

West Allegheny Edition

Allegheny West

Magazine

Volume 17, Issue 99
December 2015/January 2016

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to release
latest indy
film

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celebrates 25
years

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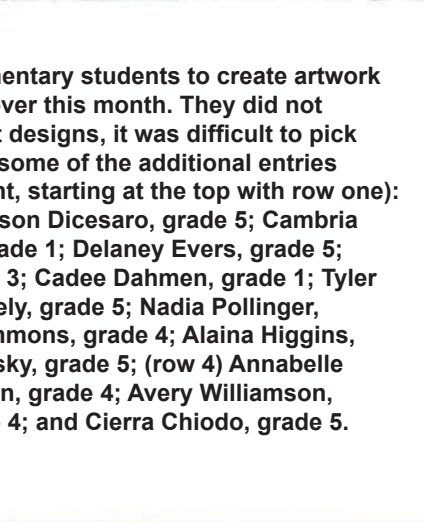
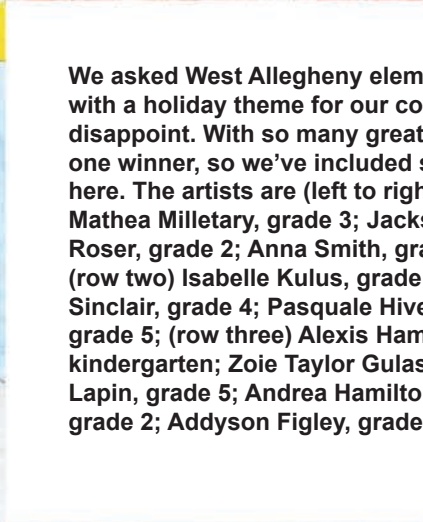
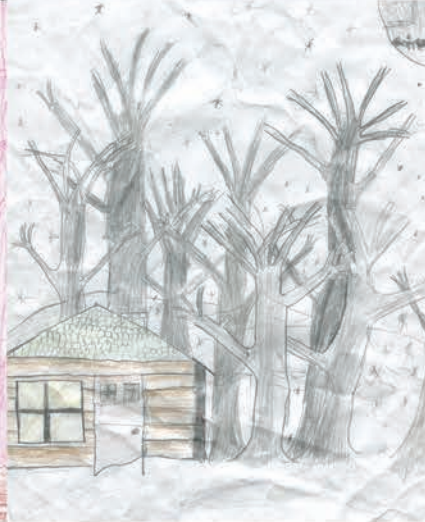


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We asked West Allegheny elementary students to create artwork with a holiday theme for our cover this month. They did not disappoint. With so many great designs, it was difficult to pick one winner, so we've included some of the additional entries here. The artists are (left to right, starting at the top with row one): Mathea Milletary, grade 3; Jackson Dicesaro, grade 5; Cambria Roser, grade 2; Anna Smith, grade 1; Delaney Evers, grade 5; (row two) Isabelle Kulus, grade 3; Cadee Dahmen, grade 1; Tyler Sinclair, grade 4; Pasquale Hively, grade 5; Nadia Pollinger, grade 5; (row three) Alexis Hammons, grade 4; Alaina Higgins, kindergarten; Zoie Taylor Gulasky, grade 5; (row 4) Annabelle Lapin, grade 5; Andrea Hamilton, grade 4; Avery Williamson, grade 2; Addyson Figley, grade 4; and Cierra Chiodo, grade 5.



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ABOUT THE COVER

Eva Lutz, a fourth-grader at Donaldson Elementary School, created this drawing for our first-ever holiday coloring contest. We liked Eva's sense of design, strong lines, originality and touch of shading. A big congratulations goes out to Eva and all the students who participated in our coloring contest this year.



Allegheny West

Magazine

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From the Publisher



I'd like to start out this month's editor's note by thanking all the West Allegheny elementary students and art teachers who participated in our first-ever holiday art contest.

In October, we approached the school district with an idea to hold a holiday-themed art contest, with the winner getting a spot on our cover. Karen Ruhl, West Allegheny's school community relations coordinator, helped us put the call out to elementary students in grades K-5, and they did not disappoint. The artwork we received was interesting and unique. Picking one overall was not easy.

Thus, in addition to the winner, we chose 18 additional works that caught our eye. We've printed them on the pages previous to this one. We are grateful to all the students who participated and thank them all for their enthusiastic participation.

Just like with every edition of Allegheny West Magazine, we have lots of interesting news to share. On page 10, read about Joe Bucci, a West Allegheny alumnus who is now directing independent films in the Pittsburgh region. On page 14, read about some notable turkey bowl area traditions. Then flip to page 24 and read about the retirement of West Allegheny's longtime school resource officer, Sgt. John Bates of the North Fayette Police Department.

On page 26, we have some not so good news to share. In September, a GMC Sierra truck traveling on Steubenville Pike struck and killed 24-year-old Brandon Ortman of Oakdale. The driver remains at large. Our thoughts go out to Brandon's family as they deal with this tragedy over the holidays. I am appealing to all our readers to be sure to review this story and contact the North Fayette Police Department if they know anything about this crime or the person who may have committed it.

In this edition as well we are running a story about the Allegheny Farm Preservation Program, which consists of locals working with the state to preserve the county's farms. A number of those farms are in the West Allegheny community. Read more on page 46.

Finally, on page 50, be sure to check all the upcoming events in the area.

As we head into the holidays, we here at Allegheny West Magazine wish our readers a happy and joyous season. Be sure to look for our next edition in February.

Doug Hughey, Publisher/Editor

Allegheny West Magazine-West Allegheny Edition is published in February, April, June, August, October, and December, six issues a year. Hughey Publications, LLC, P. O. Box 165, Imperial PA 15126. Mailed and distributed free to residents and businesses in Findlay, North Fayette, Oakdale, Sturgeon, a portion of McDonald, and adjacent areas. Extra copies available at municipal offices, schools, libraries, stores, advertisers, hotels, and businesses. Available by mail subscription for \$12 annually. Story ideas welcomed. Community events and announcements from non-profit groups must be received by the 15th of the month prior to publishing date. Announcements are limited to 30 words and must include a contact phone number. Reproduction of any artwork, photographs, or copy prepared by Allegheny West Magazine is strictly prohibited without written consent of Hughey Publications, LLC. Copyright 1999-2015 Allegheny West Magazine. All rights reserved. Views and opinions expressed by contributors and/or advertisers are the responsibility of the contributors and not those of the publisher of Allegheny West Magazine.



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Ohio Valley Hospital celebrates A Toast to the Community

STORY AND PHOTOS SUBMITTED
BY OHIO VALLEY HOSPITAL

Attendees at Ohio Valley Hospital's fifth annual wine tasting toasted to a festive fall celebration Oct. 23. The event, A Toast to the Community, took place at the DoubleTree Hilton Hotel Pittsburgh Airport in Moon Township.

More than 250 area residents and members of the hospital staff turned out to sample a variety of Chairman's Selection wines and locally brewed craft beers. Attendees had the opportunity to try various wines like Gloria Ferrer Pinot Noir, Wente Vineyards Riverbank Riesling and Secoli Pinot Grigio DOC. Craft beers on tap included Church Brew Works favorites Celestial Gold and Thunderhop IPA. Cinnamon-rimmed glasses, pumpkin favorites Kenz o' Lantern and Jack-O Traveler Shandy were also served.

The autumnal party atmosphere, complete with glittering pumpkins and bowls of candy corn, was further enhanced by the classical notes of the Sterling Strings of Shenango Quartet. In addition to great music, the evening included a Chinese auction full of top-of-the-line prizes, such as a Ninja blender, a KitchenAid mixer, and, of course, a wine cooler.

Several new sponsors this year helped make the event the hospital's most

ABOVE: Stephen N. Leibensperger, M.D., president of the Ohio Valley Hospital medical staff, and Mark R. Scholl, president of the OVH Board of Directors, welcome attendees to the A Toast to the Community event.



successful wine tasting to date. Ohio Valley's medical staff generously contributed, as did the following \$3,000-level sponsors: Clearview Federal Credit Union; Telecare Corporation; Stantec; Healogics; and Drs. Sauer and Leibensperger Family Practice.

Ohio Valley Hospital would like to give a special thanks to all of their sponsors for this year's wine tasting event. All proceeds from the evening will go toward advancements in medical technology.



ABOVE: David W. Scott, FACHE, president and CEO of Ohio Valley Hospital (third from left) enjoys the wine tasting with his family.

BELOW: Michael Nan, pharmacy director, and wife, Kelly, enjoy the tasting event with friends Michael and Lisa. Eperesi.



Imperial's Shane Treloar lands latest role, earns Equity Card

STORY AND PHOTO SUBMITTED BY
KAREN PRUNZIK'S BROADWAY DANCE STUDIO

West Allegheny student and Imperial resident Shane Treloar, 14, has landed his latest role in a production of the musical "Billy Elliot." At the time of this writing, Shane is playing the role of Michael in the production, which is playing Dec. 1-20 at the Maltz Jupiter Theater in Jupiter, Florida. His instructor, Karen Prunzik of Karen Prunzik's Broadway Dance Studio, characterizes the role as a tap dancing role, and says Shane was considered to be the top tap dancer at the auditions.

Shane's latest role adds to an already impressive list of accomplishments for the local stage prodigy. Mostly recently, Shane performed the role of Michael in a touring Broadway production of the musical "Elf." He has also been a regular performer at professional Pittsburgh sports events, singing the national anthem for the Pirates, Penguins, Riverhounds and Power. In 2012, Shane was named the first runner-up at the Kean Quest talent competition in Pittsburgh for his performance of "Defying Gravity" from the Broadway musical "Wicked." Last year, Shane was cast as the Artful Dodger in a production of "Oliver" at the Strand Theatre in Zelienople.

With his latest role, Shane also earned his equity card, making him a member of the Actors' Equity Association. Prunzik says that her student beat her out by a year. She earned hers at the age of 15.

"Believe in your dreams and they will come true," says Prunzik. "Shane is a perfect example of that."

For more information about Karen Prunzik's Broadway Dance Studio, visit www.prunziksbroadwaydancestudio.com.



Shane Treloar, 14, of Imperial, earned his equity card after landing his latest role in a production of the musical "Billy Elliott" in Florida. He is pictured here with his instructor, Karen Prunzik.

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West Allegheny alumnus to release latest indy film

STORY BY PAT JENNETTE

When 2011 West Allegheny graduate Joe Bucci was in high school, he wanted to be an Air Force pilot. Today, he's an aspiring filmmaker.

"I fell into filmmaking by mistake," Bucci explains. "I wanted to fly F-22's, so my sophomore year, I signed up for ROTC. There was an error in the schedule, though. The guidance counselor had put me in video production. At first I was outraged, but they told me to stick it out for the first week so they could get my schedule fixed."

That one week in the video class was all it took. He was hooked. Bucci's teacher was Michael Shaffer, head of the West Allegheny Visual and Print Media Department.

"He was one of the most influential mentors in my life," Bucci says. "He was funny, and took a special interest in his students."

Shaffer's feelings about Bucci are mutual.

He says, "Joe was one of my best video and photography students to graduate West Allegheny. With his talent, dedication and work ethic, I knew Joe would be successful in any endeavor. He was instrumental in the department's development from just video and photography to media arts as a whole."

Bucci stuck with the class and got help from some student mentors. By the end of his senior year, he said, he knew he wanted to be a film editor. He enrolled at Clarion University of

Pennsylvania, where he majored in communications with a concentration in film and made up his mind to become a director.

Since graduating from Clarion in 2015, Bucci has worked on a range of productions.

"I have worked on everything from small, no-budget films to being an extra in big Hollywood films," he

says. "My favorite films to work on are the ones that no one will see, the ones that are made for under \$1,000 and a prayer. There is a soul to them. When you are on set you feel the synergy between the cast and crew. People aren't there to make millions. People are there to make art; they are there for the passion. Those are the best films to work on."

While still in college, Bucci completed a few of his own shorter films, or "shorts." They include "Alex," "Alex: The Legend of The Half Blood" and "Joker's Solution."

His biggest accomplishment since college, in his eyes, was a feature film entitled "The Painter." To make the film, Bucci teamed up with fellow WA graduate Derrick Shane, who originally wrote "The Painter" as a play while attending Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

"The really cool thing about how we made 'The Painter' was the budget," says Bucci. "Normally, to make a feature film you are spending millions of dollars for a low budget film. We made 'The Painter' for \$800, which I funded by working two jobs and taking 18 credits over a period of a few weekends."

Bucci says that even films that are heavy in dialogue won't shoot more than five pages a day.

"We were shooting 30 pages a day," he says.

While working on another film, "Transience," Bucci met Ian Altenbaugh. The two have since teamed up on a number of films. Bucci says the two have several scripts in pre-production and three films in post production. Their latest film, "Last Rain," a horror film, won the Soul Staining Film award from this year's 48 Hour Film Project in Pittsburgh.

Making films, Bucci quips, isn't glamorous. Yet he wouldn't change what he does for the world; and right now, his world is



Joe Bucci (pictured at left) directs actor Dallas Wooster during filming of "Last Rain." PHOTO BY JAMES HELFRICH



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Pittsburgh, where he was born and raised.

"I love everything about what I do," he says. "I even love having to deal with problems when they come up five minutes before we roll camera. I love the chaos. I love the people I meet, particularly the cast and crew. My job is a dream job, I honestly couldn't see myself doing anything different."

He's quick to point out that there are challenges, too.

"The first thing you need to know about filmmaking is you are going to get knocked down a lot," he says. "And you are going to fail a lot. The biggest difficulty in filmmaking is being able to pick yourself up once you have been knocked down. I take something new out of each experience."

He says the second biggest roadblock - the one that plagues every filmmaker - is funding.

"A lot of filmmakers will use crowd funding to try and get their films made," he says. "Only 30 to 40 percent of films actually receive funding via those platforms, and most of the time it is under \$10,000. I am going through this struggle now with my new film 'Reckless,' but it is for the love of the art and the passion that burns inside me."

He wrote the film because he wanted to encapsulate his generation, known as Generation Y, or as he likes to describe it, Yolo, an acronym for "you only live once."

"The film is about two millennials who are stuck in a dark part of their lives," he says. "They have come to the realization that you can be the better person and still lose. So the young couple go

on a crime spree, not for the money but rather for the thrill of feeling alive."

He says to think of the film as a modern day Bonnie and

Joe Bucci (at right) and Ian Altenbaugh (at left) are pictured here during filming of "Transience." PHOTO BY GREGER ERICKSON

Clyde.

"On the surface, the film comes off as a love story," he says, "but if you really pay attention to what the two youngsters are doing and how they are living you see that it is so much more. I want the film to be something you have to watch multiple times to understand. It is all about carpe diem."

The opportunity to produce "Reckless" came out of defeat. He was working as the director of photography for a television sitcom pilot when the funding was pulled.

"Once the plug was pulled, I knew I needed to be working on something new," he says.

