



WestWord

niles west high school | october 30, 2009 | www.thewestword.net | volume forty-nine | issue two | 5701 oakton street | skokie, il 60077 | 847.626.2618

Appellate court rules against Genis, NTFT

Zoe Ljubic
Editor in Chief

Rexly Penafiora II
Editor in Chief

After over three years of legal wrangling, the District 219 school board scored a major victory on Sept. 30, when an appellate court overturned the state labor board's ruling in the wrongful termination suit brought by the Niles Township Federation of Teachers (NTFT) on behalf of former West head boys basketball coach David Genis.

The Appellate Court of Illinois First Judicial District (ACIFJD) reversed the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board (IELRB) decision from June 30, 2006, and dismissed the suit of the NTFT in its entirety. The IELRB originally had ruled that the district demonstrated "union animus" [anti-union sentiment] in Genis' firing. The IELRB ordered the district to rehire Genis as coach and to award back pay, plus seven percent interest, for the duration of time that he had been denied coaching privileges.

That decision was overturned by the ACIFJD ruling. However, according to NTFT president Steve Grossman, the NTFT will continue to advocate for Genis.

As previously reported in an article written by former editor in chief Seth Motel in issue one of *West Word* in September 2006, the incident that sparked the legal action occurred as follows: on Feb. 10, 2005, during Student Activities Night, Genis met with then-athletic director Steve Heuerman about a scheduling conflict regarding summer camps. Testimony showed that their conversation escalated to a heated debate and that Heuerman warned Genis that he was "bordering on unprofessionalism." Heuerman subsequently reported the altercation to then-Principal Dale Vogler.

West Word reported that after meeting with Heuerman, Vogler called a supervisory conference with Heuerman and Genis to discuss the incident. The conference occurred on Feb. 16, but prior to the meeting, Grossman, who was West's union vice-president at the time, asked to meet with Vogler to discuss the fact that the meeting was considered a supervisory conference. According to court records, "the union consistently took the position that a supervisory conference was inappropriate in the decision, because it involved Genis' extracurricular activity [sponsorship], not his teaching duties."

According to the court records, Heuerman said that his intent during the supervisory meeting with Vogler and Genis was "to send a strong signal to Genis that his behavior on Feb. 10, was inappropriate." There was no mention at the time of the possibility that Genis might be removed as basketball coach, and the issue was not brought up at the conference.

The following week, the union and the administration held their regularly scheduled meeting. Then-NTFT and current North Suburban Teachers Union (the union "local" of which the NTFT is an affiliate) president Dan Montgomery and Grossman again protested that calling the meeting a supervisory conference was inappropriate. They argued that such a meeting should only be held regarding one's teaching career, asserting that Genis' position as the head coach should not have an impact on his role as a tenured teacher.

Another meeting was held on March 3 between the same parties, plus Vogler and Heuerman, both of whom reassured the union that they did not intend to remove Genis as head coach. Motel wrote that the union asked that the "supervisory" tag be removed from the earlier meeting *ex post facto*. The administration agreed to the union's request with the stipulation that Genis write a letter of apology to Heuerman, at which time, the entire incident would be reported only in the extracurricular evaluation. The union agreed to the terms, but threatened to file a grievance should Genis' argument with Heuerman be documented on Genis' teaching evaluation.

At the end of the meeting, then-district Superintendent Neil Codell—who, according to the court records, "had been relatively quiet during the meeting"—said that he would consider the possible of removing Genis as head coach. The court documents stated that Codell felt "concerned that people would need to see some discipline of Genis" and that the removal of "supervisory"

title from the previous meeting would mean that there were no consequences for Genis' behavior.

Montgomery and Grossman reportedly became concerned as this was the first time that a district administrator mentioned the possibility of Genis' losing his coaching job. Motel reported that on the Monday after the meeting, Genis called Codell, who reassured Genis that situation would be resolved if Genis reconciled with Heuerman. The article quoted Genis as saying that Codell had insinuated that union representatives suggested firing Genis as coach in exchange for the removal of the "supervisory" title, a charge Montgomery denied. On that same day, Heuerman met with Genis and expressed his disappointment about his team's loss in the regional championship. He told Genis that he would need two weeks to evaluate his tenure by interviewing both players and other coaches. On March 23, Heuerman told Genis that he would not be reappointed as head coach.



Genis

West Word file photo

Both Genis and Heuerman declined *West Word's* request to comment on the case and the ACIFJD's ruling.

Motel reported that six months after Genis' dismissal, the NTFT filed an unfair labor practice charge with the IELRB. In its ensuing decision, IELRB administrative law judge Katherine Levin ruled that the district had violated section 14 (a)(1) of the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act, which prohibits educational employers from

"interfering, restraining of coercing employees in the exercise of the rights guaranteed under the Act." She concluded that the district broke the law when it released Genis as coach. In addition, Levin noted an ongoing case in which the district had refused arbitration in the firing of three non-tenured teachers in 2004 as another example of existing "union animus." She also wrote in the decision that there was "hostility" in Codell's statement that the union had suggested dismissing Genis as coach that only when the union intervened was Genis' coaching position was at risk.



