

Westside

Wire

News and information for WESTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL

From the Principal *Michael McDonough*

Great Change and New Challenges

Just over a year ago, Westside went through a time of change. The long tenured principal Paul Castro had just taken over at Lee HS, and I had come aboard here on campus. Through that time of transition and change, much of my energy was focused on keeping our faculty, staff and students focused on what they could control as we progressed through the spring semester. It was a challenge, yet, by working closely with parents, we were able to hit some of our highest achievements. And now, as we creep through February and head toward June, we will need that resolve once again. There is great change in the HISD and new challenges that we will all face. Please know that our resolve is as strong, perhaps stronger, than ever before.

Westside is so strong in tradition and pride...

As you have heard by now, the district is considering many of the recommendations provided by the mag-

net audit that was conducted in the fall. Among them is the recommendation to close the magnet program at Westside HS. While the devil is in the details (and decision by the Board), please know that this may have a large impact on our campus. Our magnet students participate, influence, and lead many efforts at Westside. Whether in the band, on the stage, on the field, or in the debate hall, these students are overwhelmingly a positive piece of our school fabric. While it is not clear what outcomes are headed our way, we do know that, in addition to the tough fiscal year that already looms for all schools, the potential closing of our magnet program will have far reaching implications. I highly encourage you to learn as much as possible about this effort, and share your opinions and suggestions freely. Making informed decisions should always be our ef-

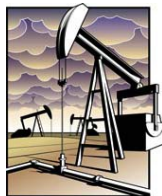
fort, and there is a great deal to learn right now.



Additionally, making informed decisions is something we all can continue to do. With a school community as large as ours, it can be easy to hear one thing and reach another conclusion. With over 3500 people cycling through our doors every day, we are not immune to small-town

chatter and the power of rumors. Thus I am always encouraging students, faculty, staff, and the community to ask questions, seek information, and then use that data in a useful and productive way. I know that as parents we will seek avenues for you to weigh in on initiatives specific to Westside as well as those for the entire district. Respecting that we all have the best interests of the students

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WEGA Students Excel at PetroChallenge

More than 150 students from Westside, Lamar and Milby high schools recently competed in a high-tech simulation game exploring the oil and natural gas industry at the United States PetroChallenge sponsored by the Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA) and El Paso Corp. In the innovative educational competition, each multi-school team acted as an energy company entering a new oil and natural gas field. Starting with \$200 million in funds, their challenge was to maximize the return on investment by finding oil or gas and investing in other team opportunities. We are pleased to announce that our WEGA students were on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place teams, bringing home \$1150 of the \$1800 total awards. WEGA freshman Karlo Remgio was on the first place team, Anthony Foote and Jarel Batiste were on the second place team, and Vimarie Contreras, Colby Clark, and Naveed Parsa were on the third place team. Congratulations to our students and a big thank you to IPAA and El Paso Corp. for this opportunity!

WHS on the Web

For a complete calendar of Westside events, visit us at www.westsidewolves.org



Principal *from page 1*

as our focus, we can continue to support our school as it strives each day for excellence.

Finally, I think it important that we never lose sight of the potential for our school. Most days we are a very good school. There have been many times that we have been an exceptional school. While we cannot find that exceptional tone every day, I do believe that our effort can be exceptional each and every day. Whether through the design of a lesson, the measure of learning, or simply the manner in which we all speak to each other, all the ingredients are here to make this school the best. Part of my charge is to ensure that the resources, personnel, and leadership are present to allow this to occur. On those days when we peak please know that it's never by accident and that our work is always purposeful.

Thus I ask that you support us each day through your actions, your words, and your time. There is much that can distract us this spring, and I believe our best strategy is to live in the present and resist the temptation to get caught up in the "what ifs". Westside is so strong in tradition and pride that I have full confidence that we will make our way through with great success.

Enjoy the day,
Michael McDonough

PTO Presents Bronzes to WHS

In honor of the 10 year anniversary of Westside, the 2009-2010 PTO voted to purchase bronze plaques in the likenesses of Scott Van Beck, Paul Castro, and Michael McDonough — each of the three principals who have served Westside to date.



Former principal Paul Castro (above left) joined Mr. McDonough (right) in accepting the PTO gifts.

The presentation was made at the first PTO meeting of the year, Tuesday, January 11, 2011, in the Library.

Refreshments and social time were enjoyed by all. The plaques will be hung in a place of honor.

Westside also received a beautiful commemorative quilt, hand made by WHS parents Ginny Jones and Nancy Zimmerer. The quilt, made from donated WHS logo t-shirts and stitched with the 10th anniversary logo, will hang in the front office.



Pictured: Paul Castro, Nancy Zimmerer, Michael McDonough, and Cathy McDonnell.

