

# AAPSNews

News, features, profiles and activities in The Ann Arbor Public Schools

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Issue No. 33, April 18, 2011

## Youth Senate takes high schoolers out into community

### From AAPSNews Service

On a recent morning, Pioneer High School sophomores Zaid Khatib and Hyun Won shared their findings about poverty in Washtenaw County, as part of their involvement with the Youth Senate Action Team.

Khatib told classmates that 50,000 people are living in poverty here and Won shared that there are 5,000 people homeless in the county at any given time. "That's more than the populations of Huron and Pioneer high schools combined," he said. "And 30 percent of the homeless population is youth; the average age is 9," he reported. "Can you imagine?"

Khatib and Hyun are among many Ann

See *Youth Senate*, [page 5](#)



Pioneer Student Forum members Zaid Khatib and Hyun Won take up a collection after making a Student Action Team presentation about homelessness and poverty in Washtenaw County.

## Mlive.com sports feed now online

Coaches, parents, students can contribute articles

### From AAPSNews Service

The Ann Arbor Public Schools and the AAPSNews is partnering with MLive.com to bring our readers live high school sports coverage, available through an RSS feed on our newsletter site, <http://news.a2schools.org>.

The feed includes stories, rankings, schedules and other posts involving sports teams at Pioneer, Huron and Skyline high schools. Contributions will come from community reports with and some coverage from AnnArbor.com. Also linked are sites specific to each high school's sports coverage.

"We are looking forward to this partnership with MLive.com, which allows us to bring up-to-date high school sports coverage to our school community," said AAPS Director of Communication Liz Margolis. "We are also excited about how our school

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Victor Wooten, center, surrounded by his brothers and jazz band students from Ann Arbor during his recent master class at Community High School. Only under contract for one hour, he stayed for nearly three, to the delight of visitors.

## Grammy award-winner visits

By Kyle Morrison  
AAPSNews Service

International bass icon Victor Wooten visited Community High School recently to hold a master class for the jazz students of Community, Huron and Pioneer high schools. Packed into the Craft Theater were jazz students, parents, and faculty who all witnessed and learned.

The five-time Grammy Award winner has won most every major award given to a bass player. Wooten was named bassist of the year three times by Bass Player Magazine, and remains the only person to have won the

See *Wooten*, [page 2](#)

## Young entrepreneurs work the sales floor during annual Burns Park Market Day

By Casey Hans  
AAPSNews Service

A recession, you say? You'd never know the country has been in an economic slump by visiting Market Day at Ann Arbor's Burns Park Elementary School.

It looks more like a stock market trading floor, as fifth graders peddle their handmade wares to staff, parents, fourth-graders and the younger "buddies" who get to do some shopping with Burns Park dollars.

Fifth-graders learned all the ins-and-outs of business during an economics unit taught by Sharon Pryce.

"There's a lot of buzz going on," said parent Doug Forman, whose daughter was working in a booth selling hand-made robots. "They get a sense of what it takes to plan and run a store. It's pretty neat."

The optional Market Day has been going on at Burns Park for more than 10 years, and it is wildly popular, Pryce said. Some 58 of her 72 students took on the project, which teaches them soup-to-nuts skills of developing an entrepreneurial spirit and learning about the economy, the stock market and basic money management.

Students do all of their research and work on their products at home, on personal time.

"It's a big thing here," said Pryce, who was serving as banker, handing out between \$10 and \$20 of Burns Park dollars to each student to keep the economy moving. "I don't push it a lot – it sells itself."

She said because many of the Burns Park parents are already entrepreneurs, it's a natural for many students to pick up the concept of running a business.

This year's Market Day included dozens of booths including bottle cap magnets (students went to Red Hawk, which donated the caps), fruit smoothies, colorful ten-



Students fill out forms for a raffle being offered by one Burns Park fifth-grader during Market Day. A total of 58 students participated in the optional program, which teaches about entrepreneurship, the economy and how to create and market a product. Below, handmade robots are for sale by this team. Students worked independently or in teams of two or three for the project.



nis shoes decorated with duct tape, a Harry Potter shop selling wands and spell books and even young artists doing face painting. Pryce said some students do raffles and others tried silent auctions this year to boost sales. One group of entrepreneurs recorded and sold their own CD.

"We didn't think we'd sell this

many," said fifth-grader Grace, who was in business with classmate Bess selling the bottle cap magnets. Their trade secret: Grace explained that they put decorative materials and then filled them in with Modge Podge.

Students must tally their sales numbers and teams with the best sales earn a prize, Pryce said.

"They develop business plans, so I know what they're doing, and we encourage them to be great recyclers and reuse materials," Pryce said. Students worked individually or in groups of up to three.

Pryce said the day is a spin-off of a yearlong mini-society program that was whittled down years ago due to increases in mandatory grade level content expectations from the state.

Wooten, from page 1

award more than once. Apart from a tremendously successful solo career, he has played and recorded with artists such as Stanley Clarke, Marcus Miller, Bass Extremes, Bela Fleck and the Flecktones and a handful of others.

In a surprise move, Wooten brought brothers Regi and Joseph Wooten along, both also professional musicians. The trio of Victor, Regi and Joseph (on bass, guitar, and electric keyboard, respectively) played a song for the audience, took questions,

and critiqued students from Community combos Maximum Will and BlueTruth.

