



The Bridge

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Hi Folks,

The following true story was printed in a magazine article in 2014. I think that it speaks to each of us who have made our life's work guiding and serving children:

At my grandma's funeral in 2004, an anonymous woman turned in a letter to be read by the pastor. She had been a student of grandmother's many years before, and the letter describes how, on one Christmas, my grandmother changed her life. This is what the letter said:

"I was in Irene Loper's fourth grade class at Lois Elementary School and I have a little story to share with you. It was Christmas time and my family was very poor. ... I was the third child of four born into our family. Money was always an issue and that year was an especially hard one. I was only 9 years old. I'm sure I was pitiful, with dirty hair and dirty clothes. The lunch-room ladies would hold me on their laps and try to feed me because I was so tiny and skinny.

The last day before Christmas break, Mrs. Loper asked her students what their families were planning for Christmas. Everyone else raised their hands so they could share their stories. Mrs. Loper asked me what my family would be doing ... and I could only shrug. She asked if we had a tree up yet and tears welled up in my eyes. The class giggled, but she quieted them and moved on to the next student.

Later, Mrs. Loper asked me to stay after school. I just knew I was in trouble. She told me that she needed a "special" helper to take down the class Christmas tree. Once we finished taking off the decorations, she told me I could take the tree home. Even after dragging it on the ground the few blocks to get back to my house, it was still the most beautiful tree in the world.

As I put up the tree with my brother, I found one small, blue bell ornament still attached. Now, every year since that Christmas, I still adorn our family tree with that little blue bell. It is the pride of the tree, of a memory of kindness shown to a child when it was needed most."

I go back and reread this letter every year. It reminds me of the impact we make on our students as educators. This woman had not seen my grandmother for over forty years, but she still remembered this act of kindness. Never doubt that you make a difference in the lives of your students. Even the smallest act of kindness can reverberate for years. –Diana Rendina

May you have a wonderful holiday season full of joy and inspiration. Merry Christmas and Happy 2022!



John D. Wagter



Important Dates

Dec. 22	PLC Day for Staff via Remote Methods
Dec. 23	End Second 9-Weeks and First Semester
Dec. 24	Christmas Holiday: No School
Dec. 27 thru 31	Out of Calendar Days: No School
Jan. 3	First Day of Third 9-Weeks & 2nd Sem.
Jan. 10	Report Cards Are Distributed
Jan. 11	Elementary Parent-Teacher Conferences
Jan. 12	Middle Parent-Teacher Conferences
Jan. 13	PBHS Parent-Teacher Conferences
Jan. 17	Martin Luther King Day: No School
Feb. 7	Prof. Learning Day: No School Students
Feb. 10	Progress Reports Are Distributed
Feb. 18	Out of School Environment: No School
Feb. 21	PLC Sessions, Fac. Senates: No School
Mar. 11	End of 3rd Nine-Weeks Grade Period
Mar. 21	Report Cards Are Distributed
Mar. 28 to Apr 1	Out of Calendar Days: No School

Barbour County's Lisa Lepsch Is Named WV's School Psychologist of the Year



Barbour County's Lisa Lepsch has been honored with the prestigious designation of West Virginia School Psychologist of the Year for 2021-22. The annual award recognizes a school psychologist in the state who is considered exemplary in the provision of school psychological services. Criteria include: a public school employee who is working primarily as a school psychologist; is a regular member of WVSA; and is considered to be exemplary in the provision of school psychological services.

As the district's only school psychologist, Ms. Lepsch is now in her 26th year of service to students and the community. Lisa provides a comprehensive array of services, including: psychological evaluations, functional behavior assessments, behavior plans, crisis response, teacher training, and counseling. She has provided trainings to school personnel and community members in national incident management systems, de-escalation, setting limits, policy 2419, ADHD, dyslexia, special education eligibility and many other areas as needed.

