



Community Newsletter

WINTER 2004

Once a Stranger to R-H, Retired Educator Embodies It

Next fall, for the first time in more than 50 years, M. Rick Page will stay home on the first day of school. Page, who spent his entire career as a respected and accomplished administrator, teacher and coach in Rush-Henrietta, retired in December.



M. Rick Page

In 1968, as a graduate student in Massachusetts, Page learned of a teaching vacancy in a district he didn't know existed. "I'd never been to Rochester in my life," says Page, who was raised in Clinton, NY, two hours east of Monroe County. "I remember saying, 'What's a Rush-Henrietta? That's a strange name.' I never actually applied to Rush-Henrietta, but I came and had an interview and walked out with a contract."

For many years, Page served as a physical education teacher, primarily at Sherman Elementary School. In 1985, he served an administrative assignment working with high school students, an experience that led to a remarkable twist of fate. "I became so enamored, so engaged in meeting with kids who were struggling or who were in trouble," Page says. "One day, I just got in my car and drove to [the SUNY College at] Brockport. I actually walked in, and it was the last day of registration, the last hour. By the time I left, this gentleman had signed me up for my administrative certificate." In 1987, Page began a four-year stint as an assistant principal at the high school, all the while pursuing his advanced degree.

In 1990, Page became Rush-Henrietta's assistant director of student services. Ten years later, he reached the pinnacle of his professional career, being named assistant superintendent for school operations. "It was a highlight of my career, to start as the

least-tenured person in a district that didn't always promote from within and to gain the trust of people," he says.

In recent years, Page championed the idea of adding a school resource officer to work in the schools. That move, which involves a police officer serving as a role model and teacher for students, was implemented this year. For Page, who also was a driving force behind the creation of the high school's Youth Assistant Program, the program is another example of his desire to create a safe and nurturing school environment.

"I have always had a passion to make sure our students and staff felt as safe and secure as they could be," Page said just before his retirement, the three pagers on his belt a testament to his constant availability to those who needed counsel. "I want parents to know that their children are being cared for at Rush-Henrietta."

As engaged as Page was within school walls, he made time for a bevy of extra-curricular activities. For instance, he fulfilled his passion for sports and student-athletes by coaching football – his team won the Section 5 championship in 1986 – lacrosse, skiing and softball. He also served for more than two decades as a basketball referee.

Page was an accomplished athlete in his own right. He played baseball and football at the SUNY College at Cortland, where he and Maurice Page Sr. are the only father-son duo enshrined in the school's sports hall of fame. As an adult, Page competed on three locally based, world championship softball teams.

Page considered stepping down from his post last year, but he "made a commitment to make sure the new operations center was completed" before making official his retirement. Once the operations center opened during the fall, Page slowly started to turn his attention to retirement, which affords him the opportunity to spend more time with his wife, Sharon, of 37 years, and

his three grown children.

December 31, 2003 officially marked Page's retirement. The district gratefully acknowledges his distinguished and long list of personal and professional accomplishments that have contributed to the advancement of education in, and well beyond, Rush-Henrietta classrooms and schools. Page will be long remembered for his unwavering commitment to all children, his dedication to providing safe and caring school environments for both students and staff, and for taking a team approach to guiding student success. He has been instrumental in building a firm foundation that will carry the district well into the future.

Family, friends and colleagues gathered to honor Page for his 35 years of dedicated service to the district at a retirement party on January 17th at the R.I.T. Inn and Conference Center on West Henrietta Road. Werner Kleemann, colleague and long-time family friend, served as Master of Ceremonies during the special program that acknowledged the rich legacy that Mr. Page leaves the district.

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FROM THE BOARD

Each year on school election day, voters are requested to complete a survey and comment on the school district. Over the past few years, several comments and questions have been asked many times. For the next few newsletters, we will provide answers to the most frequently asked questions. [Questions have been grouped by topic and rewritten for clarity.] The Board thanks those of you who took the time to complete our survey. The topic for this newsletter is . . . Bus Transportation.

How many buses do we have and how long do we keep them? Why do I see R-H buses traveling outside the school district? Why does the district usually have a "Bus Reserve/Purchase" proposition on the ballot every year?

The district currently has 69 large buses and 28 small buses. On the average, each bus has a service life of 8-12 years. These buses are used to transport over 6,200 students roundtrip each day. R-H provides transportation for students to and from school, athletic events and daycare centers within the district. Also, under NYS law, we transport not only resident students attending R-H schools, the BOCES Foreman Center and any special education student whose placement is outside the district, but also those attending any private or parochial school within 15 miles of their homes. This includes over 85 schools, both within and outside the district [e.g. Good Shepherd Elementary School, McQuaid Jesuit High School, Mercy High School, Harley School, Charles Finney High School, Hillel School, Lima Christian School and many others]. Often, to save money, the district combines these out-of-district routes with other school districts' buses [e.g. Two buses meet at a transfer point then each continue on to separate schools.].

