



# WHAA NEWSLETTER

*Pride and Tradition*

Volume 1 Issue 3

Third Quarter 2013

## WHAA Presentation



In the Fall of 2013, John DeMarco, President of the Westmont Hilltop Alumni Association, presented a check for \$100 to Greg Gagon of the Westmont Hilltop Soccer Boosters to be used towards the soccer facilities.

**CLASS REUNIONS:** If you know of an upcoming WHHS class reunion, please let us know and we will post information about it on the WHAA website and Facebook page. If you are responsible for the planning of your class reunion, please email us at [WestyAlumni@gmail.com](mailto:WestyAlumni@gmail.com)

**WHHS CLASS OF 2013:** Don't forget to sign up for your free four year membership in the WHAA!

## ABOUT THE WHAA

**Your Westy Pride doesn't end when you graduate!**

An enthusiastic group of alumni spanning more than 50 years have come together to establish the Westmont Hilltop Alumni Association. This organization will serve both the alumni and current students and families at Westmont in various ways:

- Planning alumni events at key times of year, providing opportunities for graduates to reconnect, network and have fun
- Offering support and resources to class representatives who are planning reunions
- Promoting current school activities, athletics and other events to the alumni community
- Connecting alumni and current students for college and career planning
- Raising funds to provide financial support for projects, updated materials, new equipment and supplies and upgraded technology for current students and teachers

## Coming Events

The Westmont Hilltop Alumni Association is currently working on the following future events:

A fundraiser **Cornhole Tournament**, to be held at the Grove in Westmont.

A Westmont Hilltop High School **All-Class Reunion**, to be held in conjunction with 2014 homecoming weekend.

For more details on these and other events, please visit the WHAA website!

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## *Official WHAA*

Many of you have joined various Westmont Hilltop alumni groups. Their membership fees and profits only benefit the website owners. The WHAA is acknowledged by the school district; there's even a link to our site on the district page! We are the only group actively working to benefit the students and faculty at Westmont.

The WHAA is currently developing guidelines to award at least one scholarship a year to a graduating senior, beginning with the class of 2014.

We will assist academic, athletic and arts programs in all our schools, to help offset expenses not covered by school budgeting.

Plans for an all class reunion at next year's Homecoming game/weekend are in the works. Mark your calendars for October 17 and 18, 2014.

Tailgating at home football games has helped us continue to make our presence known, and increased our donations and memberships.

So, before you pay a membership fee at a site like Alumniclass.com, think about who should benefit from your donation. Join us at [www.WestyAlumni.com](http://www.WestyAlumni.com).

## *Welcome New Teachers*

### **2013-2014 Elementary School**

Miss Mary Rhoades - Kindergarten Teacher  
Mrs. Mallory Kupchella - Grade 3 Teacher  
Mr. Scott Reininger - Grade 4 Teacher

Mr. Tim Harrigan transferred from the Middle School to replace Mr. Benford

### **2013-2014 Middle School**

John Hardesty- Grade 7 Social Studies  
Scott Bennett- MS Learning Support  
Kathleen Allard- MS Music  
Greg Hastings- Grade 5  
Seth Matthews- MS Health and Phys. Educ.  
Allison Felix- Grade 8 Science

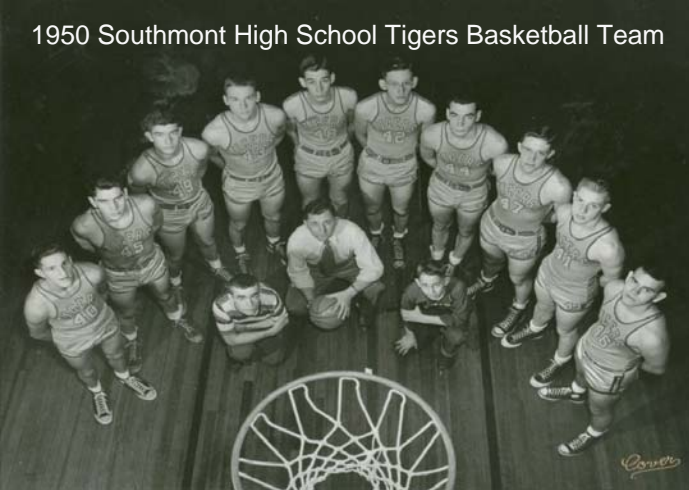
## *Elementary School Notes*

Westmont Hilltop Elementary School received a grant to promote physical fitness. Mrs. Joan Ponzurick, our school nurse, applied for the grant on behalf of our school. Therefore, WHES began "The 100 Mile Club" initiative at the start of the year. The goal is for students to walk at total of 100 miles throughout the school year, during the school day. The plans for reaching this goal include staff escorting students back to class by taking the long way and walking outside in designated areas prior to and after recess time during the week. Each grade level is off to a fast start and on pace for achieving their goal.