"What a blast – one the kids will never forget. They knocked us all out," said CHS Jazz Director Jack Wagner.

**'What a blast – one the kids will never forget!'**  
– Jack Wagner, CHS teacher/jazz director

Although Wooten was only contracted for one hour, he generously stayed for nearly three.

Wagner went through a lot of trouble to book Wooten for the master class. He tried for months, calling anyone who could make it happen.

"I went through a heck of a lot to get him here, but (it was) totally worth it," said Wagner. He was given a huge discount by agreeing to buy \$1,300 worth of CDs and books from Wooten. (His novel is "The Music Lesson," and his newest album, "A Show of Hands 15.") In addition to these purchases, another \$1,000 or so was put together by the high schools' jazz programs to pay for the master class.

Wooten's priceless insight and spirituality gave these students inspiration and perspective that they are unlikely to find anywhere else. "We got our money's worth," said Wagner.

Kyle Morrison is a senior and a musician at Community High School.



# How does your garden grow?

## More than 400 Tappan students help to launch the spring planting season

By Casey Hans  
AAPSNews Service

Getting outdoors was never better than it was last week at Tappan Middle School, when students got their hands dirty and played in the garden on one of the nicest days so far this spring.

The Tappan Agrarian Garden was the scene of the annual Spring Seedling Planting on April 13, when about a dozen community volunteers, including parents and several students from the University of Michigan, donated their time to work with students. The day is coordinated through the nonprofit, volunteer-run Agrarian Adventure which coordinates volunteers to work in the garden.

More than 400 students helped to plant seeds, get the greenhouse ready for the season, move compost and prepare beds for planting and generally help to kick off the growing season in the garden.

Ethan Kolderman, a U-M pre-med junior, said he heard about the day through Circle K on campus. "I signed up and I've been coming back ever since," he said. "I'm into nutrition and healthy eating, so this has been a good thing."

Kolderman and fellow student Martha Johnson, a sophomore who was on site giving students direction, also volunteer with the Tappan Food and Garden Club, a popular after-school club that teaches students about gardening and good eating.

"I'm just here today giving the students some guidance," she said.

An animated Scott Richardson was encouraging students in the greenhouse to dig deep for crab grass roots. He said he volunteers at the event every year.

Parent Lynda Norton who has a sixth-grader at Tappan, was handing out seeds for students to plant. "This is my first time out here," said Nor-



Students from Tappan Middle School were invited out to help get the garden beds ready in the Tappan Agrarian Garden. The annual Seedling Planting Day is scheduled each year to kick off the growing season at the community garden. Students also visit the garden throughout the year to help plant, harvest and enjoy the fruits of their labor.

At left, parent Lynda Norton hands out seeds to students who arrived at the Tappan garden ready to help. The garden has mostly vegetables and some edible flowers.

ton, who is a master gardener herself and helped to get a new school-community garden started last year at Burns Park Elementary.

Seed donations for this year's day came from The Ecology Center, Slow Food Huron Valley and some seedlings from the student-run or-

ganic garden at Michigan State University.

The Tappan Agrarian Garden is used not only to grow fresh food, but to teach students about healthy eating and sustainable agriculture. Event organizer April Schmidt said the planting day is an annual rite of

spring to launch the growing season.

New this season, she said, is a program that will allow students to sow seeds for salad greens that will be served in the Tappan cafeteria after harvest.

The Agrarian Adventure is always looking for volunteers throughout the growing season to work in the garden. They have occasional weekend workdays and usually have one volunteer evening per week where help is needed to weed the beds and to keep them watered.

Contact Schmidt at [farmtoschool@agrarianadventure.org](mailto:farmtoschool@agrarianadventure.org)

# Paul Test puts his focus on faith, family, friends and ... football

By Casey Hans  
AAPSNews Service

For Paul Test, four principles guide his life: Faith, family, friends and, not surprisingly, football.

Recently rehired as the head football coach at Pioneer High School, he balances that with his regular job as physical education teacher at Thurston Elementary School. Test said he enjoys students of all ages and loves teaching and molding young lives.

"I think what kids need to learn are structure and discipline. The kids want to connect and I like connecting with the kids," he said.

A Youngstown, Ohio native, he grew up in a family with two older brothers and one younger sister, attended parochial schools and graduated from Dearborn Divine Child High School and then attended the University of Pittsburgh. Football was an important part of his schooling throughout high school and college.

He majored in communications and Test originally thought he would go into broadcasting as a career, but didn't take that route. Test got his teaching certificate and began teaching in parochial schools at about the same time he started as defensive coordinator under former Pioneer head coach Chuck Lori, where he spent 11 years sharing in the team's two state titles in 1984 and 1987. He became the head coach at Pioneer in the early 1990s and also spent time in recent years coaching in the Huron High School program.

Between college and the start of his teaching career, Test worked as a chef in a Detroit restaurant, sold insurance and was a quality control supervisor at Ford Motor Co., but eventually left that post to pursue his dream of teaching kids.

When he moved to Ann Arbor in 1979, he began coaching at Pioneer while he taught at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School,



*Paul Test, the new head football coach at Pioneer High School and a physical education teacher at Thurston Elementary School.*

eventually moving into the Ann Arbor Public Schools as a teacher in 1986.

The loss of his father at a young age strengthened Test's faith, which has carried him through the many choices and changes in his life. He calls his life a "work in progress. We're just passing through – we're not getting out of here alive," he notes. Test said his biggest challenge over the years has been knowing that he can't control everything and "as a coach that's hard."

