

RHAC

RUSH-HENRIETTA
ALUMNI COUNCIL

www.rhnet.org

Alumni Council Newsletter

Rush-Henrietta Alumni Council

September 2008

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Alumni Council to Hold Annual Meeting, Honor Grads

Rush-Henrietta alumni are invited to attend the district's alumni meeting and Hall of Fame ceremony.

U.S. Navy Captain Brad "Brick" Conners, Terry Mathews-DeSant, Howard Ressel, and Dr. Michael Zuber will be inducted into the Rush-Henrietta Alumni Council Hall of Fame Saturday, September 27, 2008, at the Senior High School.

Alumni are invited to a reception from 12:30 to 2 p.m. and 4 to 4:30 p.m. in the gymnasium foyer at the Senior High School. An electronic kiosk will be set up so alumni who aren't registered in our online database can join. Light refreshments will be served, and each alumnus will receive a button signifying their graduation year. The Hall of Fame inductions are at 1:30 p.m. on the football field.

"We continue to be impressed with the quality of the graduates who are nominated," says RHAC President Joe Bellanca. "Although it was easy to choose these four nominees, it wasn't easy to pass over so many other wonderful candidates. It's a terrific testament to the Rush-Henrietta Central School District." Next spring, the Council will seek additional nominees for this honor. Those whose names were submitted this year will be considered again.

Prior to the Hall of Fame inductions,

Join in the Alumni Fun!

When: 12:30 to 2 p.m.
Saturday, Sept. 27

Where: Senior High School,
1799 Lehigh Station Road

Hall of Fame Ceremony at
1:30 p.m. (football game follows)

Honorees profiled on pages 2-3.

the RHAC Board of Directors will hold a brief annual meeting. All district graduates are invited to attend any or all of the day's events. The Hall of Fame inductions precede the traditional homecoming football game. During halftime, the new inductees will meet friends, family members, and fellow graduates in an alumni tent located at the north end of Elmer Gordon Field.

The Rush-Henrietta Education Foundation funds the Hall of Fame induction. The Foundation underwrote expenses for past recognition of Distinguished Alumni.

For more information, call the Alumni Council hotline at (585) 359-5004 or e-mail cjbellanca@rochester.rr.com.

Visit the Alumni Center at www.rhnet.org!

Four Outstanding Graduates to be Inducted into Rush-Henrietta Hall of Fame

A navy pilot, retired teacher, transportation engineer, and community advocate will be inducted into the Rush-Henrietta Alumni Hall of Fame at 1:30 p.m. Saturday, September 27.

U.S. Navy Capt. Brad “Brick” Conners Class of 1978

Capt. Brad “Brick” Conners, who graduated from Rush-Henrietta in 1978, leads Naval Base Ventura County, one of the world’s largest naval bases.



A Top Gun F/A-18 pilot and decorated military veteran, Capt. Conners has spent four years of his career at sea. He has accumulated 4,500 flight hours and 950 carrier landings in the most demanding aviation conditions known to man, and served as a key air campaign planner for Operation Iraqi Freedom. In addition to flying initial combat missions in Iraq, he oversaw more than 140 multi-nation warships.

At his naval base, which is located on the Pacific Ocean in California, Capt. Conners is responsible for leading more than 17,000 military and civilian personnel. He and his team have a reputation as effective and innovative stewards of 20,000 acres of environmentally sensitive beach, lagoon, and wetlands. “Those of us who know him see him as a future Secretary of the Navy,” says his friend, John Lockhart.

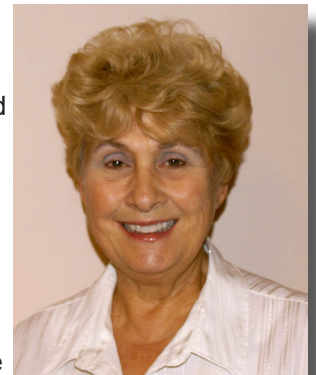
A motivational speaker who uses his talents to help others, Capt. Conners serves on the American Red Cross Board of Directors, and speaks publicly to help raise U.S. Navy mission awareness and engage the community about economic and environmental challenges. He has helped to raise millions of dollars for hundreds of charities, even occasionally playing guitar in a local band to lend a hand.

