



Community Newsletter

Rush-Henrietta
Rush-Henrietta Central School District

Winter 2011

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Board of Education Approves Phase III Facility Renovations Plan

The Rush-Henrietta Central School District Board of Education has voted unanimously to present the third and final phase of the district's decade-long Facility Renovations Plan for voter approval. A community vote will be held regarding the proposal on Tuesday, February 15, 2011.

The Phase III project is designed to improve the Senior High School campus. The proposal calls for the creation of additional classrooms and science labs, new physical education space – including a modern gymnasium and fitness center – and renovation of many athletic fields.

This project *will not* affect the tax rate. Consistent with Rush-Henrietta's philosophy to save money and plan ahead, the district has set aside money in reserve funds. That, in combination with available state aid, will pay for the Phase III Facility Renovations Plan. The district cannot move forward, though, unless voters say the district can spend the money on this project.

The Board of Education did not intend to hold a vote this winter, but timing is key now because rules governing state building aid for school districts will change, possibly as soon as this summer. Under current rules, the state would reimburse Rush-Henrietta for 65 percent of the \$14 million project cost. This means the district would be reimbursed for \$9.1 million, reducing the cost of the project to \$4.9 million. The state aid reimbursement would take the form of \$600,000 payments from the state to Rush-Henrietta each year for 15 years.

Finishing Our 10-Year Facilities Renovation Plan

If voters approve Phase III, Rush-Henrietta would be able to complete the work outlined in the three-part Facility Renovations Plan established a decade ago. Phase I, approved by the community in 2001, authorized the construction of the Transportation and Operations Center. Phase II, approved by the community in 2005, authorized renovations to Burger Middle School, Roth Middle School, the Senior High School parking lot, and the Parker Administration Building. All of this work has been completed.

The Phase III Facility Renovations Plan vote is scheduled to be held from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday, February 15, at the Transportation and Operations Center, 1133 Lehigh Station Road. Please watch for a brochure that will be mailed in the coming weeks and visit www.rhnet.org/phase3 to learn more. Community members also are invited to attend a community forum from 7 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, February 9, at the Transportation and Operations Center. Superintendent Dr. Ken Graham will be on hand to discuss the project with you.



News From Around the District

R-H Part of MCC Grant to Strengthen Education

A three-year federal grant has been awarded to Monroe Community College to establish an educational center that aims to strengthen the K-12 pipeline, reduce the number of students needing remediation at the post-secondary level, and improve college completion rates. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education Program, the Community Center for Teaching Excellence will be created in collaboration with three Rochester-area higher education institutions, two urban and suburban K-12 school districts, and a nonprofit consulting group. Led by MCC, the new initiative will involve the Rush-Henrietta Central School District, Rochester City School District, St. John Fisher College, State University of New York at Geneseo, State University of New York at Brockport, and the Center for Governmental Research. The result will be a collection of effective teaching strategies that can be used by the K-12 and post-secondary institutions as well as at other community sites.

Senior High Student Named Scholar Athlete of the Week

Greg Bischooping, a 12th grader at Rush-Henrietta Senior High School, was recognized as the News10NBC Scholar-Athlete of the Week in October. To read or watch the story that aired on TV, visit www.rhnet.org/gregbischooping. Greg, a member of the National Honor Society and was selected as the Boys Volleyball Scholar-Athlete each of the past three seasons. He has successfully completed four AP exams and is enrolled in five AP classes. He has been recognized for exceptional achievement in science and social studies and won the Chemistry Award in 2010. He is a member of R-H Singers and was selected as a Conference All-State oboist. Congratulations, Greg!

Football Team Helps Support Mary Cariola

The following letter from Brad Pearson, director of agency advancement from the Mary Cariola Children's Center, was received by the Rush-Henrietta Central School District September 29, 2010. Congratulations to the Rush-Henrietta football team's players and coaches on their outstanding effort. "On behalf of the students, staff and families at Mary Cariola Children's Center (MCCC), we thank you for contributing and participating in the walk. Your football team raised \$1,550 for the children at MCCC! Your football players serenaded us with Motown tunes and incredible enthusiasm. It is clear that under your leadership you make sure that your student athletes understand the importance of civic duty. Please enjoy the attached pictures and thank you for again for your support."