Vogler

West Word file photo

In response, District 219 exercised its right to appeal to the entire IELRB, who, according to Montgomery, "voted unanimously" to uphold Levin's ruling. The district then filed an appeal with the ACIFJD.

According to Montgomery, the "appeals process can take years," explaining the duration between the IELRB ruling in 2006 and the recent decision. The ACIFJD overturned each decision Levin ruled at the IELRB level. According to court documents, the ACIFJD ruled that the IELRB ruling was "clearly erroneous" on all terms and that the IELRB's finding that the district committed "unfair labor practices in violation of section 14 (a)(1) of the Act when it declined to reappoint Genis as head coach of the boys basketball team, [also] was clearly erroneous."

The union responded with dismay. "We believe that the [ACIFJD] cherry-picked the facts of the case to fit them in a way that they were predisposed to ruling," Grossman said. Montgomery added that the appellate court chose not to hear the union's arguments.

Soon after the ruling was handed down, the NTFT, along with the IELRB, submitted a petition to the ACIFJD to reconsider its ruling. According to Montgomery, the union has the right to ask for this review, based on the union's position that the court misapplied the law. However, the ACIFJD denied the union's request in their Oct. 19 ruling. As a result, Grossman said that the union currently is in the process of working on an appeal to the Illinois Supreme Court.

"[The NTFT is] a democratic body and there has to be a vote to push this forward, but I can say pretty confidently that we will be appealing."

Assistant Superintendent and Chief Legal Officer John Heintz countered that he believes that "this case is not a big enough political deal for the Illinois Supreme Court to care about," but acknowledged that he "may be wrong."

The ACIFJD's decision on the case, which has spanned the tenure of two West Principals and two Superintendents, drew swift reaction from the District 219 community.

Please see **Genis**, page 4

District 219 opposes Yellow Line extension

Suhail Ansari
Editorials Editor

A plan to revamp the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) Yellow Line (AKA the Skokie Swift) would be a mixed blessing for District 219 staff and students.

District 219 Community Relations Director Jim Szczepaniak said that the expansion project would result in the construction of a new CTA station at Oakton St. and Skokie Blvd., a move that would benefit West students and faculty. However the CTA's plan to extend the Yellow Line to Westfield Old Orchard shopping center has area residents and district administrators up in arms.

According to www.chicagotransit.com, the CTA plans to expand the Yellow Line train with a new terminus near the Niles North parking lot to accommodate shoppers at Westfield Old Orchard Shopping Mall. In addition, a parking garage will be built to house cars of those commuting to and from Chicago. The 1.6 mile elevated train extension will move through five different neighborhoods, from Dempster Street to Old Orchard Road and will cost \$340 million, according to the website of a grassroots organization against the proposal, www.skokiereasonabletransit.org. The plan in its current form would be funded through local and federal tax dollars and will be completed in 2016, according to www.transitchicago.com.

In an article in the *NTFT News*, Niles Township Federation of Teachers newsletter editor and West English teacher Dana DesJardins advocated against the current plan. The union, which also represents the views of the Niles Township Support Staff, has several reservations about the plan, according to DesJardins' article.

First, there is a safety issue present as strangers will now be walking onto the North campus and will be using the same

parking lot and future parking garage structure as students and teachers.

District 219 Executive Director of Security Jim DiJohn expressed concerns about the possible security implications of the construction. "We are one of the stake holders of the community directly involved with [the Yellow Line Extension]. With increased public traffic and parents dropping off students, it is a security concern where the public is now coming on to the property. Will they come into the building thinking it is the courthouse or want to use the restroom?"

DiJohn explained the possible drawbacks of the possible future parking lot structure where students would share parking space with the public. The district would have to employ security personnel to patrol the facility and would probably need to spend money maintaining the possible electronic security in the future.

Grass roots organizer, District 219 substitute teacher, wife of District 219 School Board President Robert Silverman Lisa Silverman, part of Skokie Reasonable Transit, believes that the majority of the community is against the current plan. The Sept. 23 public meeting with the CTA produced about 325 residents and over 50 were able to speak, with only three of those speaking in favor of the expansion. The possible devaluing of property

Please see **CTA**, page 4

In this issue....