With that in mind, Test allows his faith to guide the way he lives his life, coaches his players and interacts with his students and colleagues. He said he emphasizes life skills, unselfishness, humility, integrity and a general humanity toward each another.

He implemented a peer-tutoring program in his physical education class at Thurston, where older students come in and work with the youngest ones. On one recent day, he had far too many older students lined up to help their younger peers. They all came to him with the same request: "Mr. Test, can I come in and help during my lunch hour?" Having too many students asking to help is

not a bad problem to have, he said.

He was also part of a group, including Principal Pat Manley and "Mr. and Mrs. Smooth (also known as Calvin and Jackie Siebert) that started an all-school dinner dance four years ago to encourage the multi-cultural community of families to come and enjoy an evening together. Test encourages physical activities such as dance. "It's lifelong, it's rhythmic," he said. "Anyone can do it. And it's crossed some (cultural) barriers."

Test and his wife, Pam, live in Ann Arbor and he met and married her through a twist of fate. He was friends with his wife's first husband through their church and Pam wanted to set Test up with a friend – something her then-husband was not keen on. After Pam's first husband died, Test said, they became friends and eventually married and added to the family. "I think it's funny that my wife was going to set me up," he said, smiling.

The couple has three grown children – Michael from Pam's first marriage (who Test also knew as a student at St. Francis) and two daughters, Jennifer and Andrea. A new granddaughter, Vivian, was born last fall and Test said he is looking forward to meeting her soon.

Test accepted a state-level teacher retirement incentive last year, but filed for a one-year extension allowing him to work through the 2010-11 school year. So, although he will retire as a teacher in June, he will have plenty to keep him busy with the upcoming Pioneer football schedule.

He said he is excited to be back in the head coach's role at Pioneer, where he knows many of the players from his time coaching in the freshman program. "My wife encouraged me to apply," he said of his new opportunity. "To

*Paul Test, page 9*

## Paul Test

**Occupation:** Physical education teacher at Thurston Elementary School and head football coach at Pioneer High School.

**Residence:** Ann Arbor.

**Education:** Bachelor's degree in communication from the University of Pittsburgh, master's degree in secondary education from Eastern Michigan University.

**Age:** 56

**Family:** Married to Pam. They have three children: Michael, Jennifer and Andrea and a new, 4-month-old granddaughter.

**Hobbies:** Likes to stay fit by walking and occasionally sprinting to keep his heart rate up. He is an avid reader.

**Community service:** Active in his church, St. Andrews in Saline, and in and around the football programs in Ann Arbor Public Schools.

**Favorite meal:** "I'm Italian, so, of course, I love Italian food," he says. His signature dish is mezzogiorno, a dish made with whole-wheat rotini, Italian sausage, Romano cheese and his addition of sun-dried tomatoes and some rigata cheese for added texture.

**Last book read:** He reads Scripture daily and also loves mysteries. Some of his favorite authors include Michael Connelly, Nelson DeMille, David Baldacci and Dennis Lehane. He also enjoys the history genre. Life philosophy: He says he tries to live his life being faithful and open to whatever comes in life and tries to instill a sense of humanity toward one another among his students and players. "Not everything goes as planned, but it goes as God planned," he says.



# 'Dream Big!' says gold medalist Yamaguchi

## Book reading at Lakewood Elementary excites early elementary students

VIDEO OF YAMAGUCHI VISIT  
online at [news.a2schools.org](http://news.a2schools.org)

From AAPSNews Service

Olympic skater Kristi Yamaguchi visited Lakewood Elementary School recently for an early elementary assembly, presenting her children's book "Dream Big, Little Pig!" published this year by Sourcebooks.

Lakewood Elementary partners with Nicola Rooney, owner of Nicola's Books, throughout the school year and Yamaguchi's visit was made possible through the partnership. The gold medalist's visit to the Ann Arbor school was part of her spring book tour.

It took Yamaguchi about one year to write the book, she told students. The main character of the book is Poppy the Pig, who realizes she can succeed at anything if she believes in herself.

California native Yamaguchi, now age 39, won the 1991 World Championship in singles skating, won her first U.S. title in 1992 and went on to win a gold medal at the 1992 Winter Olympics in France. Later that year, she defended her World Championship title. She toured professionally after 1992.

Yamaguchi fielded numerous questions about her skating, but told students her more recent role as a mom has curtailed much of that. "I'm practicing being mom now, so there's not a lot of time to skate," she said. Yamaguchi has two daughters, aged 5 and 7, and has been married to retired professional hockey player and TV analyst Brad Hedican since 2002.

She told Lakewood students that her skating career was not easy, but that it helped her to build character.

"Just like Poppy It was pretty much magic. The first time I tried it I knew I loved it and I wanted to come back over and over again," she told students. "I kept asking my parents to take me back to the rink. A lot of people try different things ... eventually I found skating."

Seventh grade was when she decided she wanted to skate and began practicing several hours each day.

Students asked if the new book is autobiographical. "I get that a lot," she said. "A lot of the lessons and some things I learned are defi-



*Above, Kristi Yamaguchi does a few high fives with Lakewood Elementary students during her recent visit to read her new book, "Dream Big, Little Pig!" At right, students are eager to ask the gold medalist skater questions She came to Lakewood thanks to a partnership with Nicola's Books.*

nately in the book. There a little bit that Poppy goes through that I definitely went through as well."