Among the more innovative trainings that Lisa provides involve her search and rescue dogs, with whom she travels around the region and country to respond to crisis situations that need the unique skills of a K-9 unit. She brings the dogs into the schools to teach and reach the students in high interest presentations and question-answer sessions. She is shown above with her German Shepherd partner, Ike.

Lisa Lepsch's experiences and approach are diverse. She brings her experience as a police officer in Maryland and a special educator in Massachusetts to the field of school psychology. She holds an additional master's degree in Legal Studies with a concentration in Homeland Security. She has been a mentor and supervisor to two interns and is a liaison and educator with the Barbour County Family Resource Network. She also collaborates with Alderson Broaddus education department, and co-wrote a \$400,000 school safety grant for Barbour County Schools. She is truly one of our LEA's skilled, affable and valuable treasures.

★ GOLD STAR SEASONS

The 2021 fall athletic season at Philip Barbour High School will likely be long-remembered as one of the most outstanding in Colt history. The August to November window saw a Class AA state championship, along with a state runner-up.

The 2021 edition of Lady Colts volleyball continued the program's perennial excellence in Class AA play by claiming its fifth state title in Charleston on November 13 with a thrilling five-set victory over #1 seed and defending champion, Shady Spring. Under veteran coach, Heather Halfin, the Colts have now made a remarkable 20 straight trips to the Civic Center following sectional and regional crowns.



The see-saw title match saw the Lady Colts triumph with a dramatic 15-13 win in the fifth and final game of the contest. Named to the first all-tourney team from PB were: Alyssa Hill, Emily Denison and Avery Carpenter. Second team honors went to Mackenna Halfin.

★ Meanwhile, a week earlier, the Lady Colts soccer squad made school history by advancing to the program's first-even appearance in the Class AA championship match with a 1-0 semi-final victory over Winfield. While the Philip Barbour squad would eventually lose a heartbreaking 3-2 double overtime decision to powerful Charleston Catholic the next day, the season was one that will be long remembered and serve as a building block for the future. The Lady Colts finished the campaign with a record of 16-4-1.

Colt Hall of Fame Program Rescheduled

The Philip Barbour High School Hall of Fame Committee has its fingers crossed as it announces the new date for the 2020/2021 induction dinner program, hoping it will avoid any COVID issues in the spring. The event will be held on Saturday, March 26, at 6:30 p.m. barring any further concerns with the large indoor gathering.



Kindergarten – PK Registrations to Be Set by Appointments Only

Barbour County Schools will begin enrolling students for its 2022-23 Kindergarten and Pre-K programs starting on Monday, January 3, with parents asked to make appointments by phone or in person at each child's respective school. Enrollment packets will be available on and can be printed from the Barbour County Schools website.

Kindergarten information packets should be forwarded to the child's school, while Pre-Kindergarten packets can be scanned and sent to Karen Macdonald at NCWVCAA (Head Start) at 304-457-6525.

Items required for both processes include:

- *State Certified Birth Certificates
- *Immunization Records
- *Physical Exams (Health Checks)
- *Social Security Cards
- *Insurance Cards
- *Dental Exams

Further questions can be answered by contacting the child's school (or Head Start for Pre-K) or the Board of Education Office at 304-457-3030.



Student-Operated Career Center Store Is Now Open for Business

The Philip Barbour High School Career and Technical Education Center recently add-



ed a new program service to its menu of offerings. Student and community shoppers can now purchase a variety of personally produced gifts and merchandise, most with a Barbour County or PB Colt flair.

Career Center student, Nicholas Tustin won the facility's recent store-naming contest with his very creative submission of "The Whole 'Colt' and Caboodle." The school store will feature student-created products such as glassware, shirts, and several delicious food items.

The new store is located in the back of Room V6, formerly the media/ABE center. The area has been divided in the middle by a wall, with the store itself accessible by the exterior door that leads into the courtyard.



