

# Mustang



# pride



District News from Independence Community Schools

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If you have items you would like to see in the newsletter, or if you have information you would like to place in the newsletter, please contact Mary at the Administration Building by calling 334-7400 or e-mail her at [mcooksley@independence.k12.ia.us](mailto:mcooksley@independence.k12.ia.us)

## Assessment Committee

-Devin Embray, Superintendent

At the regular board meeting in April the Board of Education voted to form an assessment committee to hire a firm to do a bona-fide assessment of the current high school. This committee will have a limited scope of work to complete. They will draft a request for proposal to send out to firms who do this work. I have found through research that architects mainly do this work. The programming needs assessment is usually done by the architectural firm while they give the structural, mechanical, electrical, plumbing and other areas to engineers to assess. The board also approved the hiring of the firm to do the work at this meeting. Why are we doing this? The board of education has heard from many people that the high school is just fine and that it doesn't have any issues or that the issues the high school has are limited in nature. While we have had local and area individuals give us assessments of the building in the past, many have been reluctant to provide assessments of their findings due to possible lost revenues in their business as a result of their findings.

[Continued on page 2]

May, 2007

## Superintendent's



Devin Embray

Corner

## May Calendar of Events

**May 8<sup>th</sup>** – Curriculum Coordinating Council Meeting

**May 9<sup>th</sup> – 1:00 Early Dismissal** – Professional Development

**May 20<sup>th</sup> – Graduation Day** – 2:00 High School Gym

**May 28<sup>th</sup> – Memorial Day** – No School

**June 1<sup>st</sup> – 1:00 Early Dismissal** - Last Day of School



**Independence Community Schools**

1207 1<sup>st</sup> Street West  
Independence, Iowa 50644  
319.334.7400

Visit our website at:

<http://www.independence.k12.ia.us>

**Board of Education**

Dawnye Sturtz, President  
Bob Reiff, Vice President  
Kevin Greenley, Director  
Charlie McCardle, Director  
Kevin (KC) Robb, Director

**Superintendent**

Devin Embray  
319.334.7400

**Director of Curriculum and  
School Improvement**

Mary Cooksley  
319.334.7400

**Director of Finance**

Chris Kimball  
319.334.7400

**Transportation Director**

Michael Donnelly  
319.334.7435

**Food Service Director**

Nancy Michels  
319.334.7415

**Technology Director**

Dan Good  
319.334.7405

**East Elementary Principal**

Dr. Mary Jean Blaisdell  
319.334.7425

**West Elementary Principal**

Josh Lyons  
319.334.7430

**Middle School Principal**

Meredith Miller  
(319) 334-7415

**High School Principal**

Karl Kurt  
(319) 334-7405

**High School Asst  
Principal/Athletic Director**

Dave Ross  
319.334.7405

**Big Brothers, Big Sisters**

**Coordinator**  
Jeannie Neeley  
319.334.7415

**District News and Information****Assessment Committee** *[continued from page 1]*

Those who have been willing to do so, may not be given credibility by some with the thought business firms may have a vested interest in doing future work on the high school. By starting over at ground zero and getting this assessment, I believe will give the board of education a new starting point; one where we can discuss the issues without having distrust in what is not up to par in our current high school.

The assessment committee has been made up of a mix of those who have been in favor of a new high school in the past and those who have not been in favor of a new high school in the past. I believe the make up of the committee is a great mix of individuals that will be able to work together to obtain an assessment that will be able to be supported by the committee and the board of education. The committee consists of the following individuals:

- Mike Hayward
- Don Hoeger
- Beth Little
- Gina Trimble
- Dana Vieator
- John Bogge
- Ken Coulter
- Lloyd Davis
- Diana Muchmore
- Ed Armstead

Some have asked when we are involved in making program budget reductions how can we be assessing the needs of the high school as well. They state, "Won't the reduction in programming solve the space needs on its own?" While reducing programming can lead to the need for fewer rooms therefore eliminating the need for outside buildings, there will still be rooms inside the building with space issues. Not to mention issues with the systems (electrical, plumbing, mechanical, structural) that may be present. I believe it to be in the best interest of the district to get a bona-fide assessment of the current high school to help in the future planning of needs at the high school level. I want to remind everyone that the staff and programming in our district are funded through the general fund while building infrastructure comes out of the State Local Option Sales (SILO) dollars and the Physical Plant and Equipment Levy (PEL) monies. While we can spend dollars in the general fund for building issues we cannot spend money from the SILO or PEL on programming or staff. Currently, we do not have general fund dollars available to help offset any costs related to building infrastructure.

**Tips on what to Explore at the Library**

**Infants** – Sturdy board books, picture books of songs and rhymes are great books for infants.

**Toddlers** – Picture books and storybooks – they can start selecting their own books at this age.

**Preschool Children** – Airplanes, dinosaurs, trains, or other topics they are interested in at this age – it's what they like!

**Kindergarten – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade** – Encourage them to check out a variety of topics and start using encyclopedias to look up info.

