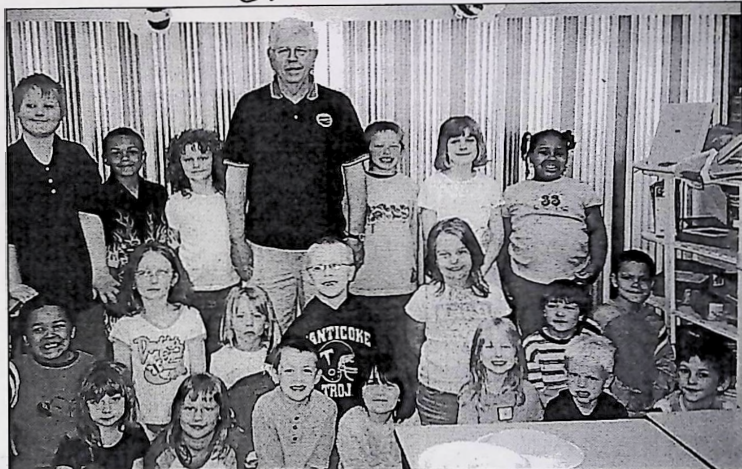


CV 6-18-05



Smith Elementary students hear professor

Dr. Walter Placek, science professor in graduate studies at Wilkes University, recently visited the first grade class of JoAnne Thomas at K.M. Smith Elementary School in Nanticoke. He engaged the children in various hands-on experiments that demonstrated static electricity. The students were introduced to the scientific process and learned new vocabulary. In the first row, from left, are Diana Conklin, Toni

Herring, Joshua Brady, Janeen Percival, Kaylie Sims, Ryan Edwards and Kyle Wolfer. Second row: Xavier Bosworth, Keisha Cropp, Tina Stiles, Dr. Placek's grandson Nikolas Placek, Katelyn Jones, Stephen Snyder and Austin McClure. Third row: Dustin Sidas, Luke Johnson, Harley Langford, Dr. Walter Placek, Christopher Grosch, Kassandra Schinski, and Janria Wood.

STRAZ (THE GUARD)

SCRANTON, PA
WEEKLY 10,500
OCT 2 2003



Burrelles
INTERNATIONAL SERVICE

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Remember Way Back



PNU members Rev. John Kotula, left, and Rev. Dr. Walter Placek, right, are shown in this early 1950's photo in front of the pond at Spojnia Farm in Waymart, Pa. Rev. Placek was part of a crew which had worked to expand the pond to make it suitable for swimming for church campers. Father Kotula was a counselor at the youth camp as part of his duties as assistant pastor of St. Stanislaus Cathedral, Scranton, Pa. He later went on to serve as pastor for many years at Transfiguration Parish, Wallington, N.J. Dr. Placek went on to become a professor at Wilkes University. Upon his retirement he studied for the PNCC priesthood and was ordained. He serves the Church as a supply pastor.

◆ NAMES & FACES

TL
8-16-03



EDITOR'S NOTE:

To have an announcement published here send information to People, 15 N. Main St., Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711.

The Rev. **Walter Placek** was appointed pastor of the Providence of God,



Placek

Lithuanian National Catholic Parish, North Scranton.

Placek was ordained a priest of the Polish National Catholic Church in May 2002. He is a retired physics professor at Wilkes University where he teaches

part time as professor emeritus. Placek is the son of Mary Placek and the late Walter Placek. He and his wife, the former Barbara Swantkowski, reside in Exeter Township. They have three children, Allison Knick, David, and Adrienne Royster; and six grandchildren, Katelynn and Rebecca Knick, Amanda and Erin McCamey, and Nikolas and Benjamin Placek.

Reverend appointed to Scranton parish

The Right Rev. Dr. Casimir Grot-nik, bishop of the Central Diocese of the Polish National Catholic Church, Scranton, has appointed the Rev. Dr. Walter Placek pastor of the Providence of God, Lithuanian National Catholic Parish in North Scranton.

Placek was ordained a priest of the Polish National Catholic Church on May 25, 2003, in his home parish, Holy Mother of Sorrows in Dupont.

In 2001, Placek retired as physics professor of Wilkes University after 40 years of teaching; he continues to teach part-time as a professor emeritus. He received his BS from Wilkes College, MS from Penn State, Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania and did additional post-graduate work at the Universities of Vermont and Maryland, and Colby College.

He spent one year as visiting professor at Cornell University.

Placek finished his theological studies at the Savonarola Theological Seminary in Scranton.

He held positions of leadership in many professional and scholarly societies, including president of the Pennsylvania Science Teach-



Rev. Placek

CV 8-30-03

ers Association in 1992 and presented scientific and educational papers at many state, national and international meetings.

Placek also served on the Wyoming Area School Board for 10 years, chairman of the Operating Board of the West Side Area Vocational Technical School and the board of trustees

of the Luzerne County Community College for 10 years.

His activities in the Polish National Catholic Church include attendance at several national synods, election to its Diocesan Council and Supreme Tribunal. He also served on the parish committee of Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish for nearly 30 years.

Placek is the son of 93-year-old Mary Placek, Dupont, and Walter Placek, who died in a mine accident in 1961.

He is married to the former Barbara Swantkowski of Duryea; they reside in Exeter Township and will celebrate their 42nd wedding anniversary in November.

They have three children: Allison Knick, a Wilkes University graduate who is a registered nurse in Wilkes-Barre General Hospital's emergency room; David, also a Wilkes graduate who teaches science at Wyoming Valley West High School, and Adrienne Royster, also a Wilkes graduate, who is director of human resources for Eaton Industries in Oklahoma.

DALLAS POST

DALLAS, PA
WEEKLY 3,000

SEP 4 1996

BURRELLE'S

Students return to new math, science classes

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

FRONT PAGE

LEHMAN - Elementary school students will find they can literally get their hands on their science lessons this year.

According to superintendent Dr. William Price, science classes in grades K through six will focus on the practical applications of basic scientific principles using "items the kids are familiar with."

"For example, they might work

with thermometers while exploring freezing, thawing and boiling, or tuning forks, two tin cans and a string to learn about sound frequencies and vibrations," he said. "We want to make science interesting and challenging for both students and teachers. It's a backyard approach which emphasizes creativity, imagination and teacher initiative."

Because elementary classes statewide spend an average of only about 20 minutes per week in

science class, Price said he wants the Lake-Lehman students to spend more time learning its basic principles.

Dr. Walter Placek of Wilkes University developed the study guides with the teachers and will visit classes to monitor both teachers' and students' progress this year. Teaching supplies were purchased through a \$4,000 federal grant, Price said.

High school science students will continue to visit their young

friends at the elementary schools and show them different science experiments in a very successful program begun last year.

The district is also revamping its math curriculum. While algebra is now introduced to eighth and ninth-graders, it will soon be moved down into the fifth grade, where students will begin learning its basics in a pre-algebra course, Price said.

See MATH, SCIENCE

Math, science

(continued from page 1) B

"We also plan to make algebra a required subject for all students," he said.

High school math students will also have the opportunity to study probability and statistics this year. Again, it's a practical approach and much more than simply figuring batting scores, Price said.

"For example, students will learn to analyze data and apply it by constructing graphs and frequency distribution tables," he said. "They'll also learn about the misuses of data, in which someone interviews 10 people, then writes that 'one in 10 people drinks tea with milk,' for example. Probability and statistics involve much more than studying a racehorse's record and trying to predict how it will place in its next race."

Math teachers will continue to fine tune the courses and design new problem-solving approaches for grades K to five, using a federal grant to buy materials.

"I'm trying to encourage the teachers to move from the textbook to the practical approach," Price said. "If they don't have a textbook, teachers are sometimes reluctant to develop a course and their own teaching materials. When I taught, I oriented my lessons more toward problem-solv-

"I'm trying to encourage the teachers to move from the textbook to the practical approach."

Dr. William Price
Superintendent of Schools

ing and less toward the book."

Price said the district will expand its peer teaching program, which brought Spanish lessons taught by high school students to grades K through three last year. Students in grades four through six will learn French from their "big friends" at the high school, giving them exposure to both languages by the time they reach the middle school.

Foreign language teachers from the high school will also work with the elementary teachers to help make them more comfortable with the idea of incorporating another language into their curriculum.

Also new this year is a research course required for all ninth-graders, who will use computers and the Internet to research and solve problems, then write about their solutions.

Fifth-grade class tests 'hands-on' curriculum

By GRACE R. DOVE

Post Staff

LEHMAN — Mrs. Carol Williams's fifth-graders will make it rain in their classroom and blow up their teacher in science class.

Using materials they are familiar with, her students will learn science through a new "hands-on" approach. During the first week of school they made and set up wind flags, a rain gauge and thermometers, and devised experiments to study temperature differences and humidity to begin a unit on the weather.

Rose Knouse, Liz Martin, Sarah Heller, Robyn Maslowski and Kara Makarewicz formed a group and immediately got to work making their wind flag — which they waved around and blew on to test from a dowel rod and a decora-

tive pennant. Joe Redmond stretched up high to attach his group's wind flag to one of three bird feeders outside the classroom window.

As Mrs. Williams peppered the class with questions about weather, hands popped into the air and students said, "I know! I know!"

You know it's going to rain when you can smell it or when your uncle's old injury aches, one said. Another said puffy, fluffy white clouds mean good weather and sometimes you can see pictures or people's faces in them.

After reading several weather proverbs, they understood that birds often head for their nests before it rains and why "sailors

See HANDS-ON, p. 8



POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

Karen Miliunic, Colleen Mininger, Scott Lozo, Matt Mahoney and Cody Lamoreaux made wind flags as part of an introduction to weather in their fifth-grade science class at Lehman-Jackson Elementary School last week.

Hands-on

(continued from page 1) A
take warning" from a morning red sky.

They'll get to blow up the teacher when they begin a study of air and its properties. According to a study guide prepared for the district's elementary classes by Wilkes University's Dr. Walter Placek, the students will make and use individual compressed air units (heavy duty quart-size food storage bags taped shut around plastic straws) to lift the teacher, who is seated on a platform. The students provide the air; the teacher's weight compresses it.

The district purchased the new materials with a \$4,000 grant, as part of a change in the elementary science curriculum emphasizing practical applications of basic scientific principles.

"Now that I have a hot plate, we'll make it rain in class next week," Mrs. Williams said. "You'll be the first class to try it out."

She said she has used the hands-on approach for several years, but not to this extent because the materials weren't available.

"I always left tuning forks, magnets and other items out on a table for the students to explore in their spare time," she said before class started. "I have boxes of new materials ready to be catalogued and used."

Students will also use familiar items, including cotton balls, coins, a cork, a metal washer, sponges, buttons and popsicle sticks to explore magnetism, ab-



POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

Ethan Christiana knows the correct answer to a question in Mrs. Carol Williams's fifth-grade science class at Lehman-Jackson Elementary School, which is using a hands-on approach to science this year.

sorption and conduction of heat and cold, light reflection and flotation. Some lessons, such as using a pumpkin to study longitude and latitude (and later recycling into a jack-o-lantern) are geared for specific seasons.

"The high school science students will also be back this year to do experiments with the children," Mrs. Williams said. "They're ab-

solutely marvelous! It's a good experience for the older students and the younger ones look up to them so much. They have excellent rapport with one another."

Last year's biggest hits were group dissections of a shark and frogs, she said. "My students really loved it," she said, smiling.

Mrs. Williams credited high school science teacher Gail Keen and gifted teacher Mary Alice Lukasavage with helping to make

*"Now that I have
a hot plate, we'll
make it rain in
class next week."*

Mrs. Carol Williams
Fifth grade teacher

the program a success. "You can call them for anything at all," she said.

Experts explain how a bolt damages body

Lightning victim still in critical condition

By MARY AGNES CAREY
Staff Writer

WILKES-BARRE — Even if it only strikes once, lightning can seriously injure or even kill you.

Monday night, Rebecca Hughes, 18, of 137 Yeager Ave., Dallas, was critically injured after lightning struck her and a companion as they walked along a beach in New Jersey.

Miss Hughes is unconscious, in very critical condition and on a life-support system at Burdette Tomlin Memorial Hospital in Cape May Court House, N.J., according to Jessie Richmond, a nursing supervisor at the hospital.

Miss Hughes' companion, Lawrence Ball, 19, of Pittsburgh, died shortly after lightning struck the

couple at 9:27 p.m.

According to area experts, a bolt of lightning can cause a variety of injuries, from a surface burn to severe internal damage and, in Ball's case, death.

"There isn't anything in nature like lightning," said Dr. Walter Placek, a Wilkes College physics professor for 17 years. "What most people don't realize is there are more people killed by lightning each year than by other types of storms," he said.

Trying to compare being shocked by a household electrical outlet to being hit by lightning "is like trying to compare a pea-shooter to a cannon," Placek said. A bolt can carry a high electrical charge and a temperature several times hotter than the sun's sur-

face, he said.