Children's Theatre.....	pg. 2
National Honors Society	pg. 3
Art Gallery	pg. 4
New Teachers	pg. 5
Fall Athletes	pg. 16

WESTWIRE



Islamophobia plagues Congress

Uzma Ahmad
News/Wire Editor

Currently, #16 on Amazon's bestseller list is a conspiratorial, right-wing manifesto titled *Muslim Mafia: Inside the Secret Underworld That's Conspiring to Islamize America*, authored by David Gaubatz. Spewing ridiculous theories fashioned by post 9-11 Islamophobia, the book promotes the idea that the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR)—the largest moderate Muslim lobby—is responsible for infiltrating young American Muslim “spies” into our political system. What is more absurd than the actual book though, is the fact that through its publishing and influence, four U.S. Congressmen—Representatives John Shadegg (R-AZ), Paul Broun (R-GA), Trent Franks (R-AZ) and Sue Myrick (R-NC)—have begun a notorious campaign to seek out these “undercover terrorists.”

These four Representatives are demanding investigations to hunt down Muslim Congressional interns, claiming that these young, ambitious and educated men and women are actually homegrown terrorists, deviously planted as part of a plot to “Islamize” America. The crusade of these Representatives is completely destroying the opportunities, careers and lives of these innocent American Muslim interns who are only yearning to represent the Muslim communities of America and building their own venerable political professions.

By discrediting the lives of young Muslim politicians, these four Congressmen are stifling any hopes of a diverse political system. If anything, our country is in a desperate need for moderate, mainstream Muslim politicians who can bridge the gaps of religion and culture to help address the issues of international Muslims extremist groups.

The accusations of a plot to take over the White House through some “grand Jihad” clearly characterize the spread of ignorant Islamophobic ideas into our federal government. Such Islamophobia leads to propaganda against Islam, and distorts the image of the moderate American Muslim. It is a huge and dangerous step backwards from political equality and justice.

We want Muslims in Iraq and Afghanistan to adopt a government system that mimics our admirable one. We want the public of Iraq and Afghanistan—as individuals and as a whole—to get involved with a democratic political system. Yet, when Muslims in America seek out to do the same thing, they are immediately shut down by a wave of false accusations. Beware of the Muslim politician, as he must be an undercover terrorist with the intent of spreading his extremist Islamic agenda to our people.

Yet, Gaubatz's theories on Islamic infiltration do not stop at targeting Muslims. According to www.politicsdaily.com, Gaubatz proclaims President Barack Obama as a Muslim and a “crackhead”. These combined shallow efforts of the author and his supportive congressmen to once again rekindle the illogical argument of Obama as a secret Muslim prove that their crusade against Muslim politicians is also an attempt to discredit the Democratic Party and the President.

The notion of equality that our country is built around includes the right of any individual to pursue a political career. Until the bias and propaganda against American Muslims hoping to enter the realm of politics ceases to exist, our nation will never reach the level of equality and justice that it espouses.

A Day in the Life...

Philip Lacey ensures stability within technology department

Hira Malik
Around Town Editor

Many changes occurred at West over the summer. The audio visual (AV) was moved to the computer lab, and the professional development center was moved to where the AV lab used to be last year. The man orchestrating those changes was the director of instructional technology Philip Lacey.

A major part of Lacey's job is to help teachers integrate technology into their lessons in the classroom. Lacey works with teachers from both North and West. *West Word* followed Lacey on a typical day for him at West.

“It is a lot of fun working at both schools. The hardest part is waking up in the morning and figuring out where I am going to go,” Lacey said.

Lacey's day begins at 7:30 a.m. After walking into his office, the first thing he does is plug in his laptop to charge. He then walks over to the other end of his office and gets coffee. After settling down on his desk, he then begins to catch up on emails that he has not read or yet responded too.

An unexpected problem arose on the day of *West Word*'s visit and it dealt with the tests taken on the computer by the special education students (special education) and the English language learners (ELL). The special education exams had been written over by the ELL tests. Lacey took care of this issue right away by calling technical support. The exams were restored.

On the day of the *West Word* visit, many teachers were walking in and out of the professional development center. From periods two-eight, many teachers came in Lacey's office. Many of them came in to ask Lacey about Moodle, a website that allows teachers to upload their work to enhance their students learning outside of the classroom as well.

“I really hope that I talk to teachers in a supportive, non-judgmental manner,” Lacey said.

He finds that sometimes his job does become difficult. “There are a lot of times where there is a whole bunch of things going on at once [in the professional development center,] and that makes it difficult to devote my attention to just one person at a time,” Lacey said.

Lacey does, however, find it a lot of fun to work with teachers.

“[It is fun] to sit down and have someone come in with an

idea in [his/her] head, and spend time working with [him/her] and watch the idea change over time,” Lacey said.

Although Lacey does not have a set schedule, he does have weekly meetings at the district office, as well as bi-weekly and monthly meetings. He works at West on Mondays and Wednesdays. Tuesdays and Thursdays are the days he works at North. Lacey says that Fridays are his “floater” days, where he will go to whichever school that needs him.

Lacey said that he finds that a benefit to his job is seeing a teacher excited about what (s)he has done.

“One of the benefits is when a teacher comes back and sits down to show you [what (s)he has created] based off a conversation with you,” Lacey said. “You do not see that often because generally people are very busy.”

