



PAW PRINTS

A Newsletter for Residents of the Western Wayne School District

Winter 2008

COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAM COMING TO WESTERN WAYNE!

Beginning in March the Western Wayne School District will once again offer adult education classes taught by both Western Wayne faculty and members of the community. The topics will be many and varied including financial planning, recreation and sports, basic computing, and so much more!

Our goal is to organize the program offerings during February. During the last week of February, you will be able to pick up a program brochure anywhere you find the Western Wayne Paw Prints newsletter. You will also be able to browse a program brochure online at www.westernwayne.org. Just look for the Community Education link.

Registration forms can be found in the brochure. Simply fill out the form and send it to the address

listed and we will process it. There will be a minimal cost associated with each course; that cost will be listed alongside the course's description in the brochure. Courses will begin during the first week of April and, depending on the course, will run through May.

If you have any questions, or if you have any ideas for future courses that you may want to offer through the program, please call the Western Wayne School District's Central Office at 937-4270.

**"Go confidently in the direction
of your dreams and live the life
you've imagined."**

~ Henry David Thoreau

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CFF MOVING FORWARD

The Classrooms for the Future initiative is beginning to make a large impact on teaching and learning in the Western Wayne High School. You may recall that Western Wayne received a Classrooms for the Future grant to place both student and teacher laptop computers in many of our high school classrooms. The vision that the faculty and administration had for using those computers is now becoming a reality!

During February and March, members of the Western Wayne technology department will be busy continuing to install laptop carts, interactive white boards, and wireless access points throughout our high school. With much of the preliminary work completed during the holiday break, *continued on page 7*

WORD OF THE WEEK

Do you know what “forlorn” means? Ask students at the Lake Elementary School and they will tell you. Vocabulary is not just an important part of our day; it’s integrated throughout our day.

Teachers use Robust Vocabulary Instruction which involves directly explaining the meanings of words with student-friendly definitions along with rich, frequent, thought-provoking, and interactive follow-up activities. Vocabulary is so essential because readers use it to make sense of words in print; students must know what most of the words mean before they can understand what they are reading.

Fifth-grade teacher, Mr. Nicholas Rodio, chooses a vocabulary word to feature throughout the week. During the morning announcements, fifth-grade students define and read the word in a sentence

over the loudspeaker. All students are encouraged to use the new vocabulary word while writing and speaking, and it is continually referred to in their classrooms. Mrs. Putman posts the vocabulary words in the halls for students to read as they walk to their classes.

Vocabulary instruction also needs to continue beyond the school day. Parents and guardians can create rich verbal environments at home by using words that their children are unfamiliar with, and then encourage their children to ask what the words mean. Children should also be encouraged to notice the vocabulary words they are learning in class being used outside of school. These practices will promote vocabulary development and ultimately help children develop the kind of understanding about words that really enhances their literacy.

LITTLE ONES IN THE ART ROOM

Look into the trays of sixth-grade students currently in art class and you will find body parts...lots of them!!! Heads, torsos, legs, and arms fill every tray to the brim. The art is part of the sixth-grade’s current project. Sixth-grade students are very involved in learning and executing the steps of soft sculpture, a form of art that involves recycling old stockings and material into wonderful sculptures. The students are creating little people, about 20 inches tall, with needle and thread, stuffing, felt, fun fur, wire, and pantyhose. They have learned how to make a face that looks very lifelike from a stuffed stocking by making a few stitches here and there.

Also, wrapping wire with cotton stuffing and covering it with various materials makes a bendable leg or arm. A piece of fake fur is a mustache, beard, or eyebrows. An old stocking stuffed and tied becomes a body. A rectangle of felt turns into a coat or pants for the little creatures. The best part of art class is seeing the creativity inside the children come to light as they challenge themselves and create art work that everyone can be very proud of. If you have a chance, stop in and visit the new residents of the Western Wayne Middle School Art Room. There is always room for one more visitor ...

WWAEC NOW ACCEPTING VOLUNTEERS

As many of you know, the vision of the Western Wayne School District is to work for excellence...for everyone... in all things...always. In order to help us realize this vision the Strategic Planning Committee recommended that we form an Academic Excellence Committee. The purpose of this committee is to serve as Western Wayne’s unofficial research staff or “think tank” whose purpose is to become aware of and promote the latest and most promising educational practices and ideas. The Western

Wayne Academic Excellence Committee (WWAEC) will meet once per month during the school year at which time we will study two to four topics of interest. Potential topics include adolescent literacy, building better school-to-home connections, and improving mathematics achievement through teacher-made assessments. Anyone interested in joining the WWAEC is encouraged to contact Dr. Clay LaCoe III, Assistant Superintendent at clacoe@westernwayne.org or at 937-4270.

