



# Our Community Matters

News and Information From Your Schools  
Spring 2005

## Writing is Revision

*Local award-winning author presents to students*

“Writing is revision. WRITING IS REVISION,” students chanted. It is this secret to writing that Portland, Oregon native and award-winning young-adult author Roland Smith asked Woodland students to repeat with him during a one-hour presentation on writing and book publishing.

“Every book starts out bad,” Smith told students in presentations at both the Intermediate and Middle schools. “Every book in your library started with a rough draft,” he added. Smith himself confessed to rewriting or revising some of his books as many as fifteen times before they were published.

Students also learned from Smith that it takes a lot of time and practice to get a book published but anyone can be an author. “If you can read, you can do anything,” he stated. “I was a reader before I became a writer and I’m still a reader. I read 2 or 3 books every week and I’ve done that for over 40 years.”

Each of Smith’s books begins with research, which starts in a library and consists of reading books and examining maps and photographs for ideas and information. Smith then lays out

his story ideas visually on a storyboard. Smith informed students that storyboarding aids the writer with the “sloppy copy” or rough draft. Of course, the rough draft is the most essential part of the writing process and one writers should revisit again and again.

Smith encouraged students to write everywhere they go and to share their work with the most “nitpicking” people they know, like their teachers. “It’s important to have other people correct your work because it makes your work better and you a better writer” Smith assured students.

Woodland students and staff enjoyed Smith’s presentation. “He hit the bulls eye when he talked about revising,” one teacher stated. She continued, “As part of the Step Up To Writing curriculum, Woodland teachers and students spend a great deal of time developing writing skills with work on topic sentences, details, voice, organization, conventions and content. They are encouraged to revise, revise, revise just as Mr. Smith emphasized in his wonderful talk about writing.”

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Dates to

# Remember

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## May 2005

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### Kindergarten Registration

May 2-5 (1-6 PM)

Primary School

*For more information, contact the Primary School Office at 225-9472.*

### Kindergarten Classroom Visits and School Bus Ride

May 3 (3:30 PM - 4:30 PM)

Primary School

### Art Fest

May 17 (6-8 PM)

May 18 (9 AM - 4 PM and 6-8 PM)

May 19 (9 AM - 4 PM and 6-8 PM)

High School Gym and Auditorium

*Come see art, music, drama and dance created by Woodland School District students and local artists.*

### 8th Annual Hot Chili Cool Jazz

May 20 (6 PM)

Intermediate School Gym

*Annual fundraiser that features the B.G. Jazz Choir and a complete chili dinner. For information or to help, contact Paula Vernon at 225-1157.*

### Memorial Day School Holiday

May 30

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## June 2005

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### K-6 Early Release

June 15

Yale (12:10 PM)

Intermediate School (12:35 PM)

Primary School (1:00 PM)

### High School Graduation

June 10

### Last Day of School

June 17

## New School Site Selection on Track

*An inside look at the district's Growth and Facility Improvement Plan*

New residential growth directly impacts schools that serve a community. This is a fact of life for the Woodland School District, which has experienced a forty percent increase in enrollment during the last ten years.

Your school administrators, dedicated school board and I, aware of Woodland's population trend, have spent much time and energy on future growth planning. Our efforts are mapped out in the District's Growth and Facility Improvement Plan. Each year, the plan is reviewed to ensure our schools continue to provide a safe and positive learning environment where all students can maximize their learning potential.

Current planning is focused around increasing instructional capacity and program offerings for our students. Your school board and I spent the better part of the year researching and evaluating facility expansion and remodeling options for buildability and affordability.

We investigated ten new building sites, which we narrowed down to four sites, and examined various remodeling options. What we found was surprising.

Geotechnical engineers ruled out two of the four land sites, one of which is neighboring the current high school and middle school, because the underlying soil is primarily volcanic in nature and prone to liquefaction

during a seismic event. Liquefaction is a phenomenon where the stiffness of the soil is reduced and the space between soil particles is completely filled with water.

We again examined a significant remodeling project at the central campus site to see if it could provide a long-term remedy for our space problem. However, due to the underlying soil conditions and relatively new International Building Code (IBC) requirements, such construction would not meet our affordability criteria.

So where does that leave us?

We are now in final negotiations on a parcel of land that will make a wonderful school site. Once documents are signed we will make the choice public. It is our hope to seek voter approval of a bond to purchase the site in the fall.

Obviously, purchase of this site is a bit time sensitive as new forty acre sites meeting our buildability and affordability criteria are increasingly hard to find. We must secure a site now for the long-term benefit of the District.

