

The

Chalkboard

A Report from the Wattsburg Area Schools

2008/2009 School Year

December 2009

<http://www.wattsburg.org>

A Sad Good-bye

Dear Community,

As you may be aware, I have accepted a position with the Erie School District and submitted my resignation as Superintendent of the Wattsburg Area School District, effective January 2, 2009. Please know that my decision to return to Erie does not in any way reflect dissatisfaction with Wattsburg. Rather, I have made a career decision based on the best interests of my family; my wife and I live in Erie, and all of our children attend Erie schools. When I applied for the WASD superintendent position, I wrote in my cover letter that I was leaving my previous job "because I felt that I was ready to lead a district. Since both my superintendent and his assistant had just received five-year contracts, there would be no such opportunity in Erie." Unfortunately, both men have announced their intentions to retire well before the expiration of their contracts. While I had certainly thought that I might someday return to Erie, I truly never expected that this would happen so soon.

Regardless of who sits in the superintendent's office, the Wattsburg Area School District has much to be proud of. Visitors are consistently impressed by the physical, educational, and fiscal condition of the Wattsburg Area School District. Your children attend beautifully maintained schools on a picturesque campus. They attend classes taught by caring, professional teachers, many of whom live in this community. Each day, Wattsburg Area School District children are carefully driven to school by our own Transportation Department. Children enjoy meals prepared by a cafeteria staff that not only prepares delicious meals, but also operates so well financially that our program is a model for the entire region. Local and state financial auditors have remarked that this is one of the best managed financial operations that they inspect. The support that this community extends to the school district is evident from the attendance at athletic events, plays, field trips and other

school functions; just try to find a parking place within a half-mile of the elementary center on Halloween!

Many of you have expressed concerns about the future direction of this organization. One measure of continuity that the Board has established is that our Assistant Superintendent, Nancy Sadaly, will honor the remainder of her contract, and will serve as Acting Superintendent for the remainder of the 2008-09 school year. Nancy possesses a wealth of curriculum knowledge, a strong work ethic, and shares my collaborative approach to leadership. You should also know that it has been my sincere pleasure to work for and with a school board that is so committed to providing the best possible education for our students, while at the same time honoring their commitment to safeguarding the taxpayers' investment in the school system. I have great confidence that they will continue to keep the Wattsburg Area School District progressing long after I have left.

The Board believes that we have made some important strides in the way we work together that they support and hope to continue. They also have been impressed with both the quantity and quality of work our teachers and administrators have done in revising the WASD curriculum, and do not wish to abandon these critical projects. Once these projects are completed, I am convinced that the Wattsburg Area School District will not only be a stronger organization, but that it will be a leader regionally, and throughout Pennsylvania. I am truly sorry to leave this district so soon, and to put the staff through yet another leadership change, but I have no doubt that the entire staff will work with the Board to keep us moving forward.

Sincerely,
Jay Badams
Superintendent
Wattsburg Area School District

WASD Welcomes New Faculty and Staff



Ms. Remle Elmer

Erie native, **Ms. Remle Elmer**, joins the Seneca High School guidance department as the counselor for the class of 2011. Ms. Elmer received her bachelor of arts degree from Hiram College with dual majors in psychology and sociology. She continued her education at Edinboro University where she earned her master of arts degree in Counseling and is certified as a secondary school counselor. Prior to her position at Seneca High School, Ms. Elmer worked at the Greater Erie Community Action Committee as a prevention specialist and drug and alcohol counselor with the Student Assistance Program. Ms. Elmer is a member of the Erie Counselor's Association and the American School Counselor's Association and is involved with the Junior League of Erie. She is very excited about her current position and looks forward to working with the students at SHS.