Student Artwork Recognized, Displayed in New York City

Diana Au, Billie Baron, and Michael Maltese – all members of the Class of 2011 – had their artwork displayed at the New York State School Boards Association Conference in New York City this fall. The exhibit was cosponsored by the New York

State Art Teachers Association and was "intended to highlight achievement in visual arts across the state. The work on display clearly demonstrates a high level of student ability on every grade level, in a spectacular range of mediums, techniques, and genres." The seniors and their families were invited to a special viewing of the exhibit scheduled for late October and were presented with certificates of participation to commemorate this honor. If you see these students, please congratulate them on this special recognition!

Rush-Henrietta Teacher Learns in Africa

Kelsey Turner, a third grade teacher at Winslow Elementary School, spent time this past summer traveling with other teachers from across the United States to Ethiopia as part of the Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad Program, which is designed to teach educators about the Ethiopian culture and



Kelsey Turner, a teacher from Winslow Elementary School, spent part of her summer learning in Ethiopia.

school system. "I loved the idea of working with teachers from across the United States and traveling together," Turner says. "I teach a unit on Africa. I thought it was a great opportunity to learn about it myself firsthand." To learn more about Turner's trip and how she is sharing what she learned, visit www.rhnet.org/kelseyturner to read a story that appeared in the *Henrietta Post*.

District Planning First Alumni Art Show

The Rush-Henrietta Art Department is planning its first alumni show with an opening in February 2011. This is an exciting initiative that the district believes will serve the need for artists to exhibit their work in a supportive environment, for future artists to see and understand the call of the creative spirit, and for the community to see the spectacular results of rich and meaningful art education experiences. The alumni art show will be held in the Dee Strickland Conference Room at the Ninth Grade Academy. This school, also known as the Carlton O. Webster Building, is located at 2000 Lehigh Station Road, Henrietta. We think it might be advisable for our first effort to be relatively small to keep it manageable, and expect to accept the first 25 artists who apply and meet the show criteria. Once we have been through this process the first time, we want to send out an open call to all Rush-Henrietta alumni and allow the show to grow. To learn more or express an interest in participating, visit www.rhalumniart.com today!

Edward A. Lincoln Named Volunteer of the Year

Edward A. Lincoln, former president of the Board of Education, received the district's Volunteer of the Year Award in October. Lincoln, who retired from the board in June 2010, is a longtime volunteer on behalf of the Rush-Henrietta community and its students. His volunteer work started when his children were in elementary school and continued during their middle and high school years. His involvement included attending PTA meetings, participating on school committees, and being at sporting events in which his girls took part. Ed served as a member of the Board of Education from 2002 to 2010. He has been an active member of the Sports Booster Club, District Parent

Advisory Council, Board of Education Policy Committee, and the Monroe County School Boards Association. He was instrumental in making sure all board members knew the importance of leadership development. In 2010, the entire Board of Education was presented with the New York State School Boards Team Recognition Award for exemplary participation in leadership development. "I think you will agree, based on his volunteer work with the school and in the community," says Superintendent Dr. Ken Graham, "that Ed deserves this honor. His generous nature and positive contributions on behalf of all Rush-Henrietta children and community are greatly appreciated."



Edward A. Lincoln (left), 2010 Volunteer of the Year, is congratulated by Superintendent Dr. Ken Graham.

Author-Illustrator Harry Bliss Returns to Rush-Henrietta

In November, students at Sherman and Winslow elementary schools had the opportunity to meet Harry Bliss, a celebrated author-illustrator. Bliss, who attended Winslow as a child, appeared as part of an author visit intended to educate and inspire children in grades K-5.

Bliss, who has illustrated *New York Times*' bestsellers such as "A Fine, Fine School" and "Diary of a Worm," read his graphic novel, "Luke on the Loose" to several groups of students. He then played a game in which several children were invited to scribble on a piece of paper. Mr. Bliss proceeded to use his creative talent to make a drawing out of it. He also held a question-and-answer session with students. "His advice was don't be afraid to make mistakes because you can learn from your mistakes and make your drawing or writing better," says Mary Mullin, a teacher at Winslow Elementary School.

Bliss is also a cartoonist and cover artist for *The*

New Yorker magazine. He studied painting at The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and illustration at The University of the Arts (BFA) and Syracuse University (MA). He lives in Vermont.



Justin Dey and Dominic Miller, kindergarten students, react as they watch author-illustrator, Harry Bliss, turn a scribble into a picture.