WHS ROTC Collects Toys for Tots



The Westside ROTC again joined forces with the Marine Corps Reserve and collected 503 "Toys for Tots" this holiday season. Clubs and organizations also helped in this project and the school contributed 4 pallets of canned goods to the Houston Food Bank. Well done, Wolves!

In Memory of Ronn Andrusco

On December 18, 2010, Westside Math teacher Ronn Andrusco passed away after a valiant fight against cancer. He will be remembered by colleagues and students as a dedicated teacher, always willing to help others in need.

Before turning to a career in teaching, Mr. Andrusco was a professional violinist and his love of music was shared here at Westside where he tutored many orchestra students. His commitment to education was evidenced by the tremendous courage he displayed in his insistence to continue teaching through the last days of his illness, planning

treatment around his work schedule so as not to miss classes.

Ronn Andrusco will be sorely missed but has left his mark on so many lives. As written in his obituary, "He held everyone to the same high standards and expectations that he held for himself. 'Aim for the top, it's less crowded there!'"

From the PTO President *Cathy McDonnell*



What About Those Changes?

We have all heard it said, "Change is difficult," and "Change is a constant." I think we can all agree that both those comments apply to HISD. We are experiencing an on-going season of change. Some of the changes we might agree with, others we might not feel are entirely positive or make us uncomfortable.

The important element to keep in mind is the management of our neighborhood school. Are you satisfied with the decisions made that affect our campus? Do you see continuous improvement? Do you speak up when you are pleased or unhappy? Do you offer productive input?

Our monthly PTO meetings are an opportunity to be heard in the community and engage in open discussion. You can ask your questions and get answers, or call items of concern to the attention of those who need to be aware of those concerns.

We are fortunate at Westside to have an administration that welcomes community inquiry and input. Please join us at an upcoming PTO meeting and be the parent that makes a positive impact on your student's education.

Westside Wire

WESTSIDE PTO

PRESIDENT
Cathy McDonnell

1ST VICE PRESIDENTS (MEMBERSHIP)
Disa Lyon
Barbara Nassab

2ND VICE PRESIDENTS (FUNDRAISING)
Kiki Hummel
Shelby Doehring

TREASURER
Kelly Simmons

RECORDING SECRETARY
Debbie Noriega

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY
Janna Wright

VIPS
Rhonda Monteverde
Michelle Dunwell

PARLIAMENTARIAN
Kelly Cramer

Parent College Panel

The Westside PTO organized the 2nd Annual Parent College Panel, Thursday, January 6. The PTO hit the ground running with the panel, comprised of parents with a student currently attending college. Several of those who spoke have a student still at Westside as well.



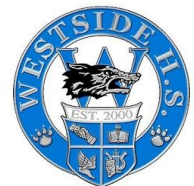
now to take care of their own alarm clocks and bank accounts, how much "rope" to allow college freshmen before you "reel them back in," roommate advice and move-in tips (bring your own dolly!).

The PTO thanks parents Patti Lofgren, Mary Ann Hammerle, Nancy Valencia, Kelly Cramer, Debbie Noriega, Carolyn & Bob Klien, Susan Hertz and son Brian and Delane Derr.

The parents gave personal insights and advice that you won't find at the on-campus orientation or in a college brochure. They discussed practical items such as preparing students

Westside History Gets an Update

The display cases in the Commons have a new look. The PTO committee consisting of Debbie Currie, Mary Ann Hammerle and Cathy McDonnell, assisted by Coach Gillespie, Ms. Heil, and Ms. Patch, went to work on this piece of Westside history.



The cases were cleared and cleaned. Items that more appropriately belonged in the display areas close to the program being honored or recognized, were moved to those areas (such as the cases in the Fine Arts hall or the cases for ROTC, or some of the sports).

The panoramic pictures taken of each graduating class were placed in the display cases, along with other important Westside memorabilia. The cases are a work in progress and items will be added and updated. Do you have an idea for the display cases? Contact Cathy McDonnell at cmcdonnell935@sbcglobal.net. Take a look and see what is going on at your school.

WHS Hosts Spring Leadership Conference for HOSA



On Friday and Saturday, February 4th and 5th, Westside's HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America) will be hosting the Texas HOSA Area 2 Spring Leadership Conference.

Students from Houston and one hundred miles away will be competing in various medical related categories for a chance to advance to the state competition. There will be over nine hundred students competing and building networks for their futures. The HOSA students will be putting hours of practice time for their competitions. Best of luck at competition!



Westside Baseball Gives Back

Westside's baseball team continued its tradition of giving back to the community this holiday season. Coach Arguello and the Varsity team spent a day at Texas Children's Hospital with baseball parent Dr. Dreyer lifting the spirits of young patients. Sometimes it was hard to tell who enjoyed the visits the most -- our athletes or the kids who look up to them so much.

