

West 40 is on the Move!

It's an exciting time for West 40: A move to new quarters is on the horizon! After 12 years at Riverside | Brookfield High School, West 40 is relocating its offices, but won't be moving far.

The move is anticipated to take place near the end of May. **West 40's new home will be Forest Road East School, 928 Barnsdale, LaGrange Park, School District 102.** It is located

between Thirty-first and Harding, six blocks east of Mannheim Road and just west of the Belt Line Railroad tracks. West 40 will occupy seven classrooms in the building with one devoted to PBIS (Positive Intervention and Support), an agency associated with West 40.

A majority of the West 40 professional development programs will be held on the new site beginning with the upcoming summer session.

As always, some programs will be held at locations in other districts. New phone numbers for West 40 are pending as we go to press. An announcement with the new phone numbers and a reminder of the new address will be mailed to school districts shortly. Watch for an invitation to an open house to visit West 40's new home. One thing won't change: West 40 will continue to offer the high-quality



programs and assistance you've come to expect over the years. ■

Technology Wizard Gerry Zeller to Retire

An icon of technology is about to leave West 40. Technology Consultant Gerry Zeller will bid farewell to many friends when he retires on June 30. Gerry came to West 40 as the technology consultant and has held that position for 15 years. As technology has grown, so has his knowledge. He credits listening and networking with peers for successfully staying on top of the technology learning curve, no easy task in a field with unparalleled growth and change.

He has aided West 40 schools in many state-directed technology initiatives, providing information, guidance, assistance with grants, and general problem solving. Gerry has helped schools design state-required three-year technology plans and identified ways for teachers to incorporate technology into their classrooms. The programs he implemented have been both area wide and district specific, from grant writing training to transitioning from one computer platform to another. Once a month he hosted a meeting for technology educators to share ideas and information; guest speakers have presented topics that include information on federal and state programs, presentations of new

Continued on p. 4...

Gerry is famous for untangling computer problems. Here, he is undaunted by masses of wire and cable.



Professional Development Continues in Summer!

Check out West 40's Summer Professional Development Catalog arriving in schools in April.

You'll find 36 pages with exciting programs with CEU or CPDU credit for certification. Or visit the West 40 website:

www.west40.k12.il.us

West 40 Regional Safe School Program Thrives

The Regional Safe School Program administered by West 40 is still going strong. During the first semester of the 2002-2003 school year, 182 students attended the West Cook County alternative schools for at-risk middle and high school students. Maritza Guilamo, the West 40 Regional Safe School Coordinator, reports this number will likely increase in spring when, traditionally, more adolescents face expulsion from their home schools.

This year the West 40 Regional Safe School program received a federal Title 4 Grant. The grant will be used to expand community service programs by Safe Schools' students. Community service by students is an integral component of the Regional Safe School curriculum. Because of the grant, high school students at the West 40 Regional Safe Schools will now be able to participate in the Linus project, making security blankets for hospitalized children. (West 40 Regional Middle School students already participate in Linus.) In addition to Linus, students will have the opportunity to participate in projects for Habitat for Humanity and collect food and toiletries for the homeless through the Night Ministry. Some students are engaged in an oral history project with their community's elderly. The grant will strengthen and expand these programs as well.

A Look at the Schools

BEACONS Academy, a program that served Oak Park-River Forest High School closed January 17. Students are now being served in an in-school alternative education program held at OPRF. A former BEACONS instructor teaches this program.

MOMENTS, previously housed in Lyons, moved to the former BEACONS Academy building in Oak Park. Guilamo stated that this move provides MOMENTS students with better equipment and a location closer to their communities and home schools of Ridgewood High School and Elmwood Park High School. Currently, 26 students are in the program.

TALENTS continues to serve students from the Proviso High Schools at two

sites located in Bellwood and Maywood. Fifty-six students were enrolled during the first semester.

Morton Alternative School serves students from Morton High School. Located in Cicero, 36 students have benefited from the program so far this year.

The Riverside | Brookfield High School Late School is located onsite. It served 21 students last semester.