So what does he want to tell other young people aspiring to be filmmakers?

"Just do it," he says. "If to make a play all you need is an actor and a space; all you need to make a movie is an actor, a space and a camera. If you are just starting out, don't worry about how the film looks; worry about learning to tell a story."

He says he got that same advice from Spike Lee when he asked Lee what it took to make it in the film industry.

"His response was 'learn to tell a story,'" says Bucci. "That is the key to filmmaking. Use your iPhone, get a few friends and learn the craft. There is no right or wrong way to make a movie. You just have to do it because that is where you are going to learn."

To learn more about Bucci or his film, "Reckless," visit www.themindofjoebucci.com or check out the film's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/RecklessTheMovie/>. The film will be available online from Nov. 27 to Jan. 1, during which donations can be made. Anyone making a donation of \$10 or more will receive a ticket to the first private screening, which, Bucci says, will more than likely be at the Hollywood Theatre in Dormont.



This photo is taken from a "Jem and the Holograms" fan film Joe Bucci shot in Detroit. PHOTO BY JOSEPH G. BUCCI



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Joe Bucci (at right) and Ian Altenbaugh (at left) are pictured here during filming of "Transience." PHOTO BY GREGER ERICKSON

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WACL celebrates 25 years, continues adding new features

PHOTOS AND STORY BY REBECCA FERRARO

On Nov. 14, the Western Allegheny Community Library, which serves Findlay Township, North Fayette Township and Oakdale Borough, celebrated its 25th anniversary. As part of the celebration, the library committee unveiled an anniversary quilt and a new history wall. An anniversary cake and light refreshments were served, children played in a moon bounce and local author Todd Vicker visited.

The celebration opened with ceremonial remarks from library board and staff members, followed by representatives from Findlay, North Fayette and Oakdale. Patrons were encouraged to browse the community room's displays, including a slide show and numerous scrapbooks displaying memorabilia from the area and the library's past, including original library cards. Guests could also create a commemorative ornament.

The library moved to its current location on Bateman Road two years ago and has since expanded to become more than an archive for books and historical documents. Patrons now have the option of checking out movies, music and even Amazon Kindle tablets, which come preloaded with 20 best sellers that otherwise could be difficult to obtain as paper copies.

The library board also is currently working on developing an outdoor space that could be opened by spring. The space will have café tables, outdoor sofas, a children's seating area and a play area, all surrounded by a fence. This will enhance the opportunities already offered by the library, such as the teen section, middle school section, and children's sections, which offer young adults Xboxes, iPads, coloring, dolls and games to supplement its books and computers. Students now also can take a bus from the West Allegheny Middle School to the library after school. Teens can serve on a teen advisory board, which provides leadership experience as well as support for their peers.

"We always have some kind of program here," said Maureen Knepshild, development manager for the WACL. "It's a cross between a library and a children's museum. We're working at really engaging people."



An anniversary quilt (at left) and area historical artifacts like this plot map of the area (at right) were unveiled at a Nov. 14 event at the Western Allegheny Community Library.

One way the library is striving to do so is with its history wall.

"We're starting a new history committee at the library," Knepshild said. "All community members are welcome."

The library's three boards represent Oakdale, North Fayette and Findlay. The wall itself is a permanent installation, but the photographs and articles, which are held in place with

Velcro, will change throughout the year. Each display will contain two-dimensional historical information and the community is encouraged to make submissions. Information was garnered using books and Pittsburgh Post-Gazette archives.

A particular gem on display during the anniversary celebration was an original plot map of the area dating back to the 1800s.

"We're hoping people will browse it and think, 'Maybe I'll look in there and see if anything is new,'" said Cathy Scott, who serves on the historical committee.

Scott was partially responsible for researching and collecting information for the wall.

Another communal representation for the library is the quilt, which was handmade by West Allegheny resident Jan Senovich. She took the quilt's squares to people in the community who contributed to make the library what it is today. Their signatures are sprawled across various squares on the quilt, and community members were able to sign it with fabric markers to leave behind their own piece of history.

"We wanted it to be a collaborative community quilt," Knepshild said.

The quilt will remain on display by the library entrance.

John Mathe', who served on the board of trustees at the library, attended the celebration to see the building he helped create. Mathe' worked with another trustee and a volunteer electrician to raise funds and remodel the library prior to its reopening in August 2013.

"Fourteen months it took to get this demolished," Mathe' said. "We had over 6,000 volunteer hours on this. It was a true joint effort."

Knepshild agreed, saying that plenty of work went into the library over the past 25 years to get to where it is today.

"The human part of it - that's what keeps libraries going," Mathe' said.



ABOVE: Attendees at an anniversary event at the Western Allegheny Community Library peruse the library's new history wall. RIGHT: A promotion using a mustache at the WACL encourages readers to check out book selections.



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Area turkey bowls are part of a Thanksgiving tradition

Each year around Thanksgiving, impromptu pickup football games take place in backyards and parks across the country. Rules, venues and organizational levels vary, but the games often bring together old friends and relatives for an old-fashioned throw-down before a feast of food and televised professional football.

The West Allegheny community is no different, with at least one of its own local turkey bowl traditions running so long it spans generations. Another more recent startup has gotten so popular that it has spawned a dozen teams and attracted some of WA's recent top former athletes.

The turkey bowl Dan Hanczar's family started 50 years ago though may very well be, or at least be among, the area's oldest. Each year, the family has held its Thanksgiving game on a small field along Oakdale Road. People who have passed the field might have noticed its uprights at either end of a relatively flat clearing along North Branch Creek.

Hanczar, who lives in Oakdale, says that at one time his grandfather operated an adjacent farm and rented the field for a place for his cows to graze. Appropriately, his family and friends have called it Cowpie Stadium for about as long as they've been playing football there.

When Dan started playing, he says his Oakdale family faced off against cousins from Carnegie. His children, nephews, nieces and family friends have since carried on the tradition. Though players have changed, the tackle rule has not. Neither has the creek hazard that sits just inches from its sideline. Someone usually gets tackled into it during games.

Despite the hazard, and the tackle rule, the worst injury Dan can recall ever occurring at Cowpie Stadium is a dislocated shoulder.

"It's probably because the field is too small and narrow," says Dan's brother Greg.

At 48 feet wide and 75 yards long, it's hard to get up a head of steam before crashing into some bushes. This year, though, he says they did away with the kick-off as a safety precaution.

This past Thanksgiving, players at Cowpie Stadium mostly consisted of acquaintances made through Greg's fiancé, Patty. A couple of years ago, Patty's sons got some of their friends together to play there. They've been hooked ever since. Patty says her son Ross starts getting texts from friends about playing at Cowpie Stadium as early as October.

Dan's brother Dave credits an uncle of theirs, Andrew, or Ange as they call him, with starting the football tradition.

"Ange would get us all riled up," Dave says. "We'd get all dressed up in pads and Ange would referee...As a kid, it was the biggest thing in the world."

Ange also officiated. If one team was winning, says Dave, he'd referee the other way to keep the game close. Dave recalls Ange making

measuring sticks out of baler twine and handing out trophies for most valuable player. Dan even recalls a pregame ceremony in which Ange would lead a pony down onto the field with one of his sisters riding on the back with an American flag.

Dave later took over officiating duties at Cowpie Stadium. At the

same time, he officiated football for the WPIAL for 13 years.

Though he hung up his striped shirt and white hat in 2005, he still pulls them back out on Thanksgiving.

As the Hanczar's celebrated their 50th year at Cowpie Stadium on Thanksgiving, WA students and alumni faced off in four games at a time on the high school's football field. As they did, a DJ blared music that kept the play fun and upbeat. That Friday, players also traveled to Pittsburgh's South Side to play under the lights at Highmark Stadium. The two days of games even featured some of the top WA football talent from the past couple of years, including Andrew Koester, WA's starting quarterback last season. Koester red-shirted for St. Francis University this past season. On Thanksgiving, he looked to be having fun while picking off a touchdown-saving pass.

Also playing in the turkey bowl was Nick Ross, WA's starting quarterback from this past season, and WA alumnus David Rubis, who now plays football for Geneva College.

The turkey bowl started out simple enough; just a couple of friends playing football in WA student Mike Starkman's backyard in the Holly Hill neighborhood of Oakdale the week before Thanksgiving. Then more kids joined in, until they had multiple teams and even age divisions.

Five years later, the Holly Hill Turkey Bowl, as it is now known, has grown to 12 teams comprised of 60 players; and that's just in its oldest high school division. They have a bracket and championship trophy that looks kind of like the Vince Lombardi Trophy but with a silver turkey on top instead of a football. They also hand out most valuable player awards, or the "golden gobbler" as they call it. Starkman has even used the event to benefit a good cause. Last year, they collected donations for the West Allegheny food pantry. This year, he got players to help drop off Thanksgiving dinners to families in need the Wednesday prior.

He says players tend to get hyped for the tournament early.

"They were already talking about it in the spring," he says.

This year marked the second that Starkman rented out Highmark Stadium. During the year, he raises money to rent it in part by selling candy bars. The impression it's left on players seems to go a long way.

"I don't even care if our team wins," says Alec Palmer, who played on Starkman's team. "I just want to play at Highmark."

Palmer now plays baseball for Baldwin Wallace University. In high school, he lived two doors down from Starkman. He says he was among the first to participate in Starkman's turkey bowl.

As for Dan, he says he and his brothers stopped playing once they came to their senses sometime in their 30's. He says he's happy though to see the younger generations carrying on the tradition.

"I'm so happy this keeps going on and on," he says.

PHOTOS AND STORY BY DOUG HUGHEY



ABOVE: Jamie Ramirez completes a pass down field on Thanksgiving at "Cowpie Stadium," as the field is known among the Hanczar family.



ABOVE: Hanczar brothers Dave, Bill, Dan and Greg started playing a turkey bowl game on a field they started calling Cowpie Stadium in 1965. Here, they are pictured holding the original football used that year.



ABOVE: Nick Ross tries to shake Jacob Cunningham and complete a pass down field during the Holly Hill Turkey Bowl on Thanksgiving. The two competed in the annual tournament, which was started by Mike Starkman (pictured at right). **FAR RIGHT:** Andrew Koester picks off a pass in front of Cameron Duffett during the Holly Hill Turkey Bowl on Thanksgiving.





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Social media brings memories to life

Rather than remain tucked away in old documents or left to fade away, memories of the past are now being brought alive through social media; most notably, Facebook pages dedicated to the purpose of “remembering when.”

Locally, Old Findlay Township Memories, a Facebook page created and administered by Susy Parry, provides a forum for residents of all ages to reminisce.

Parry, a 1979 West Allegheny alumna, worked at the Imperial Foodland while in high school. She started the page in May of 2014. Parry saw it as a way to connect people in the area, as well as those who have moved away, to the memories they experienced during their youth in the Findlay, Clinton and Imperial areas.

Page topics range from the old West Allegheny schools and their teachers to the many stores that once fronted Main Street in Imperial. Members share tidbits of when they went to visit the sno-cone lady, bowl in the lanes on Santiago Road, or go to a movie theatre in a building now home to the West Allegheny Food Pantry. The theater operated out of the bottom of the building and a furniture construction company operated out of the top.

Here is an example of a posting that Parry shared this year: “I marched as an Indianette at the old football field where Shop’n Save is now. When I marched, the school building was the junior high. In my mom’s day, it was the high school. I loved how big it was with the grandstand going up so many flights. I also marched senior year at the new football field at the senior high...where games are held now. It is a nice field but I just never felt it had the sense of grandeur and excitement and theater that the old one had. What are your thoughts and memories?”

In the picture section of the page, members have posted old group photos of sports teams and classmates. A few random pictures of the community are also posted, including ones of the Wilson log house and the Imperial Volunteer Fire Department breaking ground on its new fire station at the site of the former Imperial Elementary School on Pine Street. The school is gone now. In its place is the new fire station, which opened this year. Its old location at the intersection of Main Street and Route 30 has a new resident, Glassworks, and another piece of local history changes hands.

Page member Jeff Kurchina notes in a picture of Danny Burn’s Figure 8 car that he drove at Heidelberg Speedway, “This photo was taken in front of Mance’s Plating. I remember watching them do plating though the window at lunch time at the elementary school.”

Mance Plating was owned by Roger Mance who, for some time, served as the community’s Santa Claus before he passed away.

Among the day-to-day memories shared among members were Elmer the bread man, Homer the milk man and George the huckster. The latter was a farmer who brought his wares to the neighborhood for folks to buy fruits and vegetables directly from his truck.

For some members, the page is a chance to share their own memories, such as a post by Shirley Work: “I met my husband at the Bull Pen now Advanced Auto, got married in the old junior high which was the Church of the Living Christ (before it burned down) and now it is Subway/McDonalds and the hotel we stayed in is now a mall.”

For others, it’s a chance to recall near tragedy, such as the time the Pyrofax propane facility blew up next to Agway on Main Street. Shirley Work recalls how she and her cousin were almost hit by a train on the bridge near the old Hotel Imperial.

A post on May 22 elicited a plethora of memories from many of its members of places now gone but fondly remembered.

Some post links to other interesting facets of the community, such as the Montour Railroad before it became the Montour Trail and White Swan Park before it was demolished.

Parry hopes that more people will join the page and post their memories.

Tammy Napoli sums it all up in a long, yet reminiscent post about the past that she shared in June: “Memories of the way it was in a little town called Imperial...I miss those endless summer days of living the simple life as a kid without a care in the world...from sun up ‘til sun down, we were free to explore, seek adventures or just hang out with friends and family...I remember playing softball, it tag, hide and go seek, building forts and riding bikes wherever the roads and paths would lead us. We never had to look over our shoulder or worry about anyone harming us, which made for an easy, relaxed, happy childhood. Our parents would say, be home when the street lights come on as we were heading out on our bikes for a day of fishing or swimming in the nearby creek. We were taught to respect our elders and never talked back, we did our chores without complaining, worked in the garden hoeing, raking, picking

vegetables, had an occasional ride on dad’s tractor, in the back of his pick up, and even learned to shoot a rifle. We also had a home cooked family dinner around the dinner table everyday with mom, dad and our siblings. After dinner, we spent countless hours in the evenings catching lightning bugs in mason jars, roasting marshmallows at the weekly bonfire, sitting on the back porch listening to the chirping of crickets....not to mention the portable radio playing country music non-stop...to this day, I still know all the words to just about every country song ever written. We watched Saturday morning cartoons and also played many board games to pass the time on the weekends, like Monopoly, checkers, Chinese checkers, dominos, just to name a few, while our mom, dad, aunts and uncles played cards in the kitchen. Drive-in movies were a treat, we couldn’t wait to see the newest movie that was playing and the theater popcorn was awesome! We didn’t

shop much back then...we ordered our clothes from Sears and Spiegels catalogs. The Mancini bread man delivered our bread, the Jewel Tea man was a traveling salesman who always had a variety of things on his truck for sale (my favorite thing was the animal-shaped sugar cookies with multi-colored jimmies that mom always bought for me), the Fuller Brush man sold various brushes, combs, etc., and Joe the beer man delivered Tech beer in seven-ounce bottles and also assorted varieties of pop (cream of soda was my favorite). We did our grocery shopping at Ergen’s Foodland and got our fresh churned butter, milk and cream from Davis’ local farm. We savored every moment, took in the sights, felt the wind in our hair, cherished the love that surrounded us each day, then it was off to bed to say our prayers and thank God for the gifts in our lives. Yes, I guess you could say that was the good stuff...those were the days and I wouldn’t trade them for the world.”