Determining the damage lightning has caused is a difficult task, according to Mark Ercolani, a registered nurse in the NPW Hospital emergency room in Plains Township.

A bolt often leaves burns at entrance and exit marks but its path inside the body is mysterious, he said.

"No one knows which way it goes," the Ercolani said. Enzyme tests may determine damage to muscles, tissues or organs, Ercolani said, but the process takes time. "If you've been struck by lightning, you'll probably spend some time in the hospital," he said.

Ercolani also said if you know you were hit by lightning, or if you

were near someone who was and you feel any numbness or nausea, see a doctor.

If caught outside when lightning begins, Placek recommends the following steps:

- Go indoors immediately
- If you're in your car, stay there.
- If you're caught in a open field, lie down immediately until the storm passes. Don't lie under a tree because if the tree gets hit, so can you.

Placek also said when you can feel the hair on the back of your neck or your arms standing up, lightning may be in the area.

"If you get that prickly sensation, hit the deck and go flat," Placek said.



2 Dr. Walter A. Placek

University Honors Dr. Walter Placek

Dr. Walter A. Placek was recently honored at graduation ceremonies held at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia in May. Dr. Placek, who recently completed his Ph. D degree, was presented with "The Dissertation of the Year Award" by the University of Pennsylvania Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa.

This award is given annually to the doctoral student whose dissertation best represents the goals and principles of Phi Delta Kappa, an honorary fraternity dedicated to basic research in education. His dissertation, which dealt with the problems students encounter in the learning of Newtonian mechanics, was considered the most outstanding from over one hundred and fifty doctoral dissertations.

Dr. Placek has been a member of the Physics Department at Wilkes College since 1969 and prior to that time taught physics on the high school level.

A graduate of West Pittston High School and Wilkes College, he received his Masters Degree from Penn State University and took additional graduate work at the Universities of Maryland and Vermont.

Placek serves as an advisor and consultant to various educational institutions and the Pennsylvania Department of Education in matters dealing with science education.

Dr. Placek has been a member of the Wyoming Area School Board since 1975, has served as chairman of the West Side Area Vocational Technical Board during 1981-82 and presently sits on the Board of Trustees of Luzerne County Community College.

Dr. Placek is the son of Mary Placek of Dupont and the late Walter Placek. He is married to the former Barbara Swankowski of Duryea. They reside with their three children in the Mt. Zion section of Harding.

MEMO FROM:

HU 215-762-8284

11/11/93

WALTER A. PLACEK, JR., Ph.D.

Professor of Physics and Science Education

Mark, Ext. 4828 Ralph Roselle - Call HU- 11/16

I'm still waiting for an article on Harry Rose; he's probably one of the most outstanding 1st year medical students in the country and we're silent about it.

This article on Dr. Brent Breiseth is great for his ego and resume' but does little to help us recruit good students. If we're going to attract top students we must show that we graduate top students. We need your help

Thanks

WILKES UNIVERSITY
WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA 18766
PHONE (717) 824-4651

Walt

s & Colleges

med to "International Who's Who"

California and served as its President before returning to State University where he will his appointment as Wilkes University.

an of the Earth Center. Breiseth is head of community initiative to Blue Coal lands. In 1990, Dr. Breiseth leads purchase the 15,000-acre scarred land and into a laboratory for advanced technology which will be a model for his region among the 21st century.

Dr. Breiseth is a leader in many organizations which include the Free Library; Wilkes-Barre; United Lehigh Valley (chairman of the Lehigh Valley Division-1990), Greater Wilkes-Barre

the business community, and has worked to foster economic growth

in Northeastern Pennsylvania. He has also been instrumental in developing ways in which educational institutions in the Wyoming Valley can work together to pool resources for the benefit of all students.

His leadership is credited with the achievement that moved Wilkes to University status in 1990.

Schools & Colleges

President of Wilkes University named to "International Who's Who"

Dr. Christopher N. Breiseth, president of Wilkes University, was recently inducted as a member of "International Who's Who."

"This inclusion is indicative of outstanding professional achievement in one's particular sphere of influence," said Scott



Adams, editor-in-chief of "International Who's Who."

Dr. Breiseth's outstanding achievements have led him to be recognized as one of America's leading successful professionals.

The President of Wilkes University since 1984, Dr. Breiseth received his baccalaureate degree in history with highest honors from the University of California at Los Angeles (1958) where he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He received the B.Litt in Modern British History from Oxford Uni-

versity, (1962) and the PhD in Modern European Intellectual History from Cornell University (1964).

A Woodrow Wilson Graduate Fellow at Cornell University from 1958-60, Dr. Breiseth was also awarded the Telluride Association/Lincoln College Exchange Scholarship at Oxford University from 1960-62. He joined the faculty at Williams College in 1963 and served as the Liaison Officer for Fulbright, Marshall, and Rhodes Scholarships.

Dr. Breiseth also served as Chief of the Policy Guidance Branch on Community Action in the Office of Economic Opportunity in Washington D.C. In 1970, he was a postdoctoral Danforth Fellow in Black Studies at the University of Chicago. After completing his research in Black Studies, Dr. Breiseth joined the history faculty at Sangamon State University in Springfield, Illinois.

In 1980, Dr. Breiseth accepted the Presidency of Deep Springs

College in California and served for three years as its President and Dean before returning to Sangamon State University where he taught until his appointment as President of Wilkes University.

As chairman of the Earth Conservancy, Dr. Breiseth is head of a bold community initiative to reclaim the Blue Coal lands. In this capacity, Dr. Breiseth leads the effort to purchase the 15,000 acres of mine-scarred land and turn them into a laboratory for research and technology which will place this region among the leaders into the 21st century.

He has been a leader in many civic organizations which include the Osterhout Free Library; Leadership Wilkes-Barre; United Way of Wyoming Valley (chairman, Education Division-1990), and the Greater Wilkes-Barre Partnership.

Within the business community, Dr. Breiseth has worked to foster development and economic growth

in Northeastern Pennsylvania. He has also been instrumental in developing ways in which educational institutions in the Wyoming Valley can work together to pool resources for the benefit of all students.

His leadership is credited with the achievement that moved Wilkes to University status in 1990.

recruit good students. If we're going to attract top students we must show that we graduate top students. We need your help
Thanks

WILKES UNIVERSITY
WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA 18766
PHONE (717) 824-4651

Walt

Placek elected president of science teachers' association

Dr. Walter A. Placek, a physics and science education professor at Wilkes University, has been elected president of the Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association.

The PSTA has been called upon by the state Department of Educa-

tion to help develop the science requirements now in place across the state. Additionally, the PSTA will also work closely with the National Science Teachers Association to have an influence on the national education goals as well.

The PSTA will conduct its con-

vention on Nov. 7-8 in Clarion. As president-elect, Placek is responsible for organizing the convention which this year features an address from NASA astronaut Ronald M. Sega. Also, numerous field-trips will be offered and more than 100 presentations will be exhibited. Expected to attend are more than 2,000 science teachers from across the state.

Placek was largely responsible for bringing the Program for Improving Elementary Science (PIES) to Wilkes University in 1986. PIES is based on the belief that improved elementary science education should be a priority issue in the national agenda and teaches teachers methods which are both fun and effective in the

classroom.

Placek has spent a semester at Cornell University as a visiting fellow and has been a school

director for the Wyoming Area School District and a representative to the West Side Vocational-Technical School.

SCRANTON TRIBUNE
SCRANTON, PA.
AM-33,217



Dr. Walter A. Placek

U of Pennsylvania honors Dr. Placek

²Dr. Walter A. Placek, son of Mary Placek of Dupont and the late Walter Placek, has been honored at graduation ceremonies at the University of Pennsylvania.

Placek, who recently completed his Ph.D. degree, was presented with "The Dissertation of the Year Award" by the University of Pennsylvania chapter of Phi Delta Kappa.

The award is given annually to the doctoral student whose dissertation best represents the goals and principles of Phi Delta Kappa, a honorary fraternity dedicated to basic research in education.

A member of the physics department at Wilkes College, Placek graduated from West Pittston High School and Wilkes College. He received his master's degree from Penn State University and took additional graduate work at the Universities of Maryland and Vermont.

Placek is married to the former Barbara Swantkowski of Duryea. They reside with their three children in the Mount Zion section of Harding.

Placek honored at graduation

2 Dr. Walter A. Placek was recently honored at graduation ceremonies held at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

He recently completed his Ph.D. and was presented with "The Dissertation of the Year Award" by the University of Pennsylvania chapter of Phi Delta Kappa.



DR. PLACEK

The award is given annually to the doctoral student whose dissertation best represents the goals and principles of Phi Delta Kappa, an honorary fraternity dedicated to basic research in education.

His dissertation dealt with the problems students encounter in the learning of Newtonian mechanics, and was considered the most outstanding from over 150 doctoral dissertations.

Dr. Placek has been a member of the Physics Department at Wilkes College since 1969 and prior to that time taught physics on the high school level. A graduate of West Pittston High School, West Pittston and Wilkes College, Wilkes-Barre, Placek received his masters degree from The Pennsylvania State University, State College, and took additional graduate work at the Universities of Maryland and Vermont.

Dr. Placek has been a member of the Wyoming Area school board since 1975, served as chairman of the West Side Area School Vocational Technical board during 1981-82 and presently sits on the board of trustees of the Luzerne County Community College, Nanticoke.

Dr. Placek is the son of Mary Placek of Dupont and the late Walter Placek.

He is married to the former Barbara Swantkowski of Duryea.

Placek presented award at U of P ceremonies

Dr. Walter A. Placek, Harding, was recently honored at graduation ceremonies held at the University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia.

Dr. Placek, who recently completed his PhD degree requirements, was presented with "The Dissertation of the Year Award" by the University of Pennsylvania chapter of Phi Delta Kappa.

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Placek serves as an advisor and consultant to various educational institutions and the Pennsylvania Department of Education in matters dealing with science education. Dr. Placek has been a member of the Wyoming Area School Board since 1975, served as chairman of the West Side Area Vocational Technical Board during 1981-82 and presently sits on the Board of Trustees of the Luzerne County Community College.

Dr. Placek is the son of Mary Placek of Dupont and the late Walter Placek. He is married to the former Barbar Swantkowski of Duryea. They reside with their three children in the Mount Zion section of Harding.

Club news

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Walter A. Placek, Ph.D., will be the speaker during the monthly meeting of the University of Pennsylvania Club of Greater Wilkes-Barre at noon Friday in the Westmoreland Club, South Franklin Street, Wilkes-Barre.

Placek is a graduate of West Pittston High School and received his bachelor of science degree from Wilkes College, Wilkes-Barre; a master in education from Pennsylvania State University, and Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. He took additional graduate work

at the Universities of Vermont and Maryland.

He has been a member of the Wilkes College faculty since 1969 and, prior to this time, he taught science and physics on the secondary level from 1961 to 1969.

He has been a member of the Wyoming Area School Board since 1975 and served as chairman of the West Side Area Vocational Board during 1981-82. He presently serves on the Board of Trustees of the Luzerne County Community College, Nanticoke.

Placek's topic will be the content of his research that led to his dissertation, which dealt

Club news R 9/4/85

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Walter A. Placek, Ph.D., will be the speaker during the monthly meeting of the University of Pennsylvania Club of Greater Wilkes-Barre at noon Friday in the Westmoreland Club, South Franklin Street, Wilkes-Barre.

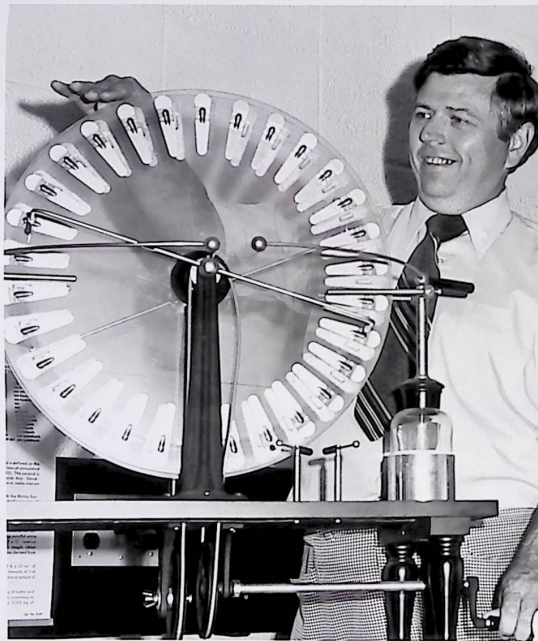
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Placek's topic will be the content of his research that led to his dissertation, which dealt











Wilkes professor on journal board

Dr. Walter A. Placek, professor of Physics and Science Education at Wilkes University, has been notified of his appointment to the editorial and advisory board of the *Journal of College Science Teaching*. The journal is published by the National Science Teachers Association and is circulated to universities and professors throughout the United States and Canada.

