

# The Bridge



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## *Important Dates*

<b>April 2</b>	3 Hr. Early Dismissal for Students
<b>April 3&amp;6</b>	2015 Spring Break— Schools Closed
<b>April 7-10</b>	Rescheduled as Instructional Days
<b>April 10</b>	Report Cards Issued for Third Nine-Weeks
<b>April 13</b>	Board of Education Meets, 6 pm at BOE
<b>April 22</b>	Philippi Main Street Art Stroll—Code Blue
<b>April 23</b>	WESTEST Window Opens in Barbour Co.
<b>April 27</b>	Board of Education Meets, 6 pm at BOE
<b>April 29</b>	Philippi Main Street Art Stroll—Code Blue
<b>May 11</b>	Board of Education Meets, 6 pm at BOE
<b>May 14</b>	County Art Show at ABU Wilcox Chapel
<b>May 25</b>	Memorial Day Holiday - No School
<b>May 27</b>	Board of Education Meets, 6 pm at BOE

Hi Folks,

Last year, at this point in the calendar, I felt with extreme confidence that winter was finally over, but this past week-end sort of silenced that idea for now. Yet, my wife is hopeful that her tulips didn't take too bad a beating.

I want to thank all the folks that helped make our Math Field Day, Young Writers Event and the All-County Music Concert such great successes. It is such a treat to see kids step up, no matter if they win or lose, because what really matters is that they were not afraid to try – in doing so they were, and are, all winners! This year was a special one for Math Field Day; we hosted the regional competition. We have been notified that RESA 7 wants to continue its relationship with Barbour County Schools as the host county for the annual event for at least two more years. I truly regret not being able to attend the All-County Music Concert; it is one of my favorites in seeing the turnout of parents, family and friends in support of our students. Again, a special “thanks” goes out to our teachers for preparing the kids so well, and to the parents and family members for supporting their children, no matter the outcome.

Now that our student-athletes are now concentrating on their spring sports, here is another great chance for you to take time to enjoy our youngsters as they compete in the athletic arenas. As one of their biggest fans, I can personally tell you, they really appreciate seeing you at their games.

Though we approach what is an abbreviated Easter break, I still hope that all of us can, and will, take time to reflect on what that amazing Sunday meant and still means. Take time, too, for yourselves to enjoy time with families and friends.

As always, if you are in the neighborhood, please stop by.



Respectfully,

## ***Overflow Crowd Enjoys 2015 All-County Music Concert***

A capacity crowd of parents, relatives and music lovers of all ages filled the gymnasium at Philip Barbour High School on the evening of March 27 to enjoy the talents of student-musicians from around the school system at the 2015 All-County Concert. The annual spring event showcases the talents of county music students and their teachers in a series of instrumental and choral compositions across different genres.



The program opened with a ten-minute pre-concert performance by the popular Philip Barbour High School drum line. Following opening remarks by Eric Ruf, Board of Education President, the PB band performed the national anthem. This was followed by a two-part performance of "Pacem (Song of Peace)" and "Let the River Run" by the combined middle and high school choir, which was led by guest conductor, Carol Isner, and accompanied by retired music instructors, Judy Hodgkinson and Rick Kennedy.

Next, the audience enjoyed individual performances by the Kasson Middle ("Mirror Lake Legend"), Belington Middle ("Korean Folk Rhapsody") and Philippi Middle ("Wind Sketch") school bands. The "Pride of Barbour County," the PBHS band, followed with a rousing rendition of "The Circus Bee."

The all-county elementary choir, comprised of young voices from all six elementary schools, then sang "Stars and Stripes Forever," "America, My Home" and "Yankee Doodle's Pony." The patriotic theme and the evening concluded with all student-musicians joining together to perform the always stirring "God Bless America."

## **PB's New Tech Academy Showcased to Various Groups During March**



The students and staff of the New Tech Academy program at Philip Barbour High School recently conducted five Open House sessions across the county to showcase the successful program housed at the Career-Technical Center. Accompanied by program administrator, Tonya Ferguson, the group presented goals, objectives and examples of the initiative's three primary elements: climate, engagement and technology.

The group provided information and answered questions about New Tech to students and parents at each of the three middle schools and the high school itself, and concluded with a special presentation to the Barbour County Association of Retired School Employees. Barbour County is one of just two NTN-approved secondary sites in West Virginia and will be joined by Philippi Middle School as the first middle-level program in the state when school opens in August.