And so, as the busy life of today goes on, Susy continues to post, and page members engage in conversation as they reminisce and look back on the “good old days.”

In addition to Old Findlay Township Memories, look for these other Facebook pages dedicated to the area and its history: Remember Moon Township When, McDonald PA History and Memorabilia, Remembering WA Nation, Remember Crafton When, Memories of Growing Up in Sewickley and Old Moon Township Historical Society.



A new experience in pizza shops opens in Imperial Plaza

STORY AND PHOTOS
SUBMITTED BY SUPER PIZZA

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PHOTO AND STORY
SUBMITTED BY

ALLEGHENY WEST EYE CARE

Allegheny West Eye Care welcomes Dr. Megan Sullivan to practice

Allegheny West Eye Care in Imperial welcomed its newest practitioner earlier this year. Dr. Megan Sullivan joins the practice after having graduated from the Illinois College of Optometry in May. A Moon Township native, Sullivan is no stranger to the practice or the area. While earning her undergraduate degree from the University of Pittsburgh, she worked at Allegheny West Eye Care, where she shadowed Dr. David Quinn.

"I've learned so much from him," says Sullivan. "He's not only taught me the technical side of optometry, but that it's important to look at the whole health aspect. As optometrists, we are concerned with eye issues, but it's also important to educate patients and take really good care of them."

She says that some eye problems can be indicative of more serious health issues, such as blocked blood vessels or diabetes. Some seemingly benign eye conditions can also be signs of more serious problems that can worsen with age. Considering the patient's entire medical history, and not just a single eye condition, is paramount, she says.

Sullivan's own early experiences with vision problems led to her career choice. She says she first realized she required corrective lenses while in elementary school, after a teacher noticed she was having trouble reading. Though she had difficulty picking out fine lines and small details, she says she never questioned her eyesight.

"You just think that's how everyone sees," she says.

She was prescribed corrective contact lenses and the experience of

wearing them for the first time left a powerful impression on her.

"I remember seeing blades of grass again and leaves on the trees," she says.

Sullivan joins a well-known practice already comprised of two accomplished doctors. Dr. Andrew Ruzich holds a medical degree from Thomas Jefferson Medical College. He completed his internship and resident training at Saint Francis Medical Center and Summa Medical Center in Akron, Ohio, where he served as chief resident. He also served in the U.S. Air Force for five years, including stints as a flight surgeon, chief of aeromedical services at an air base in Sicily and chief of flight medicine at another base in England.

Quinn, a lifelong area resident, earned a doctor of optometry degree from the Southern California College of Optometry. He completed internships at the Naval Regional Medical Center of Los Angeles and the Optometric Center of Los Angeles. He graduated from West Allegheny High School in 1978 and earned his bachelor of science from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

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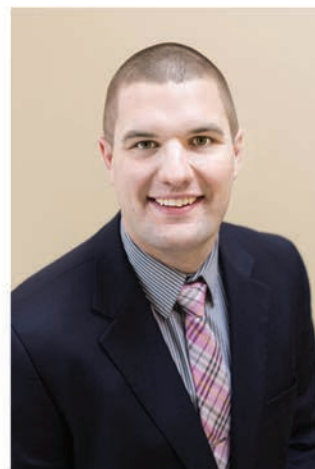
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PAACC holds first Municipalities Symposium

On Oct. 21, the Pittsburgh Airport Area Chamber of Commerce held a Municipalities Symposium with its member municipal leaders. The purpose of the gathering was to learn about issues facing local government leaders who work each day to ensure that residents have safe, clean, well-functioning and prosperous communities in which to live, work and play. With this knowledge and understanding, the PAACC felt it could serve as a stronger, more informed voice as it continues to advocate for airport area businesses and communities.

The PAACC works closely with legislators and government officials to help monitor key issues that impact businesses and communities-at-large. Through the dialogue at the Municipalities Symposium, the PAACC was able to identify key concerns that need to be part of future resolution-oriented conversations and advocacy efforts on behalf of airport area communities.

Discussions took place, first in smaller groups facilitated by PAACC volunteer leaders, including members of the chamber board, ambassador committee and/or the Community Growth and Government Affairs Committee. Notes were taken by facilitators and shared with the larger group in a concluding discussion. A number of issues were discussed, including transportation, infrastructure, storm water management, unfunded mandates, lack of grants, housing and vacant properties, and senior care and support.

Member municipalities that participated in the symposium were Collier Township, Crescent Township, Findlay Township, Greentree Borough, Monaca Borough, Moon Township, North Fayette Township, Robinson Township and Stowe



Township.

The PAACC Community Growth and Government Affairs Committee spearheaded the symposium and has reviewed the resulting discussion points. They are currently determining next steps and identifying any opportunities for PAACC involvement and assistance.

This was the PAACC's first Municipalities Symposium, and based on the enthusiastic participation and insights gained, it is unlikely that it will be the last.

The PAACC's mission is to advance the airport area's economic vitality by providing advocacy, information and services to members and the business community. Part of the mission is served by helping to inform members and communities of legislative issues through the PAACC Breakfast Briefing Series, the annual Legislative Breakfast, FlightLine Magazine, email updates, and the Legislative News and Updates page (in the News and Media section) at paacc.com.

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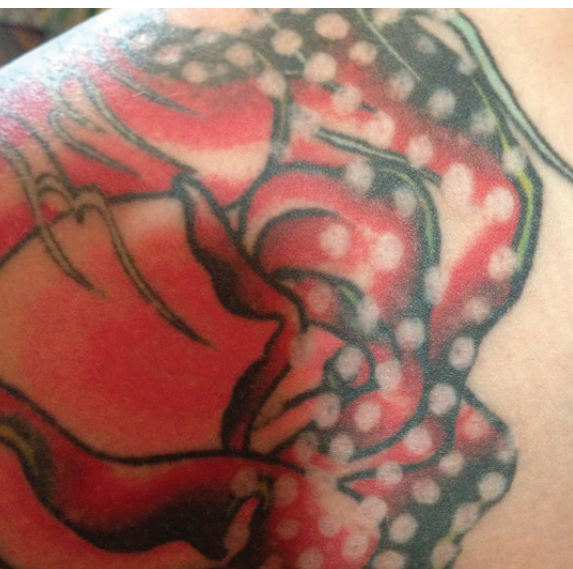
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Tatt2Away removes tattoos without the use of lasers

STORY SUBMITTED BY
UP IN ARMS TATTOO AND PIERCINGS



In a scene from the 2013 movie “We’re the Millers,” a dimwitted character named Scottie P., played by Mark L. Young, shows off a botched chest tattoo that reads “No Ragrets.” Upon seeing it, Jason Sudeikis’ character, David Clark, asks him, “You have no regrets? Not one?”

ABOVE: The Tatt2Away process works by first applying a solution in 5-millimeter patches.

The irony isn’t all fiction. Just search “bad tattoos” on the Internet and get ready to cringe. It’s the kind of stuff that the artists at Up in Arms Tattoo and Piercings in Moon Township see often enough. A big part of their business involves fixing bad tattoos other artists have penned and ones that the owners have turned out to be, well, regret.

As a result, some of the shop’s artists have become certified and licensed to administer an all-natural tattoo removal method called Tatt2Away. The process, also known as trans epidermal pigment release, uses naturally occurring carbohydrates to break up ink and pull it out of the body. A solution is applied in 5-millimeter patches right in the shop. A scab forms on the treated surface and the ink falls away with it.

Using Tatt2Away, shop artists can either erase entire large tattoos or, because it’s so precise, focus just on minute details. Up in Arms artist Jason Trunick says he recently changed a single letter on a finger tattoo using the procedure.

The pain is also no worse than what was experienced while getting inked in the first place, says Trunick. Lasers, by comparison, have been known to cause painful burns that need to be treated as such.

“I don’t think many people know that,” says Dooner Sadauskus, who owns and operates the shop.

Another advantage is that Tatt2Away expels the ink from the body, whereas lasers break up the ink molecules so the body can absorb them.

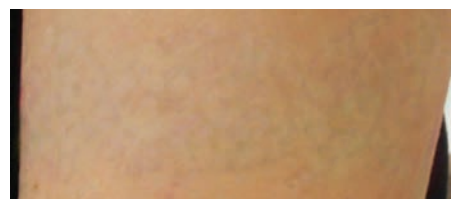
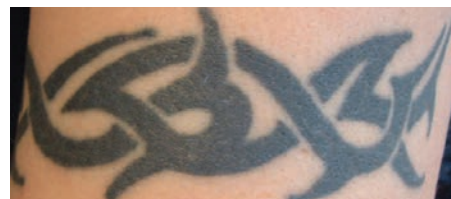
“There are so many inks out there, nobody knows for sure what happens when you super heat all of them,” says Sadauskus.

Lasers have also been known to be less effective at removing certain types of pigments and can require upwards of 10 or

more sittings to remove a tattoo. Using Tatt2Away, Sadauskus says, most tattoos take three to five sittings, which translates to money saved because both methods are priced per sitting. Small changes, like changing a letter or a name, can be done in one or two sittings using Tatt2Away.

Sittings take place eight weeks apart and the skin can be tattooed again after 12 weeks.

Through February, Up in Arms is offering discounted rates for Tatt2Away tattoo removal services. Call (412) 264-3126 to schedule a consultation. For more on Tatt2Away, visit <http://tatt2away.com>.



ABOVE: Photos show the progression of the Tatt2Away process

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TATT2AWAY

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Maybe you should pay your debt first, maybe not. Some debt is “good” debt. A debt is “good” if it brings you income. Credit cards are generally considered “bad” debts.

If you’ll be carrying a debt for a while, put it to a test. Weigh the interest rate on that specific debt against your potential income growth rate and your potential investment returns over the term of the debt.

Of course, paying off debts, paying down balances and restricting new debt all works toward improving your FICO score, another tool you can use in pursuit of financial freedom (we’re talking “good” debts).

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Longtime West Allegheny school resource officer retires

PHOTO AND STORY BY DOUG HUGHEY

In 1998, West Allegheny School District administrators and the North Fayette Police Department teamed up to apply for a grant that would help place a full time police officer at the district's schools in North Fayette. Sgt. John Bates of the North Fayette Police Department says that at the time there wasn't a particular need for a dedicated officer at the township's school buildings; and that was a good thing.

"We put the grant together with the idea that WA doesn't have major issues, and we wanted to keep it that way," says Bates, who until recently served as school resource officer at WA. "We even talked about, should we even be applying for this grant even though we don't have the issues that some districts do; but we decided to take a proactive approach instead of a reactive position."

The grant was funded by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. North Fayette was one of six communities in the state to be awarded the grant in 1998. Bates initially approached WA's superintendent at the time, Dr. Charles Hughey, with the idea.

"We believed that Sgt. Bates would be an ideal person to direct the program," says Hughey. "We also believed that our students should develop a life-long respect and appreciation for police officers, and that the topics touched on in the program such as drug abuse and bullying would prove invaluable."

Hughey assembled a team to work with Bates on the grant. That same year, the police department was awarded the grant and Bates piloted the SRO position at WA. His first two years were paid for by the grant. The school and township have split the cost since. Hughey describes the program at WA as highly successful and points out that other districts across the state have since adopted SROs.

"With today's increased occurrences of school violence throughout our nation, the daily involvement of a resource officer in schools has become an invaluable means to further safeguard the welfare of students and staff," says Hughey.

After 31 years on the job, 17 of those as an SRO, Bates announced plans to retire at the end of December. He does so as SROs are increasingly becoming the norm in the wake of several high-profile school shootings. According to a July 6, 2014 Tribune-Review article, "School resource officers in high demand in Pennsylvania, nation," demand for SRO courses rose by 300 percent from 2012 to 2014 alone.

When Bates took on his role at WA, though, most people still associated the word cobbline with a pretty blue flower. Bates' colleagues describe his subsequent role there as more of a teacher and mentor at a school that has never had reason for just an armed guard patrolling its hallways.

"John's sort of bridged that gap between the police and school," says North Fayette police chief Mark O'Donnell. "He was always our eyes and ears there. The kids knew they could come to him with any kind of issue. He gave them guidance and developed a rapport between faculty and police."

Patrick Konieczny, who owns Thomas-Little Funeral Service and served on the WA School Board for six years during Bates' tenure, says Bates helped foster a relationship between students and police.

"Especially in today's society that we deal with today, it's important that kids see the police aren't the bad guys," says Konieczny.

A lifelong area resident, Bates graduated from WA in 1982. A couple years after, he started working for the North Fayette Police Department alongside O'Donnell. Even before taking on the SRO position, Bates was a regular at the school, jumping at the chance to help out with everything from fingerprinting programs to career days.

After he took on the SRO position, Bates began teaching Drug Abuse and Resistance Education - or DARE - classes to McKee Elementary students. Later, he and Findlay police officer Jeff O'Donnell - a crime prevention officer at Wilson Elementary since 1992 - along with Findlay police officers Don Sedlacek and Ken Cox, expanded the program to include seventh- and 10th-graders. Together, they've also taught a safe driving Survival 101 class and mentored students through a Law Enforcement Apprenticeship Program, which covers conflict resolution, gun safety and bullying. None of those courses have cost taxpayers a dime, says Bates. Instead, they've been paid for through local donations, including from area businesses and an annual golf outing fundraiser.

"Without the business support we've gotten over past 25 years, a lot of the stuff we've been doing here we wouldn't have been able to



Sgt. John Bates of the North Fayette Police Department is pictured here with West Allegheny Middle School eighth-graders Josh Mangold, Connor Stout, Jordan Watters, Ali Block, Olivia Rohal, Lexi Hotenfeller and Maci Priddy. Bates, a longtime school resource officer at WA, retired in December.

do," he says.

Jerry Kehm, vice president of Oakdale-based Kehm Oil, says that supporting the programs Bates and O'Donnell instruct has been a no-brainer.

"There would have been such an uproar in the community if that program ever got cut," he says, referring to DARE.

It's not the only school-related cause Bates has procured outside funds to support. Since 1994, he's served as president of the West Allegheny Foundation, which to date has raised over \$250,000 to support community- and school-related initiatives. Those dollars have helped support teachers who want to try out new services, equipment and ideas in the classroom. Some of those funds have also gone toward community projects, like helping the Oakdale Youth League rebuild its ball field after it was devastated by flooding from Hurricane Ivan.

Much of the money comes from teachers at the school who donate portions of their paychecks.