In order to maintain the fleet of buses and replace them on

a regular schedule, the voters of the district created a Bus Reserve Fund, which allows the district to purchase buses without the need of taking out a loan. State aid on the purchase of new buses is placed back into the reserve fund to help perpetuate the fund. The board cannot spend that money without voter approval so, in most years, we ask the voters to authorize the expenditure of funds so we may purchase a few buses allowing us to replace approximately 11-12% of the fleet annually. Of course, with so much money invested in buses and the safety of our children dependent on their safe operation, our mechanics perform preventive maintenance and vehicle repair. Additionally, under NYS law, each bus is inspected every six months by state inspectors under a much more rigorous inspection program than that used for private autos. Both bus drivers and mechanics are provided job training and, under federal law, are subject to random drug and alcohol testing.

The scheduling of routes, bus stops and transfer points, vehicle maintenance, and the safe transportation of all students requires a dedicated staff of transportation personnel. Rush-Henrietta buses collectively travel over one million miles annually with little or no incident.

We hope this provides answers to some of the questions you may have had. Warm wishes to you and yours for a happy and healthy 2004!

Sincerely,

The 2003-2004 Board of Education

David R. Pennella, President • Susan M. Derrick, Vice President
Susan E. Banker • Edward A. Lincoln • Pamela J. Reinhardt
Sue A. Smith • William B. Stroud

Board of Education Nominating Petitions

Rush-Henrietta Central School District Board of Education nominating petitions and candidate information packets are available at this time. There are three board seats up for election this year. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes on May 18th in the annual Budget Vote and Board of Education Election will be elected for a four-year term beginning July 1, 2004 and ending June 30, 2008. The two candidates receiving the next highest vote totals will be elected for three-year terms beginning July 1, 2004 and ending June 30, 2007. At least 84 valid signatures are required on each nominating petition to meet legal requirements in 2004. Petitions must be filed with the district clerk prior to 5 p.m. on April 19, 2004 at the Parker Administration Building, 2034 Lehigh Station Road, Henrietta, NY 14467.

The school district is governed by a seven-member Board of Education, elected by the registered voters of the district school board and serve without pay. As elected representatives of district residents and as officers of the state of New York, board members must carry out duties required by the state Legislature, the Board of Regents and the state Commissioner of Education. The board establishes policies for the operation of the district and the superintendent of schools carries out these policies.

For more information on becoming a board of education candidate, please call the district clerk at 359-5010.

Smaller Classroom Sizes Paying Big Dividends for Students

Students in kindergarten and first grade are enjoying more individualized attention this year, thanks to a reduction in the number of students in each class. The move is the first phase in the reorganization of elementary school classrooms, part of a plan that was approved in 2003 by the Board of Education.

Rush-Henrietta is among a minority of school districts throughout the nation that is aggressively embracing smaller class sizes. The decision to have fewer students in each class, a move that requires no additional funding, already is paying big dividends. "Young children need immediate feedback, whether it is for academic or for social needs," says Jill Rivard, a teacher at Crane Elementary School. "With a smaller class, I am able to respond to their needs nearly on demand. I am better able to meet the diverse needs of my students on a more individual basis, which is what most kindergarteners require. And, I deliver

garten and first grade class size targets are being reduced even further, to 15 students. During subsequent years, students in second, third and fourth grades will also reap the benefits of smaller rosters with all K-4 classes reduced to 15 students by the 2007-2008 school year.

The transition is "educationally sound and fiscally responsible," says Superintendent Dr. J. Kenneth Graham, Jr. "No additional funding was required to do this because the reorganization is being achieved by taking advantage of declining enrollment and by converting some remedial instruction teachers into classroom teachers." Smaller class sizes, Graham explains, reduces the need for remedial instruction by giving the classroom teacher more time to help students who struggle.

While researching the benefits of such a move, Rush-Henrietta officials consulted with Dr. Charles Achilles, author of the 1999 book, "Let's Put Kids First, Finally: Getting Class Size Right."

A nationally recognized expert, Achilles was involved with two of the most famous studies regarding class sizes, Tennessee's Project STAR [Student-Teacher Achievement Ratio] and

Wisconsin's Project SAGE [Student Assessment Guarantee in Education]. Such studies show that smaller class sizes benefit students and teachers in several ways. First, they allow greater individual-



Smaller class sizes allow greater individualized instruction.

ized instruction and give teachers more time to help students who may be struggling. Secondly, having fewer students in each class equates to fewer discipline problems. Misbehavior is recognized and addressed more quickly and easily in a class that has fewer students.

In an effort to provide more individualized attention for young learners, representatives from Rush-Henrietta consulted with Achilles, asking his opinion about how to best implement this type of change. Achilles and his partner, Karen Schwengel, who as a teacher experienced firsthand the benefits of teaching fewer students at one time, visited Rush-Henrietta on multiple occasions to offer their advice. They continue to visit, meeting as recently as mid-January, with a group of stakeholders from Leary Elementary School. Incidentally, Achilles has been familiar with Rush-Henrietta for decades; it was here in 1963, while attending the University of Rochester, that he did an administrative internship.

Teachers say parents may already be seeing the benefits of more individualized attention in the classroom. "I am very proud of our administration's dedication to smaller class sizes," says Rivard, the veteran kindergarten teacher. "Having fewer students in the classroom affords me wonderful opportunities in all aspects of my teaching responsibilities. I love working one-on-one with my students."



With smaller class sizes, teacher is able to respond in demand.

this individual instruction myself, rather than relying on other faculty members."