A portion of the proceeds from her book will go to the Always Dream Foundation to support early childhood literacy. Yamaguchi also wrote "Figure Skating for Dummies" and "Always Dream, Pure Gold."



# Exceptional Education

## Youth Senate, from page 1

Arbor high school students learning about social justice, community volunteering, civic engagement and philanthropy through the Youth Senate program. The two are in their first year of Youth Senate. “It’s really an enjoyable experience,” said Khatib. Won said what he likes best about it is the way the Youth Senate groups and projects help the community.

Youth Senate members have the opportunity to address the Ann Arbor Board of Education during regular updates given by board-approved groups which also include the Ann Arbor Parent Advisory Committee for Special Education, the Black Parent Student Support Group, the AAPS Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) Council and the district’s representative collective bargaining units.

Students in all grades from all five Ann Arbor high schools participate in the Youth Senate, with many participating at the school level on Senate Action Teams and together at a weekly Youth Senate leadership meeting. Students also take turn preparing updates and presentations to the school board.

Ebba Hierta works for the nonprofit Youth Empowerment Project that acts as an adviser to the Youth Senate. She said students from any group, including YEP-affiliated groups, use the designated seat time to address the board with proper preparation. She notes that a disclaimer is read before each report, saying that the student reports do not represent entire student bodies and encourages a diverse student population to be heard.

“The Youth Senate fosters youth activities throughout the community,” Hierta said. “They create a voice at the school district level.”

At the individual school level, the Pioneer Youth Senate Action Team has focused this year on the issue of local poverty and homelessness in Washtenaw County, studying statistics of the problem and working directly with homeless residents on Friday nights, helping to serve food in downtown Ann Arbor.



*Students from Pioneer and Huron high schools met the Youth Empowerment Project office on Huron Street near Fourth on a recent Friday afternoon to discuss their Youth Senate projects. Pictured from right are Enze Xing and Hyun Won of Pioneer; AmeriCorp/VISTA staff member Gurtej Medi and Pioneer junior Jack Fan.*

During the recent Pioneer Youth Senate Action Team’s classroom presentations and outreach to fellow students, the group collected more than \$275 to donate to the Washtenaw Intermediate School District Education Project for Homeless Youth and provide small leadership development scholarships.

One of the classrooms they visited was that of Social Studies teacher Jen Kunec, who told her students that many people losing jobs and their houses. “A lot of people don’t have resources to turn to,” she said.

Won said while classmates might worry about getting their homework done, or have other, more routine, problems, homeless families have bigger concerns. “These kids are thinking ‘what am I going to eat tonight?’” he said. “Where am I going to sleep? Of all of the people I’ve met, they’re so happy and content with the small things they have.”

He noted that “not even 100 people in this county help every day with the problem. There are just a few who regularly help,” he said.

Won and Khatib were among students attending a Friday afternoon leadership meeting at YEP offices on Huron Street in downtown Ann Arbor, where a handful of students from Pioneer and Huron shared their experiences.

Enze Xing, a Pioneer sopho-

more, said the poverty topic is what drew her to become involved. “I thought that was an important topic and I should get involved with it,” she said. “It affects so many people and not many people know about it. Washtenaw County is second in the state” for the number of homeless.

Jack Fan, a Pioneer junior, saw the Youth Senate Action Team presentations last year and decided to get involved. “I thought it would be cool,” he said. “We wanted it to be more applicable this year” and so chose the local poverty initiative.

Huron High students are working on a follow-up to a project that took place four years ago on achievement disparities in all high schools called “Leap the Gap!” A total of 1,500 students among all Ann Arbor high schools were surveyed and 27 barriers to achievement were noted and reported to the school board.

Asma Hussain, a Huron senior, explained that the current project, Achievement Solutions Teams, is using focus groups that are discussing barriers in students’ personal lives, to see how barriers are perceived and to find some solutions to those. The project will use peer coaching to help students make choices for academic success.

Skyline students also have a Student Forum Action Team that is organizing and beginning commu-

nity projects there and has been involved with leadership training and volunteering. Community High’s Student Forum Council is discussing ways of teaming with their peers across the district.

Each year’s involvement of students can range in numbers from 175 to upwards of 500 throughout the district, depending on the topics that local schools decide to tackle, Hierta said. Some students stay involved only at the school level, while others choose to take a leadership role at the district level of Youth Senate.

The organization began in the late 1990s to encourage teen involvement in community service and civic engagement, philanthropy, partnerships, leadership and social entrepreneurship. It became a board-approved group that visits the school board to offer updates on a variety of student-driven community service projects.

One of the largest Youth Senate efforts in recent years was a “Fight Poverty in Africa Project,” which was initiated by students at Community High School and involved students throughout the district.

It taught philanthropy and was a “very strong service-learning experience,” Hierta said. “It was a great example of positive peer influence.”



## Board approves Schools of Choice program for 2011-12 year

From AAPSNews Service

The Ann Arbor Public Schools Board of Education has approved a Schools of Choice option for 2011-12 that opens a window for applications from mid-April through mid-May.

The program is open for Washtenaw County families that do not live in the Ann Arbor Public Schools district between April 15 and May 15.