"John has built such a rapport with teachers and staff, all he has to do is ask," says Kehm, who serves on the foundation board.

Bates says the foundation has yet to not fund a grant that met its criteria.

Following Bates' announcement to retire, Sgt. Michael Hayes of the North Fayette Police Department was selected to take over the SRO position at WA. Like Bates, Hayes is a lifelong area resident and his tenure will coincide with his children going through the school system. He is well known in the community for instructing a firearm safety and crime awareness course called Refuse to be a Victim.

"This was a nice fit," says Hayes. "I have a vested interest and am a lifelong resident myself; I care about the school. I care about what goes

on there. I want to make sure it stays the nice place it is.”

Like Bates, Hayes will be in a unique position to watch students progress all the way from kindergarten through high school graduation. Educators at WA say Bates has endeared himself to those students, starting at the elementary level.

“He’s about as popular a person as you’ll find at the elementary,” says McKee principal Tom Orr. “He’s always joking and knows something about the kids or their families. He went to school with a lot of their moms and dads.”

Fifth grade teacher Tiffany Mangan says Bates has been able to bring a sense of humor to DARE classes even while talking about serious subjects.

“He has a way with the kids,” she says. “He can joke with them in a way not everyone can.”

She says the classes deal with peer pressure and that over time they’ve adapted to confront current day issues such as social media.

In recent years, with the proliferation of SROs at more schools, some have questioned the position’s effectiveness. North Fayette supervisor Jim Morosetti, though, says keeping an SRO at the school has been well worth the investment.

“If an SRO can save one child from going bad, it’s paid for itself,” he says. “I think it is essential that we continue the program.”

Bates says what he’ll miss most about the job are the kids.

“It’s been a great journey that I wouldn’t change one bit,” he says. “I got to meet a lot of great kids, families, school faculty and business people through the years.”

He says he’s not retiring, just transitioning.

“I was born and raised here,” he says. “It’s home and I will continue to help when I can.”

NRA grant helps

North Fayette police upgrade range

A grant from the National Rifle Association has helped the North Fayette Police Department upgrade its firing range. North Fayette police officer Mark Kern says that he applied for the grant last year through the NRA Foundation, a charitable wing of the NRA. Kern did so at the suggestion of several local residents involved with the foundation. As a result, the department was awarded \$5,000.

Kern says the grant allowed the department to pour a new concrete pad for the range’s pavilion, purchase new steel supports for targets, construct a storage shed and install new permanent outdoor lighting. The shed allows officers to store targets at the range instead of hauling them from the station.

Kern and township police chief Mark O’Donnell say that the department has also opened up its range to other area police departments at no charge.



Officer Mark Kern of the North Fayette Police Department wrote a grant awarded through the National Rifle Association that has provided funds to upgrade the department’s firing range.

They estimate that 20 area departments have used the range over the past year.

Currently, the next closest range specifically for law enforcement is located at the Allegheny County Police Academy in Allison Park. Closer ranges are operated on area military bases. One is operated by the 171st Air Refueling Wing in Findlay Township. Maj. Karen Bogden of the 171st says that departments can make arrangements to use it. Another operated by the 911th Airlift Wing had been available to departments but use of that range is being restricted until it undergoes renovations, says Sgt. Mark Winklosky of the 911th.

Sgt. Michael Hayes of the North Fayette Police Department says that some officers have been choosing to drive as far as West Mifflin to shoot at a private range or been going to area sportsmen’s clubs.

Kern says that in addition to its location, North Fayette’s range on Donaldson Road gives officers an added advantage because it is outdoors. Because the range sits in front of a dirt barrier, officers can train with AR-15 patrol rifles. Officers can also place barriers on the course for tactical shooter training. Both are used during Active Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training, or ALERRT, as it’s known among law enforcement.

“With the whole Char-West COG sticking with the ALERRT program, our range is perfect for that,” says Kern. “We have a little more leeway with shooting and moving [over an indoor range].”

Encouraged by the success of the grant, Kern says the department applied for the grant a second time this year and was awarded funds to purchase ammunition for a firearms segment to its Refuse to be a Victim course. The course, which is taught by Hayes, instructs area residents on crime prevention and firearm safety. During the firearms portion of the class, participants use the same range as police.



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Municipal Roundup

Police and family of local cyclist killed on Steubenville Pike still seeking answers

More than two months after a tragic accident in North Fayette Township took the life of 24-year-old Brandon Ortmann of Oakdale, his family continues to seek answers from the unknown motorist responsible for his death.

Ortmann, who was riding his bicycle home from his place of employment at The Pointe at North Fayette on the evening of Sept. 18, was struck in the face at 7:40 p.m. by the passenger-side



ABOVE: Brandon Ortmann is pictured here kayaking. He enjoyed a number of outdoor activities, according to his mother. PHOTO SUBMITTED

mirror of a vehicle travelling eastbound in the 7200 block of Steubenville Pike. Ortmann died at the hospital from head trauma the following day.

The white GMC, three-quarter ton, four-door Sierra pickup truck with a white cap on the back was pulling a black, open-style utility trailer not unlike ones used to haul landscaping equipment. The driver did not stop after hitting Ortmann. The truck then continued driving down Steubenville Pike, where surveillance cameras at two businesses captured the truck on video. Witnesses saw Ortmann's bicycle fly into the air upon impact and later noted that the headlight on the front of his bike remained lit, proof that he should have been visible to drivers.

Footage from a business near the scene of the accident of the right side of the 2003-2007 model year truck shows a missing mirror, possible damage to the front passenger door, and a missing plastic strip under the broken right headlight. Before turning onto Steubenville Pike, the truck traveled down McKee Road, where it was caught on video while passing the Community College of Allegheny County campus. That video, captured moments before the truck struck Ortmann, clearly shows the truck with the mirror still intact. Lt. Michael Hamm of the North Fayette Police Department is the officer in charge of the ongoing investigation. He reported that all of the vehicles matching the make, model and year of the one in question that have been registered in Pennsylvania within a certain radius of the accident have been checked. Roughly 99 percent of those vehicles have been located and eliminated, according to Hamm. However, a few remain for investigation.

Hamm is hopeful that a neighbor or acquaintance of the truck's owner will recognize the identifiable damage and call police. He worries though that the longer the investigation goes without a definitive lead, the less chance there is of locating the vehicle.

Cindi Taylor, Ortmann's mother, said she is "a person of strong faith who doesn't harbor vengeance" toward the driver who took her son's life. However, she doesn't understand the person's ability to live unaccountably for this action.

She encourages the driver to come forward and "face [their] fears like I had to face mine" so that she and her family can have

a small amount of closure over Brandon's death.

The bicyclist group Western Pennsylvania Wheelmen held a memorial ride Nov. 14 to promote continued awareness about the efforts of the Ortmann family and the police department. The group places white painted "ghost bikes" at sites where cyclists have been killed to remind the public that cyclists have a right to travel safely on roads. A new Pennsylvania state law enacted in 2012 requires that motorists allow a four-foot berth between their vehicle and a bicyclist. If the motorist cannot do so safely, they must wait to pass the bicycle.

Approximately 25 people participated in the two-mile ride, which began at the North Fayette Fire Department with a police escort at the beginning and end of the procession. Trek of Robinson provided the ghost bike, which was draped in a pink ribbon signed by everyone in attendance.

Hamm spoke at the event, saying, "This (driver) was aware that he hit someone, there's no question in my mind."

Hamm asked that residents from anywhere in the state who may know something call with tips.

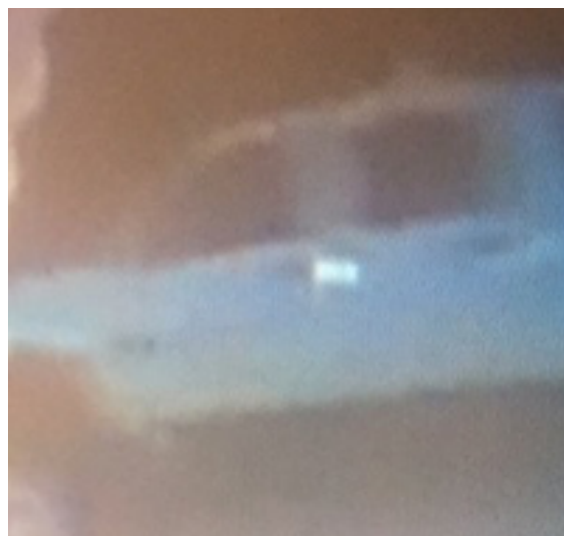
Ortmann attended Moon Area High School and, according to his

mother, was talented in film and computer animation. He was in the process of deciding whether to attend school to pursue a career in the field. He also enjoyed swimming, hiking and geocaching with his girlfriend.

Ortmann's family has established a Facebook website titled "Justice for Brandon Ortmann," which includes photographs and video of the memorial bike ride and of Hamm describing the truck in question.

A reward of \$1,000 is being offered to anyone with information about the vehicle. Those with relevant

knowledge are urged to call the non-emergency number for the North Fayette Police Department at (412) 787-8900.



ABOVE: This photo, taken from surveillance footage, shows the GMC Sierra truck that struck and killed Brandon Ortmann along Steubenville Pike on Sept. 18 at 7:40 p.m. The driver remains at large.



The Western Pennsylvania Wheelmen held a memorial ride Nov. 14 to promote awareness about the hit-and-run incident that took the life of cyclist Brandon Ortmann of Oakdale on Sept. 18. As part of the ride, the organization placed a memorial "ghost bike" (pictured above) at the corner of Steubenville Pike and McKee Road. The bike was donated by Trek of Robinson. PHOTOS BY ED QUIGLEY






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Thursday, Dec. 10, 6 p.m.

It's movie night at the library! Bring the whole family, a sleeping bag and/or stuffed animal. The WACL will provide the popcorn!

CHILDREN'S MAKE AND TAKE ORNAMENTS

Saturday, Dec. 12, 2 p.m.

Stop in to make a cool ornament just in time for the holidays!

STUFFED ANIMAL SLEEPOVER

Saturday, Dec. 19, 10:30 a.m.

Bring a favorite stuffed animal for a night at Library Camp! A special story time starts at 10:30 a.m. Make a nametag, "blankie" and mini toy for the stuffed animals, which will get to stay after the library closes. Animals will be ready for pick up on Sunday, but don't be surprised if they are tired after a night of fun!

THE LIBRARY GIVING TREE

Check out the new "giving tree" in the lobby and find an ornament with supplies that the library needs. Everyone who gives a gift to the library will get their name on a special "thank you" ornament to hang on the desk.

MICROSOFT OFFICE SERIES: Excel

Tuesday, Dec. 8, 6:30 p.m.

Learn the basics of Excel in a step-by-step overview using library-provided laptops. Basic computer knowledge required.

TEEN HOLIDAY FEST

Thursday, Dec. 17, 3:30 p.m.

Come celebrate the chill in the air and the season of giving by making a gift (and maybe nibbling some cookies).

MIDDLE GRADE LOCK-IN

Friday, Jan. 29, 8 p.m. and Saturday, Jan. 30, 8 a.m.

Sleep over at the library! There will be games, crafts, movies and snacks all night long! Grades 4-8.

SCHOOL BUS STOP

Students from West Allegheny Middle School can take the bus right to the library after school. The new bus stop allows students to access all of the library's resources. They can work on homework, enjoy board games, play Xbox One or read a good book. Visit the WACL website to download a permission form.

WINTER READING

Save the date - Winter Reading kicks off the week of Jan. 11 with programs for all ages. Stop by the library or visit the WACL website for more information.

Western Allegheny Community Library offers free programs year-round, as well as an amazing array of services, including a collection of over 45,000 items such as books, audio books, music, movies, video games, magazines, reference materials, puzzles, board games and so much more. In addition to the in-house collection, customers have access to materials available at any library within Allegheny County. The library offers free Wi-Fi access; print, fax, copy and scan services; desktop and laptop computers; and tutoring rooms. The library also has a community room available for meetings, birthday parties and/or general rental. Free homework printing is also available to students.

Additionally, throughout the year, the WACL offers story times for babies, toddlers, preschoolers and school-age children; middle grade and teen programs; computer and technology classes; adult programs; craft classes; summer reading programs for all ages; literacy classes; book clubs; and community outreach programs. Visit the WACL to learn more, or go to www.WesternAlleghenyLibrary.org.

Library Hours:

Monday – Thursday: 9:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Friday - Saturday: 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Sunday (Sept – May): 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Please note, the library will be CLOSED Thursday, Dec. 24 through Saturday, Dec. 26. The library will also close at 4 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 31 and will be CLOSED Friday, Jan. 1.



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- Accepting children ages 10 weeks to after school.



IN PITTSBURGH GUIDE

137

Things To Do

{this holiday season}

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West Allegheny Youth Soccer Association

Spring 2016 REGISTRATION

Season runs April through May

DEADLINE: February 10th

(Registration for In-house players only will be accepted until February 25 with a \$20 late fee.)

Travel players must register by February 10th.

Child must be 4 years old by 7/31/15

NO EXCEPTIONS

Visit www.westasoccer.com
for age chart and more information

U5/U6 Boys & Girls coed	Wednesday 6:00 – 7:00 pm	Saturday 10:00 – 11:00 am	\$60.00
U8 Boys & Girls coed*	Tuesday 6:00 – 7:00 pm	Saturday 11:15 am-12:15 pm	\$75.00
U10 Boys and Girls coed* In-house	Monday 6:15 – 7:15 pm	Saturday 8:30-9:30 am	\$75.00
U9/U10 Co-Ed Travel Team	See website for information		\$85.00
*U8/U10 additional skills training by Pittsburgh Soccer Academy	Thursday 6:15 - 7:45 pm	4 sessions	Included!
Travel (U11 and above)	TBD practice day and location	Sunday afternoon games	\$85.00



Ways to Register:

- Go to: www.westasoccer.com
(Register on-line and SAVE \$10.00)
No longer an additional fee for credit card payments

- Print registration form on website and mail to P.O. Box

- January 30th at WA Community Library from 10-12.

Questions Call Heather Chappel (724) 693-2536 OR Liz Pons (412) 716-8000

Email: westasoccer1@gmail.com



WEST ALLEGHENY SCHOOL DISTRICT

WA TODAY

DECEMBER,
2015
VOL. 38,
No. 2

INFORMATION FOR RESIDENTS OF FINDLAY AND NORTH FAYETTE TOWNSHIPS AND OAKDALE BOROUGH

Wilson Elementary renovations showcased at building dedication



Following 18 months of renovations, Wilson Elementary School students, staff and administration were anxious to share their recently completed building at a dedication ceremony on October 21.

With the colorful new library serving as a backdrop, superintendent Dr. Jerri Lynn Lippert welcomed guests. Lippert took the opportunity to thank the school board and former superintendent Dr. John S. DiSanti for their foresight and vision, as well as Kenneth Fibbi, director of buildings and grounds, for ensuring the building be completed on schedule and under budget.