## From Yesteryear ...

1950 Southmont High School Tigers Basketball Team



## WESTMONT HILLTOP ALMA MATER

*Dear Alma Mater we sing to you,  
sing of your kindness your power too.  
We glory in your name, your works to view,  
Dear Alma Mater, we sing to you.  
Dear Alma Mater we sing to you,  
pledging our loyalty our vows renew.  
Your name we'll ever love, your precepts true.  
Dear Alma Mater, we sing to you.*

Written by Willard E. Ackley, the supervising principal

## 2013 WHHS Tailgating ...



The Westmont Hilltop Alumni Association held tailgating parties at the Middle School for the home football games on:

August 31st 2013 vs Forest Hills  
September 14th vs Greater Johnstown  
September 28th vs Bedford.

Special thanks to everyone who helped and joined in the festivities!!!





# Hillstopper Alumni in the Military Spotlight ...

## Lt. Col. Joe Cieslo, WHHS Class of 1987

I am about 9 x working days out from retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel and will officially become a civilian on 1 DEC 2013. I am an Army Soldier and Special Forces (Green Beret) commander. I've had a good number of deployments and overseas travel, which include Korea, Germany, Bosnia, Serbia, Croatia, Hungary, Bolivia, Colombia, Qatar, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan x 3. I've done the Army Ranger School and am a qualified Master Parachutist/Jumpmaster. My last assignment brought me here to Fort Leavenworth, KS, where I was an instructor at the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) for Army and other services' officers in the Intermediate Level Education (ILE) course....this is in essence Army officer's mid-career course, i.e. those officers with about 9-10 years in service after they've been commissioned and are now young MAJs or senior CPTs.

My wife was an Army Captain and an Iraq Vet with one of our Spec Ops support units when she resigned her commission in '08. She would have loved to remain in the service, but we had to make some hard decisions with having 3x kids and being out the door constantly.

We will (hopefully) be doing some overseas travel in the next couple months...maybe take advantage of Air Force global flights while I'm still Active Duty. After the New Year's, we'll be getting in our RV and conducting a Figure 8 all around the United States for 5 x months. When the pass is clear in mid-May, we'll take the ALCAN Highway up north, through Canada and be moving to Alaska.

Lt. Col. Joe Cieslo (WHHS Class of 1987)

Organized by his wife, Candace, Joe had the special honor of being formally recognized and throwing out the ceremonial first pitch at the Friday, August 30th, 2013 Pittsburgh Pirates game at PNC Park. A number of Joe's classmates and friends

from Westmont Hilltop joined him and his family in this special occasion.



## *Hillstopper Alumni in the Military Spotlight ...*

### **Nicholas J. Krupa (WHHS class of 2007)**

I was transferred this past summer and am now assigned in San Juan Puerto Rico with the U.S. Coast Guard. Next Thursday will mark exactly 6 years since I joined and am planning on staying in the Coast Guard until retirement.

I recently completed the NAUI Basic SCUBA diver course and am a certified basic SCUBA diver and my next goal is to learn to surf and kiteboard. My official title is YN2 which stands for Yeoman Second Class. My job entails pretty much H.R. work doing pay and personnel administration. I am actively involved with the Coast Guard Enlisted Association which is an association for junior enlisted personnel in the Coast Guard to participate in community service projects and fun activities to bring junior personnel closer together. Prior to my transfer to San Juan, I was still involved in the metro Washington, DC area with advocating for anti-bullying.

### **Danielle and Cara Pozun (Both WHHS Class of 2005) are both captains in the air force.**

Danielle is stationed at Camp Leatherneck in Afghanistan. She is an intel specialist providing air support for troops on the ground.

Cara is a pilot stationed in Little Rock, Arkansas. She flies C-130's and expects to be deployed to Afghanistan in early 2014. Cara recently completed the Air Force Marathon in at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and came in 2nd of all female active duty military participating(over 1000). Hope this helps for your newsletter.

### **Greg Clemenson (WHHS class of 1984)**

Master Gunnery Sergeant (E9) US Marine Corps. Currently serving at Camp Lejeune NC as the II MEF (second Marine Expeditionary Force) as the senior Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Defense Chief. Been in almost 23 years now. 2 tours in Iraq in 2003 and 2004. Last big adventure was running the operations monitoring radiation and directing protection and decontamination of personnel and military vehicles, equipment and aircraft during the Japanese tsunami and nuke reactor incident.

