

VOL. 11 ISSUE 4

Washington County *Highlights*

April/May 2015



April Showers, Bring May Flowers!

After many long months of cold temperatures and falling flakes, spring has finally sprung! Washington County is growing and continues to bloom with new stories each day.

Save the Date!

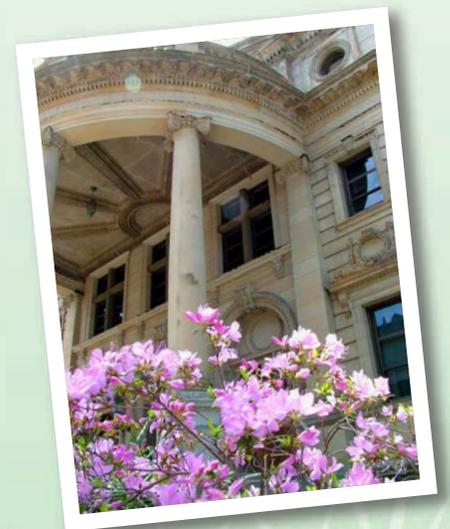
Pittsburgh Pirates v.s. St. Louis Cardinals
July 11th at PNC Park
7:14 pm

See Page 7 - For more information regarding tickets transportation, and deadlines.

In This Issue...

Here are just a few things to look for in this month's issue. Be sure to check out many other great stories making county headlines.

- The New President Judge Emery (Pg. 2)
- Promotion of the next Washington County Mascot Contest (Pg. 4-5)
- County Personnel Changes (Pg10-11)
- County-Wide Food Drive (Pg.12)





Spotlight:

Washington County's New President Judge

By: Wes Parry

With less than a month under her belt as Washington County's new President Judge, this reporter had the opportunity to sit down with Judge Katherine B. Emery and have a chat. Her ties to Washington County and Pennsylvania run very deep. She was born and raised in Canonsburg, attended Penn State for her undergraduate degree and went to law school at The University of Dayton. She also has been in the employ of the county since 1985, having worked in Human Resources and as the county solicitor for ten years before ascending the bench.

The judge is a bubbly, cheery person with a witty sense of humor and 20 years experience on the bench. She is married to fellow Washington County Judge, The Honorable Gary Gilman. Together, the couple has one son. Her interest in pursuing a law degree emerged from her lifelong interest in county government. In fact, she jokes that her tastes were unique early on. She tells the story of the days in 1972 when she was ninth grader, who shared a bedroom with her sister, who would complain about Katherine's taste. Her sister did not fully appreciate her poster of George McGovern as her side of the room highlighted the teen heartthrob band, "The Monkees."

Now that she has taken on the role of President Judge, she has implemented some new ideas to improve the relationship between the county court and county government. Her first actions began with the appointment of

Judge DiSalle to the prison board, a position that has been unfilled for some time. Her effort to hold bi-weekly meetings with all the judges, is also a step toward improved communication and teamwork.

Judge Emery said that even though the former President Judge's resignation leaves a potential three-year vacancy on the county bench, she doesn't foresee it impacting the caseload as the State Supreme Court has placed two senior judges in Washington for 10 days each per month.

Judge Emery's caring nature comes to light when she speaks about the things she has most enjoyed about her time on the bench. By far, she says, the most memorable time of her career has been the time spent doing juvenile and dependency court; it is a passion of hers. While it was "very emotional" she truly enjoyed being able to make a difference in people's lives. Being able to reunite a family or find a new family for someone who really needed one was a true joy for her. Her current judicial assignment, the same she has had since 2006, has her hearing civil cases as well as being the Orphan's Court Judge. So, she still gets to help out families on a regular basis with adoptions.

Judge Emery does have an active life outside of the courthouse as well. In her spare time she enjoys cooking, traveling, swimming, and driving the family boat at Indian Lake.

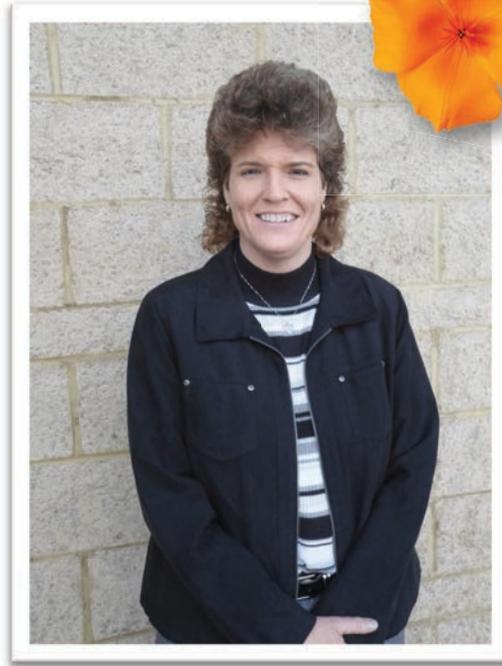
Washington County Correctional Facility Welcomes Treatment Supervisor