During the past four years, Rush-Henrietta has successfully reduced class sizes at all grade levels. This year, kinder-



Stakeholders Meet to Discuss School Challenges, Opportunities

A broad-based group of community and school leaders met during the fall to discuss Rush-Henrietta's demographic, educational and financial trends, a meeting designed to help the school system embrace future opportunities and prepare for potential challenges.

The informational meeting is an example of Rush-Henrietta's quest to be proactive, rather than reactive, says Superintendent of Schools Dr. J. Kenneth Graham, Jr. District leaders place a high priority on stakeholder input, seeking the unique perspectives of citizens, taxpayers, students, teachers, town leaders and others. Better to prepare now for potential challenges, Graham says, rather than scramble to deal with one if it becomes imminent. "We're trying to anticipate factors that are of critical importance to us in running a school district," he says. "We do not want to be surprised if we run into them down the road."

During the forum, Dr. Ken Hilton, executive director of research and evaluation, presented a variety of demographic information, some relating to a continuing shift in student enrollment. During the past few years, enrollment has decreased annually by about 75 students, a trend likely to continue during the next three to five years. School leaders are viewing the move as an opportunity. "We really see this as a chance to implement the smaller elementary class size initiative without having to reopen our sixth elementary school, Vollmer Elementary School," Hilton says.

A discussion of educational trends led to dialogue about whether Rush-Henrietta should alter its classroom curriculum and teaching approach or make changes to the school environment in an effort to enhance learning opportunities. School leaders say

these discussions are crucial today, particularly given the more rigorous testing standards being implemented by the state and federal governments. District officials also expressed their resolve to further close ethnic and gender-based achievement gaps. For instance, boys locally – as is the case not only nationwide, but internationally – traditionally do not achieve as highly as girls.

Before adjourning, those in attendance engaged in a substantive conversation about Rush-Henrietta's financial state. Each winter, school officials carefully monitor the potential state aid situation and examine trends that will influence next year's school budget. Many outside factors – such as whether the local town tax bases are growing, the size of the Monroe County budget shortfall and the continued negative effects that the

September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks have had on the state economy – play an important role in how the proposed budget is developed.

The forum, which was held in October, is part of a series of ongoing brainstorming sessions.

The next meeting is scheduled for August 9, 2004 at Rochester Institute of Technology. There, a group of key stakeholders – including administrators, teachers and parents – will gather for a daylong brainstorming session. They will discuss five major areas: curriculum and instruction, student management and support services, human resources effectiveness, stakeholder relations, and administration and operations.

"These types of forums are crucial to our success," Hilton says. "They are part of our cycle of planning. Dr. Graham is one of those people who is naturally a long-range planner, and he is also a person who wants to keep touching base with our stakeholders to confirm the direction we are going and to fine-tune our plans."

"We're trying to anticipate factors that are of critical importance to us in running a school district."

*– J. Kenneth Graham, Jr., Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools*

Let R-H Spirit Soar!

Once again, Rush-Henrietta Senior High School is ranked among "America's Best High Schools" and continues to excel as noted in *Newsweek's* 2003 ranking. In March 2000, *Newsweek* published the ranking, at which time Rush-Henrietta ranked #459. Only three years later, Rush-Henrietta has jumped closer to the top, now ranking #363.

The *Newsweek* "Best High Schools" listing is compiled by Washington Post writer Jay Matthews, using a mathematical formula based upon the percentage of each school's students taking the demanding, college-level Advanced Placement [AP] or International Baccalaureate [IB] courses and exams. Matthews calls his listing the "Challenge Index," a ranking of the challenge and rigor of each high school's academic program.

Teachers Go the Extra Mile to Become Better Educators

Two Rush-Henrietta teachers are serving as real-life examples to students about the importance of lifelong learning. The educators, John Banker and Tim Heaphy, recently spent a significant amount of time . . . both inside and outside of the classroom, honing their teaching and leadership skills.

The Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools, Dr. J. Kenneth Graham, Jr., recently acknowledged the pair for their outstanding achievement. "We're really thrilled to recognize these teachers, both of whom have gone above and beyond the call of duty," Graham says.

Heaphy, a social studies teacher at the high school, earned the Adolescent and Young Adult History and Social Studies certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Banker, who teaches science at the high school, earned the organization's Adolescent and Young Adult Science certification.

According to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards web site, the certification program requires "intense self-reflection and analysis of one's own practice" and is "a forceful professional development experience." After completing the program, ". . . teachers say that their teaching is resultantly more focused, reflective, confident. Teachers speak eloquently about how the experience produces deeper student learning outcomes in classrooms. They are strengthened in their practice and emerge from the experience with a lasting commitment to professional growth."

Heaphy, who has been a teacher for 13 years, started the certification process in November 2002 and spent six months completing it. He created a 15-page portfolio, which included information from the past five years about staff development programs he completed, committees he served on, parent contacts he made and curriculum writing he did.

Like Banker, a teacher at Rush-Henrietta since 1989, who created a similar portfolio, Heaphy was asked to explain how each of these activities helped improve student achievement. Both men were required to videotape themselves teaching a classroom lesson, a tape they later had to watch to critique themselves and their teaching style. This is just a glimpse of the work that went into each portfolio; much more work – often done during the weekends – was required to fulfill this part of the certification.

