

Book challenge is defeated

By **Debbie Lowe**
Staff writer

The Delphi Community School Corporation Board of School Trustees listened to an hour and a half of testimony, both in favor and against a recommendation by a community curriculum review committee, to continue to allow three novels on the required reading list for high school advance placement/junior honors English Literature class. The books in question are "Chinese Handcuffs" by Chris Crutcher, "The Bluest Eye" by Toni Morrison (both of which have been in the curriculum since 2002) and "In Country" by Bobbie Ann Mason.

At least 175 people attended the Monday night board meeting to listen to the proceedings after a group of parents objected to the re-

quired reading texts. The committee reviewed the selections and decided they were appropriate and useful as teaching tools. An appeal was made to the school board by the objecting parents and the school board was then bound to make the final determination.

Forty-four audience members spoke during public comments at the beginning of the meeting. Some spoke in favor of the committee's recommendation and some spoke against the ruling. Some were parents of DCHS students and others were DCHS students. Some were former students while others who spoke either home-school their children or were children who were home-schooled.

Those in favor of retaining the books on the required reading list explained books provide a safe and secure way for children and young

adults to delve into sensitive material and subjects. They said those who are subjected to explicit reading material are more able to handle unpleasant situations in their own lives.

Opponents to the required reading material said readers had the right to refuse to read material which was offensive to them.

Proponents of the current curriculum emphasized students in their junior year are not fragile. They are young adults and should be afforded opportunities within which to grow. It was noted that most juniors have drivers' licenses and will soon be not only voting in elections, but will be eligible to hold public office.

However, one opposed to the books compared the content to that in Hustler magazine. He read a sexually explicit excerpt from one

of the books to the audience to illustrate his point.

Another patron expressed her point in simple and direct words.

"If these books are not harmful, I don't know what is," patron Sharon Milburn said.

"My sister was raped and murdered," local resident Lori Heron said. "The man who did that did not learn about it in a book."

"We hear more walking in the halls (at Delphi High School) than we did reading those books," a current student reported.

Board member Melinda Rossetter made a motion to allow the books to appear on an optional list of books to read with parental consent. Chris Nipple provided the second.

Rossetter said she was not in favor of banning books, however those in question did not help

ISTEP scores. She said she had "enormous concern of the effect of the books on children." Rossetter added that controversial content should not be forced onto children.

"It just wouldn't be right," she said.

Rossetter's motion was defeated, five-to-one.

Jerry Sparks made the next motion.

"I move to accept the recommendation of the Book Review Committee to keep the three books in question as well as all books currently listed in the current syllabus as part of the class reading requirements without any further review," he said.

The motion passed five-to-one. Rossetter provided the sole nay vote.

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Carroll students may have chance to earn college credit

By **Jennifer Archibald**
Staff writer

Carroll students may be able to take specified college-level courses in high school and receive college credit for them if enough interest in the concept is shown by students and their parents.

Guidance director Kristen Seward explained the Advance College Project (ACP) to Carroll School Board members at their March 4 meeting.

The project is possible through the school's collaboration with Indiana University, specifically IUUK. Seward said potential students who would take the college courses offered would get both high school and college credit, if they earn a grade of C or better. They would receive transfer credit to Indiana University or to any other college or university that accepts IU transfer credits. The courses would be taught by Carroll's own teachers.

Seward said the cost of these college-level courses is only a third of what they would cost if actually taken in college. Students would be responsible for buying their own books.

To qualify, students (mostly college-bound seniors) must rank in the upper half of their high school class. Other qualifications are based on GPA, SAT scores, and endorsements from teachers and the guidance director.

Seward will discuss the program with students and

parents and see if there is enough interest for Carroll to offer ACP courses next school year. Although a number of courses are available through the program, Seward said Carroll would start out with college math and English.

She will report back to the school board at its second meeting in April, and then a determination will be made if the college courses will be offered.

Another presentation was given to the board by Dana Wannemacher and Brian Walker of Barton-Coe-Vilamaa, Architect and Engineers. They gave updates on the planned air conditioning piping project at the junior-senior high school.