School board president Debbie Mirich also addressed guests and noted the extensive planning that went into creating the space that was designed to better serve students. Additional speakers included Mark Duane from the project's architectural firm, Hayes Design Group, as well as Fibbi, who presented a building rendering to Wilson principal Christopher Shattuck.

Wilson fifth-graders served as student hosts for the event and provided organized tours of the school. The evening also featured a patriotic musical performance by the Middle School Show Choir, directed by Meagan Bruno and Andrew Peters.



Building Features

Wilson Elementary School's new design keys in on a student-centered blueprint that incorporates safety, functionality and energy efficiency. Here are several features:

- **Collaboratory** - delivers a bright, open space that welcomes students and teachers to come together to collaborate in a creative and comfortable setting.
- **Full-service Kitchen** - provides staff with state-of-the-art appliances and equipment, which allow fresh, hot meals to be prepared onsite.
- **Computer Lab and Technology Integration** - includes managed wireless access and classrooms that are now outfitted with 55-inch televisions partnering with new integrated laptops.
- **Library** - encourages students to explore the spacious, colorful and imaginative setting while inspiring an appreciation for reading.
- **Gymnasium** - offers students a full-sized, dedicated physical education space featuring hardwood floors, drop-down screen dividers, LED lighting and a refurbished stage with a progressive sound system.
- **Private Classrooms** - allow for focused instruction.
- **Skylights** - provide significant natural lighting while reducing energy consumption.
- **District Administrative Office addition** - includes a District training room, an executive boardroom and 15 offices.



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West Allegheny
School District

Superintendent's Message

Do you consider yourself to be good at math?

That is a question we want all West Allegheny students to answer with a resounding, "Yes!" However, many of us and many of our students and graduates would sadly answer with, "No, I am not very good at math," or, "I just never got math." Aligned with priority #1: Academic Rigor, Equity and Excellence for all students, we have increased our focus on mathematics through the adoption of new curricula, more time spent on mathematics in the academic schedule and teacher professional learning. Our goal is to ensure that all students have mathematical confidence, persistence and the mindset that they can in fact do math and do it well. This is vital to our students' success, so they are able to access advanced math courses in high school and college and pursue career choices that have a foundation in mathematics.

What does it mean "to do math well?" Some say the Common Core State Standards ushered in a "new" math that is fuzzy, lacks a focus on basic math facts and algorithms, and does not prepare students for the real world. I have to tell you that this is not true. In order to achieve math competence and confidence, three equally important areas need to be developed: procedural/skill fluency, conceptual understanding and application.

✓ **Procedural skill and fluency:** The Standards call for speed and accuracy in calculation. Students are given opportunities to practice core functions such as single-digit multiplication so that they have access to more complex concepts and procedures.

✓ **Conceptual understanding:** The Standards call for conceptual understanding of key concepts such as place, value and ratios. Students must be able to access concepts from a number of perspectives so that they are able to see math as more than a set of mnemonics or discrete procedures.

✓ **Application:** The Standards call for students to use math flexibly for applications in problem-solving contexts. In content areas outside of math, particularly science, students are given the opportunity to use math to make meaning of and access content.

Think of these areas as a three-legged stool. Without one of the critical legs, such as conceptual understanding, the two-legged stool becomes unstable and falls. All three areas are essential to developing mathematical competence. Think of a ladder with the two rails being conceptual understanding, application and procedural fluency. The rungs are essential to connecting the rails and making it possible to climb the ladder.

The more traditional approach to math overemphasizes procedural fluency (fact fluency, automaticity) at the expense of developing conceptual understanding and application. It is not uncommon in traditional mathematics to start with the equation or formula and substitute numbers into the equation to "find the correct answer." Nor is it uncommon in traditional mathematics to spend little or no time understanding why the formula actually works or how and when to use the formula. Struggling to compute the problem and/or failure to get the

"correct" answer often results in self-identifying as not being "good" at math. Struggling in math erroneously results in the belief that those who do not struggle are good and those who struggle are bad at math.

In contrast, inquiry-based mathematics, or problem-based mathematics, approaches mathematics by having students engage in and struggle to figure out how to solve a problem.

This may include more than one way to solve the problem, which allows students to discover what math skills and equation/formula work in the context of the problem. Sharing different ways to solve a problem is an important component in the math classroom, as is being able to explain the solution path or paths. Struggling is a vital component to becoming an

effective problem-solver and developing a positive disposition for mathematics.

At West Allegheny, we are striving to develop strong, confident mathematical thinkers who consider themselves to be "good at math." In order to do so, we believe every student must develop the eight Standards of Mathematical Practice. These practices foster a productive disposition and habits of mind that are essential to being "good at math." Our math curricula and math classrooms reflect the following eight standards:

"The math department at the middle school has been hard at work navigating students through our new program, Connected Mathematics Project 3. Teachers have been working closely with a consultant to strengthen their practice around inquiry-based teaching and learning. Students are learning complex mathematics through a combination of direct instruction and group work, allowing them to further develop their collaboration, communication and problem solving skills. There is a buzz of energy in the air of every math class at the middle school. It's awesome to see students working and learning together."

~ Megan Huchko ~
Middle School Assistant Principal

"The new math curriculum brings forth intellectual challenges designed to engage students with making sense of mathematical concepts. We, as teachers, are seeing students who are becoming mathematical thinkers. Although it continues to be a work in progress, it is one that our district feels confident implementing."

~ Tania Garofoli ~
Wilson Elementary School Teacher

1. Make sense of problems and persevere to solve them -

Students are challenged to understand the problem, find a way to attack it and work until it is done. The math becomes about the process and not about one right answer.

2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively -

Faced with a mathematical problem, students should be able to break it down and demonstrate their understanding of it symbolically through diagrams, tables or graphs. Students are to figure out what to do with the data themselves instead of being boxed into one way of solving the problem.

3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others -

Students should be able to talk about math by using mathematical language to support or oppose the work of others.

4. Model with mathematics -

To understand the world around them, students should be able to solve real-world problems and organize data. Math that is limited to math class has no value. Math should be applicable to science, art, music and even reading.

5. Use appropriate tools strategically -

Students are to select the appropriate math tool, use it correctly and know that technology can help them explore and deepen their understanding of concepts.

6. Attend to precision -

When solving math problems, students should have the ability to speak and approach mathematics with exactness and meticulousness. Measurements should be exact, numbers should be precise and explanations should be detailed.

7. Look for and make use of structure -

Students are encouraged to find patterns and repeated reasoning that can help solve complex problems. For young students, this might be recognizing fact families, inverses or properties. As students get older, they can break apart problems and numbers into familiar relationships.

"This game helps students learn their basic multiplication facts. However, what is more important is that the game teaches students how to solve more complex multiplication problems by breaking apart the complex problem into simpler problems that are easier to solve. This game builds mathematical reasoning and thinking and the students are having fun at the same time."

~ Kim Buser

Donaldson Elementary School Teacher ~

"This is really fun and I am learning my facts."
~ Students Mandy Mahen and Hope Halkias ~

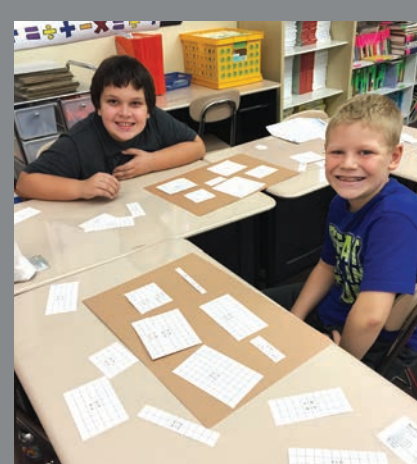


8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning -

Keep an eye on the big picture while working out the details of the problem. Students should not only be able to solve the one problem given to them but also be able to apply that problem to their general thinking.

Finally, our teachers are often asked by parents and guardians how to best help students

in math. For any individual supporting a student of math, it is important to emphasize that effort creates ability. Thinking hard about a problem and struggling to find solutions are essential components to developing critical thinking, problem solving and analyzing skills. In other words, struggling is a good thing and will make the student smarter. Also, try to resist giving them the answer. Lastly, always ask for the student to explain his/her thinking, how they thought through the solution path and push them to think about more than one way to solve problems. Together, we can foster confident mathematicians who can say with confidence, "I am good at math."



"I'm learning my multiplication facts using arrays."

~ Aaron Especto with Caleb Gnoth ~

.....

Dr. Jerri Lynn Lippert,
Superintendent

Assistant superintendent Sean Aiken accepts Shaler superintendent position

Former assistant superintendent for schools Sean Aiken has accepted the position of Shaler Area School District superintendent. Aiken assumed his new role December 1 after serving at West Allegheny since August of 2014.

"This is a well-deserved opportunity for Mr. Aiken," said Dr. Jerri Lynn Lippert, West Allegheny superintendent. "Shaler Area School District is fortunate to welcome Mr. Aiken back as he takes the reins as their superintendent."

The District will conduct a search to find Aiken's replacement.

"In my short tenure at West Allegheny, I have grown to truly appreciate the District and the community," said Aiken. "Working with Dr. Lippert, the board, the administrative team, and the staff has strengthened me as an educational leader. However, I could not pass on the opportunity to lead Shaler Area School District as its superintendent. Shaler is another special place where I previously served as an administrator."

Speech and debate team earns national recognition

The speech and debate team has been named to the 200 Club by the National Speech and Debate Association. This prestigious honor recognizes the team for being ranked among the



top 7.5 percent of all participating schools nationwide for points earned in 2014-15 from participation, competition

rankings and service-related activities. According to the NSDA, "This milestone is remarkable because it demonstrates outstanding commitment to teaching students essential life skills, including communication, research, listening, writing and organization."

Mike Shaffer, Mike Quinn, Mike Vattimo and Lauren Barry were the coaches of the 42-member team in 2014-15.

West Allegheny partners with Carnegie Science Center to provide STEM Excellence Pathway

West Allegheny was recently selected by the Carnegie Science Center as one of 10 regional schools to participate in a partnership to provide professional learning through the implementation of the Carnegie STEM Excellence Pathway. The STEM - an acronym for science, technology, engineering and math - Excellence Pathway program offers resources and a "strategic planning process" to K-12 schools for improving their STEM education.

The partnership will provide:

- staff support from Carnegie Science Center throughout the pathway implementation to help guide the process, connect regional resources, assist with the sharing of best practices and provide professional development opportunities.
- online technical tools for the Carnegie STEM Excellence Pathway.
- an onsite Science on the Road outreach program for students.
- the opportunity to apply for a \$3,000 mini-grant to support improvement efforts based on priorities.

Other members in the cohort consist of Allegheny Valley, Avonworth, Baldwin-Whitehall, Bethel Park, Elizabeth Forward, Montour, Plum Borough and Shaler Area school districts, as well as the A.W. Beattie Career Center.



Student-led play provides mystery and intrigue

West Allegheny's fall play, "Lizzie Borden of Fall River," showcased the creative talents of several high school students and teachers during three October performances. The mystery drama told the story of Lizzie Borden of Fall River, Massachusetts, whose high profile case divided public opinion in ways no murder trial to that point in U.S.



Cast members of the fall play "Lizzie Borden of Fall River" were: (front) Sydney Campbell, Lucia Bruschi and Victoria Sadauskas; (middle) Julianne Buterbaugh, Reilly Zimmerman and Taylor Schmac; (back) Gabriella Hatch, Janghyen Cho, Nick Morrison, Catherine Wheatley, Caleb Bartholow, Morghann Simon and Max Bruce-Rudge.

history had ever done. Leads Reilly Zimmerman and Gabriella Hatch, along with an 11-member cast, kept the audience in suspense right up to the final scene.

Taylor Schmac and Morghann Simon served as student directors under Michael Shaffer, faculty director.

NMSI partnership fuels AP engagement

As the first nine weeks of this school year concluded, District and high school administrators looked to assess the early impact of the National Math and Science Initiative partnership on Advanced Placement enrollment, students and classroom instruction. As announced in the spring, the partnership included a \$730,000 three-year grant designed to increase the number of students taking and passing AP math, science and English exams, thereby increasing the number of career and college ready students graduating from West Allegheny. To achieve this goal, the NMSI partnership provides intensive content training to AP teachers and continuous support to AP students.

"The impact of the partnership has proven to be significant for both teachers and students," stated Kevin McKiernan, high school academic principal. "The classroom dialog has been rich and there has been a push from teachers to encourage productive struggling."

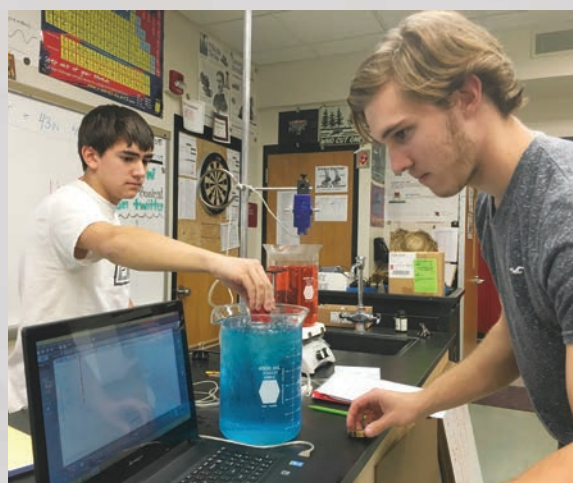
With AP course enrollment at 430 for the 2015-16 school year, up from 274 in 2014-15, students accessing and engaging in these preparatory courses has jumped by nearly 57 percent. To support these students, West Allegheny AP teachers have already benefitted from rigorous training sessions, access to additional classroom materials, equipment and supplies, mentor collaboration, and enhanced networking opportunities provided through the NMSI grant. Teachers will

also continue to receive ongoing professional development. Student support has been provided through increased engagement and rigorous instruction in class, additional tutoring availability and Student Saturday Sessions, which provide an opportunity for students from cohort schools to come together for extensive, subject-specific instruction.

"The NMSI training has given me the resolve to challenge my students to think at a much deeper level," said Blaise Cackovic, AP physics teacher. "Rote memorization and simple recall of facts is the most basic cognitive manifestation of learning. As such, I am more keen about the quality and depth of student assignments, assessments (tests and exams), and classroom tasks (labs) in terms of the level of thinking each requires from students. The renewed focus on preparing students for college-level academics has raised expectations for our students to be better thinkers and more responsible learners. I believe, even when the

students themselves sometimes don't, that students will grow intellectually and meet new expectations when confronted with rigorous academic challenges."

Through the NMSI grant, students enrolled in AP courses will take the culminating AP exams in the spring when the impact of the partnership will be further defined.



Students in Mr. Cackovic's AP Physics 2 class are studying how thermal energy can be converted into mechanical forms of energy. Students Christopher Giura (left) and Colin Cain (right) cycle a simple heat engine by extracting heat energy from a hot water bath. Using technology and electronic measuring devices, students are able to plot a PV diagram of the thermodynamic processes of a simple heat engine.