By: Laura L. Radcliffe

As the winter chill lifted and spring drew near, staff at the correctional facility welcomed Judy Klobucar, their newest team member. Ms. Klobucar, who holds a Master's degree in social work, is no stranger to the needs of the inmate population. Prior to accepting her role as the facility's treatment supervisor, she spent nearly 14 years as a program director for a residential treatment facility. Clients lived on-site for three months at a time so as to receive intensive treatment for a variety of mental health needs. Anger management, coping skills, and drug and alcohol counseling were just a few of the programs offered to residents, many of whom had a history of incarceration. When the time came to join the treatment team at W.C.C.F. it seemed like a natural fit, Judy explains.

Nationwide, correctional facilities are seeing an increased need for such workers and programs- and for good reason! Maintaining the mental health of the inmate population is a key factor in ensuring the safety of both the inmates and the officers entrusted with their care. Access to such programs provides inmates with communication and social skills that many take for granted. Those skills work not only to make the incarceration period run a bit more smoothly, but aids an individual's transition back into society. Once reintegrated into society, it is

the goal of such programs for former inmates to utilize their new-found skills to successfully navigate situations they may encounter. Another way of ensuring that goal is met is to collaborate with area organizations to provide continuous care to those who need it. Although Ms. Klobucar will be the first to tell you that she is still settling into her new position, she recognizes that strengthening relationships with area providers is an important step in continuing care.



Judy Klobucar

Agreeing with her is Rob, who has been incarcerated roughly 35 times. Now at age 47, Rob relays that he was just 19 years old the first time he found himself in jail. He admits that most of his problems stem from an underlying drug addiction that has remained largely untreated over the years. Although he was able to attend programs sporadically throughout his

stays, Rob says he was never around long enough to complete the programs he was offered. He also expresses frustration over a lack of programs in most facilities. "They make you do victim impact, anger management, but that's nothing compared to what you actually need to do. You need a lot more drug and alcohol programs, especially for these young kids," he says. "Every one of them is here for the same thing," he continues. "Guess what that is? Drugs, Heroin." When asked why he never sought treatment upon release, Rob admits that he was often unsure of where to go. He also

(Cont.)

confesses that he needed a nudge from someone who knew the ropes and cared enough to see him get help. He explains that without a pre-set screening or intake planned, he went right back to doing what he'd always done. "You definitely need mental health [programs]," he says. "Because guess what? Guys like me, when we're on the street, guess what we do? We self-medicate. We turn to heroin. Something's gotta change. I'm too old for this. I don't want to be 60 and in prison."

With that, Rob walks toward a cork board posted on his housing unit. The board is filled with neat columns of papers, each one a resource of some sort. One lists the programs that the jail currently offers, while another lists community resources: The public defender's office, The city mission, job training, The Department of Public Welfare, and nearly a dozen other agencies. He takes a moment to point out which classes he's attended, which program information he plans to

copy and take with him. He's quick to say that he never believed in programs, until he found one that worked for him. Now, he says, he tries to recruit others to attend. When asked if the other guys seem interested Rob becomes animated and exclaims, "Oh, yes! Definitely, definitely! There's a lot of guys that tell me every day, 'I'm done with this. I don't want to do this.'"

It seems to genuinely excite Rob that the facility he's called home for 20 of his stays is increasing efforts to expand their treatment programs. Upon hearing news of the new hire, Rob grows serious. "Good," he says. "Maybe now they can get more programs into here."



Last year's winners at the Commissioner's Meeting – Pictured from the left are, Rene Crow and Winston; Commissioner Larry Maggi; Commissioner Diana Irey Vaughan and Daisy Darling; Commissioner Harlan G. Shoher, Jr.; and Amber Young, daughters Isabella and Evie, and Go-Go the Goat.

Washington County Mascot Contest

By: Randi Ross Marodi

It's time to get out your cameras and start taking pictures of your cats, dogs and farm animals, because the Washington County newsletter staff is gearing up for the 2015 mascot contest. Last year, 13 pets competed in the contest and helped the committee raise more than \$1,000 for the Washington Area Humane Society.

The winners of last year's contest were Daisy Darling, owned by Washington County Commissioner Diane Irey Vaughan, who was crowned the Washington County Mascot; Winston, owned by Rene Crow of Magistrate Curtis Thompson's office, who

was given the title of Best of Show & First Runner-Up; and Go-Go the Goat, owned by Amber Young of the Washington County Correctional Facility, who received the Washington County Agricultural Mascot & Spirit Award.

Just like last year, the competition is open to Washington County employees, who will decorate boxes, baskets or coffee cans with their pet's photos and collect monetary donations to help their pet win.