Mr. John Erickson

Mr. John Erickson is a 2000 graduate of Harborcreek High School where he was involved in chorus, football, and a year of wrestling. He graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in mathematics and a secondary math education certification from Thiel College in 2004. At Thiel, he was a member of Thiel Choir and Chamber Singers, Kappa Mu Epsilon (Mathematics Honorary), Lambda Sigma (Sophomore Honorary), Alpha Chi Rho (National Fraternity), and, briefly, Thiel football. Mr. Erickson has taught at Strong Vincent and East High Schools in Erie. Currently, he is pursuing a master's of education degree in curriculum and instruction at Gannon with a principal's certification pathway. Recently, he earned his permanent teaching certificate in Pennsylvania. At Seneca, John is the coach of the Athletic Sports League (ASL) team and teaches sections of Algebra I and II. At his home in Harborcreek, John's family has a century-old farm including 235 acres of grapes. For fun Mr. Erickson enjoys spending time with family, fishing, hunting, and riding his Harley Davidson motorcycle as a member of American Legion Riders Post 571.



Ms. Ann Gavazzi

Currently **Ms. Ann Gavazzi** is a Title One Reading Specialist for the third and fourth grades at WAEC, and also teaches PSSA Prep at WAMS for the seventh and eighth grades. Before being hired by the Wattsburg Area School District, Ann coordinated adult education programs and instructed adults in several welfare-to-work programs. Prior to this, she worked as a seventh grade language arts and gifted education teacher in Gastonia, NC.

Recently, Ann completed her M.Ed. in reading with a reading specialist certification at Edinboro University. She holds a BA in English from Penn State University, and a teaching certificate in secondary education from Edinboro University. Ms. Gavazzi belongs to the International Reading Association (IRA) and the American Association of University Women. In Ann's free time, she volunteers with the Big Brother/Big Sister Program, reads voraciously, designs and makes jewelry, listens to lots of music, and enjoys writing.

Ms. Kristy Gnibus is a proud 2002 Seneca High School graduate. In college, Kristy earned her bachelor of science degree in family and consumer science education. She is continuing her professional development at Gannon University working toward her master's degree in curriculum and instruction with a principal certificate, and anticipates graduation in May of 2009. Ms. Gnibus has taught at North East Middle school and substitute taught in Wattsburg and surrounding school districts. She is very excited about teaching in the school district in which she grew



Ms. Kristy Gnibus



Mrs. Amanda Hernandez



*Mrs. Dorene (Cookie)
Johnston*



Mrs. Karla Kimmy

up. Teaching family and consumer sciences has been Kristy's goal since her 10th grade year at Seneca High School and she looks forward to the future with the students, the school, and her educational career.

Mrs. Mandy Hernandez joins the elementary center as a new fourth grade teacher. Mrs. Hernandez graduated from Penn State with a bachelor's degree in human development and family studies, and she graduated from Syracuse University with a master's degree in elementary education. She has two prior years of teaching experience as a fourth grade teacher in Frederick County, Maryland. In her former position, Mandy gained experience in implementing a balanced literacy approach and is skilled at differentiating instruction in all subject areas. She has a special interest in teaching Spanish and will be one of the teachers who offers Spanish lessons as an after-school activity later in the school year. Mrs. Hernandez and her husband, Jose, have an eleven-month-old son, Joseph.

The elementary center welcomes **Mrs. Dorene "Cookie" Johnston** as she joins the staff at the elementary center where she monitors children during all lunch periods. Mrs. Johnston graduated from high school with a commercial art diploma and has a variety of prior work experiences including nurse's aide, child care technician, phlebotomist, and secretary at St. Boniface Church. Cookie was also a stay-at-home mom for nine years. She and her husband, J.J., have three children, Colyn, Matthew, and Michael, and all three boys attend the elementary center.

The Wattsburg Area School District Transportation Department would like to welcome **Mrs. Karla Kimmy** and **Mr. William Swanson** to the staff. Karla is a former Seneca graduate and current Wattsburg resident with students attending the District. She had previously worked with students at the YMCA and now joins us as a bus driver. William Swanson is also a current Wattsburg resident with students attending the District and works seasonally at Presque Isle in the Maintenance Department. William joins our staff as a bus driver also.

Mrs. Melinda Kinnear, a 1996 graduate of Seneca High School, joined the district's cafeteria staff at the middle school. Mrs. Kinnear is a lifetime resident of the Wattsburg Area School District. She has two children, a four-year old daughter who attends the YMCA Preschool, and a two-year old son. Melinda is the daughter of Mrs. Beatrice Wroblewski, also a new employee of the district. She enjoys spending time with her children, and the hours of her cafeteria position allow her to do that.

