

West Allegheny Edition

# Allegheny West

Volume 19, Issue 112  
April/May 2018

FREE Direct Mail Community Publication

# Magazine

## West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame



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Also  
Inside:

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eighth term

DNA test unites  
local family,  
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70-year-old  
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This  
organization  
wants  
more fish in  
Montour Run

WA grads  
become  
Army  
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# Allegheny West Magazine

P. O. Box 220, McDonald, PA 15057  
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E-Mail: info@awmagazine.com  
www.awmagazine.com

## PUBLISHER AND EDITOR

Doug Hughey  
WRITERS  
Jill Bordo  
Jocelyn Grecko  
Pat Jennette

## GRAPHIC DESIGN

Sarah Hughey  
WEBMASTER

www.ddswebdesign.com  
CONTRIBUTORS

Pittsburgh Airport Area Chamber of Commerce,  
Findlay Township, North Fayette Township  
Oakdale Borough, McDonald Borough, West  
Allegheny School District, Western Allegheny  
Community Library, Erma Dodd,  
Barb Kleyman, Jesse Forquer, Gabriella Salvucci

FOUNDING PUBLISHER  
Pat Jennette

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**Renea and Michael Holden of Carnegie hold up their granddaughter, Emma, 3, so she can pet a Clydesdale horse at Donaldson Park on March 16. Throughout the afternoon and early evening, residents were invited to take pictures and enjoy a carriage ride pulled by the horses, which were in town for an appearance in Pittsburgh's St. Patrick's Day Parade the following day. The event, which was arranged by Express Employment Pittsburgh West, attracted approximately 1,000 people and raised \$4,000 for local military families. PHOTO BY DOUG HUGHEY**

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# From the Publisher

Dear Readers,

Thank you for picking up our April West Allegheny edition of Allegheny West Magazine.

As we've done in each of our April editions over the past four years, we are including a special section in this edition on the latest West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame inductees. These individuals will be recognized on May 5 at a special induction banquet. Each of these individuals - and one team - have contributed in their own significant way to West Allegheny athletics. Read more on page 20.

On page 28, read about some standout West Allegheny alumni, including two lifelong friends who are training to become U.S. Army helicopter pilots and another who is gaining notoriety in college athletics.

Then be sure to read about our recent interview with state Rep. Mark Mustio, who at the end of this year will be stepping down after eight terms in office, on page 14. Mustio has contributed plenty to the West Allegheny community and, in this interview, he looks back on those efforts.

Also in this edition, we're bringing you an interesting local example of how DNA testing is helping to shed light on family histories. Last year, it brought one local family together. Read more on page 16.

On page 18, we take a look at a local organization that's helped funnel millions of dollars into local projects aimed at cleaning up a local watershed. Finally, on page 44, we're bringing you our regular listings of upcoming events, including parks and recreation information for North Fayette and Findlay townships.

Look for our next edition in June, when we'll be bringing you our annual Summer Fun Guide, with a special rundown of festivals, fairs and more fun things to do in the area over the summer.



Doug Hughey,  
Publisher and Editor



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### ABOUT THE COVER

The West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame inductees for 2018 are as follows (clockwise starting at top left): Dorin Dickerson (PHOTO BY PITT ATHLETICS), the 1996 and 1997 girls track teams (PHOTO COURTESY WEST ALLEGHENY SCHOOL DISTRICT - pictured is the 1997 team celebrating its WPIAL championship win); Jim Yanek (PHOTO COURTESY WEST ALLEGHENY SCHOOL DISTRICT); Dr. David Quinn (PHOTO BY DOUG HUGHEY); and Paul DeBor (PHOTO BY EMILY DAVIS PHOTOGRAPHY). For more, see page 20.  
DESIGN BY SARAH HUGHEY

## Heroes Supporting Heroes to search for new CEO

STORY AND PHOTO  
SUBMITTED BY HEROES SUPPORTING HEROES



Don Steward

Don Steward has stepped down as the CEO and executive director of Heroes Supporting Heroes. Steward, however, plans to remain with HSH as a project manager and lead the 2018 West Allegheny Workcamp project this summer.

Starting in 2013, Steward performed a critical role in the development and success of HSH by overseeing the merger of West Allegheny

Workcamp and HSH. He also oversaw two previous successful West Allegheny Workcamp projects that have helped dozens of homeowners in need across the area. The work camp coordinates

with Group Mission Trips to bring volunteers into the area to help residents with home repair projects.

Even before joining HSH, Steward collaborated on the organization's first website and logo. After joining, he helped establish policies and procedures to ensure a strong foundation.

Two years ago, Steward coordinated the transition of donated properties from Noblestown United Methodist Church. The church building in Oakdale now serves as HSH's official headquarters. Since then, Steward has helped set up the organization's new office space, managed day-to-day operational tasks, supported a full-time employee and served as property manager for rental units that HSH operates.

Over the next few months, the HSH board of directors will be conducting a search for a candidate to volunteer as the new HSH executive director. During this transition period, it is the board's priority to find the best individual to lead while maintaining a stable and effective organization. HSH intends to share an announcement soon and will ask for help identifying candidates who can help HSH continue on its current successful trajectory.

HSH cannot thank Don enough for the dedication, passion, enthusiasm and motivation he has given the organization over the past five years.

Questions or concerns during this transition process may be directed to: [John.Lee@HeroesSupportingHeroes.org](mailto:John.Lee@HeroesSupportingHeroes.org).

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## WA ice hockey teams close out successful 25th season

Despite winning just two games last season, many within the West Allegheny Ice Hockey Association felt this year's varsity team had the makeup to return the Indians to post-season play and compete for a Pens Cup championship.

Under the direction of second year varsity head coach Brian Boehm, the team did not disappoint. The Indians finished their 2017-2018 season with a 16-4 record in a very

tough A Division, thanks to a veteran group of talented sophomore and junior players who have the organization already looking forward to more success next season.

"We knew we had some really good players returning along with adding some players who we felt would be a good fit," says Boehm. "Our focus from day one was based on hard work, improving their knowledge of the game and, most importantly, buying into our team goals and approach. We played in a spring/summer league and also participated in a pre-season tourney, all in preparation for being game-ready for our regular season. Once our season started, you could sense almost immediately that the team had confidence in what they could do this year."

The varsity squad finished their regular season in fourth place with a first-round playoff bye. The team reached the quarterfinal before suffering a 4-3 overtime loss to Indiana in a match that saw officials disallow two WA goals.

The varsity squad wasn't the only WA hockey team to experience success this past season. The middle school team also posted strong regular-season results, going 12-2 and finishing third in their division. The team achieved two, six-game win streaks and advanced to the semi-final round in the playoffs before losing to Shaler. In January, West Allegheny Middle School principal Dr. Frank Hernandez recognized the entire team at a school assembly. Hernandez was presented with a WA hockey jersey by the team in recognition of his support of the team.

WA's junior varsity hockey squad finished its season with a 6-9-1 record. As in past seasons, there were both new and returning players on the team. After posting mixed game results during the first half of the season, the squad found the right formula in December and won four of its last six regular season games. The Indians earned a playoff berth but lost a tough 2-1 game in the first round.

Throughout the season, JV players often found themselves performing double duty, participating in both JV and varsity practices through Boehm's "call-up" approach.

"We try to recognize JV players who have demonstrated through hard work an opportunity to join the varsity team for games so they can be part of game action and contribute to our success," he says. "It also helps prepare these players to possibly step up and



West Allegheny hockey players get some last-minute instruction from head coach Brian Boehm. PHOTO BY MEGHAN HARDIMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

STORIES SUBMITTED BY FRIENDS OF WEST ALLEGHENY ICE HOCKEY

join the varsity team in coming seasons."

This past season marked the West Allegheny Ice Hockey Association's 25th. As such, the organization made a new commitment at the end of last season to improve play at all levels. Last year marked the first for a new youth program designed to encourage players new to ice hockey - and/or players

who are not yet old enough to join the middle school team - to become part of the WA program. Led by director of player development Mike Kennedy, the program's focus is entirely on skill development and allows players to put their skills into action through some scheduled games. WA plans to continue the program this coming season.

For more about West Allegheny ice hockey, visit [www.waicehockey.com](http://www.waicehockey.com).

## WA's Kellen Almady to participate in national showcase event

Kellen Almady has been selected to represent the West Allegheny Ice Hockey Association at the America's Showcase in St. Louis, Missouri in April. Almady, who is also a member of Team Pittsburgh, is the program's first representative since 2012 to make the team. Varsity head coach Brian Boehm said, "Kellen has been the catalyst for our club's remarkable turnaround and culture change. His work ethic and leadership abilities have complemented his ever improving skill set and made accomplishing my goals as coach much easier."

Team Pittsburgh selects the top junior and senior players from western Pennsylvania who have played a minimum of 75 percent of their high school's games for the season. The America's Showcase attracts college and junior hockey scouts and coaches from all over the country looking to recruit talent to their programs. Almady, who just finished his junior season at West Allegheny with 33 goals, 21 assists and 54 points in 25 total games this season, will be one of the 20 western Pennsylvania players looking to make an impression on those scouts. Boehm summarized the opportunity as "the culmination of all the hard work and commitment Kellen has displayed for two seasons. This honor is just one more step in the club's evolution in becoming a premier hockey program."



Kellen Almady PHOTO BY CHERYL HOWCROFT



## Special anniversary golf classic to benefit the WACL

The Parkway West Rotary Club's 20th Annual Gerry Dulac Charity Golf Classic will be held on Monday, July 16 at the Sewickley Heights Golf Club in Sewickley. Along with supporting their traditional causes, this year's proceeds will once again be directed to the Backyard Project, a new flexible outdoor area for reading, relaxing and engaging at the Western Allegheny Community Library. The event had a special kick-off on Thursday, March 22 with a luncheon and check presentation hosted at the library. With spring fast approaching, the excitement is already building for this special 20th anniversary of the charity event.

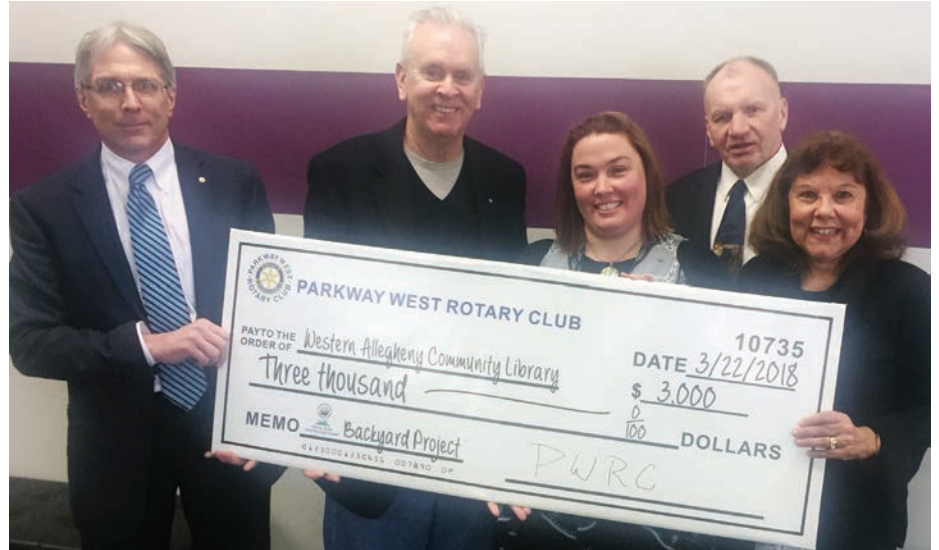
The day promises great golf, gifts, skill prizes, entertainment and unmatched hospitality at a price that makes the tournament the best value for a charity event in western Pennsylvania. The festivities are topped off with a sit-down dinner that includes silent and live auctions, plus a special award recognizing a longtime contributor to the tournament. In addition, to celebrate the anniversary, each participant will receive a special gift when they enter - a pair of FootJoy waterproof golf shoes valued at \$120.

The Gerry Dulac Charity Golf Classic continues to grow each and every year, with greater participation, more prizes and increased

charitable donations. This year's special anniversary outing will include music, dining and prizes at Sewickley Heights.

To download an entry form or register online, visit [www.parkwaywestrotary.com](http://www.parkwaywestrotary.com). Rotary is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible and go directly toward furthering their efforts of service.

Sam Duerr III, golf classic chair; Gerry Dulac; Amy McDonald, Western Allegheny County Library development director; Fred Liechti, Parkway West Rotary president; and Marilyn Walters, WACL board member, pose with a check presented to the library to fund its backyard project.



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## Ohio Valley Hospital's Diabetes Day turns 10

Ohio Valley Hospital hosted its 10th Annual Diabetes Day on March 20. For an entire decade, the hospital has been providing free testing, local resources and wellness information to its community through this event. One hundred and fifty people braved some pretty chilly conditions to participate on that snowy first day of spring.

The most important benefit of the free event was the availability of testing for attendees, many of whom are diabetics. Available testing included an A1c, which shows the body's blood sugar levels over a three-month span; a glucose test, which shows the body's current blood sugar level; and cholesterol and bone density exams. Regular checks in these areas are extremely important for diabetics and non-diabetics alike.

The annual event hosted a variety of healthcare and diabetic-specific businesses and organizations from all over Allegheny County. Vendors such as Sanaljon, Sewickley Eye Group, Primary Care Pharmacy Services, Gallagher Home Health Services and AstraZeneca were on hand to present information, offer handouts and provide support.

This year, the Western Area YMCA, Focus on Renewal, the Sto-Rox Family Neighborhood Health Council and Central Blood Bank were just a few who joined in on the fun in Ohio Valley Hospital's brand-new community room. The idea behind this room

was to have local resources spread their missions of health and safety to those who live in the greater area.

In addition, Diabetes Day featured lectures to continue the conversation about this relevant health topic. Dr. Elena Georgievskaya and Henry Mokube, PA-c, from Ohio Valley Hospital's Physician Services group, led discussions on ways to monitor and treat diabetes. Physicians from the community, as well as Ohio Valley Hospital, also took part in a panel discussion titled "Diabetes Prevention and Lifestyle Management."

Susan Zikos, RN, LDN, CDE, Ohio Valley Hospital diabetes educator and the co-planner of the event, loved how the event united people with similar life paths. Zikos explained that community

members benefit greatly from this event because "people who attend see many others who are dealing with the same things that they are dealing with. It is a comfort to know that you are not alone in your struggles."