(Cont. Pg. 5)

The pets that receive the most money will be the winners of the top three categories: Washington County Mascot, Best of Show & First Runner-Up; and the Washington County Agricultural Mascot. The winning pet will receive a gift basket, attend a Commissioners' meeting, and represent the county throughout the year. Again, all proceeds from the contest will be donated to the Washington Area Humane Society.

The contest will end on July 1, 2015, and the winners will be invited to attend a Commissioners' Meeting at 10 a.m. on Thursday, July 16, 2015.

If you are interested, please:

- Email a photo of your pet to Randi Marodi at marodir@co.washington.pa.us or drop it off at the Commissioners' Office, Suite 702, Courthouse Square.
- Include the pet's name and age, your name and the office where you work, your phone number and any other information that makes your pet special.
- Make sure your pet has updated vaccines and, if it's a dog, a current license.
- The pets who won the following categories in last year's contest are not eligible for this year's competition: Washington County Mascot; Best of Show & First Runner-Up; and the Washington County Agricultural Mascot.



Daisy Darling at the Washington County Fair with Commissioner Diana Irey Vaughan and Amber Young and Go-Go the Goat

Daisy Darling at the County Fall Festival at Mingo Park with Commissioners Diana Irey Vaughan, Larry Maggi and Harlan Shober, Jr.

Meet Daisy Darling

By: Daisy Darling (with the help of a translator)

It has been a great honor to serve as the first Washington County Pet Mascot. It was very exciting to receive my official collar and name tag. It is a day I will never forget. This past year I got to enjoy going to the Washington County Fair and had fun getting to meet a lot of other animals from all around the county. The best part was all of the great smelling food, I could hardly contain myself. I was also invited to attend the

County Fall Fun Fest at Mingo park. That was my favorite trip out. There were so many nice children who liked to pet me, one of my favorite activities. I enjoyed the great music, food that everyone "accidentally" dropped for me, and getting my photo taken with some guests. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to represent the County and know that the Washington County Humane Society greatly appreciated all of the donation that they received. I am anxious to see who will run to be the next County Pet Mascot...Please consider entering the contest, I look forward to crowning the 2015 winner in July.

Deputy District Attorney is Sworn In

By: Sylvia Cavallo

The District Attorney's Office headed off 2015 with a new, yet familiar addition to its office when Dennis Paluso, Esq., a Charleroi native, was sworn in as Deputy District Attorney on Monday, January 12.

Paluso, who maintains a private law practice in Charleroi, is a veteran of the District Attorney's office. He was an Assistant District Attorney for Washington County from May 1993 to September 1995. He then served as the Juvenile Master for the Court of Common Pleas from 1996 to 2013, hearing dependency and delinquency cases.

District Attorney Gene Vittone is delighted to welcome Paluso to his team and is proud to bring on board a knowledgeable, experienced and energetic attorney with strong connections to his community.

"We are fortunate to have Mr. Paluso join us," said Vittone. "Dennis brings energy and a high level of commitment that strengthens the productivity of our office. Mr. Paluso is an experienced trial attorney with a strong focus on criminal law, and his dedication and purpose is sure to reap benefits for the taxpayers of the county."

Paluso helps to oversee the everyday operations of the office in addition to managing the overall trial list and assisting in major crime investigations.

"I enjoy working with so many dedicated people," said Paluso. "It is my goal to help the office be as effective and efficient as it can be. The foundation of achieving those goals centers on receiving enough resources to enable Assistant District Attorneys to attend all preliminary hearings and help contribute toward complete office efficiency. It is a pleasure to have this opportunity to serve our community in this capacity."

Paluso graduated from Charleroi Area High School in 1984, and graduated from IUP with a BS degree in Accounting in 1988. After



Dennis Paluso

working for a small accounting firm in Silver Spring, MD, he attended Syracuse University College of Law, from which he graduated in 1992.

Paluso resides in Charleroi with his wife, Becky and their two children.

Commissioner Larry Maggi



Commissioner Larry Maggi made sure his new granddaughter, Brynn Elizabeth, was happy during her recent visit to the county. Brynn Elizabeth was welcomed to the world by Commissioner Maggi's daughter, Bronwyn Kolovich, and her husband, Michael, on January 19th.

Commissioner Larry Maggi with granddaughter Brynn Elizabeth



Mark Your Calendars

Pittsburgh Pirates vs. St. Louis Cardinals

When: July 11th

Where: PNC Park

Time: 7:14pm

County employees should mark their calendars for this year's Pirates' game. The event is scheduled for Saturday, July 11, when the Pirate's face the St. Louis Cardinals at 7:14 at Pittsburgh's PNC Park.

One bus will be transporting guests to the game, making pick-ups in Charleroi and at the Washington Park and Ride. As usual, the fun will include a tailgate party that includes food and refreshments, snacks for the bus ride and a block party on Federal Street. Bus pick up times will be announced at a later date.

The activities committee recently announced that ticket prices are \$22 each. Only 50 tickets will be sold, so get your name on the list as soon as possible. Fifty people were in attendance at last year's game.

