

# The Lions Roar



THE LIONS ROAR

November 2008

## Digital Newsletter

**NOTICE:** The *Lions Roar* is moving to a digital newsletter. This is the last hard copy that will be sent through the mail unless you notify us that you want to continue to receive one. The newsletter will be posted on WSSB's website each quarter and a notification will be emailed to you to let you know when it is available.

If you wish to receive an email notice each time a *Lions Roar* is published *or* if you wish to continue to receive a hard copy in print or braille, send your contact information to: [janet.merz@wssb.wa.gov](mailto:janet.merz@wssb.wa.gov) and let her know which option you prefer.

**Providing the *Lions Roar* newsletter electronically will save WSSB over \$5,500 per year!**

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## WSSB Tandem Rides

By Steve Rosvold, WSSB Volunteer

During our Summer School ride we logged our 5,000<sup>th</sup> mile since the program started in 2005. We aren't sure if it was Clay, Larry, Suzie, Eric or Chuck's bike that logged the milestone distance so they'll all go down in WSSB biking lore as being part of the team that crossed that milestone.



**Tandem Program—  
September 2008**

Many of stokers on this ride came from out of town and don't attend the WSSB during the regular school year. They seemed to really enjoy the ride and made for great tandem partners.

After a quick break at Fruit Valley Park the peloton raced to Fort Vancouver where Ranger Mary gave us a tour of the old fort. Our scholars couldn't be tricked by Ranger Mary! They had all the answers to Washington history questions.

We did have one delay, Emily was stranded on Mill Plain for 20 minutes when our tandem flatted. Unfortunately it was the second flat of the day for that bike and we were out of spare tires. Luckily we had great support from Jennifer and Michelle and got the tandem and Emily back on the road in time to meet the rest of the riders at the Fort.

The Fall tandem program runs from mid September to mid November.

## Partnerships

### A Key To Awareness, Networking, Opportunities, Involvement and Learning

By Dr. Dean O. Stenehjem, Superintendent

During my tenure as Superintendent at WSSB, I have often wondered which programs would not be in place if it weren't for the strong partnerships involving hundreds of people in developing improved services for children. Helen Keller was right when she said, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much!" This statement has even more meaning right now when agencies and organizations are trying to figure out how to hang onto the good services that have been developed over the years for children, while moving forward on meeting unmet needs of students during difficult financial times. We also need to remember—for each day a child doesn't receive a needed educational service, that opportunity may be lost. How do we tackle these challenges in meeting all these needs? Once again, as Helen Keller said, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much!", but I would like to add *and what is stopping us?* Is it a lack of creative thought, lack of willingness to work together, or just doing something different!

I have always been amazed by how many organizations work in isolation of one another or are afraid to share the credit for success, but never short on sharing the credit when things don't go well. Maybe this is just human nature or maybe it is just a fact that it is easier to work in isolation. Developing partnerships is hard work. It takes willingness to give and take, to share, to recognize partners as part of the reason for success and being able to realize that working in a partnership may take longer, but will generally result in more sustainable systems that will have greater impact. Just think of the power of strong creative sustainable partnerships that can occur by many working together for common goals! It can be hard work, but also very energizing!

Over the years WSSB has accomplished many good things for children, but I can't think of a single one thing that wasn't done in partnership with someone

else. I was going to start listing these, but decided rather than list all the accomplishments, I should list a sample of projects that need partnerships if we are going to make it though these difficult financial times without slowing our pace in making a difference for students:

- ◆ Building a strong network/partnership to improve Birth to Three services.
- ◆ Partnerships for stronger parent support.
- ◆ Online Learning/Digital Accessibility for blind/visually impaired students that will help level the playing field.
- ◆ Expansion of regional service delivery in providing quality/efficient and effective services to students.
- ◆ Development of strong partnerships to expand teacher training opportunities for teachers of the blind and visually impaired and orientation and mobility instructors.
- ◆ Expanded Career education options for blind/visually impaired children with solid follow up on all children throughout our state to help determine which children succeed and why.

The above list is just a small example which could easily be expanded if partnerships are developed to improve services and create new services that make measurable differences in the lives of children.

Helen Keller also said, "While they were saying among themselves it cannot be done, it was done!" I would like to add, *probably in partnership with someone else!*

Remember to share your creative ideas, and then be willing to put in the work that is required to make good things happen. You never know how many lives you can touch by any action that you take. Don't wait, get involved and make a difference!

