Happy Holidays to one and all. Please drive safely in all the hurried busy-ness of the season. Remind young drivers that getting there a couple of minutes later is better than not getting there at all. Safety doesn’t take much time.

If you missed our last PTSA meeting, please try to come when we have Jacque Van Wormer and Officer Judge speak again. Wow! Did they open our eyes! As a parent of teenagers, I find it sometimes difficult to find out what is really happening in “their world.” Ms. Van Wormer talked and showed photos about things we sometimes would rather not face. There are drugs in our community and we need to be vigilant to ensure our children are not caught in that culture. Granted, most of our children are not involved, but they are sometimes exposed to experiences of which we are unaware.

Ms. Van Wormer is the Intervention Manager of the Benton-Franklin Juvenile Justice Center and speaks nationally about the effects of Methamphetamines. Officer Judge is the resource officer at RHS. Between the two of them, we learned a good deal about Methamphetamines in the Tri-Cities.

We would like to invite them back to talk with more parents. Please let us know whether you are more interested in learning about Marijuana or Methamphetamines. A start to helping keep our children armed against the pressures they face is to learn more about what exists in our community and how to identify it. Forewarned is forearmed.

Thought for the month: “Who you are speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say.” ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

KUDOS KORNER:
Thank you so much to the speakers at the last PTSA meeting. Their talk was interesting, informative and enlightening.

Thank you to the following for taking on volunteer duties with the PTSA: Julie Lowery – Reflections (winners to be announced in the January newsletter). Sue Heil – Hospitality (already running with lots of events, including goodies at the Parent-Teacher conferences). Deanna Winterose – Council Representative (she also does this for CMS). Melody O’Neal – as the Audit Committee chair (she’ll be needing two more people to help her). Terrie Cobb, our Vice President, is beginning to look for people willing to serve on the Nominating Committee. Please consider helping us select next year’s officers early so they can plan early. We are still looking for people who would like to be a part of the Drug and Alcohol Awareness committee (contact Janice Miller).
Principal’s Corner
Steve Neill

Richland High School’s staff is continuing to work on a Learning Improvement Plan while the renovation groundbreaking is right around the corner. We are excited and anxious to tackle both projects.

The Staff is currently divided into study groups that are looking at ways to help all students maximize their learning potential. At a March 18th workshop, these groups will present their plans to the entire staff. Then, on May 18th, the Northwest Accreditation Team will visit RHS. This team will review our plan and hopefully give a “thumbs up” approval to continue our accreditation as a high school. Assistant Principal Teri Kessie and the Learning Improvement Team have done a tremendous amount of work and led this charge.

The architectural design work for the renovation is just about complete and the project will go to bid in January. Phase I (300 wing/shop area) construction will begin in February. A very special thanks goes to the entire staff that have spent countless hours planning and preparing.

As we move into the winter session, I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone safe and happy holidays. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 942-2500.

Steve Neill
Steve_Neill@rsd.edu

REFLECTIONS CONTEST UPDATE
LOOK IN THE JANUARY NEWSLETTER FOR A LIST OF THE WINNERS. GOOD LUCK TO THOSE WHO ARE CONTINUING ON TO COMPETITION AT THE COUNCIL (CITY-WIDE) LEVEL!

FROM THE SCHOOL-TO-WORK PROGRAM COORDINATOR:
Mary Kaye Hergert

THANK YOU!

A big thank you to the Richland High School community for your support of mock interview and portfolio exhibition in our Consumer Economics classes. Sixty community volunteers interviewed over 200 of our students and we appreciate their contribution. This activity couldn’t happen without you!

FINANCIAL AID WORKSHOP

On December 14, 2004 at 6:30 pm Richland High School in cooperation with Columbia Basin College will sponsor the annual Financial Aid Night. This workshop will be held in Lecture Room A. It is designed to help parents navigate the FAFSA form. Paper forms and instructions for filing on-line will be available at the session. Senior parents are encouraged to attend!