Not only does Lacey work as a director, but he also works as a teacher for the teachers at both North and West. On Mondays and Wednesdays, Lacey teaches technology tools and applications for the classroom at West. 4 p.m.-7:30 p.m. He teaches the same course at North at the same time on



Philip Lacey begins a busy day of work. Photo courtesy Judy Duesenberg

Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Lacey received his baccalaureate degree at Marquette University. There, he studied secondary education, with a concentration in science. Lacey received his M.A. in instructional technology at Northern Illinois University, and both his Type 75 administrative certificate and his doctorate from National Louis University.

When Lacey is not helping teachers enhance their technological abilities, he likes to be at home with his wife, Amy and his dog, Murphy.

“Amy and I will come home on a Friday night and first take Murphy out for a walk. [For dinner] we really enjoy grilling out in the backyard, which is our preference,” Lacey said.

The last few books that Lacey read were *Slaying Dragons*, which is about mountain climbing in Europe, and *The American Lion*, which is a biography on Andrew Jackson.

While reading is interesting to Lacey, he does not watch many movies.

“I do not generally have the attention span to sit down and watch an entire movie. I cannot sit still that long,” Lacey said.

One of the holidays that Lacey enjoys most is the fourth of July, because it is warm outside and Lacey prefers the outdoors.

“Amy and I will either end up going to Amy's parents house who live out in Michigan right off the lake, or my father has a cabin up north [where] spend the fourth of July weekend.”

Lacey's love of nature extends to less placid settings. In the past, Lacey spent a week mountain climbing in the Alps.

French community dedicates week to cultural activity

Kathryn Booker
Staff Writer

Niles West French students and teachers invite all members of the school community to celebrate National French Week, Nov. 2-6.

According to French teacher Eileen Walvoord, National French

Week was created by the American Association of Teachers of French to educate students about the French culture and promote the value of taking French at school.

Walvoord believes National French Week will reduce misunderstandings and judgments about France and the French language.

“National French Week is about educating ourselves and the larger school community about the relevance and practicality of studying French,” Walvoord said.

Activities will include the annual crêpe sale outside the cafeteria, French labels around the school and a French trivia contest, in which the winning homeroom will receive a French breakfast of croissants and hot chocolate.

This year, the National French Honor Society (NFHS) will offer a fromage-eating contest, during which students can taste different types of cheese (there are 400 different kinds) and vote on the one they like best.

The NFHS will contribute to National French Week by reading and acting out a French poem during that Thursday's Reading Hour.

Senior NFHS member Tiffany Trinh will participate in the Reading Hour and other events. She believes National French Week is “a good opportunity to convince more students to take the language and have a bit of a feel of the culture.”

French students will celebrate the week during class with activities such as crêpe making and playing a French game called “pétanque boules,” a game similar to croquet (without mallets) or bocce ball.

Walvoord plans to expand National French Week activities to other students this year so they can be involved as well. “Even students who don't take French will get a chance to experience a little bit of French culture,” Walvoord said.

Theatre department to perform beloved children's story

Kathryn Booker
Staff Writer

The theatre department will perform its annual children's play, *James and the Giant Peach*, on Nov. 5-7 in the Robert L. Johnson Auditorium.

Roald Dahl's play tells the story of James Henry Trotter as he and a cast of giant magical insect friends escape James' evil aunts' house and experience the trip of a lifetime.

Senior Sean Buckley (Ladybug) believes children and adults will enjoy the play because “it's fun and light-hearted; it's just like a children's book come to life.”

Junior Becca Levy (Glowworm) agrees that the audience will enjoy the show because “it is cute and fun...It also creates a whole new world with a giant peach, talking insects, two evil aunts and great narrators to lead the way for an audience of any age.”

Other members of the ensemble include sophomores Kyle Resurreccion (James Henry Trotter) and Aaron Ruderman

(Grasshopper); juniors Aleks Krapivkin (Narrator) and Leah Hummel (Earthworm); and seniors Ashley Alexander (Aunt Sponge), Fiona Stephens (Aunt Spiker), Alyssa Jutovsky (Narrator), Charlie Cotton (Centipede), David Fisch (Spider), David Schwartz (Old Man) and Ned McElfresh (Mr. Trotter).

“The moral of the story is that everybody is unique and has different talents...and if we all work together and use those talents we can accomplish anything,” Levy said.

Buckley agrees that *James and the Giant Peach* carries a strong message for a younger audience. “[The play shows] that even the most unlikely people can turn out to be the greatest heroes,” Buckley said.

According to Buckley, the stage crew will use special effects such as magnifying shadows to enhance the actors' performances. The insects' costumes are created with unusual materials, such as hula-hoops and exercise balls, to make the play more exciting for the audience.

Tickets cost \$7 for students and \$10 for adults. Proceeds will help to finance the thespians' trip to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival next summer.

