

Connections

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Thumbs Up to NHS Class of 2005

Northville High School Principal Dennis Colligan congratulates Jen Kritch upon receiving her diploma at the Class of 2005 NHS Commencement on June 4 at Compuware Arena. The Class of 2005 was the 136th graduating class of Northville Public Schools. A highlight of this year's graduation ceremony was a special recognition of members of the NHS Class of 1934. For stories and additional photos, see Pages 6 and 7 (Photo by Steve Fecht)

School survey helps district decide bond

In an effort to gauge public opinion about the complexion of a November 2005 bond issue, the Northville Board of Education has contracted EPIC-MRA of Lansing to conduct a phone survey with Northville residents within the next few weeks.

The public opinion research firm is expected to report to the school board in early July the results of 300-plus respondents. The 40-question survey is designed to help school officials formulate the district's bond proposal.

Continued on Page 2

Northville joins Lansing rally

Page 3



Inside Connections

Page 2

District honors retirees;
Bond sale offers savings

Page 3

Northville joins education rally
at Michigan Capitol

Page 4

Thornton Creek Principa retires
after 30 years in education

Page 5

Hillside says goodbye
to Assistant Principal

Pages 6-7

Hats off to NHS Class of 2005;
Class of '34 honored

Page 8

Summer is perfect time
for helping kids make good choices

School district survey will help decide bond

Continued from Page 1

The school board is weighing a number of building options for the November election. Among the considerations are:

- Construction of one - and possibly - two elementary schools;
- A classroom addition to Northville High School;
- Replacement of the district's transportation facility;
- Construction of a field house at Northville High School;
- Renovation of the Eight Mile stadium;
- Renovation of the administration building (Main Street School) which also houses some Early Childhood Center classrooms;
- Improvements to existing elementary and middle schools.

Several of the items under consideration were deferred in the May 2004 bond proposal including renovation of the district's transportation facility, construction of a field house at the high school and renovation of the administration building.

The community's relentless housing boom has resulted in unprecedented enrollment growth in the district over the past several years. The district is expecting an additional 300-plus students at the beginning of the new school year.

Stay Connected

Connections is a publication of the Northville Public Schools. We'd like to hear your comments and suggestions.



Please feel free to email Michele Fecht, Editor, at mmfecht@aol.com. You also can find *Connections* on the district's website at www.northville.k12.mi.us. Additional copies

are available at the Administration Building at 501 West Main Street.

Notice of Non-Discrimination Policy

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District Briefs

BOND SALE OFFERS TAXPAYERS SAVINGS For the second time in six months, the Northville Board of Education has announced the successful sale of its 2005 refunding bonds, reducing the district's interest expenses by approximately \$735,830 for taxpayers over the next 14 years.

The sale of \$11.2 million in bonds allows the district to refund a portion of its outstanding 2001 School Building and Site Bonds.

In January, the school board announced the sale of \$40 million in refunding bonds saving taxpayers approximately \$3 million in lower debt payments over the next 14 years. This is the sixth time since 1991 that the district has issued refunding bonds for the purpose of reducing interest expense.

RETIRING STAFF HONORED The Northville Public Schools honored its 2004-05 retirees at a retirement celebration in May. Honorees were:

Shirley Abraham, Early Childhood Center
 Charlie Anderson, Custodian
 David Bartlett, Special Education Teacher
 Cheryl Casterline, Elementary Principal
 Linda Desmond, Teacher Assistant
 Sharon Ellis, Special Education Teacher
 Lynda Hojnacki, Second Grade Teacher
 Paula Joyner-Clinard, Vocal Music Teacher
 Gail Raben, Art Teacher
 Jan Salmon, Music Teacher
 Charles Schwind, Maintenance
 Barb Sixt, Learning Consultant
 Patricia Stebbins, Sixth Grade Teacher
 Nancy Candela, Bus Driver

The district also honored the following staff for 25 years of service:

Nancy Arnold, Teacher
 Gala Halley, Student Services
 Carol Jarocha, Teacher
 Pat Mogridge, Administrative Assistant

Northville joins education supporters at Lansing rally

A contingent of Northville administrators, school board members, parents and students were among the 11,000 education supporters marching to the State Capitol June 21 to encourage lawmakers to pass legislation increasing school funding.

The rally drew the largest crowd to turn out in Lansing for a single political issue in the last 20 years, according to Jerry Lawler, chief of operations for the Capitol.