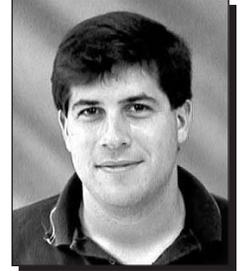
After their portfolios were completed and submitted, Banker and Heaphy took a series of six tests, each of which quizzed them on their knowledge of science and social studies, respectively. The portfolio was worth 60 percent of their final grade, the content tests worth 40 percent. The certification is offered on a voluntary basis and is valid for 10 years. It does not take the place of state certification, but rather complements it.

More teachers from Rush-Henrietta may take part in the certification program in the future. "I considered doing this a few years ago, but the process was expensive," Heaphy says. Two years ago, however, New York State approved what is known as the Al Shanker Grant, named for the famed leader of the American Federation of Teachers. The grant legislation said the state would pick up most of the \$2,300 tab. "Thus, this became a real option for me," Heaphy says.

"I am frequently asked, 'When are you going into administration?'" Heaphy says. "Society often sees this as the only way to progress in my profession. This certification allows me to progress in a different way, where I can still remain a teacher. This process made me examine what I do very carefully. Each part of the portfolio made me look at different aspects of my teaching and, in doing so, improve what I do."



John Banker



Tim Heaphy

Banker, Heaphy and Jessica Weld, who has since left the district, were among nine educators in Monroe County earning this distinction. Relatively few teachers achieve national certification, which is one of the most prestigious labels that a teacher can earn. This honor speaks well of their commitment to education, the advancement of the teaching profession and to the improvement of student learning.

Rush-Henrietta Central School District SAFETY TIP LINE



To anonymously report non-emergency situations that may pose a threat to the safety or well-being of Rush-Henrietta students, staff or school property,
DIAL 359-STOP [7867]

WHO can call this number?

- Students
- Teachers
- Staff Members
- Bus Drivers
- Parents
- Administrators
- Community Residents

WHAT should be reported?

- Violence and threats of violence
- Theft and vandalism
- Drug or alcohol use and abuse
- Talk of suicide
- Sexual harassment
- Weapon possession
- Residency concerns





New Transportation and Operations Center Making a Big Difference

Restricted by a small parking lot, members of the Rush-Henrietta transportation staff used to experience three or four fender-benders each month. It is

The official dedication of the new building, which is located on the southwest corner of Lehigh Station and Middle roads, was held on October 7, 2003. The



not easy backing a school bus into an unforgiving space that leaves little room – scant inches, in many cases – for error.

That and many other challenges were resolved this school year, when years of planning, hard work and growing community support came to fruition with the opening of the Rush-Henrietta Transportation and Operations Center.

R-H Singers, the Senior High School Brass and String Ensembles, and children from the Even Start and Universal Pre-K programs provided entertainment, which included a rendition of "The Wheels on the Bus," to help mark the occasion.

The 35,000 square foot facility, built by LaBella Associates, affords much more space than its predecessor at 649 Erie Station Road, adjacent to Burger Middle School. "That was a beautiful building," Deborah McGowan, director of transportation says, "but it was to the point where the district was leasing other properties to store maintenance vehicles to cut down on the congestion. We haven't had any parking lot incidents since we moved here in August."

Other occupants of the new center – including the buildings and grounds, facilities and food service departments – also have more room to operate. "It's just amazing how everything gelled," McGowan says. "We are so centralized, right in the hub. It's phenomenal." Being centrally located is crucial to running an efficient operation. For instance, Rush-Henrietta has a fleet of 97 buses and about 45 maintenance vehicles, all of which are based at the new location. Last year, Rush-Henrietta buses traveled a staggering 1.6 million miles.

The new facility features an automatic indoor washing area, a vehicle preparation and paint room, and a multipurpose conference room for employee training. In addition, the size of the garage – where maintenance is performed on all buses and other school vehicles – has doubled.

The Transportation and Operations Center also has fostered an increased level of efficiency and cooperation between the school system, the town of Henrietta and the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, all of which fuel and wash their vehicles at the new location. That's a big benefit, especially for sheriff deputies, who used to drive to the Iola Campus on



East Henrietta Road to refuel. The new arrangement provides additional security for the new site, with a steady stream of police officers patrolling the grounds around the clock.

Reaction from the community regarding the \$9.4 million project is positive. "The buses don't all leave at one time, and they don't all come back at one time," McGowan says. "We're good neighbors. We certainly appreciate the residents' support in building this new center."



It is with special thanks that the district acknowledges all individuals whose collective efforts helped to make the Transportation and Operations Center project a success from proposition through construction. The 35,000 square foot state-of-the-art facility, situated on 56.7 acres, is the first new building erected in the district since the late 1960s. Its successful completion...

"Reflects the district's commitment to planning for, and providing, the resources that ensure its long-term capacity to maintain the efficient delivery of quality services."



— DAVID PENNELLA
President, Board of Education



"Realizes the district's vision of excellence and continuous improvement that supports the advancement of education and ensures the effective utilization of district and community resources."

— DR. KENNETH GRAHAM
Superintendent of Schools

"Will meet student and community requirements today and in the future as they continue to evolve and change for years to come."



— M. RICK PAGE
Assistant Superintendent of School Operations



NEWSMAKERS

DISTRICTWIDE

- Despite adverse weather conditions, Rush-Henrietta had an excellent turnout this year for the "Making Strides for Breast Cancer Walk," filling five buses. There was great enthusiasm among the entire group who, at last count, raised \$8,466. According to the TV news, Rochester walkers raised more than \$600,000 overall. Way to go R-H!

