



# WestWord

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## School tinkers with Homecoming schedule Game to be played on Saturday afternoon

**w** Zoe Ljubic  
Editor in Chief

In her debut as student activities director, Jessica Fliman has decided to shake things up a bit for this year's Homecoming. For the first time in recent memory, the game will be held on Saturday afternoon, a decision that will have a domino effect on pre-Homecoming festivities.

The plethora of activities planned by the Homecoming committee and student government will kick off Oct. 13. Student government, student cabinets and the Homecoming committee have come together to create a week full of "fun," according to Fliman, to lead up to this year's "Chicago goes Hollywood" dance.

Pre-game activities will include:

- Tuesday, Oct. 13: the Homecoming king and queen coronation assembly will take place during extended homeroom.
- Wednesday, Oct. 14: the annual Powder Puff football game will begin at 6 p.m. on Basrak Field.
- Thursday, Oct. 15: during all lunch periods, activities—including inflatables, bungee runs, bouncy basketballs, quarterback toss and jousting—will be set up in the student courtyard.
- Friday, Oct. 16: the annual Homecoming spirit assembly will be a regular p.m. assembly 2:23–3:23 p.m. In the evening, students will be able to attend a party (replicating a carnival) in the south parking lot so that each class can decorate the Homecoming floats for the parade. Fliman said that a D.J. will be "spinning music," while an obstacle course will be set up for students. Food also will be served.

Student government will host spirit week Tuesday-Friday. Tuesday will represent "Old West" day in which students will wear Western clothing. Wednesday will feature "Highlighter" day in which students will wear bright, neon colored clothing. Thursday's theme is "Crazy Hair and Sock" day. The traditional "Red and White" day will close out the week of festivities.

Saturday's activities will include the Homecoming parade at 9 a.m. and the Wolves' football game against Evanston Township on Basrak Field at 1 p.m., followed by the dance in the Contest Gym at 7:30 p.m.

This is the first year that organizers have decided to plan all

three major Homecoming events in one day.

As for the morning parade, Fliman explained that the route is different this year.

"[The students and teachers] are taking [the parade] down Oakton Ave. onto Niles Ave., then to Main Street and will finish by coming down Gross Point Road," Fliman said. "We are going in a reverse circle so that we can go through more of the downtown Skokie area."

Fliman added that by going through the downtown area, the entire community can come out to watch the parade.

"Not a lot of families can come out and watch a parade at 2

lights," but by having a Saturday afternoon game, "more alums can get back for a Saturday day game rather than a Friday night [Homecoming] game."

Freshman Rachel Dimayuga expressed the belief that if all events are jammed into one day, many students might have conflicts when it comes to attending each event. She believes that the schedule is too crammed.

Despite these students' concern, all said that they plan to attend the festivities.

Fliman's attempt to promote school spirit continues with an "incentive to get people to stay" at the game.

"Each junior and senior will receive a raffle ticket [for staying] the entire game, and at the end we will pull a ticket to win a reserved parking spot for the year," Fliman said.

To accommodate those who would normally spend Saturday preparing for the Homecoming dance, students from the Pivot Point cosmetology school and salon will provide services to students during the football game. The packages vary in combinations of hair, nails and makeup, all for \$25.

Organizers stressed that the planning of this huge school event is designed to promote school spirit and involve the entire community.

Senior cabinet secretary Danya Snowsky said that school spirit will "build up from here. The athletic staff is working on getting [athletes] better, and once we all are better, people will have more school spirit," she added.

For Snowsky, this is just the first step in developing genuine school spirit for years to come.

Junior Ramsan Younatham expressed excitement about Homecoming this year and is planning to attend Saturday's events.

"I know many people don't like the fact that the game is on Saturday, but it is still the Homecoming game, and I am still going," he said. "I am ready to see what else they have planned that week."

Student cabinets, student government and the Homecoming committee are trying to promote the events and unite each class to celebrate Homecoming.

"[Homecoming] is fun, and it should be. It should be a big deal," Fliman said. "Niles West is such a great place with tons of resources. We have been working on improving our school spirit, and it is definitely getting there—we just need that final push."



Members of Hellenic Club participate in the 2008 Homecoming parade. This year's parade will take place on Oct. 17. West Word file photo

p.m. on a Friday," Fliman said. By making the parade on Saturday morning, the parade "can become a community event as opposed to just a West thing," she said.

As evidenced by the mascot change and the shift from mods to periods, traditions die hard at West, and some students are less than thrilled with the Homecoming changes.

Seniors Katie Keith and Flo Lee both believe more students would attend a Friday night football game rather than a Saturday game, because the game won't be the same if it is not "under the lights," Lee said.

Fliman understands that it is "less cool to play without the

## ELL Parent Center benefits immigrant families

**w** Morgan Quilici  
Copy Editor

As one of the most diverse townships in the state, Niles Township is home to significant numbers of adults and children who do not speak English as a first language.

With this in mind, the Niles Township Superintendents' Association and local school boards established the English Language Learners (ELL) Parent Center in July 2008.

According to the center's informational brochure, the ELL Parent Center (EPC) was assigned as a resource for parents from other countries to learn about the school system, to support one another and to promote healthy learning for their children.

Located at 9440 N. Kenton Ave. Skokie, the EPC has helped 275 parents representing 36 different countries and speaking 40 different languages since its inception.