Dr. Placek has been on the Wilkes faculty for 25 years. Prior to that, he taught high school physics for seven years. He earned a BS degree from Wilkes College, a master's from Penn State University and his PhD from the University of Pennsylvania. He and his wife, Barbara, reside in Harding.

Dr. Placek's role and leadership in education have been numerous and far-reaching, and include several professional and scholarly societies.



Dr. Placek

CV 8/5/94

Placek to address U of P club

Dr. Walter A. Placek will be guest speaker at the regular meeting of the University of Pennsylvania Club of Greater Wilkes-Barre Friday, Sept. 6, at noon in the Westmoreland Club, South Franklin Street, Wilkes-Barre.

Dr. Placek will discuss the research he conducted for his doctoral dissertation dealing with the problems students encounter in learning Newtonian mechanics and their relationship to giftedness.

A member of the Wyoming Area School Board since 1975, he served as chairman of the West Side Area Vocational-Technical School Board during 1981-1982 and is currently on the Board of Trustees of Luzerne County Community College. He is a member of the faculty of Wilkes College.

Reservations for the luncheon may be made by calling Murray Popky.



Dr. Walter A. Placek

CV 9/5/85

Placek appointed ^{TL} to national board ^{4/27/84}

Dr. Walter A. Placek, professor of physics and science education at Wilkes University was recently



Dr. Walter A. Placek

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This journal is published by the National

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Placek has been on the faculty at Wilkes University for 25 years; prior to that he taught high school physics for seven years. He earned a bachelor's degree from Wilkes, a master's degree from Penn State University and a doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania.

Placek has served in various positions of leadership in education and is a member of several professional and scholarly societies. He has presented the results of his research in science learning at state and national meetings.

JUN 4, 1994

STANDARD SPEAKER

HAZLETON, PA

AM - 24.440



HOLY SPIRIT GRANT — Holy Spirit Academy, directed by Alice Flynn, principal, is implementing its hands-on-science grant. The first step took place May 19 during a meeting with Dr. Walter Placek, left, physics professor at Wilkes University, who shared some tips on how to use the grant with, from left, Linda Kistler, Rosemarie Garramone and Stan Pavlick. He stressed simple, low cost experiments and using the rich community resources that are available through area colleges and universities. He will return in the fall and be available for consultation and continued staff development. nsc

BURRELLE'S

WALTER A. PLACEK

Member of the JCST Advisory Board

Walter A. Placek, a member of the JCST Advisory Board, has been a faculty member of Wilkes University for the last 25 years where he is presently professor of physics and science education. He received his bachelor's in physics education from Wilkes College, a master's in physical science from Pennsylvania State University, and a doctorate in science education from the University of Pennsylvania. He has also been a National Science Foundation (NSF) Fellow at several universities.

Dr. Placek served for three years on the National Committee for Research in Physics Education of the American Association of Physics Teachers and is a past president of the Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association. His current research interest is in the role of preconceived knowledge in the learning of basic mechanics among young learners.

In addition to Dr. Placek's teaching duties at Wilkes University, he is the director of and instructor for the Pennsylvania Science Teacher Education Program: Program to Improve Elementary Science (PIES), sponsored by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency.



MAY 1, 1994

SUNDAY DISPATCH
PITTSBURGH, PA

54.000

Named To Board Of National Teaching Journal

Dr. Walter Placek, professor of physics and science education at Wilkes University was recently notified of his appointment to the editorial and advisory board of the Journal of College Science Teaching. This journal is published by the National Science Teachers Association and is circulated to universities and professors throughout the United States and Canada.

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Dr. Placek has served in vari-



Dr. Placek

ous positions of leadership in education. These include president of the Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association, the National Committee for Research in Physics Education of the American Association of Physics Teachers; is presently a member of the Pennsylvania State delegation to the Middle Atlantic Consortium for systemic reform in education and is the director for the program to improve elementary science at Wilkes.

He also served for ten years on the board of the Luzerne County Community College and also for ten years on the board of the Wyoming Area School District.

Dr. Placek is a member of several professional and scholarly societies and has presented the results of his research in science learning at state and national meetings.

Dr. Placek and his wife, Barbara reside in Harding.

MUTUAL
PRESS CLIPPING SERVICE
MAR 19, 1994

STANDARD SPEAKER
HAZLETON. PA
AM - 24.440

Holy Spirit gets \$500 science grant

22586
Holy Spirit Academy, under the direction of principal Alice Flynn, recently was awarded a \$500 science grant from the Scranton Diocese.

The school's proposal for the grant was titled "Hands on Approach to the Teaching of Science." The grant will be used to implement this approach.

Dr. Walter Placek of Wilkes University, will conduct a staff in-service on this approach in May and provide suggestions for the purchase of suitable resource materials for the science laboratory.

JUL 8, 1993

STANDARD SPEAKER

HAZLETON, PA

AM - 24.440

Atty. Kennedy named to LCCC board of trustees

By BOB SALITZA^{225FF}
Standard-Speaker Staff Writer

WILKES-BARRE — The Hazleton area regained representation on Luzerne County Community College's board of trustees Wednesday through action by the county board of commissioners.

The commissioners, meeting at the courthouse, appointed attorney Thomas Kennedy, 200 W. Chapel St., Hazleton, to a six-year term on the Nanticoke-based college's board.

Kennedy, whose term began immediately, will replace attorney Charles Bufalino, of West Pittston, an assistant county solicitor whose LCCC board term expired in March.

The Hazleton area had been without representation on the 15-member college board since February 1992, when county commissioner Rose Tucker was appointed to replace former Hazleton Councilman George Hayden.

Also appointed to the college board Wednesday was Charles P. Gelso, a Wilkes-Barre lawyer and solicitor to the county controller's office. He will succeed Walter Placek, a Wilkes University professor whose term also ran out in March.

Meanwhile, Dr. Joseph Lombardo, of Pittston, was reappointed for a third term as a trustee.

In other business, the commissioners appointed Carlie Wetzel as interim director of the Office of Human Services at an annual salary of \$40,000.

Wetzel, who had been serving as block grants coordinator for the department, succeeds Ronald Russo, who died last week after heading the office for four and a half years.

The commissioners said a screening committee will be created to find a permanent replacement for the 48-year-old Russo.

In still another major appointive action, the commissioners named Ronald R. Harchar, of Wilkes-Barre, as director of the Tax Claim Bureau at a salary of \$23,500.

A freelance accountant, Harchar succeeds Janet Augustine, who retired in March.

Chairman Frank Crossin voted against the appointment. He said he does not question Harchar's qualifications, but had thought the matter was to be placed on the "back burner." According to Crossin, a number of qualified individuals had been under consideration for the post.

In other business, the commissioners awarded a \$364,536.88 contract to M. J. Spott Construction Co., Inc., of Wilkes-Barre, for emergency repairs to a county-owned bridge in the Blytheburn area of Mountaintop.

An agreement with The Architecture & Engineering Group Inc. of Wilkes-Barre, was approved for design work on the replacement of a county bridge off Route 93 in Sugarloaf Township.

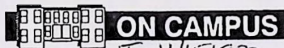
A reimbursement agreement was executed for the 1993 critical bridge inspection program. The federal government funds 80 percent of the program cost.

The pre-determined ratio of assessed value to market value was lowered to 9.2 percent for 1994 from 9.4 percent this year. County assessors apply the ratio in determining assessed valuations for all new construction. Most municipalities and school districts in the county use the ratio for taxing purposes.

Stroehmann Bakeries, Inc., Valmont Industrial Park, West Hazleton, was awarded a \$5,849 contract to supply bread to Valley Crest, the county nursing center.

The start of the commissioners' business meeting was delayed for two hours by a public hearing at which some 200 Wilkes-Barre-area residents expressed dissatisfaction with proposed service cutbacks by Luzerne County Transportation Authority.

The citizens also objected to the possible sale of the financially ailing LCTA bus system to a private company, which also is under consideration.



■ Wilkes University

Annual state convention

Dr. Walter Placek, science professor at Wilkes University and president of the Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association will chair the annual PSTA State convention on Nov. 19 and 20, in Pittsburgh. The convention will feature over 180 sessions and 50 exhibitors to be presented at the Vista Hotel and the Governor Lawrence Convention Center. The highlight of this year's convention is an evening at the new Carnegie Science Center, which will include a film at the OMNIMAX theater, a sky show at the planetarium and four floors of hands-on science and technology exhibits.

The Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association represents over 2,500 science teachers, professors and school administrators from all levels of education in the Commonwealth.

Placek, who has been a member of the Wilkes University faculty since 1968 received his B.S. from Wilkes University, a Master's Degree from Penn State and his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. In addition to belonging to several professional and scholarly societies, Placek serves on many state and national advisory boards dealing with science education and is presently a member of the Board of Trustees of Luzerne County Community College. Placek and his wife, Barbara, reside in Harding.

Placek will chair state convention

Dr. Walter Placek, science professor at Wilkes University and president of Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association will chair the annual PSTA State convention, Nov. 19 and 20 in Pittsburgh.

The convention will feature more than 180 sessions and 50 exhibitors to be presented at the Vista Hotel and the Governor Lawrence Convention Center. The highlight of this year's convention is an evening at the new Carnegie Science Center, which will include a film at the OMNIMAX theater, a sky show at the planetarium and four floors of hands-on science and technology exhibits.

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10/28/92 cv

SEP 27, 1992

THE SUNDAY DISPATCH
PITTSBURGH, PA

SUN - 54.000

Walter Placek To Preside At State Science Convention

Dr. Walter Placek, science professor at Wilkes University and president of the Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association will chair the annual PSTA State convention on November 19 and 20 in Pittsburgh. The convention will feature over 180 sessions and 50 exhibitors to be presented at the Vista Hotel and the Governor Lawrence Convention Center.

Highlight of this year's convention is an evening at the new Carnegie Science Center, which will include a film at the OMNI-MAX theater, a sky show at the planetarium and four floors of hands-on science and technology exhibits.

The Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association represents over 2500 science teachers, professors and school administrators from all levels of education in the Commonwealth. The PSTA is dedicated to the improvement of science teaching at all grade levels and advises the Pennsylvania Department of Education on issues such as curriculum and teacher certification. As president of the state science group, Placek recently presented testimony before the Pennsylvania State House Education Committee deliberating major policy reform in science and math education in the state.

Placek, who has been a member of the Wilkes University faculty since 1968, received his BS from Wilkes, a masters degree from Penn State and his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. In



Walter Placek, Ph.D.

addition to belonging to several professional and scholarly societies, Placek serves on many state and national advisory boards dealing with science education and is presently a member of the Board of Trustees of Luzerne County Community College.

Placek and his wife, Barbara reside in Harding.



PA STEP/ITEC receive commendation

The Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association (PSTA) recently recognized the Pennsylvania Science Teacher Education Program (PA STEP) and Information Technology Education for the Commonwealth (ITEC) with a "Commendation for Excellence."

Dr. Walter Placek, PSTA president, at left, presents the commendation to Dr. Ken Mechling, director of PA STEP/ITEC.

In his remarks, Dr. Placek, Wilkes University professor of physics/science education, noted the outstanding contributions of PA STEP/ITEC to science/technology education in Pennsylvania.

PA STEP/ITEC are programs administered by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency. In 1986, the National Science Foundation recognized PA STEP as one of the top science education programs in the United States.

"The 25,000 teachers who have taken PA STEP/ITEC courses and thousands of others who have completed workshops and conferences are making a difference in the education of Pennsylvania's children," commented Dr. Placek.



SCIENCE CAN BE FUN — Carol Lohr, of West Chester, left, and Kathy Kownacki, of the Wilkes-Barre Area School District, work on building a motor. Thirty elementary school teachers attended the program at Wilkes University to learn science experiments to teach their students.

TIMES LEADER/CLARK VAN ORDEN

Course offers teachers ideas to make science fun

■ *Thirty area teachers are getting a taste of how to excite elementary students by using hands-on experiments*

By **LEANORA MINAI**

Times Leader Staff Writer

WILKES-BARRE — Ingredients: Three wriggly worms, soil, sand and lettuce.

Layer sand and soil in a clear plastic cup, then place the worms and lettuce on top.

This isn't a recipe for a new athletic power drink; it's a recipe for elementary school teachers to teach students hands-on science.

Youngsters will see how the worms mix the soil and sand, and aerate the combination so rain can seep into the earth.

About 30 teachers from Luzerne, Susquehanna, Wayne and Lackawanna counties will be at Wilkes University for the next week to learn 100 new science experiments for the upcoming school year.

"Science is everything," said Walter Placek, professor of physics at Wilkes, who is teaching the course. "It's us. It's the world. It shouldn't be taught from a textbook. To teach nature we should use nature."

The course, which has been

■ See SCIENCE, Page 7A

Science

(Continued from Page 3A)

taught since 1985 at Wilkes, is funded by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Association Agency, Placek said.

