



December 4, 2017

Dear Residents:

For the third year in a row, the Pewamo-Westphalia football team made it all the way to the state finals at Ford Field in Detroit. For the second year in a row, they left as State Champions as the Pirates defeated Saugatuck 21-0. After losing the opening game of the season, the Pirates won 13 games in a row on their way to the championship. After winning the state championship game, I heard many of the players talk about losing that opening game and how they became determined to use it as motivation to work even harder to accomplish their season goals. The message this sends should be an inspiration to us all.

The PW football team was blessed with many great student athletes and excellent coaching. But many of the comments I heard from fans, coaches, media people and others involved terms like devotion, discipline, dedication, work ethic, loyalty, and commitment. What a great reflection on the team and our communities. Our players were often seen helping a rival to their feet and giving them a pat on the back acknowledging the effort put forth by a worthy opponent. This show of character and class reflects a great source of honor and pride for our local communities.

Our entire community was greatly saddened by the sudden and unexpected passing of Samantha Smith, daughter of Tony and Kristy Smith. The St. Mary's 4th grader will be greatly missed by her family, classmates and the entire community. There are simply no words that can take away the pain felt by so many over the loss of one of our beautiful children.

Within the hours of Samantha's situation becoming known, St. Mary's church was filled to capacity – everyone praying for a miracle. Although the miracle we were all hoping for was not meant to be, several other families did receive a miracle. Through the kindness and generosity of the Smith family, Samantha's memory will live on through the organ donation program. What a beautiful way for Samantha to be remembered.

When I spoke with Tony and Kristy, they both expressed how extremely blessed they felt to be surrounded by a community that truly seeks nothing more than to help alleviate some of the pain their family is going through. I would like to acknowledge Father Eric Weber, St. Mary's School administration and faculty and the entire community on their handling of this difficult situation that affected so many of our young people and adults. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Samantha, her family and the entire community as we will all grieve and heal together.

This year's Christmas parade and tree lighting was a great success with friends and neighbors gathering to see all the great floats, listen to the beautiful Christmas music performed by our excellent PW Marching band, sing a few carols, watch the lighting of the beautiful Christmas tree and enjoy each other's company. St. Nicholas again made an appearance as did a few very special princesses! It's events like this that really make our community so special. Thanks again to the Westphalia Historical Society for all their work to bring yet another wonderful event to our community for all to enjoy.

Lastly, I want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Please remember those that are less fortunate or may be going through difficult times during this holiday season. May God bless each and every one of you.

Sincerely,

Dean Kohagen, President
Village of Westphalia