The brochure outlines the center's goals, including: "to provide immigrant parents with skills and information needed to help them be involved advocates in all aspects of their children's education; to provide a cultural and linguistic cushion as immigrant students

and families adapt not only to the United States educational system but also to the social environment of the community; to help immigrant parents access community resources in the areas of citizenship, health, human services and English language acquisition; and to establish a communication network among immigrant parents to promote their positive involvement and leadership within our schools and community."

The center, run by director Corrie Wallace, offers a variety of programs for parents, all of which are free to the parents of children in the Niles Township school districts. Students can join their parents and do homework or use the resources while the classes are in session. Babysitting is also available for parents with young children.

Some of the classes include English classes, English conversation classes, citizenship classes, parenting classes and computer classes. The center also offers a myriad of special events, such as ELL Family Story time, Dine & Dialogue, mother-daughter exchange groups and family field trips.

In August, the center held a Back to School Health Fair, at which parents and children from the center could come for physicals, dental appointments and information about health. The center's brochure states that it would like to continue programs related to health by

holding monthly health lectures about various topics and to also educate parents on America's medical system.

The ELL Parent Center has also been involved specifically with Niles West. They have had information stations at many of West's events, held college nights for parents of first generation college students and have been part of the Cultural Round Table sessions.

The Literacy Center has also been involved with the ELL Parent Center as well. Last year, the Literacy Center held a Parent Night at the EPC to give parents tips on ways to help their

children through high school with study and organization skills and another at Niles West to give the parents of District 219 ELL students an opportunity to see the school and the Literacy Center.

Literacy Center coordinator Andrew Jeter said that he hopes to coordinate another event with the ELL Parent Center again this year.

Those interested in more information about the ELL Parent Center and/or those who seek volunteer opportunities can call the EPC at (847) 568-7617 or visit the center's website at www.ellparentcenter.org.

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Coming soon to [www2.niles-hs.k12.il.us/westword](http://www2.niles-hs.k12.il.us/westword): video game review: *Need for Speed: Shift*

# WESTWIRE



## Extracurricular participation lags

**w Uzma Ahmad**  
News/Wire Editor

Although West's students regularly uphold a unifying degree of school spirit, it seems that involvement in extra and co-curricular activities at our school has not reached its full potential. From athletics to clubs to enrollment in the newspaper production class, our numbers just do not match those of neighboring schools.

As *West Word* is closest to my heart, I will use the newspaper as an illustration. The number of students enrolled in newspaper production for this school year is 13, or less than one-half of 1 percent of student enrollment. Of those, the number of underclassmen is exactly one. In other words, out of the approximately 2000 current freshmen, sophomores and juniors, there is only one individual who is willing to partake in the production of the school newspaper.

While that might be great for sophomore staff writer Mary Basic, ostensibly next year's editor in chief by default, it is a sad indictment of the school.

## When students are unwilling to get involved in school publications, they directly hinder any progress in this very important facet of the school

When students are unwilling to get involved in school publications, they directly hinder any progress in this very important facet of the school. Next year, if the newspaper production class is eliminated because of low numbers, West will lose an integral part of the school, a vital source of information about the day-to-day life of the institution. If that happens, the decline of *West Word* will forever become a stain on West's image.

However, academic-based (AKA co-curricular) classes are not the only areas in which student participation is lacking. Compared to neighboring schools such as New Trier and Glenbrook South, West continues to lag behind in the sheer number of students that are involved in after school activities. According to Student Activities Director Jessica Fliman, only

## Compared to neighboring schools such as New Trier and Glenbrook South, West continues to lag behind in the sheer number of students that are involved in after school activities

40 percent of the student body participates in school activities. These low numbers depict the inactivity of students who attend a school that has an infinite amount of opportunities to offer.

Getting involved around school will surely prove to be beneficial for our students. According to Fliman, students participating in activities tend to have higher grades and better permanent records. Not to mention, college admission boards are very keen towards students who are committed to co-curricular activities.

Fliman also believes that students who are involved with extracurricular activities are in a "better position to understand our world's problems and grow as human beings."

It is up to each and every student here at West to take full advantage of all the opportunities our school has to offer. Increased student involvement helps promote a healthier atmosphere, and allows our school to expand in all areas of both academics and extracurricular activities.

## A Day in the Life...

### Fliman reinvents role of student activities director

**w Hira Malik**  
Around Town Editor

Some things just make sense. After coordinating the enormously successful Dance Marathon the past few years, new student activities director (SAD) Jessica Fliman emerged as the natural choice to replace outgoing SAD Peter Geddeis, who left this summer to take the same position at Lyons Township High School.

Many students are familiar with Fliman, a former science teacher at West. Along with teaching and sponsoring Dance Marathon, Fliman serves as student government sponsor.

Fliman received her baccalaureate degree from Bradley University. For her first two years of college, Fliman studied to become a virologist with a biology major. Between the summer of her sophomore and junior year, Fliman found that teaching was her passion and decided to pursue education as second major.

Fliman found a job at West directly out of college.

"I started teaching at [age] 22," she said. "I was teaching 18 year-olds chemistry, so there was a four-year age difference. It was like a senior teaching freshman."

While teaching, she received her master's degree in education from Xavier University and her Type 75 administrative certificate from Concordia University, the latter a preferred prerequisite for the SAD position.

In her new role, Fliman now oversees all the clubs and advises activities sponsors. *West Word* followed the school's new SAD on a typically busy day.

Fliman arrives promptly to school at 7:15 a.m., and begins her day by turning on all the lights in the student commons and her office. She then checks her email and voicemails and makes an effort to respond to each message.

