

# WEST WIND

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2      31 JANUARY 2014

## VALENTINE LUNCH BUNCH FEBRUARY 13TH

The 299th gathering of the West High Lunch Bunch at Hillwood Country Club will be a very special event.

This will be our annual Valentine's Day Extravaganza! If you have not been to one, or have not been to one in a while, you are in for a real treat.

Special drawings for the women that will offer unique surprises just for the day. Flowers on the tables, great food and a chance to celebrate a very special day with Bluejays in classes from 1940 through 1968. Nearly every graduating class will be represented so how could you



miss out on such a wonderful event?

There will be time for socializing throughout the day and if that is not enough, please come early and share some special time with people you may not

have seen in a while, or brand new friends you haven't met yet, but share the very same Bluejay heritage as you.

Start time is 11:15, but come early and enjoy the day!

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Basketball at the Middle School February 4th
- Valentine's Day Extravaganza February 13th at Hillwood Country Club
- Informal meeting of all those interested in WESA. Thursday, February 27th, 6:00 p.m. Hopefully in the West Library



## INFORMAL MEETING TO LEARN ABOUT WESA

There will be an informal meeting of any interested in asking questions of the new West End School Association Board of Directors or just want to find out more about the new organization that will be carrying forward the Bluejay tradition in the

years ahead. The meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 27th at 6:00 p.m. I am trying to secure the library at West for the meeting and will let you know as soon as I do. I think it should be large

enough to hold all those interested. Questions, comments or just want to meet the new officers? Bring them, have a wonderful time with your fellow Bluejays and find out what WESA is doing for you!

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

WEST HISTORY	2
WEST HISTORY	3
MIDDLE PTSO	3
SCHOOL GIFTS	3
REUNION	3
MISSION	4
WANT TO HELP?	4

WHIT STOKES,  
CLASS OF 1954,  
WILL WRITE A  
REGULAR  
FEATURE ON THE  
HISTORY OF  
WEST

## WAS IT ALWAYS WEST END HIGH SCHOOL?

The historical plaque at the corner of West End Avenue and Bowling Avenue says the school “opened in 1937” which is also the year I was born. Those two events are not actually related other than to make me feel the school had always been there when I arrived as a student in 1950. I was already familiar with the school because I had two cousins, Leslie Cram (1948) and Kendall Cram (1950), who had already graduated. My brother, Brock Stokes, was two years ahead of me and would graduate in 1952. However, not only had the school not always been there, high school public education had not been a large part of Nashville life until the 1930s when West and several other schools were built.

The first public school in Nashville was Hume which opened in 1855. After the Civil War, Fogg School opened in 1875, and the two schools combined in 1912 to form the only public high school in the City of Nashville. In 1917 Central High School was opened by the Davidson County government and this pair of schools was the only public option available to white students for the

first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Several events combined to change this situation. Mandatory attendance laws began to have an effect and increased demand for schools beyond the elementary level. Also there was a devastating report issued in 1931 by Fred Bachman of Peabody College which pointed out that compared to seventeen other cities Nashville was last in almost every category, including teacher salaries. The onset of the Great Depression threatened to put a halt to the planned improvements, which included the construction of East High School in 1932. But, the federal programs of the New Deal, particularly the Public Works Administration (PWA) came to the rescue. Cohn High School opened in 1936 and the only Negro high school, Pearl High School, got a new building. North High School and West End High School opened in 1937, followed by Howard (1941) in the city and Hillsboro (1939) in the county.

Many West High graduates may remember the PWA plaque on the grandstand at the football stadium.

It was not just schools that benefited from the outpouring of federal dollars, but the Tennessee Supreme Court Building, the State Office Building, and new Post Office (now the Frist Museum) were constructed.

However, the school was almost not named West. As the opening of the school approached in 1937 a school board member proposed that the school be named Hilary E. Howse School after the Mayor. This proposal was voided by the Public Works Administration rule that no PWA project could be named after a living person. So when the school opened in September 1937 there was no actual name for the school, but people called it West End and it appeared the matter would be resolved when the School Board got around to actually naming the school.

