



The Bridge

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Spring, 2018

Greetings Everyone,

A lot has happened in Barbour County Schools since my holiday message to you in the Winter issue of The Bridge. We have survived the winter that wouldn't quit, the world-renowned work stoppage, the inaugural administration of the SAT at Philip Barbour and, most recently, the floods. I was speaking to a fellow superintendent yesterday and he said about the only thing left to battle is a swarm of locusts.

Throughout all of the madness of the past few months, I have constantly been impressed with the way that the men and women of Barbour County Schools have risen to whatever the challenge may be. Time and time again people have stepped up to do what was needed to be done in order to best serve our students.

I hope that all of the men and women of Barbour County Schools understand how much I appreciate and respect their efforts to make a change in the way school employees are valued in Barbour County and throughout the State of West Virginia. By deciding to hold out and wait to insure that the legislature did what the Governor and the state union leadership had agreed to, against the advice of those union leaders and your superintendent, you forced a result that no one in this state or across the country could see coming. I am proud to say that I was able to be a part of 55 STRONG.

In my opinion, the greatest value gained through the work stoppage was not the 5% raise for all school and public employees. It was the realization gained that a large group of people, committed to a common goal with honorable intentions, can accomplish more than what most individuals could ever imagine. Furthermore, it's not just the adults who learned that valuable lesson; our students were first-hand witnesses to that historic process.

We are now heading down the home stretch of another successful school year and the weather, flooding and work stoppage has resulted in the creation of a period of time at the end of the year that will be different from other school closings in the past. We have several days available after the students leave for the summer, presenting us with opportunities. We are planning end-of-year professional development activities, and will have time to complete some work that would normally be done at the beginning of the next year. Further, we'll have time to look at some data and make decisions about scheduling and remediation that we normally wouldn't have time to do.

I hope you enjoy the rest of your school year and that you will keep pushing yourselves and our students to be the best that they can be. Thanks!





Important Dates

March 23	End of Third Nine-Wks Grading Period
March 26 -March 29	Rescheduled as Instructional Days
March 30	Out of Calendar Day No School
April 2	Out of Calendar Day No School
April 4	Report Cards Are Distributed
April 5	Elementary Parent-Teacher Conference
April 9	Middle Parent-Teacher Conference
April 10	PBHSC Parent-Teacher Conference
April 20	Philippi Art Stroll: Main Street, 5-8 pm
April 27	Faculty Senate: Two Hour Early Dismissal
May 8	Election Day; No School
May 17	Baccalaureate: 7 pm Wilcox Chapel - ABU
May 18	PBHS Graduation Day: Fairgrounds
May 24— June 4	Rescheduled as Instructional Days
June 4	End of Fourth 9-Wks, Report Cards Issued
June 5-11	Professional Meeting Days for Staff
June 12	Planning & Prep Day for Closing of School
June 13	Parent-Teacher Conference Day

Annual All-County Concert Draws Large Crowd



A capacity crowd of parents, relatives, students and community music-lovers filled the gymnasium at Philip Barbour High School on the evening of March 20 to enjoy the 2018 edition of the school system's All-County Concert. The popular event is held each spring and features vocal and instrumental selections by student-musicians representing each of the county's eight schools.

Following a rousing pre-concert performance by the Philip Barbour High School drumline, emcee, Doug Schiefelbein, introduced Board of Education President, Eric Ruf, and Superintendent, Jeffrey Woofert, who made welcoming remarks to the audience. After the PB Colt band presented the The Star Spangled Banner, the county's middle and high school choir took center stage.

Led by guest conductor, Carol Isner, and accompanied by retired music instructor, Rick Kennedy, the choral group opened with the haunting and imaginative piece, "The Moon." The choir concluded with "Umbuntu," a tune which embraces the philosophy of a shared connectivity among all of earth's people.

Next, the four bands from the middle schools and high school each performed selections chosen for the evening. First, under the direction of Kim Neff, Kasson Middle played "Queenwood Overture." Belington Middle, directed by T.J. Dalton, followed with "Shawnee Creek Legend." Next, director, Edward Poling, led the Philippi Middle band in "Raider's March." The band portion concluded with a performance of "In Flight" under the direction of Victor Iapalucci.

The elementary choir, representing Belington, Junior, Kasson and Philippi Elementary Schools (above), then joined voices to sing three selections: "Music is Always There," "This Day of Peace," and "Yakkin' on the Phone" under the guidance of their respective teachers, Tonya Baker, Laura Hart, Christina Savidge and Kim Neff. The traditional finale, "America the Beautiful," concluded the evening as the hundreds of young Barbour County musicians blended their talents to honor our nation and its veterans.

Barbour's Own Lisa Lepsch: Serving the Community in So Many Ways

As Barbour County's School Psychologist, Lisa Lepsch is known for her professionalism and dedication to local children and young adults. For the past 22 years, she has helped diagnose academic, emotional and social issues, helping county students to process their problems, plan goals and actions, while promoting positive behaviors. But, outside of school hours, she serves in other ways as well, none more fascinating than her role as a search-and-recovery canine handler and trainer.