That includes the local districts of Chelsea, Dexter, Lincoln, Manchester, Milan, Saline, Whitmore Lake, Willow Run and Ypsilanti.

Applications available on the district website

and in person at the Balas Administration Building, 2555 S. State St. Ann Arbor. No applications will be taken after May 15 and applications must be postmarked during the enrollment window.

Enrollment is proposed to be through a lottery, not through a first-come-first-served process, officials said. A waiting list would be maintained for the remaining applications and prioritized through a random draw.

The proposal is for kindergarten, first and sixth grades with limited seats available for second, third, fourth and fifth grades. Elementary schools included in the proposal include Abbot,

Bryant, Carpenter, Dicken, Eberwhite, Lakewood, Logan, Northside, Pittsfield and Pottengill. Middle schools include Clague, Forsythe, Scarlett, Slauson and Tappan.

Applications will be reviewed for accurate information, which may involve contacting the student's current school.

Acceptance is conditional until the Ann Arbor Public Schools receives and reviews all school records.

Transportation to-and-from school will be the responsibility of the participating parent/guardian. Call 734-994-2249 for information.

## Pioneer teacher's new book aims to make reading exciting for boys

By Carlina Duan  
AAPSNews Service

Weekday afternoons, you'll find students in Creative Writing classroom C-331 at Pioneer High School huddled over notebooks, scribbling down lines and lyric, or circled together reading their pieces aloud for peer feedback.

You'll also hear a dynamic voice booming from his teacher's desk, the owner of the voice nodding his head to the rhythm of students' words; delving into writing prompts with clear energy and purpose. That voice belongs to Jeff Kass: Creative Writing teacher at Pioneer, poet, Yankees fan, Literary Arts director at the Neutral Zone, and, more recently, author of a new collection of short stories called "Knuckleheads," released last month from Dzanc Books (<http://www.dzancbooks.org/knuckleheads-by-jeff-kass/>).

Kass is scheduled for a "meet the author" event at Nicola's Books (<http://www.nicolasbooks.com/>) at 7 p.m. on April 27. Nicola's is at Jackson and Maple roads in the Westgate Shopping Center.

Kass, a well-known literary figure in the Ann Arbor community, is the author of two novels and several books of poetry, yet "Knuckleheads" is his first collection of short stories. Kass describes the book as "my first debut publishing effort that's more of a major endeavor."

The book includes ten short

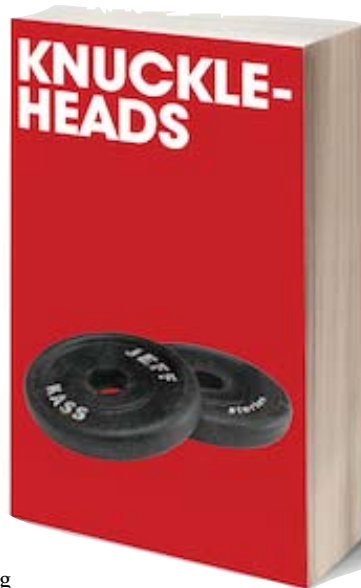
stories showcasing the lives and struggles of true knuckleheads, a term Kass describes as "something in between an insult and a term of endearment."

The word knucklehead is one of Kass's favorites, and he tags the expression as a somewhat optimistic one. By using the term, he said, "you're telling somebody you're doing something kind of stupid right now, but you're not necessarily saying you're a stupid and hopeless case."

"What you're saying is that whatever you're doing right now, you need to figure out a better way to live your life – but there's hope for you to do that. And in each of these stories, there's a character who's trying to figure that out."

The knuckleheads in his book represent a diverse group of all male characters – ranging from an elementary school playground-hopper to a high school wrestler to a hopeful father; with a satisfying array of teachers, husbands, and brothers thrown into the mix.

Yet one quality the characters all share is their bizarre thirst to steer through life and its pelting curveballs.



Each story in the book represents a stage in "knuckle-headedness," Kass said. "(All these characters) are in that place where they make a lot of dumb mistakes, but there's still hope for them to (improve) their lives."

They don't always get there, and some-

times, their decisions are so misdirected they don't even know what 'better' is," he laughed. "But I don't think knuckleheadedness totally disappears when you get older. It just comes up in different forms."

Kass admits that though none of the stories in the book detail any occurrences in his personal life, there are some characters who were inspired by his experiences. "There's a lot of seeds that come from my own," he said. "I plant (these seeds) in the soil of my own

imagination, and grow something entirely different from them. Maybe there's a situation that's similar to something that occurred when I was a kid or adult that I was a part of or witnessed, but then it becomes something entirely different.

"Ultimately what blossoms is almost completely made up."

Kass spent about four years writing and editing the book. Between teaching, working as the Literary Arts director at the Neutral Zone, and balancing family life, Kass believes finding the time to work on Knuckleheads was his biggest challenge to publishing the book. "It takes a lot of focus and energy to write the stories and edit the stories," he noted, "But it's pretty exciting. I feel like for a long time, I was writing a lot of stuff out in the wilderness, not getting feedback. Now, it's just exciting to feel like some of this work is paying off."

The target audience of the book was sparked by Kass's teaching experiences, and his desire to see more of the male students in his class become engaged in reading. "I just wanted to write something that I thought would reach out to them, where they could see a little more of themselves (in the characters) and hopefully think more about why it's worthwhile to read," he said.

