



Washington County officials attended the swearing-in ceremony in January. Seated in the back row, from the left, are: Controller Michael Namie, Prothonotary Phyllis Ranko Matheny, Recorder of Deeds Debbie Bardella, Retired Judge Thomas D. Gladden, Register of Wills Mary Jo Poknis and Coroner Tim Warco. In the front row are: Commissioner Harlan G. Shober, Jr., District Attorney Gene Vittone, Commissioner Larry Maggi, Commissioner Diana Irey Vaughan and Judge Valarie Costanzo.

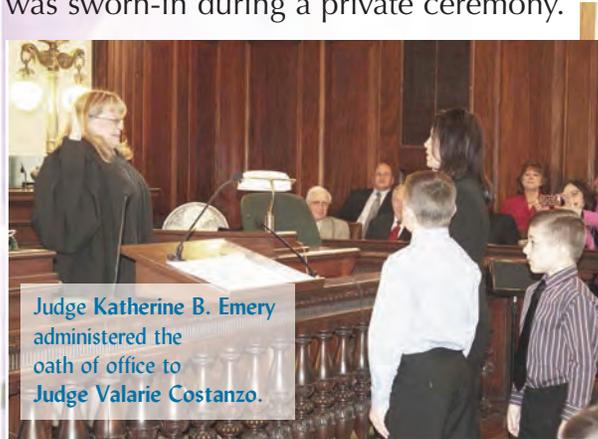
New Year : New Beginnings

The courtroom of President Judge Debbie O'Dell Seneca was filled to capacity on Thursday, Jan. 2, for the swearing-in ceremonies of two new Court of Common Pleas Judges Michael J. Lucas and Valarie Costanzo. Also taking the oath of office were Controller Michael Namie and Sheriff Samuel Romano. Debbie Bardella, the recorder of deeds, was sworn-in during a private ceremony.

Judge Katherine B. Emery administered the oath of office to Controller Michael Namie.



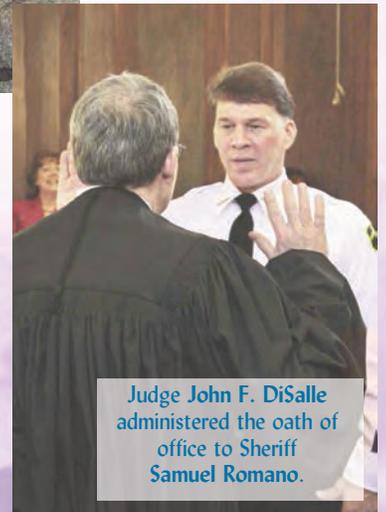
Judge John F. DiSalle administered the oath of office to Michael J. Lucas as the county's sixth member of the bench.



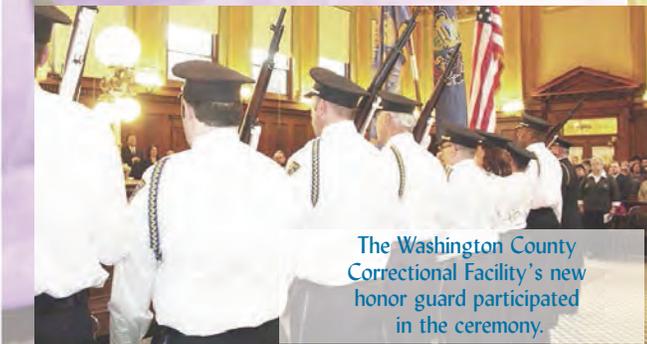
Judge Katherine B. Emery administered the oath of office to Judge Valarie Costanzo.



Washington County Commissioner Harlan G. Shober, Jr. and Judge Gary Gilman talking with some of the guests after the ceremony.



Judge John F. DiSalle administered the oath of office to Sheriff Samuel Romano.



The Washington County Correctional Facility's new honor guard participated in the ceremony.

Judge Valarie Costanzo

By Sandy Sabot

Judge Valarie Costanzo has two of the toughest jobs around and is enjoying both – being a newly-elected judge of the Washington County Court of Common Pleas and being a mother to two sons.

Her legal career path has been one of steady movement upward.

“I became interested in being a lawyer in junior high school. I was very involved in student government at Canon-McMillan and knew that’s what I wanted to do,” she explained.

One of the first in her family to graduate from college and go onto law school, both at the University of Pittsburgh, Judge Costanzo first served as a law clerk for an insurance defense firm for several months, waiting for her bar exam results. Once she passed the bar, she moved into a position in the District Attorney’s office as an assistant district attorney.

“When I worked there, I handled a variety of cases in general criminal law. That was about 18 years ago — before any of the assistant district attorneys had specialized positions covering specific crimes.”

A native of the Canonsburg area, Judge Costanzo was pleased to be appointed by then-Governor Tom Ridge in 1998 to the position of Magisterial District Judge for the Cecil/McDonald area when a vacancy occurred. She had to run in 1999 and she won then, and again for re-election in 2005 and 2011. She said, “I enjoyed being a District Judge and having the ability to make sure that everyone coming before me could be fairly heard. I decided to run for judge in 2013 so I could serve residents of the entire county and deal with more complex issues that come before the court.”