**3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade** – Use the library for school assignments – Be sure to locate reading material that is age appropriate!







## “Eating to Compete”

An exciting program called “Eat to Compete” will be offered June 11-12 at several Iowa State University Extension Offices across the state. The program will focus on sports nutrition – training diets, fluids, supplements, weight control/injury prevention, and current research in sports performance.

Those attending the program have the option of receiving either 1-hour teaching license recertification or 1 hour of graduate credit. Registration deadline is June 1<sup>st</sup>.

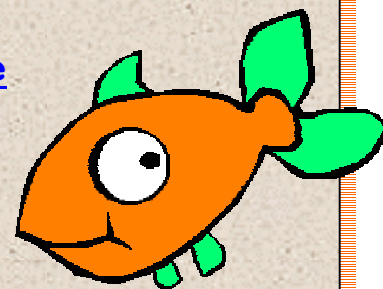
The program will be facilitated in at the Delaware County Office in Manchester. Two other sites (Marion and Waterloo) may be of interest as well.

“Eat to Compete” looks to be an excellent program! If you have further questions, call Cindy at 563 927 – 4201.



## Fish Nominations for April

- ❖ Choose Your **Attitude**
- ❖ Be **There**
- ❖ Make Their **Day**
- ❖ Play



- Jon Testrake – High School Social Studies
- Sandy Hood – High School Social Studies
- Casey Reinkoester – Elementary/Middle School Liaison Officer
- Dawnye Sturtz – School Board President
- Burt Van Horn – Bus Driver
- Judy Olsen – High School Media Specialist
- Kara Vance – High School French
- Jenny Beatty – East Elementary Kindergarten
- Margie Torgerson – Elementary office and Media Center substitute
- Meredith Miller – Middle School Principal
- Nancy Michels – Food Service Director
- Rose Millard – East Office Secretary
- Mary Cooksley – Director, Curriculum and School Improvement
- Jim Brockling – High School Custodian
- Kim See – High School Custodian
- Michelle Kuper – High School Custodian
- JoAnn Crain – West Elementary 4<sup>th</sup> Grade
- Shelly Staker – West Elementary 5<sup>th</sup> Grade
- Sarah Crawford – Elementary Spanish
- Karla Cornwell – High School office associate
- Mike Donnelly – Building and Grounds Director
- Teresa Nennig – High School Family and Consumer Science
- Chris Kimball – Director of Finance
- Janine Gueltzow – High School Math
- Ronda Hilbert – Middle School Special Education
- Trish O'Loughlin – High School Industrial Technology
- Michael Doyle – High School Math
- Renita Weiland – West and Middle School Media Specialist
- Dave Ross – High School Assistant Principal and Athletic Director
- Pennie Anderson – Central Office Secretary
- Audra Meyer – East Elementary Special Education
- Josh Lyons – West Elementary Principal

Does your child have a teacher that possesses the Fish! Philosophy Principles each and every day? Nominate them for entry into the Fish! Community. **Make Their Day** by showing your appreciation for all they do for students. To make a nomination call Mary at 334.7400 or e-mail the nomination to: [mcooksley@independence.k12.ia.us](mailto:mcooksley@independence.k12.ia.us)



## WANTED!!



### **Volunteers to help with RAGBRAI for Big Brothers Big Sisters!!**

To make this event successful .....  
WE NEED YOUR HELP!!

- We need people to work July 25<sup>th</sup> to help with setup/prep
- We need people to work July 26<sup>th</sup> – the day of the event (Multiple time slots are open to fit your schedule)
- We need dessert items: pies, brownies, cookies, cakes

*This would be a great opportunity for you and your mentee (Little) to do community service by helping us prepare, set up or clean up.*

*Or you could bake a dessert(s) together to donate*

**Please e-mail Jeannie Neeley or call at 334-3353**

Note: We are partnering with Independence Community Schools Food Service Group and the Band Boosters in this fund raiser.

Remember, Big Brothers Big Sisters is funded by

**“Expanding horizons through  
the power of one-to-one  
relationships”**

### **Bus Transportation Request**

I would like to ask all  
parents of East, West,  
and Middle  
School students who ride  
the rural busses home to  
call the  
bus garage if their  
children are not riding the  
bus home due  
to being picked up by  
parents or going home  
early.

Bus garage #334.7435  
24 hour answering  
machine

Thank you, Mike Donnelly



Want more information about Big Brothers Big Sisters, go to their website at:

<http://www.bbbs.org/site/c.diJKKYPLJvH/b.1539751/k.BDB6/Home.htm>





Independence Community PTO - May 2007

# PTO INFO TO KNOW

Co-Chairs:

Shelly Bertelli

[stbertelli@trx.net](mailto:stbertelli@trx.net)

Dawnye Sturtz

[lsturtz@iowatelecom.net](mailto:lsturtz@iowatelecom.net)

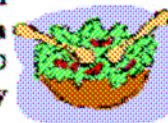
Please let us know if you want to be included on our PTO email list. You will receive meeting agendas, minutes and other updates.