NASA: TEAM WILDCAT

Ever wonder what it would be like to train as a mission specialist for NASA? Several of our gifted students had the opportunity to do just that!

In November, sixteen students from Mr. Joe Blaum's gifted classes at Robert D. Wilson, Lake Elementary, and the Middle School (second grade through sixth), participated in a distance learning simulation via a Polycom videoconference link-up with "Commander" Potter of Mission Control at the Challenger Learning Center in Paducah, Kentucky.

The students were presented the following scenario: The year is 2080 and NASA has permanent research bases on the Moon and Mars with astronauts routinely exploring the outer planets. One of NASA's spacecrafts hasn't been heard from for five days. It is the job of the student mission specialists to locate the lost ship and prepare a rescue flight equipped with the necessary supplies to rescue the lost astronauts.

The students trained for several weeks preparing for this mission including advanced work in math and science. In mathematics they learned how to use co-ordinate planes to plot possible locations and distinguish between space ships and celestial debris such as meteors and asteroids. They calculated the fuel and oxygen requirements necessary to launch a rescue ship and return it safely to home base. They learned about the solar system and the planets. Since transmissions from NASA bases are coded for security reasons, they learned to decode messages and use this information to locate the missing ship.

Team Wildcat, NASA's name for our group, was divided into four teams, each responsible for assimilating the information NASA provided and plotting possible locations for the lost ship as well as preparing the calculations for the necessary food, fuel, and oxygen requirements for the rescue mission.

Teams were assigned planets to investigate and each team member was assigned a specialty, responsible to the rest of their team for a particular task. Specialties included the communication specialists who received transmissions from NASA and coordinated efforts of the other team members; the

transmission specialists who decoded NASA messages and relayed the information to other team members; navigation specialists who plotted locations where the lost ship had been and projected where it could be; and cargo specialists who prepared the rescue ship and made sure all necessary food, fuel, and oxygen needs were met.

Information on the lost ship was constantly fed to the teams via a video link with NASA; using the information, the teams managed to locate the lost ship and ensure a successful rescue. Throughout the simulation, video footage of NASA liftoffs and flights were shown to the teams making this as realistic as possible.

Along with having fun, the students learned what it is like to work in Mission Control and how important it is to work as a team and to rely on fellow team members. The mission proved to be a success both as a rescue mission and a learning experience which the students won't soon forget. Team Wildcat functioned smoothly and completed the mission in record time.

The simulation was successful also due to the efforts of Mrs. Sue Thivierge, Technology Coordinator, and Mr. Brian Seaman, Network Administrator, who set up the video link with the NASA Distance Learning site and Mrs. Gail Barna, Instructional Technology Specialist, who coordinated this activity with NASA.



LOCAL AUTHOR VISITS SCHOOL

Have you ever wondered what inspires an author to write? The students at Hamlin Elementary know the answer! On Thursday, November 29th, local author Lindsay Barrett George shared her secrets for writing and illustrating children's books. Beginning with a whole school assembly, Ms. George used a slide show to demonstrate how her ideas often originate from a simple event – taking a walk, driving in the car, or just waking up with a new thought! In addition, the author gave the entire school a drawing lesson as she guided the students step by step through the process of drawing a character from one of her stories. During the assembly, Ms. George read a few of her books to the students, showing how her stories evolve from a draft to a finished product.

For the remainder of the day, Ms. George ran workshops for the first grade students. Not only did the author share her stories, but she also gave the students the opportunity to create their own stories. The lesson began with Ms. George and the students drawing a circle. From there, the author encouraged the students to use their imaginations and add to their pictures, in order to tell a story. The children received that message loud and clear and one simple circle transformed into a variety of pictures and stories. The students were proud and excited to share their stories with each other. Thank you, Ms. George, for inspiring our young authors!

"Great beginnings are not as important as the way one finishes."