The worm experiment shows youngsters respect for living creatures, as well as their benefit to the earth, said Janet Ghannam, a teacher at Gate of Heaven in Dallas.

"Worms add nutrients and vitamins, and they mix the soil for the roots," she said. "They'll (kids) pick up a worm and put it back instead of squashing it."

After the teachers covered the cups with black paper to simulate the dark earth, they sang a song and ate candy gummy worms.

"Nobody likes me everybody hates me...guess I'll go and eat worms...Big ones, little ones, fat

ones, juicy ones...See how they wiggle and squirm," they sang.

That's the way they'll do it in class, so the kids will have fun, the teachers said.

"It gets them excited," said Pat McDonnell, 45, who teaches at Kistler Elementary School in Wilkes-Barre. "They end up having a positive feeling about science, and if they have a positive feeling, they want to learn."

Teachers also experimented with such things as a geological timetable, tornado in a bottle, fingerprints, comic strips and jelly beans.

"This gives you a whole binder full of activities to do with the kids hands-on — not just with a textbook," said Darlene Payne, 30, a Kistler Elementary School teacher.

Attends conference

7/27/79

Dr. Walter A. Placek, Professor of Physical Science and Science Education at Wilkes University recently attended a National Science Foundation Conference conducted at the University of Puerto Rico at San Juan, PR.

The purpose of the conference was to study and discuss difficulties students encounter in learning science and how critical thinking can help students overcome these problems. Placek, a member of the Physics Department at Wilkes since 1969, is presently on leave and serving as a Visiting Faculty Fellow at Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.

Placek and his wife Barbara reside in Harding and are the parents of three children, Allison Knick, David, and Adrienne McCamey.



Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association

3/16
Walter A. Placek Jr., Ph.D., President
Physics Department
Wilkes University
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania 18766

-----News Release-----

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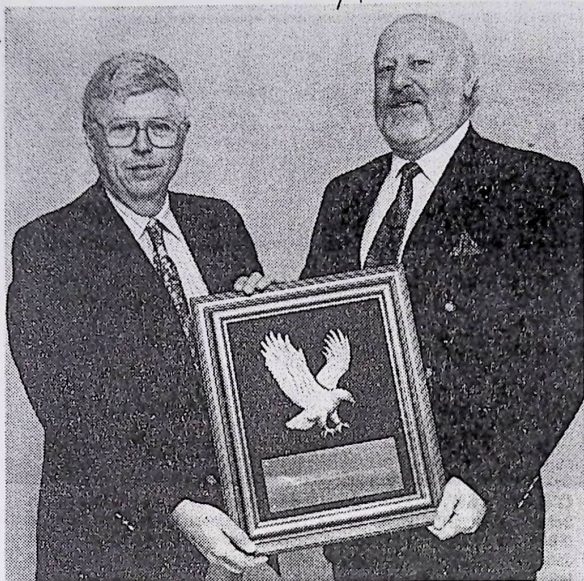
In his remarks, Dr. Placek, a professor of physics and Science Education at Wilkes University, noted the outstanding contributions of PA STEP - ITEC to science and technology education in Pennsylvania. "The 25,000 teachers who have taken PA STEP - ITEC courses and the thousands of others who have completed workshops and conferences are making a difference in the education of Pennsylvania's children," said Placek. "PA STEP - ITEC are providing educational opportunities among the finest in the nation. The Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association commends the vision, commitment, leadership and service of PA STEP - ITEC."

PA STEP-ITEC are programs administered by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency with their headquarters located on Main Street in Shippensburg, PA.

In 1986, the National Science Foundation recognized PA STEP as one of the top science education programs in the United States.

Walter Placek

ST 3/15



RECEIVE COMMENDATION — The Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association (PSTA) has recognized the Pennsylvania Science Teacher Education Program (PA STEP) and Information Technology Education for the Commonwealth (ITEC) with a Commendation for Excellence. Dr. Walter Placek, PSTA president, (on the left) presents the commendation to Dr. Ken Mechling, director of PA STEP - ITEC. In his remarks, Dr. Placek, a professor of physics and science education at Wilkes University, noted the outstanding contributions of PA STEP - ITEC to science and technology education in Pennsylvania. "The 25,000 teachers who have taken PA STEP - ITEC courses and the thousands of others who have completed workshops and conferences are making a difference in the education of Pennsylvania's children," said Placek. "PA STEP - ITEC are providing educational opportunities among the finest in the nation. The Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association commends the vision, commitment, leadership and service of PA STEP - ITEC." PA STEP - ITEC are programs administered by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency with their headquarters located on Main Street in Shippensburg. In 1986, the National Science Foundation recognized PA STEP as one of the top science education programs in the United States.



Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association

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STANDARD-SPEAKER

HAZLETON, PA.
DAILY 24,000

THURSDAY
FEB 13 1992

184
BURRELLE'S ZL

Shall we name it Wilkes-Barre-Pittston Community College?

Every two years, during election campaigns, candidates for Luzerne County commissioner are fond of telling the Greater Hazleton Area, also known as Lower Luzerne County, how much they have done and will do for the area.

Another example of what they DON'T DO for the Hazleton area occurred when George Hayden's term on the Luzerne County Community College board of trustees expired.

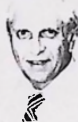
Hayden, the only Hazleton area resident on the 13-person board, was replaced by Rose Tucker of Nanticoke, who was elected a county commissioner in November.

The board is a haven for county commissioners and former county commissioners. Frank Trinisewski was on it when he was a county commissioner and he's still on it, along with Eddie Brominski, another ex-county commissioner.

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Perhaps the name of the Luzerne County Community College should be changed to the

Ray
Saul



Wilkes-Barre—Pittston Area Community College.

The board includes Trinisewski and Walter Seroka of Wilkes-Barre, Dr. Walter Placek and attorney Charles J. Bufalino of West Pittston and Michael Turco of Pittston.

Five of the 13 members of the board are from Wilkes-Barre and the Pittston area.

Placek is a professor at Wilkes College. Seroka is assistant to the the superintendent of the Wilkes-Barre School District, Bufalino is an attorney and Turco a garment manu-

facturer. Attorney Allan M. Kluger, who has offices in Wilkes-Barre, is the board solicitor.

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Other members of the board, for terms that usually last six years, are: Brominski, insurance agent, home address in Swoyersville; John Hosage, Dental Associates, home address in Mountaintop; Dr. Joseph Lombardo, home address, Yatesville (office in Pittston); Brigid O'Connor, Plains; Robert Patton, bank executive, Dallas; Jeannie Torony, M.D., Kingston and Wilkes-Barre addresses, and Albert Wasley, jeweler, Plymouth.

I have nothing against the people who are on the board and with the exception of a few people who have political grudges going. I doubt that many people in the Hazleton area have anything against the members of the board, but doesn't the largest or second largest school district and voting unit and school district in the county deserve to have at least one person on

the board of a community college that is supposedly functioning to serve the entire county?

There is no acceptable excuse, political or otherwise, for the failure of the county commissioners to have at least one member of the LCCC board of trustees from the Hazleton area.

If the commissioners were really interested in the welfare of the citizens of this area, they would appoint not only one area resident, but two, to the board.

Four of the terms of the present members run until 1995 and one of them won't expire until 1997.

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Are the county commissioners telling us that there is no one in the entire Hazleton area capable of or deserving of being a member of the board?

Or are they telling us that politics come first and the residents of the Hazleton area second, or worse, on the list of priorities?

SUNDAY DISPATCH

PITTSBURGH, PA
WEEKLY 14,942

FEB 9 1992

449 BURRELLE'S 3 ZK
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Dr. Walter A. Placek Attends Conference In Puerto Rico

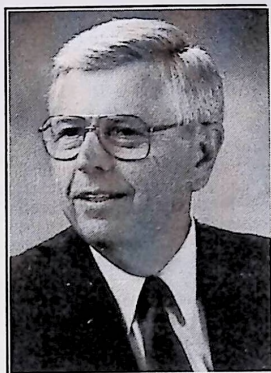
Dr. Walter A. Placek, Professor of Physical Science and Science Education at Wilkes University recently attended a National Science Foundation conference conducted at the University of Puerto Rico at San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The purpose of the conference was to study and discuss difficulties students encounter in learning science and how critical thinking can help students overcome these problems. Placek, a member of the Physics Department at Wilkes since

1969, is presently on leave and serving as a Visiting Faculty Fellow at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

Dr. Placek, a graduate of West Pittston High School, received his B.S. from Wilkes and M.S. from Penn State and a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. He has presented papers at state and national science meetings and holds memberships in several professional and scholarly societies.

Presently, Dr. Placek is serving as President of the Pennsylvania



Dr. Walter A. Placek

Science Teachers Association which represents over 2000 Science Teachers and professors from throughout the Commonwealth. Also, Placek has served as a member of the Wyoming Area School Board for ten years and is presently a trustee of the Luzerne County Community College.

Placek and his wife Barbara reside in Harding and are the parents of three children, Allison Knick, David and Adrienne McCamey.

SUNDAY DISPATCH

PITTSBURGH, PA
WEEKLY 14, 942

FEB 2 1992

449 BURRELLE'S ZL
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Walter Placek Heads Science Teachers

Four area educators chaired key committees for the Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association convention held recently in Carlisle, including: Walter Placek, Conference Chairman and incoming PSTA President for 1991-92. Placek, a resident of Harding, is a professor of Physics at Wilkes University.

PSTA is dedicated to the improvement of science teaching at all grade levels in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It advises the State Department of Education on issues such as curriculum and teacher certification requirements.

The PSTA is made up of professors, teachers and administrators from all levels of education in the

Commonwealth. This year's convention theme was "Scientific is Terrific."

Local Teachers Chair Committees

Four area educators chaired key committees for the Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association convention held recently in Carlisle.

Walter Placek, Conference Chairman and incoming PSTA President for 1991-92, resides in West Pittston. He is a Professor of Physics at Wilkes University.

Barbara Bellucci of Conynham, PA, is Director of Microcomputer Education at the ITEC Center at Wilkes. She served as Chair of the convention Publicity Committee.

David Wiley, Clarks Summit, was President of PSTA for 1990-91 and Chair of the VIP/Awards Committee. Wiley is an Assistant Professor of Education at the University of Scranton.

Eileen Prescavage of Hudson chaired the Exhibit Committee. She is Chairman of the Science Department at Wyoming Area High School and is also Treasurer of the Luzerne

County Science Teachers Association.

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NOV 3 1991

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e**BURRELL'S**

20

Walter A. Placek Heads State Science Convention

Two years ago, and to much fanfare, President Bush and the nation's governors set up a list of educational goals to be reached by the year 2000. But long before that a local educator, Doctor Walter A. Placek of Wilkes University, had been working hard to improve Pennsylvania's schools.

Placek, who holds a Ph.D. in Science Education from the University of Pennsylvania and teaches physics and science education on both the undergraduate and graduate levels, was recently elected president of the Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association.

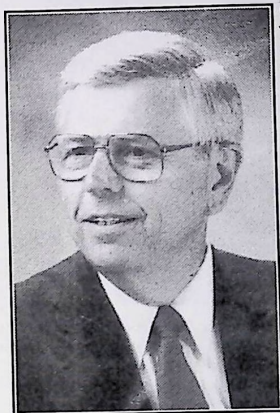
Placek is a resident of Harding and is married to the former Barbara Swankowski. They have three children, Allison, Davie and Adrienne.

"PSTA has become the recognized voice for science education in the state," says Placek, obviously proud of the organization he will soon head. He explained that the PSTA has been called upon by the state department of education to help develop the science requirements now in place across Pennsylvania.

Placek's immediate attention is focused on the PSTA's state convention which will be held on November 7-8 in Clarion.

In 1986, Placek was largely responsible for bringing the Program for Improving Elementary Science (PIES) to Wilkes.

A proud moment came recently for Placek when he was invited to spend a semester at Cornell



Walter A. Placek

University in New York as a visiting fellow, working with nationally known educator Professor J.D. Novak.

Among Placek's other contributions to the educational community are his years as a school director in Wyoming Area. During his ten years on the board, he served as Secretary, Vice President, Chairman of the Education Committee and President of the West Side Vocational Technical School Board. Of his time at Wyoming Area, Placek said, "I think I was able to make some positive changes," and noted the experience, from a political standpoint, was very educational for him.

Teachers rediscover sciences at Wilkes

By SUSAN SNYDER

Times Leader Staff Writer

WILKES-BARRE — "Watch this one," an excited Glenna Poceschi said as she pointed to tan tissue paper shaped into a rectangle standing on a nearby table top.

With that, Wilkes College Professor Walter Placek lit the rim of the paper, and the rectangle burned evenly within seconds.

Then the charred remains flew up toward the ceiling.

What does it mean?

"Heat rises," Poceschi said, explaining the scientific significance. "You should see the kids with that one."