Judge Costanzo and Judge Michael Lucas were the two new judges sworn into their new roles in January 2014. Her assignment in Common Pleas Court includes both family law and criminal law cases. Judge Costanzo said that family law involves such things as custody and support issues that impact individual families. Criminal law, on the other hand, impacts society as a whole and she feels that is where she can make a difference. “Rulings in those cases have a profound impact on us all,” she said.



Judge Valarie Costanzo

One area she sees a need for change is in arraignment of felons. The current system in the county has district judges on call overnight for a week at a time every so many weeks. Arraignments are done by video every four hours throughout the evening/overnight time period. For example, if someone is arrested in the late evening on a possible felony charge, the district judge will likely be setting bond and sending them to jail anyway after their video arraignment. Police departments basically “babysit” until the arraignment at one of the pre-set times throughout the night.

She said that Commissioner Harlan G. Shober, Jr. has put together a committee to review the current procedures and to expand the booking center so that possible changes could benefit police departments by getting them back into their communities on patrol more quickly. The potential new plan is one that some other counties like Beaver currently use. Police would take the potential felon to jail immediately to be booked and arraigned the next morning, after spending the night in jail. That way, police could be back on the streets immediately and the potential felon would be behind bars until arraignment the next morning before the district judge.

Judge Costanzo acknowledged that change is often difficult and it often takes time for procedures to change, but her understanding, knowledge and persistence will help her to make a difference in Washington County as she moves forward in her first term as a judge.

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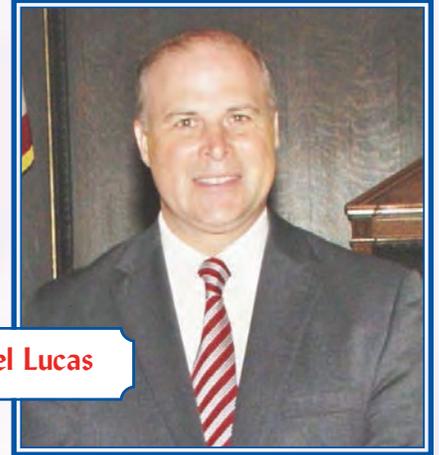
Judge Michael Lucas

By Wes Parry

Two months after his swearing in, I got the chance to sit down and talk with one of Washington County's newest members of the bench, Judge Michael J. Lucas. The 46 year old lives in Carroll Township with his wife Anna and their three children and he is wholly a product of western Pennsylvania, having grown up in the Allentown Beltzhoover section of Pittsburgh. He graduated from Central Catholic High School and received his undergraduate degree from Washington & Jefferson College, and studied the law at Duquesne University.

Prior to ascending the bench, he practiced law privately, specializing primarily in civil litigation and municipal/school district type cases. He also simultaneously served as an assistant district attorney for the last 16 years. When asked what his hobbies were, he answered, "I haven't developed any yet." And, it's easy to see why with a schedule like that. If I had to take a guess at a future hobby for the judge I would bet some kind of athletic endeavor. Because he is a long-time-Pirates-fan, our conversation strayed into some nice reminiscence about the old days of Pirate's glory and hopes for the future. Having been a high school basketball coach as well, the judge's love of sports is evident. So much, that he joked about the size of his new office saying he is pretty certain there is room for a basketball hoop, if only he could convince Gary Bertosh to put one up.

While still settling into the new job, there is one specific area of note that the judge would truly like to make a difference. He explained that he is well aware of the "crisis in our county with opiate dependency."



Judge Michael Lucas

"There are an extraordinary number of cases with kids in the child welfare system because of parents being addicted," he said, adding that everyone needs to get involved, not just the courts and law enforcement, but the medical profession. "They need to step up and take responsibility on how they prescribe these kinds of medicines." According to the judge the statistics surrounding this problem are "staggering."

The judge's quality and character show through when asked about his goals and philosophy. A true servant, his goal is to be "on time, prepared, and issue prompt decisions." And his philosophy is simply "to be fair."

"People just want to be heard and want to know they are getting their fair shot," he said.

The judge left me with one significant quote by Oliver Wendell Holmes that he says is the aggregate of where he is right now in his new position. "The life of the law has not been logic, it has been experience," he said, noting that he is still getting his experience.

Judge Valarie Costanzo *(continued from page 2)*

When she's not presiding over court cases or working over lunch in her office to accomplish her legal goals, she enjoys spending her free time with her two young sons, Ryan, 12 and Justin, 9. Both are involved in school and community activities and as any working parent knows, the time commitment to family and children's activities is vital. Judge Costanzo said that at this time in her life, her children come first and other

outside activities when she leaves the courthouse, revolve around them.

It is evident in her conversation that she enjoys being both a judge and a mom and is committed to making a difference in her sons' lives as well as in her commitment to the betterment of the community at-large.

United Way Campaign a Success!