After all the morning messages have been processed, Fliman is able to sit down and enjoy a bowl of oatmeal for breakfast.

On the day of the *West Word's* visit, Fliman her one day a month executive coordinating council (ECC) meeting during fourth period in the Principal's conference room. Here, the student government executives and the class cabinet presidents discuss their plans for the year, including organizing homecoming, movie night, assemblies, etc. ECC members also debate policy changes.

**w Kathryn Booker**  
Staff Writer

Chemistry enthusiasts already have begun preparations for the annual Mole Day celebration that will take place at West on Oct. 23, 6:02 a.m.-6:02 p.m.

"I think Mole Day is a good way to get students more excited about chemistry and [is] a crazy tradition that brings some fun and sugar to the science department," senior Ilya Raskin said.

The time and date of this unofficial holiday are derived from Avogadro's number,  $6.02 \times 10^{23}$ , which describes the number of particles in a mole, a measuring unit in chemistry.

Chemistry teacher Michael Heinz said he hopes to take Mole Day to a new level this year.

According to Heinz, activities include a Mole Day run in which students jog .602 of a mile.

Heinz has been involved in Mole Day for the duration of his tenure at West, and he feels that Mole Day is "just a way to get kids fired up about chemistry."

Two years ago, an AP chemistry class made pancakes at 6:02 in the morning on Mole Day, and last year, those students returned to make pancakes for current chemistry students.

During these meetings, Fliman serves a dual role, as SAD and one of the sponsors for student government.

In addition to student government, Fliman has retained sponsorship of Dance Marathon, extra components that she feels are vital.

"I think it is really important so stay in touch with students. It is really easy in my job to be stuck in your office all day, just answering phone calls and emailing. That is not what I want to do," Fliman said. "If you really want to do student activities and know what kids are thinking, then you need to keep in touch [with students]. This my way of keeping in touch."

Although Fliman's schedule is not as regimented as those of classroom teachers, meetings occur on a regular rotation. Student Government, ECC, Dance Marathon and core (with school administration) meetings occur on Fridays and Mondays, and building and grounds meetings are held on Mondays.

On the day of *West Word's* visit, Fliman attended ECC and Dance Marathon meeting's during the school day, followed by a computer training class after school at 3:30 p.m. and a Dance Marathon executive meeting at 5:30 p.m. in the Literacy Center.

The computer training class was for all the directors and deans in the district. This class is meant to teach them about the Dell net books that will be given to all freshmen next year.

Fliman ended her busy day by convening with co-sponsor Dena Lichterman and Dance Marathon executives about different ways to fundraise and promote this year's target charity, Expanding Lives.

When Fliman isn't coordinating the vast variety of student activities, over 80 total, she likes to spend her time with her husband, Gene.

"My husband and I like to travel a lot. We love to ski, watch movies and dance; my husband likes to salsa,"

Fliman

Fliman said. "I also love to cook, and we have big family dinners. A lot of people make fun of me because I make Excel™ spreadsheets for my [grocery] shopping lists."

Fliman's decision to leave the classroom for the SAD position provides her the opportunity to touch more young lives.

"I like kids, and I like hanging out with and learning from the [students at West]," she said. "I learn from [students] just as much as they learn from me."

## Mole Day excites chemistry teachers and students

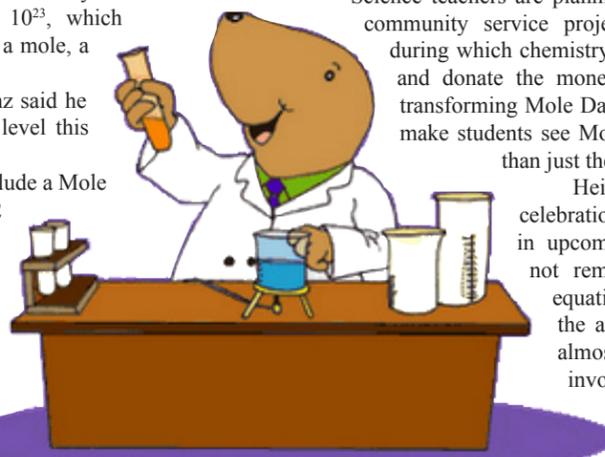
Mole Day seems to inspire commitment, Heinz notes. At Glenbard South, Heinz's previous post, a student transposed the Mole Day Song to play on a trumpet in the early hours of the morning until neighbors called to complain. Heinz says it is fun "when parents who are dropping off their children at school ask what is going on" and when "people from all over come to celebrate this geeky thing that we call Mole Day."

Senior Urveel Shah believes that Mole Day "gives students a break from the seriousness of chemistry and allows them to just have fun with an important concept that they learn. It also lets you eat lots of cake and goodies," Shah said.

Science teachers are planning to turn Mole Day into a community service project in future years, a day during which chemistry club students will fundraise and donate the money to a charity. Heinz feels transforming Mole Day into a charitable event will make students see Mole Day as being about more than just themselves.

Heinz promises that Mole Day celebrations will get bigger and better in upcoming years. "[Students] may not remember how to balance an equation, they may not remember the atom molecule, but they will almost always remember being involved in Mole Day," he said.

Heinz and his fellow science teachers strive to introduce new students to Mole Day. "You don't have to be in a science class [to celebrate Mole Day]" Heinz adds. "Come on out and join us. Anyone is welcome."