Poceschi isn't a kid; she's an elementary teacher.

But on Monday night at the college's Stark Learning Center — like other Monday nights for the last couple of months — Poceschi, a Wyoming Area School District special education teacher, played the role of student.

Placek, a physics professor on the college staff for 20 years, is teaching Poceschi and 29 other elementary teachers from Luzerne County and beyond how to better teach science to their young students.

The key to success is attracting students' minds with experiments that illustrate scientific concepts, Placek showed during the three-hour class.

"In the past, we thought the only grades that mattered were high school," he said. "But what's happening is kids aren't electing to take physics (and other advanced science courses) in high school."

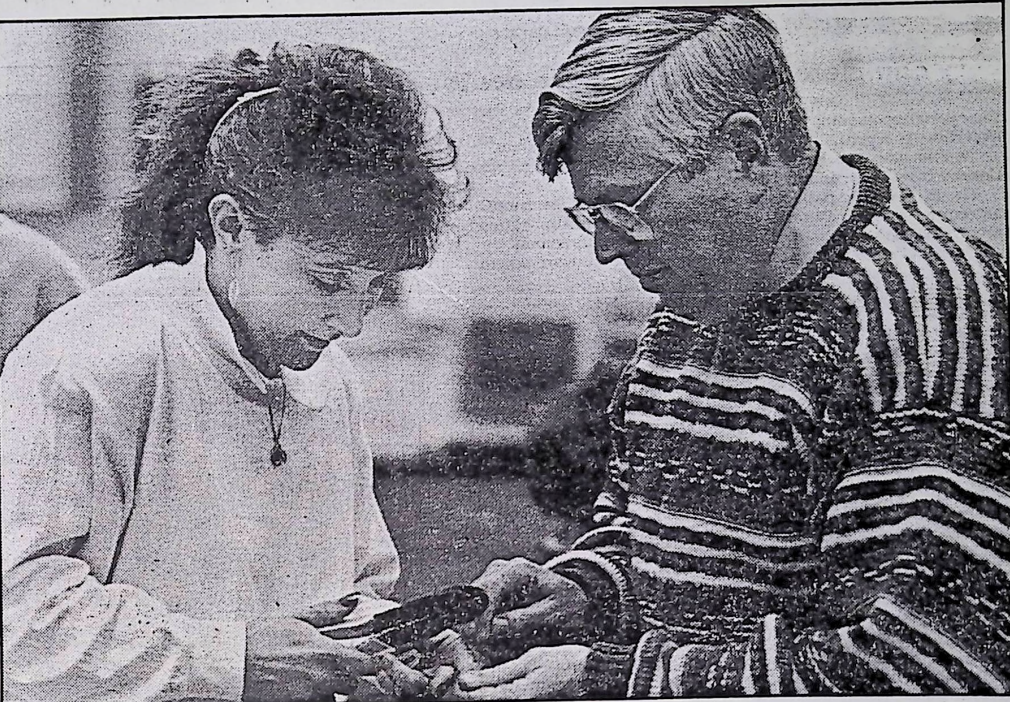
By that time, they've already lost interest in the subject, he said.

Citing several reports which point out American students' poor performance in math and science compared to the work of students in other countries, Placek said more emphasis must be placed on science at the elementary level.

"If the interest isn't spurred at that age, they aren't going to be turned on as freshmen," he said.

And, it doesn't take fancy equipment and expensive kits to do the job, he said, recognizing that many schools are financially strapped.

Copper wire, a small wooden



TIMES LEADER PHOTOS/DON CAREY
NEW LOOKS — Teacher Leighann Feola, of the Hazleton Area School District, gets a helping hand from Dr.

Walter Placek of Wilkes College recently in a program designed to help elementary teachers instruct their young pupils in the basic concepts of science.

Below Hanover Area School District teacher Charlotte Duffy works on a project in the class. Teachers report they have gained new insight into ways of making science interesting and comprehensible to students.



block, a battery and paper clips can become a motor for a creative science teacher, Placek said.

"To buy a motor, it would be \$25 to \$30," Wyoming Valley West School District elementary teacher Catherine Baumann-Hecht said. "What we learned here is that you don't have to spend a whole bundle of money that you don't have to get a motor."

Minutes later, she touched the two copper wires to the ends of a battery, making a small ring connected to two paper clips spin.

Teachers said in the past they mostly taught science from a textbook, but their students are enjoying the experiments a lot more.

"The kids are more motivated," said Leighann Feola, a fourth-grade teacher at Drums Elementary School in the Hazleton Area School District.

"They ask, 'Are you going to do another one of your experiments today?' They think it's neat that their teacher goes to school."

Other teachers said they avoided science lessons in their classrooms whenever possible in the past because they didn't feel knowledgeable

enough on the subject. Placek points out that colleges don't require prospective elementary teachers to be well-versed in science.

"I'm getting a lot out of it," said Lisa Marchetti, also a teacher at Transfiguration School.

72 3/15/89 P.3

How Do Teachers Spend Their Summers?

Wilkes University Physics Professor Walter Plack raises his voice in an attempt to bring his 8 p.m. class to order. There is the usual preclass chime, and students cluster, talking about their research and projects. A typical class? Not really, because the "students" in this particular class are teachers — and the experiments and research will be carried back to their classrooms in elementary schools throughout the region of Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Over the past five years, these teachers and hundreds of their colleagues have come to Wilkes University to learn to better teach science to American youth. Dr. Plack, under whose guidance and leadership the Program for Improving Elementary Science (PIES) came to the Wilkes campus, is dedicated to the premise that better science education at the elementary level should be a priority issue on any national agenda. "If anyone is to save this planet environmentally, if anyone is to bring this country back to its original prominence in scientific research it will be the children who are in our elementary schools today," Plack said.

Dr. Plack who holds a Ph.D. in science education from the University of Pennsylvania, is convinced that the problem caused by the lack of science education in our nation's elementary schools is real and that the time to fix it is now. "The elementary classroom is where the solution lies, not in secondary schools although that is essential too, and certainly not at the college level because it is then too late. And what better way to achieve this goal than to help teachers to teach science and have fun in the process."

With that commitment in mind the program was brought to campus in 1986 and through it, Wilkes University has become recognized as the Center for Science Teacher Education in the region.

Plack's class is a perfect model for watching the program work its influence on science teaching methodology at the elementary level.

The "students" quiet down

and break into individual research groups. Each group clusters around a lab table and prepares to demonstrate projects that they designed. Each project is thoughtfully worked out by the groups with their particular grade level in mind. The projects range from simplistic for kindergarten children to more complex for higher grades. All are elementary school level and expand the self-imposed boundaries in science education. Even the most casual observer is aware of how much fun the teachers are having as they work together to give presentations.

David Jacobs, a project leader from the Crestwood School District, is an environmentalist who is dedicated to the idea that we can reverse the environmental dilemma facing the world today, if we educate the children. "If we can talk to children from kindergarten through fifth grade in language they understand, if we can show them what happens when we live without concern for the planet; if they begin to accept individual responsibility, we can reverse the tide."

To give a brief example of what kind of projects are devised, Jacobs and fellow teacher Clara Bartha worked out a graphic demonstration called "Fred the Fish." Jacobs in the most simplistic terms showed the class what happens to Fred, a plastic fish in a jar of water, as he swims upstream to explore his extended home, the river. The class watched as Fred became less able to "breathe" or swim be-



Sister Mary Williams, I.H.M., Saint Charles' School, Scranton, looks at pin hole camera.



Dr. Plack works with students.



Becky Harris, (Center) Tunkhannock Area, talks about her project as her husband looks on.

cause of the contaminants flowing into the water. Groundwater carrying oil and salt substitutes were maple syrup and rice) were washed into the river, chemicals came from factories along the bank, even low level toxic waste materials (dirt) were dumped into the jar (food coloring). The message was clear — Fred had nowhere to go. He could not survive if humans continued to contaminate his world, and our water supply.

There was more than a little sympathy for the little plastic fish from the adult educators. One can imagine the effect it would have on raising the consciousness of children.

The experiments went on and on and they were not all simplistic. Science projects that would be carried back to the elementary schools would include a pin hole camera (made from a coffee can that would show clearly how light is refracted and how visual images are passed

from the optic nerve to the brain. A popular child's toy called Silly Putty was used to demonstrate what happens when molecules smash into each other to create heat.

The language in the projects was easy to understand, the scientific theory they put forth was complex. This is a winning combination for teaching young minds and all of the teachers in attendance were convinced that the course was exactly on target for what they needed to be more effective as science educators. One of the most important factors involved in the class is that there is no need for sophisticated and expensive equipment. The teachers have used cereal boxes, jars, cartons, cans, to give solid demonstrations of scientific research to elementary school children that is guaranteed to spark interest in science.

School districts throughout Northeastern Pennsylvania have become aware of the courses of-

fired by Dr. Plack at Wilkes University, and, the course continues to produce so much interest that there is always a waiting list.

Becky Harris, who teaches in the Tunkhannock Area epitomizes the value teachers place on the course. Harris has multiple sclerosis and at times is confined to her homebound because of the debilitating illness. Yet she makes just about every class. "My husband drives me and then sits in class for three hours, just so I can be here. There is no way for me to express how very grateful I am for Dr. Plack's dedication to the teaching of science. We will probably never be able to gauge the impact his courses have had on the future lives of the students we are now teaching. I am sure it would be enormous if we could measure."

How did it all begin at Wilkes University and will it continue?

It began, generally when the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) began funding the Program to Improve Elementary Science. At Wilkes University, it began specifically because of Plack's concern that by the time a student gets to high school it is too late to teach science. PIES has become, for Plack, a consistent mission. The result is that the program at Wilkes is not only praised as "one of the most successful in the Commonwealth," by the Program Administrator Dr. Ken Mecking, at Clarion University, but is continually

funded by PHEAA, and is significant in the University's identification as the Center for Science Education for Teachers in Pennsylvania.

During April there was a week-wide effort called Earth Day held to make us more aware of the environmental crisis that faces humanity. Dr. Plack is convinced that the crisis can be averted through education. He states, "No matter what we do as a nation or what we do globally, it is imperative that we think scientifically. Science is no longer housed in an ivory tower. Science must be communicated clearly and immediately and especially to American youth."



David Jacobs, Crestwood Area, demonstrates how our water ripples become contaminated.

Wilkes University

News

Jane Manganello
Office of Public Relations
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania 18766
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*copy
file
Walter Placek*

WILKES RECOGNIZED AS CENTER FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION

Wilkes University Physics Professor Walter Placek raises his voice in an attempt to bring his 6 p.m. class to order. There is the usual pre-class chaos, and students cluster, talking about their research and projects. A typical class? Not really, because the "students" in this particular class are teachers...and the experiments and research will be carried back to their classrooms in elementary schools throughout the region of Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Over the past five years, these teachers and hundreds of their colleagues have come to Wilkes University to learn to better teach science to American youth.

Dr. Placek under whose guidance and leadership the Program for Improving Elementary Science (PIES) came to the Wilkes campus is dedicated to the premise that better science education at the elementary level should be a priority issue on any national agenda. "If anyone is to save this planet environmentally; if

1ST ADD WILKES RECOGNIZED AS CENTER FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION

anyone is to bring this country back to its original prominence in scientific research it will be the children who are in our elementary schools today," Placek said.

Dr. Placek who holds the Ph.D in Science Education from the University of Pennsylvania, is convinced that the problems caused by the lack of science education in our nation's elementary schools is real and that the time to fix it is now. "The elementary classroom is where the solution lies, not in secondary schools although that is essential too, and certainly not at the college level because it is then too late. And what better way to achieve this goal than to help teachers to teach science and have fun in the process."

With that commitment in mind the program was brought to campus in 1986 and through it, Wilkes University has become recognized as the Center for Science Teacher Education in the region.

Placek's class is a perfect model for watching the program work its influence on science teaching methodology at the elementary level.

The "students" quiet down and break into individual research groups. Each group clusters around a lab table and prepares to demonstrate projects that they designed. Each project is thoughtfully worked out by the groups with their particular grade level in mind. The projects range from simplistic for kindergarten children to more complex for higher grades. All are

2ND ADD WILKES RECOGNIZED AS CENTER FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION

designed to enrich and expand the self-imposed boundries in science education. Even the most casual observer is aware of how much fun the teachers are having as they work together to give presentations.

David Jacobs, a project leader from the Crestwood School District is an environmentalist who is dedicated to the idea that we can reverse the environmental dilemma facing the world today, if we educate the children. "If we can talk to children from Kindergarten through fifth grade in language they understand; if we can show them what happens when we live without concern for the planet; if they begin to accept individual responsibility, we can reverse the tide."

