



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

Kids flock to Western Oregon University's new Wolfie, who joined families in Monmouth for trick-or-treat Friday.

## WOU's 'Wolfie' gets a makeover

Less scary and 'mangy,' the new and improved mascot is revealed this fall

**By Emily Mentzer**  
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — There's a new Wolfie in town. He's more lovable, but still fierce. At least, that's the hope of Western Oregon University officials.

"The old Wolfie was scary to some kids," said Gary Dukes, vice president for student affairs. "We were trying to create a Wolfie that was more approachable."

While a university mascot should be fierce, inducing fear in any opponent, there should be balance.

"You have to look at all

the purposes for your mascot," Dukes said. "That community outreach and connection, for us, it means a mascot where kids feel comfortable coming up to it."

The real reason for Wolfie's makeover had more to do with the state of the mascot.

"I'm not exactly sure how long 'Old Wolfie' had been around, but he was threadbare in many places," said Randi Lydum, WOU director of compliance. "We were all in agreement that Old Wolfie was looking a little mangy."

She said Wolfie's new look is not as fierce as the old one. "New Wolfie seems to get a

more positive reaction from the younger crew," she said.

The makeover process for Wolfie took about five months, Dukes said. He worked with a committee and solicited ideas from vendors before settling on Wolfie's new look. The mascot cost about \$5,000.

The performers who take on the role of the mascot are perhaps the most excited about the new costume.

"I was hearing a lot of complaints that it (the old costume) was pretty stinky," Dukes said. "People weren't thrilled about being the performer."

The new costume has a working fan in the headpiece to help keep actors comfortable, as well as a cooling vest.

"We tried to do some things to keep it more an enjoyable experience for the performer," Dukes said.

The change to the mascot has nothing to do with Western's logo, which will remain untouched.

"New Wolfie has been very positively received by the WOU students and alumni, some who have seen two or three different Wolfies over the years," Lydum said.

## Dallas' TAG program under evaluation

**By Jolene Guzman**  
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — In Dallas School District there are 84 students in the Talented and Gifted (TAG) Program.

Steve Martinelli, the district's curriculum director, thinks that number may be

low, especially in the elementary grades (K-5), where only five students have been identified as talented and gifted.

Martinelli and a group of teachers representing each school have begun planning how to better find and serve students who meet the program's qualifications.

"My plan moving forward on this is to do a little bit more in-depth of an audit of our TAG services," Martinelli said during a recent presentation to the Dallas School Board.

Martinelli said the reason for the discrepancy between the number of students at the elementary level (5) and middle school (23) and high school (56) is because it's easier to recognize older TAG students.

"I think we are under identifying at the elementary level," he said.

Teachers and parents can refer students for TAG evaluation. Or high marks — higher than 97th percentile — on standardized tests can trigger a closer look. In elementary school, Martinelli said test scores are often used.

The work group will be looking at other ways to identify students.

Also, the committee is

looking at ways to better serve those who qualify for the program. Martinelli said students are placed on an individual plan tailored to their skills. TAG students can fit into three categories: intellectually gifted and academically talented in math or language arts. They can qualify in more than one area.

Individual plans at the elementary level are based on "content," or providing material at the student's level, and "rate," the speed at which they learn. Martinelli said those can be adjusted to match a student's level.

In middle school, accelerated classes are offered and at the high school, advanced placement, honors diploma options, and dual-credit classes are available.

Martinelli said the planned audit will evaluate those options while looking at resources and what other school districts offer.

## SCHOOL NOTES

### Locke is Distinguished Educator

DALLAS — Lyle Elementary School physical education teacher Trena Locke was named the October Distinguished Educator for Dallas School District.

She was presented the award at an all-school event on Oct. 26.

Her colleagues at Lyle nominated her for the recognition, saying "No one is more deserving than Trena."

"She is the consummate team player who will help others, she strives to make a difference," her colleagues said.

Her students agree, calling her their "good luck teacher."

"She's the best teacher because she is cool," her students added.