WestWord

DECA and Dance Marathon team up to expand lives

w Daniel Friedman
Staff Writer

The Harlem Wizards "Trick Hoopz" basketball team will entertain a Contest Gym audience on Thursday, Nov. 12 at 7 p.m.

The event will benefit *Expanding Lives*, a Niles West-based charity, and will be sponsored by Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) and District 219 Dance Marathon (DM).

The Wizards will compete against faculty and students from West and its five sender junior high schools (Lincoln Hall, Lincoln, Culver, Fairview and Park View).

In 2007, a similar fundraiser brought in more than \$4,000 but according to senior DECA member Michelle Poskrobko, this year organizers hope to raise \$10,000.

Along with Poskrobko, other organizers include senior DECA members Nadia Sarnecki and Zoe Ljubic, along with senior DM executives Victoria Ng, Charisse Barnachea and Sofiya Pershteyn.

The proceeds from the event will be donated to DM's yearlong mission to support *Expanding Lives*. The brainchild of West teachers Leslie Natzke and Dana DesJardins, *Expanding Lives* is an "admirable beneficiary" of DM's efforts because the "charity makes it possible for young West African women to travel to the United States and experience things that they would never have a chance to back home," Barnachea said. "We want these girls to return to their country as strong individuals who the other women can [emulate]," she added.

Event organizers hope to surpass the 2007 event in every way.

"One of the main goals of this event is to improve upon the event from two years ago," Sarnecki said, "and get out the word about the event in order to sell as many tickets as possible, so that we [can] fill up all four [levels of] the [Contest Gym]."

In addition to the games, the fundraiser will feature a concession stand and a raffle.

The Harlem Wizards, like their counterparts the Harlem Globetrotters, are a nationally renowned team, known for their fusion of sports and entertainment.

According to Barnachea, "the idea of having the Wizards

National Honor Society coronation to induct over 70 new members

w Morgan Quilici
Copy Editor

The National Honor Society (NHS) will induct 71 new students at their annual induction ceremony on Tuesday, Nov. 10, at 7 p.m. in the Robert L. Johnson Auditorium.

The NHS is an academic organization that helps the community through service projects and volunteer work.

There are five criteria that a student must satisfy in order to

again was all DECA's; Dance Marathon was only informed of a possible partnership," but DM executives realized that the combination of the "two great forces" of DECA and DM will be the key to the success of the fundraiser. The sender schools are already in the process of selecting which students and staff they want representing them against the Harlem Wizards.

Despite the team's goal of providing a thrilling show for the audience, the Wizards also come to win. In fact, by virtue of having won its past 2,800 games, the team is the owner of

H1N1 vaccinations available for students

w Sofiya Pershteyn
Staff Writer

Niles West and the Skokie Health Department will offer all interested students free H1N1 (swine) flu vaccinations on Monday, Nov. 2, during physical education classes.

According to school nurse Peggy Bassrawi, the H1N1 virus poses a bigger threat to high school students than seasonal influenza.

"While the symptoms do not seem any worse than the seasonal flu, the death rate is higher among young people," Bassrawi said. "Seasonal flu tends to affect more elderly people causing death in that age bracket, whereas swine flu tends to be [a serious threat to] school age and college age people."

Informational packets, which included consent forms, were sent home to all students earlier this month. The students were asked to turn in the consent form completed with parent signature by Monday, Oct. 26, a week before the event. However, according



A patient receives the H1N1 vaccination. Photo courtesy MCT

the longest current winning streak in professional sports. This presents a daunting challenge for the teachers and students selected to face the Wizards.

Regardless of who comes up victorious in the basketball game, Sarnecki believes that the ultimate winners will be the beneficiaries of *Expanding Lives*. According to Sarnecki, "The most important thing is that we raise as much money for *Expanding Lives* and help bring as many girls from Niger to U.S. as possible."

to Bassrawi, late forms will be accepted but are not encouraged. School administrators encourage all students to take advantage of the vaccine.

"[H1N1] is a very dangerous form of the flu [that] can spread very rapidly," Assistant Principal of Operations Ryan McTague said. "To prevent students we want to offer [the vaccine] to the [student] population."

According to Bassrawi, negative side effects of the vaccine may include soreness, low-grade fever and mild symptoms associated with a cold.

Nevertheless, Bassrawi hopes that students will take advantage of the opportunity, citing the fact that the vaccines will prevent an H1N1 flu outbreak in the school.

"I think it is something that will keep the schools open [and] keep the kids healthy," she said.

Both McTague and Bassrawi agreed that students should communicate with their families and consider consulting their personal physicians if they are not sure about getting vaccinated.

"I personally would recommend [the vaccine], but I think that the students and the parents need to consult with their own doctors," Bassrawi said.

administrators. They interview each student, debate his/her merit and make the decision on whether or not the student should be accepted into the club.

"The great thing about NHS is that the teachers respect [the students] because they have gone above and beyond in the classroom, on the athletic field and in activities," NHS sponsor Daniel Gin said. "They have done the right thing each and every day."