## Construction Update

By Rob Tracey, Buildings and Grounds Manager

Progress continues on construction of the new physical fitness building. Currently the work is focusing on getting the roof covered and sealed before the weather changes. The contractor is also installing the pool filter equipment and floor drains, fire alarm panels and electrical conduit. Door frames have been hung on most of the interior openings and efforts are underway to allow for sealing the interior rooms from unwanted access. Within the next few weeks, exterior insulation will be finished and the metal skin will be placed to cover the tilt up concrete walls. The brick work along the back will be continued around the north face which will house the new recreation center, offices and classroom.



Workers placing steel roof supports over the main entry way and applying roof coving over the gymnasium.

A separate part of this construction project has been the addition of a bio-swale/nature walk along the south central portion of campus. To date, the sidewalks are in, the swale is sloped and graded and the plants are being placed. This swale will disperse the collected runoff water from the fitness center roof and parking area down a two hundred foot long engineered stream. With the specially selected plants lining the bottom and sides of the swale, the water will slowly be filtered before returning to the aquifer. A final addition to the swale will be benches, bird houses and informational signs, in braille and print, explaining how a bio-swale works and pointing out the different plants used for this project. The goal is that the bio-swale will also be an important part of environmental science for students on campus and within our community.

## Parents You Are Represented

By Jean Marie Curtis, Parent Representative

I am the Parent Representative to WSSB's Board of Trustees. My job is to be your voice. I represent anyone with a blind or visually impaired child in the state of Washington. You can contact me by phone at (360) 597-4340 or by email: [curtis\\_jean@hotmail.com](mailto:curtis_jean@hotmail.com). I look forward to hearing from all of you. You can also send me a comment through WSSB's listserv/message board. The following are steps you need to take to subscribe:

1. Go to the WSSB website ([www.wssb.wa.gov](http://www.wssb.wa.gov))
2. Look on the right hand side of the site for a list of services, etc. Under "School Information" in bold letters is a link titled "**Parents/Families.**" Click on that link.
3. You will see 4 additional links. Click on "**Parent (Listserv) Message Board.**"
4. You will see a document that describes the (Listserv) Message Board and the rules that apply to it. The third paragraph tells you how to subscribe. Please follow all the steps **especially step number 5 below.**
5. You will receive a confirmation email from the listserv. It will give you a confirmation code to send back to the (Listserv) Message Board.

***You will need to reply to this message with the confirmation code, within 10 days or you will not be subscribed.***

## Education

By Craig Meador, Director On-Campus Programs



### Fall into Change

Fall represents the greatest momentum for change in a student's life. Each fall students are given the opportunity to start fresh in their academic and personal lives. Resolutions are made to be better, to grow and to experience new challenges.

WSSB is experiencing its own changes on campus. There is on-going construction of the new fitness facility. The facility itself will be a state-of-the-art building that will house a swimming pool, a full gym, fitness center, weight room and classroom spaces. The anticipated completion for the gym is this winter.

In addition, a new green space on campus is being created. This green space, located adjacent to the current track will feature native plants and a walking trail. Seating areas along the trail will offer students a quiet spot for reflection.

We know that change of any sort can be trying. In the middle of all the change it is important to remember that the challenge is not in the change, it is in our attitudes towards change.

### P.R.I.D.E.

WSSB students have P.R.I.D.E. PRIDE represents our school focus and the acronym is our common language. A common language is a shared vision for the entire school. During workshops in the fall our staff developed the theme of PRIDE. This message is shared from classroom to cottage and throughout the school. Here is what PRIDE stands for.

- ◆ **Positive** (Students are positive and display a positive attitude toward new challenges and trying circumstances.)
- ◆ **Responsible and Respectful** (Students are at all times responsible for themselves and their actions. They are respectful of themselves and others.)
- ◆ **Independence** (Students strive to learn skills that will foster independence.)
- ◆ **Dependable** (Students are dependable. You can count on them.)
- ◆ **Engaged** (Students are engaged in their learning process. They come to class and work ready and prepared.)

Students are learning about PRIDE during Friday Assemblies. Students are rewarded for demonstrating the characteristics of a PRIDE student. They are given PRIDE dollars. These pride dollars accumulate and the students can exchange those dollars for awards and opportunities. Some of these include, a visit to the school store, gift cards, school materials, lunch with the Principal, etc. Homerooms with the most pride dollars are recognized each month at a school assembly.