## **RESA 7 Sumdog Contest Announced**

Sumdog's final RESA 7 math contest of the school year will start Friday April 24th and will run until the following Thursday. It's free to take part and there are prizes to be won! The contests are aimed at grades K - 8, but if a teacher feels this is an appropriate level for other students, they are also welcome to join in. It will only take an hour or so to get a decent score and, as students play online, they can compete in school or at home. In order to join in the fun, teachers can enter their classes here: [http://www.sumdog.com/enter\\_contest](http://www.sumdog.com/enter_contest).



## BES Students Shine at Regional Social Studies Fair

Five fourth grade students from Belington Elementary School participated in the RESA Social Studies Fair, held at Fairmont's Middletown Mall on March 27. Accompanied by BES teacher, Gina Davis-Layhew, the local contestants included: Carli Cvechko, Avery Carpenter, Mimi Ferguson, Marshall Nestor and Rafe Riley.

In the category of Economics, Mimi Ferguson placed second in the region, while in the US History division, Rafe Riley finished third. The big winner from Belington was in the Psychology competition, where Marshall Nestor claimed first place, qualifying him for the 2015 West Virginia State Social Studies Fair on April 24. According to the staff, each member did a great job and a big shout out was extended to all of the parents for their great support.



## Winners Named in Junior Elementary School's 5K Run Event



The 2015 5K Run sponsored in late March by the Junior Elementary School PTA was deemed a big success, with dozens of local citizens participating in this year's race. The long-distance event helps the school raise funds for the annual 4th grade class trip.

Congratulations were extended to the following winners: Overall Male—Austin Hamrick; Overall Female—Jennifer Swift; Age 10 and Under: Brayden Cole (M) and Jorjalynn Ward (F); Ages 11-19: Noah Ward (M) and Aubrey Williams (F); Ages 20-29: Sterling Daniels (M) and Sarah Shelton (F); Ages 30-39: William Allen (M) and Shelley Starkey (F); Ages 40-49: David Shelton (M) and Kristi Rosier (F); Ages 50-59: Gary Shaffer (M) and Susan Anglin (F).

## Employees Asked to Check Mailing Addresses for Accuracy

Due to the recent 911 address changes across the county, the Business Office needs to ensure that employee addresses that are currently on file are correct. A form has been prepared to help personnel update their addresses as necessary. It is available as an attachment to an email of March 12.

**Please take time to verify that the address on your paystub is correct.** If the address is not correct, complete the provided forms and return them to the payroll department at the central office.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Amanda Huff at 304-457-3030 (ext. 136) or by email at [ahuff@k12.wv.us](mailto:ahuff@k12.wv.us).

## Philippi Lions Club Presents Flags to Volga-Century Students

Members of the Philippi Lions Club visited Volga-Century Elementary School during March to make a presentation to Mrs. Streets' first and second grade students. After discussing the history of the American Flag and interesting facts about it, the Lions awarded a personal U.S. flag to each member of the class as a memento of the special program.





## Do Your Best on the Test!

### Tips and Techniques

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When students ask why it is so important to give good effort on the General Summative Assessment (or any other instrument), here are some reasons, tips and/or discussion starters...

- *It is generally good practice to always give your best effort on anything you do. It becomes ingrained and **a part of your character**, and others will notice.*

- *While it is true that the GSA results will not affect your classroom grades, report card or promotion status, these scores become part of your official school records and, as such, will be available to future schools and employers.*

- *In addition to the importance of your individual scores, the overall grade level and school scores will be used to compare our school with other schools around the county, state and nation. We want to show how sharp our students are! The results will also be used by the school staff to improve the curriculum as it analyzes strengths and weaknesses.*

**Note:** The teacher's attitude toward the testing process is critical because students are by nature intuitive. Also, be aware of the fine line between preparation and over-preparation. There exists a point of diminishing returns where students may become overwhelmed by the whole process and begin tuning out.