~ Dr. James Dobson

PIE A` LA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Prior to the holiday break, the C.A.T.S. club provided a rare opportunity for Western Wayne Middle School students. In honor of the holiday and as a reward for months of hard work, students purchased tickets for a chance to "pie" one of their favorite administrators and/or teachers. For the week prior to the big event, students purchased tickets for 25 cents. Then, on the afternoon of December 20th, the names were drawn and pies loaded. Students had a great time throwing pies and enjoying a good laugh. Teachers and administrators alike were great sports and enjoyed the fun as well.

LOCAL HISTORY

Under the direction of high school social studies teachers Greg Butler and Ben Gill, the newly-formed Local History Club hopes to preserve our local history and encourage the students to take pride in where they live. The club sees its mission as not only to promote an appreciation for local history within its student members, but also to bring local history into the district's classrooms as well as the surrounding community. Students will research local history to tell the story of Wayne County and other surrounding areas. Initially, students will analyze their own genealogy and family history. Then, their personal histories will help them determine the local events that interest them and deserve remembrance. Students can then create projects that will benefit other students and the community.

Although in its infancy—the club held its first meeting in December—the Local History Club has big goals. New members are being accepted and are encouraged to join. The group is eager to keep our local history ALIVE!

FUTURE BUSINESS LEADERS OF AMERICA



FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) is a national organization for high school students. In Pennsylvania, there are approximately 275 active chapters and more than 13,000 members.

In addition to developing leadership skills and participating in school and community activities, FBLA members have the opportunity to participate in a rigorous competitive events program which begins on the regional level. After additional testing or performance, students can qualify for further competition on the state and finally national level. This year's national conference will be held in Atlanta, Georgia in late June.

Recently 79 Western Wayne students traveled to Keystone College to compete against members from 8 other schools in nearly 40 different events. Some of these events included Accounting I, Business Calculations, Computer Problem Solving, Desktop Publishing, Management Decision Making, Business Ethics, Global Business, Parliamen-

tary Procedure and Job Interview.

Despite tough competition, 73 of these students were recognized on stage during the Awards Ceremony because they had placed in the top five in their respective events. A record 54 students have now qualified for the upcoming State Leadership Conference to be held in Hershey in late March. In addition, another six students were recently notified that they have made it to the top 10 in their respective events which began on the state level.

Many of these students are eager to begin preparing for their events by diligently studying before school, after school, during study halls, and at home.

Western Wayne students have been represented at the National Leadership Conference every year since 1980. We hope to continue this streak in 2008.

W.W. EMBARKS ON MATHEMATICS

In an effort to improve mathematics achievement for all of our children, the Western Wayne School District will implement a new pre-Kindergarten through twelfth grade mathematics curriculum beginning in the 2008-2009 school year. Faculty members and administrators at the elementary, middle, and high school levels have spent much of the 2007-2008 school year mapping mathematics curriculum and examining updated mathematics teaching materials. Our primary goal is to make our mathematics program more rigorous and relevant for our children, thereby improving their mathematics achievement.

In examining our current mathematics program along with our student achievement data in mathematics, the district's faculty and administration have made many interesting discover-

ies. These discoveries have taught us that we need to focus on preparing our students, from the very beginning of their school careers, to take a rigorous mathematics course sequence in high school. Regardless of their post-graduation plans, students should strive to take a *minimum* of Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II during their first three years of high school. The vast majority of our students must experience this sequence before they leave Western Wayne.

This is an exciting time for mathematics education in the Western Wayne School District. As a team of professional educators and administrators, we are truly looking forward to helping our children become better math students through a renewed focus on rigorous preparation in mathematics.

SOCIAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT MAKES LITERARY LEAP!

You may have noticed your high school student toting around an extra book for their social studies class. Within the social studies department at the Western Wayne High School, each grade level is reading a different novel which closely relates to the context of the particular course and is designed to spur thought and discussion about the history associated with a particular era.

The novels our students are reading represent a wide range of styles and cover many different historical periods. The 9th grade is reading *My Brother Sam is Dead*, a story of an adolescent boy whose brother has gone off to fight during the Revolutionary War. It is a wonderfully compelling tale and is widely read in schools throughout the country. The 10th grade is reading *Maus*, an illustrated novel that depicts life during the Holocaust. The 11th grade students are reading Joseph Conrad's classic, *The Heart of Darkness*. This novella depicts imperialism and expansionism during Victorian times and is a classic and timeless story. The 12th grade students are reading Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, a classic story written during the Cold War and depicting Bradbury's view of society.

