



The West Virginia Challenge

September 1999



Our communities, our schools

Challenge West Virginia will sponsor a fall conference, "Our Communities, Our Schools," for parents, teachers, students and others who support small community schools.

The conference will be held Friday, October 8, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Cedar Lakes Conference Center near Ripley. The fee for the conference, which includes a mid-day meal, is \$10. Overnight accommodations are available at an additional cost.

The keynote speaker will be Dr. George H. Wood, a professor of education at Ohio University who in 1992 became principal of Federal Hocking High School in Stewart, Ohio.

Working with the students, teaching staff and community, he helped transform a poor and struggling rural high school into one of the top schools in the region. As a result of those efforts, grade point averages and college attendance rates soared at Federal Hocking.

Dr. Wood, the author of two outstanding books – *Schools that Work* and *A Time to Learn* – offers a new vision of what the high school experience can and should be.

He will help you see that high school does not have to be the way it has always been. High school, he says, is the one common experience that most Americans share. The primary goal should be to help students become the kind of citizens you want living next door to you.

As Dr. Wood says in *A Time to Learn*, "It is important to rethink our schools – to transform them from the institutions they have become to the com-

munities they should be."

The most important mission, he says, "is helping young people develop the habits, hearts and minds that will make them good citizens."

Dr. Wood is a founding member of the Institute for Democracy in Education. He lives in Amesville, Ohio, with his wife and two sons.

Dr. Stan Maynard of Marshall University also will speak at the conference.

Dr. Maynard is coordinator of a small schools project in Mason County designed to demonstrate that small schools can deliver a quality educational experience for students.

The three-year project, which is a joint effort of the Marshall University Rural Education Scholars, the Mason County Board of Education and Hannan High School, is in its beginning stages. It will incorporate community participation, distance learning and teacher training that focuses on new technologies and methods.

Other participants in "Our Communities, Our Schools" are Dr. Van Dempsey, director of the Benedum Scholars program at West Virginia University, and Marty Strange, director of the Rural Challenge Policy Program.



Dr. Wood

Make your reservations now!

The "Our Communities, Our Schools" conference is limited to the first 150 persons who register. Please fill out the registration form on page three and return it to:

Linda Martin
801 Gordon Drive
Charleston, WV 25303



Challenge West Virginia

The **West Virginia Challenge** is published by Challenge West Virginia, a statewide organization committed to maintaining and improving small community schools.

Challenge members believe that the policy direction being pursued by education officials in the state, which has involved the closing of many small schools, does not serve the best interest of many chil-

dren, especially those from low-income families who live in rural areas.

If you would like to become involved in Challenge WV, please contact the fellow who lives nearest you or Linda Martin or Beth Spence, whose numbers are listed on the back page.

Challenge is a program of Covenant House, an independent, non-profit organization in Charleston, WV, which is not connected to any other program by the same name.

Editor of **The West Virginia Challenge** is Beth Spence.



This 'n that

• In our story about coaches in the August issue of *The West Virginia Challenge*, we incorrectly identified the original source of the story. Rick Ryan is assistant sports editor of *The Charleston Gazette*. We

apologize to Mr. Ryan and to the *Gazette* for the error.

• Challenge West Virginia's Linda Martin has been elected to a three-year term on the national board of directors of the Rural Challenge.

• There is an update on the situation involving Harts High School teacher Gwen Ramey, who was transferred by the Lincoln County Board of Education after the Board cut out a semester of American History at the school. After prodding by the State Department of Education, the school reinstated the semester of American History, but failed to reinstate Ms. Ramey to her teaching position. At an August meeting of the Board, Ms. Ramey volunteered to teach American History at Harts at no cost to the county until her case is resolved by the courts. Her offer was ignored by the School Board.

• Judge Arthur Recht may once again oversee the education reform lawsuit that bears his name, according to a story in the *Charleston Gazette-Mail*. Dan Robinson of Huntington, the circuit judge who was assigned to the case when it was reopened in 1997, is retiring.

Challenge WV Chapters

Preston County
Jana Freeman
RR1, Box 214A
Aurora, WV 26705
304-735-3411

McDowell County
Eddie Harman
HC 32, Box 585
Caretta, WV 24821
304-875-4202

Challenge WV Fellows

Clay County
Joyce White
304-548-7821

Mingo County
Phyllis McCoy
304-475-4244

Clara L. Sears
304-286-3754

Beverly Workman
304-475-2447

Fayette County
Pam Boles
304-632-9844

Monongalia County
Jenny Selin
304-598-9650

Betty Jo Neil
304-632-0321

Preston County
Jana Freeman
304-735-3411

Lincoln County
Thomas Ramey Jr.
304-855-3930

Ritchie County
Patty Deak
304-869-3462

Steve Ruby
304-756-3692

Terri Weiford
304-477-3076

Logan County
Christine Spaulding
304-752-6056

Webster County
Cindy Miller
304-493-6369

McDowell County
Eddie Harman
304-875-4202

Jeanette Craighead
304-862-4752