NHS meets Thursdays during homeroom. The group held a Blood Drive on Oct. 27 and is currently planning its annual Thanksgiving Canned Food Drive.



1. Who wrote "The Raven"?
- A. Edgar Allen Poe
 - B. I don't know
 - C. Charles Dickens
 - D. I don't know
 - E. Edgar Allen Poe

2. What does Halloween stand for?
- A. All Hallow's Eve
 - B. Scaring people
 - C. Scary time of year
 - D. All Hallow's Eve
 - E. I don't know

3. What is the most popular Halloween candy?
- A. Hershey's™
 - B. Snickers™
 - C. Snickers™
 - D. Snickers™
 - E. Smarties™

4. What is a carved pumpkin with a candle inside called?
- A. Jack-o-lantern
 - B. Jack-o-lantern
 - C. Jack-o-lantern
 - D. Jack-o-lantern
 - E. Jack-o-lantern

5. Who first broke Roger Maris' record of 61 homeruns?
- A. I don't know
 - B. Mark McGwire
 - C. Mark McGwire
 - D. Mark McGwire
 - E. Mark McGwire



A. Freshman - Jessie Simkins



B. Sophomore - Michael Wright



C. Junior - Monica Garcia



D. Senior - Patrick McVermont



E. Faculty - Fernando Perez

Answers: 1) Edgar Allen Poe 2) All Hallow's Eve 3) Snickers™ 4) Jack-o-lantern 5) Mark McGwire

WESTWIRE

Short Circuit

Art gallery to expose student talent

w Sofiya Pershteyn
Staff Writer

Digital photography will be the focus of the Niles West art department's upcoming exhibition, which opens on Tuesday, Nov. 17, beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the gallery above the Robert L. Johnson Auditorium.

"Expectations [of the students and teachers] are always to produce high quality, creative photographs or works of art that express their interests and their creative abilities," visual arts teacher John Zilewicz said.

Students in Digital Photography 1 and other digital design classes are guaranteed to have at least one piece in the show if all of their assignments are completed.

"It is our expectation to have [all students] that [have] work in [the exhibition] to show up to represent their work in the show and to bring their family or friends with [them]," Zilewicz said.

Admission is free and all staff and students are welcomed. Zilewicz urges visitors to ask the artist questions about their work.

"I would like the visitors to engage the artists as well as enjoy the opportunity to see the [creativity] taking place in our school and the talent of our students," he said.

CTA, from page one.

values, coupled with the security issues at North sparked disagreement with the proposed plan, according to Silverman.

Second, North has a campus that is landlocked, according to DiJohn. He said the current plan calls for a reduction in parking as well as the removal of a few athletic fields and a facility building.

Third, "parents also worry that the noise from [the trains] would disrupt classes, as the track would run above the athletic fields and directly past the North Black Box Theater," DesJardins wrote, noting that the proposed elevated train goes as close as 30 feet to some houses. According to Silverman, the quality of life for those people

would be drastically reduced. The Skokie Swift currently runs four to five times an hour and such loud noise near such homes would not bode well for property values, she added.

Szczepaniak insures that the district is an active participant of the discussion, is present and is involved in all public meetings, even a few in downtown Chicago at CTA headquarters. "As



Proposed Yellow Line extension would expand CTA's range beyond Dempster. Photo by Uzma Ahmad

the superintendent said at the public meeting, [the Yellow Line extension into North] is not [District 219's] locally preferred alternative."

Szczepaniak added that the district filed a formal request during the interagency scoping meeting at the CTA's Chicago office that District 219 be named a "participating agency and be able

to sit at the table and be involved in discussions where the decisions are being made."

Although the plan negatively affects the district in many ways, the development of downtown Skokie transportation seems to be a high priority for these residents. "The downtown area [of Skokie] is embarrassing. In this time of economic woe, we should [invest in it] and make it a place to be," Skokie-resident

Silverman said.

Skokie resident DiJohn also agrees. "As a resident I think that it is great if we can take advantage of what the CTA has to offer. I think [public transportation expansion] makes Skokie more attractive for businesses, as well as more user-friendly for residents."

Preparations for parent-teacher conferences well underway

w Hira Malik
Around Town Editor

Niles West will hold its annual parent-teacher conferences on Nov. 18, 4:30-8 p.m. and Nov. 24, 5-8:30 p.m.

"[A parent-teacher conference] is an initial meeting [between teachers and parents]. It serves as a gateway for other conferences and to inspire future conversations down the road," Assistant Principal of Operations Ryan McTague said.

One of the first steps in regards to parent-teacher conferences, according to McTague, is allowing the teacher to go onto his or her Pinnacle Web gradebook to select with which parents (s)he wants to meet. From there, the school will send out a letter to those parents indicating that their child's teacher wants to conference with them.

Parents also have the ability to schedule conferences online. "On Oct. 23- Nov.1, parents will be able to sign up online for parent teacher conferences using their child's Pinnacle Internet Viewer (PIV) password," McTague said.