MUSIC

- The following **Burger Middle School** students are to be congratulated on their participation in the New York State School Music Association Zone 2 Junior High All-State Music Festival.
 - Chorus [7th graders]: **Brian Cronic**, Tenor; **Eric Metzgar**, Tenor; **Regina Schlosser**, Soprano; **Eric Swanson**, Baritone; [8th graders]: **Nick Condello**, Tenor; **Jordan Deane**, Soprano; **Eric Hardy**, Baritone
 - Orchestra [8th grader]: **Joseph Wang**, Violin
- The following **Roth Middle School** students are to be congratulated on their participation in the New York State School Music Association Zone 2 Junior High All-State Music Festival.
 - Chorus [8th graders]: **Kendra DeWinde**, Alto; **Amanda Horn**, Soprano; **Zachary Ott**, Alto
 - Orchestra [8th graders]: **Sarah Dobjeleski**, Violin; **Greg Lebens-Higgins**, Viola
- The following **Ninth Grade Academy** students are to be congratulated on their participation in the New York State School Music Association Zone 2 Junior High All-State Music Festival.
 - Chorus: **Amy Schnitzler**, Soprano
 - Band: **Nicole Ciminelli**, Clarinet; **Allison Thurnherr**, French horn
 - Orchestra: **Elizabeth Barnett**, Cello; **Marirose Dempsey**, Viola; **Samuel Elliot**, Violin; **Thomas Kern**, Violin; **Victoria Vasso**, Cello
- The following **Senior High School** students are to be congratulated on their acceptance into the New York State School Music Association Zone 2 Senior High Area All-State Music Festival.
 - Chorus [11th graders]: **David Gusmano**, **Noah Hudnell**, **Katie Mueller**; [12th graders]: **Katie Horn**, **Stephanie Schweitzer**, **Edward Wooten**
 - Orchestra [10th graders]: **Zeke Auburn**, Viola; **Tyler Lucero**, Violin; **Yi**

Wang, Viola; [11th graders]: **Luke Auburn**, Cello; **Rebecca Barnett**, Violin

- The following three Senior High School students, **David Goebel**, Jazz Drum Set; **Corinne Paull**, Alto; and **Edward Wooten**, Tenor, represented R-H at the 2003 NYSSMA All-State Conference held in Rochester. Thousands of students auditioned for this honor last spring at Solo and Ensemble Festivals throughout the state.
- Lauren Otis**, was a member of the cast of *The Taffetas*, the first student production of the 2003/2004 school year for the Monroe #1 BOCES School of Performing Arts at Eastridge. The extracurricular productions are a great opportunity for students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and artistry. Congratulations Lauren!
- The **R-H Singers** are one of five choirs nationally who have been invited to sing in Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. next September 11th. The National Philharmonic Orchestra will be accompanying the choirs singing a newly composed oratorio named "Prelude to Glory." It is based on a series of books written about the Revolutionary War and subtext, a Memorial to Heroes. What an honor!

SCHOOLS

- Sherman Elementary** fifth graders **Zachary Lucero** and **Zoe Morse** are finalists in the Rochester Museum and Science Center's Young Visionaries Awards. Their entries were ranked among the top 30 of the 158 received representing 68 schools and home schools in 10 counties. Zachary and Zoe will each receive five free tickets to the Young Visionaries Banquet, featuring NASA astronaut Pamela Melroy and a one-year free RMSC family membership.
- The following **Winslow Elementary** students were finalists in the 2004 Geography Bee sponsored by the National Geographic Society. They are [4th graders]: **Danielle Maio**, **Samantha Feck**, **Shelby Wilson**, **Praise Adisida** and **Rebecca Wu** and [5th graders]: **Marie Sponholz**, **Hayley Johnson**, **Joshua Moufarrege** and **Brittany Schaeffer**. After five grueling rounds, Hayley Johnson and Josh Moufarrege squared off for the championship with Hayley emerging the 2004 Geo Bee winner. Hayley will take a written examination to qualify for the New York State Bee held in Albany in April. Congratulations to all participants and best of luck Hayley!

- Mrs. Walker's** and **Mrs. Wowzynski's** fifth grade classes at **Winslow Elementary** completed the Classroom Cares Challenge to read 100 books. This program is sponsored by Scholastic Books. Once each class reads 100 books, Scholastic donates 100 books to programs that serve children who cannot afford books for themselves. There were 200 books donated in the names of Winslow students.
- Burger Middle School** student, **Brad Demarest**, finished second in the seventh and eighth grade division of the 36th annual Fire Prevention Essay Contest, sponsored by the Monroe County Volunteer Firemen's Association.
- Christopher McDonald**, Health Education & Computer Skills Teacher at **Burger Middle School**, has started the STAR Club [Students Taking Action & Responsibility]. The club focuses on community service and volunteering projects that allow the students the opportunity to give back to the community and make a difference in someone else's life. The club consists of about 25 students and so far this year they have volunteered at the American Diabetes Walk, raised over \$1,000 and walked the Breast Cancer Walk, sponsored a canned food drive and collected new toys for over 100 less fortunate pre-school students.
- Roth Middle School** participated in America Recycles Day this year. Students in the Green Team Club went to individual classrooms and had students complete pledge cards pledging to recycle. Over 80% of the student population returned cards, which won the school an ice cream party. After the pledge cards left the local area, they went onto the state level for a drawing where **Rachel Boch** won the grand prize, a trip for four to Disney World.
- Senior High School** student **Adam Chatfield** was a cast member in the December production of *Edgy Shorts*, a compilation of published and original student work at the Monroe #1 BOCES School of Performing Arts at Eastridge.
- In December, a national video team from National Hadassah in New York came to the **Senior High School** to film students for a new "Check It Out!" health video. Rush-Henrietta was one of only three communities in different parts of the U.S. chosen to participate in this video. The students spoke with an encounter group specialist about health issues and taking care of their own health needs. The video will