Diabetes is a disease that is prevalent in the area. Through events like Diabetes Day, Ohio Valley Hospital is doing its part to combat the disease by offering free testing, education, resources and awareness. Anyone who was unable to attend the event but would like to learn more about healthy lifestyle resources can contact Susan Zikos at (412) 777-6205.



**ABOVE:** Various medical professionals discussing proper diabetes prevention and management techniques with attendees.

**RIGHT:** OVH Nutrition Services Chef Tom DeGori demonstrates a simple, healthy, and delicious whole wheat pasta salad recipe.



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## Acceptance, support and guidance

I recently had the opportunity to spend time at Disney World and Universal Studios with my niece and nephew, Emma and Matt, while on a mini-vacation prior to our Express Employment Professionals International Leadership Conference.

Disney World and Universal Studios, collectively, draw an average of approximately 83,000 guests per day. Express' leadership conference draws close to 1,100 franchise owners, staff, vendors, guest speakers and corporate leaders.

Though these are two very different experiences, I couldn't help but notice that, in both scenarios, a vast variety of people came together for an interactive experience and they all got along fabulously.

In both groups, I experienced and observed similar behaviors:

1. **An infinite amount of patience and acceptance** while waiting in lines - a lot of them! No challenges, disagreements or bad behavior - just true acceptance of the circumstances.

2. **A supportive environment** where staff kindly and calmly provided assistance to the many of us who were in unfamiliar territory and had lots of questions.

3. **The ability to give and accept guidance and assistance.**

What would happen if we approached every day's choices and challenges with the same acceptance, support and guidance?

As graduation time approaches, consider how you can bring acceptance, support and guidance into your interactions with students as you help them make the tough choices regarding advanced education, a job, a career, or simply the challenge of making decisions. For parents, do you ask questions to help with a thought-provoking, problem-solving conversation? Do you listen to the responses given? Do you accept that the response might not be what you wanted to hear? Do you support the decision-making process by providing guidance that is helpful and not combative? Are you willing to listen to ideas beyond your comfort zone? Are you willing to agree to disagree?

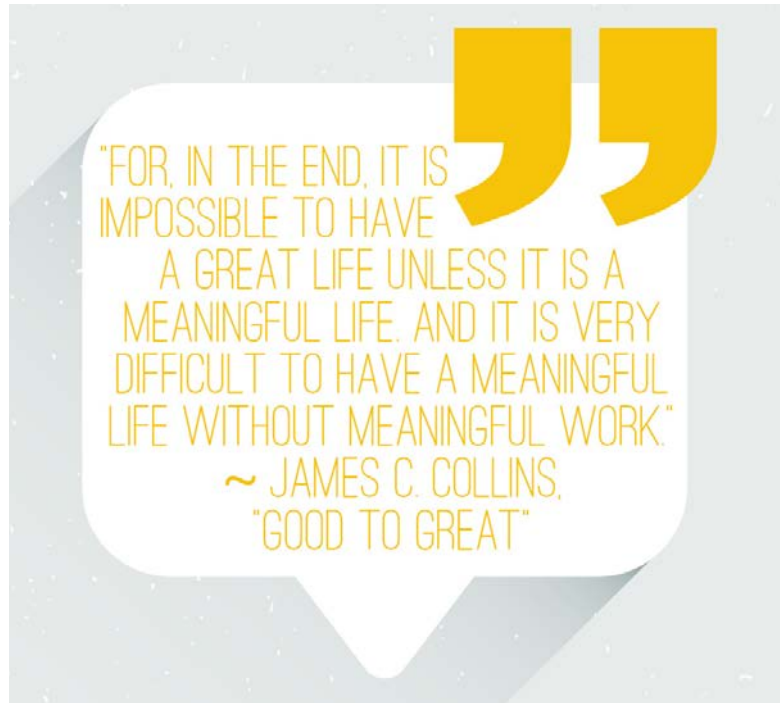
Helping individuals every day - whether it's someone in a job search or an employer looking for a new hire - I see many people who wish they had taken a different path than the one they took. I am certain that some of the reasons students choose a certain option is because "it is expected." Examples include pursuing a four-year college degree over a two-year program, or taking a job to save money versus juggling school and a job. Change and choice are hard, especially for high school and college graduates.

One of our leadership conference guest speakers, Jim Collins, author of "Great By Choice," challenges us to make conscious choices - with discipline. He urges us not to allow circumstances to rule us. He explains that successful people are disciplined people who engage in disciplined thought and disciplined actions - but it starts with who they are as people.

I challenge parents, counselors, family, friends and employers to approach these difficult conversations with acceptance, support and guidance - and to help students focus on the "who" versus the "what" as they begin a path of study or work after high school or college.

If we commit to the daily practice of acceptance, support and guidance, could each day and the future of our students be as enriching as the leadership conference and as magical as Disney World and Universal Studios?

If you are looking for alternative ways to help - check out our Job Genius series at [ExpressPros.com/JobGenius](http://ExpressPros.com/JobGenius) or reach out to us at (412) 494-2000.



*Deb Gray, owner of the award-winning Pittsburgh West office of Express Employment Professionals, is an active member of the regional business community and a proud supporter of many local charities and educational institutions. She can be reached at (412) 494-2000 or [deb.gray@expresspros.com](mailto:deb.gray@expresspros.com). More information is available at [ExpressPros.com/wpittsburghpa](http://ExpressPros.com/wpittsburghpa).*

## Mustio to step down after eight terms in office

For the first time in 15 years, many voters in western Allegheny County won't see a familiar name on the ballot when they go to vote for their state representative in November.

That's because in January, state Rep. Mark Mustio announced he wouldn't be running for reelection. Mustio says he's planning to step away from public office at the end of this year, bringing to a close a combined 19 years in office at the state and local levels. He is currently serving out his eighth term as a state representative and, prior to being elected in 2003, served as a Moon Township supervisor.

Mustio was first elected to represent the 44th House District in a special election held to replace John Pippy after Pippy was elected to the Pennsylvania Senate. Since being elected, he has served on the House Professional Licensure Committee and the Liquor Control committee. He currently chairs the former. Mustio has also served on the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, as well as on the Appropriations Committee.

Four Republican candidates are currently vying for the 44th District seat. Those candidates are North Fayette Township supervisor Bob Doddato, Moon Township Municipal Authority treasurer Scott LaRue, Moon Township supervisor David Bachman and Valerie Gaydos, the founder and CEO of Capital Growth. Educator Michele Knoll of Sewickley is running as the sole Democrat.

The 44th District encompasses largely Democratic-leaning communities surrounding Pittsburgh International Airport. Over half of the residents in the district are registered as Democrats, yet Mustio managed to get reelected eight times. He also ran unopposed in the past two elections.

Mustio says he's still hoping to get a couple of things accomplished this year. He's supporting a proposed bill that would shrink the House legislature from 203 to 151 members. The House Appropriations Committee has estimated the measure would save taxpayers over \$10 million per year, but opponents of the bill argue it would reinforce unfair districting and give special interests more influence.

Mustio says he's also supporting a measure that would repeal a tax on soda in the Philadelphia area and prevent the tax from being imposed elsewhere in the state.

Looking back on the past couple of years, Mustio says the failure of some efforts he's supported have left him frustrated, even though they did affect some change. Last year, he and state Sen. Guy Reschenthaler, whose district overlaps with 44th House District, supported measures that would have granted amnesty to video gaming terminal operators. The House and Senate bills, taken together, would have both regulated and taxed the terminals, producing an estimated \$100 million in tax revenue for the state. Rather than a blanket amnesty measure, however, lawmakers instead passed a bill allowing certain truck stops to operate a limited number of the machines.

Mustio says he blames outside interests, particularly those with ownership stakes in Pennsylvania casinos, for the resulting bill. "You have so much of that going on right now that's untaxed. The casinos claimed it was a threat to their business model and it's legalizing them when it's already happening was very frustrating," says Mustio. "Guy and I worked really hard on that."

As a member of the Liquor Control Committee, Mustio also got behind an effort to privatize Pennsylvania liquor stores, and while that effort also failed, lawmakers did pass a measure allowing grocery stores to sell wine and beer.

In a statement following Mustio's announcement, Reschenthaler applauded Mustio's efforts on both counts, along with an effort to shield Allegheny County residents from property taxes.

"Mark Mustio has represented our local community with distinction and effectiveness," Reschenthaler said. "Mark protected taxpayers with his anti-windfall legislation that lowered property tax rates after Allegheny County's reassessment. He has also been a leader in the recent commonsense modernizations that put wine and beer in grocery stores. I am proud to call him a friend and a mentor. I wish Representative Mustio all the best, and I thank him for his years of exemplary service."

Bernadette Puzzuole, who recently retired as the CEO of the Pittsburgh Airport Area Chamber of Commerce, called Mustio a "true friend to the airport area - one we could always call on for help, and one who always worked to deliver for us."

She added that he will be greatly missed.

Matt Smith, the former Democratic state senator who represented the 37th District adjacent to the 44th House District, worked with Mustio on a number of efforts.

"It was an honor to work in a bipartisan and bicameral way with Rep. Mustio during my time in the state Senate," says Smith, who is now president of the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce. "Rarely do you find a public official with the combination of integrity, insight, dedication and commitment to the community that Mark has and I really cherish our partnership. Finding good people of both parties is increasingly difficult and this makes Mark's retirement all the more bittersweet for me - I am very happy for him, but his departure is a true loss for our General Assembly."

Pat Jennette, this magazine's publisher emeritus, says Mustio has been "a fantastic representative for our community."

Among his clear successes, Mustio said he feels he can count the money he's secured for area infrastructure. That, he says, has helped drive the local economy, which at the time he was elected was facing an uncertain future.

"When I first was elected in 2003 - that would have been after 9/11 - US Air was pulling out, we were losing the hub, and that was going to be a real challenge," he says. "But I think we weathered that storm really well and worked with Republicans and Democrats to get money for infrastructure here. And that's helped bring in more business and commercial diversity into the area."



State Rep. Mark Mustio is pictured at his office in Moon Township with longtime staff members Bonita Wilson and Jim Scott.

As evidence of that, Mustio points to the success of Pittsburgh International Airport under CEO Christina Cassotis and Shell's decision to build an ethylene cracker plant in the area.

"If the region sold stock, I'd buy it," he says.

Mustio says he's always been willing to reach across the aisle but also says that social media has led to a polarizing atmosphere in Harrisburg that's been counter-productive.

"It's just a nasty environment right now," he says. "With social media, everything's so instantaneous, it really just adds fuel to the fire, whether some things said are true or not - this was even before Trump was elected. I'm the type of person that tries to get results and work with people to get things done. And there's that mindset on wings of both parties that are just steadfast, no compromise, and I don't think that's healthy for the state or the country."

In January of last year, Mustio was awarded the Pennsylvania Healthcare Association Better Life Award in recognition of a bill he sponsored requiring assisted living residences using fossil fuel heating systems to install carbon monoxide detectors. Mustio says he sponsored the measure after the parents of a family living in Moon Township passed away at an assisted living facility from carbon monoxide poisoning. The facility did not have carbon monoxide alarms and was not required to have them. The measure took eight years to get through the legislature but was written relatively quickly.

"I called in the Assisted Living Home Associations - there's two of them in Pennsylvania - and said, 'Here's what we want to do, you guys write it.' And you know what, it got done, like that. They said, 'Usually we've never had anything like this happen before.

Usually legislators pass it and it's jammed down our throats. And we fight it because it's too onerous.' It worked out perfectly. They supported it and it got through the Senate with a couple changes. That was eye-opening to me... Hopefully it saves some lives in the future. That's not one of those front-page news stories, but it had an impact. And had it been in place that family's parents would have been alive."

Mustio has also been awarded the NFIB Guardian of Small Business Award, the Taxpayer Watchdog award and the 2006 Economic Development and Job Creation awards. In April of 2015, he was awarded the Legislative Legacy Award by the Pittsburgh Airport Area Chamber of Commerce. Mustio once served as the organization's chair and has helped secure numerous grants for the chamber over the years.

He's also served on boards for the Western Area YMCA, the Moon Area Excellence in Education Fund and the Airport Corridor Transportation Association.

Another goal Mustio set for himself by the end of his term has nothing to do with politics or legislation. It has to do with his weight. Since first being elected, Mustio says he's put on 30 pounds that he'd like to lose by Nov. 30. For added motivation, he's sent out an email pledging to donate \$100 for every pound he loses to JDRF. He's hoping to write a check for \$3,000 to the organization on his last day in office. He's encouraging others to take on similar challenges.

"My last day, I want to be able to go out serving," he says.

Mustio called working with his longtime staff members Bonita Wilson, Jim Scott, Joy McKee and Kelly Roth "a joy." He also thanked his constituents for all of their support over the years.



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## How a DNA test united a local family and solved a 70-year-old mystery

STORY AND PHOTO  
BY DOUG HUGHEY

In 2015, Carol Thompson told her husband that she wanted a DNA testing kit for Christmas.

Like a lot of people who order the tests, Thompson, who lives in Oakdale, was curious about her ancestry. She didn't know who her father was and never had a relationship with her mother. Most of what Thompson did know about her background had come from the woman who raised her, a biological aunt and census records.

Thompson ended up receiving that DNA kit and was tested through Ancestry.com. When she got her test results back, she discovered that she was predominantly Polish. She also found out her DNA was very similar to another person who had gotten their DNA tested through Ancestry.com with the username "gbaker." Thompson had no idea who the person was, yet the test results suggested the two samples were close enough that they could have come from first cousins.

Ancestry.com gave Thompson the means to contact gbaker but Thompson didn't act on the opportunity for months. When she finally did reach out, she ended up exchanging numerous messages with a person named Geri Baker in an effort to figure out their connection. Some details that Thompson's biological aunt had given her about a man her mother had dated finally led to the two making a startling discovery.

"Carol's father was a steel worker who worked on the North Side," says Baker. "She said he walked with a really bad limp. I never thought much about it, but my father had polio as a child and walked with a limp. His name was Frank. When Carol said her father's name was also Frank, I gave her my number and said, 'Call me.'"

Baker says that when Thompson revealed those details she "literally couldn't breathe." Stranger yet, Baker lives in Imperial, just a couple of miles away from Thompson. For years, the two had run in many of the same circles. They knew some of the same people and their grandchildren had both attended West Allegheny. They'd even grown up in the same North Side neighborhood. Yet the two had never met.