See 'Knuckleheads', next page

## Sports feed, from page 1

sports community can be part of the process.”

Coaches, parents and students can participate by becoming contributors of information about their sports teams and schools. A link to that is also found on the site.

MLive.com has launched a High School Sports Network that is recruiting volunteers to report on schools and teams, according to Senior Producer Dave McVety, who coordinates the network. Nearly 2,000 reporters have signed up so far, helping make the website the most popular source for high school sports in Michigan.

“We welcome this community involvement and want to do all we can to help people get started,” said McVety. “It is a great way to get the word out about the city’s athletes and teams.

“Our website has the biggest audience for high sports in the state.”

Based in Ann Arbor, MLive.com is an online division of Advance Publications, which partners with newspapers across the state as their online presence. Their partners include AnnArbor.com, the Jackson Citizen Patriot, Kalamazoo Gazette, Grand Rapids Press, Muskegon Chronicle, Flint Journal, Saginaw News and Bay City Times. MLive.com also covers other areas of southeast Michigan.

The MLive.com High School Sports Network allows reporting of schedules, scores, game stories, news, photos, video player information and more for individual Ann Arbor teams.

Margolis said she hopes that community members with an interest in Ann Arbor sports teams will consider contributing and noted that the partnership also offers a fresh opportunity for student journalists to become involved.

Visit <http://highschoolsports.mlive.com/become/a/reporter/> to fill out an application or direct questions via e-mail to [damevety@mlive.com](mailto:damevety@mlive.com).

Casey Hans, district editor for the AAPSNews, said the new feed will enrich the 18-month-old newsletter site, which offers features about people and programs, news stories and videos from around the district.

“This gives our readers even more information about their schools at one location,” she said.

## Balanced calendar will get review for 2013-14

From AAPSNews Service

The Ann Arbor Public Schools is moving ahead with plans for a K-8 partnership between Mitchell Elementary, Scarlett Middle School and the University of Michigan School of Education this fall, but will wait and reconsider a balanced calendar for the 2013-14 school year.

The decision was made after a parent opinion survey was conducted asking about such a calendar, which would be a non-traditional school year with extended breaks and a shortened summer.

The committee surveyed parents at Scarlett and feeder elementary schools of Mitchell, Allen, Carpenter and Pittsfield. The survey was available online, in printed format and was also trans-

lated into Spanish. A total of 360 persons responded to the survey.

“It is with some measure of disappointment that we arrive at this recommendation but all involved feel it is the most responsible position to take at this time,” Interim Deputy Superintendent for Instruction Lee Ann Dickinson-Kelley said in a recent memo to the superintendent and school board. She said the decision will not stop the partnership from moving forward with enrichments and other instructional innovations in place and planned for next fall.

The decision was made to put a system in place for measuring and evaluating teacher performance in the program and to introduce enrichment intersessions for students during school breaks. A number of enrichment activities are planned

for the inaugural 2011 school year for interested families.

It remains the committee’s desire to see a balanced calendar implemented in the future.

Most Mitchell and Scarlett respondents said they would stay if a balanced calendar was implemented, but feeder elementary school respondents said, as a whole, they would not want to stay because of family scheduling conflicts. Feeder elementary respondents also said they did not want to participate in pilot intersession enrichments as they are offered in 2011-12.

Committee members said it was clear from the responses that there must be choices for parents who would not participate in a school program with a balanced calendar in the future, including a way to opt out.

## ‘Knuckheads’, from previous page

Additionally, Kass hopes that “Knuckleheads” will introduce student readers to a fresh genre of literature. “I think high school students in general don’t really read short stories on their own, and since I know I can reach out to a lot of high school readers in a way, I’m saying, ‘Here’s a new genre that you can try. Maybe you don’t have time to read a whole novel, but you can have half an hour to read a story,’ and in a way, introduce them to the genre of contemporary short story.”

Some of his characters are high school age male protagonists. Many of Kass’s own students of the same demographic have already displayed interest in reading the book.

Senior Adam DesJardins, a student in Kass’s Creative Writing class, said he plans to read it.

“It sounds really interesting. I think I’m definitely going to read it. I know a lot of his poetry, but not a lot of his prose, so it’ll be cool to see that part of his work.”

DesJardins said he thinks it

will have an impact. “I think it’s a really good thing that Kass is publishing his work,” he said. “I’ve noticed in class that a bunch of young people, usually male students, don’t like to read aloud. They don’t like to let people in as much per say. So this— it’s pretty inspirational.”

Kass expresses mixed feelings about the book release, which is officially on Friday, according to the Dzanc Books website.

“It’s really scary to have a book – a collection – that’s been years in the works – come out. I’ve been working on this collection for essentially four years, and to have it come out... maybe it’s not going to sell, maybe nobody’s going to like it, thinking about that is really scary,” he said,

“On the other hand, I think it’s exciting to think about creating these stories essentially out of nothing, and having a book of them that somebody will sit down and read and maybe affect their lives in some way.”

Above all, Kass expresses

hope to motivate his students to read more through the book’s release.

“I guess, in my heart, I really, really want those kids in my class – those dudes who hide in their sweatshirts – to pick this thing up and read it. And I hope the general audience will like it, too,” he said. “I hope they get a few laughs out of it, and I hope the stories make them think.”

And, he said, he hopes his male students find it helpful.