By Mary Helicke

The results are in, and on behalf of the United Way Committee, thank you sincerely for your help with our successful campaign. We were able to raise \$4,440 from the gift baskets that the committee put together from collected donations. A special thank you to our elected officials who donate a gift card every year! We also received \$3,301 in pledges through payroll deduction. Our fundraising was successful because you participated, and for that, we are truly grateful. It took all of us to work together to be able to collect nearly \$8,000 in cash donations! So, from the bottom of our hearts, thanks for helping. Your contribution, will be appreciated by someone in one of the many organizations supported by the United Way. Washington County's Health Center Activities Fund and the Correctional Facility's Ministry Program are two of the programs that you supported through your contributions.

This year, we will be having fundraisers throughout the year. We currently have a tip board ticket for a round of golf for four at Lone Pine Country Club, cart, and a \$50 Angelo's gift card to complete your golf outing. The package is valued at \$300. We are selling 100 tips for \$5.00. As soon as all the tips on the board are sold, the winning number will be revealed. As you know it is sealed in the upper corner of the board. If you are interested in buying a ticket please contact me at Ext. 6723 or Randi Marodi at Ext. 6730.



We had a lot of happy winners this year from several departments throughout the county. Thanks again for your ongoing support.

Casting Call for Washington County's First Mascot!



Washington County needs a mascot and the newsletter staff is certain that the perfect dog or cat is out there, just waiting for this title to be bestowed upon them. So, if you are a Washington County employee with an adorable pet (translation: one that won't bite or scratch us) please make sure your pet has all of their updated vaccines and (if it is a dog) a current county dog license. If your pet meets these criteria, please send us a photo, along with the pet's name and age, the owner's name and office phone number, and any other important information that makes the pet special. Once we have the photos assembled, we will place each pet's photo on a coffee can and ask employees to vote (with cold hard coins and cash) for their favorite. Please note that the time and place of the election has yet to be determined, so watch for announcements. Also, depending on the response, the newsletter

committee may have to narrow down the field of candidates prior to voting. The winner (the pet who raises the most money) will be treated to a shopping spree at a local pet store and will be invited to attend a commissioners' meeting. The new mascot will represent the county throughout the year and will be featured in the newsletter. Oh, and the money raised during the election will be donated to the Washington County Humane Society. Now, grab a camera and get an amazing photo of your pet!

Please email the photo to Randi Marodi at marodir@co.washington.pa.us or send a hardcopy to the commissioners' office in Suite 702 before 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 30, 2014. Good luck!



SUPPORTING LOCAL FARMERS

WHY LOCALLY GROWN?

People worldwide are rediscovering the benefits of buying locally-grown food. When you purchase food from your local farmers, you are getting food that is fresher, tastier and more nutritious than what you can purchase in the supermarket. Also, you are supporting the farmers' business. There are many ways you can purchase food from your local farmers: CSA, Farmers' Market, U-Pick, Farm Stand and Food Cooperative. Buying locally grown food has many benefits:

1. Local produce tastes better and is better for you. Fresh produce loses nutrients during transportation. The fruits and vegetables you purchase at the supermarket have been shipped from all across the country and are not as fresh and nutritious as the produce you can buy from your local farm, which was probably picked within the past day or two.
2. Local food supports local farm families. Farming is a vanishing lifestyle. Today's farmer gets less than 10 cents of the retail food dollar. Local farmers who sell directly to consumers cut out the middle people who get full retail price for their food, which means farm families can afford to stay on their farm.
3. Local food uses less packaging. Buying produce from a farmer's market or from a farm itself is a no-frills process that involves less packaging.
4. Local food promotes energy conservation. The average distance our food travels is 1,500 miles, mostly by air and truck, increasing our dependence on petroleum. By buying locally, you conserve the energy that's used for transport.
5. Local food protects genetic diversity. Shippers demand produce with a tough skin that can endure packing, transport and a shelf life in the store. Only a handful of hybrid varieties meet these demands, so there is little genetic diversity in the plants grown. However, local farmers grow a huge number of varieties because they have the best flavors, provide a long harvest season and come in eye-catching colors. The old varieties contain genetic material that may one day be useful to adapt to changing climate or new pests.



6. Local food preserves open space, and can support a diverse environment. The patchwork of fields, rows, ponds and buildings can serve as habitat for many species of wildlife. This landscape will only survive if the farm remains financially viable. When you buy locally grown food, you are doing something proactive about preserving the agricultural landscape.
7. Local food builds community. By getting to know the farmers who grow your food, you build understanding, trust and a connection to your neighbors and your environment. The weather, seasons and science of growing food offer great lessons in nature and agriculture. Visiting local farms is a great opportunity to learn more about how food is grown.
8. Local food is about the future. By supporting local farmers today, you are helping to ensure that there will be farms in the community tomorrow, green space for wildlife and that future generations will have access to locally grown food.