Rush-Henrietta Alumni Council Inductees

Four Rush-Henrietta graduates were inducted into the Alumni Council Hall of Fame in October. Please join us in congratulating Sean Costello '95, Bill Flynn '76, Jeffrey Gates '82, and Tammy Van Dame '82 on their accomplishments.

Sean Costello, Class of 1995

Sean Costello, a member of the Rush-Henrietta Class of 1995, is an educator who uses his personal experience as an organ transplant recipient to help others. Mr. Costello is an instructional coach at East Irondequoit Middle School. The fact that he's teaching and inspiring others at all is a credit to his perseverance.

In 1991, Mr. Costello was involved in a car accident that left his kidneys badly damaged. For seven years, he received hemodialysis treatments, several times having to postpone his college studies because of illness. In 2000, he received a kidney transplant, but his journey was far from finished. The following year, an infection left Mr. Costello in a coma for two weeks. Then, in 2004, he lost both hip joints as a result of the anti-rejection transplant drugs he must take. After having both of his hips replaced, he returned to work.

Despite his challenges, Mr. Costello continued to pursue athletic endeavors and inspire others. In 2002 and 2004, he represented New York in the United States Transplant Games in Orlando and Minneapolis, respectively. Mr. Costello also has raised awareness and money to support others who need transplants. From 2006 to 2009, he co-organized the East Irondequoit Middle School Kidney Walk. Between 2008 and 2010, he served as co-chair of his school's student-staff basketball game to benefit the National Kidney Foundation. To honor his efforts, Mr. Costello received the National Kidney Foundation Award for Volunteer Service. Outside of the classroom, Mr. Costello maintains a deep interest in athletics. He has spent many years as a junior varsity basketball coach and varsity softball coach. In 2002, he was named Monroe County Division III Softball Coach of the Year.

He and his wife, Jennifer, have one daughter and are expecting a second child this year. We are pleased to welcome Sean Costello into the Alumni Council Hall of Fame.

Bill Flynn Class of 1976

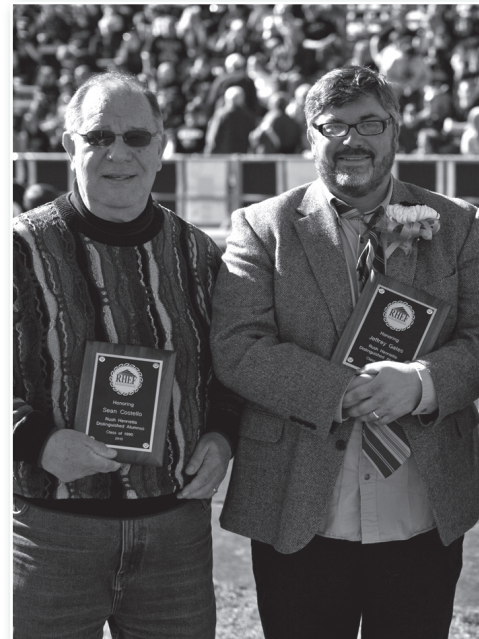
Bill Flynn, a 1976 Rush-Henrietta graduate, has been a member of the media for 35 years in local radio. Mr. Flynn began his radio career in 1975 with Rush-Henrietta's WRHR-FM, followed by Rochester's WSAY, WRTK, WXXI, and

WHAM. He has created more than 1,300 short radio features, and served as an Associated Press national correspondent from 1987 to 2002.

In 2001, Mr. Flynn moved to 1180 WHAM, where he anchors the overnight news. In 2003, he produced a documentary titled, "When We Saved the Amerks." The piece, which features the 1972-73 Rochester Americans hockey team, was accepted into the Hockey Hall of Fame. Another documentary, "Sounds of Silver," about Rochester baseball's Silver Stadium, was accepted into the library at the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. Mr. Flynn's work as a writer and reporter has earned him impressive awards, and he continues to gain recognition for his efforts. He has four Edward R. Murrow Awards, 11 New York State Associated Press awards, and an award from the New York State Broadcaster's Association to his credit. In 2010, he was honored with induction into Rochester's Frontier Field Walk of Fame.

An accomplished local sports commentator and sports memorabilia collector, Mr. Flynn has maintained a presence on the Rochester sports scene, reporting on the U.S. Open and Ryder Cup tournaments, as well as the LPGA tour. Some of his most prized sports memorabilia, such as the "Reserved for Working Press" sign at the former Holleder Memorial Stadium in Rochester, reflect his dual passion for media and sports.