PBHS Career-Tech Center Signage Acquires New Look



Travelers along Route 250 will notice a new sign announcing the entrance to the Philip Barbour High School Career and Technical Center. Nearly completed, the cement and brick project was undertaken by Ag. Mechanics students at the center under the supervision of their instructor, Ray Freeman. It is shown above in front of the previous wooden sign, which had become worn and weathered over the years. Plans for foliage or plants around the base are being considered. Expenses for materials and supplies used towards the structure were made available through a community grant awarded by the Barbour County Community Foundation.



County Transportation Fleet Grows: Seven Additional Buses By Spring

Students, bus operators and school programs in Barbour County have seen improvements in the transportation department with the addition of four new buses during the first semester of 2021-22. The total of new vehicles in the fleet will swell to seven with the increased purchase of three more units before the end of the school year.



Supplemental funding of \$40,000 for the final pair of new buses was secured through a DERA grant proposal written by Barbour County Schools in November.

According to Transportation Director, Russ Collett, the LEA department presently numbers more than 40 employees, including drivers, mechanics, supervisory personnel and substitutes.



Board of Education Meeting Dates Set for Winter Months

Following are the established meeting dates for the Barbour County Board of Education during the winter of 2021-22. All sessions are scheduled to begin at 6:00 p.m.

- **January 10** **Board of Ed. Office**
- **January 24** **Board of Ed. Office**
- **February 14** **Board of Ed. Office**
- **February 28** **Board of Ed. Office**
- **March 14** **Board of Ed. Office**
- **March 21** **Board of Ed. Office**

COVID Testing Services Available at No Cost During the Winter Break

Barbour County staff members can receive free, fast and easy testing for COVID-19 during the upcoming winter break. The non-invasive saliva test will be available at the Community Market location at 107 S. Main Street on the following dates:

- ♦ Monday, December 27, 2021
- ♦ Friday, December 31, 2021
- ♦ Monday, January 3, 2022
- ♦ Friday, January 7, 2022

The program facilitator is Maverick Health in coordination with the Barbour County Health Department. While online pre-registration is available for those interested and their convenience, it is not required. Testing can help stop the virus spread and protect the community and your loved ones.

— Odds 'N' Ends —

➤ **Certification Renewals:** Staff members who will need to renew teaching certificates effective June 30 of 2022 are reminded that they may begin the renewal process beginning on January 1. Questions may be directed to Homer Talbott, executive secretary, at the Board of Education office.

➤ **Early Retirement Reminders:**

County school personnel are reminded that the date for **classroom teachers** to submit early written notification of their intent to retire in order to receive the \$500 bonus authorized through WV Code 18A-2-2(g) this year is Monday, March 1, 2022.

In accordance with WVC 18A-2-5a, county boards have the authority to pay, strictly from local funds, up to a \$500 bonus to professional personnel other than classroom teachers or service personnel who provide written notification of their intent to retire at the end of the school year by March 1.

Questions about these guidelines or the notification process for Barbour County Schools may be directed to either David Neff (ext. 1011) or Homer Talbott (ext. 1031) at the Board of Education office at (304-457-3030).



An Old-Fashioned Christmas by Helen Monnette

I thought of an old-fashioned Christmas
When the world was aglitter with snow,
When stars, in their lockets of velvet,
Their silvery beams rain below.

Where a Christmas tree stands in a corner
Decked out in the season's attire,
With a pearl-white necklace of popcorn,
The stringing, the children's desire.

The shutters unclosed at the windows
And friendly the light shining there,
Like the neighbors who linger when passing,
For it is the hour of prayer.

I thought of an old-fashioned Christmas
And a church in the valley of peace,
And the bell with its silver chiming
That eased our cares ere it ceased.

The peals of the laughter of children
In toy land around the green tree;
Pleasing and happy the merriment,
How wonderful childhood must be.

The logs blaze bright in the fireplace
As the hearts that are merry and gay,
As the sleigh bells I hear in the distance
And wish they were coming my way.

I wish you an old-fashioned Christmas
With neighbors and family and friends,
With church bells and singing and blessing
As the old year comes to an end.