Washington County Receives Grant to Raise Awareness During Crime Victims' Rights Week

By: Betsy Dane

The District Attorney's Office of Victim Services will be observing National Crime Victim's Rights Week April 19 – 25. This annual observance seeks to increase general public awareness of, and knowledge about the wide range of rights and services available to people who have been victimized by crime. The theme for 2015 National Crime Victims' Rights Week is "Engaging Communities; Empowering Victims."

Betsy Dane, administrator for Office of Victim Services, said the Community Awareness Project that will be sponsored in the City of Washington, is intended to connect with the community by holding a series of events in specific neighborhoods throughout the city. Several small events will provide information about services and answer specific questions. A larger community-wide event will be held where victims will share with the community their stories about the impact of crime through videos and in person. They will talk about what was helpful, and how our communities can support all victims of crime.

The county's crime victim's office is to provide such services, because of funding received from the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators (NAVAA) through a grant from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), within the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Our county office was one of the 90 projects recommended by the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators and selected for funding by OVC for 2015 from the 194 applications that were submitted nationwide.

"This year's National Crime Victims' Rights Week theme reminds us of the importance to create a victim response system that is open and accessible to all survivors and victims of crime," said OVC Director Joyce Frost. "It is very important that we build partnerships throughout our communities to better address all victims' needs by believing them and offering support and resources regardless of where they disclose their victimization. Everybody plays a role."

A program that focuses on crime victims will be held at 6pm. Thursday, April 23 at Washington High School.

CYS Worked Hard to Make Christmas Special for Children & Employees

By: Maire Higgins



CYS held its second annual door decorating contest, titled "A Christmas Story" during its Christmas Party. The winners pictured with their door are Robert Lawler, Nakita Lewis, Dawn Ellis, Kris McDowell and Michelle Derosa. The contest was judged by Rob Landis, Matt Cain and Rodney Jones from Information Technology. Prizes were awarded and the 1st place trophy was handed off to the new winners.

Children & Youth Employees were busy in December wrapping gifts for children and planning parties for families and employees.

On December 4, the annual Foster Christmas Party was held at Julian's Banquet Hall. The day started out with a rain and snow mix to get us into the Christmas spirit. Foster children and their families and CYS workers, their families and friends also were invited.

D.J. Spaz got the party rolling by playing all of our favorite Christmas songs and line dances including the Electric Slide, Hokey Pokey and Limbo. Craft tables were set up for the kids to show off their artistic talents. Some of the children made cards and Christmas presents for the special people in their lives. Many made something special for Santa.

A dinner consisted of chicken tenders, stuffed chicken breasts, mashed potatoes, gravy, ham, salad, rolls, veggies and cake. Special thanks to the foster parents were given by Commissioners Harlan G. Shober Jr. and Diana Irey Vaughan; Director of CYS Kimberly Rogers; Assistant Director, Dee Dee Blosnich-Gooden; and Foster Unit Supervisor Frank Allen. The children were so excited when Santa and Mrs. Claus arrived. Each child had a chance to get their photo taken while sitting on Santa's lap. Santa listened attentively to the children's requests to make sure he knew what they wanted for Christmas. Candy and presents were given out to all of the children.

Then, on December 16, the employees and volunteers listened to Christmas music in the public meeting rooms of Courthouse Square while they wrapped hundreds of gifts for children who receive various services through CYS.

The meeting rooms were filled with rolls of wrapping paper, tissue paper, ribbons and bows and the tables were filled with toys, clothes, games and other items that were donated to the Helping Hands project from employees, corporate sponsors, various churches, social organizations, and individuals. Support from the community was tremendous and a great organizational system of lists and names made it possible for all of the children to receive a Christmas present. Once the gifts were wrapped, they were distributed to the caseworkers for delivery.

The next day, CYS hosted a potluck lunch with delicious foods, a holiday-door-decorating contest, an ugly sweater contest and gift exchange. Then, two days before Christmas, the staff delivered 13 meals to needy families served by CYS.

A special thanks is extended to Jane, Jody, Michelle and Kate; and to any anyone who wrapped, delivered meals or gifts, or donated wrapping paper or gift bags. There are too many people to thank, but Santa knows who you are. Thank you for making the holidays special for children and families in need.

CYS—Helping Children Through Foster Care and Adoption

By: Sandy Sabot

“Children and Youth Services (CYS) is committed to the well-being of children and families. By empowering and engaging families and the community, safety and permanency can be achieved and all members can thrive.”

The above-stated mission may seem overwhelming, but the CYS department works *daily* to make life better for children and families they serve. Besides the actual casework involved in the day-to-day operation, CYS is focused on changing lives by changing laws. According to CYS’s Jane Zupancic, the agency has been working “to implement twenty-three pieces of new child protection legislation. These changes significantly impact the reporting, investigation, and assessment of child abuse and neglect.”