HOW TO PURCHASE LOCALLY GROWN FOOD

Community Supported Agriculture

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) has become a popular way for consumers to buy local, seasonal food directly from a farmer. Community members pledge financial support to a farm operation. By purchasing "shares," members pledge in advance to cover the anticipated costs of the farm operation and farmer's salary. In return, they receive a regular portion of the harvest throughout the growing season. There are many benefits for both the farmer and consumer through a CSA. By providing working capital to the farm in advance, farmers can receive better prices for their crops



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SUPPORTING LOCAL FARMERS

(continued from page 5)

and gain financial security. Consumers enjoy a wide variety of fresh, local produce that is harvested at the peak of freshness and flavor.

Farmers Markets

In a Farmers' Market, a group of farmers sell their products once or twice a week at a designated public place, like a park or parking lot. Some farmers' markets have live entertainment and may include non-food products from other local vendors, such as flowers and plants, candles and crafts.

U-Pick

Many local farms offer the option for U-Pick. They open their fields to the public during harvest season and visitors can pick their own fruits and vegetables straight from the fields. This is especially popular with strawberries, apples and pumpkins.



Farm Stand

A farm stand is a place where a single farm sells its produce, either from the back of a truck parked on a main road or from a roadside stand near or on their farm. Farm stands are generally open only during warm weather. In some instances, they may be self-serve – the produce is left unattended and there is a collection box where you can submit payment.

Food Cooperative

Food Cooperatives are worker- or customer-owned entities that provide grocery items of the highest quality and best value to their members. Co-ops can be retail stores or buying clubs. All food co-ops are committed to consumer education, product quality and member control, and usually support their local communities by selling produce grown by local family farms.

WELLNESS

Wellness is the sense
that things are as they ought to be.

It's peace of mind, body, and spirit.

It's living in an environment in which
order and beauty are dominant features
where we are intellectually challenged,
emotionally satisfied, and physically healthy.

It's being able to smell the roses –
and having roses to smell.

It's firemen's parades and Apple Festivals,
Kindergarten plays and Art Shows,
Street Fairs and long walks in the Fall.

Wellness is a good night's sleep,
a well-read book,

A Sunday school picnic
or an eighth grade dance.

It's a gift from a friend or a gift to a friend,
a personal note – sent or received.

It's a baseball game
without managers or uniforms.

Wellness is the beauty of a tree in Spring –
or anytime.

And wellness is the hug of a grandchild,
a spouse, or,
For that matter, a hug from anyone will do.

Bracken Burns

February 2001

Park Happenings



April and May, 2014



Needle & Yarn Craft Workshop

Wednesday, April 9, 2014
Mingo Creek Park - Park Office 10:00 a.m.

Natural Egg Dye & Decorating - Home School Program

Thursday, April 10, 2014
Mingo Creek Park - Park Office
10:00 a.m. or 1:00 p.m.

Flight of the Timberdoodle

Thursday, April 10, 2014
Cross Creek Park - Shelter 1 7:30 p.m.

Natural Egg Dye & Decorating

Saturday, April 12, 2014
Mingo Creek Park - Park Office 11:00 a.m.

Jeepers Peepers

Tuesday, April 15, 2014
Cross Creek Park - Shelter 1 8:00 p.m.

Women's Wilderness Hike

Saturday, April 26, 2014
Mingo Creek Park - Shelter 1, 2014 10:00 a.m.

Brownie Badge Program

Tuesday, April 29, 2014
Mingo Creek Park - Shelter 4 6:00 p.m.

Meandering for Morels Mushrooms

Thursday, May 1, 2014
Cross Creek Park - Parking Area
across from Red Rooster Diner
on Route 844 6:30 p.m.

Star Party

Friday, May 2 & Saturday, May 3, 2014
Mingo Creek Park - Observatory Dusk

Spring Into The Outdoors Weekend

Saturday, May 3 - Sunday, May 4, 2014
Mingo Creek Park - Shelter 8 1:00 p.m. - Noon

Salamander Tales - Pre-School Program

Tuesday, May 6 & Wednesday, May 7,
2014

Mingo Creek Park - Shelter 4
10:00 a.m. or 1:00 p.m.

Salamander Search

Wednesday, May 7, 2014
Mingo Creek Park - Shelter 4 7:00 p.m.

Mingo's Meanies - Home School Outdoor Classroom

Thursday, May 8, 2014
Mingo Creek Park - Shelter 2
10:00 a.m. or 1:00 p.m.

Lakeside Stroll

Tuesday, May 13, 2014
Cross Creek Park - Shelter 1 7:30 p.m.

Needle & Yarn Craft Workshop

Wednesday, May 14, 2014
Mingo Creek Park - Park Office 10:00 a.m.

Family Campout

Friday, May 30, 2014
Cross Creek Park - Shelter 3 5:00 p.m.



Activities Keep Us Going...

By Cindy Zubchevich

GREETINGS from the Washington County Health Center!

We have been keeping busy after the passing of the holidays and just like everyone else we are awaiting the arrival of spring!