Baker says that when she told her siblings the news they were no less shocked.

"I called up my brothers and sisters and they said, 'You're out of your mind,'" says Baker.

She says one of her brothers, John Serbicki, had his own DNA tested to make sure. The results confirmed the initial findings, that his DNA was close enough to Thompson's for them to be half siblings.

"It's not that I was skeptical of the people, I was skeptical of the procedure," says John. "You go decades, and after decades, you

kind of know everything about yourself and your family. You're not in discovery mode, and all of a sudden you're in discovery mode."

Following their revelation, Thompson and Baker agreed to meet for the first time last spring at a North Fayette senior luncheon. When they told some of the other seniors their story, those seniors remarked on their family resemblance. They've been meeting up

regularly at the luncheons ever since.

In November of last year, Baker convinced the rest of her siblings to meet their half sister at a comedy night at the McDonald VFD. Thompson and her half brother Frank Serbicki didn't even need an introduction. They met in the parking lot as they were walking from their cars.

"Carol walked up behind them and my sister-in-law took one look at her and said, 'Frank, I think that's your sister,'" says Baker. "He walked over and, guess what, it was his sister."

That night, they discovered an odd coincidence. Frank's two

sons are named Frank and David. Thompson's two eldest sons are also named Frank and David.

Since meeting, Thompson and her newfound siblings have hit it off pretty well. They're all in their mid- to late 60s or early 70s and they all live in the area. Thompson's husband and her half brothers have found they have a lot in common. They've even gone out together a few times. In March, Thompson hosted her half siblings at her house for the first time.

"I wasn't looking to have a big family reunion," Thompson says. "But these people are so nice and so friendly. We've hit it off wonderfully."

No one can be sure, but the siblings say they suspect their father - who has passed - probably never knew about his eldest daughter. Thompson says she believes that her mother attempted to disguise the fact that she had gotten pregnant out of wedlock by marrying another man who she had previously dated.

"My mother was 21 when she got pregnant with me," says Thompson. "She had been going with a fellow who was in the Navy. They wrote back and forth and she decided when she got pregnant to wait for his ship to come in and get married. They got married, he got shipped out, and she was in California. My grandfather and grandmother sent my mother's younger sister out to California to get her and bring her back to Pittsburgh. She was seven months pregnant at the time."

A handwritten medical record Thompson obtained indicates that her mother was working as a stenographer at a steel company when she gave birth to her. She says her aunt told her that her mother returned home one day and told the family she had lost the baby.



Thanks to a DNA test, Carol Thompson of Oakdale (at far right) found out she has four half siblings living in the area. They are Donna Bushey, Frank Serbicki, Geri Baker and John Serbicki.



Thompson, though, was born in August of 1944. An official birth certificate filed with the state lists her as having her mother's maiden name. All other records, however, including the certificate of birth from the hospital and even a cradle roll certificate from a church, list the name of the woman who raised Thompson. On a bill from the hospital, Thompson's mother's married name is written after her own, crossed out and the name of the woman who raised her written after it.

Thompson says that when she was about 4, the woman who was raising her told her she was not her real mother "because the people across the street knew so she wanted it to come from her." Years later, Thompson says that woman revealed that she had purchased Thompson from Thompson's mother. She also said that the practice wasn't uncommon at the time. Thompson says she believes a well-known neighborhood doctor helped facilitate this black market baby trade in the North Side and that another boy she grew up with was also acquired through a similar transaction.

An article published by the BBC in March indicates that, in the decade prior, this same practice was not uncommon in London. That piece cites a newspaper article from the early 1930s denouncing the rampant black market baby trade. That BBC article, entitled "Who were my parents - and why was I left on a hillside to die?" tells the story of Anthea Ring, who as a baby was abandoned in a field. Ring was found and adopted. Not unlike Thompson, she recently used DNA testing to help identify her parents. Also like Thompson, she figured out she was an illegitimate child.

For years, Thompson says her biological mother continued living in the same neighborhood and would even periodically check in on her. Thompson says she remembers in particular her mother coming to her fifth birthday party with her two daughters but not knowing who any of them were. Even after Thompson's mother moved away, she continued corresponding with the woman raising her.

At the same time, Thompson's biological father also lived in the same neighborhood, where he raised his own family. Thompson and her younger half sister Donna Bushey even attended the same elementary school, though years apart. The rest of the children

attended private school while Thompson attended public school. Frank says they moved out of the neighborhood in 1958.

In 1961, Thompson says she ran away from home at the age of 16 and told the police her story.

"I told the authorities that [the woman who was raising me] wasn't my real mother," she says. "They contacted her and she gave them the contact info for my mother's younger sister, who was still in Pittsburgh. The court contacted her and she didn't know I existed. She had been married about a year and was pregnant with her first child. She said I could live with them but I couldn't say who I was."

Thompson declined that offer, instead opting to live with a foster family until she graduated from high school at the age of 17. She found work and married her first husband, who has since passed, at 18.

When Thompson was about 40, she says she looked up her aunt again. When she called her aunt's house, her aunt's mother answered. It was the first time Thompson had ever talked to her grandmother. Thompson learned that, like her and her mother, her name was also Carol. During an ensuing visit, Thompson gleaned a number of important details, including the ones that would eventually help her identify her father.

She says what her aunt did not do, however, was give her any more information about her mother's family. She says she still has not met her two half sisters on that side of the family and that her mother never expressed an interest in meeting her.

"I think she just moved on," says Thompson.

Thompson's mother has since passed. Yet in place of that missing part of her family, she has managed to connect with brothers and sisters who, up until a year ago, she never knew she had.

"It's nice, it's new," Thompson says about her newfound family members and ancestry. "I found out I'm part Polish. It's just interesting to me. I never had any sisters before."

Baker, who calls her newfound sister "Sis," says she's still getting used to the idea.

"She lives a mile away from me," says Baker. "It's really weird to find out we have an older sister."



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## This organization wants more fish in Montour Run

Bob Dolence would like it if there were more fish swimming in Montour Run.

It's not so much that he's an avid fisherman like the anglers who flock to the stream along the Montour Trail each spring to catch trout stocked by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. Rather, for him, the presence of fish are a positive indication of the stream's health, which is something he's been working toward for the past 17 years.

A West Allegheny graduate, Dolence grew up in North Fayette Township and, for six years, worked for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection as the deputy secretary of the Office of Mineral Resources Management. In 2001, he left the DEP to work in the private sector and joined a newly formed organization in the area called the Montour Run Watershed Association. Not unlike many other watershed associations across the state, the MRWA grew out of the Growing Greener Program, which started under Gov. Tom Ridge.

"That has prompted watershed initiatives all across the commonwealth because it provided expertise and funding to locals," says Dolence.

Over the years, the association has spearheaded a number of efforts to clean up Montour Run and its tributaries, including clearing streams of garbage and introducing plants to prevent shoreline erosion. It's also funneled millions of dollars worth of funds and services into area projects designed to filter acid mine drainage out of the watershed. For the most part, those projects aren't state-mandated, so if the organization did not exist, those projects likely would not, either.

Today, Dolence sits on the organization's board of directors and serves as its project monitor, helping it oversee five treatment systems in the watershed. The sites are designed to strip pollutants out of mine drainage that would otherwise flow into Montour Run and its tributaries. All of those sites are located near the headwaters of Montour Run in western Findlay Township.

This year, the MRWA will also be constructing a new site in North Fayette Township along Mahoney Road. The goal of that project is to filter aluminum and acid out of a polluted stream called Milk Run that starts at the intersection of Mahoney Road and Old Steubenville Pike. The stream gets its name from its cloudy water, which is caused by aluminum that's been dissolved in a nearby abandoned coal mine.

Like the MRWA's other filtration systems, this one will consist of ponds packed with limestone and vegetation that catch and filter mine drainage at its source. The MRWA estimates the system will remove 72,000 pounds of acid and 7,000 pounds of aluminum from the Montour Run watershed each year.

Sean Brady, executive director of the Hollow Oak Land Trust, says that his organization is looking forward to completion of the project, as both aluminum and acid are toxic to aquatic life. Brady

has been overseeing development of a system of trails in the Montour Woods, including a spur that will connect with the Montour Trail near the Forest Grove Sportsmen Rod and Gun Club. Hollow Oak also manages a small wetlands conservation area 100 yards downstream from where Milk Run empties into Montour Run.

"So Milk Run remediation is going to make a big difference," he says.

This past spring, larger than normal amounts of aluminum and other mine-related pollution emptied into Montour Run following heavy rains and warmer than usual temperatures. At the time of this writing, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission is still evaluating whether it will stock the stream with trout like it has done every spring since 2003. The commission started stocking Montour Run after the Allegheny County Airport Authority built a large de-icing pad at Pittsburgh International Airport. The pad captures aircraft de-icing chemicals, which are then recycled on airport property.

Dolence says that, despite the heavy rains, its passive treatment systems held up well, even when they were flowing at about four times their normal capacity. Were it not for those treatment systems, the impact on Montour Run could have been much worse. Even in years with normal rainfall and colder temperatures, the MRWA's sites remove an estimated 25 tons of dissolved iron and aluminum from the Montour Run watershed. The ponds also remove over 45 tons of acid annually.

The largest of these sites removes 32,000 pounds of iron compounds and 32,300 pounds of acid from the watershed each year. That site sits adjacent to I-576 on property at Pittsburgh International Airport. Originally built by the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, the MRWA later took over the project and expanded it, funneling \$674,000 worth of work and materials into it. The MRWA manages the site thanks to a partnership with the airport, which occupies a seat on the MRWA's board of directors. It's one of two MRWA sites that sit on airport property.

Kevin Gurchak, vice president of sustainability and natural resources for the Allegheny County Airport Authority, says the site next to I-576 was originally constructed to treat water in a mine unearthed during turnpike construction. Gurchak, who represents the airport on the MRWA's board, says it was estimated that the mine contained 30 to 60 million gallons of water when construction started.

"Over time, when they were done building the highway, the watershed association approached the airport and turnpike



Kevin Gurchak, vice president of sustainability and natural resources for the Allegheny County Airport Authority, is pictured with Jacqui Yeck, environmental program administrator, and Bob Dolence, project monitor for the Montour Run Watershed Association. PHOTO BY DOUG HUGHEY. The three are pictured in front of a polishing wetland, which forms the end point of a system (pictured below) filtering mine drainage. PHOTO SUBMITTED



commission and said, 'Hey, can we expand this and keep it going?'" says Gurchak. "The airport authority is pleased to work with MRWA in continuing and advancing these efforts."

Working with the company BioMost, Inc. of Mars, the MRWA added two additional vertical flow ponds and a wetland to the system. Water from the mine enters the first pond via a pipe packed with limestone that runs underneath the turnpike. The limestone raises the alkalinity of the water. Once the water empties, it interacts with oxygen, converting the dissolved iron into iron oxide, which sinks to the bottom of the pond as a rusty brown substance.

From there, the water flows into two vertical flow ponds where the water interacts with more limestone and rotting mulch. As the vegetation rots, it strips oxygen from the water. That prevents iron from coating the limestone so it can continue to neutralize the sulfuric acid in the water. The acid forms when water mixes with pyrite interlaced with coal in the mine.

Next, the water flows through a polishing wetland, where thickly planted cattails slow the flow, further stripping the water of metals and raising its alkalinity.

"The more contact time, the more productive the system will be in the iron removal," says Gurchak.

By the time the mine drainage discharges, its pH has gone from three to about seven, which is neutral. There are no moving parts, meaning no operational costs, and maintenance is performed about every 10 to 20 years. The MRWA just recently completed maintenance on that pond and three others, thanks to a \$100,000 grant from the S. Kent Rockwell Foundation.

Unlike a government agency, the MRWA does not have to go through a bidding process to build systems like these, meaning it can get the work done more efficiently.

"[When I was with the DEP] we found out that, at times, the most efficient way to use the money was not always to have the state issue contracts," Dolence says, "because it gets into competitive bidding...there's so many regulations. We can get this type of work done through a watershed organization for pennies on the dollar versus the state putting a contract out."

The MRWA pays for its projects largely through in-kind donations and grants, some of which are awarded through the DEP. Dollars from the state are raised by a federal tax on every ton of coal that is mined and sold.

"No taxpayer money goes to funding any of this," Dolence says. "It's a very specific line item."

At the same time, the MRWA works with area partners like local governments, landowners and contractors. One of its most important partners has been the Allegheny County Airport Authority, which joined shortly after the organization's inception. Two of the MRWA's treatment systems sit on airport property and the Allegheny Airport Authority donated \$100,000 to build one of them.

Findlay Township has also allowed the MRWA to construct and manage a filtration system. In 2007, the organization completed installation of a treatment system along the edge of the township's municipal lot. The system treats water discharging from a mine across Clinton Road. It has been estimated that the system removes about 1,700 pounds of aluminum and 14,000 pounds of acid annually.

Another project the MRWA manages sits on private property off Boggs Road. That system consists largely of a wetland designed to remove iron from the water as it slowly flows through a manmade marsh. The MRWA estimates the wetland removes about 10,000 pounds of metals annually. Again, the MRWA was only allowed to build and manage the system thanks to permission from the landowner.

Over the past year, the MRWA has also been working with Landowners Continental Communities, which manages Settlers Place Apartments, to build its Milk Run project.

Dolence says the organization prefers this method of building partnerships to accomplish its aims. He points out that's not the way every environmental organization functions but that it has been effective in this area thanks to those who are concerned about the health of the watershed.

"The MRWA has the culture of, it's an advocacy for cleaner water," he says. "We want to see more fish...And, there are some groups out there, they have attorneys, and they sue for things. That's not the way we do work. If we see a problem we approach people."

For more about the MRWA, visit [www.mrwa.info](http://www.mrwa.info). For more about the MRWA's upcoming Milk Run project, see the February West Allegheny edition of Allegheny West Magazine at [awmagazine.com](http://awmagazine.com).