When a child is removed from his or her home due to neglect or abuse, CYS caseworkers match trained Foster Parents for placement of the child until the situation improves and the child can either be returned home or a permanent, adoptive home can be found.

Children facing a move to foster care are often frightened, upset, and emotional – all normal responses to being uprooted. However, a relatively new program – Foster Friends of Washington County – has volunteers who prepare and donate “Care Packs,” which are backpacks with familiar items like a stuffed animal, towel, toothbrush, etc., so that children going into foster care have something to call their own. Foster Friends of Washington County gives Care Packs to all foster children, but focuses more on younger children.

A community collaboration with the Central Assembly of God Church in Houston helps with the “Princess Initiative” to benefit high school students who would like to attend their school proms. For the past few years, Kate Grant of CYS has worked with this project to help girls in foster care. According to Grant, the church began the program to help lower income girls throughout the county. The community donates “gently used” prom gowns, shoes, jewelry, and handbags so that high school

girls can attend their proms. CYS has been handling it for girls in foster care. Although donations can be made throughout the year. To donate gowns, shoes, jewelry or handbags, contact Kate Grant at extension 4154.

Foster Care Awareness Month is in May and CYS will continue to promote the urgent need for caring, supportive adults who can provide a safe, nurturing environment for children who cannot remain safely with their birth family. CYS is planning a recognition event during May to acknowledge and thank the dedicated foster families who have already made this commitment. Foster parent training sessions for new foster parents started in February and have been ongoing for prospective foster families. However, ongoing training is also provided for all foster parents with courses in CPR/first aid, car seat usage, and healthy sexual development.

Currently CYS is also working with the county’s Correctional Facility to provide family-friendly locations for children in foster care to be able to have visits with birth parents who are incarcerated. The staff thanks to Warden John Temas and Deputy Warden Edward Strawn for their cooperation



(Cont.)

and assistance with this project. To find out more about assisting CYS with donations for the Care Packs or Princess Initiative, contact their offices on the 5th floor of Courthouse Square or call 724-228-6884.

County Personnel Changes

By: Pat Maxon

RESIGNED:

Chanel Allen	Jail Administration
Evan Banasick	Community Service
Jennifer Brooks	Jail Security
Robert Debowski	Jail Security
Josselyn Hypes	Children & Youth Program
Michael Kloszewski	Children & Youth Program
Christian Koroly	Community Service
Stefanie Lenart	H.C.-Nursing
Sara Martin	H.C.-Housekeeping
Alyssa Matesic	H.C.-Nursing
Logan McAnany	Juvenile Probation
Michael McClure	Children & Youth Program
Kristie McMasters	H.C.-Nursing
Adina Necciai	DA-Victims Services
Kristen Peck	Vacant Judicial
Bradley Poland	Children & Youth Program
Tara Roffis	H.C.-Social Services-Co.
Zachary Rutherford	Booking Center
Cynthia Shrontz	Jail Administration
Gina Steranko	C.C.I.S
Helen Swarrow	H.C.-Nursing Admin.
Theresa Treherne	Emergency Telephone-911
Kenneth Zites	Children & Youth Program

RETIRED:

Denise Biagini	Emergency Telephone-911
Margaret Brown	Clerk of Courts
Cathrine Davies	H.C.-Nursing
Kathleen Dicks	District Attorney
Melanie L Finney	Planning Department

Susan Furlage	H.C.-Nursing
Philomena Jacobetz	Community Service
Margaret Jennings	Aging
Patricia Kulla	H.C.-Nursing Clerical
Janet Kulla	H.C.-Nursing Clerical
Barbara Lewis	H.C.-Nursing
Jacklyn Miller	H.C.-Nursing Clerical

NEW HIRES:

James Saska	Aging
Michael Wise	Aging
Sheila Fullerton	BHDS
Andrew Kobert	Booking Center
Lori Dominick	C.C.I.S.
Erin Dixon	Children & Youth Program
Zachary Harvey	Children & Youth Program
Kenneth Zites	Children & Youth Program
Joseph Bali	Community Service
Evan Banasick	Community Service
Christian Koroly	Community Service
Amanda Fisher	Court Administrator
David Rundquist Jr.	Court Administrator
Brandon Clifford Gorski	District Attorney
Dennis Paluso	District Attorney
Sarah Sandin	E&M-Parks
Sylvia Dreistadt	H.C.-Dietary
Alyssa Armstrong	H.C.-Nursing
Jena Carlisle	H.C.-Nursing
Rhonda Hiller	H.C.-Nursing
Kimberly Jackson	H.C.-Nursing

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Chelsey Leckie	H.C.-Nursing
Courtney McCarty	H.C.-Nursing
Tammie Rice	H.C.-Nursing
Danielle Barish	H.C.-Nursing Admin.
Roxanne McWreath	H.C.-Nursing Admin.
Kathleen Miles	H.C.-Nursing Admin.
Barbie Castrucci	Human Resources
Sara Huggins	Human Resources