PTO is once again providing a free drink to all students during the East and West Elementary field days held in May. Thank you to Polly Fank for coordinating this for us.

## Teacher Appreciation Supper

The Teacher Appreciation Supper was held on November 21 during fall conferences. Our committee co-chairs, Anne McMillan and Rhonda Jasper, did a great job organizing the meal. In addition to Anne and Rhonda, we had several servers: Mary Beth Brinkema, Tammy Baldwin, Teresa Barske, and Jordan Feltes. Numerous PTO members gave \$5.00 donations towards the dinner of taco salads and desserts. Cindy Thompson did a wonderful job baking and providing all the desserts!



Great Success!

PTO's Fall Fundraiser was a great success with over \$19,000 of profits raised for our elementary schools and future PTO events! We had several volunteers that made this go smoothly including Deb Martin (our committee chairperson), Curt Martin, Holly Rosauer and children, Betty Giddings, Julie Berner, Dawnye Sturtz, Shelly Bertelli, Cindy Thompson, Shelly Whited, Tracy Steger, Jodi Behan, Pam Gissel, Renee Gillis-Arnold, Deanna Porter and children, and Polly Fank. In addition, our parents and building staff also deserve a pat on the back! Thank you for your cooperation, support, and hard work! Students that sold 35 or more items were awarded with a special limo ride and lunch at Pizza Hut. Fifteen students from East and 31 from West had an awesome time! Thank you to Jessica Birthisel for the wonderful article and pictures in the paper.

## PTO Hosted Movie at Starlight Cinema



PTO invited students, teachers, and families to attend the free showing of Over the Hedge on Saturday, March 24, at the Starlight Cinema. Approximately 160 students and family members enjoyed the show. A special thank you to Curt Martin and Jim Hughes, both of Hughes Real Estate, for sponsoring this fun family event! The Movie Morning committee members were Deb Martin (chair), Kathy Meyer, Julie Berner, Betty Giddings, and Joni Kuper.



## Fall Book Fair



Our media specialists, Renita Wieland at West and Virginia Lake at East, coordinated the Fall Book Fair held during our November conferences. PTO provided the following helpers at West Elementary: Pam Gissel, Dawnye Sturtz, Shelly Bertelli, Wendy Fischels, Shelly Whited, and Betty Giddings.

## Grant Applications...

The Safe Surfacing Committee is beginning the search for grants to be used for the East Elementary playground. Meanwhile, West Elementary has applied for a grant from Qwest for the mobile computer lab.





## Early Childhood Fair

PTO and East Elementary had a table at the Early Childhood Fair held on March 31<sup>st</sup>. Dr. Blaisdell, Betty Giddings, and Dawnye Sturtz shared information about PTO and our elementary schools with everyone that stopped by. Betty Giddings did an awesome job with our PTO posters! Thank you, Betty!



## Dollars for Scholars Award

*Shelly Bertelli and Dawnye Sturtz, PTO co-chairs, plan to present PTO's \$500 scholarship to a deserving senior during the Dollars for Scholars award night to be held on Wednesday, May 9th.*

## April 3rd Meeting Presentation

Mary Cooksley, Curriculum Director, and Karl Kurt, High School Principal presented information about a possible Parent University at our April 3rd PTO meeting. PTO may offer assistance next fall with these special educational sessions.

# THANK YOU

PTO would like to give special recognition to Holly Rosauer, Amy Stephens, and Stacy Nabholz for handling the Milk Moola and Box Tops for Education all year. We appreciate your efforts in getting additional funds for East and West Elementary! Thank you!

PTO also appreciates all the support and help from our elementary principals, Dr. Blaisdell and Mr. Lyons, as well as our secretaries - Judy Hess (West), Jami TeKippe (East), Marj Lappe (East), and Pennie Anderson (Administration).

THANK YOU to Kathy Smith for designing our eye-catching PTO Info to Know newsletters!

## Read-a-thon Update



PTO member Pam Glissel assisted Renita Wieland, West Elementary Media Specialist, with the West Elementary Read-a-thon. Families donated \$861.79 to be used for AR tests and special binding for new paperback books.

## PTO OFFICERS NEEDED

**We're still looking for PTO officers!**  
**Let's keep the ball rolling...**

## Kindergarten Round Up



Kindergarten Round Up was held on March 12th and March 13th. PTO provided each student with a special envelope filled with a magnet with the school building phone numbers, a PTO flyer, information about Milk Moola and Box Tops for Education, Early Childhood Fair brochure, and a free pizza coupon to Pizza Ranch. Thank you to Julie Berner for pulling it all together! We also thank our Kindergarten teachers for handing out the envelopes.



# RAGBRAI

Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa™

July 22 - 28, 2007

A RAGBRAI Committee has been formed to organize a food booth during RAGBRAI. This is an excellent opportunity for PTO to earn some extra cash for our special projects. We'll need several helpers to make this a success. Please let us know if you can help on Thursday, July 26th!