GETTING YOUR FAFSA PIN

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) arrives this month. All seniors planning to attend an after-high-school education program next fall need to complete this form and submit it after January 1, 2005.

You should plan to complete the form on-line if at all possible. On-line application speeds up the application process by several
weeks. Many schools have February deadlines making speedy application imperative.

On-line application requires that student and parent each have a PIN. The PIN is used to electronically sign your forms. It takes several weeks to get a PIN and it is helpful to get it prior to completing the form.

You can get your PIN by visiting http://www.pin.ed.gov/PINWebApp/pinindex.jsp

**COLUMBIAN NEWS:**
Robin Morris

Parents, it’s not too late to buy a student ad for the Columbian! We still have some blocks left. Each block is $50 and is in color. Please submit your check made out to the Richland School District and your picture and message to room 410 or send to the office in care of the Columbian. You can call us if you have questions – 942-2054. We will take the ads as long as we have blocks available.

**RHS CALENDARS**
Robin Morris

The Columbian is selling school calendars with pictures of Richland High Students as well as their birthdays for $3.00. It’s a great buy for a birthday, Christmas, or just to have. Proceeds from the calendar sale go to help students attend journalism conventions in Atlanta and Seattle. Columbian students are selling the calendars or email or call Robin Morris at 942-2054 to purchase a calendar.

**MORRIS EARNs DOW JONES JOURNALISM AWARD:**

Robin Morris, RHS English teacher and adviser to the school’s newspaper The Sandstorm, has been named a “Distinguished Adviser” in the 2004 Dow Jones Newspaper Fund’s (DJNF) Teacher of the Year Awards. Morris is one of only four journalism advisers nationwide to earn this recognition. In honor of her selection, DJNF is awarding a $500 scholarship to a Richland High senior who is planning to pursue a college journalism degree next fall.

“Robin’s tremendous efforts toward improving journalism education are demonstrated by the achievements of her students,” said Richard Holden, DJNF executive director. The Sandstorm is published 14 times annually and has won numerous awards in recent years including:
- Best of Show from the National Scholastic Press Assoc. (NSPA)
- Pacemaker Award (top award in scholastic journalism) from the NSPA
- Best of Show from the Journalism Education Association (JEA)
- George Gallup Award from Quill and Scroll, the international honorary society for high school journalists.

Morris was named Washington State “Journalism Adviser of the Year” in 1999. She achieved master journalism educator certification from JEA in 1999 and was selected the 2000 Distinguished Journalism Educator of the Year by the Washington Newspaper Publishers Association. “I have a passion for student journalism so I was honored to be selected for this award,” said Morris.

The Dow Jones Newspaper Fund founded in 1958 by editors of The Wall Street Journal to improve the quality of journalism education and the pool of applicants for jobs in the newspaper business. It provides internships and scholarships to college students, career literature, fellowships for high school journalism teachers and publications advisors, and training for college journalism instructors.
RICHLAND HIGH SCHOOL
ELITE FLEET MONTHLY WINNERS
OCTOBER 2004

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<th>DEPARTMENT</th>
<th>ATTITUDE</th>
<th>IMPROVEMENT/CONSISTENCY</th>
<th>EXCELLENCE</th>
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<td>Bryan Caldwell</td>
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<td>Kevin Grummer</td>
<td>Yuriy Grinchuk</td>
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<td>Edgar Arcia</td>
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THANK YOU!

A big THANK YOU to those who helped with the distribution of last months newsletter: parents Robin Berkenbile, Mary Ann Kelley, Jill Meinecke, Bobbie O'Toole Beasley, Machelle Lewis, Connie Shandell; Jill Wulf, her assistants, Jenna Blashi, Kaytlyn Roberts, Lynnsey Amaral, Alison Hoyt, Melinda Holden, and Life Skills Students: Ruthie Brandt, Brett Carey, Ashley Collopy, Emily Derkes, Becky Heard, Mike Soto, Danny Wheeler, Lindsay Wright, Jeff Carpentiere, and Sherry Boucsieguez.