**ABOVE:** An excavator stirs medium in an impoundment on a pond managed by the Montour Run Watershed Association. Iron oxide is responsible for the orange coloration. **BELOW:** Montour Run is considered impaired by the state but has been improving. **PHOTOS SUBMITTED**



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# West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2018

**The** West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame has announced its inductees for the class of 2018. Inductees will be honored at the sixth annual hall of fame induction ceremony May 19 at SNPJ Lodge 106 in Imperial. A social hour will begin at 5 p.m., with dinner served at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$50 per person or \$350 for a table of eight. Sponsorships are also available. Funds raised help financially support West Allegheny athletic programs. Tickets can be purchased at the North Fayette Township and Findlay Township parks and recreation offices, as well as at the Oakdale Borough Municipal Building. Children's dinner options are also available.

The following inductees were chosen based on their contributions to West Allegheny athletics and, in some cases, their success at the post-secondary level. All inductees are nominated via written letters from the public. Nominees must have at least two letters of recommendation to be considered. To nominate an athlete, coach/administrator, patron/contributor or team, fill out a nomination form at [www.awmagazine.com](http://www.awmagazine.com).

## Dorin Dickerson - Athlete

Dorin Dickerson is being inducted into the West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame in the category of athlete, as he is one of the finest to have ever graduated from West Allegheny High School.

Dickerson graduated from West Allegheny High School in 2006. During his high school football career, he played a number of positions, including wide receiver, running back, quarterback, safety, corner back and kick returner. As a junior, Dickerson rushed for 1,065 yards and scored 13 touchdowns. He also caught 25 passes for 517 yards and eight touchdowns. During his senior year, he rushed for 1,429 yards on 182 carries and scored 30 touchdowns. He also caught 22 receptions for 423 yards and six touchdowns. His total combined 36 touchdowns led the entire WPIAL that season. On the defensive side of the ball, he caught four interceptions.

As stated in a letter of support, Charlie Cherico writes, "[Dorin] was one of the best football players we have ever seen at West A and we have seen some great ones."

Bob Palko, who was head coach of the football team when Dickerson played, says Dickerson was one of the most talented players he has ever coached, particularly on offense. He also says Dickerson was one of the most humble players he has ever met.

In recognition of his high school senior season, the Associated Press named Dickerson its Pennsylvania Class AAA Player of the Year. The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette also named him player of the year and Keystone Recruiting named him the Pennsylvania Class AAA Player of the Year and WPIAL Player of the Year. The Pittsburgh Athletic Association awarded Dickerson with its Mercury Award, effectively naming him the top football player in all of western Pennsylvania. Dickerson was further named to the Post-Gazette's Fabulous 22 team, the Pittsburgh Tribune Review Terrific 25 team and the Harrisburg Patriot News Platinum 33 team. He additionally was selected to play in the U.S. Army All-

American Game and the All-American Bowl, an all-star game for the country's top players.

Dickerson's lifelong friend Chris Clark says that, even at a young age, Dickerson could run faster and jump higher than anyone else in school. Clark states, "Although Dorin was a much

better athlete than anyone else, he always wanted to give credit to someone else or focus on team achievements versus individual efforts." Clark further remembers, "Dorin never got a big head, but always considered himself just one of the guys throughout his WA years in school."

Upon graduation, Dickerson chose to attend the University of Pittsburgh over the University of Iowa, University of Michigan or Penn State University. Following his senior season, he was named an All-American with Honors by the Association Press, CBS Sports, the Football Writers Association of America, the Sporting News and the Walter Camp Football Foundation. He is the only player in Pitt history to have earned that distinction as a tight end. The two previous Pitt players to earn All-American status at the end position - Mike Ditka and Joe Walton - earned that honor before the inception of the tight end position. Dickerson was also considered a finalist for the John Mackey Award, which honors the top tight end in



Dorin Dickerson  
PHOTO BY PITT ATHLETICS

college football.

Dickerson was subsequently drafted into the NFL and played for six years on seven professional teams, including the Houston Texans, Buffalo Bills and Detroit Lions. In 2016, he was inducted into the WPIAL Hall of Fame. Dickerson is currently a sports broadcaster on the sports talk radio station 96.3 FM The Fan.

Clark relates that, while Dickerson is proud of his athletic achievements, he is now most proud of being a devoted father of two growing boys. Clark shares, "Dorin has always remained level headed about everything he has done over the years, but he is proudest about the life that he and Rachele have created in raising two sons, Jace and Jett!"

## Dr. David Quinn - Patron/ Contributor

Dr. David Quinn's induction into the West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame recognizes his outstanding contributions to the West Allegheny basketball program. As Josh Bears, who coached alongside Quinn for 10 years, writes "since his playing days at West Allegheny ended, Doc decided he was going to make a difference in not only his children's athletic lives, but also the [lives of the] children of the WA community. He chose coaching as his avenue for making a difference."



Dr. David Quinn  
PHOTO BY DOUG HUGHEY

As the varsity team's head coach, Quinn had two successful seasons before he gave up the position due primarily to his growing optometry practice. Over the past decade, he has continued to serve the district as an unpaid volunteer assistant varsity coach. During his tenure, WA teams have appeared in three WPIAL semifinals. One of those appearances, in 2007, ultimately ended with the team winning a WPIAL championship. That team was inducted into the West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame last year.

Quinn is also credited with developing the West Allegheny Youth Basketball Program, which has helped young athletes learn the sport and develop their skills. Derrik Zeroski says that he and his classmates started playing basketball in third grade thanks to that youth program. Zeroski and those teammates went on to win West Allegheny that WPIAL championship in 2007.

The following year, Zeroski broke a 30-year-old school scoring record set by Quinn, who scored 560 points for West Allegheny in 1978 before the inception of the three-point line.

According to Bears, Quinn was the first one out on the court to congratulate Zeroski when he broke that record.

"Even today, I consider Coach Quinn a dear friend and one of the best mentors I was associated with (many of my teammates share the same sentiment) during my time at West Allegheny."

Vito Bovalino, whose son played basketball for West Allegheny and who coached alongside Quinn, further states that, "Coach Doc is an excellent basketball coach, a fine mentor, and a role model for all his players."

Bovalino writes that he watched Quinn "work very hard to help every player achieve their full potential."

When asked to make a comment about his selection, Quinn did not want to mention himself. Rather, he wanted to thank everyone associated with West Allegheny for giving him an opportunity to give back to the entire school community.

### West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame Inductees

2 0 1 7	<b>Athletes</b> August "Augie" Beyer Rocky McGeary <b>Coach</b> Pat Rheam <b>Contributor</b> Chris McGough <b>Team</b> 2006-07 WPIAL Champ. Boys Basketball Team	2 0 1 6	<b>Athletes</b> William Hager Matthew Majocka Amanda Yothers <b>Coach/Administrator</b> George Allison <b>Team</b> 2006 State Champion Girls Volleyball Team
	<b>Athletes</b> 2 Dr. Kevin Coates William Glass Gary Hager Ben Herbert Ron Tarquinio <b>Coach</b> 0 Alex Kramer Bob McFarland Sr. 5		<b>Athletes</b> 2 Brian Cornell Michael Johnson Scott Patterson Michael Polidor R. Darrel Wilson <b>Contributor</b> 1 Richard "Dick" Glavier 4
2 0 1 3	<b>Athletes</b> Michael Craig Tyler Palko Jim Quinn Christine Taranto <b>Coach</b> Guy Rippole	2 0 1 2	<b>Athletes</b> Dave Chappell Jim Hamilton Ben Karcz Ray Perko Lauren Schaffer <b>Coach</b> Ed Sarachine <b>Contributor</b> Dennis Cornell Sr. <b>Team</b> 2001 State Champion Football Team

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## West Allegheny Girls Track Teams, 1996-1997 - Team



Pictured are members and coaches of the 1996 West Allegheny girls track team. PHOTO COURTESY WEST ALLEGHENY SCHOOL DISTRICT

The 1996 and 1997 West Allegheny girls track teams were selected for induction into the West Allegheny Hall of Fame for being the first school teams to win back-to-back WPIAL championships. As their former coach Mike Quinn relates, “The depth of these teams in all four facets of track - sprints, distance, jumps and throws - allowed them to achieve undefeated seasons in AA competitions both years. When one looks at the team scores you need to realize that the scores were purposely held down for sportsmanship reasons because once you score 76 points you have won and there was no desire to humiliate other teams by running up the scores.”

As a result of their hard work, dedication and teamwork, a new culture of excellence for the West Allegheny track program was established. Bob Rose, then assistant track coach, describes it as “lightning in a bottle.”

“West Allegheny has had a number of special student athletes over the years, but this group etched their way into school history with a unique blend of talent, versatility, work ethic and heart,” Rose writes. “These athletes overcame injury and adversity and were among the toughest people I’ve ever been around, both physically and mentally.”

Rose notes that the teams were “feared and respected throughout the entire WPIAL, controlling medal stands at numerous invitationals and making an indelible mark in school history.”

The team’s distance coach, James Hamilton, who was inducted into the West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame in 2012, says, “Every one of those girls were team players and didn’t care about individual stats. We still had a lot of talent but it was fun.”

Melissa Klobchar, a standout performer on that team, says, referring to that 1996 WPIAL win, “We competed as individuals, but we always say that being part of a team is the only thing that keeps us going. We worked together to win this.”

Combined, the teams earned 17 WPIAL event medals and 12 different athletes secured nine PIAA event qualifications. They also secured three PIAA medals and set a WPIAL record in the 4x800 meter relay.

Quinn summarizes the achievement of these teams by stating, “Though it doesn’t show up on a score sheet, I most remember the joy with which these teams competed.”

## Jim Yanek - Athlete

Jim Yanek is being inducted into the West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame for his contributions to the wrestling program as an athlete - but his induction also acknowledges the adversity he has overcome and the impact he has made both on the wrestling community and young athletes.

As a West Allegheny student athlete, Yanek recorded a number of firsts during his outstanding wrestling career. He was the first freshman ever to wrestle as a member of the varsity squad, the first wrestler to win 100 matches, the first four-year letterman in wrestling, the first three-time section champion in wrestling and the first wrestler to finish a season undefeated. Along with his brothers, Carl and Eric, the Yanek Family had the third highest number of family wrestling wins in Pennsylvania wrestling history.

Dennis Cook, who wrestled alongside Yanek, writes that from the time he was a freshman, Yanek was a leader “not vocally but by example with an intense work ethic and a strong desire to be the best he could be.” Cook writes that, as a sophomore, while most wrestlers were happy just to make the team “James was a face in the WPIAL.”

Yanek’s wrestling coach Pat Rheam writes, “Jimmy was not the quickest, strongest, or most knowledgeable wrestler by any

standard. However, he was the most tenacious athlete with an indomitable competitive spirit that was unmatched in my coaching career.”

After graduation, Yanek continued his wrestling career in college, an accomplishment that Cook writes was rare at that time. Yanek wrestled at Thiel College and California University.

Yanek was later injured in a tragic work-related accident. Coincidentally, Rheam was at the hospital looking after his father when Yanek was brought to the emergency room. As a result of that accident, Yanek



Jim Yanek is pictured with his brothers, Eric and Carl. PHOTO SUBMITTED

has been confined to a wheelchair for the past 20 years. Rheam recalls Yanek at the time saying he would be “Ok,” and he has embraced that attitude ever since.

“Still, he cannot be held back by his disability,” Cook writes. “He has continued to follow West Allegheny wrestling and giving advice to the wrestlers any chance he gets.”

As Rheam relates, “With the support of his wife, Shelly, and his own invincible, never-quit attitude, he has willed and worked his way to living a full and active life.” Rheam further states, “Jimmy has not only been an inspiration to others throughout our community, but also within the wrestling program that has meant so much to him.”

In his summary, Cook states, “James is more than worthy to be inducted into the West Allegheny Hall of Fame as one of the first West Allegheny wrestlers to have had major success on the mat and as a role model to our young wrestlers by showing them how to fight through anything and still have a positive outlook on life.”

## Paul DeBor - Patron/Contributor

Paul DeBor's induction into the West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame recognizes his invaluable contributions to West Allegheny athletics as a longtime sports chronicler. Using photography skills he first learned while serving in Vietnam, DeBor repeatedly volunteered his evenings and weekends without financial

compensation to attend most every sporting event in order to take pictures of students. These pictures most often became the pictures that parents hung on their walls at home or were placed in their most prized family picture albums.

In a letter of support for DeBor's candidacy, Laurie Cole writes, "Although Paul wasn't directly involved in West Allegheny athletics as a player or coach, he played an important role with the teams."

In another letter written in support, former track coach and current school board member Mike Quinn states that he wanted



Paul DeBor  
PHOTO BY EMILY DAVIS PHOTOGRAPHY

to nominate DeBor "for the efforts that he makes to ensure that all members of the teams get pictures, especially the ones that don't see much playing time." As Quinn further relates, "I have witnessed Paul sitting and freezing in an ice skating rink checking off numbers in a program to make sure everyone gets a picture." Quinn also states, "Paul especially focused on taking pictures of the athletes with modest skills who competed for the love of their sports and toiled for years without receiving any recognition." Quinn concludes, "I feel that this is a priceless message that he sends to all of our athletes that they are worthy and appreciated."

Over the years, DeBor's photography has frequently been featured in this publication. Pat Jennette, Allegheny West Magazine's publisher emeritus, says of DeBor, "Paul's sincerity, loyalty, community spirit and passion are second to none. He epitomizes the true meaning of giving back. From the time I worked with him at the school district through the years publishing this magazine, I watched Paul's painstaking efforts to do a thorough job for whatever event or activity he was photographing. He generously donated his photography skills to not just athletics, but school musicals and many other events."

DeBor was also a highly respected teacher who retired a few years ago from the school district.

"[Paul] was a wonderful reading teacher and always had the students' best interests at heart," writes Cole. "He carried that same caring of students from the classroom to the fields and gymnasiums as well as any other school events he was invited to photograph...I don't think there are many people who have contributed more to West A athletics from the sidelines..."

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## Gun laws could save lives

BY GABRIELLA SALVUCCI

Why should we be pressured into becoming violent? Why should we have to watch innocent people suffer from something like these mass shootings and crimes? Why are killing machines legal? Sure, there's background checks, but the last time I checked even they can't catch everything.

From what happened in Las Vegas, to Columbine, to Florida just this past Valentine's Day, why do we stand in silence as these massacres ring through our ears? We let our children across the country bear these times. They are afraid to go to school. They fear their own classmate could pull the trigger on any one of them. They will cry, in fear, which we can change. Why do we let the world suffer when we could change it? Why look away from our struggles when we can end them?