#### Before the Test:

- *Get a full night of rest before each of the testing dates so that you are fresh and alert the following mornings. Test sessions are usually limited to the morning hours to avoid fatigue and burnout.*

- *Eat a good breakfast either at school or at home to provide fuel for the day's activities.*

- *Dress comfortably so that you are not distracted by clothing too warm, not warm enough, too tight, etc.*

- *When feeling nervous before the test, close your eyes and take several slow, deep breaths; spend a few moments completely relaxing your mind as necessary.*

- *Do not try to study for the General Summative Assessment. Think of it as a non-threatening opportunity to show what you've learned over the past several years.*

#### General Test-Taking Tips:

- *On the GSA, consider using the available technology tools. They are there to help you. For example, you can use the on-screen calculator in math for grades 6 and up.*

- *The GSA is untimed. Don't agonize over any one question. Work at a comfortable pace, marking any items that you need to return to, and use available time at the end of each section to review your answers.*

- *Answer all questions. All multiple-choice items are weighted equally. You are not penalized for incorrect responses. Your score is determined by the correct number of answers. Don't leave any answers blank.*

- *All tests have some hard questions. Don't skip them. It's much better to take a good guess. Use the process of elimination to reduce the number of choices and then make your best guess.*

- *Read all directions through twice. Never begin to answer questions before reading all directions.*

- *Read all passages in their entirety before attempting to find the answers to any related questions.*

- *Stop at the pop-up STOP sign at the end of the test section. You can then go back and work on any questions that were skipped and marked for review. Make sure that an answer has been bubbled for every item. You may then begin a quiet activity at your desk (e.g. reading a book, working a puzzle, etc.) until the rest of the class is finished.*

- *Use the highlighter and note-taking tools to mark key words or phrases that tell what kind of computation is needed in mathematics sections; for example, less than, greatest, between, nearest, least and so on.*

- *Use the provided scratch paper for mathematics calculations or notations.*

- *Try out all answer choices until finding one that is correct. Sometimes the correct answer is not given. Then follow the directions for marking the none of the above choice. Similarly, sometimes the first three answers are all correct. Then mark all of the above as your choice.*

- *Watch carefully for negative words in directions, such as NOT or OPPOSITE. These words tell exactly which answer to look for. Such key words often appear in bold or italic type or all capital letters.*



## — Odds 'N' Ends —

### ➤ April Open Enrollment Information:

The annual PEIA Open Enrollment will take place from April 2 through May 15, 2015. All PEIA PPB Plan policyholders will **need to designate a primary care physician (PCP)** to avoid the \$500 deductible penalty for Plan Year 2016. It is important to note that **PEIA will not take these designations on an ongoing basis throughout the plan year.** Anyone who does not designate a PCP during open enrollment will be subject to the additional \$500 deductible. Questions on the open enrollment period may be directed to Amanda Huff, Benefits/Payroll Coordinator at the board of education office (304-457-3030 ext.136).

### ➤ State Benefits Fairs are Scheduled:

For those who seek more detailed or personalized information about their insurance or benefits, PEIA has scheduled a series of seven Benefit Fairs for the Plan Year 2016 across West Virginia. The sessions will take place between April 7–21. The nearest location for local personnel is at the Morgantown Ramada Inn on Thursday, April 9, from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m.

### ➤ Certification Reminders:

If your teaching certification is due to expire on June 30, 2015, the coursework required for renewal and an application for renewal must be submitted to the Personnel Office prior to the opening of the 2015-16 school term. There have been recent changes regarding certification permits and authorizations recently, and staff are encouraged to contact their colleges with any questions. Also, if you have completed hours that make you eligible for advanced salary classification, it is important to submit all paperwork as soon as the class is completed. The county's state aid funding is based in part on current salary information. More importantly, the state will back-date salary increases only up to three months. For more information or assistance, personnel may contact either Elaine Benson (ext. 125) or Homer Talbott (ext. 131) at the board of education office.

## Remembering Barbara Jones Bradley

A mosaic can be defined as a picture or decorative design made by setting small colored pieces, such as stone or tile, into a surface. Perhaps Barbour County Schools can be thought of as a constantly shifting and expanding mosaic of people who, whether a piece for several weeks or several decades, help define it and always remain a part of it.



Many retired and veteran school employees will fondly remember her as Barbara Ann Jones, while those in mid-career may recall her as Barbara Bradley. She passed away on February 22 at age 80. Barbara's contributions to Barbour County Schools during a long and accomplished career included Title I instruction at Philippi Elementary School and later in service as the district's Elementary Curriculum Coordinator until her retirement in 1994.

Former colleagues remembered her professionally as: passionate about reading, dedicated, caring, enthusiastic and someone who loved children. Personal attributes often cited include: bubbly, friendly, supportive, funny, kind and someone who could make a room sparkle. As Barbour County's mosaic of school service continues to change and grow, piece by piece, one of the most brightly colored tiles will always be the one represented by Barbara Jones Bradley.



"You know, I'm really going to miss our little chats over spring break."