Mrs. Michelle Leone is a new science teacher at Seneca who currently lives in Fairview with her husband, Scott, and two children, Ryan and Sydney. She also has two stepsons who are in the Marine Corp and are stationed in San Diego, California. Michelle graduated from Edinboro University with a bachelors of arts degree in biology and a master of education degree in secondary education. Prior to her employment with the Wattsburg Area School District, she taught for several years at Mercyhurst North East. In her free time, Michelle enjoys traveling, reading, watching movies, and being outdoors.

Ms. Melody Mountford has been a resident of the Wattsburg Area School District for eight years and joins the cafeteria staff at Seneca. She is the mother of four children, Cassy, Ryan, Jessica, and Marissa. Melody loves spending time with her family, is very involved in her church, and enjoys working with horses.



Ms. Lindsey Ross



Ms. Gretchen Ruprecht



Mrs. Melissa (Jill) Pence

Continued on page 4



Mrs. Melinda Kinnear



Mrs. Michelle Leone



Ms. Melody Mountford



Mrs. Kristy Ohrn

WASD Welcomes New Staff

Continued from page 3



Mrs. Kathy Schreiber

Mrs. Kristina Ohrn will be teaching English at Seneca. Mrs. Ohrn is a Wattsburg Area School District native and daughter of Raymond and Birgitta Allgeier. She received a bachelor of arts degree in legal studies, a bachelor of arts degree in English, and her teaching certification and master's degree in English from Gannon University. Prior to accepting the English 10 position at Seneca, Kristina was a composition instructor at Gannon, an English instructor for Upward Bound, and a document analyst for Knox, McLaughlin, Gornall, & Sennett, PC. She is an avid reader, enjoys playing piano, running, watching the Pittsburgh Steelers, and cooking. Mrs. Ohrn also enjoys traveling and spending time with her two dogs. She can sometimes be found riding her motorcycle with her husband, Adam, a Seneca High graduate. The couple recently moved from Erie to Greene Township and is excited to be closer to their family and friends.

Mrs. Jill Pence, LPN, was recently hired as the district's medical assistant. This is a new position designed to provide assistance in the nurse's offices in all three buildings. Jill's schedule will depend on staffing needs. She will probably be based at WAMS most of the time, but will cover the other buildings as needed. We are thrilled to have Jill join our staff.



Mr. William Swanson

Ms. Lindsey Ross is a 2007 graduate of Gannon University and a 2003 graduate of McDowell High School. She has earned her bachelor of science degree and teaching certification in elementary/early childhood/special education, and plans on obtaining her master's degree in curriculum and instruction with a behavior specialist pathway at Gannon University. Lindsey was previously employed by the Dr. Gertrude A. Barber National Institute where she taught in the Mental Health Partial Hospitalization Program and was also a member of the therapeutic support staff for children with Autism.

Ms. Gretchen Ruprecht is very excited to be part of the WAMS family. Although new to the Wattsburg Area School District, she is not new to teaching. She received a B.A. degree in elementary and early childhood education from Edinboro University in 1999. She then attained a master's degree and earned a reading specialist certification in 2001. After graduation, Gretchen moved to Raleigh, North Carolina, where she had been a reading specialist for the last seven years. While in North Carolina she received her National Board certification in 2006. Gretchen has since moved back to the Erie area and is enjoying being home again.

After 25 years of her children attending Wattsburg Area School District, **Mrs. Kathy Schreiber** has joined the Seneca staff as a teacher's aide in the emotional support classroom. Mrs. Schreiber serves on the Office of Children and Youth Advisory Board and is part of Governor Rendell's Commission for Children and Families. She and her husband, John, have been foster parents for the past 15 years. Kathy is currently the pre-school director for her church.



