



Westmar University Alumni and Friends Association

VOLUME 25 ISSUE 1

February 2023



Marilyn Hardersen Murra ('75) has been named the 2022 Volleyball Recipient of IGHS AU Golden Plaque Award. The Golden Plaque of Distinction Award honors the Iowa coach who has demonstrated a successful career while making notable contributions toward school, community, and the coaching profession.

Murra is currently the Newell-Fonda, IA, Head Volleyball Coach. After graduating from Hinton High School in Hinton, IA, she played for Westmar. She was a First Team Io-Kota Conference honoree on the conference runner-up volleyball team at Westmar in 1973.

Murra began coaching in 1977 at Schaller High School where she founded the volleyball program. She continued to coach when Schaller and Crestland consolidated in 1989. In 2010, Murra started coaching at Newell-Fonda to rebuild their volleyball program.

Murra has been named the All-District Coach, and several times, she was named as the IGCA representative for the 1A Northwest district. She coached the Iowa All-Star team in 1997.

Murra just completed her 46th year of coaching and has an accumulative record of 930-412-43.

Murra's family consists of her husband, Bill, son Kiley and daughter Katie (who played for her at the 2008 state tournament), step-daughter Cindy, and granddaughter Loghan Marie.

<https://www.lemarssentinel.com/story/2970492.html>



Jolene Stratton Philo ('78) describes the books in her new West River Mysteries as if Mary Tyler Moore of the 1970s went on "Little House on the Prairie" where an episode of "Murder, She Wrote"

Was always in production.

Her series enters on the adventures of 21-year-old first-year teacher, turned amateur sleuth, Jane Newell. In her first book in the series, "See Jane Run!," Jane investigates a hit-and-run fatality leaving one of her new students an orphan.

Before her time in Boone, IA, Jolene and her husband Hiram spent seven years in the tiny town of Camp Crook, South Dakota. This experience laid the groundwork for her West River Mysteries, set in the fictional town of Little Missouri, South Dakota, population 92.

"It was two miles from Montana and 20 miles from North Dakota, so in a very remote area," she said. "We moved there in 1978, but I set the books in 1977... All the roads were gravel, and that included the state highway. The lifestyle was 15-20 years back in time."

Philo taught for two years at a boys ranch, instructing remedial math, while her husband served as the caseworker. She then moved onto a teaching job at the town's school.

Her heroine Jane hails from Sioux City, IA. Philo is originally from Le Mars and graduated from Westmar. "Although not all the characters are there, some people (in the books) are pretty much patterned after some really unique people we knew," she said. Philo noted that several figures in the books have disabilities. "...because when you're in that small of a community, everybody's abilities are needed."

Book two, titled "See Jane Sing!," picks up three months after the first book and is set at Christmastime. Philo is working on a third book called "See Jane Dance!" due out in a year. A fourth book called "See Jane Dig!" would explore the area's rich history as a site for dinosaur fossils.

Philo is also the author of six books pertaining to special needs. She earned her Master's from Drake University. For more information, visit www.jolenephilo.com. <https://www.amestrib.com/story/news/2022/11/03/author-jolene-stratto-philo-to-give-book-talk-in-boone-nov-9/69592999007>

DONATIONS

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS!

Please consider making your own donation to WAFA.
WAFA relies on these donations to keep the office open.
We greatly appreciate it!

Alumni News

Carolyn Moore Zeisset ('62) could not have imagined the eerie timing of publication release during years of writing her novel "Then the Rules Changed."

The historical fiction account tells of the 1870s immigration to the U.S. Great Plains following an edict from the Czar that German-speaking people in South Russia (Ukraine) must become Russian. A week after Prairieland Press released the book, the current Russian leader declared that Ukrainians are Russian and sent troops into the place where the story begins.

Zeisset tells the story from the viewpoint of 9-year-old Isaac. It relates his emigration experiences of fear, loss of the known, an imagined future, and an arduous journey followed by his immigration experiences of more fear, facing the unknown, and difficult realities of a new life.

The novel is written to be accessible to middle grade readers, but also has an audience of parents and grandparents who are using it to open conversations about their family stories. It has appeal for students and teachers who connect history and current events, for English Language Learners, and for readers interested in culture and everyday life of ordinary people.