# Elementary

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

**May 1-4** K-2 Spring Assessment

**May 9** 1:00 Dismissal: In-service

**May 28** No School: Memorial Day

**May 29** East Field Day

**June 1** Last Day of School

**Aug 2** 7am-7pm School Registration

**Aug 21** K-2 Orientation/6-12 first day of school

## Mileage Club Volunteers Needed!

If you would like to devote 15-30 minutes each week outside at recess to help students reach their goals in the Mileage Club, please call East Elementary to volunteer your time!

## Mentors Needed!

If you are interested in being a mentor and volunteering your time to work with a child for approximately 30 minutes each week on a regular basis, please call and let us know!

## Wanted: Substitute Associates

If you are available to substitute occasionally as a classroom, office, or library associate (duties vary), please call 334-7425. We need YOU!



## Principal's Corner

By: Dr. Mary Jean Blaisdell

It is hard to believe that the school year is nearly at an end. We are looking forward to an active month of May and the excitement of the upcoming summer!

**Class lists** for the 2007-08 school year will be developed during the summer. It is important that your child has a successful year. Teachers will be giving input on students' needs and abilities. This information is used to try to find a good match with a teacher and to create a good balance in classes with other students. A lot of time and effort will go into this process. If you, as parents, feel you have valuable information about your child that should be known for this process, let me know by May 31. Requests for individual teachers will not be acknowledged due to the impossibility to grant all of these requests. Thank you for your patience and support in this process.

May is a fun month to look forward to! East Elementary students in grades K-2 will participate in a **Field Day** on Tuesday, May 29. This is a non-competitive, fun event filled with many activities outdoors (hopefully!).

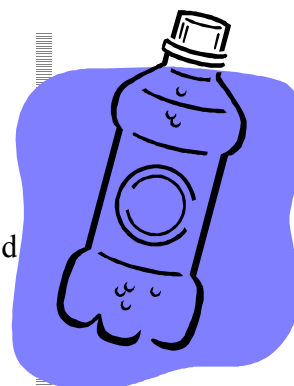
**Our last school day for students is Friday, June 1. Have a great month and enjoy the summer!**

Thanks,  
Mary Jean Blaisdell

## Box tops for Education/ Pop Can Tabs/Milk Moola for Schoola



We continue to collect General Mills Box Tops, Pop Can Tabs, and bottle caps and bag tops from Kwik Star products. Our PTA will again be taking care of these collections for us! This is a good way to help us earn extra money for things we need. Thanks! If you are interested in spending time at school or at home sorting/cutting and redeeming these items for our school, please call!





## Kindergarten Corner

May holds a chance to celebrate the great outdoors! We look forward to an outing to Buffalo Creek Park, east of Winthrop, on May 16, as well as an activity-filled field day on May 29. The kindergarten class has also been asked to escort the seniors for Baccalaureate on May 16th. We anticipate Friday, June 1 to be the student's last day of school.

Kindergarten students are well on their way to becoming First Graders! They will need opportunities and encouragement this summer to help them maintain the skills they have learned. Practice identifying letters & sounds, writing words, and **READ, READ, READ!** Don't forget about fundamental math skills, too: count out loud to 100, count objects to 30, name and print numbers to 30.

Thanks for a great year and have a terrific summer!



## First Grade Year End Fun!

May will be a busy month for first graders at East Elementary. In connection with a unit on ecology, students will get a chance to recycle paper, cans, and other trash with naturalists from Fontana park. As the children sort materials on a conveyor, they learn about many products that can be reused and recycled.

Also in May the children will attend a school-wide field day. As we prepare for summer we remember the fun and learning we did this year, and we all look forward to a great 2007-2008 school year.



**Mrs. Meyer's class learns about snakes from Sondra Cabell.**

## Second Grade Scene

The year is quickly coming to an end and second graders have lots of special things planned. The Spring Program was great! Thank Mrs. Thomas the next time you see her. We also had a delightful time at the Gallagher Bluedorn at the AMELIA BEDELIA play. In April Sondra Cabell from Fontana was here with activities for Earth Day.

The BABES program continues for six weeks. We are also working hard on our Math Summative Tests and will soon begin our last CBM testing for the year. May 29 is East Field Day.

In May we travel "Westward" for orientation at West Elementary. Students will spend time in a third grade classroom, partnered with a present third grade student. This is always an exciting time for second graders.

You can see we have a busy and exciting time ahead. As you begin to think and plan for summer, we would like to encourage you to make reading a leisure-time activity for the entire family. Besides the public library, you will receive information about the East library being open for AR books and testing times. We hope you each have a wonderful and safe summer.





## Summer AR Available

Due to the success of the Accelerated Reading Program during the school year, East, West will have their libraries open for a Summer AR/Library Program during June and July.



### Summer AR/Library Program hours:

Tuesdays, 9:00 - 11:00 am

Thursdays, 5:00-7:00 pm

### Summer AR/Library Program dates:

June 12, 14, 19, 21, 26, 28, July 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19

Students in grades K-5 may come at these times to check out books and take AR tests. This will only take 5-15 minutes. Children MAY NOT be dropped off and left for this. Please come along with your child and wait for them to finish. There will be NO SUPERVISION of students other than inside the library.