I have a dream that our generation will lead a greater life where we can open up about our hearts and our hurts. Instead of letting them struggle with mental health, get help for them. Be the one to offer the assistance. What would we be without these massacres? Weaker? No. As a nation, we would be stronger, happier and safer. Make the hatred stop, and turn it into hope for another tomorrow.

Adjusting gun laws will be a step in a good direction, a step toward ending the pain - but, first, as a community, as a state, as a nation, we must also distinguish hate. Gun laws, however, could save lives.

*Gabriella Salvucci is an seventh-grader at West Allegheny Middle School. She writes a blog at [getreadyforenews.wordpress.com](http://getreadyforenews.wordpress.com).*

*Perspectives is an opinion column submitted by readers.*



# Allegheny West Magazine

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# LIBRARY PROGRAMS & SPECIAL EVENTS

## COMMUNITY BLOOD DRIVE @ THE LIBRARY

**Saturday, May 5, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

Central Blood Bank is once again holding a Blood Drive at the library. Check back for details on our website & sign up online to participate in this worthy cause. Walk-ins are also welcome!

## "INDOOR-OUTDOOR TOUR" AT THE WALKER-EWING LOG HOUSE

**Tuesday, May 15, 7:00 p.m.**

The Pioneers West Historical Society in conjunction with WACHS invites the public to attend an "Indoor-Outdoor Tour" at the Walker-Ewing Log House, which has been lovingly maintained by the Pioneers West Historical Society since it was received as a gift in 1998 from Mrs. Jane Grace, a descendant of the Walkers and the Ewings. Check our website for details & sign up to join the tour today.

## AMERICAN GIRL TEA PARTY

**Saturday, May 19, 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

We'll have tea & treats, games, activities, door prizes, & more! Bring your own American Girl doll or check out one of ours to take to tea. Fundraiser tickets cost \$25 a pair, \$10 additional child, \$15 additional parent. A perfect Mother's Day gift! Sponsored by Celebrations.

## GEOCACHING FOR BEGINNERS

**Saturday, May 19, 11:00 a.m.**

Join us for an electronic excursion into Geocaching! Styled as the "world's largest treasure hunt," geocaching is a real-world, outdoor treasure hunting game using GPS-enabled devices. A husband and wife team of geocaching experts will show you how to get started, including how and where to find caches and what equipment you will need. To cap off the event, we'll hunt down the library's multi-stage puzzle cache! Bring a "trinket" to swap and your GPS device or GPS-enabled mobile phone.

## GATEWAY TO THE ARTS PRESENTS: PETER RABBIT PUPPET PLAY

**Saturday, May 26, 10:00—11:00 a.m.**

Come and romp through the garden with Peter Rabbit! The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust Arts Education Department presents *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, including puppet performance and hands-on workshop. A family event most appropriate for ages 4-9.

## W.A.F.E.L.'S SEMI-ANNUAL BOOK SALE

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## Findlay friends and WA classmates complete Army training together to become helicopter pilots

When childhood friends Brian Thompson and Eric Wasek were participants on youth baseball teams for Findlay Township, they would inevitably spend time looking skyward - but not always for fly balls.

Thompson and Wasek, both aviation fans, were able to identify all of the military planes that flew over the ball fields from the nearby 911th Airlift Wing and 171st Air Refueling Wing. As the Wings over Pittsburgh airshow used to coincide with spring baseball, the boys had ample opportunity to show off their knowledge.



ABOVE: Brian Thompson (left) and Eric Wasek were teammates on a Findlay Township youth baseball team. RIGHT: Wasek (left) and Thompson are pictured with Army aviator Lt. Gen. Michael D. Lundy at the 2017 George C. Marshall Leadership conference.

Both men knew at a young age that their life ambitions involved flying. Though the two expected to remain friends after graduating from West Allegheny High School in 2013, they never anticipated that their paths would align so closely after college.

Following their graduations from different four-year universities, the young men were both commissioned as second lieutenants at Fort Rucker, Alabama, the installation that provides all of the Army's flight training. In August, Thompson and Wasek will graduate as pilots of AH-64 Apache attack helicopters and begin careers supporting combat troops.

The young men were both commissioned as second lieutenants at their respective four-year universities. Upon graduation, they were assigned to Fort Rucker, Alabama, the installation that provides all of the Army's flight training. In August, when Thompson and Wasek complete this phase of training, they hope to pilot AH-64 Apache attack helicopters and begin careers supporting combat troops.

In addition to their interest in aviation and youth baseball, the young men were teammates on the West Allegheny High School football team and both participated in the school's JROTC program for four years. With the help of Maj. Dave Botizan, the

pair even landed back-to-back interviews for army scholarships.

After both young men were granted ROTC scholarships, their paths diverged a bit for the next four years. Thompson attended West Virginia University and received a degree in supply chain management. Wasek chose Akron University, where he majored in history with a minor in military science.

Wasek learned of the next Army duty assignment to Fort Rucker during his last months at Akron and immediately called Thompson to see what he knew. Upon walking Thompson through the steps to view the notification, the young men found out that not only were they both headed to Alabama, but that they were also to report on the same day and would be in the same class.

Thompson and Wasek both mentioned the intense competitiveness of preparing for a military career, stating that cadets are continually ranked from best to worst in academics, physical fitness and abilities in their chosen areas of training.

Of the available tracks within the Army - including armor, artillery, infantry and aviation - the Findlay natives identified aviation as their most coveted path. They were required to compete with prospects in the top 10 to 15 percent of their classes from all over the country to secure their assignments as pilots.

Thompson, who graduated college with a 4.0 GPA, mentioned the constant drive to get good grades, saying that he and Wasek, who graduated with a 3.9 GPA, "spent time at college positioning ourselves to get aviation."

In their final semesters of college, Wasek and Thompson attended the George C. Marshall Leadership conference in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas - an honor reserved for cadets in the top 20 percent of the Army ROTC's commissioning class.



Thompson and Wasek were the selectees from their universities, along with one cadet from each Army ROTC program across the nation. Wasek was also one of only 10 cadets to receive a special award for leadership activities at the event.

Though their training paths at Ft. Rucker were very similar, the helicopters in which they trained were from completely different eras. Thompson flew in the UH-72A Lakota, a recently released Army chopper with top-of-the-line electronics and technology.

Wasek trained in a TH-67 Creek/OH-58C Kiowa, a model that was introduced to the U.S. military in 1969, and flew missions during the Vietnam War. Wasek said he fell in love with the “pure pilotage” of the Kiowa, which will soon be phased out by the Army.



Eric Wasek stands in front of an OH-58C Kiowa, the helicopter in which he learned basic warfighting skills.

Even after individual training began, the young men saw each other on the base several times a week and spent much weekend time together “hanging out in Panama City, Florida.”

In the coming weeks, Thompson and Wasek will choose an advanced airframe, most likely an Apache, for their next phase with the Army. Potential mission locations include Japan, Germany, Italy and Korea. Wasek said that there is still a “fair chance” that they will be stationed somewhere together.

Thompson is proud that both he and Wasek’s goals are finally coming to fruition after all of their hard work.

“Every day, we have the realization that we’re getting paid to do this!” he said.

Both young men expressed gratitude to their parents, Jim and Sandy Thompson and Jeremy and Pattie Wasek, for their continual support. They also mentioned West Allegheny personnel Bob Palko, Dan Marshall, Andy Barry, and Brian Cornell as “not just coaches, but life coaches” who helped them develop into young men. Wasek and Thompson spoke with reverence of Sgt. Maj. Robert Word and Botizan, their JROTC instructors from high school.

“Maj. Botizan worked tirelessly to help us turn our dream into a reality and serves, to this day, as a mentor that both of us stay in touch with,” said Thompson.

## More alumni news: WA grad named Patriot League rookie of the week

The Patriot League named 2016 West Allegheny High School graduate Skyler Mason as its track and field javelin rookie of the week in March. Mason is currently in his second year at the U.S. Naval Academy, which he is attending on a scholarship. He spent one season at the Naval Academy Prep School in Newport, Rhode Island. Navy is a NCAA Division I school.



Skyler Mason  
PHOTO BY PHIL HOFFMANN,  
NAVY SPORTS

Mason earned the rookie of the week honor after recording two impressive javelin throws in his first two meets at the college level. In his first throw at the San Diego Collegiate Challenge, Mason recorded a throw of 192-07 to finish in second place behind the team’s captain. At the Sharon Irwin Meet, Mason recorded a personal best throw of 209-03 to win. At the time of this writing, he is ranked 14th in the East and 28th nationally in the NCAA.

At West Allegheny, Mason was a three-time state finalist in javelin. His junior season, he also won a WPIAL championship and finished second in the state, earning all-state honors along the way. Despite suffering an elbow injury his senior season, Mason still managed to qualify to compete in the WPIAL and PIAA meets. He finished his high school career as a four-year letterman on both the track and field and football teams. Mason was a football team captain his senior season. He still holds West Allegheny’s record in javelin.

Mason was coached in javelin at West Allegheny by his father, Rik Mason. Skyler’s younger brother Spencer is currently a javelin thrower at West Allegheny.



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Bunions are among the most common type of foot ailment today’s podiatrist treats, especially in women. Studies show that women are anywhere from two to nine times more likely to develop a bunion than men! While your high heels and peep toes are partially to blame, your foot type (passed down through your family) is the true culprit. Here’s the good news! Today’s podiatrist is the true expert when it comes to diagnosing and treating bunions.

For more information about bunions and their treatment, visit the American Podiatric Medical Association Web site at: [www.apma.org](http://www.apma.org).

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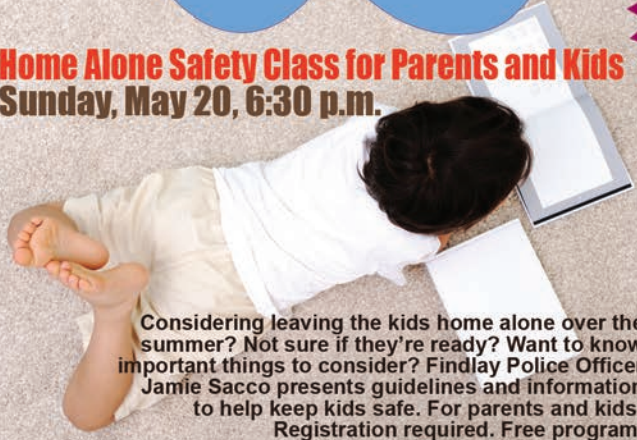
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**AMERICAN RED CROSS BABYSITTER'S TRAINING CLASS**  
Wednesday, June 13, 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
Findlay Township Activity Center - Lower Level

Learn how to be the best babysitter on the block (and impress your parents with a certificate)! Hands-on, fast-paced, one-day class sponsored by The American Red Cross covers basic childcare, emergencies, handling bedtime, discipline issues, communicating with parents, and finding and interviewing for babysitting jobs. Students receive a certificate upon completion. Wear comfortable clothing and bring a sweater or jacket as the center is air-conditioned. Video role-plays and lively discussions. Bring bag lunch and drink. Registration required. For ages 11-15. \$80 payable to Findlay Township.

**Home Alone Safety Class for Parents and Kids**  
Sunday, May 20, 6:30 p.m.



Considering leaving the kids home alone over the summer? Not sure if they're ready? Want to know important things to consider? Findlay Police Officer Jamie Sacco presents guidelines and information to help keep kids safe. For parents and kids! Registration required. Free program. Findlay Township Activity Center.



**Food Truck Thursdays**

*Last Thursdays through October, 4-8 p.m.  
Take a break from cooking and join us!!!*

- April 26 - Oh My Grill, Bubbas Dawgs, Kona Ice
- May 31 - South Side BBQ, Las Chicas, Kona Ice
- June 28 - Evil Swine BBQ, Bubbas Dawgs, Kona Ice
- July 26 - South Side BBO, Las Chicas, Sugar and Spice
- Aug. 30 - Wok of Life, Meat Here, Sugar and Spice
- Sept. 27 - Oh My Grill, Evil Swine BBQ
- Oct. 25 - Wok of Life, Meat Here

**Outdoor Flea Market**  
June 9, Clinton Park, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Parking spots for vendors are \$5 each. Vehicles must remain in the spot, but you can bring tables or tarps to put in front. Call or email to reserve.



Help place rocks painted last year in their new home at the Rainbow's End Playground in Clinton Park. Bring some of your own custom painted rocks to place. For a complete guide to the painting process, visit [www.thekindnessrocksproject.com](http://www.thekindnessrocksproject.com). There are great ideas on there as well! Let us share our kindness and gratitude with our community!

Sponsored by Armstrong Telephone Company

# WA TODAY

APRIL, 2018  
VOL. 40,  
No. 4

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

## Schools come together to support the West Allegheny Foundation Teachers' Cup

At the end of the night, it was the McKee Elementary team that came out on top after battling for the title of champions at this year's Teachers' Cup on March 2. Donaldson Elementary students and staff showed their enthusiasm and again captured the Spirit Award. The highly anticipated event was sponsored by the West Allegheny Foundation and raised over \$5,000.

Over 100 competitors came together to support the fundraiser and took part in the night's spirited challenges, which included goggle basketball, cup stacking, dress-up relay, hungry hippos and marshmallow toss. School and District administrators also got in on the excitement by facing off in basketball, push-ups and a scooter race.

The West Allegheny Foundation provides financial support for specified educational and/or community initiatives that are designed to enhance the quality of the life of District residents. The foundation has distributed over \$250,000 in the form of community and teacher grants over the years.



ABOVE: Team McKee proudly claims the Teachers' Cup.  
BELOW LEFT: Donaldson teacher Lisa Barr bows down to accept the Spirit Award, presented by the night's emcee, Jonathan Denk.  
BELOW MIDDLE: Superintendent Dr. Jerri Lynn Lippert and middle school administrators Megan Huchko and Dr. Frank Hernandez take a break from the competition.  
BELOW TOP RIGHT: Wilson teachers show their game faces as they prepare to launch teacher Renee Caruso in the hungry hippos challenge.  
BELOW BOTTOM RIGHT: Teacher Ron Neurohr battles it out for the high school team.