The event was coordinated by the K-16 Coalition for Michigan's Future, a group of statewide education organizations working together to obtain full funding for public schools, community colleges and universities.

Education supporters across the state converged on the Capitol to push for support of House Bill 4582 and Senate Bill 246. The legislation would:

- Guarantee minimum yearly funding increases in state budgets for K-12 schools, intermediate school districts, community colleges and universities based on the rate of inflation or 5%, whichever is less.

- Cap school contributions to the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System (MPERS) at 12.99 percent and call for the state to pay for any retirement costs above that percentage.

- Eliminate language that allows school budgets to be automatically prorated in the middle of a school year. By removing the language, the Legislature would be required to vote on cuts to school funding should the need arise.

- Allow districts with declining enrollment to retain 90 percent of their state funding.

Helping coordinate Northville's participation in the education rally was the district's Legislative Action Network (LAN), a standing committee of the Northville Council of PTAs. LAN has



worked tirelessly this year to keep Northville residents informed about education issues in Lansing and Washington that impact children.

The most recent LAN newsletter is available on the Northville Public Schools' website at www.northville.k12.mi.us

LAN encourages residents to write letters, send emails or call their legislators. Addresses, emails and phone numbers for the community's four legislators - Senator Bruce Patterson and Representative John Stewart in Wayne County and Senator Nancy Cassis and Representative Craig DeRoche in Oakland County - are included in the LAN newsletter.

LAN also sends out ACTION ALERTS via email on hot topic issues to those interested in contacting their legislators. Anyone interested in signing up for LAN alerts should send an email to:

northvillepta_LAN@yahoo.com
with "Subject: Subscribe"



Speaking out

Northville LAN Chairperson Carol Poenisch (at left with sign), Amerman Principal Steve Anderson (right) and Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Casey Reason were among Northville Public Schools' participants at the June 21 rally. Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm addressed the crowd from the Capitol steps. (Photos by Steve Fecht)



Photo by Steve Fecht

Thornton Creek Principal Cheryl Casterline talks with students at recess

Principal retires after 30 years in education

After 30 years in education - the last six in Northville as principal of Thornton Creek Elementary - Cheryl Casterline has said her final goodbyes to students and staff as she embarks on a retirement that will include among other things spending time with children . . . her grandchildren.

"I'm going to miss the kids the most," says the longtime educator. "It's impossible to have a bad day when you just walk out into the hallway and there they are."

During her six-year tenure in Northville, Casterline had ample opportunity to interact with hundreds, if not, thousands of students. One of her greatest challenges as principal was managing an elementary school with a burgeoning student population that peaked to more than 750 students during the 2002-03 school year.

"Everyone worked so hard to make that workable," she says. "It really is a tremendous tribute to staff and parents." Since the opening of Ridge Wood Elementary in September 2003, Thornton Creek's student population has stabilized with this year's enrollment at 478 students. It is projected that next year's student population will be more than 500.

The school's academic achievement, student behavior and the implementation of Love & Logic are among the highlights of Casterline's principalship. She also notes her pride in the staff. "I hired two-thirds of the staff in the building,"

she says, crediting their efforts for much of the school's success.

Casterline says the community's growth has been the most notable change during her six years with the school district.

"When I started we were a small district," she explains. "In a few short years we have had to come to grips with the fact that we are no longer a small district but a mid-sized district grappling with growth. This has forced us to reassess ourselves constantly."

Despite the challenges brought by enrollment increases, Casterline said Northville's commitment to lower class sizes "sets it apart from other districts."

In the next year, Casterline says she and her husband Richard are hoping to move to Spring Lake after selling their house in Canton. They hope to travel - an African safari is high on their list of destinations - and find a warm place to winter either in Florida or Hawaii.

They also are looking forward to spending time with their five grandchildren and their dog, Austin.

"I'm really ending my career with the dream job," she says. "Small class sizes, community involvement second to none, a wonderful staff and a central office that lets you participate in decision making."

Hillside Assistant Principal says goodbye

The house has been sold, a new one purchased and a job is waiting for Laura Kelly as she brings closure to her four-year tenure as Hillside Middle School Assistant Principal.

Kelly, her husband Bob Porzio, and two daughters Kira, 4, and Sophie, 2, will head to California where Bob will be an attending physician in Redding, and Laura has a new post as assistant principal at a K-8 school.

Though the move will bring the Kelly-Porzios closer to family, leaving Northville is bittersweet.