If your children attended different schools this year (06-07), you may want to take them all to one building to participate in SummerAR. If this is the case, you should do the following:

- Call your child's school **no later than June 1** to have your child's name put on a list (Your child's AR records will be transferred to the building of choice)
- You will need to give the following information: the child's first/last name, their 06-07 grade level/teacher and the building in which they will participate in Summer AR.

## Spring into Summer Activities

By: Crystal Seamans

The school year is coming to an end and it has been a great year at East. On May 29 we are holding the annual Field Day. Weather permitting we are going to be enjoying fresh air and physical activities that include teamwork and imagination. It is a very non-competitive day.

The spring and summer is a great time for you and your child to get outside and move together. Keep your child moving by eliminating or decreasing time spent in front of the television. I encourage you to promote physical activity in your house. Chores are a good way for children to keep moving and learn responsibility. Make sure to keep your child hydrated when they are outside for long periods of time. Your little guy or gal will need lots of good fuel for all of their activity so give them healthy choices that include fruits and vegetables. They are the original fast food and have lots of vitamins and minerals children need for optimal growth and brain development. Fruits and vegetables are also high in water content helping keep your child hydrated.

I want everyone to finish strong with a great May. Have a great summer and I look forward to seeing your child next year at East.



## Don't Forget to Read and Write!

By: Title I

Research shows children lose 1 to 3 months of learning every summer. They forget the skills they worked so hard on during the school year. Then they have to work even harder to catch up in the fall. You can prevent this loss. Keep your kids reading! Here are a few ideas:

- Swap books with a friend throughout the summer.
- Set a goal of reading a certain number of books, then do it.
- Take advantage of the summer reading program at the library.
- Tell stories.
- Put on a play.
- Make your own birthday cards, party invitations, and thank-yous.



## If The Shoe Fits

By Christina Carnelly – School Nurse

Now that the warm weather is here the children are wearing their warm weather clothing and footwear. This sometimes brings on a new problem for children. When young children wear open-toed sandals with no socks, sandals with higher heels, strappy sandals, or thong-type flip-flops, they are running the risk of injury to their feet and toes. Many injuries have been seen involving students here at school that would have most likely been prevented had the child not been wearing the type of shoes that described above. These shoes are not sturdy for the type of play that students of this age participate in at recess such as running, jumping, climbing, or crawling. Wood chips get pushed up under toe nails, skin is torn around toes and heels, blisters form, and sprains and fractures occur. Many times these injuries were caused solely or in part by the shoes that the student was wearing.

Please consider not sending your student to school in these types of shoes. They should be wearing sturdy shoes and socks to school. This will prevent blisters, sores, cuts and more serious injuries. Also, please note that on page 7 of the school calendar/handbook it does state that students are not to wear thong-type flip-flops to school.

Thank-you for your understanding of this matter and we hope we have a safe and enjoyable end to our school year.

May, 2007



# WEST ELEMENTARY

## West Elementary Media Center

has been a busy place this year. Since this is my first year at West, I was pleasantly surprised to see how much activity goes on in the Media Center. It is wonderful to see how excited the students are about the books they are reading, which is evident by the number of books that are checked out and by the continuous flow of students through the Media Center to check out books and take AR tests. Our goal is to encourage our student to read by providing them with opportunities to experience new authors and current titles. We earned \$860 from our Read-a-Thon which went to purchasing new books and AR tests. Thank you so much for participating in this fundraiser.



## the bottom line

by Josh Lyons

As we head into the final month of the school year it is important to remember what the accomplishments of our students, teachers, parents, and community have been.

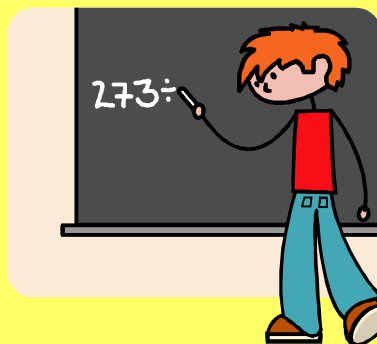
Throughout the year our kids have put a great deal of effort into their work and making the effort to meet the expectations of their teachers. Whether it be Accelerated Math, attaining their goals for Accelerated Reading, or completing an important project for science, our kids deserve a pat on the back.



Our teachers are some of the most dedicated educators in Iowa and in the Nation. They put in extra time to assure your children receive the best education possible. I have been impressed with their passion to provide activities that meet students' interests and to push forward through the challenging curriculum process. The West Elementary teachers make every effort to reach every student and to make them the most successful learner they can be. We should be proud of the work our teachers have accomplished this year.

The parents and community continue to find ways to be a support system to our school and students. We may not all agree on the ways we want to get where we want to go, but our values and beliefs are strong. We have to continue to work collaboratively, holding high expectations for our students and system to become the best at what we do. Our parents make sacrifices to help our students learn and the Mentoring program says a lot for our commitment to providing guidance to our children.