Teacher preparation is the key to a good conference according to social studies teacher Matthew Wiemer.

"I will go through the list of parents that I have [to speak with], and print out a grade sheet. [During the conference], I give a few minutes talking about how the student is in class and then I give [the parent] a grade sheet," Wiemer said.

The system is not without its detractors.

English teacher Sharon Swanson believes that the parents who really need to conference with her are the ones who usually do not sign up for conferences.

"Unfortunately, I found over the years that the parents who come in are the not the parents who need to come in. Basically, I end up telling [those who attend] how wonderful their children are," Swanson said.

According to Assistant Principal of Pupil Personnel Services Jason Ness, parents can also schedule a conference with their

child's guidance counselor.

Each conference lasts for about five minutes.

"[In these five minutes] teachers can go over the student's grade, [discuss] what is happening in class and [determine] either why the student is doing well or why the student is not doing well," McTague said.

Although walk-ins are allowed, it is preferred that parents schedule a conference, rather than merely taking the chance that a teacher will be available.

"When [a parent] walks in, maybe one teacher is available to see him or her, but [the parent] may have to wait an hour for another teacher to become available, if [the teacher] becomes available at all," McTague said.

There is a lot of behind-the-scenes work that comes from the district office as well. Programmer analyst Becky Lothian plays a role in the scheduling process.

Genis, from page one.

Vogler said that even though the most recent ruling favored the district, neither side won the case.

"The way that I look at this is that it cost the district, hence the taxpayers, a lot of money in legal fees, and it cost the teachers, hence the union, a lot of legal fees," she said. "I don't think that this was the best use of capital, but I will say that from an employer's point of view, this was a necessary use of funds."

One of the teachers caught in the crossfire is Niles North applied science and technology teacher Fritz Wulfram, who replaced Genis in 2006 before resigning last spring, paving the way for new coach Bob Williams. Wulfram said that during his coaching career at West, he was constantly aware of the case and knew that Genis could win the job back.

"Somebody [was going to be] disappointed," he said of the protracted court battle, "whether [it was] the district or Genis. At least now there is some resolution to it."

Superintendent Nanciann Gatta, who assumed oversight of the district's appeal when she replaced Codell in 2008, expressed satisfaction with the ACIFJD's decision and intimated that the case need not have taken over three years to resolve.

"My job is all about data. When parents go online to request conferences, they see a list of [their child's] courses and teachers. We extract [that information] from the [registration information] system that we have," Lothian said. "[I turn that information into a spreadsheet] and send that to [our] parent teacher conferences vendor, they plug it into their system and that is how it all appears."

McTague believes that parent teacher conferences usually run smoothly because the preparation is good; however, getting the school cleaned and ready for the night causes stress.

"We need to make sure that every staff member is here and in the right place. As soon as school ends, we have to start preparing the building for parent teacher conferences. We have to start cleaning classrooms and the hallways to make sure everything is set," McTague said. "There is a lot going on in a short time span."

Gatta said that upon assuming the Superintendent's post, she considered it important for the school to "move forward." We didn't know how long the [ACIFJD] was going to take, so there were opportunities to settle this with the new administration," Gatta said.

In order to do so, she "gave the union and Genis the opportunity to reach a settlement" because she didn't want this "hanging out there forever." According to Gatta, she opened the door for Genis' return to coaching as an assistant and "working his way up the system. The union, on behalf of Genis, rejected [this offer]."



Gatta

Photo by Rexly Penafiorida

Grossman responded to this revelation by saying that the "union feels that it was inappropriate for [Gatta] to discuss the settlement with the press because it was discussed behind the scenes, and if there is not an agreement, the standard procedure is as if nothing was ever discussed. [Gatta] was not characterizing the agreement in full and only presented her side." He said that her actions would have a "chilling effect" on to whether or not the union will negotiate behind the scenes in the future.

The bottom line is that unless the Illinois Supreme Court overturns the decision of the ACIFJD, Genis' career as a basketball coach at West is finished. "He will not coach again at [West]," Gatta said.

Heintz added, "He can go somewhere else and coach."

Indeed, Genis currently is the head boys basketball coach at Chicago's Northside College Prep High School.

Of the decision, Gatta expressed mixed emotions. "I am not excited that [the district] won or that the union lost—[or that] Genis will now never be a coach again [in the district]. What makes me happy is the validation that [district administrators] do have the right to ensure that we can evaluate coaches and dismiss or retain them based on [an evaluative] instrument. Ultimately, I believe in the evaluation process and the administration's responsibility to ensure that we have the most qualified and dedicated coaches for our athletes."