Continued on page 9.



NEWSMAKERS

Continued from page 8.

be used by Hadassah volunteers in conjunction with the "Check It Out" breast and testicular health awareness program in area high school health classes throughout the country. Senior High School participants were: **Kevin Darby, Meghan Gilligan, Shannon Hatch, Derrick Loyde, Joe Sargent, Amanda Spuck, Jay Helt and Shauna Leonard.**

- The **Alternative High School Program** had five teams participate in the Fall Stock Market Simulation. During a 10-week period, over 120 high school teams participated from around the region. Each team played high finance as they invested \$200,000 while vying for the distinction of top investor. The Alternative High School teams finished third, eighth, 20th, 21st and 41st. The teams ranged from making a few thousand on the investments to nearly \$24,000 for third place, which was only \$10,000 short of first place. The top 20 teams were invited to an awards ceremony at the Memorial Art Gallery, where representatives from three of the Alternative High School teams will be in attendance.

SPORTS

- The **girls' varsity bowling team** is undefeated this year [11-0]. They clinched the Monroe County championship on January 21st and hope to win their third consecutive sectional title in February. Congratulations girls and good luck in February!
- The **boys' varsity bowling team** is 8-3 this year, their best record ever. Nice work boys!
- The **boys and girls cross country teams**, coached by Mike DeMay and Dale Ladd respectively, completed the best combined season in the history of R-H cross country. The girls compiled a 17-3 record and the boys finished 18-2. The boys finished second and the girls third in the Monroe County League Division I standings. Both teams earned New York State Scholar Athlete Team Awards with the girls receiving a 95.5 gpa and the boys a 95.43 gpa. Great job!

STAFF

- Congratulations to **Leary Elementary School** teachers **Deb O'Mara, Sue Gillette** and **Amy Pugsley** for recent recognition as WOKR TV13 Educators of the Week. Reading, writing and visualization are all important in their classrooms, where chil-

dren benefit from the experience, knowledge and talent of this team of teachers who encourage the potential of their 3rd and 4th grade students.

- **Floyd Winslow Elementary School** fifth grade teacher **Ms. McLean** was awarded the WARM 101.3 Teacher of the Week Award on January 22nd. Each week, listeners nominate teachers from the community to receive the WARM 101.3 Teacher of the Week Award. The Teacher of the Week receives a plaque and an on-air interview with Tony and Dee.
- **Maura Gilsinan**, 8th grade teacher at **Roth Middle School**, has received a grant from the Freeman Foundation to study East Asian history. The seminar is part of the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia's initiative to enhance and improve the teaching of East Asian history throughout middle and secondary schools. Roth will receive \$500 worth of teaching background material that can be used by all teachers. Ms. Gilsinan will produce an implementation plan on how East Asian history can be taught effectively within the 8th grade curriculum and standards, and at the end of the implementation, have the opportunity to study abroad in Japan during the summer of 2005.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Schools Closed . . . February Recess

Schools will be closed Monday, February 16, 2004 through Friday, February 20, 2004 for the February recess. The district will resume its regular schedule on Monday, February 23rd.

Snow and Emergency Closings

It is important to note that when Rush-Henrietta schools are closed districtwide for snow days, or other emergency closings, all afternoon and evening activities, sporting events and meetings are also cancelled for that day and evening. Individual activity/meeting cancellation notices will not be posted. When the district is closed, a blanket cancellation notice covering all activities and events will be sent to the media for announcement and a notice will be posted to the home page of the district web site.

Partnership School Survey

Each year, the District Parent Advisory Council, working with the district, surveys all parents seeking input and advice. This year's Partnership School Survey will be administered in late February. The survey will be mailed to the homes of all secondary students, while children in elementary school will take them home. Parents . . . please return your survey . . . the district respects and values your opinions.

RHTV Programming Expands

The district's cable TV initiative has expanded to include cable TV subscribers in the town of Rush. RHTV programming now appears in the Rush area on cable CH19 every Wednesday from 5 to 6 p.m.

Now in its third year, RHTV programming will continue in Brighton and Henrietta on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month on cable CH15 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Tapes of each program are available for loan to staff and residents who do not live within the cablecast area. To reserve videotapes, please call the district reception desk at 359-5000. Tapes are also in circulation at the Brighton, Henrietta and Rush public libraries.

Walk Program

All R-H schools are available for walking on school days.