The book is available on Amazon or through Barnes and Noble or independent book stores. More information about the author and book is available at carolynzeisset.com

Carolyn has taught and written curriculum for preschool, elementary, middle school, and adult levels in public school, religious, and business settings. She has developed and taught a weekly Bible-related history class at her church for the last 13 years.

She and husband Ray Zeisset ('61) live in Lincoln, NE. He retired after 27 years at Lincoln Regional Center (state hospital), where he was director of psychology, and then pursued several part-time activities including 20 years as an adjunct professor in the master of arts in counseling program at Doane University before his next retirement.



Alumni Deaths

'50—Linnea Asplund Worner, 95, passed away on November 14, 2022, in Colorado Springs, CO. The summer before graduating from Westmar, she was at summer camp where she met George Worner when he pushed her into the pool to get her attention. They married in 1951. As an Air Force Chaplain's wife, she supported her husband and raised their five children. Plus, they got to travel, which she loved to do. In 1991, Colorado Springs became their final retirement home. She loved the outdoors and being active. She definitely felt her life had meaning being a loving wife, a good friend, and a mother. Linnea is survived by her sister, 4 daughters, 1 son, 9 grandchildren, and 18+ great-grandchildren, plus numerous nieces, nephews, grand nieces and nephews. <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/linnea-worner-obituary?id=3824979>

'50—Bethel Johnson Kienitz, 92, of Billings, MT, passed away on December 25th, 2022, at TenderNest Assisted Living. She graduated from Westmar with a two-year teacher degree after which she taught school in Melvin and Le Mars, IA. Later, she graduated from Eastern Montana College in Billings, MT, with a degree in elementary education, then taught in Shepherd and Grey Cliff, MT. In 1951, she married Richard Kienitz, who became a pastor. Together, they ministered in Salem, OR, and churches in Billings, MT. Through the years, she taught Sunday School classes, served in various offices of the local and conference level of Evangelical Women, and spoke for many women's groups. Bethel is survived by 2 sons, 2 daughters, 9 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren, 1 sister, and 1 brother. <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/billingsgazette/name/bethel-kienitz-obituary?id=38596339>

'52—Richard W. "Dick" Carey, 93, of Des Moines, IA, passed away on April 3, 2022 at Unity Point-Methodist Medical Center of heart failure. After graduating from Westmar, he attended law school at the University of Iowa. He served our country at the end of WWII and was recalled to go to Korea in 1950. He received the Bronze Star, Silver Star, and the Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster. Upon returning home, he married Ruth. After law school, he worked for 34 years with Iowa Des National Bank. He was dedicated to helping others, and his involvement with other groups, organizations, and church attested to that. He also took great joy in being with friends to go fishing, golfing, and biking with RAGBRAI or friends in Europe or the US. Dick is survived by his wife of 72 years, Ruth, 4 daughters, 6 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren, and many nieces, nephews, and their extended families. <https://www.desmoinesregister.com/obituaries/dmr122258>

'53—June Asplund Marty, 91, of Le Mars, IA, passed away on December 15, 2022, at the Floyd Valley Hospital. After

graduating from Westmar, she taught fourth grade at Albert Lea, MN. In 1954, she married Wayne Marty, and they moved to Ft. Leonard Wood, MO, where she taught kindergarten part-time. After Wayne's army service ended, they returned to Iowa where she supported his education, professional growth, their family, and the community. In 1962, they built their country home, now within Le Mars city limits, and it has been their home to this present day. During that time, she hosted many Westmar students for ice cream parties, treasure hunts, faculty celebrations, and celebrations with family and friends. She was involved in many clubs and organizations plus enjoyed reading, baking, and gardening. The Marty family traveled a lot for family trips, Wayne's sabbaticals, and Westmar student excursions. She leaves behind a legacy of her love and gratitude for us to cherish. June is survived by her husband of 68 years, Wayne, 2 sons, 1 daughter, 6 grandchildren, and 4 great-grandchildren. <https://www.rexwinkelfh.com/obituary/june-marty>