Twenty-one years ago, her lifelong love of dogs found common ground with Kathy Holbert, a local handler and friend, who introduced Lisa to the roles of canines in the world of search and rescue. Now regarded as one of the most experienced trainers and owners in the region, Lisa is the CEO of the Barbour County Tactical Search and Recovery Team, with members in Barbour, Preston and Harrison Counties. While dogs can be trained to detect in a variety of areas such as explosives, drugs, airport contraband, medical conditions and even the location of rare animal species, Lisa's niche is to help locate



With Jack at a Carolina training seminar

missing people, whether living or deceased. Her current canine partner is seven-year old, Jack.

The non-profit and volunteer group frequently receives requests for assistance by law enforcement and emergency management agencies from across the region and beyond. For example, last summer, Lisa traveled to Colorado with Jack to help advance a major criminal case investigation.



Exploring rapids with Renzo in 2014 at Arden near Party Rock

While every search and recovery is memorable, Lisa recalls the sadness and enormity of the Flight 93 crash site near Shanksville, PA. Her two groups were among only five summoned to help locate remains in the tragic aftermath of 9/11/01. More recently, she was part of an archaeological search for ancient remains at historical sites in Mississippi.

Jack is the sixth in a line of canine partners for Lisa. All have been German Shepherds and, while some were older when she acquired them, Jack was a pup, just eight weeks old. The training process involves a period of socializing or bonding, playing games and teaching the dog to react to certain scents, while ignoring others. These imprints are the foundation for their success. Lisa says that work for the canines is actually fun for them, an adventure that ends with a reward and affection.

Among the challenges for the handler are best practices that must be followed, including a minimum of 16 hours of training per month. In addition, a considerable amount of out-of-pocket expenses go with the territory. The rewards in the avocation, however, are even greater: finding answers for loved ones and aiding law enforcement. Mostly though, it's the joy of watching the dog work, and bonding with a loyal partner that only wants to serve.

Belington Middle History Bowl Team Places 2nd at Regional Event

** Students Qualify for State Contest **

Burnishing its reputation for recent strong performances at the annual Region 7 History Bowl, the team from Belington Middle School finished a close second out of nearly 20 teams from the area. The local team was edged out of the overall championship by a single point by South Middle School of Morgantown. The 2018 event was held on March 10 at Robert L. Bland Middle School in Weston.



Coached by BMS teacher, Sarah Harris, the team consists of (above from left): Gracie Miller, Maggie Haller, Bella McNaboe and Cadie Kittle. Alternates include Koltin Davis and Audrey Williams. Their performance at the regional play-in qualifier earned the team a spot at the West Virginia State Contest, to be held in Charleston on April 24.

The West Virginia History Bowl features questions compiled by the state Archives and History staff about the state's architecture, arts, culture, geography, government, history, people, literature and sports. The Archives and History staff has developed more than 2,000 questions for its online Quick Quizzes. Eighth graders in public, private and home school education programs are eligible to compete in four-person teams during double-elimination tournament play. The regional winners and runner-up teams from each region then qualify to advance to the state tournament.

Highmark Foundation Grants to Aid County Schools' Health Resource Needs



During the past few weeks, each school in Barbour County has benefited from generous grant awards made by the Highmark Foundation. The Pittsburgh-based organization is a private, charitable group dedicated to public health and human service initiatives. Cathy McAlister, of Highmark Foundation/Blue Cross Blue Shield, is shown above, front left, as she makes one of the \$1000 check presentations to school staff representatives at Philippi Middle School.

The grants will be used across the county at each school to assist with the purchases of items that will impact students' supportive, social and health needs. In addition, the Highmark Foundation has encouraged each principal to apply for other grant opportunities for their schools. The Foundation anticipates returning to Barbour County with additional grant awards of up to \$5000 after speaking to principals and board of education members during a recent presentation.

Highmark recognizes that children spend 7-8 hours daily, five days per week in school under the care and supervision of teachers, administrators and school nurses, while they promote lifelong healthy behaviors. The Foundation's goal is to provide schools with the necessary resources required to best meet student needs.

Procedural Changes Announced for Paper Paycheck Distributions

The Finance Office has announced that beginning on Friday, June 1, 2018, employees who are currently receiving paper payroll checks (those not receiving pay via direct deposit) will receive payroll checks through the mail only. Checks from that date forward will no longer be available for pick-up at the central office on pay dates.

The paper payroll checks will be placed in the mail the day before payday.

Employees who would like to change from a paper check to direct deposit, will need to complete the Authorization Agreement for Automatic Deposits form, located on the Barbour County Schools website at: <http://www.wvschools.com/barbourcountyschools/files/Employee/Direct%20Deposit%20Request%20Form.pdf>. Employees who are interested are asked to please send this completed form along with a voided check or deposit slip to the attention of Amanda Huff in the Payroll Office at the central office.



Board of Education Meeting Dates Set for Spring Months

Following are the established meeting dates for the Barbour County Board of Education during the Spring months of 2018. *The May 29 date is tentative.* All sessions are scheduled to begin at 6 p.m.