Mr. Flynn also serves as webmaster for the amerksboosterclub.com website, contributing and maintaining historical materials, and operates the scoreboard and keeps statistics for the Rochester RazorSharks basketball team. He and his wife, Cathy, have two children and live in Henrietta.



The Alumni Council Hall of Fame honors Sean Costello (represented by his father), Jeffrey Gates '82

Inducts Four Graduates into Hall of Fame

Jeffrey Gates Class of 1982

Jeffrey Gates, a member of the Rush-Henrietta Class of 1982, was not satisfied until his desire to expand community theater programs in his adopted hometown was fulfilled.



Inducted, from left to right, Sean Costello '95, Tammy Van Dame '82, and Bill Flynn '76.

Mr. Gates, who moved to London, Ohio, in 1995, always has demonstrated a passion for the theatre, starting with his days on the Sperry stage. He was pleased to find that a community theater program existed in London, but identified several ways it could be improved. Mr. Gates believed the program could be expanded to the benefit of everyone who lived within the borders of his county, and that such a program should afford children with opportunities to become involved with their families.

His ideas weren't embraced at first, but Mr. Gates persisted, aligning himself with enthusiastic people who shared his vision for expanded theater programs for all ages. With their help, he founded the Madison County Arts Council in 1997, where he has directed and produced county-wide theatrical productions and written original scripts for musical revues. Mr. Gates served as the organization's founding president and remains active on and off the theatrical stage.

To demonstrate the Arts Council's commitment to youth, the council's first program in 1997 was the Young Artist Showcase, an opportunity for instrumental and vocal students to perform in a professional format. As proof of its popularity within the community, the fourteenth consecutive installment of the Young Artist Showcase was held in 2010. He is also lead singer for the CD-producing barbershop quartet, The Music Men of London.

Mr. Gates, who works for the Madison County Board of Developmental Disabilities, is also an accomplished

journalist. While writing for *The Madison Press*, he has won 10 writing awards from the Associated Press Society of Ohio. He credits Rush-Henrietta teachers, Paul Cimicata, Richard Guido, and Bob Sagan, with helping him achieve in music, journalism, and theatre to such a high level. Mr. Gates and his wife, Maggie, have two sons, Aaron and Reid.

Tammy Van Dame Class of 1982

Tammy Van Dame, a 1982 Rush-Henrietta graduate, is Director of Corporate Communication for Naval Surface Warfare Center Dam Neck in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Ms. Van Dame served 10 years in the U.S. Air Force in public affairs positions throughout Europe and the United States, and served during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm in support of the 1st Fighter Wing's efforts. She received multiple awards and recognitions, including the U.S. Department of Defense's highest journalism honor, the Thomas Jefferson Award.

After leaving military service in 1994, Ms. Van Dame became a spokesperson for the Virginia State Police. She was responsible for overseeing media relations and public information for southeastern Virginia. In 2000, Ms. Van Dame was selected to join a team that developed interagency doctrine. This led to her accepting an exercise planner position with U.S. Joint Forces Command working at the Joint Warfighting Center's World News Network. Ms. Van Dame provided simulated media broadcasts to all U.S. combatant commands worldwide, including mission rehearsal exercises for the Salt Lake City and Athens Olympics and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2003, Ms. Van Dame became part of the U.S. State Department's International Information Speaker's Program and has made several trips to Kosovo. There, in support of public diplomacy efforts, she taught media relations and strategic communication to senior leaders from Kosovo and the United Nations. She continues to bring this program to other governments worldwide and has received ambassador-level honors for her volunteer efforts.

Ms. Van Dame also is serving as the volunteer Outreach and Marketing Coordinator for the MODSIM World 2010 Conference and Expo, which is the premier international conference for modeling and simulation communities of practice. MODSIM World also promotes STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education for middle and high school students to keep the United States focused on maintaining a competitive edge.



Burger Middle School Hosts State Education Department

Dr. John King Jr., Deputy Commissioner for the State Education Department, and Ken Slentz, Associate Commissioner for District Services, visited Burger Middle School in October. While traveling to meet with area superintendents, they toured the school for 90 minutes. We shared with them the great progress we've made in the school and district during the past seven years, and explained how these gains have been made.