We must commit to excellence and do what is best for our children making the sacrifices necessary to be sure our children's futures are bright.



## Respect and Protect

West Elementary is compiling Respect and Protect data for the areas of bullying and harassment. We are committed to designing a plan of action that addresses the area of prevention education. Next year our focus will be on that of providing supplemental programming to reinforce that bullying and harassment are not acceptable behaviors and that all students deserve to be included in a safe and nurturing environment.





## Hola y Adios

Elementary Spanish with Sra. Crawford

It is with much sadness and disappointment that I write this newsletter article. Sadness because I had such a wonderful time this year working in the elementary buildings here in Independence and we are financially unable to bring Elementary Spanish back next year. I got to know more about the fabulous work our elementary teachers do and got to learn more about the day-to-day business of what a kindergartener through 5th grade student does and goes through each day. I've had a super time sharing my love of Spanish with them and seeing them USE it.

Disappointment, because our future lies in our ability to communicate to the larger community outside of our beloved state of Iowa, and even our national borders here in the U.S. To even the nay sayers out there on learning a second language at an early age, there are abundant studies and sources of information out there supporting the use of and continued study of a second (or even third) language beginning at an early age. This study not only enhances a child's ability to communicate in a second language early on, but enhances the understanding of their own language and forces the brain to work harder thereby strengthening the brains ability to work more effectively in other areas of study such as math and the sciences.



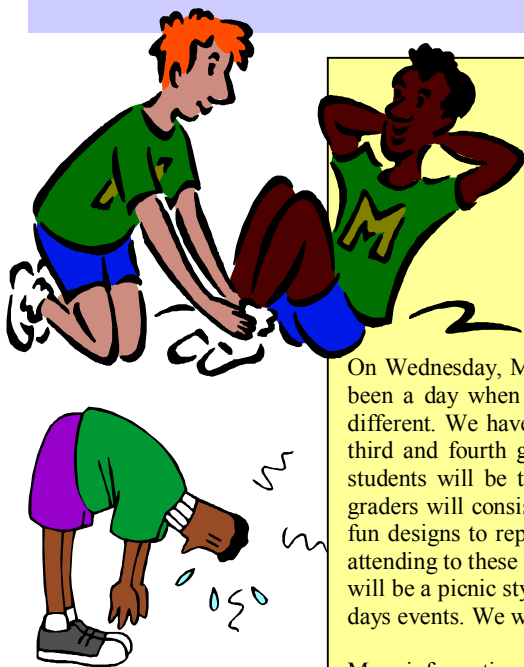
In class this year we have studied how the Spanish language originally came to our side of the world. Also, how our own language arrived here in our country. We have created many authentic Hispanic crafts, where they have come from and why they are created year after year in their native country. We have begun to explore the language, working not only on words and phrases, but sentence structure, and the use of, yes, verbs, nouns and adjectives.

I will get the chance to follow the current 5th graders back up to my old spot at Middle School to teach the 6th grade Social Studies course again. Middle School is a fun time in a student's school career but full of change, as well. It will be fun to see how this year's 5th graders have grown over the Summer, and I look forward to seeing them this coming Fall!

For those of you who have lower aged children, look for the Summer Spanish Camp to come back to one of the early weeks of June.

This will be a language and craft centered week of exploration, along with a sampling of snack foods from the Hispanic world.

Hello and goodbye, from Senora C.



### Physical Education

Before the school doors close for the summer students at West Elementary have a lot to look forward to in Physical Education class! Students are currently finishing up playing 23 Scadoodle this PE cycle. As the weather continues to warm up students will be outside getting ready for Track and Field events scheduled for May 23<sup>rd</sup>. We will also finish up the last of the Presidential Physical Fitness tests we have to do. Those students who qualify for the Presidential Physical Fitness award will be honored at the end of the school year. Please continue to encourage your son/daughter to be active and to live a healthy and happy lifestyle.

On Wednesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, West Elementary students will be participating in Track and Field Day. In the past this has been a day when students spend the entire day out at the track competing in events. This year the format will be different. We have decided to make the Track and Field event only part of the day's agenda. The day will consist of third and fourth graders competing in events during the morning from approximately 8:45 until 11:00. Fifth grade students will be taking part in the events from 12:30 until approximately 2:45. The afternoon for third and fourth graders will consist of completing a task for this summer's Ragbrai. Students will be painting refrigerator boxes with fun designs to represent Independence. They will also be participating in Jump Rope for Heart. Fifth graders will be attending to these tasks in the morning. Students will want to wear or bring older clothes to wear for this activity. There will be a picnic style lunch provided that day, so parents are welcome to eat lunch with their child and participate in the days events. We will send a note home for parents and families to sign-up for a school lunch that day.

More information will come, as we get closer to May 23<sup>rd</sup>.