Mrs. Kimberly Webb

Mrs. Kimberly Webb is a welcome addition as one of the elementary center's newest third grade teachers. Mrs. Webb has a variety of prior teaching experiences including teaching preschool at the South Hills Child Development Center in Millcreek and teaching first grade in the North East School District as a full-year permanent substitute. Kimberly graduated first in her class from Gannon University with a bachelor's degree in early childhood and elementary education. She and her husband, Scott, live in Millcreek Township. Mrs. Webb enjoys reading and scrapbooking. She is also learning to enjoy taking drives with her husband on their motorcycle.

Mrs. Stephanie Welser joins the elementary center staff as an aide in the Therapeutic Elementary Education classroom. Mrs. Welser graduated from Edinboro University with a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a bachelor of fine arts degree in photography. She previously taught in the Commodore Perry Area School District as an Americorps teacher. Stephanie has a range of teaching experience in grades kindergarten through grade six. Mrs. Welser and her husband, Mark, live in Millcreek township with their mischievous cat, Selina.



Mrs. Stephanie Welser

Mrs. Beatrice Wroblewski joins the elementary staff as an evening housekeeper. Mrs. Wroblewski is a graduate and resident of the Wattsburg Area School District. She is the mother of three children, and she has four grandchildren. She also enjoys working as a Home and Garden Party Designer.

Britney Trayer Brings Home the Gold!

11th grader Britney Trayer won a gold medal for her essay at the last Academic Sports League competition. The competition was held Saturday, November 15, 2008, at Mercyhurst College. She scored higher than all students who participated in her division!



Britney Trayer



Seneca's Academic Sports League

Become A Guest Teacher!

Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit Emergency Substitute Teacher Consortium is interested in finding qualified personnel to act as guest teachers to substitute for regular classroom teachers in local school districts during training sessions and/or leave time.

Interviews are to be held January 6 and training will be held January 27. Classroom visitations will take place January 28, 29, and 30. For an application packet, logon to www.iu5.org or call Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit, Personnel Services at 814-734-8407.

To qualify, you will need to show —

- Proof of a bachelor's degree in any field from an accredited college or university
- Proof of no criminal history or child abuse incidents (current Act 34, 114, and 151 clearances).

Freedom Calls

The Freedom Calls Foundation and the *Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit*, in Edinboro, PA is sponsoring a community service event in which they will be connecting soldiers in Iraq with their families/loved ones in the area via videoconference. The FREE half-hour videoconferences are being offered to families with deployed loved ones on the front lines in Iraq.

From 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on December 15, 2008, families will be able to see their loved one and speak with him or her in real-time using videoconference technology. Families can schedule a 30 minute connection by contacting Judy Baker at (814) 734-8388 or judy_baker@iu5.org to arrange their videoconference.

Specifically, the Foundation and the IU are searching for families with a soldier stationed at one of the following five camps in Iraq: Camp Taji, Al Asad Air Base, Camp Fallujah, Camp Victory (Baghdad) and Camp Taqaddum, who would like to come into the Northwest PA IU facility to participate in this event.

Band and Chorus News

The Seneca High School Marching Band has had a very successful season. They were awarded first place at the Bradford Show of 10 bands in their class, and have won awards for best winds, music, visuals, general effect, and guard throughout the season. The band also competed at the LMBA Championships on October 25th, and is also planning a spring 2009 trip to Walt Disney World to perform in a parade on Main Street USA.

Congratulations to the following students who were chosen to participate in the PMEA Junior Chorus Festival November 7th and 8th at Eisenhower High School in Warren County:

Sarah Hall	Ben McGill
Lacey Murdock	Makenzie Yost
Trent Heitzenrater	

Also, congratulations to the following students for being chosen to participate in PMEA Senior District 2 Chorus being held this year at NWPA Collegiate Academy in January, 2009:

Sarah Shreve	Lindsey Wilczynski
Jeff Donner	Brooke Surgener
Jeremiah Gibbons	

I've retired...sort of

When I began teaching, I learned so much.

I came from a very loving family and I learned not every child does.

I was fortunate to have a lovely home and I learned every child does not.

I had a college education and I learned every child does not.