### Open House/Curriculum Night: A Huge Success

Our annual Open House/Curriculum Night began with the annual Spaghetti Feed prepared by Bob Lonnee, Karen Quillard and host of staff volunteers. 150 meals were served to parents, friends and volunteers of WSSB. Guests were then entertained in the cottages with a dessert tour. Each cottage featured items prepared by the students. Each classroom had engaging activities set up for guests. Some of the highlights of this year's curriculum night included a Coffee House Poetry Slam, History Jeopardy, and student music performances.

A big Thank You to all staff for their hard work in making this an exciting event.

## Outreach Services—A Day in the Life of an Itinerant Teacher

By Cindy McAlexander, Outreach Teacher

WSSB outreach staff serves students from birth to age 21 at about 1/5 of the school districts in Washington. When asked to describe what we do, I decided to pick a day and describe my activities. Here is a typical day, if there is such a thing, in the life of an outreach teacher:

- ◆ 8:00 am: Prepare for the day, check emails and pack up the car (aka my office) for the day.
- ◆ 8:45 am: Travel to first site, which is in town today.
- ◆ 9:00 am: Greet and consult with the classroom teacher, catching up on student's progress.
- ◆ 9:15 am: Direct service time teaching preschool student tactual skills.
- ◆ 9:45 am: Consult with classroom teacher.
- ◆ 10:00 am: Head to another classroom that has 2 students at the same preschool. Observe and consult with teacher, direct instruction on pre-braille skills, provide a braille center during center time for all the students to explore.
- ◆ 11:30 am: Travel to elementary school, lunch in car, prep.
- ◆ 1:30 pm: Meet with case worker to work on upcoming IEP.
- ◆ 2:00 pm: Quick consult with classroom teacher and then direct service with low vision elementary student, working on monocular skills and self-advocacy.
- ◆ 2:45 pm: Travel to preschool for evaluation and IEP meeting.
- ◆ 4:30 pm: Travel to home visit for early intervention consultation.
- ◆ 6:30 pm: Home, check email. Tomorrow I travel to a district an hour away to see a high school student, but maybe I can finish early since today was so long.

One of the “perks” of the job is that every day is different, so I could never get bored. I go to different places and work with students of all ages and different abilities. Some days I get to just stay in my office and write reports. It can be a lonely job, as I am a guest everywhere I go. As I reflect on the job, I have to say that it is much more than a job to me, it is a service. I hope I make a difference in the lives of students and families, and that I help the staff and families that I work with to understand the unique needs of blind and visually impaired students.

## LOUISVILLE BOUND: A Dream Come True

By Jim Eccles, Residential Life Counselor

As a schoolboy here at (then) WSB several decades ago, I remember listening each fall to our sixties-era Superintendent, Mr. Byron Berhow, talk in glowing terms about his annual trip to the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) where the leaders of schools for the blind from around the country have gathered together each fall since time out of mind, it seemed.

As I moved through my high-school years, I remember hearing Mr. Fred Gisoni, now working at APH, make distributed audio tapes, demonstrating everything from early electronic mobility aids, the Kay device which morphed into The Sonic Guide, and early tone-based reading machines. Imagine the nearly speechless state I found myself in just a few short

weeks ago, when I found myself standing in Mr. Gisoni's office, talking about more recent gadgetry. It was something of a dream come true.

How did all this happen? Well, it was a conspiracy that began last spring, when one of my three bosses had the idea of nominating me for this year's annual Residential Staff person of the Year Award, which I was fortunate enough to be awarded along with a very nice lady, herself from another blind school. Since I spent the previous school year dividing my work time between our program for fifth-year residents, who have been graduated from various high schools around the state, proofreading braille at our braille shop and putting in the odd hold-over weekend in a couple of residential cottages, I guess that I was not

## LOUISVILLE BOUND: A Dream Come True (continued)

By Jim Eccles, Residential Life Counselor

doing a very good job of keeping my head down and my work inconspicuous.

My wife, Michelle, and I spent a lovely four days in The City of Possibilities, as Louisville, Kentucky now bills itself; and, aside from attending an awards banquet held by the Council of Schools for the Blind (COSB), we toured some local-area museums, as well as both the newly renovated APH Museum and the Kentucky School for the Blind, which is so close to the printing house that they share a common parking lot.

While at APH, I even got to chat with the developers of the APH MiniBook, a miniaturized braille notebook that, when eventually produced by APH for general purchase, will bring the slate and stylus into

the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, if sighted braille instructors rally 'round the idea that braille on paper—while on the go—for the blind is still as indispensable as print on paper still seems to be for my sighted wife and most every other sighted person that I know. Having been a product tester for the MiniBook over a year ago, I enjoyed meeting the two-person product research staff working to revive the personal use of braille, face to face. It gave me a chance to throw in a suggestion or two about the product's final version, which is pretty much wonderful, just the way it already is.