# School

Meredith Miller, Principal

## Calendar of Events

### MAY

- 1 - BT Vinton-Shellsburg, 4:15pm
- 4 - GT WaMaC @ Indee, 4:30pm  
BT WaMaC @ Indee, 4:30pm
- 5 - 7th & 8th Adventureland  
Band Trip
- 8 - GT Vinton-Shellsburg, 4:15pm  
BT Marion, 4:00pm
- 9 - 1:00 Dismissal Staff  
Development
- 14 - Choir Night @ High School  
7:00pm  
Athletic Physicals @ M.S.  
6th - 12th grade, 6:00-7:30pm
- 15 - Band Night @ High School  
7:30pm
- 22 - Middle School Orienteering
- 28 - No School - Memorial Day
- 30 - Presidential Awards Assembly  
8:45am @ Middle School

### JUNE

- 1 - Last Day of School - 1:00  
Dismissal
- 4 - Teacher Workday
- 14 - Report Card Pick Up  
@ Middle, 6th-8th Grade
- 15 - Report Card Pick Up  
@ Middle, 6th-8th Grade

## The Principal's Corner By Meredith Miller

Due to the fog, ice, and snow we experienced this year, our last school day has been shoved back to June 1 with a 1:00pm dismissal.

### Athletic Physicals

Information will soon be sent home (with students) regarding the Athletic Physicals which will be given on May 14, 6:00 - 7:30pm at the Middle School. All athletes must have an athletic physical in order to participate in any school sponsored athletic program in grades 7 - 12. The cost is \$10 per student (maximum of \$20 per family).

**Please note the Choral Night is the same evening starting at 7:00pm at the High School. We will do what we can to place chorus students at the front of the line for the physicals.**

### Report Cards

Report cards will be available at the Middle School Office June 14 & 15. Any book fine or fees must be paid prior to receiving the report card. Parents are urged to check with their child for any potential "forgotten" or lost books before they come in to pick up the report card.

*[Continued on page 13]*



**REPORT CARD PICK UP  
GRADES 6th - 8th  
@ MIDDLE SCHOOL  
JUNE 14 & 15, 2007  
OFFICE HOURS  
7:00am - 3:00pm**



**Principal's Corner** *[continued from page 12]***Summer School**

Summer School will be scheduled for any student who has passed all of the required GLE's for either math, science, language arts, Family Consumer Sciences, and physical education. Parents should have received midterm reports late April; students who are in danger of qualifying for summer school will be monitored closely. Students who fail a GLE must attend re-teaching sessions and be reassessed in order to pass the course.

Whenever a student fails a GLE, the teacher sends a letter home with the student to notify the parent and schedule re-teaching opportunities. Students who fail to report for the re-teaching times will receive a Saturday-In-School suspension.

Students can not expect to wait until the end of the school year to schedule re-teaching times and reassessment for GLE's that were taught early in the year. A teacher's priority is with those students who need re-teaching on the most recent GLE's.

If you have a question about your child's grade(s), please give either the teacher or me a call as soon as possible.

**Course Selection Sheets**

The scheduling process for the 07-08 school year will soon be under way. Course selection sheets will be handed out to the 6th and 7th graders. The course selection sheet indicates both required and elective classes; the sheets need to be filled out, signed by a parent, and returned to the student's advisor by May 16. This information will be used when scheduling students this summer. Students who fail to return the course information sheets may not end up with the electives they prefer.

**Second Chance Reading**

This past school year students who scored below the 41%ile in reading comprehension on the ITBS were placed in an Extended reading class to improve their reading skills. The reading class was scheduled in place of one the students' exploratory experiences. Due to restrictions with the budget, we're not sure that we will be able to offer the Extended Reading class during the 2007-08 school year. If the funding is available and the class is offered, letters will be sent to the parents of those students who qualify for the reading class.

**Awards Assembly**

The last awards assembly of the year will be late May 30 at 8:45 in the gym. Eighth graders who have 1) maintained a 3.5 grade point average since 6th grade and 2) achieved at the 85th percentile or higher in math or reading on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills this school year will be recognized and awarded the Presidential Award for Outstanding Academic Excellence.

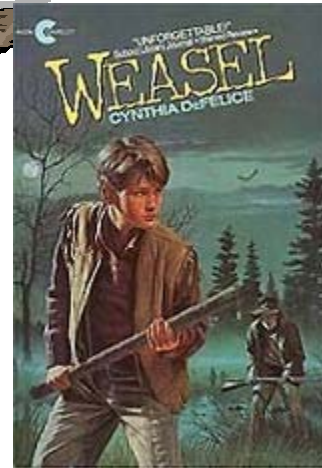
Students who have earned the Presidential Physical Fitness Award will also be recognized. Of course, we will also present the Schrage Award to the 8th grade boy and/or girl who best demonstrate the characteristics taught in the Quest program.

Parents of students receiving an award will be notified by letter inviting them to the assembly.