The Regional Middle School in Lyons had 16 students during the first semester. This is double the number of students it had a year earlier, which was the school's first year of operations.

Fourteen high school students in the West 40 RSSP graduated at the end of the first semester. Each received a high school diploma from

his/her home school.

"Alternative schools provide much needed services," Guilamo explained, "not only to the high school and middle school students in these programs, but to communities. Without these programs, these teens could be in the streets with limited education and limited opportunities, getting into trouble. It is a second chance. For many, it is even an opportunity to excel. Also, our alternative schools help students and their families by providing social services and other resources they otherwise might not receive, or would receive at their communities' expense."

For information on the West 40 Regional Safe School Program, contact Maritza Guilamo at 708/447-6070.

West Cook "Those Who Excel" Winners

In March, the State Board of Education honored 296 of the state's outstanding teachers, administrators, support service personnel and community members for their contributions to education with the 29th annual "Those Who Excel/Illinois Teacher of the Year" awards.

The categories for recognition were classroom teacher; school administrator; student support personnel; education service personnel; and school board member/community volunteer.

For the third year, teams were also recognized. A team is a group of teachers and administrators; citizens' committees; civic organizations; parent organizations; school boards; booster clubs and others that have a significant impact on teaching and learning in a school or district.

"Those Who Excel" recipients receive either the Award of Excellence, the Award of Merit, The Award of Recognition or the Certificate of Appreciation. Winners are nominated from their local schools.

A committee of peers chooses the award winners, based on:

- **How the nominee has demonstrated excellence in his or her duties**
- * **How the nominee has demonstrated concern for children**
- * **Positive effects the nominee has had on the school environment**

Continued on p. 4...

2003 School Citizen of the Year Awards

On March 19, West 40 hosted its eighth annual School Citizen of the Year (SCOTY) Awards, held at the Riverside | Brookfield High School auditorium. Seventy-six students in grades two through twelve from West Cook County schools were recognized as “good school citizens and models for others to emulate.” Grades and participation in activities were important, but only a small part of the selection process. Each school could choose only one SCOTY Award winner.

At the ceremony an auditorium full of teachers, administrators, parents, family and friends joined in celebration. Students walked on stage when their names were called and received a certificate, medal, and a copy of the School Citizen of the Year Honor Roll. The Honor Roll includes a brief biography of each student. Congratulations to the 2003 SCOTY Award recipients!

For a complete list of the 2003 SCOTY Award winners please visit the West 40 website: West40.k12.il.us

Jessica McElroy (pictured with her mother) has won the SCOTY Award twice; first as an eighth grade student at Hillside School, and now as a high school student at Proviso West. Jessica, who has a WGTD GPA of 4.46, is involved with many student activities, including symphonic, marching and jazz band; Spanish Honor Society; Math Club, Key Club and National Honor Society. She will attend Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism this fall.

West 40 Regional Middle School Director Karen Hemann with the school's SCOTY recipient, Karen Castro.



Kate Kenahan, SCOTY recipient from Riverside | Brookfield High School (pictured with her father) is not only a dedicated student (4.5 GPA), but is articulate, poised and enthusiastic. She is considering a double major in college — science and linguistics — and is contemplating a career in diplomacy.



In Memoriam: Richard Latta, 1946-2003

Sadly, a teacher whose accomplishments were recognized in the “Educators Accolades” feature of the last **WestWinds** newsletter passed away just as the issue was being mailed.

Richard Latta, science teacher at Forest Park, District 91, suffered a heart attack on January 1. A graduate of Illinois Benedictine College, he taught at Forest Park for 34 years, simultaneously, authored a number of educational puzzle and maze books and four supplementary curriculum books. He also contributed poetry, short stories and articles to more than 55 journals. His work has been read on radio in the U.S. and Canada.

Forest Park PE teacher Fred O'Connor stated, “Richard was a quiet, humble, man who was very professional. He loved children, teaching, and science and was very family-oriented.” Latta and his wife, Mary (who was the former mayor of Plainfield) raised four daughters. Poems he wrote for his daughters and all of his publications, were displayed at his wake. “I was amazed at the number of books he authored,” O'Connor remarked. “Even his closest coworkers had no idea of the extent of his writing.”