But, the Mayor died on January 2, 1938 which made the PWA rule against naming a project after a living person no longer applicable. So the school was officially named Hilary E. Howse High School, but not for very long. Milton Shaver, president of the senior class, appeared (Continued on next page)

## WAS IT ALWAYS WEST HIGH SCHOOL?

before the School Board in March 1938 and presented a petition with 450 signatures protesting the name. Shaver and another student, Walter Beisinger, were quoted in the *Nashville Tennessean* the following day, saying:

“The graduates are ready to buy their own special diplomas with that name just to show

they were graduates from West End.”

The board agreed and the official name of the school, albeit somewhat late, became West End High School. However, students for the next twenty years may have wondered why the curtains on the stage of the auditorium had “HH” in the center. The curtains were or-

dered before the school opened and no one anticipated there would be any objection to the name.

(Whit Stokes, class of 1954, will be writing a regular column for us on the history of our great School.

Currently living in Louisville, Whit regularly attends the monthly Lunch Bunch.)

**All-Class Reunion coming up July 26th, if you have moved in the last two years, please let us know your new address and e-mail!**

## ALUMNI GROUP HELPS MIDDLE SCHOOL PTSO

Our group has been very fortunate over the last couple of months to have forged a strong alliance with the West End Middle School PTSO.

*Mary Sanford, Diana Duren and Amy Lee* have been very generous in allowing us to interact with their group and make it possible to make those wonderful

West T-shirts available for sale to our alumni group.

In return we have helped them work the concession booth at their home football games and basketball games.

At Christmas we also helped the PTSO fill the food baskets that they were sending home with the children attending the school who

would not have much to eat during the Christmas break. They also got a West hoodie to wear as well.

This is just our first year to help the PTSO help the children who now attend our wonderful school. We are looking to doing the concession stand and Christmas baskets again next year, and perhaps even more!

## ALUMNI GROUP HELPS OUR SCHOOL

The West End School Association is always looking for ways to help our school and the children, faculty and staff who are there now.

If you would like to propose a project for the association to consider, please contact one of the board members with as many details

as you can provide so that we can take a look at your suggestion and see how it will fit with our organization.

Since being formed in October, WESA has actively supported the school in many ways—from staffing the concession stand at all three home football games, helping present the homecoming

court during halftime, helping to prepare Christmas food baskets for the needy students and staffing the concession stand at all the home basketball games, we have been hard at work for you and our wonderful school!

Let us know how we can do even more!

Key Club members put the final touches on the overflowing Christmas baskets filled by the home rooms.



We have a strong tradition of helping not only the school, but the com-



## WEST END SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

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Temporary E-mail: [Burton@BKPhoto.com](mailto:Burton@BKPhoto.com)

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IT'S HERE!

[WESTHIGHBLUEJAYS.COM](http://WESTHIGHBLUEJAYS.COM)

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BLUEJAYS CARRYING FORWARD A  
GREAT TRADITION!

## OUR PURPOSE

WESA is organized to be a non-profit organization whose primary purpose is to conduct alumni activities typically associated with graduates from a particular institution of learning.

### Other Specific Purposes

To foster mutual support among the Alumni of West End High School and West End Middle School, Nashville, Tennessee including alumni gatherings, support for those in ill health and passing of WESA participants.

To continue the preservation of the West End physical facility and grounds.

To support the ongoing educational program at West End School by working with the Parent Teacher Student Organization, faculty, students or other interested parties in school activities, fund raising, and mentoring students.

To set an example to all as to why "West is Best".

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## HOPE YOU ENJOYED THE NEWSLETTER

Well, that's all we have for this issue of the revived *West Wind*, we hope you enjoyed it.

The West Wind will be delivered electronically to your inbox on at least a monthly basis and perhaps more often as we have more news to report. (When the Website is up and running, it will also be posted there and will be posted to the West Group on FaceBook as well.)

It is great to be a West High Bluejay, we have accomplished a lot in the years since we graduated and we have a bright and strong

future ahead of us as a group.

This will be a great place for class news, so please pass your information along.

Let us help with the planning for your next reunion by getting the information out quickly to your group.

When we achieve our 501c3 designation, all of your donations to the association will qualify for a tax deduction for you as a charitable contribution.

Looking ahead to serving on the Executive Board? If you are interested,

please reside in Nashville or an area close enough where you can make the quarterly meetings. Active participation is a must as we move forward with some great new projects and some wonderful events for all of us Bluejays to enjoy!

Thanks!

*Burton Dietz*

Burton Dietz  
WESA President



Comments, suggestions and ideas for future issues are always welcome!