Athletes from all levels of the program also contributed to the community by helping set up for the Westchase Winter Wonderland, then working again on the evening of the big event. The team's help was much appreciated. In past years setup was an all-day event, but with help from the Wolves setup was complete in 2 1/2 hours! Way to go!!

Did you know...?

The majority of WHS students are college-bound, attending a very diverse collection of schools. Outside of Texas, our students are represented at schools as diverse as :

- The Air Force Academy
- MIT
- George Washington
- Stanford
- Harvard
- Yale
- Xavier
- Embrey-Riddle Aeronautical

and many other fine fine educational establishments.



75% of the Class of 2010 is currently enrolled in a 4 year college.

16% are enrolled in a 2 year college.

9% are in the Military or other.

WHS Ecological Preserve Gets a Facelift

Our campus is fortunate to have a few acres of land which have been set aside for outdoor learning. The Environmental Science classes have teamed up with the Ecology Club and the Lacrosse team to restore the preserve closer to its original condition. The goal of the project is to rehabilitate the acreage with native prairie grasses, forbs and wildflowers. By restoring the native Gulf Coastal Prairie plant community, it is expected that the diversity of birds, insects and butterflies will increase.

The Gulf Coastal Prairie has been referred to as the most endangered ecosystem in the US. Only 1% of the original one million acres is left in original condition. Once restoration is complete, WHS's new pocket prairie will be part of a regional ef-



fort to restore and preserve this important ecosystem.

The area has been cleared of the weedy species that have been encroaching since WHS was built. The Houston Native Plant Soci-



ety and Katy Prairie Conservancy donated a variety of native prairie plants, such as Texas Coneflower, Evening Primrose and Indian Blanket, which were installed in December. Students planted a mix of Gulf Coastal prairie grass seeds. New paths have been laid out to increase accessibility for students and teachers.

Future plans include a class seating area and bird observation corner. What is bare ground right now will be green again soon. Plan on coming by to enjoy the wildflowers and birds in Wolf Prairie this spring!

National Honor Society Membership

The National Honor Society (NHS) is the nation's premier organization established to recognize outstanding high school students. It serves to honor those students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas of Scholarship, Leadership, Service, and Character. Our Westside NHS will send out invitations the last week of February to students who qualify scholastically; this includes sophomores and juniors who have a 3.8 cumulative grade point average or higher for all work done through the Fall Semester, 2010.

Once a student receives an invitation, he/she needs to get a packet

from Ms. Patch in S-236 and return it by the date specified. The entire Westside staff has input on the character, service, and leadership of the student; then a panel reviews the information and the final selection of students occurs.

We are fortunate to have so many outstanding students who meet the minimum academic requirement but the initial step of being invited to apply does not necessarily mean the student will become a member; it is a privilege bestowed upon a student by the faculty of the school. If you have any questions, you can email Donna Patch at dpatch@houstonisd.org.

NASA Field Trip for Microsoft blink Web Design Contest Winners

Four Westside students had the privilege of a VIP tour of the NASA space center on Wednesday, November 17.

Ms. Boone's web mastering students had the opportunity to enter the Microsoft blink contest in the spring of 2010. Elora Arana, Jewell Elliott, Karla Fortin and Doris Reese were first place winners in the statewide Microsoft blink web design contest that encouraged students to think creatively about the benefits of space exploration and the exciting careers in this field, and to encourage other teens to learn about the exciting student training opportunities offered by NASA. A behind the scenes visit to NASA was part of the winning award.



Students DO NOT need to be enrolled in web mastering to enter. Information regarding the contest can be found at <http://www.blinkcontest.com/Contest.aspx>.

Registration is now open for the 2011 Microsoft blink web design contest.

UIL Academic Teams Shine at Winter Fest

Our UIL Academic Teams racked up numerous awards in December at the Winter Fest 2010 competition.

Our Math and Science Teams both took first with individual awards to Sandy Qi for first place in Science, Top Scorer in Physics and third in Math. Konstantinos Varvarezos took second in Science and third in Number Sense.

The Westside Literary Criticism Team, consisting of senior Morgan Drake and juniors, Kelsey Petrie, Amanda Schlaudt, and Katie Raymond, took home the first place trophy for the highest team score in the event. Morgan also took first place over competitors from high schools across HISD. This category of competition is extremely comprehensive regarding



literary works and complex devices.

Additional individual awards went to Nada Ismail, first in both Editorial and Headline Writing, Ariel Lee for second in News Writing, and Khady Diack for second in TV Commercial.

Ashna Kataria won first place in Informative Speaking; and the team of Antoinette Stewart and Khady were second in Duet Improvisation. And in Computer Applications, first went to Loriah Pope and second to Aaron Malveaux,

Their great performance, along with the many Outstanding Finalist awards, earned our Wolves second place in the School Sweepstakes Championship! Congratulations to our students and sponsors!