Capt. Conners credits his Upstate New York roots and his academic and athletic foundation at Rush-Henrietta as key influences. He and his wife, Terrie, have four children. He plans to retire from the U.S. Navy in February 2009.

Terry Mathews-DeSant Class of 1955

Former students remember Terry Mathews-DeSant, who graduated from Rush-Henrietta in 1955, as a teacher who made learning more meaningful.

Mathews-DeSant worked in the Rush-Henrietta Central School District for 22 years as a French and Spanish teacher. She is known for her ability to make learning a foreign language fun and engaging through her commitment to bringing other cultures to life for students.



Whether seeing a film, eating at a restaurant, or hosting an exchange student, Mathews-DeSant gave students the opportunity to become fully invested in the language they studied. Well traveled then and now, she would bring back any items from her trips abroad – from authentic costumes to dinnerware – that enhanced her students’ education. “I can attest to the impact she has had on the lives of thousands of students in the Rush-Henrietta community during her teaching career,” says Laura Sadowski, who was a high school student taking classes from Mathews-DeSant in the 1970s. “As an adult, I have had the opportunity to see Terry in action firsthand as an international ambassador on behalf of the greater Rochester community.”

Although Mathews-DeSant retired from the district in 1995, she remains active in several international cultural exchange programs. Since 1959, she has been involved with the American Teenage Diplomat program. In addition, for the past 40 years, she has been a leader in the International Sister Cities of Rochester Committee. She has served as chairwoman of the Rennes-Rochester Committee since 1990, winning the respect of leaders locally and in France.

Mathews-DeSant has three children with her late husband, Jerry Mathews. She has 10 grandchildren and is married to Guy DeSant.

Navy Captain, Teacher, Community Leader, and Civil Engineer to be Honored

Howard Ressel Class of 1980

Howard Ressel, who graduated from Rush-Henrietta in 1980, played an integral role in designing the Douglass-Anthony Memorial Bridge, which is part of Route 490 in Rochester.



Since replacing the Troup-Howell Bridge, the Douglass-Anthony Memorial Bridge has become a popular city landmark and redefined Rochester's landscape. Ressel was the Project Design Engineer who worked with the community and a design consultant to develop the design for the \$38 million bridge. The project received numerous awards and has been embraced by the community. Readers of *City Newspaper* named the bridge as the "best use of public funds" two years in a row.

As a squad leader with the New York State Department of Transportation, Ressel is responsible for the supervision of a Highway Design Squad including designers and technicians. A graduate of the University of Buffalo, he earned his Professional Engineers License in 1989.

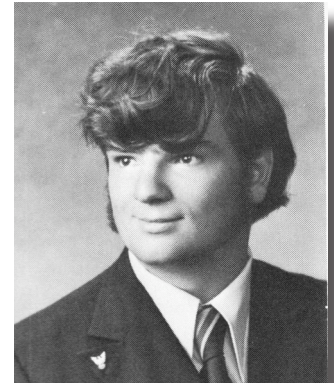
A member of the New York State Association of Transportation Engineers, Howard also serves as a volunteer with the National Cooperative Highway Research Program. In this capacity, he works alongside engineering professionals nationwide who are devoted to solving transportation problems.

Howard is involved with the Jewish Community Center of Greater Rochester, where he spent six years serving as a member of the board of directors, as well as Temple Beth El of Rochester, and the 19th Ward Community Association. He also has been a Cub Scout leader. He and his wife, Amy, have three children.

Dr. Michael Zuber Class of 1972

Michael Zuber, Ph.D., who graduated from Rush-Henrietta in 1972, is director of the Rochester Psychiatric Center and an active servant throughout the community.