# #WeAreTeacherProud

# West Allegheny receives D. Richard Wynn Distinguished School Board Award

The West Allegheny School Board of Directors proudly received the D. Richard Wynn Distinguished School Board Award at the University of Pittsburgh Tri-State Area School Study Council dinner March 15. Board president Debbie Mirich accepted the award on the board's behalf and commended them for their ability to work collaboratively to enhance academic opportunities at all levels. The recognition reflected the board's exemplary governance and continued work to advocate for what is in the best interest for all students and staff. The board was also recognized for maintaining fiscal health to ensure high quality programming, excellent student-to-staff ratios and state-of-the-art facilities.



Current and former school board members Chip McCarthy, Robert Ostrander, Tracy Kosis, Mark Rosen, Debbie Mirich, Edward Faux, George Bartha, Ronald Pasic and Mike Quinn are joined by superintendent Dr. Jerri Lynn Lippert (center) at the University of Pittsburgh Tri-State Area School Study Council dinner. Missing from the photo is Tracy Pustover.

## District welcomes new administrators

West Allegheny is excited to announce two new additions to its administrative team. Tammy Adams has been named the new assistant to the superintendent for special education and student services. Dr. Shana Nelson has taken on the role of the new assistant to the superintendent for curriculum, instruction and professional learning.

Adams has served as superintendent of the South Side Area School District for the past five years. She brings over 25 years of exemplary experience in education to her new position at West Allegheny. Prior to serving as superintendent, Adams held the positions of acting superintendent, assistant superintendent, director of pupil services and emotional support teacher at South Side Area School District. Her extensive expert knowledge in gifted and special education reflects her passion for student advocacy and has garnered Adams distinction at the state level. Her experience in all aspects of student services - including interagency partnerships, counseling services, nursing services and mandates - will benefit West Allegheny tremendously. Adams will join the District team July 1 and fill the role of Elaine Fitzgerald, who will retire after 30 years of distinguished commitment and service to West Allegheny.

"Directing the student services and special education programs in the South Side Area School District has been a focal point of my educational career; thus, being provided with the opportunity to again serve in this capacity is an honor, especially in a high performing school district such as West Allegheny," said Adams. "I genuinely look forward to working in partnership with the deserving students and their supportive families, the governing leadership team, the exemplary staff and the engaged community as together we advance the shared vision of the West Allegheny School District."

Nelson joins West Allegheny from Pittsburgh Public Schools, where she served as a teacher for six years, elementary principal for four years, and a leadership specialist for the last four years. With over 14 years of experience in education, she brings to West Allegheny a robust and deep knowledge of research-based best educational practices in professional learning, curriculum and instruction, strategic systems thinking, and data analysis.

Nelson was an accomplished principal in the Pittsburgh Public Schools, leading a transformational K-8 school resulting in double-digit increases in the number of students scoring proficient and advanced on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment tests. She is also recognized by Duquesne University, where she completed her doctorate and superintendent letter of eligibility, as a distinguished graduate alumni fellow. Officially joining the District team on July 1, Nelson fills the role of Dr. Christine Assetta, who has served the District for 31 years with excellence and unwavering compassion.

"It is truly an honor to join such an amazing team of hard working educators," said Nelson. "As the new assistant to the superintendent for curriculum, instruction and professional learning, I look forward to partnering with the West Allegheny teachers and staff to ensure our students have access to a rigorous standards-aligned curriculum and high-quality instruction every day to prepare them for success in college and their future careers. I am confident that, together, we will build upon the West Allegheny tradition of excellence and work collaboratively toward a shared vision for tomorrow."

"Although it is with heavy hearts that we say goodbye to Mrs. Fitzgerald and Dr. Assetta after three decades of exemplary service to our District, I am thrilled to welcome both Mrs. Adams and Dr. Nelson to the West Allegheny team," stated Dr. Jerri Lynn Lippert, superintendent of West Allegheny School District. "They exemplify servant leadership as well as a student-centered advocacy approach to their work, which will greatly complement our staff and students. They prioritize the importance of building positive relationships and working in collaboration. Their professional expertise will contribute to the work of our Framework for Excellence and continue to accelerate West Allegheny School District forward as we ensure all of our students are career and college ready. Adams and Nelson are both highly regarded amongst the districts they serve and have won state and national recognitions for their contributions to their districts. We are extremely fortunate to have them join our team and support our continued growth and tradition of excellence."



Tammy Adams and Dr. Shana Nelson join the District administrative team.



# Superintendent's Message

When I began my career in education almost 20 years ago, I never imagined the kinds of difficult challenges school districts would be facing today. At the top of the list is the growing number of potential perils that directly impact the safety and well being of our students. As we began laying the foundation of our strategic plan for our continually evolving Framework for Excellence nearly four years ago, one key component was ensuring that all students are educated in a safe and supportive learning environment.

We never could have foreseen the importance of these guiding principles as they are now applicable in the wake of the recent school shootings in Florida and Maryland, and the increased frequency of these events across the country. One of our primary goals, defined in the Framework for Excellence, is Safety and Emergency Preparedness: The District will prepare all students and staff for emergency situations and ensure all facilities are well-maintained and equipped with enhanced security measures.

Working in partnership and collaboration with the Findlay and North Fayette police departments, we recognize the importance of a comprehensive and balanced approach to safety and security that incorporates both

preventative and emergency response measures. We refer to our complementary and comprehensive system as preventive C.A.R.E. measures and emergency S.M.A.R.T. measures. Preventive measures include actions and dispositions to minimize and reduce threats in a proactive manner. Emergency measures include actions and dispositions to rapidly identify, assess and react to a threat while minimizing that threat and preserving life.

Our preventive C.A.R.E. measures encompass **Connections and Culture, Awareness, Relationships, and Extra support**. We know that the best preventive measures include connecting students to school through activities, clubs and school events. Research shows that students participating in co-curricular and extracurricular activities are positively connected to the school community and less likely to exhibit at-risk behaviors. Further, connecting parents to the school and productively engaging with parents as partners reduces risk factors for students. Likewise, we establish school cultures where students feel included, are celebrated and develop a sense of belonging. Students who are excluded and isolated are disconnected from their school, the adults within the school and often their peers. As such, they have increased risk factors. We strive to create cultures of empathy and care where acts of kindness abound from adults and students.

Awareness is critical as a preventive measure as well. We message frequently that we teach students, not content, and strongly emphasize an ethic of care for the whole child. Students need to know how much we care before they can care about how much we know. Our staff needs to be aware of each student's social and emotional needs as much as they are aware of their academic needs. Awareness also embraces the concept of "See Something, Say Something." As a community, we need to be

aware of what is happening around us and be vigilant about the potential dangers facing our children, whether it be weapons in a home, use of social media or a child's mental health.

Further, the importance of relationships with our students is pivotal. Every West Allegheny student should have at least one WASD employee in the school who they have a strong relationship with and would feel comfortable going to for support. This is a fundamental precept as we are continually working to build positive adult-to-student and peer-to-peer relationships that empower students through outreach groups such as Stand Together and the Friends of Rachel Club.

Of critical importance in our preventive C.A.R.E. measures is recognizing and providing some students with appropriate extra support. We are continually assessing and providing extra supports for those students who need it in a variety of ways, including one-on-one counseling, groups, in-house mental health services and more. Through our student services team, the District continues to offer parent workshops on key issues facing our students, including mental health, suicide awareness and social

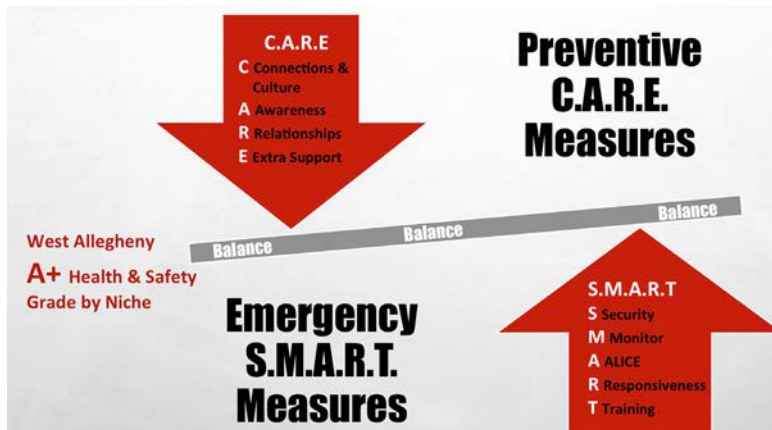
media. Addressing and nurturing the academic, social and emotional needs of the whole child is a fundamental cornerstone of our C.A.R.E. values and measures.

We are confident that if we continue our focus on preventive C.A.R.E. measures that it will provide a proactive complement to our emergency S.M.A.R.T. measures. These encompass **Security, Monitor, ALICE, Responsiveness, and**

**Training**, which capture all elements of our extensive Emergency Operations Plan. The District has dedicated significant resources to the physical safety of our schools over the last four years. This includes an investment in enhanced security systems; a school resource officer; enhanced camera systems that allow local law enforcement 24/7 access to our cameras; RAPTOR, our visitor management system; a strong and collaborative law enforcement partnership; consultations with security experts; implementation of monthly drills, establishment of unit captains and radio systems; and a comprehensive communications and reunification plan.

We also commit to daily monitoring of our security measures and active monitoring of our students, campuses and community. Students are greeted every morning by staff and/or administrators before entering our schools while local law enforcement have significantly increased their presence both inside and outside our schools in an effort to build relationships with our students.

ALICE, Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate is the model we ascribe to for our emergency response in the event of a crisis situation. These drills have been a focal point for our emergency measures. We recognized early on the importance of ALICE and dedicated a large part of our 2016 back-to-school in-service days to practicing these drills where every staff member actively participated. Staff members were also trained on Stop the Bleed first aid procedures during the 2017 back-to-school



## Superintendent's Message, cont.

in-service days. Our plans are enacted and practiced frequently to ensure appropriate responsiveness and preparedness in any emergency situation.

Lastly, training is pivotal to ensure the safety of our staff and students in any critical situation. Training is ongoing, comprehensive and inclusive of both our emergency S.M.A.R.T. measures as well as our preventive C.A.R.E. measures. They must function dependent and simultaneous of the other to ensure the strength and integrity of our efforts to keep our students and staff safe.

More than ever before, we live in challenging times where our students are confronted with issues that most of us did not encounter while we were growing up. It is critical that we work in partnership to

ensure the safety of our children, schools and community. Here are some simple things parents and guardians can do to support us in our safety and emergency preparedness goal:

- If you see something or hear something, say something to a school official or law enforcement.
- Be vigilant and aware of what students are bringing to school and/or extracurricular activities.
- Secure weapons in the home and check them daily.
- Monitor your child's social media habits.

Please talk with your child about these issues and assure them that the District has comprehensive safety and emergency plans in place.

.....*Dr. Jerrí Lynn Lippert, Superintendent*

## Art students featured in awards, shows and outreach

High school art students have been continuing a tradition of excellence that was started by their predecessors. Students this school year have been recognized as Scholastic Arts Award winners, been featured in regional shows and extended their service to others.

This year, students' work was submitted in the Northeastern Region Scholastic Art Awards in which a Gold Key was awarded to Tatum Amos and honorable mentions went to Sophia Antos, Lexi Fleet, Akira Littles, Melina Lynn, Carolyn Macek, Miala Palaima, Keri Quasey, Sami Swoager and Elizabeth Vollmer.

Five art students - Ike Bower, Akira Littles, Taylor Loyer, Lily Lutkus and Jamie Sheppard - participated in the first annual CCAC South Campus Art Show on February 21. These budding artists received certificates and were recognized at the award ceremony.

As a service project, art students again created pottery ware to donate to the Empty Bowls event on March 18 at the Rodef Shalom in Pittsburgh. Attendees to the event receive a light lunch of soup and bread donated by local restaurants and a choice of a handmade bowl to take home. All proceeds go to the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank.



**ABOVE:** Scholastic Art Award winners are Tatum Amos, Sophia Antos, Akira Littles, Melina Lynn, Carolyn Macek, Miala Palaima, Keri Quasey and Elizabeth Vollmer. Missing from the photo are Lexi Fleet and Sami Swoager.



**ABOVE:** CCAC South Campus Art Show participants include Jamie Sheppard, Taylor Loyer and Lily Lutkus. Missing from the photo are Ike Bower and Akira Littles. **BELOW:** Seniors Veronica Heyl, Carolyn Macek, Lauren Whitaker and Jeree Best display their handmade pottery that was donated to the Empty Bowls fundraiser.



## West Allegheny's "The Drowsy Chaperone" was anything but sleepy



**Pictured is the cast of "The Drowsy Chaperone."**

West Allegheny Arts proudly brought "The Drowsy Chaperone" to the stage as this year's spring musical theatre production with five performances in April. Billed as a musical within a comedy, "The Drowsy Chaperone" is a loving send-up of the 1920s Jazz Age musical. It dominated the 2006 Tony Awards with 13 nominations, winning five. The plot follows the hilarious tale of a pampered Broadway starlet, her debonair fiancé, an overzealous producer, a dizzy chorine, a Latin lover and a couple of bumbling gangsters. Ruses are played, hijinks occur and the plot spins everyone into musical comedy euphoria. The show is narrated by a cranky yet lovable character.

Leads included Michael Bagnell as the narrator Man in Chair, Sydney Campbell as Janet, Katie Carnot as the Drowsy Chaperone, Jeremy Taranto as Adolpho, Steven Abbott as Robert, Mackenzie Walters as Mrs. Tottendale, Katie Borgo as Kitty, Nathan Mavrich as the Underling, Dominic Patitucci as George, Cayla Chiodo as Trix, Shannon Clontz and Lindsey Sabo as the Gangsters, and Evan Armstrong as Feldzieg. Jennifer Zelesnik was the Dance Captain.

This year's production was directed and choreographed by Mara Greer. The show was produced by Meagan Bruno and Tom Snyder. Bob Neumeyer served as the choral and orchestra director. Michael Greer was the assistant director/choreographer and Aaron Denk was the technical director.