As always, your school board and I value your input. Please don't hesitate to contact us with questions or comments regarding the District's Growth and Facility Improvement Plan.



William W. Hundley  
Superintendent of Schools

## WASL Testing Begins

From April 18-May 6, Woodland students will take the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) and show educators and their parents how well they are learning the state's reading, writing, math and science academic standards.

Did you know that Washing-

ton teachers write all of the questions used on the WASL? Did you know trigonometry and calculus are NOT tested on the 10th-grade math WASL? To learn more about the test and view WASL test items, check out the Partnership for Learning web site ([www.partnership4learning.org](http://www.partnership4learning.org)).

The Woodland Intermediate and Middle Schools invited Smith to speak to students as part of a celebration of National Library Week, commemorated annually in April.

Smith is an award-winning author of books for children and young adults. Some of his books that have won awards include: *Jaguar* (Wash-

ington State's Sasquatch Reading Award 2000 and Children's Choice 1998) and *Thunder Cave* (Young Reader's Choice 2002).

Prior to becoming a full time author, Smith worked as a zookeeper, curator of mammals and birds, zoo director and senior research biologist.



## Getting to Graduation

### *Taking a look at the Culminating Project*

Starting with the class of 2008, all Washington public high school graduates must fulfill four new graduation requirements. Students will have to complete the credit requirements of the high school curriculum, pass all content areas of the 10th grade WASL tests, draft a high school education plan outlining post-high school plans and complete a culminating project.

While all aspects are equally rigorous, it is the culminating project that inspires the most fear and raises the most questions among students and parents alike.

The culminating project is a learning project that helps students understand the connection between school and the real world by studying a topic of interest and presenting their findings to teachers and community members.

Woodland School District initiat-

ed the culminating project as a graduation requirement for the class of 2007 prior to the state's mandate.

Woodland's culminating project is designed as a four year venture students begin upon entering high school. It includes a series of oral presentations, the creation of a "best works" portfolio, an 11th grade research paper, and a service-learning project.

Students complete the culminating project in 12th grade with a final oral presentation to a panel of community members. The presentation covers the student's service-learning project and portfolio of best works.

Woodland staff work with students each year to ensure they are on track and have the tools necessary to successfully complete their project.

For more information on the project and how to support your child, call the high school at 225-8201.

## Achievement

# Matters

## School District Receives Award

Woodland School District recently received the new Academic Improvement Award from OSPI for increasing the success and achievement of its students.

Woodland was one of twenty-two districts in the region that qualified for the award by increasing by 10 percent the number of students meeting the state's standards in reading, mathematics or writing as assessed by the WASL.

"It is a pleasure to call attention to the tremendous gains being made in hundreds of Washington schools and districts," said State Superintendent Dr. Terry Bergeson. "We need to celebrate the fact that thousands more students each year are learning the skills and knowledge they need. This is a time to recognize the investments made by educators and parents, and praise our students for working diligently, too."

Award recipients received a wall plaque with room to add brass plates for each future year the award is achieved. Woodland Superintendent Bill Hundley accepted the award for the district.



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# Woodland Schools Wait for Final Vote on Impact Fees

At a public hearing on March 27 with approximately 70 Woodland-area residents in attendance, Cowlitz County Commissioners announced they would reconsider the district's request to impose impact fees on new construction.

Impact fees are not a property tax but a one-time fee charged to developers for each new house and apartment unit built. Woodland school officials desire implementation of impact fees as a way to mitigate the community's rapid student population growth.

Washington state's Growth Management Act authorizes the collection of impact fees in counties with high population growth, such as Clark County, where all nine districts charge similar fees. The law does not apply to Cowlitz County, but the school district argues that the State Environmental Policy Act justifies collecting the fees on new development in Cowlitz County even though it is not classified as experiencing rapid growth. The Woodland School District straddles Clark and Cowlitz counties and is the fastest growing district in Cowlitz County.

Cowlitz County Commissioners will hold a public hearing in the next several weeks to vote on the measure, which would apply only to development within school district boundaries.

This is second time the district has asked commissioners for approval of impact fees. In a March 2000 advisory vote, Woodland voters approved growth impact fees with a 67 percent yes vote.

Following the initial vote, the district received approval from Clark County and the city of Woodland but Cowlitz County in a 2-1 vote refused the collection of growth impact fees.

## How Impact Fees Work

Impact fees are charged directly to the developers of new residential housing. Let's say for example a builder purchased a 40-acre site and built 107 new homes. If the fee per home were \$2,000, the school district would collect \$214,000 to be used toward increasing instructional capacity (i.e., purchasing land for a new building or remodeling existing facilities).

## Woodland Patron

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