The board gave approval for advertising for bids for the project. Besides the base bids, the board will also ask for alternate bids for air conditioning the auxiliary gym and cafeteria. Cost estimates for the project, not counting any alternates that could be added, total \$1.97 million. Superintendent John Sayers said the project may start before school is out this year, but work will be done when students are not in the building.

The board also approved

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Still treading water

Water from the Tippecanoe River already surrounded a house on Horseshoe Bend Monday afternoon. It is expected the river will continue to rise to about the same level as the February 2008 flood, or approximately 25 feet above flood stage. More flood photos on page 9A. Comet photo by Debbie Lowe

Putting a history lesson into practice

By **Debbie Lowe**
Staff writer

As the water in the Tippecanoe River rose Monday and Tuesday afternoons, residents took a page from the 2008 history book, packed up their cherished belongings and began to evacuate their homes on Tecumseh and Horseshoe bends.

"A little rain goes a long way," Carroll County Emergency Management Agency Director Dave McDowell said Monday. "Our local lakes are not large enough to use as a reservoir."

"If the local dams attempted to hold

back floodwaters, they would inevitably be overtopped, which leads in short order to dam failure," McDowell explained. "Water height during a dam failure would be magnitudes greater than the floods of 2008, so the prudent course of dam operation is to maintain river flow at the rate water is entering the lakes. This is what the Federal Energy Regulatory Company (FERC) orders NIPSCO (the dam operators) to do."

The Red Cross has established a shelter at the First Assembly of God Church on US421/SR18 west of Delphi. As of Monday at 3 p.m., four fam-

ilies were registered to spend the night.

A press release from the Red Cross said that all American Red Cross disaster assistance is free, made possible by voluntary donations of time and money from the American people. Donations help victims of thousands of disasters across the country each year, disasters like the 2008 February Indiana floods, by making a financial gift to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund, which enables the Red Cross to provide shelter, food, counseling and other assistance to victims

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Special election date moved forward

Public questions DCSC outreach methods

By **Debbie Lowe**
Staff writer

The referendum date for the public to decide by vote whether the Delphi Community School Corporation is allowed to proceed with a building project that may cost \$21 million over 20 years, including interest, was changed from May 5 to June 2.

According to Carroll County Clerk Nancy Mattox, the ballot question, although appropriately worded before it was certified, was questioned by the school corporation. After further consideration by the county election board, it was re-certified as of March 4. The

special election can then be held 90 days from the final certification.

The school corporation building project referendum timeline is as follows:

- Oct. 13, 2008 – the board of school trustees voted to continue the 1028 public hearing and table the vote needed to proceed with the project;
- Nov. 20 – the board formally voted and adopted a resolution to proceed with the project;
- Dec. 16 – petitions were filed with the county clerk requesting a special election to vote on the matter.

Petitions with the appropriate number of signatures to bring about a special elec-

tion were submitted by Katrina Coghill, Connie Myer, high school P.E. teacher Norma Carpenter, art teacher Sherri Cripe (who carried two petitions) and bus driver and Education Foundation President Leanne Aldrich.

However, the special election date is not the only issue with the current referendum process. The other issue, voiced by at least one school patron, has been the use of school equipment, personnel and students to promote the corporation's position about the project.

One parent objected to the use of students to promote the school corporation's position at freshman orientation, which began at 6:30

p.m. March 4.

"I was there to hear about high school, not to hear about the project," Jonella Beale told the *Comet* Thursday.

She explained four students gave a 20-minute PowerPoint display in between other presentations about students entering high school. She said the students were introduced and the audience was given the information that the same presentation would be given by students to community groups and civic organizations.

"This seemed like it was done as a school project," Beale continued. "This went over the line. This was inappropriate."

"That shouldn't have been part of freshman orientation," she added.

She said she did not believe she could voice her opinion at the time. Beale said she "felt captive to be there." She said she did not feel comfortable asking the students questions because she did not want to "put them on the spot."

"This was definitely a one-sided presentation," she concluded.

Superintendent Ralph Walker, when contacted by the *Comet*, said he did not know the presentation was given at freshman orientation.

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