Latta's interests ranged from cooking to music trivia. He was also an avid photographer, whose pictures were used as learning aids in class. “Whatever he could do to help kids learn — if it was writing a book or taking a photo — he would take it upon himself to do,” O'Connor remarked. The entire West 40 community sends its sincere condolences to his wife, daughters, and four grandchildren.

Superintendents Breakfast

West 40 will kick-off the 2003-2004 school year with its annual Superintendent's Breakfast. All superintendents within the West 40 service area are invited for food and an opportunity to meet. This year, the breakfast will be held on August 15, 2003, in our new location. Further information will be sent to superintendents in summer.

Technology Wizard Gerry Zeller to Retire *Continued*

technology and promising applications, and demonstrations of real world technology into the teaching and learning process.

Perhaps most importantly, he has overseen professional development in technology for West Cook educators. During the past 10 years, Gerry estimates West 40 has given 900 classes, programs, workshops and events in technology that offered myriad subjects to approximately 9,000 attendees. All of the subject matter was geared to the specific needs of teachers and developed with the input of numerous district technology directors — some nationally

known — who teach the professional development courses. Offerings have varied from those that help scared old timers turn a computer on to those that teach the adventuresome to animate a smiley face on a website, all with the intent of improving teaching and learning.

Prior to his tenure at West 40, Gerry worked as a junior high teacher for 22 years. In his first position in the Pilsen area of Chicago he taught all subjects — including music, art and physical education. Several years later he was hired as a junior high math teacher in Avoca School District 37. He worked there for 18 years,

14 as the District Media Specialist. He has a BS from Loyola University and a Master's of Arts in Instructional Media from Northwestern Illinois University.

Although Gerry has no particular plans for retirement, he is looking forward to having the time to explore a variety of interests. He is also looking forward to spending more time with his wife, Patricia, and their three grown children.

However, he will miss his many friends — his coworkers and the technologists of the West 40 area schools. "They are phenomenal people," Gerry stated. "I have enjoyed working with them all." ■

West Cook "Those Who Excel" Winners

Continued

- * Leadership shown by the nominee to inspire others to achieve
- Achievement of the nominee beyond what would be expected as part of his or her normal duties.

Congratulations to the West Cook 2003 "Those Who Excel" recipients:

Bataan Committee Research Project, Proviso High School District 209, Maywood, Award of Excellence. **Marcia J. Cullins**, educational service personnel, Oak Park District 97, Certificate of Appreciation. **Dianne Duner**, LaGrange Highlands District 106, Award of Recognition. **Patric Den Hartog**, community volunteer, Oak Park District 97, Award of Merit. **Kevin Gilchrist**, administrator, Proviso District 209, Maywood, Award of Merit. **Susan D. Harris**, teacher, Elmwood Park Community District 401, Certificate of Appreciation. **Theresa L. Kelly**, Board member, Proviso High School District 209, Maywood, Award of Excellence. **Holly Lundquist**, teacher, Rhodes District 84.4, River Grove, Certificate of Appreciation. **M.P.A.C.T. Team**, Ridgewood High School District 234, Norridge, Award of Recognition. **Susan B. Merz**, teacher, Oak Park District 97, Award of Excellence. **Toni Pemberton**, teacher, Ridgewood High School District 234, Norridge, Certificate of Appreciation. **PING! Team**, Oak Park District 97, Award of Merit. **Bonita E. Ryan**, educational service personnel, Ridgewood High School District 234, Norridge, Award of Merit. **Jennifer Snyder**, student support personnel, Ridgewood High School District 234, Certificate of Appreciation. **Felicia Starcks**, administrator, Oak Park District 97, Award of Merit. **Debra Suhajda**, Rhodes District 84.5, River Grove, Certificate of Appreciation. **Larry J. Thomas**, teacher, Westchester District 92.5, Certificate of Appreciation. ■

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