

# Reporters' Notebook

## Boone event special in many ways

*Reporters' Notebook gives our staff a chance to share some of the stories behind the news. The feature appears each Tuesday and Thursday.*

**I**CAN'T THINK of a movie theme more inspiring than the one from the 1981 film "Chariots of Fire."

The music usually causes me to reminisce about my short-lived days as a cross-country runner, but last Wednesday it nearly brought me to tears.

I was covering the Daniel Boone School District's version of the Special Olympics. In the opening ceremony, 50 students marched down the center of the field to that theme, with the children in the front serving as flag-bearers.

I did not expect my eyes to well up with emotion, and I was caught off-guard by how moved I was. It's easy to forget that less than a century ago, societal attitudes as a whole had not yet evolved to a point of embracing the value and dignity of people with intellectual and/or physical disabilities.

That was my first time covering such an event, and even though I left the stadium with a painful sunburn, it was worth it to witness the joy on the students' faces as they competed with their friends and celebrated their abilities.

— Lindsey O'Laughlin, reporter

### Views on newsletter far apart in Boyertown

The Boyertown School Board has been a divided in recent years on a variety of issues, and a recent meeting provided a perfect example of just how far apart the board can be sometimes.

Mired in a particularly challenging budget process, the district has been looking to cut costs, and one idea suggested by board member Christine Neiman was to cut the district's quarterly newsletter, Boyertown Essentials. The district spends about \$50,000 annually to produce and mail the newsletter.

The fact that there was controversy over the issue didn't strike me as



SPECIAL TO THE READING EAGLE: JEFF DOELP

Daniel Boone senior Brandon Kleinert, dressed as the Hulk, leads the procession of Special Olympic athletes and assistants onto the field.

much as how far apart some of the board members were on the matter.

Board member Jill Dennin said that among people she had spoken with, support was 10 to 1 in favor of producing the newsletter. Additionally, Superintendent Richard Faidley said senior citizens in the community have thanked him for sending out the paper copies, and has never heard a negative comment regarding the newsletter outside of school board meetings.

On the other hand, Neiman insisted that many senior citizens don't receive the newsletter or even know what it is. Board member Paul Stengle noted that he believed that "90 percent or more" of recipients immediately disposed of the newsletter without reading it.

Who's right? Who knows?

But it stood out to me as a classic example of how far apart a governing body can be on an issue that, at first glance, wouldn't appear to be that controversial.

— Matt Carey, reporter

### Mayor, City Council honor rec commission

City officials can't say enough good things about the Reading Recreation

Commission.

The commission, a partnership of the city and Reading School District, received two awards at the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society's annual banquet March 28 in Hershey.

The commission, headed by executive director Daphne Klahr, and the Friends of Reading Hospital were honored for Excellence in Recreation and Parks. The state recognized the two groups for providing after-school meals for children in the commission's "Out-of-School Food, Nutrition, and Healthy Lifestyle Program." Hospital volunteers raised money for a new van to deliver meals to the children in the food program.

The state Recreation and Park Society also named the Reading Recreation Commission as the "Agency of the Year."

Mayor Wally Scott and council members Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz and Chris Daubert, who represent council on the commission, presented a proclamation to Klahr and her colleagues at the May 8 council meeting.

The proclamation credited the commission with living its motto: "We Make Reading Look Good."

— Dan Kelly, reporter