Judith Klobucar	Jail Administrator
Adam Leech	Jail Security
Jamie Restanio	Jail Security
Anthony Giannetti	Judge Emery
Abbey Rugola	Planning Department
Jennifer Hood	Records Management
Matthew Smith	Vacant Judicial

Register Now for Take Your Child to Work Day

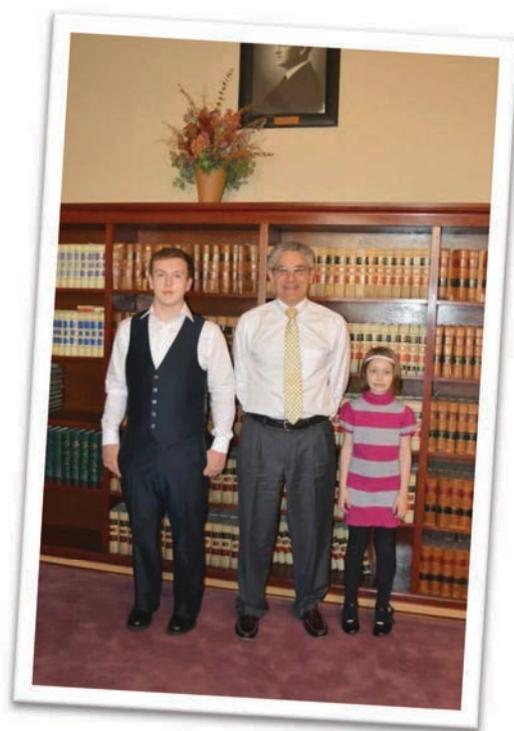
By: Stacey Allen

Take your Child to Work Day is always a special day in the county and this year there will be some young people sitting at desks, filing papers and doing other county business on Thursday, April 23.

County employees are encouraged to participate in this day, which gives children a chance to experience a day in the workforce. In order to participate, the children must be at least eight years old. All participants must obtain a form from human resources and have it completed and approved by the head of their department.

Last year, my children, Conner Allen, 15, and Victoria Allen, 7, got all dressed up and had a great day at the county. The first thing on their agenda was a tour of the courthouse and a visit with Judge Gary Gilman, a visit to the Washington County Correction Facility and the booking center for a finger print demonstration. After being handcuffed to a chair at the booking center, we enjoyed lunch and then my children got to do some office work at adult probation. We also visited the Memorial Garden where rocks were dedicated with the names of deceased crime victims. We took a moment to honor our friend, our veterinarian, Dr. John David Dryer, who died on December 19, 2011 from a gunshot wound suffered in the line of duty.

I would recommend bringing your children to this year's Take Your Child to Work Day, because it was a great day with valuable experiences. Conner and Victoria are looking forward to this year's visit.



Connor and Victoria Allen visited Judge Gary Gilman last year on Take Your Child to Work Day

Washington County Employees Help the Families in Need

Washington County employees recently participated in the Washington County Farm Bureau's Food Drive and collected a total of 5,000 food items for families in need.

The farm bureau collected food for the Greater Washington County Food Bank. Employees in each building, Courthouse Square, Courthouse, Correctional Facility, Family Court and the Health Center held a competition to see who could collect the most food. In the end, Deputy Warden Ed Strawn and his team at the Correctional Facility collected the most food.

Thanks are extended to everyone who participated and helped provide meals for many Washington County families.



Commissioner Larry Maggi, Don Carter of the Washington County Farm Bureau and Commissioner Harlan G. Shober, Jr. helped load food into a van for the recent food drive.



Gary Bertosh of building and grounds helps some food drive volunteers with another pick up.



Warden John Temas, Commissioner Diana Irey Vaughan, Julie Bailey and Deputy Warden Ed Strawn on the day of his crowning.



And the winners are...

- \$10 Giant Eagle Gift Card – John Secrist
- \$25 Lagerhead's Restaurant gift card – Karen Goetz
- \$40 Washington Shop N Save gift card – Gloria Cumer
- 4 Pk of Tickets to a Washington Wild Things – Mark Stewart
- Dinner for 2 at the Union Grill- Gloria Dovshek
- Cameron Wellness Center Membership – Brian Newman



Pam Jericho of building and grounds helps get some of the food ready for pickup.

Spotting Eastern Bluebirds In Washington County

By: Jeff Donahue

Eastern Bluebirds are common songbirds in Washington County. Bluebirds can easily be spotted perching on fence posts or utility wires adjacent to a field, pasture, golf course or large grassy area. Not to be confused with Blue Jays or Indigo Buntings, bluebirds are thrushes like the American Robin. Blue Jays are large songbirds that are related to crows. Indigo Bunting are similar in size to bluebirds, however buntings are finches, like the goldfinch.