I had the simple things...a Mom who fixed me breakfast, a Dad who sat with me in the evening and cuddled me and made me feel safe and I learned every child does not have that.

I grew up and still had the safe and happy feelings, and learned that every child does not.

I devoted 35 years to the children of the Wattsburg Area School District and learned that I was a very fortunate individual.

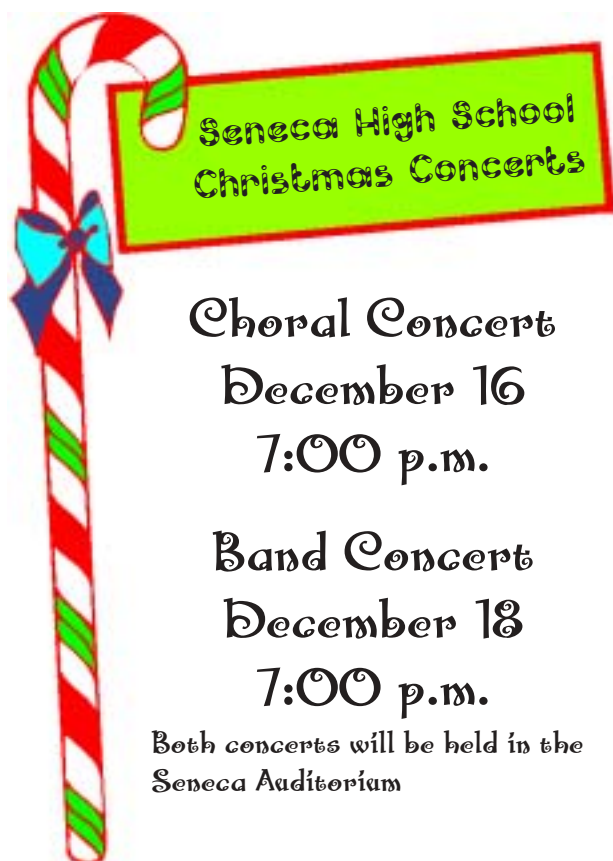
Many children I taught had none of what I had, but they taught me about the reality of life and how resilient people of all ages can be.

I had the opportunity to substitute teach for eight days in one classroom since retiring and was reminded why I first entered this profession: as the day ended today, a child came up to me and gave me a hug. She is waiting patiently for her regular classroom teacher, but she felt compelled to give me a hug.

Teaching is so rewarding and difficult and addictive.

I love the children, I admire my co-workers and administration and feel a little sad that I won't be a part of the future, but I am satisfied to have been part of the past.

— Nancy McNally



Choral Concert

December 16

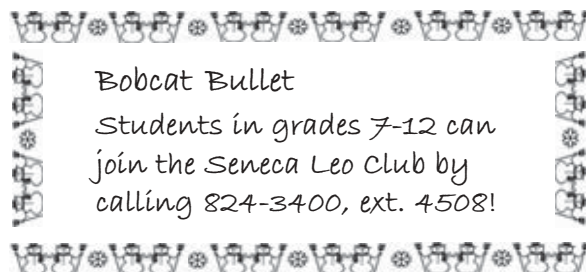
7:00 p.m.

Band Concert

December 18

7:00 p.m.

Both concerts will be held in the
Seneca Auditorium



Bobcat Bullet

Students in grades 7-12 can
join the Seneca Leo Club by
calling 824-3400, ext. 4508!

Seneca News

The fall sports season recently concluded and the winter season is about to tip-off. Our fall sports all made good showings with the highlight of our teams being the girls' soccer team winning seven games; that's more than they've ever won in a season. Allyson Gibbons from the girls cross country team ran at the state meet in late October.

The marching band and color guard concluded this season's extravaganza that is based on jazz music and entitled "Creative World." The band placed very highly at all of their competitions this season and ended with a 3rd place finish in the LMBA Championships at the Veteran's Stadium.

There are several new activities starting at Seneca that will serve to further broaden the educational experience we provide. The Academic Sports League team is in its second year and is being headed by Mr. John Erickson. A brand new offering is the Robotics Club which is being led by first year science teacher, Mr. Todd Talbot. Finally, Mrs. Kristy Ohrn has resurrected the Seneca newspaper; we look forward to reading about events from the students' perspectives.