# #WeAreInnovators&Designers

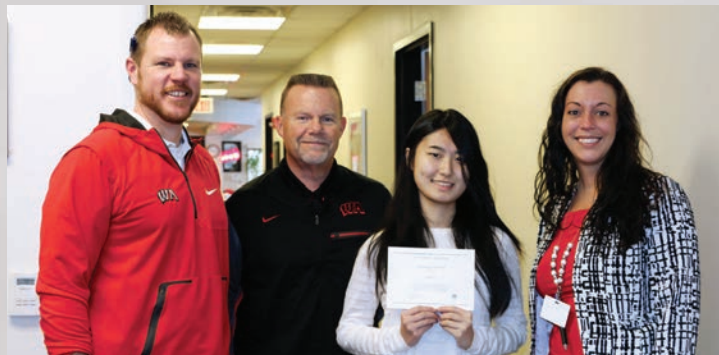
# #WeAreWestA

## Ye named National Merit finalist

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation has named Megan Ye as a finalist in the annual National Merit Scholarship Program. Ye received a Certificate of Merit and will compete for one of the 2018 scholarship awards among 15,000 eligible finalists. The National Merit Scholarship Program honors individual students who show exceptional academic ability and the potential to succeed in rigorous college studies.

Ye was named a semifinalist in the fall when she represented less than one percent of high school seniors nationwide who were among the highest scoring entrants in the state who participated in the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). About 1.5 million students entered the competition last year representing more than 22,000 high schools.

High school administrators Kevin McKiernan, Dave McBain and Kate McClelland present Megan Ye her Certificate of Merit.



## Stand Together looks to erase mental health stigma

The newly formed high school organization Stand Together is making a difference by raising awareness about mental illness and substance use disorders in an effort to remove the stigma associated with these problems. In addition to student-led assemblies, they are hosting several outreach activities during lunch periods.

Students address issues of mental health during a Stand Together assembly.



## Holocaust author shares stories of perseverance

High school students in Dan Prevade's holocaust and genocide studies class had the unique opportunity on February 26 to welcome guest speaker and author Anna Bikont. As a Polish journalist, Bikont wrote "The Crime and the Silence," which shares accounts of Jews in the small town of Jedwabne during the reign of the Nazi regime. The author's visit was made possible by Classrooms Without Borders.



Author Anna Bikont recounts holocaust survivor stories.

## Mr. West Allegheny raises funds for Homes for Our Troops



ABOVE: Contestants entertain with a choreographed dance routine.

It was an entertaining evening on February 5 when seven brave and talented seniors took to the stage for the 15th Annual Mr. West Allegheny Pageant. Taking home the coveted Mr. West Allegheny crown was Kolbe Stout. Mr. Congeniality went to Mike Bagnell. Contestants participated in spirited rounds that included a group dance, formal and casual wear, talent, and a final secret question before faculty judges cast their votes.

The event was organized by the National Honor Society and faculty advisers Sara Ferko and Jennifer Cook. Proceeds from the event went to Homes for Our Troops, the winner's charity of choice.

BELOW: Mike Bagnell congratulates Kolbe Stout after Stout was crowned Mr. West Allegheny.



## Middle school team recognized for excellence



Sharon Lepri, Renee Treonze, Dr. Frank Hernandez, Megan Huchko, Valerie Meehan and Jess Henry proudly receive the Don Eichhorn Schools to Watch Award on behalf of the middle school.

On February 25, a team comprised of middle school principal Dr. Frank Hernandez, school assistant principal Megan Huchko, and teachers Valerie Meehan, Jess Henry, Sharon Lepri, and Renee Treonze attended the PAMLE Conference at Penn State University.

The middle school was officially recognized with the Don Eichhorn Schools to Watch Award for school excellence from the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform. The school was one of three schools in Pennsylvania to receive the Schools to Watch distinction, which is awarded based on academic excellence, social equity, developmental responsiveness and organizational structure and capacity.

Through interviews with students, parents and teachers, the Schools to Watch evaluation team identified the middle school's Indian Pride program as an exemplary model and a key factor for earning Schools to Watch status. The program seeks to teach, reinforce and recognize positive behavior for all students. It is directly responsible for organizing school-wide events and improving the learning culture for middle school students and staff.

Since implementing the Indian Pride program, the middle school has realized improvements in student attendance and achievement, along with decreases in student behavior infractions and chronic absenteeism. Reflective of the middle school's success with the Indian Pride program, the team was asked to present the Indian Pride program to a cohort of educators from across the state as an exemplary model of positive school-wide behavior support programs.

## Middle school celebrates attendance



ABOVE: Students are greeted with cheers upon arrival.

As an extension of the District-wide focus on attendance, the middle school staff implemented several awareness and celebratory events. On February 16, students were surprised as they arrived at school and were enthusiastically greeted by a tunnel of administration and staff.

Students entered the school through balloons, music and a fog machine.

Students also participated in mini-attendance assemblies hosted by the United Way Foundation.

Representatives from the foundation led student skits that emphasized the importance of establishing good habits that will help students succeed.

A door decorating contest followed that shared messages of encouragement and positivity.



ABOVE: United Way Foundation facilitators lead students in attendance skits. BELOW: A student decorated door displays positive messages about attendance.



## Geography and spelling bee winners declared

This year's middle school geography and spelling bee winners claimed their titles after several initial rounds. In the geography bee, it was Joseph Pustover who took first place with Alex Geisler taking second and Ryan Davis taking third.

Francis Wichryk captured first place in the spelling bee with Ally Gilkey named runner-up.



Pictured are spelling bee winner Francis Wichryk and runner-up Ally Gilkey.



The top three geography bee winners were Alex Geisler, second place; Joseph Pustover, first place; and Ryan Davis, third place.

## Career Fair spurs student interests

On February 27, the middle school hosted its first Career Fair. Eighth-graders selected their top career interests and had an opportunity to sit

**Sports broadcaster and former NFL player Dorin Dickerson shares insights on turning interests into careers.**



in on speaker presentations. In the afternoon, students in both seventh and eighth grade visited career booths in the gymnasium, which allowed

them to learn about multiple careers. Many of the speakers were West Allegheny parents, alumni or community members. The event provided an early opportunity to spur student interests while enhancing the middle school's focus on career awareness.



Presenters volunteer their time to share career information with middle school students.

## Annual Talent Show spotlights middle school students and staff

The talents of the middle school students and staff were on full display for families January 25 and for the student body on January 26. The event featured 26 acts that ranged from ballet and Irish dancing to comedy and musical performances. Following tradition, the show closed with a special performance by the WAMS Rubber Band, a rock group made up of teachers. The event was coordinated by middle school teacher Dana McCaskey and a host of staff and student volunteers.

**RIGHT:** Olivia McCracken performs a selection from Don Quixote.

**BELOW:** Jump in the Line sets the beat for a colorful dance troupe.

**BOTTOM:** Jess Henry takes the stage with the WAMS Rubber Band.



## Middle School FOR Club continues random acts of kindness

The middle school Friends of Rachel Club is continuing to build a positive school culture through random acts of kindness. The club again teamed up with the Safe and Supportive Schools committee to post kind messages on student lockers. Students were surprised by the messages upon their arrival at school.

Middle school FOR Club members share positive messages with their peers.



## K'nex Competition connects students to STEM



ABOVE: The team of Andrea Halun-Ramirez, Ava Kosta, Kyla Fayad and Roman Police proudly display their honorable mention trophies and certificates. RIGHT: Donaldson teams work to complete their interactive inventions.

The annual STEM K'nex Competition was held March 7 at Duquesne University, where Donaldson Elementary was represented by three teams. The team of Andrea Halun-Ramirez, Ava Kosta, Kyla Fayad and Roman Police scored among the top five finishers out of 40 total teams and received an honorable mention for their invention of a doggie waste scooper. The other two teams invented an interactive dog treat dispenser and a motorized foosball table.

The event was sponsored by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit and Thermo Fisher. Teacher Leah Vestal served as the teams' coach.



# #WeAreInnovators&Designers

## Read Across America celebrates early literacy

The longstanding tradition of celebrating Read Across America was continued this year as literacy activities were held throughout the District. The weeklong recognition kicked off February 26 at the elementary schools with daily Dr. Seuss themes and guest readers, including school board members and administrators. The elementary school librarians sponsored the Drop Everything And Read program each day and students enjoyed a favored activity of eating green eggs and ham during lunch. The week concluded on March 3 at The Mall at Robinson with arts, crafts, face painting, cookies and Dr. Seuss stories.

The Read Across America celebration was a collaborative effort between the WAEA, the West Allegheny School District, and the West Allegheny Education Support Professionals Association. This year's activities were organized by Kristina Tissue and Christiana D'Agostino.



LEFT: Donaldson teacher Jacqui King helps visitors pin the heart on the Grinch during The Mall at Robinson celebration. RIGHT: Students at McKee celebrate Read Across America with a Dr. Seuss hat stacking. BELOW: Wilson first-graders received a wonderful surprise when Findlay Township Police Sgt. Neil Cridge and K-9 officer Scooby stopped in to read.



**Custodial substitutes needed**  
 West Allegheny School District is currently looking for custodial substitutes. Interested candidates should visit the Support Openings page on the District website at [www.westasd.org](http://www.westasd.org) to learn more.

## Elementary students and staff celebrate 100-day milestone



ABOVE: Compiling collections of items in groups of 100 allowed students to break them down into smaller increments to help them count.

RIGHT: McKee kindergarten students created their own t-shirts with 100 of their favorite items included in the design.

January 26 marked a big milestone for elementary students as they recorded their 100th day of school. It proved to be a day of fun and learning as they participated in several activities denoting the occasion, including counting, sorting, building, painting and flipping coins in increments of 100.



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## Children's author shares stories with Donaldson students

Donaldson students, staff and PTA welcomed children's author Jacqueline Davies on February 1 when she shared stories and illustrations from her books. Davies is an award-winning children's author who has published 11 books. She also has several others in the works. During her visit, students had a chance to ask her questions about how she writes her books and the steps it takes to get them published.

Author Jacqueline Davies shows students one of the bird's nests she wrote about in her book "The Boy Who Drew Birds."



## Elementary afterschool programs engage student interests



McKee After 3 students explore dinosaur bones and the excavation process.

Elementary students are engaging in afterschool programs in record numbers with offerings through Donaldson Discovers, McKee After 3 and Wilson Wonders. These extended learning opportunities are made possible by the schools' PTAs. The courses engage students in a wide array of interests that encompass art, robotics, dance, exercise, cooking, dinosaurs and more. Held over several weeks in the spring, these programs are a great way to expand students' imaginations and connect them to interests outside of the regular school day.

# Seniors sign to play at next level

The West Allegheny Athletic Department hosted a National Letter of Intent/College Commitment Day ceremony on February 8 for the following senior athletes who were awarded scholarships to play at the next level:

- Courtney Hurey - Robert Morris University - Soccer
- Taylor Goldstrohm - Point Park University - Soccer/Track
- Nathaniel Graziani - Robert Morris University - Soccer
- William Weber - Duquesne University - Football
- Anthony Dellovade - Duquesne University - Football
- Hanna Cook - West Virginia Wesleyan College - Swimming
- Maddie Salek - Oklahoma State University - Cross Country/Track



Seniors Maddie Salek, Nathaniel Graziani, Courtney Hurey, Anthony Dellovade, Taylor Goldstrohm, Will Weber and Hanna Cook have all signed letters of intent to continue their athletic careers in college.

Students were joined by family members, school officials and coaches.

## Teams and individuals excel in post season

The winter sports season witnessed a first for girls basketball and post season competition in boys basketball, gymnastics and wrestling. For the first time in West Allegheny history, the girls basketball team clinched a 5-A section title on February 5 with a 70-28 win over Lincoln Park Performing Arts Charter School. This led them on a WPIAL run to the quarterfinal round where their historic season came to an end against neighbor Chartiers Valley High School.

In boys basketball, the team recorded another winning season that advanced them to the quarterfinal round in the 5-A WPIAL bracket, where they fell to Highlands High School 66-58.

The varsity hockey team, meanwhile, reached the quarterfinals in post-season play after securing a first-round bye. The team finished its regular season with a strong 16-4 record. For more, see page 8.

In its second year, the girls gymnastics program continues to make its mark as the team ended the year with a winning season while junior Jordan Frasier claimed first place in the PA Classic Gymnastics Championship in the all-around. This achievement comes after Frasier won first in floor, second in bars, fourth in beam and seventh in vault. This was Frasier's second year bringing home the title of state champion, which helped her earn co-athlete of the week by the Beaver County Times.



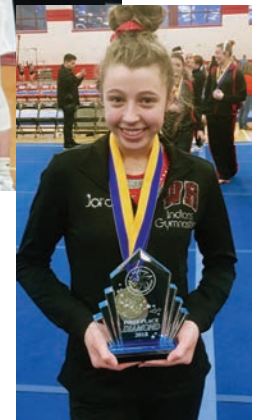
Ty McGeary takes to the medal podium with a sixth place finish in the state.

In wrestling, the Indians sent Ty McGeary and Jordan Watters to the 3-A state championships in Hershey March 7 to 9. After continuing to advance to the quarterfinal round in the 152-pound class, McGeary claimed sixth place to stand on the medal podium. Jordan Watters also advanced to the quarterfinal round, where he had a strong finish but just missed the podium in the 113-pound class.

In wrestling, the Indians sent Ty McGeary and Jordan Watters to the 3-A state championships in Hershey March 7 to 9. After continuing to advance to the quarterfinal round in the 152-pound class, McGeary claimed sixth place to stand on the medal podium. Jordan Watters also advanced to the quarterfinal round, where he had a strong finish but just missed the podium in the 113-pound class.



ABOVE: The girls basketball team claimed the 5-A section championship title with an at-home win against Lincoln Park.



RIGHT: Jordan Frasier proudly displays her state championship trophy.

## WEST ALLEGHENY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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FOR WEEKLY EVENTS, SCHOOL CLOSINGS, AND DELAYS.

VISIT WEST ALLEGHENY ONLINE:

WWW.WESTASD.ORG

All material has been prepared, written or edited by Karen Ruhl,  
School Community Relations Coordinator, West Allegheny School District: (724) 695-5274.



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## Robinson Township Christian School

### Senior performs in District 1 PMEA Choral Festival

Senior Reuben Meyer has given Robinson Township Christian School a lot to sing about. He auditioned this past November for the opportunity to participate in the annual District 1 Choral Festival sponsored by the Pennsylvania Music Educators' Association, which sponsors a select number of outstanding students for special opportunities in their musical development. After competing against many talented singers, Meyer was chosen to be a part of the chorus festival as a bass. He then sang himself into a spot on the Region 1 Chorus Festival held in February at Butler Intermediate School. From there, he was selected to participate in the All-State Conference and All-State PMEA Festival to be held April 18-21 in Lancaster. Though originally Meyer was not planning to participate in the competitions, he is now glad that he did. It has been a lot of work for him, but he enjoys singing with others who share his passion for music.