New Gold Card Club members welcomed!

The West Allegheny School District continues to welcome new members into its Gold Card Club. Residents who are at least age 60 and live in the District may pick up a gold card at the District office, located at Wilson Elementary School, 100 Bruno Lane, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. through 3:30 p.m. A driver's license or other proof of age and residence is required.

The Gold Card entitles members to attend all school district-sponsored activities for which there is normally a charge. These events include a variety of concerts, plays, science fairs, art shows and regular season athletic activities. Special events, including a holiday breakfast and a luncheon in conjunction with the spring musical production, are also included in member benefits. Membership does not, however, provide free admission to fundraising events or other activities sponsored by booster organizations.

Visit the West Allegheny School District website at www.westasd.org for the District calendar and a wide variety of both school and community information.

Students selected for Honors Choir Festival

Junior Kaylie Wallace and freshman Carly Thompson were selected to represent West Allegheny High School at the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association District 1 Honors Choir Festival. The festival was held at Seton Hill University on October 30 and 31. Teacher Meagan Bruno prepared the students for the festival.



Carly Thompson and Kaylie Wallace represent West Allegheny at the PMEA Honors Choir Festival in October.



Student talent showcased at Mucho Macho Music Festival



Six students represented West Allegheny at the Mucho Macho Music Festival on November 3 at McKeesport Area High School. They performed under the direction of guest conductor Dr. Samuel Barbara from Westminster College. The event is a song festival for young men in grades 6-9 with changing voices and is sponsored by the southwest region of the American Choral Directors Association.

West Allegheny was represented by Michael McGivern, Nathan Mavrich, Nathan Presutti, Andrew Martin, Earlin Bracken and Dylan Mersing at the Mucho Macho Music Festival.

SRO position changes guard

After serving 17 years as the District's school resource officer, 26 years as a DARE instructor and 32 years as a North Fayette police officer, Sgt. John Bates announced he would retire in December.

Throughout his long career, Bates developed the resource officer position into a valued role that set an example for other districts. He also had the opportunity to watch generations of students enter kindergarten and progress through grades, including his own children.

"I will truly miss the daily interactions with the community, teachers and especially the students," said Bates. "It is amazing what you can learn from them."

Filling the role of resource officer is Sgt. Michael Hayes. A lifelong resident of North Fayette Township, 20-year veteran of the North Fayette Police Department and a graduate of West Allegheny, Hayes has been very involved in the community and the District. Hayes will have an active presence within the District on a full-time basis. He will also continue to teach DARE classes and plans to introduce new classes such as Survival 101, a safe driving/distracted driving class.

"I am looking forward to interacting with the students and staff throughout all the schools and grade levels and seeing the students' progress through the years," said Hayes.



School resource officer Sgt. John Bates (right) retired at the end of December. Sgt. Michael Hayes (left) has since assumed the role. Bates retired after 17 years.

Substitutes Needed

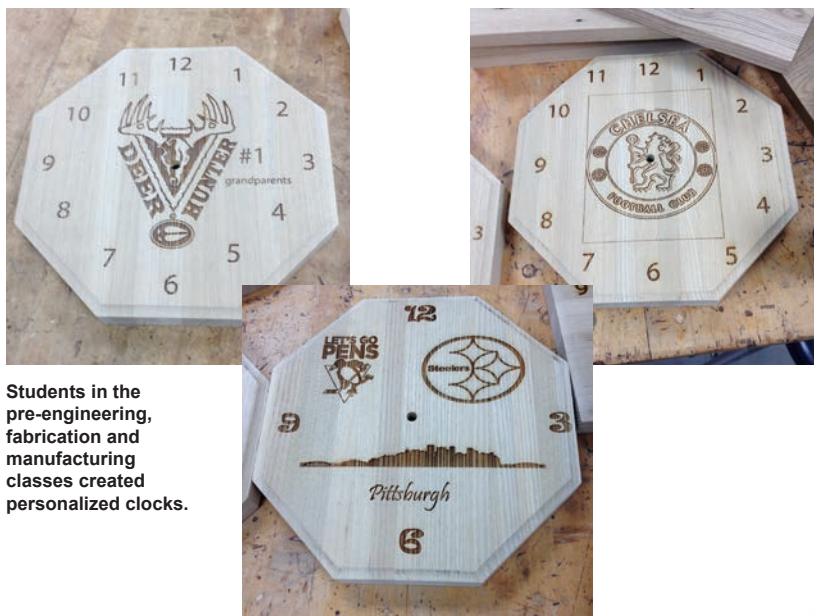
The District is in need of substitutes for the following positions: teachers and nurses; support staff positions, including custodians, instructional paraprofessionals, clerical workers, and cafeteria workers.

To apply as a substitute teacher or nurse, please visit the District website at www.westasd.org. Select: Employment – Professional Openings. To apply as a substitute for a support staff position, please visit the district website and select: Employment – Support Openings.

Middle school STEAM Focus

As the middle school continues to advance its STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Medicine and Mathematics) focus, newly designed course offerings are providing foundations that prepare students to be high school ready and on track for college and/or a 21st century career. These courses teach students to innovate, create, design, collaborate and problem solve.

In Bob Mayo's pre-engineering, fabrication and manufacturing classes, students utilized their Adobe Photoshop skills and a new laser engraver to design and construct personalized, working clocks. This course is the first step toward transforming the former technology education class into a 21st century STEAM class. Projects will continue to grow in complexity as students incorporate techniques being taught in the new innovations and design courses.



Students in the pre-engineering, fabrication and manufacturing classes created personalized clocks.

McKee goes all out for Kidstruction

As their school is in the midst of major renovations, McKee teachers, staff and principal Tom Orr went all out for Halloween this year and posed as construction workers. The Kidstruction theme included specially designed t-shirts, hard hats and work boots. Kidstruction has been promoted throughout the school and has made the transition fun and student-focused.

McKee teachers, staff and principal Tom Orr show off their Kidstruction t-shirts in the newly completed library.



Wilson Promotes drug free message during Red Ribbon Week



Wilson Elementary students and staff wore red on October 26 to kick off Red Ribbon Week. The initiative encourages students to make good lifestyle choices, with this year's theme being Respect Yourself - Live Drug Free.

Event coordinator and guidance counselor Kathy Taylor worked to raise student awareness with a variety of themes promoting anti-drug messages. They were:

- Red-y to be Drug Free - Red Clothing Day
- Sock it to Drugs - Crazy Sock Day
- Follow Your Dreams, Don't Do Drugs - Pajama Day
- I Have the Power to be Drug Free - Super Hero Day
- Smarties Choose to be Drug Free - Students received Smarties candies as an early Halloween treat

Students Jackson Cilli, Aubrey Schwarz, Cali Fiscus and Cody Floyd won the award for best red attire.

Veterans honored at Donaldson celebration

Fifth grade students at Donaldson Elementary School honored veterans with a memorable celebration November 11. In addition to digital presentations, students shared research on U.S. symbols and monuments. They also performed patriotic music selections.

To culminate the educational exercise, veterans and their families were invited to a touching tribute during which students presented their research and messages. Students honored each military member as they were introduced with a meaningful and memorable history of their service. As the honorees were introduced, they were presented with a gift of appreciation.

The event was coordinated by Leah Vestal, Jaime Mahramas, Darren Humbert, Debbie Hamilton, Tiffany Mangan, Elise Sunseri and Lyndy Stout.

LEFT: Donaldson fifth grade students celebrate Veterans Day with patriotic songs. BELOW: Veteran Steve Mack shows appreciation for his grandson Alex's tribute and gift.



District supports high school teacher

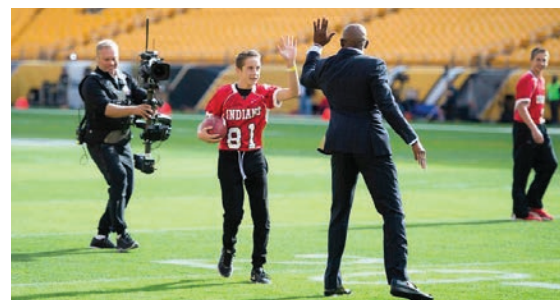


High school staff and students don their Battle with Boustead t-shirts.

In a true display of West Allegheny spirit, staff and students came together to support high school science teacher Diane Boustead, who is battling cancer. "Battle with Boustead" was the theme of the football team's October 30 home game against Central Valley. Funds raised from donations and t-shirt sales will benefit ovarian cancer research.

Steelers spotlight middle school football team

The middle school football team was invited to participate in a special demonstration that aired during the CBS/NFL Thursday Night Football game on October 1, when the Steelers hosted the Baltimore Ravens at Heinz Field. The WA team assisted CBS sports analysts Bill Cowher and Deion Sanders, who described the tendencies of the Steelers and Ravens in certain football situations. Students spent two hours at Heinz Field helping with on-field demonstrations and visiting the WPIAL Wall of Champions, where they saw all seven years' worth of West Allegheny football championships listed.



TOP: The middle school football team displays their Terrible Towels during a tour of Heinz Field.

ABOVE: Players assist with on-field demonstrations.

LEFT: Student Jonathon Rink receives a high-five from Deion Sanders.

Senior raises nearly \$5,000 for Wounded Warrior Project

For her senior project this fall, Abby McBain chose to help the Wounded Warrior Project. In the process, she raised nearly \$5,000 for the organization, which assists those who have bravely served their country in the U.S. Armed Forces. In addition to inviting community and corporate partners to become sponsors, McBain also sold t-shirts and sweatshirts that were worn at the October 23 home football game against Moon Area High School.



Fall sports spotlight

As the fall sports season winds down, West Allegheny witnessed both individuals and teams move on to post-season play.

In boys golf, West Allegheny again captured the 2015 MAC golf championships by claiming a victory at Fox Run Golf Course. Sean Weber, Chasen Claus and Jake Gazella won the second team title for the Indians program. All three qualified individually for the boys WPIAL golf finals, which was held at Southpointe Golf Club.

As a school first, West Allegheny took third place in the MAC girls golf championships at Black Hawk Golf Course. Mya Konieczny, Paige Colicchie and Haley Kozel comprised the team. This is the first time WA had girls compete as a full team for the event. Paige Colicchie went on to the WPIAL girls individual golf finals.

The Indians football team assembled a 7-1 conference record and a 7-2 overall record this season. WA also shared a conference title with rival Central Valley. Ranked first for most of the season in the WPIAL, and as high as third in the state, the Indians' season ended with a loss to Thomas Jefferson in the WPIAL AAA quarterfinals.



Golfers who advanced to post-season play for the boys were (l to r) Chasen Claus, Jake Gazella and Sean Weber, and for the girls they were Mya Konieczny, Paige Colicchie and Haley Kozel.



WA receives WPIAL Sportsmanship Award

The WPIAL Sportsmanship Committee selected West Allegheny School District as a recipient of its 2014-15 sportsmanship award. Recipient schools were recognized for promoting and demonstrating elements of good sportsmanship during the fall, winter and spring sports seasons. West Allegheny representatives were honored at the WPIAL Sportsmanship Summit at the Senator John Heinz History Center on November 12.

WA joined other recognized high schools, including Peters Township, Seneca Valley, South Park and South Fayette.

Student athletes visited the Senator John Heinz History Center for the WPIAL Summit on Sportsmanship and received the WPIAL Sportsmanship Award for the 2014-15 athletic year. Students pictured are Nick Ross, Justin Baker, Alex Pichi, Abby McBain, Hanna Charlton and Casey Ujevich.



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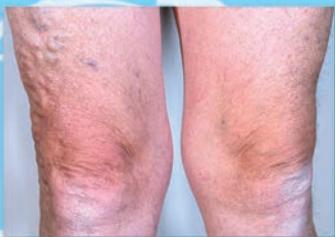
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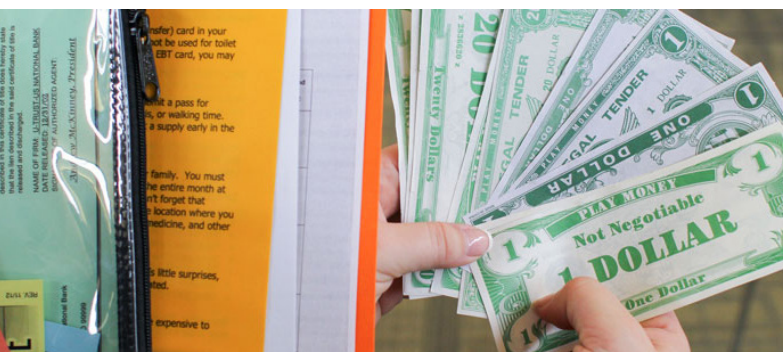
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Pittsburgh Technical Institute Poverty simulation teaches life lessons



Ninety-five Pittsburgh Technical Institute students from the PTI School of Nursing and the PTI School of Criminal Justice got a taste of reality at a poverty simulation exercise at the school Oct. 22. The event was sponsored by the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank and led by 24 PTI faculty and staff.

Students were given roles to play that simulated real-life challenges faced by many people in the region every day. Some of those challenges included finding work with no means of transportation, obtaining healthcare with no money to pay for it, and navigating a maze of services.

"Our objective is to sensitize these students [to] the challenges that some people are faced with every day," explained Cynthia Moore of the Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank. "The future nurses here will work with people who can't pay for healthcare. Criminal Justice students will deal with people [in] severe poverty. My hope is that they will learn to be flexible and better understand the problems these people face."

Melissa Gnoth and Becky Solt played shady operators who provide short-term loans, cash checks and sell tickets.

"We are here to teach the participants that all may not be what it seems," said Gnoth with a furtive smile. "If you come here, you need to be aware, count your money, and pay attention to interest rates in the loans. This could be a bad place to visit."

Students ran from job, to school, to a service center. Leetha

Bartolovich, a nursing student, played a teenage boy who was broke, out of work and with a pregnant girlfriend.

"This is very eye opening," Leetha explained. "I may run into these situations I am role playing today in my nursing career."

In response to the question, "How would you deal with the type of person she is playing?" Leetha said, "I guess I would help this person find some social services, get him some food and a bus pass. This event certainly makes you understand that you take for granted what you have."

The event covered a number of weeks in the life of someone in need. Students dealt with many problems, tried to navigate the system and then gathered for a final briefing of lessons learned.

Michael Lofton of the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, who helped run the event, said, "After today, I hope the participants have some empathy in their nursing and criminal justice careers. Many people they will work with are a product of their environment and that is hard for someone who has had it pretty good to understand."



Pittsburgh Technical Institute students confront common problems facing impoverished families during a role-playing exercise. Using a limited amount of money, they had to decide between paying for such things as utility bills, rent, health insurance, transportation, day care, groceries, clothing and medicine. Practical nursing student Desire Petties (pictured above) navigates social services available to impoverished families as part of the exercise. Leetha Bartolovich (pictured below), a student in the PTI School of Nursing, role plays as a teenage boy looking for a job and help for his pregnant girlfriend during the exercise.