TEN THOUSAND VILLAGES

Fair Trade Bazaar

in the Student Commons

Gifts for All Occasions

- Coffee • Home Furnishings
- Holiday • Collectibles
- Chocolate • Clothing
- Stationery • Jewelry
- Toys/Games • Baskets
- Musical Instruments • CD's



Invest in Your World

Shop Fair Trade

Your fair trade purchase of handmade jewelry, home decor and gifts helps improve the lives of thousands of artisans in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East.

New Teachers

WestWord



Name: Amina Jarad
Previous Experience: Molloy Education Center
College: University of Illinois at Chicago
Classes Teaching: Biology 12-22 and Biology 13-23
Favorite Book: *Three Cups of Tea*

Goals at Niles West: Share my knowledge of science and experiences and be an active member of the school community.

Reason for teaching: Opportunity to make an impression on the lives of students and to make a difference in society.



Name: Caroline Ahearn
Previous Experience: Forsythe Middle School and Goethe Institute Chicago
College: Louisville Collegiate School and University of Michigan
Classes Teaching: German 1, 2 and 3
Favorite Book: *The*

Alchemist

Goals at Niles West: Making learning German fun, relevant and exciting. Encourage students to learn languages outside of the classroom

Reason for teaching: I want to share my experiences, and I enjoy the study of languages and cultures.



Name: Eva Greenspan
Previous Experience: Lubavitch Girls High School, Hanna Sacks Bais Yaakov High School and student taught at Niles West
College: Yeshiva University and Loyola University
Classes Teaching:

Algebra 10-20

Favorite Book: Not sure. Currently rereading *Harry Potter* series

Goals at Niles West: To connect with students and to help them to achieve their goals.

Reason for teaching: I like working with people and helping them out.



Name: Stephanie Iafrate
Previous Experience: Michelle Clark High School
College: Michigan State University
Classes Teaching: Freshman English, American Literature and College Prep

Favorite Book: *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

Goals at Niles West: To get actively involved and become a part of the school community.

Reason for teaching: Always wanted to be a teacher, and I love the teaching atmosphere.



Name: Andrew Suarez
Previous Experience: Plainfield High School and student taught at Naperville North High School
College: Northeastern University
Classes Teaching: Spanish 2 and

Introduction to Spanish 1-2

Favorite Book: *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

Goals at Niles West: Get involved in extracurricular activities.

Reason for teaching: Seeing other people grasp concepts that are different and see people evolve.



Name: Meagan Lag
Previous Experience: social work intern at Niles West
College: Washington University in St. Louis and University of Illinois at Chicago
Classes Teaching: Social worker

Favorite Book: *A Prayer for Owen Meany*

Goals at Niles West: I want to help students manage difficulties at home and/or school.

Reason for teaching: I love working with students and families, and promoting emotional awareness and well-being within the community.



Name: Michelle Amaro
Previous Experience: internship at Kelvyn Park High School, Prospect High School and Rolling Meadows High School
College: University of Illinois at Chicago
Classes Teaching:

Student Assistance Program Coordinator

Favorite Book: *The Kite Runner*

Goals at Niles West: Get to know the students, families, staff and community resources and to help students.

Reason for teaching: Seeing the best come out of individuals. Loves working with students and families, and promoting emotional awareness and well-being within the community.



Name: Steven Berkeley
Previous Experience: Holt High School
Classes Teaching: Center for Individualized Curriculum Courses
Favorite Book: *The Autobiography of Malcolm X, The*

Alchemist, The Gift of Dyslexia, Everything is Illuminated and The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay

Goals at Niles West: Captivate and engaging students, and make students feel comfortable in class.

Reason for teaching: Realizing my own potential because of my own teachers at West.



Name: Stephanie Gray
Previous Experience: Librarian at Hinsdale Central High School and long term substitute at Niles West
College: University of Michigan and Dominican University
Classes Teaching:

Librarian

Favorite Book: *The Book Thief and Jellicoe Road*

Goals at Niles West: Getting students excited about reading.

Reason for teaching: I like young kids and working with other teachers.



Name: William Statema
Previous Experience: Niles North High School
College: Hope College
Classes Teaching: Chemistry 10-20 and ILS
Favorite Book: *A Tale of Two Cities*
Goals at Niles West: Show students that

science is a part of every aspect of life.

Reason for teaching: Seeing the "oh I get it" expression on the faces of students.



Name: Bob Williams
Previous Experience: Palatine High School and Schaumburg High School
College: University of Dakota, Northwestern University and Northern Illinois University
Classes Teaching: Algebra 10-20, Algebra

32-42 and Topics in Precalculus

Favorite Book: *The Magic of Teamwork*

Goals at Niles West: Help students learn about themselves and grow as people.

Reason for teaching: Loves being with kids.



Name: Poonam Patel
Previous Experience: Private tutor
College: Queen Mary University of London and National Louis University
Classes Teaching: Biology 12-22 and Biology 13-23

Favorite Book: *A Child Called "It"*

Goals at Niles West: Wants students to understand that they have the power to achieve anything they set their minds on.

Reason for teaching: Giving back to the teaching profession.