Male and female bluebirds are similar in size and are “sparrow-sized” songbirds. The male bluebird is colored bright blue whereas the female is colored a buffy blue-grey. Both the male and female have a burnt orange breast and a white belly. Young bluebirds are strongly speckled.

Humans can assist local bluebird populations by placing and maintaining bluebird boxes in the proper habitat. Placing a bluebird box in forest will not yield nesting bluebirds, nor will placing bluebird boxes along brushy field edges. Bluebird boxes are best placed in pastures, hayfields, golf courses or maintained grassy areas.

Late February or early March is the time to place a new bluebird boxes or clean existing bluebird boxes for the upcoming nesting season. Cleaning existing boxes is as simple as removing last years’ nesting material, wasp nests or caches of seeds stored by mice over the winter. A thin edged scraper is a good tool for cleaning boxes thoroughly. It is also important to check to see that the drainage holes in each corner of the floor are clear and free of debris. It is also a good idea to cut back any brush that may have grown up around the box since last year.

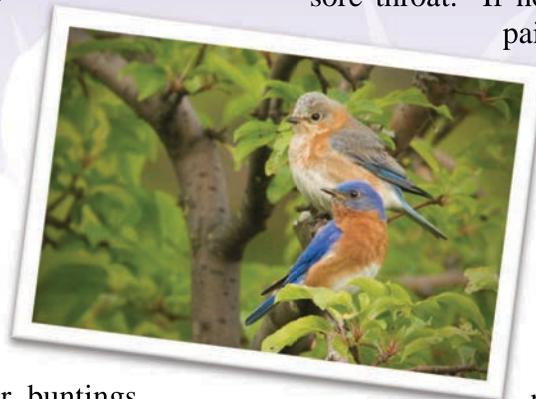
On the first warm sunny days of late February and early March male bluebirds will be heard signing to establish territories for the

upcoming nesting season. Listen for their soft warbling that resembles the song of a robin with a sore throat. If nest boxes are nearby, watch for pairs of bluebirds to begin preparing the inside of the nest box with soft grasses, weed stems or pine needles. Nesting can begin as early as March. Unfortunately early nesting attempts are often unsuccessful, due cold, wet weather and a lack of insects. Bluebirds can and will nest multiple times in a single season and will use the same nest box over and over again.

Looking for an excuse to get outdoors? Searching nearby fields, pastures, golf courses and grassy areas for bluebirds can be just the motivation needed to get off the couch. Aside from bluebirds you might also be fortunate enough to observe the first groundhog of the year, the silhouette of a returning Turkey Vulture overhead, a brilliantly colored yellow coltsfoot flower blooming alongside the road or a fluttering Morning Cloak Butterfly. Good luck

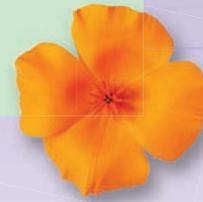
Characteristics of a good bluebird box are:

- 4 1/2 to 5 1/2 inches square
- Entrance hole is 1 1/2 inches. Distance from the bottom of entrance hole to the floor is 8 inches
- The area between the floor and the entrance hole is roughed up to provide traction for the young bluebirds to climb out of the box.
- There is ventilation and the roof is sloped, Can be open and closed for cleaning
- The box is attached to a pole or post. No perch
- There is a predator guard attached to the pole or post to keep predators from accessing the box
- The box is not located by buildings, brushy areas, barns or other areas where European Starlings or English Sparrows are common.



Park Happenings

April - June



Star Party

Friday, April 24 & Saturday, April 25, 2015
Mingo Creek Park – Observatory
Dusk

Brownie Hiker Badge Program

Tuesday, April 28, 2015
Mingo Creek Park – Shelter 4
6:00 p.m.

Meandering for Morel Mushrooms

Thursday, April 30, 2015
Cross Creek Park – Parking Area across from the
Hopewell Diner
6:30 p.m.

Family Campout – Mingo Creek

Saturday, May 2, 2015
Mingo Creek Park – Shelter 8
4:00 p.m.

Preschool at the Park – Salamander Tales

Tuesday, May 5 & Wednesday, May 6, 2015
Mingo Creek Park – Shelter 6
10:00 a.m. or 1:00 p.m. either day

Walk & Talk

Thursday, May 7, 2015
Mingo Creek Park – Shelter 1
10:00 a.m.

Salamander Search

Thursday, May 7, 2015
Mingo Creek Park – Shelter 4
7:00 p.m.

Great Migration – Homeschool

Thursday, May 14, 2015
Mingo Creek Park – Shelter 6
10:00 a.m. or 1:00 p.m.

Evening Paddle

Wednesday, May 20, 2015
Cross Creek Park – Shelter 3
6:30 p.m.

Star Party

Friday, May 22 & Saturday, May 23, 2015
Mingo Creek Park – Observatory
Dusk

Family Campout – Cross Creek

Friday, May 29, 2015
Cross Creek Park – Shelter 3
4:00 p.m.