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Efforts to preserve area farms are protecting food sources, green spaces and local heritage

Story by Carolyn Morrison

Judge Anthony Saveikis is pictured here on the Antel Farm in North Fayette Township. Saveikis is a board member with the Allegheny Farmland Preservation Program, which is working to preserve area farms. PHOTO BY SUE WALLS

When most people think of Allegheny County, urban and suburban settings come to mind; along with long-established commercial and industrial enterprises. Sprawling farmlands of food crops and livestock are often viewed as the forgotten elements of a by-gone era, and yet they have carried on their family traditions throughout the county for many generations, including right here in the West Allegheny community. The Allegheny Farmland Preservation Program is designed to help ensure that this way of life continues.

“A lot of people don’t realize that agriculture is the largest industry in Pennsylvania, and a lot of people don’t realize that there are still a lot of active farms in Allegheny County,” says Tom Headley, chairman of the Allegheny Farmland Preservation Program. “People think of Allegheny County as primarily a bedroom community that’s fully developed, but there are patches where the farms still remain in operation.”

Across Pennsylvania, there are many organizations just like the AFPP. It and other countywide organizations of its type are funded by the state’s Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. The program helps those groups purchase land development rights,

thereby preserving farms or greenspace over the long term. Before easements can be purchased, however, an Agricultural Security Area must be established in the municipality or township.

ASAs are established in cooperation with property owners and township officials, and must be comprised of at least 250 collective acres of viable farmland. North Fayette established its ASA in 2013, while Findlay followed suit and formed their own ASA in 2014. ASAs promote a sense of community and shared purpose among farmers, while protecting them from local ordinances that may restrict their normal operations.

According to Laura Ludwig, North Fayette community development director, North Fayette’s ASA has grown from an initial 800 acres to over 1,330. She says that while much of the ASA is centered in the Seabright, North Branch and Oakdale Road corridor, 24 individual parcels representing 11 property owners are scattered throughout the township. Ludwig stresses that after the township’s rapid retail and housing boom of the 1990s and early 2000s, recovering a balance of development options throughout the township is critical for sustainable economic growth.

“Farming has a history, a purpose and a meaning here, and that’s

very important for us to preserve,” Ludwig says. “We don’t want to eat up all of our farmlands and all of our greenspace and all of our open space; we want to manage and grow sustainably and efficiently.”

She adds that many more properties within the township meet the requirements to enter the ASA, and hopes that at least one additional property per year will agree to join.

North Fayette has been home to the Scott Farm for over 200 years. The farm is owned by John Scott and his brothers Jeff and Warren. John says the “well-drained, fertile limestone soil” of the township has historically been very good for growing forage crops and pasture, which are vital for sustaining livestock.

After John was injured last year, his sons, Bill and John Jr., took on much of the farm work, including caring for their 75 milk cows and 75 young heifers. The milk they produce is marketed and sold to processors in Pittsburgh. John was recently told by a 94-year-old family friend that there were over 40 dairy farms in North Fayette Township at one time. Now, the Scott family dairy is not only the last remaining dairy farm in the township, but also the sole dairy farm in all of Allegheny County.

As a former official with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, John was well aware of the ASA and easement programs, and helped to organize and encourage his neighbors to petition the township to form their own ASA. For now, the Scott family is content to be part of the ASA and has not applied for the preservation easement. John says his family will continue to steward and farm the land despite continuing area development.

“My kids seem pretty dedicated to it, and that’s what it takes, a generation that wants to do it,” he says. “Preserving farmland isn’t worth anything if you can’t preserve the farmers also. It’s long hours and low pay, but that’s part of the game.”

Allegheny County Farmland

RIGHT: The Janoski Farm is one of a number in the county applying for a program that would protect it forever. **PHOTO BY DOUG HUGHEY;** **CENTER:** The Scott Farm is pictured here in 1908 when it was known as the G.A. McCandless Sunny Brook Farm. **PHOTO SUBMITTED;** **BOTTOM LEFT:** Allegheny County Farmland Preservation Program board members Judge Anthony Saveikis, Tom Headley and Bill Sray are working to protect area farms. **PHOTO BY DOUG HUGHEY;** **BOTTOM RIGHT:** This barn on the Scott Farm is one of a number of the farm’s original structures that is still standing. **PHOTO BY SARAH HUGHEY**



by its agricultural and development potential. After a real estate appraisal and approval, the farmer is paid a portion of the difference between the current agricultural value and the potential development value of the land. In exchange, the eased out farm must remain in agricultural production. For many farmers who enter the program, that’s business as usual.

Saveikis says that funds for the program do not come from property or income taxes, but rather from a small portion of tobacco and real estate transfer taxes at the state level. The program seeks to invest funds in farms that will benefit from re-investing that payout to better



Preservation Program board member Judge Anthony Saveikis of North Fayette describes himself as a local food aficionado. He says that ASAs are a good first step for others who want to continue to be able to purchase local food. “The goal is to preserve area farms and to allow them to continue where

their farming operation.

Saveikis emphasizes that the preservation easement is “forever.”

“Even if future generations decide they do not want to farm, the property will be sold to someone who will,” he says. “You can’t buy yourself out of that restriction, no matter how valuable the land becomes to development.”

Jerry Antel’s farm is the only member of an ASA in North Fayette or Findlay to have been accepted into the preservation easement program thus far. He raises 17 head of Black Angus



people have the availability of local agricultural products and the development pressure is taken away,” he says.

Saveikis says that any property owner within an ASA can take the next step to apply for the state’s easement purchase program.

After a farm owner applies for the program, the board’s next step is to perform an assessment on the property, which is determined



cattle on his 161-acre parcel. He also grows and sells straw, hay, feed corn and grain. The farm has been in the family for four generations.

"My great-grandad bought this farm in 1921, and then it moved to my grandad in 1922, then my dad took over in 1969, and then I took over in 2003," he says. "My nephew Shawn helps me with field chores and taking care of the animals. I'm probably going to be turning it over to Shawn whenever I'm done with it."

Antel says the farm does not pay for itself. In addition to laboring on the farm, he has a full-time job at a chemical plant in Neville Island.

Despite all of the hard work involved, he says he has never considered selling the farm.

"Nope," he scoffs at the question. "It's staying in the family."

From the initiation of the ASA to the permanent preservation of his farm, Antel says the process took almost six years but was worth the wait.

"I think it's very important to keep farmland open in all the communities," he says. "You can only build so much, it gets so built up and all of the sudden you've lost all the farmland and you can never get it back."

Since the preservation of its first farm in 2002, the Allegheny Farmland Preservation Program has protected 30 farms and 3,200 acres in Allegheny County, according to Headley.

Findlay Township is home to an ASA of 520 acres, including about nine different properties and five property owners, according to township manager and planning administrator Chris Caruso. The majority of the parcels are found in the Clinton area, including a farming family legend and household name, Janoski's Farm.

Michael is the son of Sonny Janoski, the farm's beloved and devoted patriarch who passed away in June. Now he, along with his wife, Patricia, and mother, JoAnn, are responsible for the farm's operation. He says that Sonny farmed with his father and brother in the late 1950s on the Janoski's original farm in Mt. Lebanon. Area development there led to the family seeking out its current 70 acres in Findlay Township, along with another 100 acres in Beaver County. Mike has no doubt that the experience of being "shut out" affected his father and helped fuel his inspiration to preserve the farm.

Mike says that he and his father had been working through the preservation easement process for two or three years by the time Sonny passed away.

"My dad pretty much gave me the will to go do it," he says. "He was happy that it was getting done."

Construction of housing developments next to the farm on Moody Road has accelerated recently on land which Mike says the Janoski family used to lease and grow sweet corn. Farms are ranked by a point system when they apply for easement. Points are determined by many factors, including vulnerability to development pressure.

"We're probably about halfway through [the application process]," Mike says. "We were told our point system scored very high, so we were moved to the top of the list."

The easement will preserve the Findlay Township portion of their property. The appeal to preserve their 100 acres in Beaver County would be a separate application



TOP: This panoramic view shows a good section of the Scott Farm. **PHOTO BY SARAH HUGHEY;** **ABOVE:** An orchard overlooks one of several ponds on the Janoski Farm. **PHOTO BY DOUG HUGHEY;** **LEFT:** Janoski brothers Francis (Sonny) and Mike (Junior) are pictured here. Sonny's son Mike now operates the Janoski Farm in Clinton. **PHOTO SUBMITTED**



process.

"Agriculture was an essential business here in the township," Caruso says. "It's part of our heritage, and it's part of the countryside we want to preserve here, too. Farms are very integral to providing for people here in western

Pennsylvania and we want to keep it that way."

As Mike takes over his father's legacy, he, too, is reassured that the farm will live on between his two sons and two nephews. They take equal pride in their livelihood. Mike wants to make sure that his father's passion and the "beautiful farm we've built up over the years" grows food for the region in perpetuity.

"Everything's the same," he says. "We're going to do everything exactly the same as [Sonny] did. My dad went through all the hard times of building this place and figuring out where you could make money and couldn't make money. He did all the hard work, and now we've got to just keep it going." •

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Ongoing Christmas Light-Up Celebration, through Jan. 3, Clinton Park, 5-10 p.m. nightly, one-mile drive-through, enjoy lighted displays celebrating the Christmas spirit, supports community organizations, (724) 899-3602.

Greater Pittsburgh Football Officials Association Seeking New Officials, GPOFA has officials working at the youth, scholastic, college and semi-pro levels, new applicants learn the rules and mechanics associated with serving as an official so as to assist them in obtaining PIAA certification, certified officials not already affiliated with another chapter are encouraged to join, (412) 398-6545.

Western PA Kidney Support Group, second Sunday monthly except July and August, 2:30-4:30 p.m., King's Restaurant, Imperial, (724) 796-1603.

No Veteran Dies Alone, volunteers needed for program providing companionship and assistance to veterans entering the final stages of life, Deborah Goral, deborah.goral@va.gov.

Support Groups

Brain Injury and Stroke Support Group, third Wednesdays, noon-1:15 p.m., HealthSouth Sewickley, third floor boardroom, call to confirm meetings on holidays, Michelle McCann, (412) 749-2388.

Amputee Support Group, third Mondays, 3 p.m., HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Sewickley, library, call to confirm meetings on holidays, (412) 749-2255.

Winter clothing donations being sought by the Salvation Army Chartiers Valley Service Center on 225 West Main St. in Carnegie; drop off winter coats, hats, gloves, scarves, boots and new socks 10 a.m.-3 p.m. weekdays, for pickup: jamilhollan@gmail.com, (724) 413-0604.

Networking Groups

Greater Pittsburgh Business Connection, Wednesdays, 7:15 a.m., Eat'n Park on Rt. 60, find new leads and make more sales, for over 20 years the GPBC has been a dedicated group of business professionals committed to expanding their business through professional networking, run and governed by members for members, supports each member by furnishing appropriate business referrals, (412) 364-6446 x 302, www.gpbc-pgh.org.

Toastmasters International City of Bridges, odd Thursdays, 12-1 p.m., Robinson Township Eat'n Park on Rt. 60, world leader in communication and leadership development, become a more confident speaker and leader, guests welcome, www.d13tm.com.

Women's Business Network, Robinson Township Area Chapter, meets first and third Tuesdays of each month at 7:30 a.m. at Panera Bread meeting room in North Fayette, advances the presence of aspiring and successful businesswomen by providing personal and professional resources, meeting agendas include self marketing, business presentation by an individual member, table topic discussion and networking, Barb Dull, (412) 608-3616.

Jacob Ferree Chapter DAR Events

Reservations can be made by contacting Bonnie Kappert at (412) 771-7526 or at kkandcompany@msn.com.

Conservation

Luncheon, Feb. 6, 11 a.m., Donna Lutz will talk about her farm and dairy farming in Pennsylvania, \$21, register by Feb. 2.

American History Tea, March 5, Montour Heights Country Club; presentation of the DAR Good Citizen Awards, the American History Awards and the Junior American Citizen Awards; 1 p.m., \$10.

Findlay Township Events

For more information or to register for an event, contact Darlene Larson at (724) 695-0500 or dlaron@findlaytwp.org, unless otherwise noted. Activities take place at the Findlay Township Activity Center unless otherwise noted.

Time for Toddlers

Mondays: Dec. 14, Jan. 11, 25; Tuesdays: Dec. 15, Jan. 12, 26, 10:15-11:15 a.m., hour of movement, music, activities and snack, great opportunity to meet other families and toddlers, adult must stay with child, registration required, \$3 per session, follows WA schedule for inclement weather.

Kids' Cooking, Jan. 14, 4-5:15 p.m., popular hands-on class teaches participants to prepare easy and delicious seasonal recipes that will satisfy those afterschool hunger pangs, \$8 per class, register at least two days prior, space limited, with Darlene Howell.

North Fayette Parks and Recreation

For more information or to register for a program, contact Darlene Hildebrand at (724) 307-3725 or at dhildebrand@north-fayette.com, unless otherwise noted.

Future Stars

Basketball, ages 4-6, Saturdays, Feb. 13-March 26, \$25, \$35 non-residents.

Elementary Floor

Hockey, coed, first-fifth grade, Jan. 3-March 27, \$45.

Future Stars Floor

Hockey, ages 4-6, floor hockey program helps develop skills, Feb. 13-March 26, \$25, \$35 non-residents, helmets required.

Water Aerobics, Donaldson Elementary School pool, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5-6 p.m., \$2 per class, free with Medical Insurance Card.

Water Walking, Donaldson Elementary pool, Monday-Thursday, 6-8 p.m., \$2 per person.

PIYO, Tuesdays, 6-7 p.m., \$5 per class.

Cize, Wednesdays, 6-7 p.m., \$5 per class.

Open Gym, stay out of the cold and take a morning walk, weekdays, 7:30-9 a.m.

Afterschool Programs

ages 6-14, 3:30-5:30 p.m., Mondays-Wednesdays: afterschool program; Thursdays: cooking (fall), crafts (winter), science (spring); Fridays: soccer (fall); basketball (winter); dodgeball (spring); transportation provided from school to community center when school is in session.



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Bar Bingo, for members and guests, **first and third Thursdays in November and December, second and fourth Thursdays otherwise**, early bird games start **6:30 p.m.**, regular games **7 p.m.**, play until **9 p.m.**, kitchen open.

Singing By Kathy, Dec. 11, enjoy the wonderful singing of Kathy Paterniti, **8-10 p.m.**

Children's Christmas Party, Dec. 12, Imperial Room, **1-3 p.m.**, food, games, music, visit from Santa.

Adult Christmas Party, Dec. 19, food, prizes, entertainment, members only.

New Year's Eve Party, Imperial Room, **8 p.m.-1 a.m.**, \$35, purchase tickets in clubroom during business hours, entertainment by the George Suhon Duo, extensive buffet starting at **8 p.m.**, party favors and pork and sauerkraut at midnight, adults-only party, a block of rooms has been secured at the Wyndham Hotel for all party-goers, ask for reservation details when purchasing party tickets.