# WestWord

## Names Assembly teaches students respect

**w** Hira Malik  
Around Town Editor

The fourth annual Names Assembly will take place on Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 30- Oct. 1.

The program is designed to help the freshman class learn to respect their peers' differences and adapt to such a diverse school, according to Principal Kaine Osburn, who notes that the reason that the assembly is geared towards freshmen so that they can start thinking about respecting the differences of others as early as possible in their tenure at West.

Event sponsors will work with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) to put together an assembly in which freshmen and student-staff facilitators can open up with one another about anything, learn from the activities set up for small group discussions and listen to peers.

Several sophomores, juniors and seniors are paired with staff members to work with one freshman homeroom each day, organizing small group activities to help the freshmen navigate interpersonal relationships in which one can be a target, a

perpetrator, a bystander and/or a confronter.

The student and staff facilitators attended training sessions on Aug. 19 and Sept. 9 to prepare for their roles.

"The point of training is to prepare the student panelists to tell their stories without hurting anyone. It is also a good way for them to get to know one another because these teachers and students [will be] working together during the assembly," student activities director Jessica Fliman said.

According to Osburn, the Names Assembly is key for a safe environment at school.

"One of the biggest problems for teens in high school is some form of bullying and discrimination, all of which add up to an unsafe environment. The goal of the school is [to create a] safe environment because then learning is better," Osburn said.

The Names Assembly is geared towards helping freshmen realize that they can be hurt and can hurt others and that this behavior needs to be controlled.

"Students take back [from the assembly] a greater appreciation of how their words can have an affect on their peers," Fliman said. "Regardless of who you are, you always have feelings. Those feelings can be hurt. You also have the power to hurt."

According to Assistant Principal of Operations Ryan McTague, the school's greatest strength, its diversity, can also be its biggest

challenge.

"We have to help kids realize what it means to be diverse. The assembly is one of the ways [West] promotes diversity, [but also teaches] to respect one another as individuals," McTague said.

Not only are students, but staff members as well are encouraged to learn from the assembly. According to McTague, he learned to be more conscious of certain issues because of the Names Assembly.

"After hearing the stories, I realized racism and bullying does exist. It happens in our school. I can never let myself believe that we are solving these issues," McTague said.

Osburn said that he, too, learns something from each Names Assembly.

"[The Names Assembly] has made me more considerate [in regards too] how I speak to students," Osburn said. "Hearing other people's stories has made me realize that I probably have been a perpetrator in the past."

The one rule that assembly stresses is confidentiality. All the freshmen and student and staff facilitators are prohibited from repeating any of the anecdotes outside the context of the assembly.

"Some of the stories that get shared are very, very personal," Fliman said.

## Annual orchestra concert to feature array of music

**w** Sofiya Pershteyn  
Staff Writer

Niles West's annual fall orchestra concert will take place Thursday, Oct. 15, at 7:30 p.m. in the Robert L. Johnson Auditorium.

"We have a history and tradition of wonderful orchestra program here and the kids perform very, very well," orchestra director Steve Katz said.

The symphonic orchestra will perform "Sinfonie in C," by Felix Mendelssohn, "Overture Poet and Peasant," by Fr. V. Suppe and "Firebird Suite," by Igor Stravinsky.

The concert orchestra will perform parts of "Symphony #4," by William Boyce, a traditional Scottish piece called "Dunfrie's Place" and "Fanfare Allegro," by Jean-Joseph Mouret.

The philharmonic orchestra will perform "Somewhere," from the musical West Side Story, by Leonard Bernstein, "Symphony No. 5 in G Major," by W.A. Mozart and "Hickory Variations" by Willian G. Harbison.

Katz spent time over the summer studying musical scores and selecting music for the orchestras to perform.

"I choose music that spans several musical time periods and genres, that will help advance the students' individual skills and

that the students and audience will enjoy," Katz said.

To prepare for the upcoming concert, the orchestra students have practiced the new music daily since the start of the school year.

"[The fall concert] is the 'opening act' for us and we have to

do well for more people to come see our performances," senior president of the orchestra board Jennifer Wong said.

Katz promises that attendees will not be disappointed.

"[The audience] should expect an evening of great music and great performances," Katz said.

## Flag football game to develop camaraderie

**w** Sofiya Pershteyn  
Staff Writer

The annual Niles West staff vs. student flag football game will take place on Wednesday Oct. 28, at 5 p.m. on Basrak Field.

"One of the goals of this event is to help develop a stronger relationship between staff members and students," originator of the staff vs. student game, science teacher Anthony Serafini said.

Students who are interested in playing in this year's game can sign up in the student activities center. The cost to play is \$10 per person. The cost of the team tee-shirt is included. Students who do not wish to play can also watch for \$2. All money raised will be donated to Dance Marathon.

"We are all hopeful that more students will attend and support their fellow classmates or favorite teachers," Serafini said.

Student activities director Jessica Fliman agrees with Serafini,

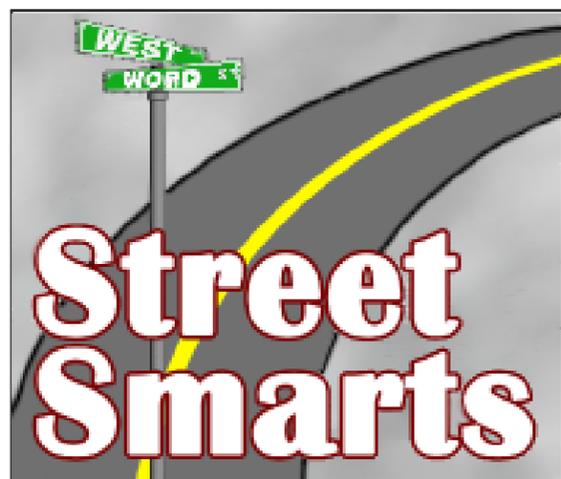
calling the game an opportunity for staff and students to interact outside of the everyday classroom environment.