SEPAC NEWS:

Special Education Parent/Professional Advisory Council (SEPAC) would like to invite and welcome parents/staff/professionals/friends and anyone that would be interested in attending our informational meetings. The topic for the December 2, 2004 meeting is Behavior Plans.

The meeting will be held in the Administration Building Boardroom located at 615 Snow Avenue at 7:00pm.

HANFORD SPIRIT DANCE CLINIC:

The Hanford High School Dance Team invites interested K thru 8 students to participate in the Hanford Spirit Dance Clinic on Saturday, December 4, from 9:00am to 3:00 pm. Registration begins at 8:30am in the Hanford High cafeteria. Cost is $15 per student. Students should bring a water bottle and cold lunch.

Each age group (K-1, 2-3, 4-5, and 6-8) will learn a dance routine. Each child will learn basic dance moves and technique. They will also have the opportunity to make spirit headbands to take home at the end of the day. Plus, parents will have the opportunity to watch their children perform during halftime at the Hanford High basketball game in the school gym.
**DISTRICT NEWS:**

Steve Aagaard

*District Refinances 1997 Bonds, $700,000 Savings for Taxpayers*

The Richland School District has refinanced some outstanding bonds in order to take advantage of low interest rates. The refinancing will lower the District’s bond tax rate and that will result in a $700,000 savings to taxpayers over the next 12 years.

The Richland School Board accomplished these savings by approving the issuance of $9.2 million in refunding bonds in late September. Board members had been monitoring bond market conditions throughout the summer. Low interest rates signaled that the time was right for the refinancing move.

Interest rates average 3.5% on the new bonds. That compares to a 5.5% average on the original bonds. The original bonds were issued following the successful 1997 election, which provided $20 million in funding for construction of Wiley Elementary School and renovation of Carmichael Middle School.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:**

Russell Miller

On October 15th and 16th of this year representatives from all Washington State PTAs gathered at the Yakima Convention Center to discuss the future focus of the Washington State PTA. We sent our Legislative Chairperson, Russell Miller, to Yakima to represent Richland High School’s PTA. The objective of this year’s Legislative Assembly was to prioritize the 23 nominated issues based on the needs of our state. During the discussion it was decided, however, that the “shotgun” tactic used in years past, in which many issues we support are lobbied for in Olympia, would no longer work. The new idea was that instead, the Legislative Assembly would nominate the “Top Five” most important issues for our lobbyist, Mary Kenfield, to fight for. Mary Kenfield will still work for all children’s rights issues, but she will not be nominating bills, and starting legislation on any other issues besides the “Top Five” elected issues. Most of the two-day assembly was spent discussing the issues themselves, and in the end the five issues selected became: 1) Simple Majority for School Levies and Bonds 2) Critical Support Components for Education Reform 3) Education Funding Study 4) K-12 School Facilities 5) Support for Programs for Highly Capable Students. Details on these issues, and others can be found on the Washington State PTA’s web page at [www.wastatepta.org](http://www.wastatepta.org). The Washington State PTA, Every Child, One Voice.

**PESTICIDES NOTIFICATION LIST:**

Steve Aagaard

The Richland School District has established a pesticides notification system. Any parents or community members wishing to be notified in advance of pesticide applications at neighboring schools will be placed on a list. Those on the list will be notified via phone, letter or email at least 48 hours before the pesticides are applied. The notice will include the pesticide name, and the date, time and location of the application. The list will be updated yearly. To have your name placed on the Richland School District pesticides notifications list, call 942-2585.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS:**

Dec 2 7:00pm SEPAC meeting Admin. Bldg.
Dec 3 9:40am PEP Assembly
Dec 3 11:00am Battle of the Bands
Dec 4 9:00a-3:00p HHS Spirit Dance Clinic HHS Café
Dec 14 6:30pm Financial Aid Night Lect Rm. A
Dec 20 – Jan 2 WINTER VACATION
Jan 3 CLASSES RESUME