'54—Evelyn Roepke Blumer, 90, of Sioux Falls, SD, passed away on July 16, 2022, at Dow Rummel Village in Sioux Falls. After graduating from high school, she attended Westmar College where she completed her BA in religion/home economics. In 1954, she married Boyd Blumer. They lived in many towns across South Dakota including 2 in North Dakota. She was always active in the churches where Boyd served. Throughout the years, she worked as a school secretary, district school office secretary, and as coordinator of mission project. She loved sunflowers as a reminder of her home state of Kansas. She was deeply involved in the lives of her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Evelyn is survived by her husband, Boyd, 3 sons, 1 daughter, 9 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren with one on the way, 1 brother, and 1 sister. <https://www.mitchellrepublic.com/obituaries/obits/evelyn-blumer-5d124a5367a60618cv3c765-62e2fe2e2dc0041498302858>

'54—Carlton Bauer, 90, of Duluth, MN, passed away on May 10, 2022, at Diamond Bluffs Health Facility in Proctor, MN. He graduated from Blue Earth High School before enrolling at Westmar. He was a pre-theology student who was also active in music, chorus, and band. After graduating from Westmar, he married Charleen Miller, also a Westmar student, from Iowa City. He attended Seminary in Naperville, IL for three years and then served United Methodist Churches in Minnesota until he retired. He was active in music in all of his churches, serving often as choir director or just singing in the choir. Carlton is survived by his wife, Charleen, 1 daughter, 1 son, and 2 granddaughters (obituary submitted by Charleen Miller Bauer '57).

Alumni Deaths

'59—Eunice Oehlerking Higgins, 84, passed away on September 28, 2022, in Lincoln, NE. In Junior High, she met Earl Higgins at church camp, and they later married in 1958. She and Earl graduated together from Westmar in 1959. They moved to Dayton, OH, where she taught and he attended United Seminary. Together, they would go on to serve in many churches in Nebraska. Her favorite roles were that of a loyal pastor's wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. Faith was the foundation in all she did. She had many hobbies, but one of her favorite was cheering on her family during their many sports endeavors. She and Earl shared a love of travel, which inspired camping trips with their family as well as trips to the Holy Land and Australia. Eunice is survived by her husband, Rev. Earl Higgins, 1 daughter, 2 sons, 7 grandchildren, 1 great-grandchild, 2 brothers, 1 brother-in-law, 1 sister-in-law, 4 nieces, 6 nephews, and countless friends (obituary submitted by Ramona Kolbo Oehlerking '61).

'62—Dr. Tony R. Pitkin, 88, of Callaway, NE, passed away on October 27, 2022 at CHI Health Good Samaritan Hospital in Kearney, NE, surrounded by his loving family. He was inducted into the United States Army on January 7, 1955, and spent nearly two years serving in Germany as a tank mechanic. Upon his return, he eventually enrolled at Westmar. In 1959, he was married to Beverly Krueger while they were both students at Westmar. After graduating, he earned both his Master's and Doctorate degrees from the University of South Dakota. In 1971, he started at Gordon College in Wenham, MA, as the Education Professor, working there for 26 years before retiring in 1997 to pursue a lifelong dream of cattle ranching. Tony is survived by his wife, Beverly, 3 sons, 2 daughters, 11 grandchildren, and numerous nieces, nephews, extended family and friends. https://www.reynoldslovefuneralhome.com/obituaries/print?o_id=8286044

'63—Larry Elias Ellingson, 80, of Howell, MI, passed away on August 29, 2022, after a brief illness. He attended Coe College for two years before transferring to Westmar from which he graduated. In 1962, he married Mary Gloege. After school, he took a job with General Motors at the V-8 Engine Plant in Flint, MI. In 1972, he changed jobs and went to work as a revenue officer for the IRS where he worked for 30 years until retirement. He received the Albert Gallatin Award for outstanding service to the IRS. In retirement, he worked at Marquette Mountain Ski Hill. His hobbies were gardening and woodworking, and he was an active church member. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Mary, 2 sons, 2 daughters, 7 grandchildren, a sister, his twin sister, and numerous nieces and nephews. <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/thegazette/name/larry-ellingson-obituary?id=36413933>