Dr. Zuber's volunteer resume is as impressive as it is lengthy. He has combined a passion for politics with a love for serving people. He was director of the Henrietta Youth Bureau for 12 years, served on the Henrietta Town Board for four years, and was a member of the Rush-Henrietta Board of Education for six years, serving for two years as president. He enjoys volunteering for A Meal & More Inc. soup kitchen and Bethany House in Rochester.



A former New York State Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinator, Dr. Zuber helped develop the local Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program while working as a drug prevention coordinator for the Monroe County Sheriff's Office. Dr. Zuber, an Eagle Scout who later served as the scoutmaster of Troop 128 in Henrietta, now has turned his attention to a higher calling. He is a student of deaconship at St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry in Pittsford.

The Henrietta Chamber of Commerce honored Dr. Zuber with its Citizen of the Year award in 1989, and he has continued to better his community since that time.

He and his wife, Audrey, have two children and four grandchildren. Dr. Zuber's father, Richard, nominated his son for the Hall of Fame. "I have watched him serve his community to make it better for his family and the community as a whole. Henrietta is a part of his heart and soul."

Help the Rush-Henrietta Alumni Council

Members of the Rush-Henrietta Alumni Council are interested in hearing from alumni regarding ways the council can continue to reach out to district graduates. Do you have a great idea or a trunk full of school memorabilia from the district's early days? Please feel free to contact RHAC president, Joe Bellanca, at (585) 334-5147 or cjbellanca@rochester.rr.com.

Remembering Bob Thompson '58, One of RHAC's Founders

The day before Bob Thompson's sudden death Aug. 22, 2008, he called a contact at the Rush-Henrietta Central School District to apologize that he had "run into a situation" and would be unable to write stories for this alumni newsletter as he planned. Bob, who had inoperable pancreatic cancer, died the next day.

A 1958 Rush-Henrietta graduate, Bob Thompson bled green and gold. Although he graduated 50 years ago, he kept close ties with the district, helping its development both as an employee and a volunteer. He was such a tireless advocate for Rush-Henrietta that the district, unaware of his illness, gave him its 2008 Volunteer of the Year Award just 10 days before his death. His wife, Tina, was with him for the announcement.

Bob's career as a teacher and school administrator spanned nearly 35 years. Although he retired in 1996, he continued to work for local districts on an interim basis as the need for experienced leadership arose. "Bob is a humble and hard-working individual," Superintendent Dr. Ken Graham said as he announced the Volunteer of the Year winner. "However, his generous nature and positive contributions on behalf of all Rush-Henrietta children and community are greatly appreciated and truly warrants this honorable award." In 2004, Bob was honored with the district's Distinguished Alumni Award.

Bob served as chairman of the Rush-Henrietta Task Force on School Space and the district's 60th Anniversary Celebration Committee, and was one of the founders of the Rush-Henrietta Alumni Council. He had an unsurpassed passion for Rush-Henrietta and everyone associated with it. Bob is survived by his wife, Tina; children, Rebecca '88 and Jeffrey '91; three grandchildren and his brother, Richard '62.



Above, Terry Mathews-DeSant '55, Bob Thompson '58, and Joe Bellanca '65, of the Rush-Henrietta Alumni Council, look at district memorabilia in February 2008. Below, Bob and his wife, Tina, display the district's Volunteer of the Year award he received in August 2008.



Share Your Reunion Photos!

Members of the Rush-Henrietta classes of 1962 and 1963 gathered recently to celebrate successes and reflect on their school days. Although the turnout was light, the spirit was mighty!

The Rush-Henrietta Alumni Council would like to publish photos from class reunions. If you would like to share photos or a link from your get-together, contact Joe Bellanca, president of the Rush-Henrietta Alumni Council, at cjbellanca@rochester.rr.com. We look forward to sharing some of these photos with you in future issues of this newsletter.