Oakdale events

Trinity Jazz Orchestra (TMG Big Band) Christmas Concert, Dec. 14, **7 p.m.**, free concert for the community, The Rock in Oakdale.

Oakdale American Legion Post 171 New Year's Eve Gala, Dec. 31, **8:30 p.m.-1 a.m.**, over 21 only, Oakdale Community Center, buffet, DJ, BYOB, mixers provided, beer while it lasts, dinner at **9:30 p.m.**, \$25 per person, reservations required, Bob Mizwa (412) 693-9242, checks payable to: American Legion Post 171 and mail to Bob at: 219 Winslow Dr, Oakdale PA, 15071, full refunds for cancellations honored until **Dec. 18**.

West Hills Symphonic Band

Concerts take place at West Allegheny High School unless otherwise noted.
Dec. 13, 3 p.m., "Yule LOVE it!"
Feb. 28, 2016, 3 p.m., "The WHSB's Greatest Hits"
May 1, 2016, 3 p.m., "Spring Luster"
March 31, 2016, 8 p.m., Soldiers and Sailors Hall in Oakland, Association of Concert Bands Convention

Heritage Public Library

Located at: 52 Fourth St. in McDonald. To register for events, stop by the library or call: (724) 926-8400 heritagelibrary@comcast.net www.washlibs.org/heritage

Fit Club Exercise Group, Mondays, no class 12/14, adults, **7-8 p.m.**, \$2 per session per person.

Holiday Craft Project, Dec. 22, **10:30 a.m.-noon**, adults and children, with artist Victoria Scoumis, registration required, \$10-\$15 per pair depending on craft (painting on wood).

Meet the Author, Janet Roberts, Dec. 26, **1-2 p.m.**, Roberts discusses her new book "The Narrow Gate," Roberts lived in McDonald and Erie, her debut novel is set in southwestern Pennsylvania, coffee and light refreshments, registration required.

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The Mission of the Christmas Light Up Celebration

Our mission is to generate unity within our community by celebrating the Christmas Spirit together and to bring positive attention to our township from those outside its borders.

It is also our ambition to continue a healthy community tradition of raising spiritual support for the worthwhile organizations within our area that help those who are in physical, emotional, spiritual, and financial need and to help other organizations, individuals, and groups who need such support.

Contact Persons:

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Community Connections

MUNICIPALITIES

Findlay Township
 1271 Route 30, Clinton, PA 15026
 (724) 695-0500, www.findlay.pa.us
North Fayette Township
 400 North Branch Road, Oakdale, PA 15071
 (412) 788-4888, www.north-fayette.com
Oakdale Borough
 6115 Noblestown Road, Oakdale, PA 15071
 (724) 693-9740, www.oakdaleborough.com
McDonald Borough
 151 School Street, McDonald, PA 15057
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PUBLIC & PRIVATE

SCHOOLS K-12

West Allegheny School District
 600 Donaldson Road, Oakdale, PA 15071
 (724) 695-3422, www.westasd.org
Parkway West Career & Technology Center
 7101 Steubenville Pike, Oakdale, PA 15071
 (412) 923-1772, www.parkwaywest.org

This list includes only those public and private schools located within the municipalities served by the West Allegheny Edition of Allegheny West Magazine

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Al-Anon, West A area, (412) 683-4279
American Legion Post 171 Oakdale, (724) 693-8759
American Legion Post 335 Imperial, (724) 695-0491
Boy Scouts-Grtr. Pgh. Council-Frontier, (412) 325-7971 or 7995
Faith in Action, (724) 921-0027
Findlay Athletic Assn., (412) 874-9348
Findlay Garden Club, (724) 350-9837
Girl Scouts WPA, (724) 774-3553
Heritage Public Library-McDonald, (724) 926-8400
Kiwanis Club of the Pittsburgh Airport Area, PAAKiwanis@gmail.com
Lions Club Imperial, (724) 513-7616
Masonic Lodge #669, (724) 693-8274
McDonald Area Redevelop. Assn., (724) 926-4617
Meals on Wheels-W.A., (412) 279-5670
Montour Run Watershed Assn., www.mrwa.info
Montour Trail Council, (412) 257-3011
Montour Valley Grange, (724) 695-0481
Mothers of Preschoolers-Crossroads, (412) 494-9999
Mothers of Preschoolers-Hebron, (724) 899-2276
North Fayette Athletic Assn., (412) 580-0655
North Fayette Garden Club, (724) 693-8413
Oakdale Youth League, (724) 693-8951
Rotary - Parkway West, (412) 787-5280

Senior Citizen Groups:
- Findlay Township, (724) 695-0500
- North Fayette Township, (724) 693-3118
- St. Columbille, (724) 695-7325
SNPJ Lodge 106, (724) 695-1411
Sturgeon Athletic Association, (724) 926-2150
The ROCK Community Center, (724) 693-2777
VFW Ladies Auxilliary, (412) 788-4674
VFW Post #7070 Oakdale, (412) 427-9195
VFW Post #7714 Imperial, (724) 695-8866
West Allegheny Food Pantry & Thrift Shop, (724) 695-1305
West Allegheny Foundation, inquiries@wafoundation.org
West Allegheny Friends to Enhance the Library (WAFEL), (724) 695-8150
West Allegheny Ministerium, (724) 693-8950
West Allegheny Booster & PTA Groups, www.westasd.org
Western Allegheny Community Library, (724) 695-8150
West Allegheny Aqua Club, (412) 608-4583
West Allegheny Inline Hockey, (412) 334-2640
West Allegheny Youth Assn., www.westayouth.net
West Allegheny Youth Soccer Assn., (724) 693-8073
West Allegheny Youth Wrestling, (724) 695-8132

CHURCHES

Church of The Living Christ
 220 West Allegheny Road, Imperial, PA 15126
 (724) 695-7188, www.cotlc.com
Church of the Nazarene
 (moved to Florence) 1080 Steubenville Pike, Burgettstown, PA 15021
 (724) 947-9223, www.nazarene.org
Clinton UP Church
 25 Wilson Road, Clinton, PA 15026
 (724) 695-7993
Clinton Wesleyan Church
 1022 Clinton Road, Clinton, PA 15026
 (724) 695-7076
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 P. O. Box 15533, Pittsburgh, PA 15244
 (724) 263-7147, www.covenantfamily.cc
 (meets at Courtyard Pgh. Airport)
Cross Connections Alliance Church
 201 Valley Street, McDonald, PA 15057
 (724) 926-2453, www.crossconnectionsac.org
Crossroads Methodist Church
 1000 Crossroads Drive, Oakdale, PA 15071
 (412) 494-9999, www.crossroadsumc.org
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 141 N. McDonald Street, McDonald, PA 15057
 (724) 926-4216
Hebron Presbyterian Church
 1767 Route 30, Clinton, PA 15026
 (725) 899-2276
Independent Bible Presbyterian Church
 112 Dempe Street, McDonald, PA 15057
 (724) 926-3355
Montours Presbyterian Church
 3151 Montour Church Road, Oakdale, PA 15071,
 (412) 787-1050, www.montourchurch.org
Mosaic Church
 140 Imperial Plaza Dr., Imperial, PA 15126
 (724) 695-3129, www.mosaicpgh.com

Noblestown United Methodist Church
 7313 Noblestown Road, Oakdale, PA 15071
 (724) 693-2755
Noblestown United Presbyterian Church
 7427 Noblestown Road, Oakdale, PA 15071
 (724) 693-8250
Oakdale United Presbyterian Church
 62 Hastings Avenue, Oakdale, PA 15071
 (724) 693-8950
Rivers of Living Waters Church
 7120 Steubenville Pike, Oakdale, PA 15071
 (412) 787-1888, www.rlwcc.tripod.com
Resurrection Lutheran Church
 7600 Steubenville Pike, Oakdale, PA 15071
 (412) 788-4513
St. Columbille Church
 103 Church Road, Imperial, PA 15126
 (724) 695-7325, www.saintcolumbkilleparish.org
St. Patrick's Church
 7322 Noblestown Road, Oakdale, PA 15071
 (724) 693-9260, www.saint-patrick-parish.com
The Church of Jesus Christ
 57 Moore Road, Imperial, PA 15126
 (724) 899-3935
The Bible Chapel
 @ Pittsburgh Technical Institute
 (724) 941-8990, ext. 124
www.robinson.biblechapel.org
Valley Presbyterian Church
 237 Main Street, Imperial, PA 15126
 (724) 695-0300, www.valleychurchweb.com
West Ridge Christian Community Church
 100 Gorwood Drive, Coraopolis, PA 15108
 (724) 695-7500, www.westridge.cc

News from Heritage Valley Health System

Heritage Valley Medical Group welcomes Dr. Melissa Rau

In November, Heritage Valley Medical Group welcomed Melissa Rau, MD, to the group's Heritage Valley Family Practice - Robinson practice in Robinson Township and West Allegheny Healthcare practice in Imperial. Rau joins Denise Wegrzynowicz, DO and Melissa Kashlan, MD in the Robinson practice and Todd McCaslin, MD at West Allegheny Healthcare.



Prior to joining Heritage Valley Medical Group, Rau completed her internship and residency in family medicine at UPMC St. Margaret - Family Medicine Residency Program. She attended Walsh University, where she graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor of science degree in biology. Rau received her medical degree from the Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine in Dayton, Ohio.

Rau enjoys caring for the entire family, from newborns to the elderly. She has a special interest in adolescent medicine and women's health. She is board certified by the American Board of Family Medicine and a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians, the Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians and the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals.

Rau is accepting new patients at the Heritage Valley Medical Group Family Practice Robinson, 6521 Steubenville Pike, Robinson Township, and West Allegheny Healthcare, 300 Penn Lincoln Drive, Imperial. To schedule an appointment, call (412) 749-6920 (Robinson) or (724) 773-3001 (West Allegheny).

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As a neighborhood based and community focused publication, Allegheny West Magazine encourages complimentary submission of informational school news, as well as informational (non-promotional) news from community groups, nonprofit organizations, and churches. Please submit via e-mail to: dhughey@awmagazine.com.

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All darkness cannot put out the light of the first Christmas



Members of the Reynolds' family enjoy a Christmas together. Pictured are (first row) Jazmine, Ayla, Christian, William, (second row) Becky (Reitz), Roger, Gregg and Emily.

Not one, not three, nor five, but seven children over the years have been adopted into the family of Roger and Becky Reynolds. Together, this loving and caring family has celebrated many Christmas holidays.

Ask Becky about their family Christmas, and she says, "Crazy, crazy."

In addition to their seven adopted kids, the Reynolds' also have five biological children: Jason, 37, Jeromy, 36, Joanna, 30, Roger Dale,

26, and a "surprise son," William, now 15. The couple also has 11 grandchildren, two of whom - Ayla, 9, and Jassmine, 11 - they are raising.

Twenty-eight years ago, while having her morning devotions by her window in Lexington, Becky occasionally saw a man staggering down the sidewalk. Her prayers were, "Lord, send someone along to change that man." Little did she know she was to be the answer to that prayer.

That man was Roger Reynolds. For seven years, his friends had encouraged him to call Becky. He wanted to call, but his self-doubt stopped him.

Finally, he called her, and three months later, they were married. Within a year, Roger was clean and sober. He became a father to Becky's three children and to his own first-born son, Roger Dale. By the time they were married three years, they had four kids. Roger needed to have surgery, which put him out of work. Christmas was coming. It was a hard time. Their phone rang. An anonymous caller said, "Go to the end of the road to the stop sign." They did. There were bags and bags of Christmas gifts. It became an unforgettable Christmas.

Life got better. The feeling that life was not complete for Becky and Roger led to their decision to foster children in need. "A lot of kids out there are waiting for a family; waiting," says Becky. "Kids out there want someone, need someone. You can be a mother in many ways, but you do not need to give birth to be mother."

Roger was also ready to once again fill the role of father. They began the process of gaining approval to foster children. Just two days after they did, two little girls, ages 2 and 6 months, came into their lives, but not for long. Biological parent(s) may regain custody of their fostered children. At court that day, the mom was given her children. Becky can still hear the little 2-year-old crying, with arms outstretched toward her, saying, "my mama, my mama".

That same day, two scared homeless girls were there: Anna, 10, and Hollie, 9. Anna was lying under a chair crying at the courthouse. They came from a family of 13. Their parents were denied custody. The caseworker asked, "Will you please take them

home?" Becky saw the tears and how they had begun interacting together with her daughter, Joanna. They left court together.

Two years later, time came that they were up for adoption. Eyes filled with tears, Anna told Becky, "I don't want to have to leave."

Roger asks, "How can you let go of kids you have had and loved for two years?"

The sisters became Anna and Hollie Reynolds.

Joey came at age 4 after a call in the middle of the night. They went to pick him up. Soon, Joey just would not go to bed without a hug. It took six years to adopt him.

Lucas, the younger brother of Anna and Hollie, had been living in a group home. Becky and Roger felt it might be good if he could be united with his siblings. Lucas was soon adopted.

Two years passed. Something was happening concerning Becky's health. She was sick. She even began to fear cancer. A sudden thought came. She bought a pregnancy test. Roger came home from his job as a custodian at West Allegheny School District. She showed him "the stick."

"What's that?" he asked.

Their son William was born the year 2000.

Christian is the two-day-old son. Becky got a call about a one-day-old child needing a home.

"They laid him in my lap and I lost my heart," she says. "I fell in love...I can remember begging God, begging God, at the second-month court hearing, 'please do not let them take him from me.'"

They didn't.

Christian had come to her 10 days before her mother, Marty, died. When Christian was adopted, they changed his middle name to Marty after the grandmother who cuddled him in her final days of life

Again, Becky's phone rang while shopping at WalMart.

"Can you take two children?" they asked.

It was a huge decision, but Becky knew Roger would agree. She said, "Yes."

About 9 p.m. that evening, Becky pulled up by the caseworker's car on I-376 and rescued Emily and Greg. Again, she says, "I lost my heart to two little kids."

A few days later, Greg, 5, came downstairs and sat down on the couch. Big tears were rolling down his cheeks. He questioned, "Is this a 'froster' home?" Becky answered, "Yes."

"Oh, I thought a 'froster' home was made of ice," he said.

Her heart just melted. She wrapped her arms around him.

"This is a foster home where you are gonna live," she said.

Now 18, Gregg is an auto mechanic and Emily, now 17, is an honor student; a junior at WA. She loves animals and is studying to become a veterinarian technician.

"Struggle," Becky says, "all families struggle...we have our ups and our downs, all families do."

This year, as in the past, Christmas trees will be decorated and homemade cookies will await, with gifts under the tree. Becky's passion is knitting. Another Reynolds' Christmas is coming, with most of the family all knit together, with "lotsa love."

Jason and Jeremy will walk in the door and ask, "Where are the cookies, Mom?"



BY ERMA DODD



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