“Sometimes I just feel like I want the boys in my classes to be happier,” he added. “I want them to appreciate that they’re allowed to screw up and do really good things, and grow into really good people; and I want them to forgive themselves a little bit more, smile a little bit more.

“Hopefully this book will let them do that.”

*Carlina Duan is a senior at Pioneer High School and editor of The Optimist, Pioneer’s student newspaper. She contributes regularly to the AAPSNews.*



# Superintendent: All to feel effects of May 3 county special ed vote

## An OK will maintain services, defeat would cause general education dollars to be used

From AAPSNews Service

On May 3, the Washtenaw Intermediate School District will seek a renewal of .9850 of a mill for seven years to support special education services for students in the 10 local Washtenaw County districts that it serves.

Voters first approved the millage in September 2004 and the renewal is proposed to cover the years 2011-17. The millage renewal will bring in \$14 million countywide, of which \$5.8 million would come to the Ann Arbor Public Schools.

"If that money goes away, we will have to find another way to fund it and that's through the General Fund," said Ann Arbor Interim Superintendent Robert Allen. He has given presentations explaining the impact of the millage both to the school board and at community meetings.

Allen explained that special education services are mandated

by state and federal laws and local school districts are bound also by Individualized Education Programs, or IEPs, which are binding legal documents between a district and families and determined how their children will be educated.

"We look at each individual child and say 'what is the true need?'" Allen said. "We take what's in the best interest for the child."

Money from the millage will be used to continue to reimburse local school districts for special education programs and to help maintain quality services for all students, said WISD Interim Superintendent Richard Leyshock.

"We're seeking the renewal because the demand for special education continues," he said "And, without adequate special education millage, local districts will be required to take increasing dollar amounts from their general operating funds to provide special education programs that are re-

### Ballot language

WASHTENAW INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
SPECIAL EDUCATION MILLAGE RENEWAL PROPOSAL

This proposal will allow the intermediate school district to levy the special education millage previously approved by the electors.

*"Shall the limitation on the amount of taxes which may be assessed against all property in Washtenaw Intermediate School District, Michigan, be increased by .9850 mill (\$0.9850 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation) for a period of 7 years, 2011 to 2017, inclusive, to provide funds for the education of students with a disability (the above is a renewal of millage which expired with the 2010 tax levy); the estimate of the revenue the school district will collect if the millage is approved and levied in 2011 is approximately \$14,000,000?"*

quired by state and federal law."

One in seven – or an average of 3 students in a classroom – receive some type of special education service. Of the 16,569 students enrolled in the Ann Arbor district, 2,093 students are receiving special education services.

These include 602 students with a specific learning disability, 241 with Autism Spectrum Disorder, 548 who are speech and language impaired and 124 who are emotionally impaired. Other students receiving services are those who have a cognitive impairment, severe multiple impairment, a visual or hearing impairment, some with physical or other health impairments and others who are developmentally delayed.

Last year, it cost the Ann Arbor district nearly \$40 million to offer special education instruction and support services including transportation. About

\$20 million of that is reimbursed by the county and, of the \$20 million, \$5.8 million is represented in renewal being asked for on the May 3 ballot.

"It's really an issue of what's best for the kids," Allen added. "The earlier you intervene, the less you'll spend later on. And that person will become a productive member of society."

#### ONLINE RESOURCES:

For a video message from WISD, visit:  
<http://wash.k12.mi.us/movies/SEmillage/semillage.html>

Visit here to download more information about the May 3 millage renewal:  
<http://www.wash.k12.mi.us/adminandcommdept/millage.php>

### Paul Test, from page 4

me, it's all about the relationships. Her encouragement and knowing the players was the key thing for me."

The team's 2011-12 schedule, which includes Catholic powerhouses Warren De La Salle and Birmingham Brother Rice, takes him back on a personal note to the days he played in the league in high school. And De La Salle's coach Paul Verska is a personal friend.

"It is one of the toughest schedules we've had in years," he said. "It's challenging in a good way."

Lorin Cartwright, Pioneer High School athletic director and assistant principal, said she expects it to be an exciting football season with Test at the helm.

"Paul brings to the program integrity, strong foundation of football, solid coaching techniques, excitement and love of the stu-

dents," she said. "Our athletes will be prepared to take on the best of the best football programs."

She explained that Test likes to "two platoon," meaning 22 different positions will be filled by 22 different players – so more athletes will see game time. "Paul will be tough but he will be compassionate with our players," she added.

Test's life philosophy boils down to a basic: "Just trust in

God," he said. "My whole life has been that way." Test said he will enjoy the challenges of his new role this fall, but also relishes what might be just around the corner. "It's neat that life is kind of a work in progress," he added. Casey Hans writes and edits this newsletter for the Ann Arbor Public Schools. E-mail her at [hansc@aaps.k12.mi.us](mailto:hansc@aaps.k12.mi.us) or call 734-994-2090.

## School Bells

For more news and achievements in the Ann Arbor Public Schools, visit [www.a2schools.org/aaps/admin.super/this\\_week](http://www.a2schools.org/aaps/admin.super/this_week) for "This Week in the Ann Arbor Public Schools" from our superintendent.

## April 30 run benefits Huron student

The Eighth Annual Endurance 5K Run and Walk will take place at 9 a.m. Saturday, April 30, at Gallup Park, Fuller Road and Huron Parkway.