"I'm definitely a better person for having been in Northville," Kelly notes, adding that she has struggled with leaving her "adopted family" in the community.

Kelly credits Hillside Principal Jim Cracraft with instilling the sense of teamwork at Hillside.

"One of the highlights of the past four years has been working with Jim on the goal of doing what's right for kids. We're all working on the same page," Kelly explains. Activities such as Spirit Week, Make A Difference Day, the March of Dimes Walk and most recently Challenge Day have been highlights for Kelly.

Challenge Day, a two-day program offered to all Hillside 7th graders, helped unite students at that grade level by increasing self-esteem and addressing issues of teasing, bullying and harassment.

Kelly, who was instrumental in bringing the program to Hillside, says she believes it had an impact on the students. She notes that there have been fewer discipline issues at the end of this school year than in previous years, and that kids are kinder to each other and taking responsibility when there is a problem.



Photo by Steve Fecht

Assistant Principal Laura Kelly with Hillside students

"We live in such a good community that we forget that our kids have the same issues as kids everywhere," she explains.

Challenge Day is one of the programs Kelly would like to see at her new school. She also has a laundry list of things she's learned in Northville that she hopes to implement in California.

"Community involvement and the parent piece are huge here," she says, noting that she would like to develop a PASS program (parents supervising activities during the lunch period) at her

new school. Staff development, team building, the Galileo leadership program and the Leaders Leading Leaders initiative are other Northville programs she'd like to replicate.

As she gets ready to leave her corner office at Hillside, Kelly says it is the kids and parents she will miss the most.

"The kids here are incredible, and the parents are so supportive," she says. "I'm really going to miss it here. It has been an incredible experience. I've learned and grown so much in this position."

District welcomes new administrators

Heidi Capraro, a former sixth grade science teacher at Hillside Middle School, has been named Assistant Principal at Hillside. Capraro, the 2004-05 Michigan Teacher of the Year, will replace Laura Kelly.

Sharon Irvine, Principal of Perry Child Development Center in Ypsilanti, will take the helm as principal of Thornton Creek. She replaces Cheryl Casterline.

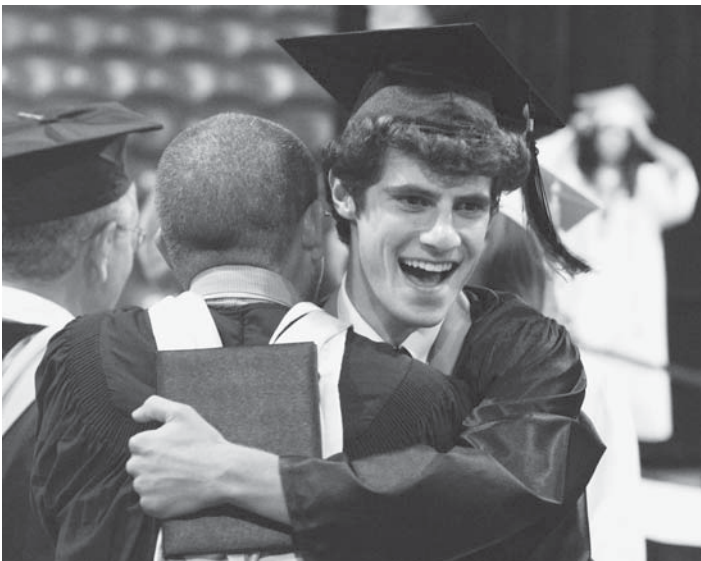
Come back to the September issue of *Connections* for a profile of the district's new administrators.

NHS Class of 2005 takes a bow



Commencement Moments

Brett Marquardt (left), recipient of the 2005 Superintendent's Award, addresses his classmates and commencement guests. Phil Yutzy (lower left) is congratulated by NHS Assistant Principal Rob Watson. Kathy and Tracy Garfield (below right) receive their diplomas. Jessica Markstrom waves to the commencement crowd. (Photos by Steve Fecht)





Class of '34 honored

Five graduates of the Northville High School class of 1934 received special recognition at this year's commencement. Honored were Kenneth Eichen, Ruth Angell, Eleanor (Grosvenor) Bulloch, Jane (Lester) Lawrence and Hilda (Garchow) Nacker. (Photo by Steve Fecht)

NHS Class of 1934 enjoys pomp and circumstance

Among the 432 students of the Northville High School Class of 2005 receiving diplomas June 4 were five special honorees from the Class of 1934.