Westside Wire

Yearbook Orders

Don't miss out! Preserve those memories by ordering your Westside High School Yearbook online through www.smart-pay.com. Watch for additional information in the mail from Smart Pay and Taylor Publishing.



Fitness Testing in March

On Wednesday, March 9th and Thursday, March 10th all Westside students will complete the state required Fitnessgram Assessment during their English classes. Attendance for all students is required.

Senate Bill 530 requires that the Fitnessgram physical fitness assessment be administered to all students in grades 3-12. Students are encouraged to be self-aware of health-related fitness and take responsibility by setting personal fitness goals. Students should wear athletic clothing, socks, and tennis shoes. Students who forget to wear the recommended attire will proceed with the fitness test in their daily attire. Westside High School's dress code still applies.



Class of 2011 Graduation



Mark your calendar! Graduation for the Class of 2011 will be held Saturday, June 4, at 5pm at Hofeinz Pavilion,

University of Houston, 3100 Cullen Blvd., 77004.

Upcoming Performances

Voice Recital
February 3, 7:00 Pm, Mini Theatre



“The Good Person of Setzuan” Theatre Production
February 17-19, 7:00 pm, Black Box

“Random Acts of Dance”
February 24-26, 7:30, Mini Theatre

Orchestra Pre-UIL Concert
March 8, 7:00 pm, Auditorium

Choir Pre-UIL Concert
March 10, 7:00 pm, Auditorium

UIL One Act Play Zone Competition
March 25, Bellaire High School (TBA)

“You Know What I Know” Inertia Concert
April 14-16, 7:00 pm, Mini Theatre

“The May Concert” Dance Show
April 29, 5:00 pm, Auditorium

Westside Tennis Team Wins Home Court Advantage



The school’s Varsity and Junior Varsity teams are on their way to having 2 extra tennis courts, for a total count of 6. The long awaited additional courts are under construction and should soon be ready for play. Covered bleachers in an enclosed, fenced area also bring the court area up to standard.

The big news is that with the additional courts, the team will be able to host dual matches and may also be able to schedule some invitationals.

The team typically travels to dual meets about once per week and to a local tournament every other week in season. Additional out of town tournaments are played 2-3 times per season to get athletes the

greatest amount of experience and play time, heading into District play.

The team, under Coach Jennifer Hollingsworth, 2nd year coach, sent 18 players to District last fall, with Anthony Molina, Aki Ogishima, and Amanda Materre advancing to Regionals. Materre then went on to the State championships in singles.

Hollingsworth expects to see great performances from the seniors on the team this season, including Sean McDonnell, Toshi Ogishima, Maddie Farrell, Lisa Hill, Brittany Monte, and Eleni Stamatakis. These seniors will set a great example for the up and coming stars of the team.

LaCrosse



The Westside Boy’s Lacrosse Team had a great time at the December 26, 2010 annual alumni game.

There was a great turnout to celebrate 10 Years of Lacrosse at WHS.

The Boys’ LAX Team will kick off their season with the Clear Lake Lacrosse Club tournament in League City and begin the season with the first game at Westside February 1, 2011. Our schedule can be found on the Westside website and we have many games here on campus. So come check out Lacrosse and support our team!



Fall Into Haiku Poetry Contest Winners

Contest co-sponsors DeLonn McCall and Marilyn Hagans are pleased to announce the winners in the Fall into Haiku Poetry Contest sponsored by your Westside English department.

There were three categories: Autumn, Romance, and Spooky. The winners for each category were:

Autumn:

- 1st - Harlin Oh
- 2nd - Paulina Dosal
- 3rd - Kristina Lutz
- Honorable Mention - Talia Harris

Romance:

- 1st - Lenzi Daniel
- 2nd - Silesha Walker
- 3rd - Stephanie Forsberg
- Honorable Mention - Diana McCall

Spooky:

- 1st - Sarah McConnon
- 2nd - Jesus Maldonado
- 3rd - Elizabeth Pappas

Honorable Mention-Nadim Rabbani.

The 1st place winners received a \$50 gift card from Target. Additional gift cards and tickets to the Renaissance Festival were awarded to 2nd and 3rd places and Honorable Mention winners.

A special thanks to the contest sponsors for generously donating prizes: Westside PTO, Gabe & crew at Starbucks on Hwy. 6 @ Memorial; Marilyn Hagans, and Caroline Stento. Even more thanks are given to the contest judges Rick Hebert, Beth Morgan, Deb Schroen, Caroline Stento, Marilyn Hagans, and DeLonn McCall.

Westside students should be on the lookout for another poetry contest in the spring semester again sponsored by the Westside English department.





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PTO Meetings...

the first Tuesday of every month!

Be sure to check

www.westsidewolves.org and

www.westsidpto.org