In January, even with the cold temperatures, we managed to keep things warmed up with our annual "Glitter Ball." Residents, families and volunteers filled the dance floor while moving to the sounds of Jack Giacomel. Kathy Keranko, recreation specialist, planned a wonderful night and it was and as the song title states, "We Could Have Danced All Night!" We also held our annual WCHC Chili Cook-off and the new reigning queen for 2014 was Dene Rivera, recreation specialist. She knew what special ingredients to use in her chili and the judges loved it! We also said good-bye to last year's queen, Mitzi Lesnick, activity aide.

February soon arrived, but there was no time to be idle. The WCHC Resident Choir, along with volunteer Judy Boone and the members of the Washington Alliance Church Choir presented a beautiful concert for families and friends. You could tell from the smiles on their faces and their singing that they were enjoying themselves. Colleen Mansfield, activity aide assisted with the planning and all of the hard work and preparation paid off. On Valentine's Day the dietary department served a special meal, along with a

special selection of love songs sung by Jan Lawrence. It was a perfect pink and red celebration and there was a lot of love in the air that night. As the month progressed, the youth group from the First United Presbyterian Church in Houston sponsored a bingo for the residents. Everyone enjoyed the games and prizes. The residents enjoyed spending time with the awesome students and they can't wait for them to return.

March came in like a "lion" and Mardi Gras festivities kicked off the Lenten season at the annual Pancake Luncheon and Races. It was fun and of course the pancakes were delicious! Another highlight of the month was when Kathy Dice, recreation specialist, taught the residents the ethnic art of making homemade pierogies. Several residents and staff rolled up their sleeves and took the plunge and made about 12 dozen pierogies and a profit of \$89 for the Brain Injury Association. So, hats off to the resident's "Helping Hands Group," for a job well done. As you can see, everyone keeps busy at WCHC....and that's just the way we like it!



Making homemade pierogies.

Left to right: Mike Naylor, RS, Michelle Prevost, RS, Thelma Debolt and Kathy Dice, RS



Pancake Luncheon and Races on Fat Tuesday.
Left to right: Wilma Banfield and Terry Malush

Home Spin

IDEAS BY DEBBIE



Everyone is looking for ways to recycle today and Easter is no exception so I decided to make this craft tackle both recycling and fun! You will need:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Clean egg shells | Candle scraps |
| Acrylic paints and brushes | Cookie sheet |
| if desired to paint shells | Old birthday candles |
| Tin can for melting wax | |
| Newspaper to prevent messes | |

Directions:

1. Save your cracked in half eggs from your last meal and wash them in warm water. Make sure you run your finger inside to help rinse out the inner membrane. Rinse thoroughly and let dry. If you want your candles to have colored egg shells, paint them with acrylic pain and let dry before continuing.
2. Place scraps of wax from old candles into a clean tin can and place on a cookie sheet in an oven set on low (200 degrees) Swirl gently every few minutes to help the candle scraps melt. You can toss in candles that actually have wicks on them still as well. Just use a pair of tweezers to remove the wick before pouring the wax into the shells. Do not heat wax to hot and never leave it unattended. You can also melt wax in the bottom of glass candle jars just by setting them on a cookie sheet in the oven.
3. Carefully remove the cookie sheet with the container of melted wax and set aside to cool for a few minutes.
4. Cover your work surface with newspaper to help with cleanup. Place the clean egg shells into an egg carton. Pour melted wax into the egg shells to fill it about 3/4 of the way full. Let the wax harden for about 5 minutes.
5. Gently insert one used birthday candle into each egg. You can shorten the candle with a pair of kitchen shears if it is too tall. Then, carefully fill the egg to the top with more melted wax. Let harden for several hours before displaying.

One more fun recycling Easter project to add some cheer to your household: Buy some of the small Easter Jelly Beans and grab some of those dead branches we seem to have in abundance outside. Glue those jelly beans onto the branches and drop them into a vase. Instant Easter cheer!



Happy holidays to all of you!

--- Debbie Richey

This section will be ongoing and include anything from recipes, decorating ideas and crafts. If you have any ideas, photos or recipes you would like to submit, please send them to Deb Richey at richeyde@co.washington.pa.us.

Let's see what we can come up with!



Annual FOSTER CHRISTMAS PARTY FUN FOR ALL Despite Sticky Situation

By Marie Higgins

Each month there are many children in Washington County, who cannot be with their parents or other family members for various reasons.

For too many years to count, the CYS Foster Care Unit has sponsored a yearly Christmas party to help make the holidays brighter for kids who are in foster care. This year's party was held at Julian's Banquet Hall on Dec. 5, the same day that rush hour traffic was at a standstill because of a tractor trailer that spilled corn syrup cargo onto the highway. Even though many guests were late arriving, Santa, Mrs. Claus and a few elves were able to bypass the traffic jam and fly into the parking lot right on schedule. Commissioners Larri Maggi and Diana Irey Vaughn were able to join us in the celebration, as were CYS workers and their families.

Kate and Mike Grant
with their son Gunnar



There were craft tables for the kids (and some of the artistic adults) to enjoy and show off their creativity. We had a super dinner buffet consisting of ham, chicken tenders, salad, rolls, mashed potatoes with gravy, corn, mac and cheese and, of course, everyone's favorites, a whole table full of holiday themed cupcakes.