My wife, Michelle, was quite impressed by the large library facility that the Kentucky School for the Blind has; it was a great, once-in-a-lifetime, four days in Kentucky.

## Residential Life—News from the “Home” Front

By Renee Corso, Associate Principal for After School and Evening Programs

With the first quarter of school under their belts, students are settling into a busy but regular routine. Their afternoon recreation program activity choices for this Fall include horseback riding, golf, goalball, tandem cycling, hiking, bowling, outings to the movies and theatre, and exploring and reading in the library. And of course, study hall is always available, if there's a need.

As in years past, we're continuing individualized Daily Living Skills instruction in the cottages three days a week, and group “cooking night” on Wednesdays. Kids really seem to be enjoying planning, preparing, and eating their mid-week home-cooked meals, and are excited for others to taste the results. The Clarke Cottage boys tell everyone who will listen that Wednesdays are their favorite night of the week because of dinner! The Chapman and Watson girls are not only having fun learning to make, but are also naming and writing down the recipes for their morning smoothie creations so as not to forget their favorite combinations. And, thanks to the efforts of Cathlene Cover, our new evening Nurse, we've reviewed the food pyramid and basics in nutrition with all residential students.

We have 14 students signed up for our brand new Reading Theatre Club. The group met for the first time in early October, where students tried out for roles in a radio adaptation of “A Christmas Carol.” We also plan to create our own sound effects for the program, which will be recorded in December and broadcast several times on the school's internet radio station during the Holidays. We will have a link to the radio station on our website real soon.

With all these fun, exciting things going on, we never lose sight of safety. It always remains a top priority. Our Residential Life Counselor's have inventoried disaster bag supplies and put together this year's student “buddy lists” for fast and efficient evacuation from the cottages, should the need arise. We'll be conducting safety drills during school and in the cottages throughout the year.



## DON DONALDSON'S LEGACY

By Jim Eccles, President, Former Students Association



**Mr. Don Donaldson**

**June, 1911—September, 2008**

Illustrious alumn, Mr. Don Donaldson, died recently. This set me wondering what the one major idea he left us with would be, as a man in his nineties, who was a student, Principal, and still-interested retired citizen here at the school.

During some of the weekly mandatory WSSB assemblies that I sat through as a WSSB student, Mr. Donaldson sometimes took occasion to reminisce about his own school days. When he talked about making and selling brooms and caning chairs, that got my attention. In my era, we were still learning to make single, double and triple-weave baskets; but we no longer sold items door to door to raise money for the school. Instead, we went door to door, selling tickets for the Annual PTA Benefit Dance, usually with Monte Ballou and his Castle Jazz Band, a Dixieland group. Funds from ticket sales for those dances, held while Mr. Donaldson was the Principal here at WSSB, provided power tools for the woodshop and other program enhancements.

During Don's last few years in retirement, he moved back to Vancouver from Florida, and each year he again held forth on the WSSB Fries Auditorium stage for his annual PAYDAY assemblies, where he gave students money that each could bank and build on. Don personally exhibited the impor-

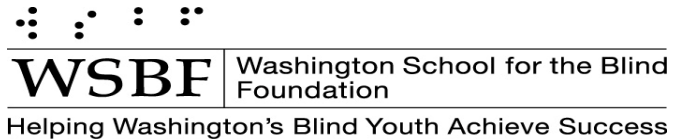
tant value of giving back to the school that had helped to shape him, during his own formative years.

All this is important for both current WSSB students and alumni to ponder: as a student, this school is giving me the requisite compensatory skills for achieving maximum independence as a blind adult. As an alumn, I should use my own hard-won life experiences to give the school useful feedback on the education, training and tools young blind students will need to have at their command to function effectively as adults, as they venture out into the real world, the post-school world. Thus, Don's message seemed to be that we each should make the most of whatever ability level we have and that we should, whenever and wherever possible, help others to benefit from those self-same advantages that we each have been fortunate enough to have. As Don would admit, this is not ever going to be done without occasional tension and disagreement; but everyone—on all sides of the table—learns from the repeated, concerted act of coming together to share new ways to help the school and its students.

On June 19, 2009, alumni will have a chance to meet together at the alumni gathering. It may represent another opportunity to give the school the benefit of our hard-won wisdom, gained through life as experienced by blind and low-vision men and women from many walks of life; and, in turn, we alumni may benefit from seeing the dramatic changes the school is making to be properly prepared to teach students to thrive in what we can only hope will be the thrilling remainder of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Maybe there will be enough learning opportunities to go around to benefit everybody. I can't wait for next June to find out!