To give a brief example of what kind of projects are devised, Jacobs and fellow teacher Clara Barrho worked out a graphic demonstration called "Fred the Fish." Jacobs in the most simplistic terms showed the class what happens to Fred, a plastic fish in a jar of water, as he swims upstream to explore his extended home, the River. The class watched as Fred became less able to "breathe" or swim because of the contaminants flowing into the water. Ground water carrying oil and salt (substitutes were maple syrup and rice) were washed into the River, chemicals came from factories along the bank, even low level toxic waste materials (dirt) were dumped into the jar (food coloring). The message was clear-Fred had nowhere to go. He could not survive if humans continued to contaminate his world, and our water supply.

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3RD ADD WILKES RECOGNIZED AS CENTER FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION

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School districts throughout Northeastern Pennsylvania have become aware of the courses offered by Dr. Placek at Wilkes University; and, the courses continue to produce so much interest that there is always a waiting list.

Becky Harris, who teaches in the Tunkhannock Area epitomizes the value teachers place on the course. Harris

4TH ADD WILKES RECOGNIZED AS CENTER FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION

has multiple sclerosis and at times is hospitalized or homebound because of the debilitating illness. Yet she makes just about every class. "My husband drives me and then sits in class for three hours, just so I can be here. There is no way for me to express how very grateful I am for Dr. Placek's dedication to the teaching of science. We will probably never be able to measure the impact his courses have had on the future lives of the students we are now teaching. I am sure it would be enormous if we could measure."

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PHOTO I.D. FOR WILKES UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR SCIENCE TEACHERS

PHOTO A -- DAVID JACOBS, CRESTWOOD AREA, DEMONSTRATES HOW
OUR WATER SUPPLIES BECOME CONTAMINATED

PHOTO B -- BECKY HARRIS, (CENTER) TUNKHANNOCK AREA, TALKS ABOUT HER
PROJECT AS HER HUSBAND LOOKS ON.

PHOTO C -- SISTER MARY WILLIAMS, I.H.M., SAINT CLARE'S SCHOOL,
SCRANTON LOOKS AT PIN HOLE CAMERA

PHOTO D -- DR. PLACEK WORKS WITH STUDENTS.



7-10-10-11



Page 2





Photo 1

MAY 26 1991

BURRELLE'S

Holy Mother Of Sorrows PNCC Notes 75th Anniversary

The year 1991 marks a significant three-quarters of a century in the history of the organization of Holy Mother of Sorrows PNCC Parish, Dupont. The first Mass in this church was celebrated on Palm Sunday, 1916.

Palm Sunday Mass of this year was the opening of the celebration with a complimentary breakfast served to all parishioners at Convention Hall, Pittston. The Ladies Adoration Society of the Most Blessed Sacrament honored their 50 year members and presented them certificates. Fifty year members are Mary Liberasky, Christine Janesko, Stella Ziobro, Victoria Knych, Helen Urbanski, Katherine Dworak, Pola Kotula, Eva Cwikla, Irene Kleynowski and Catherine Czachor (recently deceased).

Awards were presented to contestants in the SOCL essay contest of which Lottie Hoban and Jean Kopczka were in charge. Winners were Adell & Julie Wylam and Becky Wall. Runners-up were Mary Ellen Jendrey, Stacey Ehrgood, David Micka and Nicole Kotula.

Today, May 26, an anniversary Mass of Thanksgiving and blessing of the renovated church will be held at 4 p.m. The celebrant will be Rt. Rev. Anthony Rysz, Bishop Ordinary of the Central Diocese, Scranton, assisted by Deacon, Very Rev. Francis Kolwicz, Duryea and sub-deacon Rev. William Chromey, Dickson City.

Master of ceremonies will be Very Rev. Stephen Gnas, Pastor. Homilist is His Excellency, the Most Rev. John Swantek, Prime Bishop of the PNCC. The Prime Bishop's assistant are Rev. Dennis Ruda, Johnson City, New York and Rev. Stanley Strzyz, Scranton.

Visiting clergy are Rev. Daniel Oleszewski, Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Dupont; Rev. Stanley Bilinski, Albany, New York; Rev. Thaddeus Dymkowski, Wilkes-Barre; Rev. John Kotula, Wallington, New Jersey. Mrs. Barbara Nowicki, Bayonne, N.J. is soloist accompanied by Robert Skrinak, parish, Choir Director and Organist.

At 8 p.m., the 75th anniversary

banquet will be held at St. Stanislaus Youth Center, Scranton. Master of Ceremonies is Atty. Fred Pierantoni, chairman of the 75th anniversary committee.

Stanley Kotula, parish chairman, will offer the toast. The main address will be given by Dr. Walter Placek, professor of Physics and Sciences Education, Wilkes University; spiritual address by Rt. Rev. Anthony Rysz, Bishop of Central Diocese. Other speakers will be Mayor George Legezdh, Dupont; Anne Pron,

Polish National Union President; Most Rev. John Swantek, Prime Bishop of the PNCC and closing remarks by Very Rev. Stephen Gnas, pastor. Invocation will be by Rev. Stanley Bilinski and benediction by Rev. John Kotula.

Very Rev. Stephen Gnas, pastor and parish committee extend a heartfelt gratitude and thanks to all who participated in the observance services and banquet marking the three-quarters of a century milestone of faith, work and dedication to a cause.

Placek president-elect

■ Professor Walter Placek has been elected by the members of the Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association as its president-elect for 1991.

TLJ-31-91
In this position Placek will be responsible for planning and presiding over the state convention to be held in Carlisle in November 1991. In 1992, he will then advance to the presidency



of the state association which involves nearly 2,000 elementary and secondary teachers and university professors from across the state.

Placek, a member of the Wilkes faculty for 22 years, resides in Harding with his wife Barbara.

Wilkes College

News

Wilkes Physicist 1

OFFICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS • WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA 18766
TELEPHONE: (717) 822-8413



Contact: Nedra Bloom
Public Relations Writer

WILKES PHYSICIST HELPS ELEMENTARY TEACHERS TEACH SCIENCE

If American school kids need help in science, Prof. Walter A. Placek, Jr., is ready.

For the past three years he has offered an award-winning evening science course designed to help preschool and elementary teachers teach science and enjoy it.

What his teacher-students have discovered is that teaching science is fun. That doesn't surprise Placek. "We're all children in terms of observing the world, whether we're at the zoo or looking at the planets with a telescope," he said. "Nobody would go to the zoo if it were boring."

Funded by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency as part of its Science Teacher Education Program, Placek's Program to Improve Elementary Science or PIES -- one of a dozen in the state -- helps teachers find ways to offer science and to do so without expensive books and materials.

"Science has been shamefully ignored at the elementary school level," said Placek. Because it isn't one of the subjects covered in mandated testing, it isn't a priority. Because it's not a priority, teachers have difficulty getting teaching materials.

So, even though Placek's graduate class covers science content, reminding teachers of all those things they once knew, it focuses on finding materials -- teaching science with paper cups and rubber bands and thumbtacks -- and having fun in the process.

It's not hard to make improvements. "Ninety percent of all teachers have never taken their children on a nature trip," he said. "We have the grandest lab of all - the outdoors -- and they ignore it."

Placek's goal is to overcome the difficulties and get teachers as "fired up" about teaching science as they were when they first started teaching.

The teachers' projects reflect the make-do attitude he emphasizes. When Placek required his class to develop musical instruments, students made an eight-note scale by filling drinking glasses with

(more)

different amounts of water, a glockenspiel of conduit pipe in a wooden frame, and a xylophone of pan lids.

Building a musical instrument is a natural, Placek said, adding that he stresses integrating science with every subject from reading to art to music. He showed off a previous student's art-science project -- an owl made of circles of white birch and pine cones. While making the art projects, the students talked about what owls eat and how they live; what trees need and where pine cones come from.

Just opening a piano for youngsters can shed light on sound and frequency, he said. Short strings make high notes; long strings make low ones -- it's all the principle of inertia, Placek noted.

It's only natural to mix science with other subjects, he said. "The subject areas aren't a truism -- we create artificial boundaries."

"Teachers who haven't done science activities are scared at first," Placek said. But they are required to produce materials not only for the evening class but also in the classes they teach. Those same teachers "come back saying how much fun the kids have," he said.

"I'm trying to show that teaching science can be fun," Placek added. "Kids have a natural curiosity about things. Teachers just have to keep that curiosity alive. The kids will do most of the learning."

Often, the teachers "don't think they know enough science to teach. I pick their brains and show them they do know," said Placek, who holds an undergraduate degree from Wilkes, a Master's in education from Pennsylvania State University and a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania.

The Science Teacher Education Program was honored last year with the National Science Foundation's COSMOS award as the exemplary program in science education. Placek's program at Wilkes is among the most highly rated of the individual courses in the program.

Although Placek has offered the course seven times, there is still a long waiting list to enroll.

Letters from former students assure him that the course material carries over: "For ten years I devoted about 10 minutes a day to science. Now I do about 30 minutes a day for science," wrote one former student.

"I have cut way back on ordering science materials from supply houses," another wrote. "Instead,

(more)

I am creating my own. I feel I have a better background in science."

"I am doing classroom experiments and sharing them with other teachers in our building," wrote a third.

Placek, who taught high school physics for seven years before joining the Wilkes faculty, used to believe that good high school teaching turned high schoolers on to science.

"Now I'm converted," he said. "I believe elementary school is the place where intervention matters. If we don't work with these children when they're young, it doesn't matter what we do later."

"Our program is making a difference," Placek said.

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(more)

Memberships in Professional and Scientific Societies

Scope:

Local, State,

Offices

Organization Name	Local / National	Regional, National	Offices Held
Phi Delta Kappa	Local	National	Treasurer - V.P.
AAPT	National		Committee on Research
PSTA	State		State Board
NSTA	National		Committee Work

Teaching at Wilkes 1988-89 (including teaching overloads)

Course Title	Hrs. of Lecture per Week	Hrs. of Recitation per Week	Contact Hrs. of Laboratory per Week	# of Day Sections; Enrollment	# of Evening or Weekend Sections/ Enrollment
Fall '88 Physical Science 101	2	1		5 (101)	
Total of Physical Science 101E	2	1			2 (45)
Students Ed. 323	3			2 (45)	
Students Taught					
200					
Spring '89 Anticipated					
Total of Physical Sci. 102A	2	1		5 (110)	
Students Physical Sci. 102E	2	1			2 (40)
Projected Physics 201 Lab.			3	1 (15)	
180			3	1 (15)	

Other Duties Performed for Base Salary, 1988-89 (Full-Time Faculty)

Duty/Activity	Hours per Week	# of Advisees: 10
Advising	3 - 5	
Research/Scholarship	6 - 10	
Committee Work	3 - 5	
Department Chairperson		

Other Duties for Extra Compensation, 1988-89 (Full-Time Faculty)

Duty/Activity	Hours per Week
PIES Site Director & Instructor	5 - 7

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9-26-88

Pitt. Disp. 1/4/87

Dr. Placek Instructor —

PA-STEP Program At Wilkes Gets National Recognition

Wilkes College was recently notified that the Pennsylvania Science Teacher Education Program (PA STEP), in which the college has been active since 1983, was chosen by the COSMOS Corporation as one of the nation's exemplary programs in science and mathematics education.

PA STEP was one of only 12 programs nation wide to be recognized by the COSMOS Corporation, which is sponsored by the National Science Foundation. The notification coincides with the completion of the fall PA STEP Program for Improving Elementary Science (PIES) course at Wilkes. Thirty local educators completed the fall semester PIES course at the college, and registration is now underway for a spring semester session.

Wilkes is one of only twelve sites across the Commonwealth offering PA STEP courses for secondary science and mathematics teachers, and one of only 20 sites offering PA STEP courses on both the elementary and secondary levels.

The program, funded by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency, was developed in response to concerns of science and math educators working in a variety of classroom situations. PA STEP courses are offered free of charge for graduate credit to qualifying teachers.

The spring PIES course at Wilkes is designed to help teachers communicate concepts and principles through the use of inexpensive, readily accessible materials in classroom activities



STEP PROGRAM — Placek, center, instructs Nancy Bossart, left, of Wyoming Valley West Elementary School, and Marie Carchilla of Hanover Area Elementary School, as they learn an experiment in the physical sciences. Bossart and Carchilla recently completed the PA STEP Program for Improving Elementary Science at Wilkes College.

and experiments.

According to Dr. Walter Placek, course instructor and assistant professor of Physics at Wilkes, "Teachers learn techniques in PIES that they can actually take back to their classrooms. We consistently hear from people who have completed the course and are now using these techniques with great success. We are certainly pleased to be a part of this program, which impacts upon students and teachers at so many levels."

For further information on PA STEP courses at Wilkes College, or to register for PIES at Wilkes, contact Placek at 824-4651, ext. 482, or the Wilkes College Regional Computer Resource Center at 824-4651, ext. 278.

Placek presented award at U of P ceremonies ^{CV} 7/26/85

Dr. Walter A. Placek, Harding, was recently honored at graduation ceremonies held at the University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia.