Thank you to Santa, Mrs. Claus, the elves, Washington County Foster Care Unit at CYS, the staff at Julian's and all of the numerous others who helped make this such a special and enjoyable event for the kids.



CYS Employees Elaine Flanagan, Kate Grant,
Linda Kowalewski, Marie Higgins and
Michelle Lober.



Dave Cincinnati
and family

Julian's was festively decorated with red and green table cloths, red poinsettias, a huge Christmas tree, and two large wreaths on the entrance doors. Santa and Mrs. Claus paid careful attention to the children's requests for toys and electronics. Each child received a memento and some candy from Santa, they had their photo taken with the man in the red suit.

D.J. Matt got the party started when Santa arrived and played all of our favorite Christmas songs. We were able to dance to the Electric Slide, the Cupid Shuffle and some current hip hop as well.

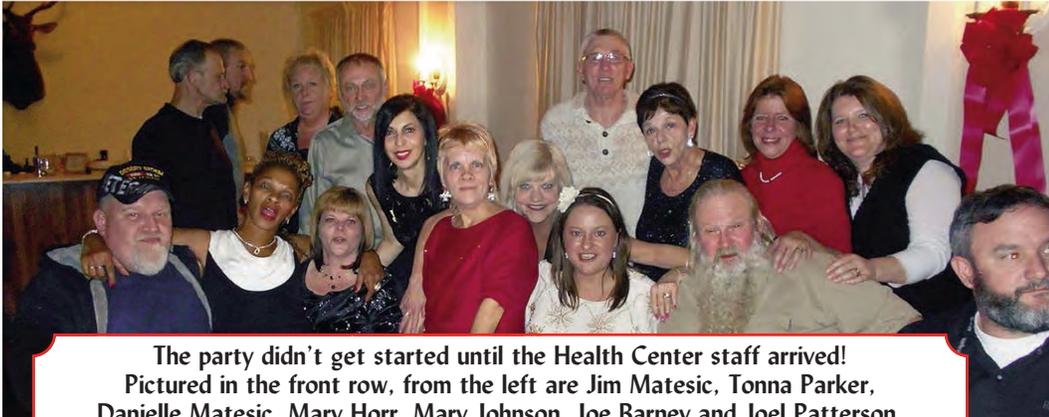


Livia Bedillion attended the party with her
grandmother Marie Higgins,
who works for CYS

Washington County Christmas Party

December 7, 2013 at the Washington Elks Club

Photos by Marie Higgins



The party didn't get started until the Health Center staff arrived! Pictured in the front row, from the left are Jim Matesic, Tonna Parker, Danielle Matesic, Mary Horr, Mary Johnson, Joe Barney and Joel Patterson. In the back row are B.J. Mance, Art Brogley, Kim Sout, Gene McGee, Nancy McGee, Candy Craft and Danielle Patterson.



Chris Stanz of the Tax Revenue department attended the party with his date Kaycee Pellegrino.



Julie Bailey of the Washington County Correctional Facility and her husband David.



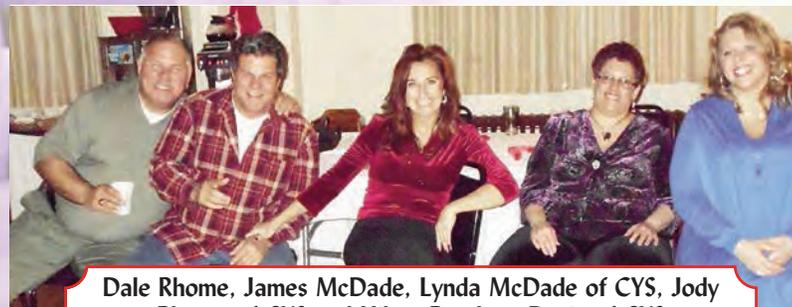
Washington County Correctional Facility Deputy Warden Donald Waugh and his wife Danelle.



Also representing the Health Center were Shelley Lynch, Carrie Kondratiuk, Gretchen Popielarczyk and Lori Hosler.



Courthouse employees and guests: Stan Milchovich, Kristin Marcy of the Clerk of Courts, From the Register of Wills: Mary Jo Poknis, Steve Poknis, and Lour Ann Openbrier and Joy Ranko from the Prothonotary's Office.



Dale Rhome, James McDade, Lynda McDade of CYS, Jody Rhome of CYS and Hilary Burchett Davis of CYS enjoyed the party.