## Washington School for the Blind Foundation

By Barbara Sheldon, Executive Director



It's fall already and the students are off to a great start here at the Washington State School for the Blind and the Washington School for the Blind Foundation, are so excited to be a part of this community. Several projects in process this year will make a difference in the lives of the students here on campus and throughout our state. Recently we awarded a grant to help five WSSB travel to Washington, D.C., this January for the Presidential Inauguration through the Close Up Program. This experience will be an exhilarating look at our nation's political process in progress, in addition to this WSSB continues to explore options in fundraising to make even more things possible.

At the start of the school year, we implemented the Larry Holzman "Slow and Steady" Orthodontic Program which helps to defray the out of pocket cost of orthodontic care for students at WSSB. Based on need and available funding, along with the donation of time from local orthodontists, students will soon begin receiving orthodontic treatment. We are so appreciative of our donors to this program which will make a huge difference in the general health and self-esteem of the students who participate.

We are currently accepting applications for our Senior Technology Grant Program. This program is for students who are completing their final year at WSSB and will allow them to acquire technology for independence to be used for transition to higher education and/or employment. Through our grant program, students will be able to have the technology in their hands while making installment payments and, upon successful demonstration of effective use of the tool and completion of the contract, will receive the equipment at graduation. The Foundation subsidizes the cost of the technology based upon each student's financial need, thus making the technology affordable for everyone.

We are thrilled to have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of blind and visually impaired students and are looking forward to another exciting year!

If you have any questions, would like to make a donation, or would like to know more about the Foundation please call me at (360) 696-6321 ext. 176 or email at: [barbara.sheldon@wsbf1.org](mailto:barbara.sheldon@wsbf1.org).

Barbara Sheldon  
Executive Director

Jennifer Tingey  
Executive Assistant

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## Washington State School for the Blind - 2008-2009 School Year Events

<b>November</b>	Veterans Day Holiday (observed)	November 10-11
	Board of Trustees Meeting	November 14-15
	Thanksgiving Holiday	November 27-28
<b>December</b>	Tree Decorating	December 2
	Winter Holiday Program	December 18
	Winter Holiday	December 22-Jan. 2
<b>January</b>	Students returning by bus/air	January 4
	Board of Trustees Conference Call	January 13
	M.L. King's Birthday	January 19
	End of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter/1 <sup>st</sup> Semester	January 23
	PAYDAY Assembly	January 25
	Lions Swim Meet	Postponed to 2010
	Career Fair	TBD
<b>February</b>	Braille Challenge	TBD
	President's Day	February 16
<b>March</b>	Board of Trustees Meeting	March 13-14
	State In-Service Day (AER Conference)	March 13
	WSSB/WSD Lions Carnival	March 26
	End of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	March 27
	Spring Break	March 30-April 3
<b>April</b>	NW Environmental Science Camp (Magruder)	April 27-30

### WSSB Board of Trustees

Congressional District 1: Open  
Congressional District 2: Chuck Nelson, Vice Chair, 2053 Greenview Lane, Lynden, WA 98226 (360) 354-1025  
Congressional District 3: Steve Rainey, 15313 SE Evergreen Hwy, Vancouver, WA 98683 (360) 253-5844  
Congressional District 4: Jim Kemp, PO Box 117, Cowiche, WA 98923 (509) 678-4601  
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Congressional District 7: Annabelle Fitts, 4703 S. Angeline Street, Seattle, WA 98118 (206) 723-6433  
Congressional District 8: Open  
Congressional District 9: Denise Colley, Chair, 2305 Maxine Street SE, Lacey, WA 98503 (360) 438-0072

### WSSB Ex-Officio Members

Teachers: Paul Baldwin, 2214 East 13th Street, Vancouver, WA 98661 (360) 696-6321  
Washington Council of the Blind: Berl Colley, 2305 Maxine Street SE, Lacey, WA 98503 (360) 438-0072  
WFSE Local #1225: Bonda Albers, 2214 East 13th Street, Vancouver, WA 98661 (360) 696-6321  
National Federation of the Blind of WA: Mike Freeman, 3101 NE 87th Ave., Vancouver, WA 98662, (360) 576-5965  
Parent Representative: Jean Curtis, 4317 NE 66<sup>th</sup> Ave., C27, Vancouver, WA 98661, (360) 433-2643

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