In other news, Seneca will soon be kicking off its new anti-bullying program to the students. Teachers and staff have already been trained in this initiative that targets traditional and cyber bullying behaviors and seeks to eliminate them through education. The coordinating committee for the program is developing an intense multi-media kickoff program that will grab the attention of the students and create an awareness in them that we hope will positively affect their relationships with their peers. Also, Seneca recently conducted activities for their annual "Say No to Drugs - Red Ribbon Week." Some of the activities included a penny drive for the Erie County Drug and Alcohol Coalition, a poster contest, and a video presented through Pyramid Healthcare.

Stop Bullying!

The Olweus HALT bullying prevention program is being implemented this year at WAMS. The purpose of the program is to educate administration, students and staff about the effects of bullying and what they can *personally* do to make it stop. Students were surveyed at the end of the 2007-08 school year to determine what, if any, bullying was occurring. In addition to the level of bullying, the survey results identified the specific types of bullying, as well as the areas in school where it was likely to occur. There are many educational aspects associated with the program including the building of positive student belonging and having respect for others. In addition to this, teachers will now have the opportunity to have in-depth class discussions with students about bullying. So far, the program seems to be yielding positive results and we hope that through building awareness the number of bullying incidents will decrease as we continue through the year.

Middle School Students Participate in E-Mission Activity

Wattsburg Area School District is participating in the LEARN (Leading Educational Achievement Through the Regional Network) Initiative which focuses on the use of high-speed broadband services to provide students with more learning activities using technology. Recently 7th and 8th grade students at Wattsburg Area Middle School participated in an e-mission experience designed to improve students' problem solving and critical thinking skills as well as promote teamwork and communication skills. Julie McGaughey, teacher of the gifted, prepared the students for their e-mission scenario prior to the October 31st lesson date.

Students were expected to apply their science and math skills to an authentic crisis situation during a two-hour simulation of a disaster situation. Their e-mission, Operation Montserrat, is based on a real historical event. The volcano on the normally tranquil island of Montserrat has come to life. As flaming pebbles and lava begin their devastation, emergency response teams learn a hurricane is approaching. Using real-time hurricane and seismic data, teams of student specialists assist Mission Control in saving the residents from certain destruction. Using computers, the Internet and a small video camera, students interacted with a flight director to track a hurricane, predict volcanic activity, and consider evacuation options. Students were divided into a hurricane team, volcano team and evacuation team.

Middle school students who participated in this lesson received a letter of commendation from the Commander Pleva, Flight Director at the Challenger Learning Center at Wheeling Jesuit University. Commander Pleva wrote, "Thank you for your partnership in today's mission! It was great working with such an awesome Emergency Response Team. Your teachers should be very proud of you! I hope to have the opportunity to work with you in the future. Have a terrific school year and keep up the good work in math and science."



REDcard Program

Attention parents. Do you want to help your schools earn money? An easy way to do this is by signing up with the REDcard program at Target. It is very simple: log on to www.Target.com/tcoe, go through the steps to apply, and choose which school you want to receive the rewards. Every time you use the card, 1% of your REDcard purchases will be donated to the school of your choice.



6th Graders Combine Learning with Fun!

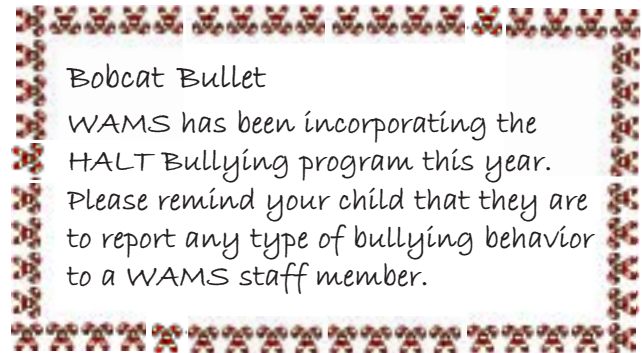
How about learning a fun way to master the elements of plot structure through the use of technology? That's what Mrs. Szymanski's students recently experienced. The students wrote stories that contained all the parts of plot: rising action, complications, climax and falling action. They then used digital cameras to take photos that would become the illustrations for their stories. That part was really great because they got to bring in props like stuffed animals from home! Finally, the 6th graders learned to download the pictures, crop them, adjust the contrast and color, and copy/paste them to the Microsoft Office Word documents that contained the stories.

