

KANAWHA IN REVIEW

Publication: THE CHARLESTON GAZETTE
Published: Wednesday, August 11, 2010
Page: 33
Byline: NOT AVAILABLE

The following Kanawha Valley Neighbors-related news and feature items were among those published in recent editions of The Charleston Gazette, Charleston Daily Mail, Saturday Gazette-Mail and Sunday Gazette-Mail:

Nitro approves \$25,000 for flag fund

Nitro City Council members decided Tuesday, Aug. 3, to donate \$25,000 to the Veterans Flag Fund to finish a veterans memorial under construction at the corner of 21st Street and 1st Avenue.

There are 13 flags standing in an oval pattern on the site and, according to Councilman Bob Fields, there will a pentagon-shaped stone monument erected in the center with bronze plaques on each side, representing each branch of armed service.

Several council members have donated funds to purchase four benches that will stand on each side of the memorial.

"We are a World War I memorial town and we should be proud of that," Councilman Joe Savilla said.

In other business, student Jason Spencer thanked council members for their help in renting the **Nitro** Community Center Gymnasium for the Hallie Smith Benefit Ball on Saturday at 7 p.m.

According to Spencer, admission to the ball is a \$10 donation. Anyone wishing to donate can contact St. Paul's United Methodist Church on 20th Street at 304-755-3561.

Hallie Smith was a 23-year-old student who died of malignant melanoma in April. Her friends and family have raised money to cover her medical expenses.

"This young lady has touched a lot of lives and to see this generation go to this effort to help deserves recognition," said Councilman Jim McKay, choking up. "I'm very proud of these young people."

(The Charleston Gazette)

Nitro, Andrew Jackson principals retire

Kanawha Board of Education members on Monday, Aug. 2, voted to accept **Nitro** High Principal Paul

McClanahan's retirement. He submitted his intention to retire last week, a move that surprised many and upset some in the school system.

McClanahan has headed **Nitro** High since 1981.

"He was an excellent principal. He's dedicated a lot of years to helping kids reach their potential," Kanawha Superintendent Ron Duerring said. "He will be missed."

But Board of Education President Pete Thaw said he was caught off guard by McClanahan's sudden departure and isn't pleased with his timing.

"Wasn't it nice, that he waited until August to retire?" Thaw said. "It's very tough to have a principal quit a month out.

"We'll have a principal in that seat before school opens, but it's not the best-case scenario. We would prefer that principals give us due and timely notice," he continued. "We like to know because the school's going to open in three weeks."

Human Resources Director Carol Hamric says the Board of Education offers an incentive to retiring employees to submit their retirements early. If employees notify the school system of their departure before December they receive a \$500 bonus when they leave and get to keep their optical and dental insurance for six extra months.

Hamric said that incentive does not apply to principals, however.

Duerring said he doesn't expect a problem at **Nitro**, though. He said one of the school's assistant principals would take over as acting principal until the county advertises the position and hires a new principal.

Board members also voted Monday to accept Andrew Jackson Middle School Principal Lisa Woo's retirement.

Woo, who submitted her retirement to the Kanawha school board last week, was recently removed from her post at the middle school pending an investigation, the nature of which has not been released.

"There's an investigation going on, and I can't comment until the investigation is complete," Thaw said last week.

Duerring wouldn't comment either, citing a "personnel issue."

Reached at his office Monday afternoon, Duerring was similarly tight-lipped about Woo's retirement.

"People have a right to retire," he said.

Employees must meet the "85 rule" to receive full retirement benefits - that is, their age and years of experience must add up to 85.

Hamric said the school district hired Woo in May 1975. She said she isn't allowed to release employees' ages.

The county isn't advertising the Andrew Jackson principal position yet, Hamric added.

Meantime, Rhonda Donohoe, the school's former vice principal, will serve as acting principal. Dorothea Fuqua will serve as the acting vice principal.

Board members also voted Monday to place former Dupont Middle social studies teacher John Lipscomb at Andrew Jackson, filling the assistant principal job Robert Somerville recently vacated.

Woo served as Andrew Jackson's principal since 2004. She previously worked as an assistant principal at South Charleston Middle, a teacher at Horace Mann and a community education coordinator at Sissonville High School.

She most recently led the charge to make Andrew Jackson an "innovation zone" through last year's School Innovation Zone Act. Woo and the school's teachers gave up that push because the state's deadline for innovation zone applications came too soon for the school to get its application and community together.