

# NORTH CENTRAL ILLINOIS

## Tiny Bureau school singled out for national program

*Leepertown is among nine schools selected by Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to learn about theater, technology through filmmaking.*

**By Lindsay Vaughn**  
Princeton Bureau Chief

**BUREAU** — Students at Leepertown Grade School in Bureau will expand their studies beyond the three R's this spring to explore technology and the arts when they make a documentary about Princeton's summer theater festival, Festival 56.

Leepertown is one of nine schools in the nation chosen to participate in the innovative arts education program 'On Location: Spotlight On Your Community,'

sponsored by The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Daimler Financial Services. Each class selected for the program will make a documentary about an artist or arts organization in the community which will be shared worldwide on the Internet.

In three months, a digital media studio on wheels — housed in a customized Thomas Built school bus — will roll into town, bringing with it two media teaching artists who will train both students and teachers at Leepertown in story-telling, filmmaking, editing and producing video stories.

"The kids get to work with all this really great technology," said Festival 56 executive artistic director Dexter Brigham.

Brigham said students will be able to interview him and his wife Laura Brigham, who serves as the festival's casting director and also

**More about 'On Location'**  
[www.artsedge.org/onlocation](http://www.artsedge.org/onlocation)

directs, choreographs and acts occasionally in productions, as well as some board members from the Princeton Theatre Group.

The students will work on the documentary in early spring before the 2010 season is in full swing, but Brigham said there will still be plenty for them to film.

"We'll be in the middle of our design process for the season, so they'll be able to see a lot of behind-the-scenes work for the summer productions," Brigham said.

It won't be the first time Leepertown students have worked with the Brighams.

Through a grant from the Sun Foundation, the couple has visited the school for several years to teach the basics of theater and

engage students in some scene work and theater games.

"They love having Dexter and Laura come to our school as artists in residence. They already have that connection," Harper said.

Even the filmmaking won't be entirely new to them. For the first time last year, older Leepertown students received direct instruction in videography.

"Each of the eighth-graders last year did a little movie for graduation using flip cameras," Harper said.

Although those students have left Leepertown, younger students who still attend the school had some exposure as well, and working with professionals to make the documentary will build on what they've already learned, Harper said.

The "On Location" bus will visit Leepertown March 29 through April 14.

The school will receive a media equipment package including an Apple iMac, iLife software and video recording gear as well as \$1,000 to support further development of new digital arts and humanities programs.

Once completed, Leepertown's documentary will be uploaded to the onlocationproject.org Web site maintained by the Kennedy Center and shared around the world.

"We are pleased to continue this program after a successful inaugural year," said Darrell Ayers, vice president for education at the Kennedy Center.

"We hope this program will help students to appreciate the art happening in their own backyards and bring the arts from their community to the nation."

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## Doyle running for re-election as sheriff in Putnam County

**GRANVILLE** — Kevin Doyle is running for the Democratic seat for Putnam County sheriff in the February primary. Doyle has been sheriff since Dec. 1, 1998. Prior to serving as sheriff, Doyle was a deputy sheriff in Putnam County.

Doyle graduated from Putnam County High School, Kishwaukee Community College with an associate of arts degree in criminal justice, and the University of Illinois at Springfield with a bachelor of arts degree in social justice. He also graduated from the University of Illinois Police Training Institute.

Doyle is the chairman of the 911 board. He also is the chairman of the Illinois Sheriff's Association Training Committee, which provides training for the sheriffs, chief deputies, jail administrators and office administrators throughout the state of Illinois.

Doyle also holds the position of vice president of the Central Zone Sheriffs. Doyle is a member of the Illinois Valley Chiefs of Police, Illinois Sheriff's Association and the National Sheriffs Association.

During his terms as sheriff, Doyle said one of his biggest accomplishments was his involvement with legislators to bring in federal and state grant money to fund the new sheriff's office/jail and 911 center. The funds procured funded 70 percent of the facility, which alleviated need for a referendum or a tax levy increase.

Doyle also states that E-911 was a great enhancement and he is proud to be a part of it.