'63—Fred Lawrence "Larry" Roth, 80, passed away on September 14, 2022, with his family by his side. He was a man of few words, but when he spoke you wanted to listen. He was honest, faith filled, and kind. After graduating from high school, he attended Westmar. After college, he went to work for John Deere in Ankeny, IA, where he worked for 38 years until retirement. He met his wife Donell at a high school dance in Perry, IA. For the next 60 years, they loved and supported each other in every way. He loved his family and friends and enjoyed outdoor sports and hunting. He and Donell loved going to 4-point lake and later Big Deep. Days were spent skiing; nights were spent fishing and playing games. Sundays were for church on the lake. Never a harsh word spoken, Larry believed the best in everyone. He was able to remain in the home he built in 1966 because of his devoted children. He is survived by 2 daughters, 1 son, 4 grandchildren, 1 brother, 1 sister, 2 uncles, 1 aunt, and extended nieces, nephews and friends. <https://www.desmoinesregister.com/obituaries/dmr125850>

'65—Donna Hess Hoey, 87, of Le Mars, passed away on September 14, 2022, with her family by her side. After graduating from Westmar in 1954 with a two-year teaching degree, she began teaching elementary school at Rock Rapids, IA. While attending Westar's summer school program to earn her four-year degree, she met James Hoey during their Romantic Literature class. After marrying in 1957, Jim joined the Rock Rapids teaching staff where they spent three years together. The remainder of their 65 years together was spent in Le Mars. She continued to teach and substitute as well as volunteer at church all while raising four children. She had many hobbies and interests, but none was greater than her family. Donna is survived by her husband, James, 3 daughters, 1 son, 13 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren, 1 sister, and her brother-in-law and his wife. <https://lemarssentinel.com/story/2964676.html>

'67—Linda Walker Adam, 78, passed away unexpectedly on July 30, 2022. While at Westmar, she studied art and physical education, and she caught the eye of Conrad Adam. The two were married in 1965. In 1969, the now family of four relocated to Kalispell, MT, where she dedicated 35 years to the county clerk and recorder's office. In addition to raising her two boys, she found time to devote to church youth programs where she gave her time to the Awana program for 40 years. During retirement, she found great joy in helping people in the community, especially young children. She enjoyed Southern gospel music and working in her flower garden. Her spirit and gentle nature will be missed. Linda is survived by her husband, Conrad, 2 sons, and 2 grandchildren. <https://dailyinterlake.com/news/2022/aug/03/linda-l-adam-78/>

Alumni Deaths

'68—**Gerald Barth**, 86, of Sioux City, IA, passed away on November 26, 2022, at Bickford Cottage in Sioux City. In 1956, he married his high school sweetheart, Shirley Dawdy. He worked for his dad at Bronson Garage following graduation until 1968. Then, still working for his dad, he enrolled for two years at Morningside College, and completed his degree at Westmar. In 1972, he received his Master's Degree from Iowa State. He taught auto mechanics and traffic education at Sioux City Community Schools for 31 years. He was very active in his church and the community and enjoyed going to his children's, grandchildren's, and great-grandchildren's sporting events. Jerry is survived by his wife, Shirley, 2 daughters, 1 son, 7 grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren. <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/siouxcityjournal/name/gerald-barth-obituary?id=38266329>

'72—**Carol B. Rancine**, 72, of Kenosha, WI, passed away on September 1, 2022, at Froedtert South St. Catherine's Medical Center Campus. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Food Service at Westmar. She was a House Manager for Lambs Farms for many years. She was a member of First United Methodist Church. She loved and cherished cats throughout her life. Carol is survived by her brother, 1 nephew, 1 niece, 2 great-nephews, and 1 great niece. <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/kenoshanews/name/carol-rancine-obituary?id=36464946>