"[My expectation] is for kids to be able to see their teachers in a new light as opposed to just in the classroom," Fliman said. "[Students] see that teachers are people too."

The staff team will defend its undefeated streak.

"Maybe this is the year that students strike back and beat them," said Fliman, who encouraged students to "remember all the homework and tests and projects they assigned as a [motive for] revenge."

Staff members who have participated in the game in past include: Serafini, science teachers Chris Barnett, Thomas Jodelka and Michael Heinz; math teachers Jeffrey Tackes, Matt Fahrenbacher, George Bravos and John Metzler; Principal Kaine Osburn; dean Mark Rigby; special education assistants Larry English and Michael Leaks; foreign language teacher Steven Lander, physical welfare teacher Nicole Reynolds; social worker Stephanie Hentz; athletic trainer Fernando Perez; psychologist Henry Brown and guidance counselor Mitch Stern.



1. What were the names of Columbus' three ships?

- A. Mayflower
- B. Santa Maria
- C. Mayflower, Pinta and Santa Maria
- D. Niña, Pinta and Santa Maria
- E. Niña, Pinta and Santa Maria

2. In what month does the German Oktoberfest take place?

- A. October
- B. September
- C. October
- D. September
- E. October

3. How many months out of the year contain less than 31 days?

- A. Ten
- B. Five
- C. Four
- D. Five
- E. Five

4. How many states border the Pacific Ocean?

- A. Ten
- B. Five
- C. Six
- D. Five
- E. Four

5. What was the number one college in the United States as ranked by U.S. News and World Report?

- A. University of Illinois
- B. Princeton University
- C. Oakton Community College
- D. Harvard University
- E. Harvard University



A. Freshman - Courtney McFee



B. Sophomore - Tiffany Steffen



C. Junior - Theresa Mathew



D. Senior - George Davros



E. Faculty - Troy Bennet

# WESTWIRE

## Short Circuit

### Choir to entertain audience

**w Kathryn Booker**  
Staff Writer

The various choir ensembles will perform their annual fall concert on Thursday, Oct. 8, at 7:30 p.m. in the Robert L. Johnson Auditorium.

The masters singers, the chamber choir, the men's choir and the women's choir will perform free of charge.

Selections include "Hallelujah," by Ludwig von Beethoven, "Lay A Garland," by Roger Emerson, "The Shoop Shoop Song," by Betty Everett, "Crossing the Bar," by Gwyneth Walker, "Barbara Ann," by Fred Fassett and "When I Close My Eyes" and "Oye," by Jim Papoulis.

"We just have a lot of really exciting things planned," Branahl said.

Senior choir member Fiona Stephens expressed hope for a good turnout.

"Having students come to the concert is kind of the equivalent of having supporters at a football game; it is a good way for people to support their friends and also experience some beautiful music that they might not experience otherwise," she said.

In addition to the fall choir concert, Branahl will hold auditions for the Niles West men's a cappella group Echo Effect on Tuesday, Sept. 29 and the women's a capella group High Fidelity on Thursday, Oct. 1.

"All are welcome to audition," Branahl said. "We would like to see a lot of people come out. The more the merrier."

## Project Lead the Way classes begin

**w Daniel Friedman**  
Staff Writer

Beginning this year, the applied science and technology (AS&T) department is offering three Project Lead the Way (PLTW) classes: introduction to engineering design (IED), digital electronics (DE) and computer integrated manufacturing (CIM).

According to AS&T director Chris Powell, PLTW courses allow students interested in engineering, technology and science to use their skills in a real world setting. The curriculum allows these students to test out advanced machinery and software in a constructive work environment.

According to introduction to IED teacher Ben Brzezinski, most of the equipment the school has now isn't even present in the field.

"Our software is years ahead of industry right now," he added.

The program is organized in conjunction with the highly-ranked engineering department at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, providing students not only the use top-of-the-line technology, but also the opportunity to receive college credit for using it. Powell stressed that PLTW not only prepares students better for engineering courses in colleges, but also may qualify them for scholarships

specifically reserved for PLTW students.

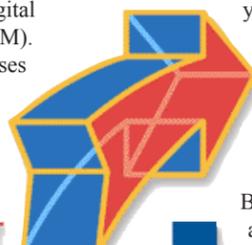
Although PLTW has been in the works at Niles West for about five years, it wasn't until last year that the first class (IED) was offered. The newer classes, DE and CIM, will offer students the opportunity to use some of the latest technology in those rapidly changing fields. The AS&T department plans to expand the program even further for the 2010-11 school year. Powell anticipates two more classes, Civil and Architectural Engineering and Engineering Design and Development, to be added by next year.

Both Brzezinski and Powell expressed excitement regarding the PLTW curricula.

"At first I was kind of skeptical," Brzezinski said, "but I see the benefit in it, and I am really excited about it because I come from a family of engineers. The fact of the matter is that we need more engineers here and this program comes around and says, 'Hey, This is something that is going to get the U.S. back in the groove of things, back on top of the engineering world. I think it's a fantastic idea,'" he added.