Doyle commends the 911 ad hoc committee and past and present 911 boards for their hard work and dedication in making Enhanced 911 a success in the county.

Doyle lives in rural Granville with his wife, Barb, and their three children.

## Putnam County school district retains valuable longtime teacher

**By Shannon Crawley-Serpette**  
Putnam-Marshall Bureau Chief

**GRANVILLE** — At the Putnam County School Board meeting this week, it was announced that longtime kindergarten teacher Mary Gilbert has decided not to retire yet. Gilbert, who had plans to retire soon, has decided to continue teaching, according to McCracken.

McCracken said that is good news for the district.

"She's a phenomenal kindergarten teacher," he said.

### Student recognition

Also this week, the board approved the 2009 tax levy.

The board also honored Brandon Rehn for his student of the month award.

### Improvement plan

In addition, the board approved the two-year school improvement plan for the high school.

"The school improvement plan involves ongoing professional development for the staff," McCracken said.

It also includes hiring a math coach and a language arts coach, he said.

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## Cool Nativity scene

The Anderson family (from left) Lucas, 10, dad Mike, and Faith, 6, stand in front of a Nativity snow sculpture in the front yard of their home at 1007 Wisconsin Ave., Mendota. Mike has done snow sculptures in the past but this is the first time he created one so unique to the season.

*NewsTribune photo/Tamara Abbey*

## Home

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bad shape and he had flat-lined twice while being transported.

Since then, he has regained his eyesight with the aid of thick glasses and doctors saved his right arm, though his use of it is extremely limited.

"I'd give it all up in an instant to be back in Afghanistan," McComber said, "and to have my arm back and my eyes."

McComber still is working through physical therapy on his arm and hand, and learning to use his left arm for everyday functions.

He expects to have another five or six surgeries before all is said and done, he said. McComber previously did a tour lasting 15 months in Iraq. This was his second deployment. He is a 2004 graduate of Princeton High School and has been in the Army for five years.

"It feels good to be home," McComber said.

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**Wounded Afghanistan war veteran** Drew McComber is welcomed home by World War II veteran Lyman Smith. Smith was a waist gunner in B-17 bombers in Europe during the war. McComber is undergoing rehabilitation for injuries received during the war.

*NewsTribune photo/Kemp Smith*

## Mendota elementary schools reviving DARE

**By Tamara Abbey**  
Mendota Bureau Chief

**MENDOTA** — The Drug Awareness and Resistance Education program will return to Northbrook School, the Mendota Grade School board learned this month. It will be partially funded through donations of supplies from local organizations, and the district will pay the city a fee of \$80 per day for the teaching officer. The program will be one day a week for 17 weeks and cost \$1,360.

Board president Sean Borchelt thought the district still may receive additional donations to help pay the

cost. Tricia Guelde was the only board member to vote against resuming the program.

Also during the Mendota Grade School Board meeting:

■ **Jim Bartley** and Julie Lewis of Klein, Thorpe and Jenkins, the district's law firm, gave a presentation on the updates to the Freedom of Information Act and the Open Meetings Act. Bartley recommends the district appoint as many as three FOI officers to handle any FOI requests from the public since those requests must be handled within five days. He also urged the board to appoint several members to a committee for training on the Open

Meetings Act once the state of Illinois has it available. The changes in the laws take effect Jan. 1.

■ **Northbrook principal Chad Anderson** requested permission to begin writing a completely new student handbook for the school. He said the current handbook is out of compliance with the Illinois State Board of Education requirements. He and assistant principal Troy Miller have been collecting handbooks from other middle schools and plan to assemble a committee of staff, parents and possibly even students to draft a new handbook.

"Mr. Miller and I have gone

through and found a lot of legal problems," he said. "What we'd like to do is write a Northbrook School handbook from the ground up."

■ **Affordable Waste** had the low bid of \$6,320 per year for waste removal services. The board approved a three-year contract with the company. The current contract with Waste Management expires at the end of the year.

■ **A new floor cleaning machine** for Blackstone School was approved at a cost of \$707.14 from AmSan. It will replace an old machine that has had numerous repairs but still does not function properly.