### **Christopher John Barczak (WHHS class of 1999)**

Army reserves 1999 - Pitt main campus, where he joined reserves - deployed to Iraq January 2002- 475th core master, petroleum supply, rank E5. Returned to USA 4/12/04 - Came home and stayed in reserves several years & retired.

### **Shawn Springer (WHHS class of 2000)**

Entered the United States Coast Guard on 6/26/2001 and currently still in. Since I have been in the USCG I have served in Cleveland, OH, Yorktown, VA, Staten Island, NY, Manama, Bahrain, Camp Patriot, Kuwait, St. Petersburg, FL and currently stationed in Cape May, NJ.

### **Michael Grados (WHHS class of 1997)**

I graduated 2001 from the Air Force Academy. After pilot training in Georgia and Texas, I flew the KC-135 tanker in Okinawa, Japan for three years.

Next, I moved to Las Vegas to fly the MQ-1 predator, which is the remotely piloted aircraft you hear about in the news so often. After two years of that, I moved to Alamogordo, NM to become a formal training unit instructor of the MQ-9 (the newer, bigger brother of the MQ-1). I was there at Holloman AFB for three years.

In order to get back to the north east, to be closer to home, I left active duty and joined the NY air national guard to continue being a training unit instructor pilot of the MQ-9.

## *Hillstoppers Making Us Proud ...*

Congratulations to Westmont Hilltop High School girls soccer player **Shyleigh Hughes**, who exemplified the spirit of Westmont Hilltop. Her class and respect during a soccer game earned herself, and the school, this commendation from one of the officials of that game.

*Dr. Anderson, Mr. Mitchell, and Mr. Callahan,*

*I was one the PIAA Soccer Officials at the Westmont Hilltop verses Greater Johnstown match on October 7, 2013. The final score of the match was 7-0 Westmont. However, it is not always the final score that reveals the quality of the players and their sportsmanship. While I offer you my compliments on the behavior of your entire girls team, I want to specifically note the outstanding sportsmanship of Player #2 on your girls varsity. I believe her first name is Shiley.*

*It was quite obvious that the Westmont Hilltop player #2 is very talented at soccer. She had numerous shots on goal and was instrumental in the victory. However, it was some other actions by this player that were extraordinary. Several times during the match, your player #2 offered compliments and words of encouragement to the Johnstown goalkeeper for her outstanding saves on shots towards the Johnstown goal. Later in the match, the Westmont Hilltop player #2 was feeding the ball to other team members, avoiding the opportunity to run up the score and perhaps pad her personal statistics.*

*I spoke with player #2 and her head coach after the post-game handshake between teams. I complimented her on her display of sportsmanship. At a time when outstanding behavior can be overshadowed by a few negative incidents, I believe it is important that the positive situations are recognized and celebrated. This display of sportsmanship reflects great credit on Westmont Hilltop, your player #2 and is an outstanding example for other players in all sports.*

*Congratulations to Westmont Hilltop girls on their victory....and further congratulations to your player #2 for her outstanding sportsmanship.*

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**Aaron Marko** was accepted to the NAFME Nationals Honor Ensemble for Concert Band which will meet in October of 2013 in Nashville. We have not had a student qualify for nationals in at least the past decade. This is quite an accomplishment, and I thought some of you would want to acknowledge his success.

# *The Westmont Impact*

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**Westmont Hilltop High School** has provided me with fond memories and a solid foundation to build my future. When I remember my high school years, many things stand out; enjoying an outdoor lunch break with my classmates, appreciating the view of the cheerleaders at sporting events, and throwing the shot put and discus at track meets. More than anything, I remember the people who helped to shape my future through their varying influences on me as a student.

The small class sizes at WHHS allowed for great student-teacher interaction. These teachers not only taught us the curriculum, but further instilled a desire to learn and pay attention to detail. There were several teachers that stand out, and have influenced my educational path and performance.

Nick Jacobs, my music instructor, believed in, and motivated his students, to give every effort to go from good to great. He inspired me to do more than only what was required to meet expectations, but to reach for and believe in myself to achieve the highest expectations possible. This lesson I carried with me throughout my college career and achieved University Scholar at the University of Pittsburgh my junior and senior years, and graduated with Summa Cum Laude honors.

Andy Swedler taught me much more than chemistry. One of the most valuable lessons learned, was something I have come to refer to as “punting”. Mr. Swedler felt that if you are having a bad day and cannot achieve a desired task successfully, not to give up due to frustration, but to stop, and try again “fresh” another day. This is a concept I have applied throughout my life and can attribute many successes, despite the frustrations exhausted along the way.

WHHS prepared me well academically for my college career. My senior classes were very much the equivalent to those of my freshman year of college, which gave me an edge over many of my lesser prepared peers. A final aspect that attributed to my educational growth, was the participation and interaction of the parents. The parents in the WHHS district were very approachable and willing to discuss their careers with us kids. This was valuable in helping me select my career as a dentist.