WHITE OUT

By Jeff Donahue

The winter of 2014 will certainly be remembered for its cold and snowy weather. Daytime temperatures in January seldom rose above the freezing mark and nighttime lows were often in the single digits or below zero. For wildlife watchers, this winter will be remembered as the winter of the Snowy Owl. Occasionally, young Snowy Owls trickle southward from their arctic home range in what is known as an irruptive migration. Irruptive migrations are cyclic and unpredictable. This year's irruptive migration of Snowy Owls was massive and considered to be a once in a lifetime event that will mostly not occur for another 60 or 70 years. Birds like Snowy Owls and songbirds like Pine Siskin, Evening Grosbeaks, Red Polls and Crossbills are referred as irruptive migrants

Often irruptive migrations are caused by food shortages. This year's irruptive migration of Snowy Owls is the result of an extremely successful 2013 breeding season. Lemming, a mouse-like mammal, is the primary food source of Snowy Owls in their home range. Lemmings were plentiful in the summer of 2013 and a plentiful lemming supply led to large broods of owlets accompanied with high survival rates of the young owls.

Snowy Owls are considered to be one of, if not the largest of the North American Owls. Adult Snowy Owls are predominantly white with black/gray barring or speckling. Males, as they age, may become nearly pure white. Yearling Snowy Owls are heavily marked with black/gray barring and speckling. Adult plumage is attained at one year of age. Adults and yearlings have large round heads with no ear tufts and bright yellow eyes.

The snowy owls that showed up in Pennsylvania this winter were in many instances last summer's nestlings. These were young birds that because of their sheer numbers abandoned their traditional habitat because there are just too many Snowy Owls, and not enough food. As of late January, Snowy Owls had been spotted in 33

counties of PA. In Washington County there were reports of a Snowy Owl in Cecil Township. These are birds of large open spaces and they adapt very well to the food sources that are available and easily replace lemmings with the moles and mice found in Washington County. If driving through open agricultural lands keep an eye open for Snowy Owls perched on fence posts, utility poles and large round hay bales. Airports also provide excellent habitat for snowy owls, unfortunately jet engines and snowy owls don't coexist very well. Often Snowy Owls that take up residence at airports are trapped and relocated, unfortunately some are shot.

Soon the Snowy Owls will return to the Arctic, but until then keep an eye during your travels for an unusually large white bird hunting in open spaces. You just may be fortunate enough to observe a Snowy Owl.



**Snowy Owl photographed by
Beth Signorini of Cecil Township and
used with her permission**

Activities Committee Plans the New Year

By Barry Clark

The Washington County Employee's Activities Committee met on February 25, to discuss plans for 2014 events and fundraising efforts. Events for the spring or early summer included a "Paint and Sip" event, some type of river cruise aboard the Gateway Clipper, and a wine tasting event.

Several fund raising efforts were also discussed, including a candy sale, cook outs, and the possibility of hosting a guest food vendor or truck during the summer months.

The annual Pittsburgh Pirate trip is scheduled for Saturday August 30, versus the Cincinnati Reds that includes a FanJam postgame concert featuring Gavin DeGraw. Game time is 4:05 p.m., and the game will be nationally televised on ROOT Sports. As usual, the package includes beverages and snacks on the bus ride to the game, and a tailgate party at the game. Times and ticket sales will be announced in advance of the date.

The Fall Festival is tentatively scheduled for September 27, at Mingo Park, rain or shine, and features a bonfire, entertainment, great food, face painting, hayride and activities for kids. In the evening weather permitting, the Mingo Park Observatory will host a Star Party, to observe the night sky. AAAP members setup their own telescopes to offer visitors the chance to star gaze.

Meetings for the activities committee are held the second Thursday of every month in the seventh floor conference room from 1 p.m. until 2 p.m. Any county employee is invited to participate, attend a meeting or join the committee. If you would like more information, just contact a member or send an email to: ActivitiesCommittee@co.washington.pa.us

Did you sign up for the annual health screening and risk assessment sponsored by the county, Highmark and the Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center?

If so, please make sure to be on time for your scheduled appointment Wednesday, April 9 at the jury lounge; Thursday, April 10 at courthouse square; or Saturday, April 12 at the Cameron Wellness Center.

Please fast for 12 hours prior to your scheduled time and remember to drink plenty of water and to take prescribed medicines during those 12 hours.

Those who participate are eligible for a \$100 bonus and they will earn points to help their team win additional prizes.

For more information, contact your W.E.L.L. Ambassador or Pat Maxon at ext. 6738 or maxonp@co.washington.pa.us.



Recidivism: A New Look at a Familiar Problem

By Laura L. Radcliffe

“Lock ‘em up and throw away the key!” For years, this was the plan for those who broke the law. Great emphasis was placed on keeping the “bad guys” away from the general public. It’s a great idea, until the “bad guys” get out of jail. Statistically, almost 95% of prisoners will be released back into the community at some point. Of those prisoners, nearly half will be re-incarcerated. The cycle of repeating criminal behaviors and returning to jail is referred to as recidivism.



Dr. Edward Latessa

When individuals repeat criminal behaviors, communities experience some unpleasant side effects: crime rates spike, residents feel uneasy, property values decrease, and the financial toll on taxpayers increases. A 2013 report shows that in Washington County, 46% of released inmates will be re-arrested, while 40% will be re-incarcerated. Although these statistics are in keeping with the national average, they are ones that administrators at the Washington County Correctional Facility (W.C.C.F.) are not comfortable with. And so, they devised a plan.