Dr. Placek, who recently completed his PhD degree requirements, was presented with "The Dissertation of the Year Award" by the University of Pennsylvania chapter of Phi Delta Kappa.

This award is given annually to the doctoral student whose dissertation best represents the goals and principles of Phi Delta Kappa, an honorary fraternity dedicated to basic research in education.

Dr. Placek's dissertation, which dealt with the problems students encounter in the learning of Newtonian mechanics, was considered the most outstanding from over 150 doctoral dissertations.

Dr. Placek has been a



Dr. Walter A. Placek

member of the Physics Department at Wilkes College since 1969 and prior to that time taught physics on the high school level.

A graduate of West Pittston High School and Wilkes Col-

lege, Placek received his Master's degree from Penn State University and took additional graduate work at the Universities of Maryland and Vermont.

Placek serves as an advisor and consultant to various educational institutions and the Pennsylvania Department of Education in matters dealing with science education. Dr. Placek has been a member of the Wyoming Area School Board since 1975, served as chairman of the West Side Area Vocational Technical Board during 1981-82 and presently sits on the Board of Trustees of the Luzerne County Community College.

Dr. Placek is the son of Mary Placek of Dupont and the late Walter Placek. He is married to the former Barbara Swankowski of Duryea. They reside with their three children in the Mount Zion section of Harding.

PITTSBURGH DISPATCH 7/25/85



Dr. Walter A. Placek

University Honors Dr. Walter Placek

Dr. Walter A. Placek was recently honored at graduation ceremonies held at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia in May. Dr. Placek, who recently completed his Ph. D degree, was presented with "The Dissertation of the Year Award" by the University of Pennsylvania Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa.

This award is given annually to the doctoral student whose dissertation best represents the goals and principles of Phi Delta Kappa, an honorary fraternity dedicated to basic research in education. His dissertation, which dealt with the problems students encounter in the learning of Newtonian mechanics, was considered the most outstanding from over one hundred and fifty doctoral dissertations.

Dr. Placek has been a member of the Physics Department at Wilkes College since 1969 and prior to that time taught physics on the high school level.

A graduate of West Pittston High School and Wilkes College, he received his Masters Degree from Penn State University and took additional graduate work at the Universities of Maryland and Vermont.

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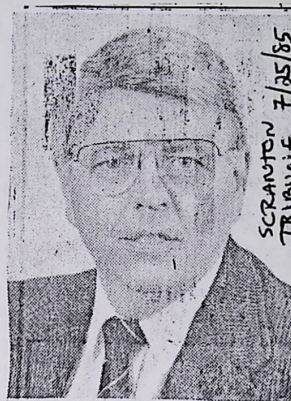
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SCRANTON TRIBUNE 7/25/85



Dr. Walter A. Placek

U of Pennsylvania honors Dr. Placek

Dr. Walter A. Placek, son of Mary Placek of Dupont and the late Walter Placek, has been honored at graduation ceremonies, at the University of Pennsylvania.

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Dr. Placek Elected To State Science Board



Dr. Walter Placek

At a recent meeting of the Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association held in Pittsburgh, Dr. Walter Placek was elected to this group's Governing Board for a two-year term. Placek who has taught physics and science education at Wilkes College since 1969 was elected to represent the northeastern portion of the State which includes Northumberland, Montour, Columbia, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Lackawanna, Wyoming, Sullivan, Bradford, Susquehanna and Wayne counties.

The Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association (PSTA) is a professional society of science teachers from secondary schools as well as from institutions of higher learning in Pennsylvania. The PSTA serves as an advocate for improving science education in our schools. Placek will be joining directors from across the state in discussing the many problems facing science teachers including developing plans and criteria for addressing these issues.

Dr. Placek graduated from West Pittston High School and received his undergraduate degree from Wilkes College. In addition he earned a Master's degree from Penn State and a Doctorate degree from the University of Pennsylvania and holds memberships in numerous professional and scholarly societies. Dr. Placek resides in Harding with his wife Barbara and their three children, Allison, David, and Adrienne.

*Pittston Dispatch
1/5/80*

Placek to serve on PSTA board *TK*

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WALTER PLACEK

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Placek Presents Paper At National Meeting

Pittston
Sunday
Dispatch



Dr. Walter Placek

Dr. Walter Placek of the Physics Faculty of Wilkes College recently presented a paper at the winter meeting of the American Association of Physics Teachers and the American Physical Society. The meeting, which involved scientists and physics teachers from the USA, Canada and South America, was held in Atlanta, Georgia, from January 26-30.

Placek's paper dealt with pre-conceived knowledge of certain Newtonian concepts among gifted and non-gifted physics students. The study focused on how students learned about the mechanical world and how these misconceptions affect the student's ability to learn Newtonian mechanics.

Dr. Placek is a member of several professional and scholarly societies and is active in science education on the local, state and national levels. He graduated from West Pittston High School, received his B.S. from Wilkes College, a Master's from Penn State and his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. Professor Placek is the son of Mary Placek of Dupont, and the late Walter Placek. He resides with his wife Barbara and their three children in Harding.

Placek served 10 years on the Wyoming Area School Board from 1975 to 1985 and presently serves as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Luzerne County Community College.

3/9/86

file

Placek to Attend Science Program

Nov. 6, 1979

Wilkes College physics Professor Walter A. Placek has been invited to participate in a short course entitled "The Science of Sound," at Pennsylvania State University, University Park.

and does consulting in the education field. Prior to coming to Wilkes, he taught on the high school level both in New York and locally at Kingston High School and Wyoming Area High School.



WALTER PLACEK

The course, sponsored by the National Science Foundation and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, will be conducted by Dr. W. Savage of the University of Iowa.

These forums provide an opportunity for invited scholars to communicate new knowledge, new advances and new concepts and techniques directly to college teachers.

Professor Placek, who has been in the Wilkes College Physics Department since 1969, also teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in science education

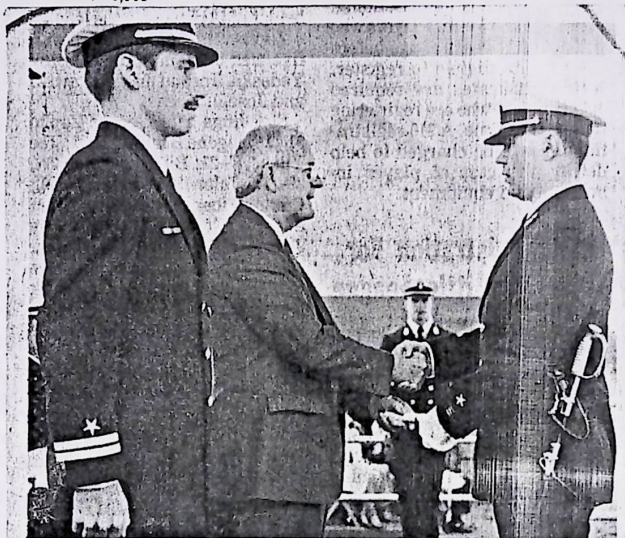
He holds memberships in Sigma Xi, Phi Delta Kappa, the American Association of University Professors and the American Association of Physics Teachers. He has published several papers on science education and serves on many committees.

Placek is a member of the Wyoming Area Board of Education and resides with his wife, Barbara, and their three children in Harding.

APR 5 87

SUNDAY DISPATCH
PITTSBURGH, PA.

S-9,368



RECEIVES ENSIGN COMMISSION — David Placek, son of Dr. and Mrs. Walter Placek of Harding, is shown being congratulated upon receiving his Ensign Commission in the United States Navy. Ensign Placek also graduated from the Naval Aviation Officer Candidate School, Pensacola Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida. These ceremonies were conducted on January 29. Placek is a graduate of Wyoming Area High School and received his B.S. degree in chemistry and physics from Wilkes College in 1986.

Ensign Placek is currently stationed at Corpus Christi Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi, Texas, where he will undergo training in the jet pilot program.

Walter Placek always a fighter...

By MARY ELLEN ALU
Staff Writer

He would complain about the same things others do: school, politics and anything else that bothered him.

His father, a miner living in Dupont, would listen intently, then say to his young son, "Well, what are you going to do about it?"

"Nothing? Well then, you shouldn't complain."

Walter Placek, a Wyoming Area school board director and Wilkes College professor, puts down his coffee cup and smiles a sly smile.

He knows he still likes to complain.

He complains about politics in Luzerne County mostly — about what he considers dishonest government.

But Placek, motivated by his father's teachings, fights to change whatever aggravates him.

"If you don't become part of the solution," he remembers his father saying, "then you're part of the problem."

Placek fought for public meetings in Dupont 15 years ago when he felt public officials tried to "ramrod" the town's residents with a cable television franchise.

He fought the nepotism he saw strangling the Luzerne County Intermediate Unit, an umbrella organization that provides special education programs to school districts in the county.

He doesn't always win, he says, but at least he tries to right what he perceives to be wrong.

Placek's latest fight is against Robert Clapps, a Wyoming Area school district teacher, Elmer Weiskerger and Adam Hudock, two defeated school board candidates.

The three allegedly tried to bribe Placek, a Republican, and influence his voting as a school director at a March 25, 1980 Wyoming Area school board meeting.

They allegedly told him his wife Barbara would be fired as a nurse at Valley Crest Nursing Home, unless Placek voted their way.

When the threatening telephone calls began, Placek and his wife went to the FBI for help.

"There was a principle involved," says Placek, explaining how he and his wife decided to go to the authorities.

"If it's a principle we believed in, then it was a principle we would fight for."

Placek says he was more insulted than threatened.

"No one had a right to try to intimidate me or involve my wife in it," he says, his voice rising.

But what price will he and his family pay for "principle?"

"I don't even want to think about that," says Placek, his expression changing to reflect concern.

He said other people worry for him,

Placek

(Continued from Page 3A)

He says he is not after publicity or revenge. He insists there are no political motives involved.

"I can't change things," Placek says, in an attempt to explain why he publicizes his complaints. "The electorate can change things."

One person approached him shortly after the alleged bribe attempts made headlines in last Saturday's newspapers.

"You're being tough Placek," the person said. "You're really after blood."

"I don't want blood," Placek says. "I just want the public to know these things are going on."

Others will pat him on the back and say, "Boy, there should be more people like you."

"I say to them, 'Well, why don't you be one?'"

Placek says many people are willing to accept corruption and deceit as a part of politics. For those reasons, he says many believe they cannot stop political corruption.

"I don't buy that," Placek says sincerely. "I cannot live comfortably with that theory. I want to believe we can change the system."

Even he if cannot, Placek says, "I don't have to let the system change me."

(Photo by Glen E. Ellman)

Walter Placek teaches Wilkes class

and wonder aloud, "what if somebody tries to firebomb your house?"

"I'm not fighting the Mafia," he says, brushing aside any fears he may have.

But he admits he does not know what "waves" the case is causing in Luzerne County politics or who may hold grudges 10 years from now.

He will not talk about the disappointments he, his wife, and family have already experienced because of his decision to fight.

Since Placek typically uses the media to bring problems to the attention of the public, many of his opponents have labeled him a publicity hound.