The Distinguished Educator Program recognizes "excellence in teaching and learning" in Dallas School District schools.

### Committee seeking more members

DALLAS — The Citizens Oversight Committee for Dallas School District is looking for three to five new members.

The group's responsibilities include reviewing and recommending projects paid for with voter-approved bond funding; reviewing and revising the District's Long Range Facilities Plan; staying informed of the status of the bond work; and providing input for a report to the Dallas School Board.

Committee meetings are the third Monday of the month at 6 p.m.

For more information or to download an application, go to [www.dallas.k12.or.us/#citizens-oversight-committee/ciey](http://www.dallas.k12.or.us/#citizens-oversight-committee/ciey).

Completed applications need to be mailed to Debbie Green at 111 SW Ash St., Dallas, OR 97338, or emailed to [Debbie.green@dspd.org](mailto:Debbie.green@dspd.org).

### Rotary club gives out dictionaries

MONMOUTH/INDEPENDENCE — The Monmouth-Independence Rotary Club distributed nearly 300 dictionaries to fourth graders in Central School District on Thursday.

The club gives dictionaries to students every year.

For more information about the Rotary club: 503-838-4884.

### Universities waive application fees

INDEPENDENCE — Central High School will join more than 100 high schools, including Dallas High School, in Oregon College Application Week.

The goal is to assist all high school seniors as they apply to some type of postsecondary educational option, including certificate programs, two-year degree programs and four-year programs.

CHS seniors will have 90 minutes outside of class time to fill out applications with help from mentors and university staff.

Many colleges and universities in Oregon will waive application fees for the event.

It is a statewide initiative by Oregon Gear Up. For more information: [oregongostocollege.org](http://oregongostocollege.org).

### Talmadge teachers don't like gradebook

INDEPENDENCE — Two teachers from Talmadge Middle School spoke to school board members on Monday about their displeasure with the new grading system, the fourth system Central School District has tried in the last four years.

Lucy Hunter called the new Powerbook the worst as far as efficiency, grading and reporting.

"It is clear that the district office does not fully understand how the middle school teaches or grades, and it cannot be explained in three minutes, nor is it an appropriate topic at a board meeting," Hunter said.

Diane Nelson said the new system created apprehension and confusion with both teachers and parents during a recent parent-teacher conference and grade day.

"We have yet another grade book that is hard to use," she said. "Parents were a little confused. We tried to alleviate that confusion."

The middle school will host a workshop about proficiency grading on Nov. 18 at the school, Hunter said, inviting board members to attend.

"Only after you see what we have done to teach and grade by proficiency, only then will you understand the Power School grade book," she said.

### Parenting classes offered in W. Salem

POLK COUNTY — Family Building Blocks is offering "Make Parenting a Pleasure" classes beginning Monday and continuing on Mondays through Jan. 25.

The class focuses on managing stress, developing realistic expectations for parenting, child development and positive discipline methods. The class is free and child care and dinner are available for free.

Classes are from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Family Building Block West Salem location, 1135 Edgewater St. NW. No classes will be held on Dec. 28 and Jan. 18.

To register go to [www.midvalleyparenting.org](http://www.midvalleyparenting.org) or call Carman Hilke at 503-581-1152 or email [carmen.hilke@mvvcca.org](mailto:carmen.hilke@mvvcca.org).

## ACADEMIC HONORS

### Monmouth student on honor list

STAUNTON, Va. — Wendy Deptula, of Monmouth, was named to the spring 2015 honors list at Mary Baldwin College.

Students named to the honors list earned a GPA of 3.75 to 4.00. To be eligible, a student must be a degree candidate and must have earned at least 12 semester hours for the grading period.

### Costa is treasurer of honor society

FRONT ROYAL, Va. — Lucas Costa of Monmouth, the son of Cynthia Costa Jones, of Monmouth, and Alexandre D T Costa, of Curitiba, Brazil, has been elected the treasurer of the Byzantium Chapter of the National English Honor Society at Randolph-Macon Academy. Lucas is a junior at the academy.

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