental relationships.

As a local organization that works with children and families, we recognize you and the organization you represent as a great asset to the community. We would like to invite you and your organization to participate in this year’s Children’s Day. Generally, participating organizations host an activity station on the day of the event. Activities range from bean bag toss to relay races.

Any activity that engages kids in something fun and creative is highly preferred. Attending organizations are asked to supply all of the materials necessary to operate the chosen activity, such as volunteers, tables, chairs, art supplies, etc. Set-up will be from 8 to 9:45 am., although some participants will arrive early, and take-down is from 3 to 5 p.m. There will be volunteers available to help you set-up and take-down. Please contact us if you have more questions about what type of activity or game your organization would like to host.

Whether you have participated in Children’s Day every year, or if this is your first year, we look forward to meeting and playing with you at the end of April.

For more information, contact:

Yesenia Guevara, Commitment to Community
509-540-0583
julial@bmacww.org

Walla Walla mom publishes book based on the family cat - Book signing event March 10

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.

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.

Walla Walla's HomeTeam Parent Aide Program Receives National Exchange Club Foundation Gala Award

The National Exchange Club Foundation granted the Walla Walla's HomeTeam Parent Aide Program a \$500 Gala Award grant for its efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect in the Walla Walla valley. The funds from this award will help support the HomeTeam's Relay for Hope program in May.

"This award will allow us to provide a fun filled event for local families to enjoy while helping to raise funds and promote the importance of building healthy families and the critical need for child abuse prevention in our community," said Stephanie Biegel, HomeTeam coordinator.

The Moms' Network March 21 Parent Workshop: "Mom to Mom" with local mom Terri Neal

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.

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