- **March 26—** Board of Ed. Office
- **April 9—** Board of Ed. Office
- **April 23—** Board of Ed. Office
- **May 14—** Board of Ed. Office
- **May 29—** Board of Ed. Office
- **June 11—** Board of Ed. Office

Kasson Service Project Targets Solar Lighting for Puerto Rico



Students at Kasson Elementary/Middle School are shining a light on a great need in storm-ravaged Puerto Rico. The school is in the final stages of completing a service project in conjunction with New Vision Renewable Energy to collect donations to aid in disaster relief. With many citizens still without electricity, renewable lighting units can be made available to the populace at a cost of \$110 per family. New Vision CEO, Rustin Seaman, recently visited Kasson to explain the science behind solar lighting, while students helped assemble the lights.

Teams from Junior, Kasson & BMS Explore & Compete in Robotics

Barbour County was well represented at the 2018 West Virginia state Robotics competition on March 3 as teams from Junior Elementary, Kasson Elementary/Middle and Belington Middle Schools participated in the field of 29 schools. The annual event took place on the campus of Fairmont State University, with the top five finishers qualifying for the upcoming World Tournament, scheduled for April 29–May 1 at Louisville, KY. For the second consecutive year, Kasson has earned a spot in the world field.



Robotics are rapidly changing the way we work and live in the 21st century. A branch of engineering and science, it deals with the design, construction, operation, and use of robots, as well as computer systems for their control, sensory feedback, and information processing. Simply put, robotic technologies are used to develop machines that can substitute for humans and replicate human actions.

The state event at FSU culminated many weeks of instruction and practice, with much of the preparation taking place outside of school hours. The competition involved about eight hours and 100 qualifying matches throughout the day. Each match involved 60 seconds of coordinated critical thinking and teamwork, as members adjusted their strategies and made changes to their robots before, during and after each contest.



In addition to Kasson's world qualifying top five finish, one of Junior's teams finished tenth and was able to reach the contest finals. The Junior team, shown at left in blue trading ideas with their Kasson counterparts in red, was coached by Diana Bibey and Charla Reger. The Kasson team was coached by David Taylor, while Belington's squad was mentored by Eric Eisenbrey and Shanda Ross.

The KEMS Eagle team, shown above between matches, will once again benefit from the training and experience of NASA engineers. Mr. Taylor and the team visited the experts in Fairmont recently as preparations continue for the upcoming World event in Kentucky. Associated with VEX IQ Robotics, the late-April event is touted as the "world's largest robotics competition."

VEX
ROBOTICS
WORLD
CHAMPIONSHIP



— Odds 'N' Ends —

➤ **Blue & Gray Reunion Activities:** The 2018 committee promises a day filled with learning opportunities for county students during the Walking History Day at the 29th Annual Blue & Gray Reunion. This special day is Friday, June 1, 2018, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in downtown Philippi. The 157th anniversary of the first land battle of the Civil War will be marked on that date and throughout the weekend.

Students and teachers visiting Walking History Day will walk through Philippi, stopping at 20-25 informal and formal presentations about life during the Civil War, including period music, daily life for the Civil War soldier, life in a Confederate Camp, visits from History Alive's Harriet Tubman and Stonewall Jackson, a visit to the Barbour County Historical Museum, home of the famous Philippi mummies, a walk through the country's only dual barreled federal highway covered bridge, built in 1852 and used by forces of the North and South, and much more.



For more information, contact your school principal, who has received detailed information about plans and procedures for the special day.

➤ **Donor's Choose Reminder:** The popular and often effective Donor's Choose fundraising platform can help generate dollars for worthy school projects and supplies. Staff members are reminded that, prior to establishing an account at the site, a fundraising request form must be submitted through the school to the county for board of education review and approval, since the money is being raised in the name of the school and the LEA.

Colt Roundballers Complete Record-Setting Season



The boys basketball team continued a stellar year for Philip Barbour varsity sports as the Colts broke several records on their way to a Final Four finish in the West Virginia Class AA championship tournament. The program picked up its first ever state win with an exciting 57-56 decision over Bluefield in the opening round before bowing out to powerful Fairmont Senior in the semi-finals. PB's final record of 22-4 matched the program's high water mark for the program set just the previous season.

Led by head coach, Marcus Johnson, and assistants, Rick Mouser and Jamie Carpenter, the Colts stayed near the top of the Big Ten Conference standings throughout the season and rolled through sectional and regional tournament play. A large and spirited group of fans traveled to the Charleston Civic Center to cheer on the Colts in the Mountain State's version of March Madness, and witnessed history as senior, Cole Whited, set a new tournament record by making all 13 of his shots from the field, eclipsing a 12-for-12 performance that had stood since 1994.

Fellow senior, David Shriver, was named to the Class AA All-Tournament team, as he poured in 35 points during the Colts' two contests. David also became the fifth player in PB history to be named to West Virginia's First Team All-State squad. Cole Whited joined him as captain of the Class AA Third Team, while senior, Noah Price, and junior, Levi MacAdam, were both named to the Honorable Mention squad.