They called upon Dr. Edward Latessa, an expert in the field of criminal justice and recidivism. With over 100 research projects under his belt, and evaluations of over 550 correctional programs, he holds valuable insight into the problems that institutions and communities nation wide are experiencing. Dr. Latessa explains that the key isn’t in locking up criminal offenders, but in teaching them new skills and attitudes to aide them upon their release. Inmates at W.C.C.F. are given the opportunity to obtain their G.E.D., seek job placement, learn techniques for re-entry into the



Washington County Correctional Facility

community, prepare for continued education, attend religious services, or attend group meetings for drug and alcohol abuse. The facility boasts an in-house classroom, as well as a collaboration with Washington High School, who has outfitted students in their G.E.D program with lap tops and cyber-schooling.

Recently, I had the opportunity to speak with Paul Kostelnik, an administrator at Washington High School. A former math teacher for students placed in alternative schooling, Mr. Kostelnik is well aware of the problems facing youthful offenders. When one of his former students landed behind bars, he decided to take action. It was then that he proposed cyber education to the staff at W.C.C.F. Cyber education, he pointed out, would allow students’ progress to be tracked long term. With the implementation of the internet, they were less likely to get lost in the shuffle of papers. They are also given the advantage of a more focused, private style of learning. Learning in this way decreases the likelihood that students will engage in disruptive behaviors or conflicts with other students.

Even with these programs in place, recidivism continues to plague W.C.C.F. “A rising population is a symptom of an underlying problem,” Warden John Temas points out. “We should be in the business of putting ourselves out of business.” With that being said, on

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Recidivism: A New Look at a Familiar Problem

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February 18, Dr. Latessa traveled to Washington at the request of W.C.C.F. and District Attorney, Gene Vittone. He addressed those in law enforcement, treatment services, corrections, mental health, legal services, and others about the importance of working in unison to reduce recidivism. He further emphasized the importance of utilizing time during lock-up for more productive learning, a concept Deputy Warden Waugh agrees with, "They're here just sitting," he says. "We have all this time to change the way they think - wasted time."

Deputy Warden Waugh's sentiments are echoed by the very inmates he is entrusted to care for. Take Lloyd*, an inmate who has been incarcerated over 35 times. W.C.C.F. has been home to him for 23 of those stays. Lloyd entered jail for the first time at the age of 18. Now at 42 years of age, he's become somewhat of an expert, a connoisseur of corrections. "I'm like the mascot here," he jokes. "But I still hate it, every day waking up here. This isn't the way I like to live." Like many of us, Lloyd has family back home - parents, siblings, and children. "This time I was really trying," he says. "I didn't wanna come back." When asked what sent him back, he speaks of his job making nearly \$19 an hour, and of losing that job due to obligations with his probation. With appointments three times per week and counseling the other two days, Lloyd was unable to keep the job he'd landed. Faced with the pressure to provide for his family, he turned to a skill he knows plenty about - selling drugs. First introduced to drugs at the age of 8, he has spent a lifetime learning to use, buy, and sell them. "My parents lived a double life," Lloyd says. He speaks proudly of the jobs they held, but adds that his dad sold drugs for extra cash. "I don't know why," he reflects. "It's not like we needed the money." But in 2014, Lloyd does need the money. Without a regular job to support his family, he turns to drugs. "It's not about the drugs. It's about the money," he insists. He does some quick mental math before explaining that a handful of guys can make \$6,000 per night, a number that is hard to ignore.



Dr. Edward Latessa during one of his lectures.

At the age of 42 though, Lloyd says he's sick of the game. He wants out. When told that the facility is looking to improve programs for inmates, his eyes widen. "That's awesome," he blurts out. "It's too late for me, but that's the best news I've heard in a long time!" His concern now is for the younger guys. "You gotta catch people when they're young. It's like cancer. You gotta catch it early." He then elaborates on the concept of improving programs. "Jail is structure all day long, but there's no therapy. You learn to be a better criminal - get clean, get better connections, go out and do it again."

With all of the differences that separate inmates from service providers, it's interesting to see how readily they embrace the idea to increase treatment in order to reduce recidivism. As Warden Temas points out, people are changing the way they think about corrections, Washington County is changing the way it thinks, and programs are on the way to better prepare inmates like Lloyd for a successful return to society.

*Note: Name of inmate has been changed

"Take Me Out to the Ball Game" Blood Drive

sponsored by the
Washington County Board of Commissioners

Friday, April 11, 2014 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Courthouse Square - Public Meeting Rooms #103 and #104
100 West Beau Street, Washington, PA 15301

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Must be 17 years of age to donate (16 years old with signed parental consent.) All giveaways are nontransferable and are not redeemable for cash. Please bring I.D. with you the day of the blood drive. Proper I.D. is required to donate blood. A Central Blood Bank I.D., military I.D., driver's license or passport are all approved forms of I.D. A birth certificate along with a picture I.D. that includes the donor's full name will also be accepted.

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Would you like to write articles or take photos
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