'72—**Francis "Frank" Cummings**, 72, of Solon, IA, passed away at his home on November 17, 2022. After graduating from Westmar, he joined the US Army. While home on leave, he married Peggy Larson. She joined him in Germany in 1973 after her college graduation. They often joked about their three-year honeymoon in Europe. Upon returning to Iowa, they settled in Lake Mills where Frank began a career in production control at Fleetguard Industries for the next 21 years. He was also an active volunteer as a trained EMT. They also started their family. Eventually, they moved to Solon, IA, where he worked until his retirement until 2014. During retirement, he kept busy with his stump grinding business. He was always one to tell it like it is. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, feeding birds, and splitting wood for the fireplace. Frank is survived by his wife, Peggy, 2 sons, 1 daughter, 4 grandchildren, 2 sisters, 2 brothers, a brother-in-law, many cousins, nieces and nephews. <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/francis-cummings-obituary?id=38063555>

'88—**Debra Weeks Reichle**, 57, of Le Mars, passed away November 18, 2022, following a courageous battle with cancer. Following high school, she attended Westmar where she majored in education. She did some substitute teaching before taking a position at Wells Dairy where she worked for over 20 years. She married Dale Reichle in 2001. She was an avid Kansas City Chiefs and Iowa Hawkeyes fan. She enjoyed golfing, boating, and spending time at their cabin. She was also an animal lover. Deb is survived by her stepson, a sister and her husband, a brother and his wife, an aunt, 3 sisters-in-law, 3 brothers-in-law, several nieces and nephews, and her furry friend Pixie. <https://lemarssentinel.com/story/2973376.html>

Remember Westmar in Your Will

Many people choose to make their alma mater a beneficiary of their estate. Although Westmar is closed, it is still possible to support your college.

If your current will includes Westmar, please make sure it reads "Westmar University Alumni and Friends Association, 335 First Ave SW, Le Mars, IA 51031."

If you have not thought about a gift to Westmar, please do so. As a guideline, it should be worded "I leave \$xxxx to Westmar University Alumni and Friends w 335 First Ave SW, Le Mars, IA 51031. This will ensure that your generosity will continue to support the alumni association.

WESTMAR SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

For those of you who have children, grandchildren, or even great-grandchildren, the Iowa College Foundation is now accepting online applications through April 1, 2023. Application materials and official transcripts must be **RECEIVED** by the Iowa College Foundation no later than April 1, 2023. This scholarship is **NOT** applicable towards the University of Iowa, Iowa State, or UNI.

Go to www.iowacollegefoundation.org. Scroll down the opening page to "News and Announcements." Click on "Read More" under the Westmar scholarship program. Then, click the link to see eligibility requirements and the actual link for the scholarship application.

Alumni News



Joyce Kaiser and Marilyn Hardersen Murra at a celebratory lunch held in Marilyn's honor for receiving the IGHS AU Golden Plaque Award.

Joyce Kaiser ('76): Double major - Physical Education K-12, Psychology 7-12, Coaching for volleyball, basketball, and track & field. I have taught and coached in Rochester, Minnesota area. Originally from Archer, IA. Currently live in Sioux City, IA.

Title IX came in when I was in my junior year. It was important for the equality of women's sports. It gave women more options, and responsibility. Plus, women's sports were enhanced to the same levels of men's sports.

That title provided equality rulings and money-options. It proved to be vitally important, and was welcomed into sports.

I had participated in volleyball, softball, and track & field. With the new Title IX, women athletes could now join W Club, which had been a men's group.

As a first-year member, I was given a gift. Option possibilities included: a Josten's ring, a "W" fur Westmar blanket, etc.

I remember my old roommate Edie Breitmeier '76 chose the blanket. I chose the ring and have worn it very proudly. I had a royal blue stone in the center.

Thus, to the Westmar area at the Plymouth County Historical Museum, I gift the sports ring I received as a gift-token from W Club as result of Title IX, which enhanced women everywhere of equality in athletics.

David N. Collins ('74): I concluded my private practice of orthopaedic surgery on December 31, 2021, which featured joint replacement of the hip, knee, and predominantly the shoulder. To the fine care of my colleagues in Arkansas and the regional area, I left the balance of nearly 6000 patients having undergone shoulder replacement surgery during my career. Since 1985, I continue to serve as a part-time staff physician at the local VA hospital where I provide care to veterans and teach/supervise residents from the local academic training program. I remain the only active member of the American and Shoulder Elbow Surgeons in Arkansas. Semi-retirement will enable me to spend more time with my wife, Nina, our six children, and our eight grandchildren. We will continue to live in Little Rock, AR and a new home in Calmer, AR. The significant role that my Westmar College experiences played in my life cannot be understated. Memories of academics, athletics, friends, faculty, and community are frequently and happily recalled.

