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## West High marks 60 years

By Betty Bean

Frank Jones was president of West High School's Class of 1952, and 60 years later, his recollections are still vivid.

"At Knoxville High, we had been accustomed to winning everything. At West, we lost everything, where football was concerned," he said, "Our best game was a 0-0 tie. Other games were zero for us, 35, 37, 40-something for the other side. David Bowman offered \$100 to the first kid who crossed the goal line. We finally scored in about the seventh game."

Jones and about 15 of his classmates were guests of honor at the school's 60th anniversary celebration and dedication of the new lobby display last Friday. The class vice president, Phil Farrow, was quick to remind the crowd that the school's first basketball team was



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Class of 2012 vice president Alex Frye and president Brenna Finn (at left) present a certificate of appreciation to Class of 1952 president

and vice president Frank Jones and Phil Farrow at the 60th anniversary celebration. The new lobby display is in the background.

## 'Pippin' utilizes young cast

By Wendy Smith

It will be a challenge for the Bearden High School drama department to put on a musical to rival last year's "Hairspray," which is the only production in the program's history to have a sell-out show.

But this fall's production of "Pippin" will also break ground because it is the first repeat performance in Leann Dickson's 15-year tenure at the school. The play features music and lyrics written by Stephen Schwartz, who also composed music for "Wicked" and "Godspell." The plot is loosely based on the historical figure Pepin, the son of Charlemagne.

While she likes the production and has performed in it professionally, Dickson doesn't choose projects based on taste. She chooses based

on the strengths of her current students. This year, she has a handful of experienced thespians and several new students. The large chorus in "Pippin" will give the newbies an opportunity to get their feet wet.

"It's a good show for a building year," she says.

While the cast may be inexperienced, it is hard-working. Even the older students have commented on the self-discipline of the younger set.

"These young kids - we are so amazed at them."

"Pippin" is the story of a young man in search of fulfillment through sex and politics, and there are dark moments. It's a story that makes you think, says Dickson, which sets it apart from most musicals. She describes the music in the show as "very cool," with a 1970s sound.

The script had to be toned down for the high school production, and she appreciates that Schwartz allows changes to the play as long as they don't alter the meaning of the scene. The composer even answers questions online.

The show couldn't go on without the students and parents who have created sets and costumes. Dickson is constantly surprised by the number of parents who are willing to sacrifice a Saturday to help with a production.

"They will show up and get their hands dirty," she says.

Show times for "Pippin" are 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 10, and Saturday, Nov. 12; and 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 13. Tickets, which are \$10 for adults and \$8 for students, can be purchased at the door.



Zachary Hall, a 4th grader at A.L. Lotts Elementary, plays alongside Bearden High School senior Spencer Streno, who stars in the school's production of "Pippin." Photo by Wendy Smith

## 'Stand Down'

Serves needy vets

By Wendy Smith

During war time, battle-weary soldiers are sometimes given the opportunity to "stand down," or withdraw from combat and refresh themselves with warm food and camaraderie, and receive care for their wounds.

The term "stand down" now refers to community-based intervention programs that serve homeless veterans, many of whom are continuing to fight for survival. The Knoxville Veterans Stand Down was held last week at the Park West Church of God, and 200 veterans pre-registered to participate.

The all-day event provided three meals, clothing and haircuts for vets, as well as

medical, dental and eye care, including free glasses made on-site.

Robert Willis, who served in Germany during the 1970s, was grateful to be able to receive so many services in one day. He was especially thankful for his new glasses, which he says will come in handy at night.

He has recently moved into an apartment, but he spent 10 years on the street before finally getting his own place.

"It feels good just to have a key. I don't have any furniture, but I have a key," he said with a smile.

Willis has received help from Clyde Vincent of Volunteers of America, one of several organizations that offered services at the event. Vincent is a program manager for the



Volunteer Judy Moore cleans Robert Willis' new glasses at the Knoxville Veterans Stand Down, held at the Park West Church of God last week. The event provided free medical, dental and legal care to veterans, many of whom are homeless. Photo by Wendy Smith

Knoxville Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project, which helps vets break down barriers to employment.

One of those barriers can be unpaid fines, so the Knox County Public Defender's Office and representatives from Legal Aid were on hand to help veterans clean up minor

offenses. Veterans who don't pay parking tickets, for instance, can end up with large fines and lose their driver's license, says Vincent. By getting their records expunged, vets can get back their license and thus be better positioned to get a job.

Remote Area Medical

(RAM) and the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) recruited the doctors who volunteered their time for the event. Recruitment was a little tough, says RAM Foundation Volunteer Coordinator Laura Kirschenmann, because the Stand Down was on a Thursday, when most doctors are working. But a core group of medical providers and volunteers can always be found to staff RAM clinics. The group has provided staff and equipment for 27 clinics this year, she said, but serving veterans is a special opportunity. While many of them receive medical care through the VA, they don't always get dental and eye care, which is expensive.

"These people served us. Hopefully, we're giving them something they can't get anywhere else," she said. "We're having a good time. These are good people."

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