For Powell, the "greatest confirmation" that the program is working well is the testimonials of alumni who go on to pursue engineering in college.

"It becomes very easy for them their first year," Powell said. "Our students feel really comfortable coming from a program like this. They walk in and feel confident rather than they walk in and they feel so overwhelmed. It really allows them to walk in and succeed."



## Thespians hope satirical *Urinetown* makes big splash

**w Zoe Ljubic**  
Editor in Chief

The Niles West theatre department continues performances of the musical *Urinetown* this weekend in the Black Box Theater.

On the heels of the production's Thursday premiere, the cast will present four more shows, this evening at 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. and tomorrow, Sept. 26, at 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

*Urinetown* is a political satire that takes place in a fictional town about 50 years in the future. The humorous plot is set in a town in which experiences a water shortage. Due to the catastrophe, the citizens are required to pay to use the bathroom. Many of the citizens are poor and cannot afford to use the bathroom. This causes a division of classes between the rich and poor.

Eventually, this struggle causes Bobby Strong (junior Aleks Krapivkin) to start a revolution in which the poor decide to stop paying to use the bathroom and begin going to the bathroom wherever they please. Along with the political and social struggle, the play does include romance between Bobby and Hope Cladwell (senior Alyssa Jutovsky).

Jutovsky said that the plot of *Urinetown* can "seem really simple from the outside, but has a lot of deeper meaning in the text."

"It is up to the audience to find out what the deeper meaning really is," she said.

On behalf of director Andy Sinclair, Jutovsky explained that Sinclair chose this production to display the "current news in politics." She also said that it could be related to the "health care crisis."

Sophomore Julia Zasso (Little Sally) agrees and is "eager to see how the audience reacts to the humor...and political undertones that are very relevant to today's world and the environment we live in."

Senior Alicia Peake (Penelope Pennywise) explained that "the play is about how stupid and idiotic everyone now is acting in this economy. It is taking something little and silly as joking about [using the bathroom] and turning it into like 'Wow, that relates to society.'"

Other featured actors include seniors Fiona Stephens (Officer Lockstock), Jeremy Berman (Officer Barrel and Old Man Strong), David Fisch (Caldwell B. Cladwell), Tracy Aneziris (Cop/Executive), Dominique Forte (Mrs. Millennium), Aly Grabowski (Billy Boy Bill), Camille Certeca (Josephine Strong), Ashley Alexander (Tiny Tom), Charlee Cotton (Hot Blades Harry), Ani Poladian (Soupy Sue) and Sean Buckley (Mr. McQueen); junior Becca Levy (Bobby the Stockfish); sophomores Lauren Langer (Little Becky Two Shoes) and Nick Behm (Dr. Billeaux); and freshman Danny Morrison (Senator Fipp).

According to Peake, the theatre department is excited to perform the same play that will be performed at the 2010 Illinois High School Theatre Fest January 7-9 at Illinois State University in Normal.

"Our school is really excited to do our version of [*Urinetown*]

and compare it to their version," she said.

Cast members expressed eagerness to perform the play for students and faculty.

"This is a really good way to start off the season," Jutovsky said.

"It is not a feel good musical, but it will get people talking."

Fisch agreed and said that *Urinetown* "has the right mix of action, comedy, romance and adventure. It is suitable for all audiences."

## Dance Marathon 2010 preparations underway

**w Kathryn Booker**  
Staff Writer

Organizers of Dance Marathon (DM) 2010 began preparations this past summer for next spring's annual event to benefit Expanding Lives, according to co-sponsors Jessica Fliman and Dena Lichterman.

Expanding Lives is a West-based, non-profit organization that was started by English language learners' teacher Leslie Natzke, one that brings women from the African nation Niger to the United States. Nigerian participants from the new DM charity, lived this summer with hosts in the Chicago area, some of whom are Niles West teachers.

The four girls (Rahilatu, Romanatu, Rakia and Rahila) spent the summer building communication and vocational skills, as well as learning about health, leadership and culture.

DM participants—including West and North teachers and students, host families, DM executives, the French honor society and alumni who had worked with Expanding Lives in the past—filled the girls' summer with numerous activities. The DM team held an athletic field day at Oakton Park, in which the girls and DM members played soccer and capture the flag and which ended with a piñata party. Peer mediators from West and Niles North talked to the girls about solving conflicts and social issues.

The girls also went bowling, received Henna tattoos and mani/pedicures, created tie-dyed tee-shirts, went to a beach in Chicago, performed yoga and watched all of the Harry Potter movies.

"I never [realized] the troubles in Niger and how DM could make a huge difference by just selling candy," senior DM executive Nicole Sarangay said. "It was an eye-opener to a different culture; I like how this charity focuses on how we can help [Nigerian women] with life skills but most importantly to empower themselves."

Throughout their three-month stay, the girls also created PowerPoint™ presentations about the cycle of poverty and its impact on Niger, the poorest country in the world. Although three out of the four girls had never touched a computer before, they created their presentations in English and showed them to DM participants in the Literacy Center at the closing ceremony. They performed a Nigerian dance with math teacher Amy Kaye and cooked Nigerian food for everyone.

"You really saw how much the girls have grown in the short time that they had been here," DM sponsor Jessica Fliman said. She said that the closing ceremony was the most memorable part of the summer.

"They felt happy to be empowered," Fliman added. "Most of the students here [who] worked with the women really got a sense of how similar they were to them...but at the same time they have an appreciation of what they have and how lucky they are to be growing up in this country."