Shyler Abbey enjoyed the project. "This was a new way to study the parts of plot," she said, "and it gave us extra experience with the computers, using programs that we wouldn't ordinarily use." Jordan Gregor agreed. "I almost never get to use the digital camera at home," she stated. "This was a good experience and it helped us review climax, rising action, and other plot terms."

The students also experimented with PhotoStory, a free and easy-to-use program from Microsoft that allows users to create fascinating slide shows from digital images. This program enables students to create a slide show with digital pictures, edit pictures, and create stories with original music and add narration. Stories were shared at the culmination of the 6th grade project.



*Joshua Myers and Shyler Abbey
show off their Photo Essays*



Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader?

Students in Mrs. Shaffer's reading classes have been on the radio! The WXTA Country 98 morning show has featured the WAMS middle school students as part of their morning show. The fifth graders were on the air for six weeks creating questions for the station's "Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader Contest." All of the participants met the radio hosts and were presented with certificates and a small token of appreciation. The program was a wonderful opportunity for the students to practice reading, writing, and listening skills.



Mrs. Shaffer's 5th Grade Class

Elementary Center Participates in Wellness Activities

Wattsburg Area Elementary Center marked Wellness Week with a variety of activities. Second grade teacher, Mrs. Stacey Mattocks, and fourth grade teacher, Mrs. Lori Dellamedaglia, shared a series of classroom activities that teachers could adapt to fit their grade level. In addition, Mrs. Mattocks and Mrs. Dellamedaglia provided a set of home activities focused on various wellness topics. Miss Nies's 1st grade class had the highest homework participation so they had their picture taken with the entire class wearing milk moustaches. The picture will be displayed in the elementary center lobby.

Four-time Olympic wrestling champion, Bruce Baumgartner, was the elementary center's Wellness Week guest speaker. Mr. Baumgartner talked with primary and intermediate grades in two separate assemblies in the elementary center auditorium, and he shared his personal story. Mr. Baumgartner emphasized healthy choices and the variety of positive impacts healthy choices had on his life. He also answered many of the children's questions about his experience as an Olympian.



Miss Juliette Nies's 1st grade class with milk moustaches!

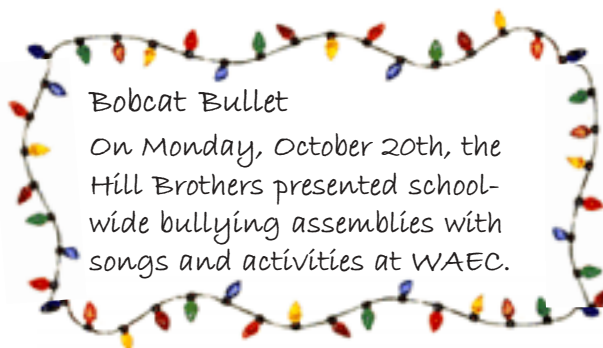
Kindergarten Transition

A smooth transition to kindergarten is an essential part of a child's early academic experience. There is a great amount of research that indicates that a child's success in school can be linked to this effective transition. This year, the kindergarten teachers at Wattsburg Area Elementary Center, Mrs. Eller, Mrs. Holland, Mrs. Metzler, Mrs. Ochterski, Mrs. Sayers and Miss Sierota, are actively involved in planning a successful series of activities designed to provide a positive transition for children and their families. In partnership with Success by Six, the kindergarten teachers are planning a special event called "Food, Fun, and Free Stuff" for all kindergarten families on Wednesday, April 29, 2009, as well as other activities designed for this purpose.