The faculty members of the social studies department chose engaging works of literature that are sure to spur meaningful class discussions. Our students are reading some truly classic literature in these classes. Ask them about it!

Questions or Feedback about Paw Prints?

If you have any questions or would like to provide feedback to us about Paw Prints, please contact us at (570) 937-4270 or e-mail Clay LaCoe at clacoe@westernwayne.org

FLAT STANLEY PROJECT



The Flat Stanley Project is based on the character in Jeff Brown's book *Flat Stanley* published over 30 years ago, in which a boy finds himself "flattened" by a bulletin board and is sent to visit his friends in California by traveling in a large envelope (one of the advantages of being flat). Now eleven years old, the Flat Stanley Project includes about 6000 classes a year and hundreds of thousands of children in 47 countries as they make "Flat Stanleys" and exchange them with other classes. As the Flat Stanleys visit each classroom, the students write letters, take photos, or send emails back to the partner classroom telling the students about Stanley's adventures on his visit.

This year Mrs. Haber's second-grade students in Robert D. Wilson Elementary School have created their own Flat Stanley. They will record his adventures in a scrapbook and meet with their partner school at the end of each month via a videoconference.

In December, Flat Stanley from Mrs. Haber's class visited Ms. Jemigan's class at the Kempsville Elementary School in Virginia Beach and Ms. Jemigan's class's Flat Stanley is with Mrs. Haber's class. The children are having fun taking Flat Stanley home and sharing adventures with him. They are looking forward to meeting other classes through the Project.

The Flat Stanley Project is an excellent way to practice communication skills and to develop an awareness of the many geographical regions that comprise not only the United States but the world.

The Digital Flat Stanley project is a MAGPI k20 program completed with the assistance of Mrs. Gail Barna, Instructional Technology Specialist of the Western Wayne School District.

PSSA TESTS SLATED FOR APRIL & MAY...

How can we do better?

The windows for the annual Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) tests are set to begin. The writing assessment, given in grades 5, 8, and 11, will be administered between February 11th and the 22nd. The Language Arts and Mathematics assessments will be administered between March 31st and April 11th. New this year is the Science PSSA. This test will be administered between April 28th and May 9th.

The PSSA tests are the assessments that the Pennsylvania Department of Education administers to determine whether or not districts and individual students are making adequate progress as defined by the federal No Child Left behind (NCLB) legislation. The tests themselves are grade level assessments, in other words, the tests that children take in a particular grade are designed for that grade. Also, the tests are criterion referenced. This means that the children must meet a certain standard to be rated "Advanced" or "Proficient". The standards are designed such

that all students working on grade level can attain them.

Typically, our students do well on the PSSA test; however, there is always room for improvement. The question is: What can parents do to help their children do their best on these tests? First, talk to your child about the importance of the test. The purpose of the test is for us to see where your children are academically strong and/or weak so that we can help them to improve. Because of this, it is important that they try to do their best. Also, make sure that your children get a good night's rest before the test and be sure they eat a good breakfast the morning of the test. We all know it is difficult to focus when we are tired and hungry. Finally, try not to let your children stress too much over the test. Your teachers have prepared your children well and they know that if they are well rested that they will do very well. Best of luck to everyone as the PSSA tests approach!

WESTERN WAYNE HOOPS SEEKS VOLUNTEERS!

If you love to play basketball and are interested in working with children, then we have the volunteer opportunity for you! This summer, the Western Wayne School District will sponsor basketball camps and clinics for school-aged

children throughout the district. We will need volunteer coaches/mentors to work with the children under the direction of our coaching staff. If you are interested in helping out, please call us at 937-4270 for more details.

CLASSROOMS FOR THE FUTURE... *continued from page 1*

our students and teachers have already begun to reap the benefits of this new technology. Take a walk through the high school and you will see science and mathematics students using real time simulations to perform laboratory activities and graphing exercises; social studies students using the Internet to access primary source information; and English students

searching the web looking for the most recent research on literary criticism.

The members of the Western Wayne School District's administrative team would like to thank our technology department for all of their hard work in making the Classrooms for the Future grant begin to come to life at Western Wayne!



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The Western Wayne School District will work for excellence...for everyone...in all things...always.



District Office



High School



Middle School



Robert D. Wilson Elementary



Lake Elementary



Hamlin Elementary Center