After all the activities during the summer, the four girls left the country with new-found knowledge, as well as a whole group of DM friends.

"It was truly a blessing, an unforgettable experience," senior DM executive Noor Hasan said. "So many of us have worked with the girls and have seen how quickly they have picked up on communication skills and leadership traits."

Although the amount of money that Dance Marathon will raise this year is significant, Fliman said that the charity is much more important than a dollar amount.

"Every year we get a new charity and a glimpse into a whole different issue," she said. "Expanding Lives brings social awareness to the school, which is amazing."

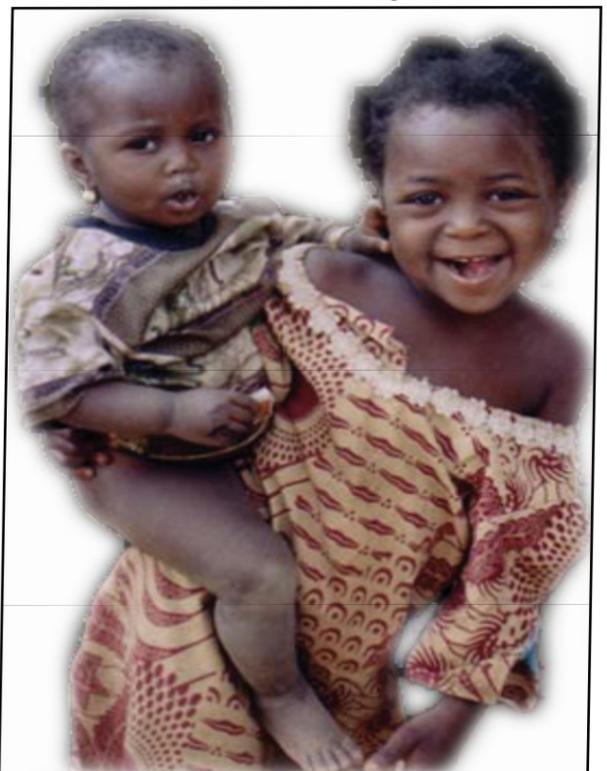


Photo courtesy Expanding Lives

# WestWord

## LoBue retires after 34 years of dedicated service

**W** Rexly Penaflorida II  
Editor in Chief

Custodian Frank LoBue is one of the backbones of the school. He is usually seen out in the hallways sweeping the floors or picking up the garbage. But after 34 years of service to Niles West, LoBue will retire at the end of September.

LoBue was born in Italy and moved to the United States in 1972. When he arrived, his father was already working at West.

"Before this job I worked at landscaping," he said. "My father then told me to ask around and see if I could get a job [at the district]. I got the job in 1975."

LoBue initially worked at Niles North for 28 years and in 2003, he started to work at West.

Of all the work that he has done, LoBue said that what he liked most about his job was setting up for sporting events.

"I used to set up the gymnastics and wrestling mats before the competition started," LoBue said.

Assistant Principal for Operations Ryan McTague talked about the impact of LoBue's work.

"In this day and age you don't find too many people staying in the same position for as long as he did and it is a testament to his dedication to the students and parents of District 219."

Maintenance mechanic Bob Moir added to McTague's comments.

"He was a great guy and was willing to do anything to make the school better," he said.

Executive secretary Judy Wheatman remembers LoBue as an exceptional cook.

"He once brought in home made tiramisu and I absolutely loved it," she said.

Others knew LoBue not for his custodial work or cooking but rather his personality.

"He was always very polite and I always saw him in a

good mood," audio and visual technician Lance Soltys said.

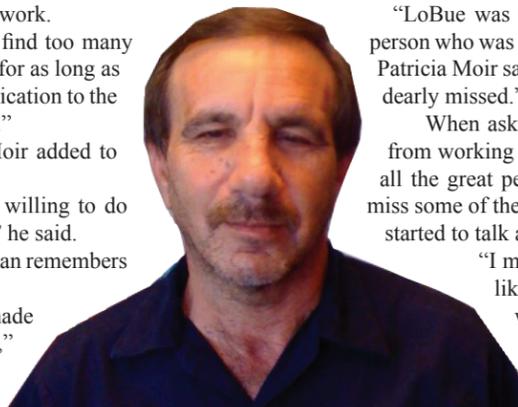
"LoBue was someone that my mother would call a person who was very down to earth," executive secretary Patricia Moir said. "He was very humble and he will be dearly missed."

When asked about what he would miss the most from working at West, LoBue said that he would miss all the great people. While LoBue already started to miss some of the aspects of working at West, he has also started to talk about his future plans.

"I might go to Arizona and see how it looks like over there," he said. "I might also want to visit Italy again."

Whatever the case may be, District 219 will be losing one of its most valued employees.

"He made a profound difference every day and he is a great asset that we are losing," McTague said.



LoBue

## Reading hour expands students' literary horizons

**W** Kathryn Booker  
Staff Writer

A bimonthly tradition, Reading Hour kicked off its fourth year on Sept. 10 with sponsor and English teacher Rachel Gross' reading of selections from the works of Rudyard Kipling.

"Reading Hour allows us to enjoy literature," Gross said. "It has become part of Niles West's culture."

From its modest origins in November 2006, when dean Mark Rigby read excerpts from the novel "A Separate Piece," by John Knowles, Reading Hour (which, actually, lasts closer to 45 minutes), has indeed become a staple at West, with up to 90 students and staff crowding into Room 2140 at 7:15 a.m. every other Thursday.