In October, the kindergarten teachers also sponsored a luncheon meeting for the early care and preschool providers who care for the preschoolers who reside within the Wattsburg Area School District. Meetings and discussions will continue throughout the year as part of the action plan that kindergarten teachers developed at the Early Childhood Governor's Institute this past summer.



*Mrs. Lori Dellamedaglia,
Amber Chapman,
and Mr. Bruce Baumgartner*



4th Grade Book Club Reads *The City of Ember*

More than sixty fourth graders fill the elementary center's third/fourth grade gathering area every Tuesday. They cluster in circles with their lunch boxes or lunch trays, and each child has a copy of *The City of Ember*, a captivating chapter book by Jeanne DuPrau. These children have volunteered to meet as a book club during their lunch period one time each week for a span of about five weeks. The children discuss *The City of Ember* in small groups, and topics range from parts that surprised the children to clues they've noticed that will solve the mystery of the half-eaten instruction list to personal connections that the children make with the characters. Mrs. Heather Hedderman, our elementary librarian, is sponsoring the book club in partnership with the fourth grade teachers. Several teachers, including Mrs. Dellamedaglia, Mrs. Hernandez, Ms. Banks, and Mrs. McGaughey, and administrators Mr. Porter, Mrs. Rullo, and Mrs. Sadaly are also participating. The elementary PTO generously donated money so that each child who participates in all of the book club meetings is able to own a copy of *The City of Ember* at the conclusion of the book club. The children remain excited about the book and can be found spontaneously discussing the book even outside of the book club meetings. Mrs. Hedderman and the teachers are planning to culminate the book club by inviting the children and their families to meet one evening at a local movie theater to watch the film version of *The City of Ember*, which is in theaters now. Because of the overwhelming response to the book club, Mrs. Hedderman is in the process of selecting other engaging books for future fourth grade book clubs and is considering offering a book club to third graders later this school year.



4th Graders (L-R) Kyle Cass, Matt Gottschling, Matt Licata, Bradley Pence, Chris Miles, Kyle Graham, Kara Kern, and Jenna Tech



Carson Smith

Carson Smith, a student in Mr. Pearce's 4th grade class at Wattsburg Area Elementary Center, has been busy the past two years with the Exxcel Modeling and Talent Agency. Carson has been featured on a Hasbro Mood Lamp Box for this coming holiday season. He also hopes to represent Hasbro on an upcoming toy box for an Indian Jones toy.

Carson has taken several classes and has attended several seminars on the qualifications needed to be in a commercial or movie.



Carson Smith, 4th Grade Student

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Mrs. Nancy Sadaly, Assistant Superintendent

BOX HOLDER OR
CURRENT RESIDENT

Parent Awareness Committee

The Wattsburg Area School District established a Parent Awareness Committee this year in order to encourage communication with parents around educational issues. Members of this committee include Sue Afton, Tom Deau, Jennifer Turner, Lori Dellamedaglia,, Cindy Cass, Sharon Jarmolowicz, Robert LaPlaca, Mary Beth Henglebrok, Tom Podpora, Doug McGarvey, Gina Rullo, Chad Porter, and Tom Rinke and Keith Miller.

This committee worked together to craft presentations about the benefits and challenges of technology for adolescents. A session entitled *Music, Movies, and Video Games* led by Jen Turner and Lori Dellamedaglia provided information about how to decipher ratings, content, and lyrics for popular movies, songs and video games available to children. Robert LaPlaca and Mary Beth Henglebrok presented information about

internet activities such as social networking, instant messaging, and web-browsing in a session entitled *Introduction to Internet Related Activities*. Community members Sue Afton and Tom Deau discussed cyber bullying, interpreted digital language, and provided practical information for identifying predators in any neighborhood in their session entitled *Cell and Cyber*.

Thus far the committee has had two presentations that were open to the public. The first was held at the Seneca Media Center on August 21st and the second was held at Wattsburg Area Middle School on November 7th. Parents attending these presentations commented that they were “very informative and well-done.” Please contact Nancy Sadaly at nsadaly@wasd.iu5.org if you have topics that you would like the Parent Awareness Committee to explore.



Happy Holidays