(See PLACEK, Page 9A)

Oct 178

NAME: Walter Anthony Placek

HOME ADDRESS: R. D. 1, Box 365
Pittston, PA 18643

BUSINESS ADDRESS: Physics Department
Wilkes College
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18703

PHONE: Home (717) 338-6061
Office (717) 824-4651, ext. 365

FAMILY: Wife: Barbara S. Placek
Children - 3 Allison, David, Adrienne

EDUCATION: B.S. Wilkes College, Wilkes-Barre, PA
Major: Physics - Biology
Minor: Secondary Education 1961

M. Ed. Pennsylvania State University,
College Park, PA
Major: Physical Science 1965

Additional Graduate work:

Colby College, Waterville, Maine
Physics 1964

University of Scranton, Scranton, PA
Physics - Education 1964

University of Vermont, Burlington, VT
Research Engineering 1965

University of Maryland, College Park, MD
Physics - Education 1969, 1970

Short courses:

National Science Foundation
University of Maryland, College Park, MD
"Atmospheric Electricity" 1972

National Science Foundation
University of Maryland, College Park, MD
"Thermodynamics" 1973

National Science Foundation
University of Maryland, College Park, MD
"The Growth of Science" 1974

National Science Foundation
Pennsylvania State University, College Park, PA
"Data Evaluation" 1973

PRESENT ACTIVITIES:

Assistant Professor of Physics, Wilkes College
Wilkes-Barre, PA
Chairman, Financial Aid Committee, Wilkes College
Member, Teacher Education Committee,
Wilkes College
Consultant-Instructor, Luzerne Intermediate
Unit #18, Kingston, PA
Consultant-Instructor, School of Radiologic
Technology, Wilkes-Barre General Hospital,
Wilkes-Barre, PA
Member, Wyoming Area Board of Education,
Exeter, PA
Chairman, Education Committee of Wyoming
Area Board of Education
Member, Long Range Planning Advisory Board,
Wyoming Area School District, Exeter, PA
Physics Representative on Continuing Education
Committee, Wilkes College

MEMBERSHIPS:

American Association of University Professors
American Association of Physics Teachers
Sigma Xi - Scientific Society
Luzerne County Science Teachers Association
Pennsylvania School Boards Association

CERTIFICATES:

New York State Teaching Certificate -
Physics - Science
Pennsylvania State Teaching Certificate -
Physics - Science

TEACHING FIELDS:

Physics
Education

UNDERGRADUATE
COURSES TAUGHT AT
WILKES COLLEGE:

Physics for Biology Majors
Biophysics
Introductory Mechanics Laboratory
Introductory Electricity and Magnetism Laboratory
Physical Science

GRADUATE:

Science for Secondary Teachers
Problems in Elementary Education: Science

EXPERIENCE:

Assistant Professor of Physics Education,
Wilkes College, Wilkes-Barre, PA (1969-present)
Consultant and Teacher, Education Department,
Graduate School, Wilkes College, Wilkes-Barre,
PA (1976-present)
Assistant Professor of Physics, Keystone Junior
College, LaPlume PA (1968-1969)
Teacher, Public Secondary Schools, New York
and Pennsylvania (1961-1966)
Chemistry, Physics, Earth Science, Science
Consultant, West Side Inservice Program, including
all secondary schools on the West Side of the
Susquehanna River in Luzerne County
Consultant, ESEA Title III Science Project,
Luzerne County School Board (1967-1970)
Consultant, Luzerne Intermediate Unit #18,
Kingston, PA (1977-present)
Secretary, Physics Department, Wilkes College,
Wilkes-Barre, PA (1969-1972)
Consultant-Teacher, Act 101 students, Wilkes
College, Wilkes-Barre, PA (1977-1978)
Consultant, ESEA Title III Evaluations for
Pennsylvania Department of Education
Consultant-Teacher, United Hebrew Institute,
Kingston, PA - Science (1976-1978)
Secretary, Planning Commission, Exeter
Township, Luzerne County (1971-1973)
Chairman, Bicentennial Commission, Exeter
Township, Luzerne County (1976)
Advisor, Luzerne County Science Teachers
Association, Luzerne County, PA (1976-present)
Consultant-Teacher, School of Radiologic Technology,
Wilkes-Barre General Hospital, Wilkes-Barre,
PA (1977-present)

AWARDS:

Kosciusko Science Fellow (1964-65)
Commendation from superintendent of
Wyoming Area School District for developing
and advancing a stronger science curriculum at
Wyoming Area (1967-68)
NSF Summer Fellow Award (Summers 1970-71)

RESEARCH AND
PUBLICATIONS:

"Frictional Loading on Glass Rods," U. S.
Naval Research Lab. Report, University of
Vermont, Jan. 1966

"The Effect of Surface Treatments on Glass Rods,"
U. S. Naval Research Lab. Report, University
of Vermont, Jan. 1966

"Introductory Physics Demonstrations" (paper
presented at University of Maryland for high
school and college physics teachers, Summer 1970)

Several articles in ESEA Title III Science & Math
Improvement publication, the "SMIP Newsletter"

Audio-visual aids and curriculum guides written
for the ESEA Title III Science & Math Improvement
Project

USE Picture

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
CONTINUING EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY PARK, PENNSYLVANIA 16802

Conference Center
J. Orvis Keller Building

Area Code 814
865-7557

March 28, 1973

Dear Mr. Placek,

NAT'L Science Foundation

It is my pleasure to inform you that you have been selected as one of the participants of The NSF Short Course, "Evaluation of Experimental Data", being offered at Penn State, June 24-30, 1973.

I am sure that you and your fellow 29 selected participants will form a stimulating interacting group for this course. For your information, there were about 350 applicants for this short course. Most of the lecturers will be here for the entire course so that you can freely discuss your particular data with them.

Please let me know by means of the attached form by April 15 whether you will be able to attend this course, so that if your reply is negative I can substitute another person. A pre-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Hoping to hear from you soon, I remain:

G. G. Johnson, Jr.

G. G. Johnson, Jr.

Director, NSF Short Course,
Associate Professor of
Computer Science

GGJ/gm

Purpose of grant is to study inter laboratory experiments and computer based instructional techniques with major emphasis on introductory courses.

From
WALTER A. PLACEK

Bea-je;

If you can save the picture
please do so!

Thanks

Walt

Department PhysicsAppointed Sept. 1969FACULTY PERSONNEL DATANAME WALTER A PLACEK Date of Birth FEB 8 1940I. RECORD AT WILKES:Date of appointment
or promotion

Date of severance

Instructor

Assistant Professor

Associate Professor

Professor

Other

Sept. 1969

Other activities and responsibilities while at Wilkes:

Writing curriculum for physics course for SMIPStudent Recruitment Program for Physics DepartmentII. EDUCATION:DegreeInstitutionYear

Bachelor's Degree

B.S.WILKES COLLEGE

Master's Degree

M.Ed.Penn State

Doctor's Degree

Other Degrees

III. STUDIES AND PUBLICATIONS:TitlePublisher or PublicationD

Concerning publications, Dr. Ostertag and I wrote 2 papers
at the U. of Vermont in 1965 resulting from my research but the Navy has
not allowed them for publication, yet. At least that is the situation.

IV. EXPERIENCE Before Coming to Wilkes:

<u>Teaching: - School or College</u>	<u>Position Held</u>	<u>Date</u>
New York State (Whitney Island) Albany, N.Y.	PHYSICS	61-63
Kington H.S.	PHYSICS	63-66
Wyoming Area H.S.	PHYSICS	66-68
Keystone Tr. College	PHYSICS	68-69

Business:

Military: - ServiceRankYear

V. PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS (indicate offices held):

A.A.P.T., N.S.T.A. Phi Delta Kappa

VI. NON-PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:

Masonic Bodies, Shrine etc.
Pottery

Dr. Placek on science teachers' state board

Dr. Walter A. Placek, Harding, member of the Physics Department at Wilkes College, has been appointed to the State Board of the Pennsylvania Science Teachers' Association.

Professor Placek's position on the state body represents high education. He



joins Dr. Ken Dr. Walter Placek Mechling of Clarion University and Dr. Brian Tomey of Penn State University on the board.

A former member of the Wyoming Area School Board, 1975-85, and a present member of the Board of Trustees of Luzerne County Community College, Placek received his bachelor of science from Wilkes, his master's degree from Penn State and his doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania. He is married to the former Barbara Swantkowski of Duryea. The couple has three children, Alison, David and Adrienne.

Dr. Placek also serves on the national committee of the American Association of Physics Teachers and has presented papers at local, state and national science education societies.

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Wilkes teacher visits Dymond Elementary

Dr. Walter Placek, professor of physics at Wilkes College, visited the Sarah J. Dymond Elementary School, Harding, of the Wyoming Area School District. Arrangements were made through the school's PTO.

Dr. Placek presented elementary science programs appropriate to the following grade levels: kindergarten and first grade, Sound and Light; second and third, Motion, Wind and Weather; fourth and fifth, Sound Travel, Gravity, Laws of Motion and Air Pressure. His presentations included demonstrations, pupil participation and question-and-answer periods.

EV 3/13/89 D22

Placek named to board of Pa. Science Teachers

Dr. Walter A. Placek, member of the physics department at Wilkes College, was recently appointed to the state board of the Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association.

He joins Dr. Ken Mechling of Clarion University and Dr. Brian Tormey of Penn State University on the board.



Dr. Walter A. Placek

Placek received his B.S. degree from Wilkes College, his master's degree from Penn State, and a Ph.D. degree from University of Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association was formed in 1951 to meet the needs of teachers of science at all levels in the state. It is currently involved with the Pennsylvania Department of Education in developing programs to improve science education on both the elementary and secondary levels.

Dr. Placek has served on the national committee of the American Association of Physics Teachers and has presented papers at local, state and national science education societies.

He served as a member of the Wyoming Area School Board from 1975 to 1985 and is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Luzerne County Community College.

TL 3/3/89 60



Wilkes Science/Engineering faculty hold conference

Faculty members of the Wilkes University School of Science and Engineering, led by Dr. Umid Nejib, dean of the school, met recently at Irem Temple Country Club in a yearly gathering to discuss long and short range plans for the department, curriculum and special programs.

Front row, from left, are Judy Drabek, Mountaintop; secretary for the Physics and Earth & Environmental Science Departments; Dr. Valerie Kaller, West Pittston, assistant professor of Biology, and Dr. Louise M. Berard, Conyngham, associate professor of Math and Computer Science; back row: Dr. John A. Koch, Shavertown, professor of Math and Computer Science; Dr. Kenneth Pidcock, Pringle, assistant professor of Biology; Dr. Mike Case, Trucksville, associate professor of Earth & Environmental Science; Dr. Dale Bruns, Dallas, chairman of the Earth & Environmental Science Department; Dr. Walter Placek, West Pittston, associ-

ate professor of physics, and Dr. Ahman Armand, Shavertown, chairman of the Engineering Department.

The School of Science and Engineering offers a wide range of concentrations for undergraduate and graduate students including allied health, pre-doctoral, and pre-medical programs. Recent laboratory renovations in the Stark Learning Center have improved the efficiency, safety and teaching technology of each department.

Wilkes Science and Engineering faculty strive to provide students with the knowledge and analytical skills necessary for entry into industry, health and science professions, graduate study or research. Advanced equipment and techniques are used to enhance curriculum and prepare students to serve the diverse scientific and technological needs of industry and government.

WALTER A PLACEK

BORN - DuPont, PA

High School West Pittston 1957

B.S. Wilkes College 1961

M.S. Penn STATE 1965

PhD. U. of Pennsylvania 1985

Additional Work:

U. of Maryland

Cornell

U. of Vermont

Previous Work:

High School Physics Teacher

N.Y. STATE 1961 - 1963

Kingston H.S. 1963 - 1966

Wyoming Area 1966 - 1968

Keystone Jr. Coll. 1968 - 1969

Wilkes 1969 - Present.

Presently on the Editorial Board and a
referee for the "Journal of College
Science Teaching"

PAST President of the Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association 1992

Organizations outside University:

Wyoming Area School Board 1975-1985
Luzerne County Comm. College Board 1984-1994

Presently: Trustee - Holy Mother of Sorrows Church, Dupont
Sunday School Bible Teacher - "1

Member of Supreme Tribunal of the Polish National Catholic Church.

Presently doing consulting work with several local school districts and Intermediate Units to integrate more "hands-on" activities into the Elementary Science curriculum. Also working on a "Science Education" Book for teachers.



The Rev. Walter Placek, a newly ordained priest in the Polish National Catholic Church, serves Mass at St. Stanislaus Cathedral Polish National Catholic Church in Scranton.

Retired educator on new career path



Walter Placek and his wife, Barbara, have been married for 41 years.

Walter Placek spent more than 40 years in the field of education—from teaching high school and college to directing students' futures as a member of the Wyoming Area School Board. When he decided to retire from the academic world two years ago, he embarked on another career: the priesthood.

Placek, 62, was ordained into the priesthood of the Polish National Catholic Church in May 25 and served his first Mass at his home parish, Holy Mother of Sorrows Church, Dupont, the next day.

The Polish National Catholic Church, which was established in Scranton in 1897, allows priests to marry and have children.

Placek and his wife, the former Barbara Swankowski of Duryea, live in the Mount Zion section of Exeter Township.

They have three children, Allison Knick, a registered nurse at Wilkes-Barre General Hospital; David, a chemistry and science teacher at Wyoming Valley West High School, and Adrienne Royster, director of human resources at Eaton Industries, Oklahoma City, Okla.

They have six grandchildren: Katelynn, Rebecca, Amanda, Erin, Nicholas and Benjamin. He is the son of Mary Placek, Dupont, and the late Walter Placek Sr.

Placek, a 1957 graduate of West Pittston High School, earned a bachelor's degree from Wilkes College, a master's degree from Penn State University and a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania.

He worked as a high school physics teacher for seven years before beginning a 33-year stint as a professor of physics at Wilkes University.

The university's board of trustees recently honored Placek with the title of professor of physics, emeritus.

The Most Rev. John F. Swanteck, prime bishop of the Polish National Catholic Church, ordained Placek, who was a deacon at the time.

He received his theological training at the Savonarola Theological Seminary, Scranton.

During his long career in education, Placek was member of many academic societies and presented numerous papers at state, national and international meetings.

His love for education led him to politics and his election to two terms on the Wyoming Area School Board, where he served in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

He served as board president of the West Side Area Vocational-Technical School and was appointed a trustee of Luzerne County Community College, a position he held for 10 years.



After serving his first Mass in May, Placek blesses his wife Barbara and his mother, Mary Placek, Dupont, who turned 92 in May.