

# Welches PTA to consider playground fence

by MICHAEL P. JONES  
Post Correspondent

How safe the playground is at Welches Grade School is a question parents and the local Parent-Teacher Association have been asking school district officials since last year.

The original safety concern of parents and PTA members was the road that runs within close proximity of the tetherball and basketball courts, near the new addition to the school.

Judy Donaldson, president of the Association, said there have been some close calls at that locale between kids and motor vehicles. She, herself, was almost involved in one of these incidents.

She said some students will chase runaway balls across the street without watching for traffic. With both buses and cars utilizing the road, the potential for an accident exists, she contends.

Donaldson said the PTA approached the school board during the 1981-82 school year and requested that a fence be installed on the north side of the playground to keep balls from rolling into the street.

After hearing no response from the board concerning this matter, Donaldson said the PTA wrote the board and again requested they take some action on their request.

On Oct. 15 the school board discussed the PTA's recommendation of fencing the playground, which she said they rejected due to the cost. In a letter to the PTA, Donaldson said Kenneth C. Blackburn, superintendent, wrote that the board had come up with an alternative solution to the fencing. This alternative was "to re-advise the playground aides to be cognizant of traffic, which is minimal, and kids on the playground."

Donaldson said the PTA will once again approach the board concerning this aspect of playground safety. She said she feels that "re-advising" the playground aides of the potential hazards doesn't adequately remove the danger of a collision between pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

"I, myself, speaking as a parent and not for the PTA, am not satisfied with this," said Donaldson. "We're not trying to make a problem out of something that isn't. I don't think that since the traffic is minimal that there's no problem. You don't need a freeway to have a problem."

This is why the PTA will be pursuing the issue further at the next PTA meeting, scheduled for Jan. 13. At that meeting "the fence issue will be presented again to the general membership of the PTA, and we will decide how we will go about handling it."

Donaldson said the PTA will look at various options available for the fencing. This could include non-

## New budget process initiated

The budget committee for the Welches Grade School District will meet at 7 p.m. Jan. 3 in the library of the school's new addition.

Dick Hoffman, board chairman, said that the district is using a different budget process this year. He said they are currently looking at the budget from the ground floor up.

"Both the teachers and the administration have been asked to draft three different budgets," said Hoffman. "We wanted to see where the teachers wanted to be, and where the administration wanted to be."

The first would be a basic budget, or "a starvation type" that just allows the job to get done.

The second would be a "comfortable budget," in which they would have additional programs.

The third is to be a "pie-in-the-sky" budget where everything they want is included.

Hoffman said the starvation type, the comfortable and the pie-in-the-sky budgets will all undergo the budget process before a final one is selected.

Two new programs that are currently being studied for inclusion into the curriculum include courses on computer programming and foreign languages.

Applications burn in district office fire

Area people who applied for part-time jobs at Sandy Union High School for either of two part-time positions with the Extended Day Vocational School, should resubmit their applications.

Lillias Crane, coordinator, said all applications that came in before Dec. 22 burned in the fire at the district office.

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# Safety of 'Big Toy' considered at Welches

by MICHAEL P. JONES  
Post Correspondent

On Dec. 8 what has been reported as the fourth accident in a two-and-a-half month period occurred on the same piece of playground equipment at Welches Grade School.

As a result of this accident, parents are beginning to question how safe the school's playground is. They are also concerned with how the district compares with others in regard to safety.

The accident occurred on the "Big Toy," a large log structure that has been at the school for the past six years. Injured in the accident was a first grade girl who suffered a concussion after falling from the top of the apparatus, which measures a distance of about eight feet.

At the December board of directors meeting Dawson Hubert, one of the parents whose child has been injured on the Big Toy, appeared before the board. He wanted to know how the school stood in respect to safety on the playground and on playground equipment.

"Are these records available and how do we stand on safety," asked Hubert.

Kenneth Blackburn, superintendent, responded that the most recent accident occurred after school during a Brownie meeting being held in the Welches Community School room. He said, "There was no one supervising when the accident occurred," as I understand.

According to Andrea Cabral, a troop leader for the Brownies, there was supervision when the accident occurred.

Later in his explanation, however, Blackburn, who was not present when the accident occurred, said he actually wasn't certain "if there was anyone there supervising or not."

"Sir, I didn't mean to attack," said Hubert. "If this happens to be the fourth kid hurt on the same toy, I want to know. This is what I am looking for."

Blackburn said he didn't feel, in relationship to the number of youngsters who use that particular play equipment, that it has a high percentage of accidents.

He said the school had two Big Toys, an old and a new one. To determine which accidents occurred on this piece of equipment,

the old Big Toy, he'd have to go back over the accident reports kept on file by the district. He said he'd make the contents of those reports public.

Hubert said this was the second accident within a month and a half. The first involved his child.

"If it's the old one, that's even better yet or worse yet, wherever your coming from," said Hubert.

"That's the second accident within a month and a half that I've been personally involved (with). We need to take that thing out before somebody really gets hurt."

Another problem Hubert identified with the playground area is the use of bark dust below the equipment instead of dirt. He said the doctor who dressed his daughter's arm when she was injured had difficulty removing the bark dust from her wound.

Dick Hoffman, board chairman, agreed and said studies have shown that dirt is safer than bark dust in play areas.

Later, Hoffman said that other alternatives to bark dust should be explored due to the infection it causes.

"Not to blow anything up, I'm just saying you got to replace (the accidents)," said Hubert. "Is everything safe, and if it is, great. If it isn't, let's do something about it."

Hoffman, in an interview Monday night, said he doesn't see a problem with that particular play equipment. He said the four injuries is minimal. He said out of 310 students, about 150 students use the playground facilities on a daily basis.

## High school students donate cans and cash

Students at Sandy Union High School donated over \$300 and 3,000 cans of food to the Kiwanis Club's food drive, according to Curtis Heath, activities director.

The junior class won the Associated Student Body's can contest, collecting 1,335 cans of food.

Members of the student body did a "tremendous job," Heath said.

Ariel, a rock band, played Dec. 21 as part of the fund raiser.

## Verla Rogers joins board of directors

Verla Rogers was officially sworn in as a new member of the Welches School Board of Directors earlier this month.

Rogers was appointed to fill the seat vacated by Ron Worrell, who was forced to resign when he was transferred to another state by the company he works for.

The term of office for the board position now occupied by Rogers will expire on June 30.

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