Reuben Meyer

Meyer has been accepted as a student at Carnegie Mellon University, where he will major in information systems. Though he is not planning to study music at CMU, he won't stop singing.

It is something that he has always enjoyed, whether at church, home or at school. He has lent his acting talents as well as his musical talents to many of the musicals at Robinson Township Christian School. As his swan song this year, he played the heavy role of Horton the Elephant in "Seussical: The Musical." Like Meyer, Horton is a good listener as well as a good singer. Performances for the musical were held in March at RTCS.

Meyer credits much of his success to Lindsay Shaffer, who directs the RTCS choirs. She persuaded him to sign up for the choral festival auditions and has done much to help him prepare. A gifted singer herself, Shaffer also directs the choral group New Song at Geneva College in Beaver Falls.



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**Western PA Kidney Support Group**, second Sundays, 2:30-4:30 p.m., Eat'n Park Robinson, (724) 796-1603, RSVP.

**Kinsey Vintage Market**, May 4, 5-9 p.m., May 5, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., 7237 Noblestown Road, 45+ vendors, antiques, vintage wares, wine with admission Friday night, live music, food trucks, winery, moonshine, Kinseyvintagemarket.com.

**West Allegheny Foundation Steak Fry**, May 5, Oakdale Community Center, doors open 5 p.m., dinner 6-10 p.m., \$25, New York strip, salad, potatoes, roasted vegetable, dessert, beer, soft drinks, supports foundation's efforts to provide scholarships and innovative teaching grants, (412) 389-6083.

**West Hills Symphonic Band Concert**, May 6, 3 p.m., West Allegheny High School, www.whsb.org.

**Ohio Valley Hospital and Kennedy Township 5K**, May 12, starts 8 a.m. at hospital, hilly course, DJ, afterparty, continental breakfast, awards ceremony, sign up at www.active.com, www.OhioValleyHospital.org.

**Fourth Annual Hometown Heroes Car Cruise**, May 19, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., downtown Coraopolis, 5th Avenue between Broadway and Main streets, dash plaques, 50/50, food, bikes welcome, with Lou Santiago of the Velocity show "Car Fix," Steel City Ghostbusters, \$5 donation per car, vendor show coincides on second floor of VFW at 5th Avenue and Mulberry Street, free admission, \$15/table, benefits Coraopolis VFW, sponsorships available, vfw402.org, (412) 559-1712.

**West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame Induction Banquet**, May 19, see page 20 for details.

**West Allegheny Youth Tennis Clinic**, May 22-23, 5:30-7 p.m., West Allegheny High School tennis courts, co-ed, grades 3-8, sponsored by WA girls tennis team, explore the game of tennis, improve skills, \$30, download registration form from Community Bulletin Board at www.westasd.org, complimentary t-shirt and participation certificate, email to ccampbell127@gmail.com, register by May 4.

**Identity Theft Prevention Fair**, June 9, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Moon Area Junior High School parking lot, shred sensitive documents, three small grocery bags/boxes per car, no businesses, sheriff collecting unused medications for Project DUMP, (412) 788-2967.

**WA Class of 1968 Reunion**, Sept. 8, SNPJ Lodge 106, Susantheartist@comcast.net, nhartz4201@gmail.com, RSVP by July 1, Facebook: West Allegheny Class of '68.

## North Fayette Parks and Rec.

Programs take place at the North Fayette Community Center at Donaldson Park, unless otherwise noted. Visit www.north-fayette.com or call (724) 307-3725 for more information.

### Adults and Seniors

**Yoga**, Sundays, 12:15-1:15 p.m., Wednesdays, 7-8 p.m.

**20/20/20**, Mondays, 6-7 p.m.

**Boot Camp**, Mondays, 7:30-8:30 p.m., Saturdays, 10-11 a.m.

**INSANITY**, Tuesdays, 6-7 p.m.

**PiYo**, Wednesdays, 6-7 p.m., Fridays, 9-10 a.m.

**Cardio Sculpt/HIIT**, Thursdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

**Adult Volleyball League**, Tuesdays through May 22, contact sfox@north-fayette.com.

**Adult Co-Ed Softball**, recreational and competitive leagues, begins April 22, contact sfox@north-fayette.com.

**Water Walking**, Monday-Thursday, 6-8 p.m., Donaldson Elementary, \$2, ages 18+.

**Water Aerobics**, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5-6 p.m., Donaldson Elementary, \$2, ages 18+.

**Pickle Ball**, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9-11 a.m., Fridays, 9-11 a.m. and 5-7 p.m.

**Senior Picnic**, June 16, 12 p.m.

**Fitness Center and Walking Track**, available to members during open hours.

### Youth

**Out of School, Snow Days, and In-Service Days**, see website for more information.

**Afterschool Program**, K-8 programs designed to provide a safe environment for children after school, transportation provided from school, \$10/day, contact nkreutzman@north-fayette.com for registration.

**Afterschool Program**, Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 3:30-5:30 p.m.

**Afterschool Sports Session 4**, Tuesdays, April 3-May 29, 3:30-5:30 p.m.

**Afterschool Home Grown**, Thursdays, April 5-May 31, 3:30-5:30 p.m.

**Instructional Volleyball**, April 11-May 16, ages 9-15, visit www.north-fayette for course listings.


**P.A.L.S.**, Providing Assistance Love & Support, recreational activities for individuals with special needs, contact dhildebrand@north-fayette.com for upcoming events.

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## Findlay Parks and Rec.

Register for any of the following programs by calling Findlay Township Parks and Recreation at (724) 695-0500 x 246 or by emailing [dlarson@findlaytp.org](mailto:dlarson@findlaytp.org), unless otherwise indicated. Programs take place at the Findlay Township Community Center unless otherwise indicated.

**Semi-Super Morning Bingo**, April 27, May 25, June 29, doors open 9 a.m., bingo starts 10 a.m., see page 30.

**Food Truck Thursdays**, last Thursdays through Oct. 25, municipal building parking lot, see page 30 for schedule and details.

**Yoga for Beginners (and Beyond)**, Fridays, 6:30-7:30 p.m., \$5/class.

**Senior Yoga and Qi Gong**, Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m., free, mixed levels, great for older adults.

**"Walk 15" Classes**, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6-7 p.m., \$5/class, all levels of fitness welcome, call or email to register: [kuziofjr@gmail.com](mailto:kuziofjr@gmail.com).

**Spring Community Clean-Up**, April 21, 9 a.m.-noon, meets at activity center, donate a few short hours to help spruce up the community, community service hours available, youth groups and high school students encouraged to join, call to volunteer.

**Scrapbooking Workshops**, April 21, 9 a.m.-9 p.m., \$60/event (includes lunch, dinner and beverages), bring tools and supplies, to register: (724) 307-3333, [michellekoestercm@comcast.net](mailto:michellekoestercm@comcast.net).

**Community Tire Collection Program**, April 21, 9 a.m.-noon, Findlay Township Public Works, \$3 up 18"/\$5 on rim, tractor trailer up to 22.5" (no rims) \$20, rear farm tractor tire up to 75 pounds \$20, rear farm tractor tire 75-150 pounds \$40, rear farm tractor over 150 pounds \$75.

**Kindness Rocks Project Garden**, April 28, 10 a.m., Rainbow's End Playground, see page 30.

**Findlay Township Dog Park Grand Opening**, May 5, 11 a.m., upper level of Recreation and Sports Complex above Leopold Lake.

**Home Alone Safety Class**, May 20, 6:30 p.m., see page 30.

**Fishing Derby**, May 26, 7-11 a.m., Leopold Lake, free, ages 15 and under, adult supervision required for children 9 and under.

**"Cruisin' In The Woodlands,"** June 1 (rain date June 8), 5-9 p.m., Clinton Park, dash plaques for first 100 cars, call for cancel info.

**Outdoor Flea Market**, June 9, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Clinton Park, see page 30.

**American Red Cross Babysitter's Training Class**, June 13, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m., see page 30.

## Oakdale Borough

Call (724) 693-9740 with questions.

**Community Cleanup**, April 21, 9 a.m., meet at gazebo area.

**Community Yard Sale**, May 12, 8 a.m., Oakdale Borough.

**Memorial Day**, May 28, 10 a.m., lines up near fire department.

## LifeSpan Senior Resource Center

Regular hours: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

540 Penn Lincoln Drive, Imperial, (724) 218-1669, [www.lifespanpa.org](http://www.lifespanpa.org).

**Boost Your Brain Health**, Tuesdays through May 15, 10-11:30 a.m., fun games and activities to help improve memory.

**Exploring Your Family History**, Fridays through May 18, 12-1:30 p.m., learn how to begin researching and recording details.

**Fraud Prevention**, Thursdays, May 3-24, 10-11:30 a.m.

**Walking for Wellness**, Fridays through May 25, 10-11:30 a.m.

**Flea Market**, May 3-4, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.

**Craft/Vender Show**, May 5, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., \$20/table.

**Trips**, reserve by May 31, space limited, Middlefield, Ohio "Amish Brown Bag," June 27, \$94/person; Gettysburg, Aug. 15-16, Flight 93 Memorial stop, \$269/double, \$249/triple, \$219/quad, \$329/single.

## Western Area YMCA

195 Montour Run Road, (412) 787-9622, [www.westernarea-y.org](http://www.westernarea-y.org)

**Child Care**, programming for Montour and West Allegheny school districts, call for more information.

**Summer Day Camp**, registration open.

**Healthy Living**, helps with your summer wellness goals, personal and small group training, teen/tween speed and agility summer programs, Jill Cersosimo, [jcersosimo@ymcapgh.org](mailto:jcersosimo@ymcapgh.org), (412) 489.3231.

**Tennis, Soccer, Lacrosse Programs**, call for details, also seeking coaches and volunteers to work with children.

## SNPJ Club

Events take place at SNPJ Lodge 106 and are open to the public unless otherwise indicated. Memberships available to the public at clubroom door. For more, (724) 695-1411, [snpjimperialpa.com](http://snpjimperialpa.com), [imperialroomsnpj.com](http://imperialroomsnpj.com).

**Bar Bingo**, for members and their guests, April 19, May 3, 17, June 7, 21, special early bird games start 6:30 p.m., regular games start 7 p.m., play until 9 p.m., kitchen open during.

**SNPJ Lodge 106 Car Cruises**, level paved parking, door prizes, air-conditioned clubroom, bikes welcome, drinks, food, 50/50, open to public, May 20, noon, Get a Grip band, Smokin' Jack's BBQ, schedule magnets for first 50 cars, June 10, noon, HEDGG Band, dash plaques for first 50 cars.

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## A missing little dog

It was the day before Valentine's Day and the smell of homemade cookies filled the house. Liz Borovich was baking treats for friends. Outside it was freezing, 16 degrees and the ground was snow covered. Borovich says, "I heard someone or something on my back porch." She went to the door, opened it and saw a little dog, a Yorkie, sitting on her dry welcome mat. "Oh my gosh," she thought out loud, "it is the lost dog on Facebook."

About 7 a.m., Borovich, while enjoying a cup of tea, had logged onto Facebook and seen a picture of the lost dog. She says that, at the time, "I thought nothing of it."

When she opened the screen door to let the dog in, the startled little dog looked at Borovich, got frightened and ran off.

Now what should she do? She says, "Then I saw that a turnpike construction guy was coming down my hill."

The turnpike borders her property.

"Looked like he was looking for the dog," she says. "He must have scared the Yorkie again. We saw the little dog take off over the hill towards the creek."

The turnpike worker made a call back to their work trailer to inform them of the dog sighting. Animal Finders were notified. At the same time, an Animal Finders volunteer Stacie Justice drove down the road and stopped. She asked if they were looking for a dog and saw her friend Borovich from Montours Church. Borovich and Justice began to follow the dog's tracks in the untouched snow. They followed tracks to the creek and saw his tracks crossing a plank that stretched across the water. The plank would not support the weight of an adult so they were stopped in their tracks.

Animal Finders manager Dusty Popovich arrived with another Yorkie to try to track the runaway dog.

Then his owners, Ashley and Joseph Montermuro, along with their 7-year-old daughter, Olivia, arrived. They were overjoyed to know he was in the area. They were also grateful to meet Liz.

Ashley told Borovich that, the day before, she was getting off I-576 near the Clinton Exit. She could not reach the toll change

Ashley, Olivia and Joseph Montermuro have been reunited with their Yorkie, Spike (also pictured above).



basket, so she had opened her car door to toss money into the toll bin. Then she closed her door. The tollbooth was about 700 feet from Borovich's back porch.

Forty minutes later, upon arriving at her destination, Ashley realized her Yorkie named Spike was not in the backseat.

Ashley said she "panicked." She and her husband rushed back to the turnpike exit area to try to find their little nine-pound Yorkie. After searching until it became too dark to continue, they called police, who told them to contact Reuniting Dogs with Families. They, in turn, contacted Animal Finders, whose manager put the post on Facebook with a picture of Spike.

Ashley did not leave. She sat in her car on the side of the road at the tollbooth all night, broken-hearted.

The rescue team was planning their ongoing search when one of the volunteers asked Borovich if she could use her bathroom. Borovich lights up as she says, "As we were walking up my sidewalk, here comes Spike bounding off my porch and down the sidewalk.

"He had made a loop and ran back to my house. We think he heard voices, and was excited. He was wet, cold, hungry, but very lucky to be alive after being out in the freezing cold overnight. We are assuming he curled up on my [covered] porch overnight to be out of the snow and that kept him safe from the coyotes.

"We wrapped the little guy in a blanket, gave him water and treats and he seemed very happy."

His family was so thankful for a very happy ending.

Ashley has told Borovich, "Spike is under house arrest and will be wearing a tracking collar so we know his every move." Spike also now has a doggie car seat and some new unforgettable two-legged friends: Justice, Popovich, two Turnpike construction men and Borovich.



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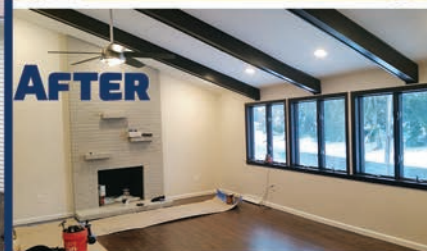
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