We shared with Dr. King our student demographics and some of the challenges we face as a school district. We also explained our strategy for continuous improvement: Academic Intervention Services release time, common assessments, differentiated instruction, instructional coaches, progress-monitoring using literacy and numeracy profiles, standards-based education and well-defined curriculum maps, teacher mentoring, and teaming and teacher collaboration.

Dr. King reacted positively to his experience at Burger Middle School. After visiting several classrooms, in which he observed differentiation, coaches in action, and other strategies listed above, he shared some of his observations with us. Among his comments: "It's clear that you are trying to do the things we're trying to do statewide ... That was all very encouraging to see. The class size and level of adult support is impressive..."

Many Burger staff members were involved in making this special visit from the state a success. Our thanks to Greg Lane, principal; Anne Dakin, secretary; Tom Demersman, custodian; Karen Wheeler, custodian;



State officials observed differentiated learning at Burger Middle School during a recent visit to the school district.

Ross Lovato, cafeteria manager; Mike Sweeney, assistant principal; Kelly Ellingham, assistant principal; Chris White, earth science teacher; Michelle Curtain, science coach; Crystal Silsby, math teacher; Donna Plain, math coach; Sue Blue, social studies teacher; Linda Lathan, ELA teacher; Chris McDonald, health teacher; Nancy Yochum, reading teacher; and Elizabeth Thomas, ESL teacher.

Representing their community with pride, the students demonstrated excellent behavior in their classrooms and in the hallways during the deputy commissioner's visit. Everyone at Burger Middle School gave us a great sense of pride during this special visit.



R-H Information is Only a Click Away!

Visit the district's redesigned website for comprehensive information about Rush-Henrietta schools. Also, consider subscribing to one of the district's latest services, E-News, which provides brief e-mail notifications, announcements, and reminders about important meetings, activities, and issues. Visit www.rhnet.org today!



Football Team Continues Rush-Henrietta Tradition of Excellence On and Off Field

Following in the footsteps of many other Rush-Henrietta athletic squads, the varsity football team has been named a Scholar Athlete Team by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association.

For any team to be honored, it must meet a state athletic association requirement that a certain number



The Rush-Henrietta varsity football team achieved high levels of success on the field and in the classroom.

of athletes hold a grade point average at or above 90 percent. The number of students varies based on the size of a typical roster for that particular sport. For example, football, soccer, and track must have at least 12 students who meet this qualification, and teams with potentially smaller rosters, such as basketball, bowling, and volleyball, need fewer to earn the same designation.

Rush-Henrietta enjoyed a spectacular fall sports season, both on and off the field. All but one of our varsity teams earned the Scholar Athlete Team honor. The only team that didn't make it fell short by 0.3 percent. Congratulations to the Royal Comet students who play football, girls soccer, girls gymnastics, girls swimming, girls tennis, boys and girls volleyball, and boys and girls cross country for their outstanding work.

The varsity football team, of course, recently completed an undefeated season by winning the state championship with a thrilling victory against Troy at the Carrier Dome. Their accomplishments on and off the field bring a great sense of pride to the Rush-Henrietta Central School District. Congratulations!

Students Represent R-H at Area All-State Concerts

Congratulations to the 15 Senior High School students selected to represent Rush-Henrietta at the New York State School Music Association Senior High School Area All-State concerts in November! They are:

- Leanne Averill, Leah Mould, Amanda Nicholas, and Brandon Yates, representing the Senior High School Chorus
- Yvonee Andreu, Sara DeLooze, Zachary Lucero, Marc Malsegna, Shane Saxton, and Emilie Scardilla, representing the Senior High School Orchestra
- Zanah Francis, Victoria Jones, Zachary Lebens-Higgins, Valanti Marou, and Patrick Shenal, representing the Senior High School Band

Students are selected for this event from hundreds of area musicians, based on their scores from state solo festivals in the spring. We are proud to have had so many students participating in this festival!

Rush-Henrietta
Rush-Henrietta Central School District

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Save the Date!

**Phase III Facility Renovations Vote
to Improve the Senior High School Campus**

Tuesday, February 15, 2011

6 a.m to 9 p.m.

**Transportation and Operations Center
1133 Lehigh Station Road**

**For more information about the Phase III Facility Renovations Plan
proposal, please see the cover of this newsletter and
visit the district website at www.rhnet.org/phase3.**