School	Days	Walk Times
Crane	T, W, Th	4:30-9 p.m.
Fyle	T, W, Th	3-9 p.m.
Leary	M, W, Th	3-9 p.m.
Sherman	M, W, F	3-8 p.m.
Winslow	T, W, Th	4-9 p.m.
Burger/Roth	M-F	6-9 p.m.
NGA	M-Th	6-9 p.m.
SHS	M-Th	6-9 p.m.
Vollmer	M, W, Th	3:30-9 p.m.

Calendar Changes

Please note the following changes in the 2003-2004 school calendar schedule:

MARCH 12, 2004: ALL SCHOOLS/ALL STUDENTS

Due to recent weather related closings, March 12th will be a regular school day, not a Superintendent's Conference Day, to ensure a sufficient number of instruction days [180]. All K-12 students will need to attend school on this day.

JUNE 11, 2004: ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS . . . NO SCHOOL

This day has been made a Superintendent's Conference Day that K-5 teachers will use for grading and using this assessment data for instructional planning.

JUNE 16, 2004: MIDDLE SCHOOLS . . . June 16th will be an "Instructional Day."

Students in grades 6-8 will attend school on Wednesday, June 16th. This day is now a day of instruction, rather than a day of testing. June 15th was originally scheduled as the last day of attendance for middle school students due to year-end testing requirements. This change provides one additional day for instruction and, accordingly, June 16th is now the last day of attendance for middle school students.



District Complying With No Child Left Behind Act

Rush-Henrietta is employing additional strategies to boost student achievement, an effort intended to meet and outperform new federal guidelines set by the landmark No Child Left Behind Act.

The law, signed by President George W. Bush in January 2002, requires states to implement accountability systems for public schools. It calls for challenging state standards in mathematics and reading, and annual testing for students in grades 3-8 by 2005-2006. All students are expected to meet the new standards by 2014; districts that do not achieve these higher standards are subject to a variety of potential sanctions.

The legislation is far-reaching in terms of assessing student achievement. For instance, test results must be broken down by disability, ethnicity, limited English proficiency, poverty and race to ensure that no group of students falls behind. "It is a complicated and involved law . . . 1,400 pages," says Dr. Ken Hilton, executive director of research and evaluation. Hilton applauds the idealism of making sure all kids are going to be successful and goes from school to school almost every week doing workshops on No Child Left Behind, looking specifically at the achievement data for each individual school.

In an effort to improve student achievement in Rush-Henrietta, a variety of initiatives are already under way. "In a number of our schools, we have instituted after-school extended days," Hilton says. "In our middle schools, we have created readers' workshops and writers' workshops. In other instances, we have scheduled additional English Language Arts [ELA] time into student schedules in lieu of a study hall or an elective."

At Burger Middle School, for example, there is a concerted effort to improve ELA scores. Last year, student achievement on the test for eighth graders fell just short of the annual State Achievement Benchmark. "We know that we can do much better, and we are in the midst of improvements that will help our students do just that," says Superintendent Dr. J. Kenneth Graham, Jr.

This year, Burger Middle School created a Local Assistance Plan designed to improve teaching and learning in the school. As part of the plan, school officials are benchmarking other schools to learn from their daily practices, to discover what they are doing to enhance student achievement. In addition, each Burger student is now required to read at least one book per

month, which is discussed in a variety of classes. Young learners are increasingly being exposed to more non-fiction reading and expository writing and are required to maintain notebooks or journals for a number of classes. "At Burger," Hilton says, "We have made ELA time sacred time."

Even if this year's goals are attained at each Rush-Henrietta school, there soon will be more room for improvement. Annually until 2014, the state raises the bar for student achievement even higher.

In a June 2003 letter to parents nationwide, Rod Paige, U.S. Secretary of Education, wrote of the new program: "If your child isn't learning, you'll know why. If your school isn't performing, you'll have new options and the school will receive additional help. Our commitment to you, and to all Americans, is to see every child in America, regardless of ethnicity, income or background, achieve high standards."

"We know that we can do much better, and we are in the midst of improvements that will help our students do just that."

— J. Kenneth Graham, Jr., Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

District Pursues Residency Fraud

Community residents are asked to help address issues of residency fraud when suspicious that a neighborhood non-residency matter might exist. As in all school districts, there continue to be cases where residency fraud exists and parents successfully find a way to enroll children under false pretenses.

The district continues to aggressively investigate any possible case of non-residency in Rush-Henrietta as it has an obligation to safeguard the taxpayers' dollars. One child added to the roster in

a school could add another class and they would be consuming teachers' time, supplies and materials. In such instances, a non-resident student takes away time, resources and assistance from other legitimate students who are residents of the district.

Such concerns can be reported to the Office of Student Services by calling 359-7950. In addition, calls may be made to the district tip line at 359-STOP, which was activated so that students, teachers, staff members, bus drivers, parents and

community residents could anonymously report situations that may pose a threat to the safety or well-being of Rush-Henrietta students, staff or school property.

Due to the district's capacity for supporting student learning, out-of-district parents often wish to enroll children in R-H schools. While the district requires proof of residency before a student may register, at times, it registers non-resident students on a tuition basis only as classroom space permits.