Proceeds will benefit Aubrey Hiney, a student at Huron High School with spina bifida and to help pay for her medical needs. The featured speaker at the run will be 2008 Olympic silver medalist Nick Willis.

Registration will take place the day of the race from 8-8:45 a.m. or visit online at: [www.huronhills.org/5Krun](http://www.huronhills.org/5Krun).

## Anti-bullying conference April 29

"Standing Strong Against Bullies: Keeping Our Children Safe on the Playground and in Cyberspace" will take place from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Friday, April 29 at the Washtenaw Intermediate School District, 1819 South Wagner Road, Scio Township.

Presenting will be Glenn Stutzky, a professor of social work at Michigan State University and a nationally-recognized expert on bullying and school violence.

Cost for the program is \$40 for pre-registration by April 25, or \$50 at the door. Students pay \$15 and groups of 5 or more: \$35 each person. Social Work CEUs which will be an additional cost of \$15 and SB CEUs through WISD will be \$10, payable to WISD day of event.

Bullying, the act of willfully causing harm to others through

verbal harassment (teasing and name-calling), physical assault (hitting, kicking, and biting), or social exclusion (intentionally rejecting a child from a group) has been happening for as long as children have gathered in groups. What used to be relegated to school playgrounds is now also showing up in families' living rooms in the form of cyberbullying online.

Estimates by the National Youth Violence Prevention in 2006 say that 30 percent of students either are bullied on a regular basis or are bullies themselves. Research shows that almost one in four children between the ages of 11 and 19 have been the victim of cyberbullying. The same research shows that approximately 65 percent of kids know of someone who has been cyberbullied.

In nationally representative surveys of 10-17 year-olds, twice as many children and youths indicated they had been victims and perpetrators of online harassment in 2005 than in 1999-00.

The conference will examine what bullying is and isn't, what cyberbullying is and how pervasive it has become, and how kids and communities are impacted by bullies. It will teach how to build a caring community by addressing our attitudes toward bullying behavior and discussing practical applications that work, as well as tips and resources that can be used to prevent damaging behavior that doesn't need to be the norm of childhood.

For more information: contact Marcia Dykstra, Program Director: [marcia@washtenawchildren.org](mailto:marcia@washtenawchildren.org) Visit the website [www.washtenawchildren.org](http://www.washtenawchildren.org) for more information, an online brochure and registration.

## Skyline DECA receives awards

Ann Arbor Skyline High School DECA chapter attended the DECA State Career and

Development Conference/Competition for the first time on March 18-20, 2011 in Grand Rapids. The eight students who attended won seven medals and six students qualified to move on to the International Career Development Conference/Competition held in Orlando, Fla. April 28 to May 3.

In addition to the competition, Madison Mayleben was elected as a Michigan State DECA Officer for the 2011-2012 school year.

DECA is a co-curricular program for high school marketing and business students. DECA activities are integrated into Skyline's Business Magnet Program as well as the various business electives including Marketing and Business Fundamentals. The competitive events use interviews, tests, role-plays, case studies and written projects to evaluate marketing and management skills. The program adviser is Diane Fine.

Skyline received the following Chapter Awards:

**Chapter Charter Award** – given for meeting all of the requirements of becoming a new Michigan DECA chapter; Gimme 5 Award – given to chapters with outstanding recruitment activities.

**Leadership Academy Qualifiers** for International Conference in Orlando, FL: Ramya Chinta, Madison Mayleben and Tommy Vaughan.

**Chapter Management Academy Qualifiers** for International Conference in Orlando, FL: Blake Ebright and Dillon Stuart.

**Test Medal** – Top 5 highest test score in event: Dillon Stuart – Principles of Hospitality and Tourism.

**Role Play Medal** – 1st place finish for role-play event: Alex Tennant - Principles of Hospitality and Tourism.

**State Finalists** (Top 10 Overall in Event): Dillon Stuart – Principles of Hospitality and Tourism and Alex Tennant - Principles of Hospitality and Tourism. Team of Blake Ebright, Maddie Mayleben, Celina Stead –

Teamwork and Leadership Event. State Champions (advance to DECA International Competition in Orlando, FL): Team of Blake Ebright, Maddie Mayleben, Celina Stead – Teamwork and Leadership Event.

## 2 seats open on WISD board

Nominating petitions for individuals interested in running for two, six-year terms on the Washtenaw Intermediate School District Board of Education are available at either the WISD offices, 1819 South Wagner Road, Scio Township, or at the Washtenaw County Clerk's office.

Petitioners must file with the Washtenaw County Clerk by Monday, May 9, at which time candidates must also file an affidavit of identity. Nominations require the signatures of between 40-100 Washtenaw County registered voters or payment of a \$100 non-refundable filing fee in lieu of signatures (per Public Act 157 of 2002).

The election is scheduled for June 6 at 7 p.m. Members elected to the WISD Board will begin their terms on July 1, 2011.

The WISD Board of Education is composed of five members who serve staggered, six-year terms. State law says that no more than two seated intermediate school district board members may live in the same local school district.

Terms expiring this year are that of Gregory Peoples and Dayle Wright. Peoples lives in the Lincoln Consolidated School District. Wright lives in the Chelsea School District. Both are planning to seek re-election.

The body electing intermediate school district board members is composed of one member of the board of education from each constituent district, designated by the local board of education. For information, call WISD Interim Superintendent Richard Leyshock, at 734-994-8100, ext. 1301.