## 6th Grade Language Arts

Mrs. Henkes

I would like to start off by thanking Connie Arend for letting me know Cynthia DeFelice, author of Weasel, would be in Cedar Falls! I asked Ms. DeFelice many questions about one of my favorite novels. She said she loves writing about 9, 10, 11, and 12 year olds because they are “the most interesting people in the world.” She got the idea for the novel because she was home alone with her two dogs and thought she heard someone at her door. This spooked her, and she decided it would be a good idea for a book. DeFelice had no idea where the book was going and gave up on it for several months. It was the friendly harassment from middle school kids whom she would read each chapter to as she finished writing it that made her continue! She owes her love of books and writing to her mother who read to her and her brother nightly. “I’d be embarrassed to tell you how old I was when my mother was still reading aloud to me,” she said. DeFelice became a writer as her eighth or so career, later in life than most. Remember it’s never too late or you’re never too old to chase a dream!



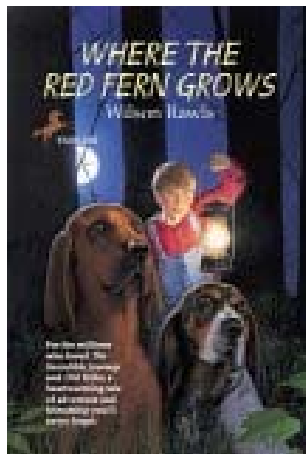
### Spring Brings Poetry and Classic Literature to 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts Classroom

Spring brings poetry and classic literature to our classroom. Students will be reading and writing poetry and also studying the classic novel Where the Red Fern Grows. The main areas of study are comprehension, vocabulary, characterization, poetic language, and setting. This novel tends to be a favorite for middle schoolers and was perhaps a favorite of yours growing up too!

Please make sure your son/daughter is continuing to read. Each student must show comprehension of NINE individual reading books to move onto seventh grade language arts.

### Attention Parents!

Mrs. Henkes is looking for old magazines to use for cutting. The best magazines are nature, travel, outdoors, family, gardening, etc. Catalogues also work well. Just send them with your son or daughter. Thank you very much!







# School

## May Calendar

- 1 – GG at CPU/Don Bosco  
BG – Wamac at VanHorne  
GTN – Wamac at Columbus  
BTN – Wamac at Columbus  
GTR – Indee Invite  
BTR at Marion  
GSC at Benton Community
- 2 – BG at Monticello Invite
- 3 – GG at Columbus/West Delaware  
GTN at Oelwein  
GSC at Decorah  
BSC (H) West Delaware
- 4 – IHSMA State Large Group Contest
- 5 – BG at South Tama Invite  
GTN at Waterloo West  
GSC at Anamosa Tourney  
BSC at Hudson Tourney
- 7 – BTN (H) Columbus  
BG – Wamac Super Meet at Epworth  
GTR – Wamac at Maquoketa  
BTR – Wamac at Manchester  
GSC at Maquoketa
- 8 – GG – Wamac Super Meet at Manchester  
GTN (H) Western Dubuque  
BTN at Western Dubuque  
BSC at Maquoketa
- 9 – 1:00 Dismissal  
Dollars for Scholars Banquet 7:00 p.m.
- 10 - Spring Play 7:30 p.m.
- 10- GG (H) Benton/Vinton  
BTN – Districts  
GSC (H) Gladbrook-Reinbeck
- 11 - Spring Play 7:30 p.m.
- 11 – BG – Sectionals  
GTN (H) Hudson  
GTR – Regionals  
BTR – Districts  
BSC at Waverly
- 12 - Spring Play 7:30 p.m.
- 12 – GTN – Regional Team  
GSC at Waverly Invite  
BTN – Substate Team  
BSC (H) Marion
- 14 – Choir Night  
GG – Districts
- 15 – Band Night  
BSC at Columbus

By Karl Kurt, High School Principal

### Backward Countdown

The backward countdown has begun for our Seniors. This means that we are getting close to the end of the school year and Graduation.

### Respect and Protect Survey

We have received the results of the 2006-2007 respect and protect survey. We analyzed the results and have identified areas for focus during the 2007-2008 school year. Overall, 76% of our students feel safe in our school. The most reoccurring comments that we received from our students were related to the number of entrances and exits and the lack of surveillance cameras. The biggest area of need identified for additional supervision by our student body was the hallways.

### Registration

We are working on putting all the student registrations into the computer and trying to build a master schedule. We will be meeting with departments to determine class offerings and sections sizes based on the course requests of our students.

### Hawkeye Trips

\*Staff – The IHS staff toured the Hawkeye campus in Waterloo, IA on April 13<sup>th</sup>. They had the chance to attend various workshops, and learn about the various programs that are offered at Hawkeye. This professional development day was well received by our staff based on their surveys.



\*Students --- The current sophomore class toured the Hawkeye campus in Waterloo, IA on April 16<sup>th</sup>. We bussed about 120 students from Independence High School and they had the opportunity to tour Hawkeye campus, hear about their various programs and course offerings, and take the Compass test. This is the 1<sup>st</sup> year that we have arranged this opportunity for our students. We appreciate Hawkeye Community College providing this service at no cost to the district.

We believe this field trip was a great opportunity for all our students. Hopefully, it gives our students more information and encourages them to think about their future plans.



◆ Independence Community School District ◆

1207 First Street West  
Independence, Iowa 50644

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