Dwight W. Vogel ('59, faculty 61-85) is the author of "In the Valley of the Shadow" (oslpublishings, 2022), an account of the six week journey from diagnosis to the Great Transition with his wife Linda (faculty 61-85) and reflections on that journey in the following years.



Gay Feind Weber, Wanda Powell Schneider, DonnaKay Pantzer Lee, and Virginia Huppe

Westmar friends reunited in Colorado on August 25, 2022, after 62 years. They had a get-together when DonnaKay visited Colorado from Capetown, South Africa.



Reunion Support Guidelines

- Publish reunion information provided by Committee on Facebook, WAFA Web Site and in WAFA Newsletter.
- Provide mailing labels or mailing list for sending invitations. (USPS only or USPS plus e-mail)
- Provide use of group e-mail for invitation and updates. Committee would provide copy of message to send.
- Provide information on a personal PayPal account to accept registrations. Alternative to accepting checks only. WAFA will assist with this.
- Provide contact lists of LeMars area hotels, caterers/restaurants, and meeting rooms.
- Make room reservation at LeMars Convention Center, if needed, to get 40% non-profit discount. Pay for room, to be reimbursed by Reunion Committee. (Reunion Committee would have to set up and take down the room. Reunion Committee would make alternative room arrangements (i.e. church, restaurant).
- Make Westmar Memorabilia available for purchase in the Westmar Room and the Museum sales area.
- Publish reunion pictures in WAFA newsletter if pictures are provided with names and reunion identification.

If you are planning a reunion, please let us know and we will list it in the WAFA newsletter, our Facebook page, and on our website. We can also assist with sending an email to your classmates or providing addresses.

We also love pictures of reunions no matter how large or small. Be sure to include information and names. We will share them!

What's Happening with You? Tell Us!

We are interested in knowing what has recently (or not so recently) happened in your life. Promotions? Marriage? Births or deaths? Honors or awards? Graduate degree? Semi- or full retirement? Pass on the information so we can print it and spread the news!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Class year _____ Spouse also an alum _____

Other relatives also alums _____

News (attach a separate sheet if needed) _____

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Le Mars, Iowa 51031

e-mail to: WAFA@westmarcollege.org

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Can we e-mail your newsletter? Yes No

Attended Westmar _____ to _____ Class of _____

Membership fee: Single \$20.00 \$ _____

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In Memory/Honor of (circle one) \$ _____

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Or complete form online at www.westmarcollege.org/Membership.html

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 Ph: 712-546-8759



Kristin Olson: Executive Director
Staff of volunteers

Please contact me with any questions about membership, newsletter, Facebook page, reunions, or anything else you may think to ask. Call me at 712-546-8759 or email me at wafa@westmarcollege.org. Thank you!

Please keep us posted when you move or get a new email address or phone number. We no longer get updates unless YOU let us know. Email Kristin at wafa@westmarcollege.org with the updated information.

Also check the **MISSING** link on the website for any friends of yours for whom we are missing current information, email addresses included. It would be greatly appreciated!

Thank you!

Show your Westmar spirit!

Do you know classmates or other Westmar alums who are not yet WAFA members? Ask them to send their information and yearly dues to the office in Le Mars to be included in future mailings. Form and information can be found in the newsletter.

WAFA Dues Support These Activities:

- Work with the Iowa College Foundation to administer the Westmar Endowment Scholarship
- Provide Alumni & contact assistance for Westmar reunions
- Publish WAFA newsletters
- Help maintain displays in the Westmar Room of the Plymouth County Historical Museum
- Maintain Westmar Alumni, Faculty, Staff, and Administration database
- Help maintain the Westmar Memorial Park on the former campus
- Maintain the WAFA web-site www.westmarcollege.org

Happy Valentine's Day



Please be sure to pay your renewal dues to ensure that you will receive the next issue of the newsletter.