Though they received their diplomas more than 70 years ago, the district chose to honor them at this year's graduation after learning that the 1934 NHS graduation lacked the pomp and circumstance that makes commencement such a milestone event.

In the midst of the Great Depression, the Class of 1934 had no caps or gowns, no invitations to a ceremony or party and few prospects for post-graduate schooling or employment.

The year they graduated, Adolph Hitler became Fuhrer of Germany, the Dust Bowl ravaged the American Midwest and West and U.S. unemployment was at 22 percent.

In the decade following their graduation, the members of the Class of '34 would come of age during the Second World War and go on to build modern America, becoming the Greatest Generation.

In recognition of their life-long achievements and to give them the ceremony they missed 70 years ago, the district honored **Ruth Angell, Eleanor (Grosvenor) Bulloch, Kenneth Eichen, Jane (Lester) Lawrence and Hilda (Garchow) Nacker.**

The five honorees were fitted with caps and gowns in the fall and awarded a special recognition by this year's graduates.

A display highlighting the Class of '34 and life in Northville 70 years ago was on view at Northville High School during the past school year.

NHS Class of 2005 by the Numbers

- 432 in the Class of 2005
- 7 National Merit Finalists
- 9 National Merit Commended students
- 69 Phi Beta Kappa students
- 127 students graduating Cum Laude (GPA 3.0 - 3.49)
- 69 students graduating Magna Cum Laude (GPA 3.5 - 3.79)
- 69 students graduating Summa Cum Laude (GPA 3.8 - 4.0)
- 120 National Honor Society
- 129 President's Education Award Program
- 209 Michigan Competitive Scholarship - Certificate of Recognition
- 289 Michigan Merit Awards

Students in the class received:

- \$722,500 Michigan Merit Awards (289 qualified for scholarship money)
- \$45,700 in Local Scholarship Money
- \$5.75 million in University Scholarship Money
- \$66,000 in 12 Independent or Corporation scholarships

Total Scholarship Awards:

\$6.58 million



Summer offers parents time to help kids make good choices

As summer kicks into gear, the months of unstructured time are a wonderful opportunity for children and families to consider the abundance of activities that are beneficial to healthy growth. It's also a time for parents to help their children make good choices about how they spend their time and to combat the "I'm bored" complex.

"Summer should be an important time for a family to build connections and have fun together," says Bob Sornson, Executive Director of Special Services for the Northville Public Schools.

Sornson notes that the traditional school year, which follows an August/September start to a May/June closure, is more than a century old and was established when the nation was a more agrarian society and children were needed to help on the farm during the busy summer months.

Though we've moved beyond our agrarian roots, the school-year schedule has not changed, which poses both opportunities and challenges for families.

"Because of the frenetic nature of our culture, we don't always have good, purposeful activities," says Sornson. While summer offers an opportunity to relax from the hectic, structured pace of activities, Sornson notes parents still need to be responsible for monitoring their children's activities.

His suggestions for helping kids make good choices include the following:

- Children need to set goals of their own. Throughout the school year they are meeting someone else's goals. Help children establish tangible goals such as reading 12 books over the summer, learning to swim or ride a bike, etc.

- Do chores. Children need to feel part of the family unit by contributing. Chores can be as simple as making a bed or walking the dog, but should be done every day.

- Help others. Children can learn to help others through their actions. Simple acts of kindness can include a lemonade stand with proceeds going to a charity or collecting the mail for a neighbor on vacation.

- Set screen time limits. Parents need to be strong in not succumbing to the temptation to keep kids busy by allowing them unmonitored, limitless time watching television or playing computer games.

Sornson cautions parents that television and computer games - even those touted as educationally sound or family friendly - should never be seen as a replacement for quality family or learning time.

Based on the research he has gleaned over the past several years, Sornson recommends that children ages preschool through adolescence should be exposed to no more than 5 hours of screen time (television/computers) per week. He notes that children under the age of 2 should have NO exposure to television or computers.

He also explains that even though many programs targeted to the preschool/early elementary age may be considered quality programs, there is not any research that proves these programs in any way enhance children's language development.

There is, however, research that shows the negative effect limitless, unmonitored screen time can have on children's development. Sornson notes that schools today are seeing more students with language and sensory delays as well as behavior and social skills issues.

"It's not just a product of videos," he notes, "but time away from other activities."

"It time to fundamentally rethink why we value kids and families," Sornson notes.

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