This year, readers will include English teacher Ellen Foley,

director of student activities Jessica Fliman, Principal Kaine Osburn, English teacher Kristen Jackson, director of English Sanlida Cheng, West's poetry slam team, A Tribe Called West and students from the French National Honor Society.

Volunteers are allowed to read almost anything they have in mind; Reading Hour selections can range from short stories to children's books to nonfiction essays to stories in different languages.

"When a reader asks me what I think he should read, I tell him that it should be something he enjoys that he thinks kids would enjoy," Gross said.

According to Gross, the purpose of Reading Hour is to get students to read on their own, and senior Emily Springer feels this goal has been achieved.

"Reading Hour is a good way [to] learn about different types of books you might be interested in, because you might have never

heard of a book until Reading Hour, and if you like it, you can continue reading it yourself," Springer said.

Often, teachers offer students extra credit to attend Reading Hour, so students can raise their grades just by enjoying breakfast and a relaxing story. Many students attend Reading Hour because their favorite teacher is reading.

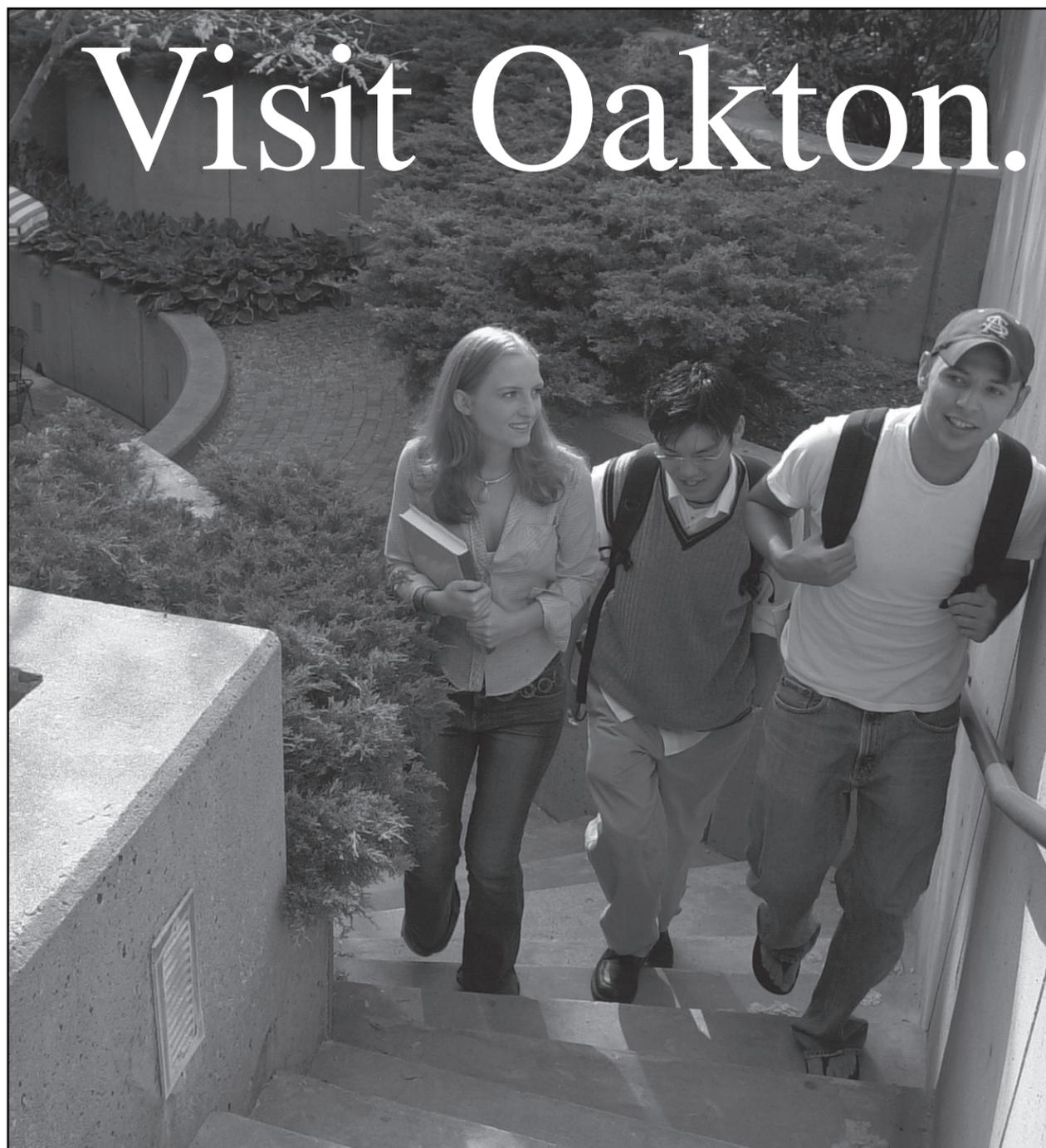
Gross invites both new and familiar faces to attend Reading Hour.

"There is something so refreshing, and even relaxing, about being read to, and students appreciate that," she said.

Gross is not a literature snob when it comes to her audience.

"Students should come if they are hungry for breakfast—we have bagels and juice—or if they enjoy reading or being read to, if they need some relaxing time during a busy week or if they just want to hear a great story!"

The next Reading Hour will be Thursday, Oct. 8.



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