Dr. John Ridella, DMD (WHHS Class of 1979)

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## *Welcome*

### **Alumni Members**

Eric Anderson  
Nathan Catanese  
Kimberly (Rummel) Melachrinos  
Christopher Patton  
Ed Elston  
Sharon (Merritts) Fetzer  
Christopher Rupert

### **Business Sponsors**

Número Uno

### **Associate Members**

Doris Liebfried



## *Class of 1963 Gift to Class of 1960*

The Class of 1960's Scholarship Fund got a big boost from the members of the Class of 1963, who recently celebrated their 50th Reunion.

Representatives of the class of 1963 are donating \$2000 to the class of 1960 Scholarship Fund, from which an annual scholarship is presented to a graduating senior deemed to be outstanding in the field of community service. The scholarship fund is managed by the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies, and the recipient of the scholarship is eligible for matching funds if he/she attends a Pennsylvania state school. Additionally, the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies will apply for all other grant/scholarship monies for which the recipient may be eligible.

The generosity of the class of 1963 is deeply appreciated by the class of 1960 as we help other young people along the way. We all recognize how lucky and grateful we are to have lived in the Westmont and Southmont communities, and to have received an education here. Our scholarship fund has been established as a way to say thank you to our community.

The presentation of a check was made at Westmont Hilltop High School. Representing the Class of 1963 were Barbara Sivi, BJ Weimer Gearhart and Bob Horowitz. Accepting the check on behalf of the Class of 1960 was Cookie Richardson, co-chair, Class of 1960 Scholarship Fund.

THANKS, CLASS OF 1963.

Additional contributions are always welcome from anyone wanting to support this worthwhile project. The scholarships are based on the interest earned. No contributions are spent, they are used to increase the principle and in turn increase the value of the annual scholarship. Contributions can be sent to: Community Foundation for the Alleghenies; 116 Market Street, Suite 4; Johnstown, PA. 15901 ." Remember to put "Westmont Hilltop Class of 1960" in the memo area of the check.



From left to right:

Barbara (Nesbitt) Sivi (1963),

BJ Weimer (1963)

Louise (Cookie) Richardson  
Horn (1960),

Bob Horowitz (1963).





**Officers**

- President  
John DeMarco, '87
- Vice President  
William J. Hargreaves, '94
- Treasurer  
Colleen Goerlich, '71
- Secretary  
Paula Ostrich, '85

**Board of Directors**

- Brian A. Krise, '87
- Carol M. Pavlosky, '86
- Charles Zimmerman, '49

**School Information**

**Westmont Hilltop High School**  
 200 Fair Oaks Drive  
 Johnstown, PA 15905  
 Phone: 814.255.8726

**Westmont Hilltop Middle School**  
 827 Diamond Boulevard  
 Johnstown, PA 15905  
 Phone: 814.255.8704

**Westmont Hilltop Elementary School**  
 675 Goucher Street  
 Johnstown, PA 15905  
 Phone: 814.255.8707

**Useful Links**

Westmont Hilltop Alumni Association  
<http://www.westyalumni.com>

Westmont Hilltop School District  
<http://www.whsd.org/>

Westmont Hilltop Recreation Commission  
<http://www.westmonthilltoprecreation.com>

**You can Contribute!**

If you have information, stories or pictures, please send them to: WestyAlumni@gmail.com

**WHAA Meetings**

Meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30pm in room 111 in the Middle School. Occasionally the date, time and/or location must be changed, so please check the Facebook page and the calendar on the WHAA website for information. We hope to see you!

**Join/Support the WHAA**

Support the Alumni Association with a membership and/or a contribution.

Membership amounts are:  
 \$10 Individual, Alumni  
 \$10 Individual, Associate  
 \$35 Family  
 \$50 Business

You can now donate using Paypal! Please visit the WHAA website for details

*This Association is recognized by the Westmont Hilltop School District. You can find our link under 'Resources' on the District Website.*

- Alumni .....\$10
- Associate Member .....\$10
- Household Membership ..... \$35
- Business Membership w/web ad\* .....\$50
- Gift membership ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- I'm interested in being a volunteer.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Alumni – year of graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to **Westmont Hilltop Alumni Association** and send to:  
 Westmont Hilltop Alumni Association, Middle School Administration, Attn: Mary Hartnett, 827 Diamond Blvd., Johnstown, PA 15905

Website: [WestyAlumni.com](http://WestyAlumni.com)

Email: [WestyAlumni@gmail.com](mailto:WestyAlumni@gmail.com)