FOUNDATION NEWS

2003 Distinguished Alumni

At homecoming in October 2003, the Rush-Henrietta Education Foundation recognized five distinguished alumni who have made the entire R-H community proud, while achieving excellence in their careers and personal lives. The nominees were chosen according to the criteria of dedicated community involvement and/or a strong record of achievement in a career/profession. Honorees joining the ranks of distinguished alumni in 2003 included: Brenda D. Lee ['68], Paul Callerame ['70], Richard Kettell ['72], Wade S. Norwood ['81] and Matthew J. Vreeland ['85]. Below, please find a brief excerpt on each of the honorees.

Brenda D. Lee [Class of 1968]

Brenda is a graduate of Rush-Henrietta Charles H. Roth High School and of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point where she received a B.S. in psychology with a minor in sociology. She then furthered her education at Antioch University in Cambridge, Massachusetts and received a master's degree in education with an emphasis on educational administration. She is currently the assistant dean for Medical Education and Student Affairs at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry where she has organized a Careers Office to assist students, residents and junior faculty with a focus on academic careers. Brenda is married to Reverend Lawrence Hargrave and works side-by-side with him in his ministry.

Paul Callerame [Class of 1970]

Paul is a graduate of the Rush-Henrietta Senior High School and obtained certification from Farrier School. Paul worked for The Salvation Army as Director of Operations for a 10 county area and seven years ago opened St. Pauly Textile. In 2003, he shipped over 10,000,000 garments worldwide. Wanting to give back to the community, Paul began working with non-profit organizations in helping with their fundraising needs and contributed \$160,000 to such organizations last year. Paul's latest venture is Upstate LifeServers, which has been instrumental in placing automatic external defibrillators [AEDs] throughout New York State and within our own community.

Richard Kettell [Class of 1972]

Richard "Rick" Kettell is a graduate of the Rush-Henrietta Senior High School. He enlisted in the Air Force after graduation and has served in Air Traffic Operations both in

Indiana and Germany. He earned his associate's degree from the University of Maryland while in the military and upon returning to Rochester, began to pursue his bachelor's degree at the Rochester Institute of Technology. In 1981, Rick was the first Air Traffic Controller hired at Rochester Air Traffic Control Tower following the strike and was appointed as Air Traffic Manager at Cleveland ARTCC [Air Route Traffic Control Center] in 2000. He is the manager of the world's busiest air traffic control facility and is responsible for over 600 air traffic employees. Amidst the tragic events of September 11, 2001, Rick provided leadership and direction for the facility handling United Flight 93. He personally monitored the terrorists' transmissions and continually communicated Flight 93's flight path and position to FAA headquarters and the U.S. military. He has been married for 25 years and has three children.

Wade S. Norwood [Class of 1981]

Wade graduated from the Charles H. Roth High School with honors and received a degree in political science from the University of Rochester. In 2001, Wade was re-elected to a fourth term as a Rochester City Council member at large. He is the chair of the council's Housing and Community Development Committee. In this capacity, he has helped to craft numerous housing revitalization strategies, has led the council's review of the city's Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Code and has been a leader in the effort to strengthen our commercial districts. Wade received the first Governor's Award for African Americans of Distinction, was selected by the Rochester Business Journal as one of this area's "40 Under Forty" community leaders and received the James McCuller Award from Action for a Better Community. He is married and resides with his family in the city's 19th ward.

Matthew J. Vreeland [Class of 1985]

Matthew is a graduate of the Charles H. Roth High School. He earned a B.A. in health and society and a M.S. in public policy analysis from the University of Rochester. While in high school, he became interested in emergency medicine and joined the Henrietta



Distinguished Alumni honorees from left to right: Richard Kettell, Paul Callerame, Brenda Lee and Matthew Vreeland. Missing from photo: Wade Norwood.

Volunteer Ambulance Explorer Post where he spent eight years as a volunteer. While employed with Tufts-New England Medical Center in Boston, MA, Matthew pursued admission to medical school and attended Harvard University's Extension School in Cambridge, MA. In 1993, Matthew was offered a commission in the U.S. Army as a medical student. He graduated as a doctor of medicine from the F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Maryland in 1997. Captain Vreeland completed his internship at Madigan Army Medical Center in Fort Lewis, Washington, trained as an Army flight surgeon and was assigned as squadron surgeon in Korea. He was promoted to major in May 2002 and was assigned to Womack Army Medical Center in Fort Bragg, NC, where he currently serves as the chief of Emergency Medical Services as well as an emergency medicine physician. Matthew and his wife live with their three children in Pinehurst, NC.

RHEF Accepting Applications

The Rush-Henrietta Education Foundation [RHEF] is accepting applications from R-H seniors for college scholarships and School-to-Work Transition Awards. Since 2001, RHEF has awarded over \$11,000 to worthy R-H Seniors to help them further their education or careers beyond high school. Applications and instructions are available in the Career Center or online at www.rhef.org. Completed applications are due no later than April 27, 2004. Awards will be presented at the Senior Awards night in June.

Rush-Henrietta Central School District

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2004-2005 Budget

COMMUNITY FORUM

Rush-Henrietta Central School District

Wednesday, February 25, 2004 • 7 to 9 p.m.

Senior High School Cafeteria • 1799 Lehigh Station Road

All district residents are encouraged to attend this important informational Community Forum regarding the 2004-2005 budget and learn more about the financial challenge facing the Rush-Henrietta Central School district next year. This is an opportunity for community residents to offer suggestions about how to best address this challenge.

For more information, please call the Business & School Operations Office at 359-5030.