Preschool at the Park – Creek Stompers

Tuesday, June 2 & Wednesday, June 3, 2015
Mingo Creek Park – Shelter 4
10:00 a.m. or 1:00 p.m. either day

Walk & Talk

Thursday, June 4, 2015
Mingo Creek Park – Shelter 1
10:00 a.m.

Gills on the Fly

Tuesday, June 9, 2015
Cross Creek Park – Shelter 3
6:30 p.m.

Owl Prowl

Thursday, June 4, 2015
Cross Creek Park – Shelter 3
8:00 p.m.

Needle & Yarn Craft Workshop

Wednesday, June 10, 2015
Mingo Creek Park – Park Office
10:00 a.m.

Yoga in the Park

Wednesday, June 10, 2015
Mingo Creek Park – Shelter 10
7:00 p.m.

Campfire Jam Night

Tuesday, June 16, 2015
Mingo Creek Park – Shelter 4
6:30 p.m.

Star Party

Friday, June 19 & Saturday, June 20, 2015
Mingo Creek Park – Observatory
Dusk

Insect Safari Day Camp

Monday, June 22 – Thursday, June 25, 2015
Mingo Creek Park – Shelter 3
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Firefly Campfire

Friday, June 26, 2015
Mingo Creek Park – Shelter 2
8:00 p.m.

Lets look at the plate...

THE MYPLATE CAMPAIGN WAS DESIGNED TO MAKE HEALTHY EATING SIMPLE. THE PLATE GIVES YOU AN EASY TO REMEMBER PICTURE OF THE KINDS OF FOODS THAT YOU NEED IN A HEALTHY DIET AND APPROXIMATE PORTION SIZES OF EACH FOOD GROUP

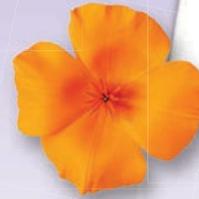
CHOOSE MYPLATE.GOV

The government website, www.ChooseMyPlate.gov, contains a lot of useful information to help you make better choices when it comes to eating healthy. There are recommendations for the kinds of foods you should include in a healthy diet, ways to incorporate those healthy foods into your diet, and how to determine adequate portion sizes. Because each individual's needs are different, the site does not provide exact amounts. For a more personalized plan, you should consult a Registered Dietitian.

HELPFUL HINTS

Here are some helpful tips when using MyPlate.

1. When using the Plate to help you with your food choices, always use a nine-inch plate. Using a nine-inch plate can help you keep your portion sizes more accurate.
2. Remember the three P's – Pick, Prep, Portion
 - Pick healthy choices
 - Prepare foods in the healthiest way
 - Portion – make sure you know the proper portion size for your body's needs. Avoid "super-sizing" anything.
3. Make half of your plate non-starchy vegetables and fruit...with a larger emphasis on vegetables.
 - Include fruits and vegetables of different colors.
 - Eat vegetables raw, steamed, roasted or grilled. Avoid frying.
 - Eat fruits and vegetables the way nature made them. Eat an apple instead of applesauce or apple juice.
 - Limit your starchy vegetables, such as potatoes and corn.
4. Make half of your grains whole grains.
 - Whole grains are less processed and include the bran "coating" and the nutrient-rich "germ."
 - Whole grains contain more fiber, which makes you feel more satisfied ("feeling fuller longer.")
 - Choose brown rice, whole-grain bread, whole-wheat pasta, oatmeal, muesli, etc.
5. Switch to fat-free or low-fat dairy.
 - Limit milk and dairy products to one to two servings per day.
 - High-fat products made from milk (cream cheese or butter) do not count as a dairy serving.
6. Choose lean proteins.
 - Pick the healthiest sources of protein, such as fish, chicken and beans. Nuts can be used in moderation.
 - Cut back on red meat and use lean cuts of beef, pork or other meats.
 - Avoid bacon, cold cuts, hot dogs and other processed meats.
 - Prepare your proteins baked, broiled, roasted or grilled.
 - Combining a lean protein with a high-fiber food will help you feel satisfied.
7. Drink low-calorie or NO calories beverages.
 - Ounce for ounce, juices contain as much sugar and calories as soda. Limit your consumption of these.
 - Avoid sugary drinks. Replace them with water.
8. Use healthy oils, such as olive oil or canola oil, in moderation. Limit animal fats and avoid trans fats.
9. Use a food tracker or diet diary if you are trying to lose weight.
10. Increase physical activity. Although the plate does not show physical activity, it is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. It is still recommended that children get 60 minutes a day, and adults need at least 30 minutes per day. More information is provided on the website.

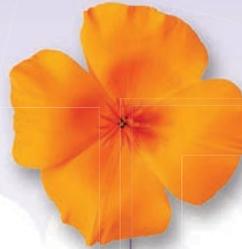


Washington County *Highlights*

APRIL/MAY 2015

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Would you like to write articles or
take photos for the county
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Washington County

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