



Learning Valuable Life Lessons 3

Unveiling Artistic Talents 3

District Commencement Exercises 2

inside this issue...

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The Official Newsletter of the Three Village School District

the Reporter



Three Village Central School District
200 Nicolls Road
Stony Brook, NY 11790

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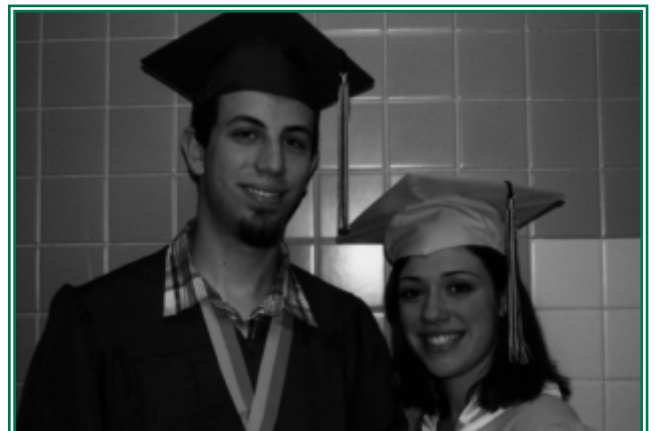
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DISTRICT HONORS ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF ALUMNI

Recognizing the wide variety of success achieved by alumni, students at Ward Melville High School started a new tradition of honoring former students who embody the characteristics the school district and community value most.

Ward Melville High School's First Annual Alumni Wall of Recognition Induction Ceremony recognized four inspiring individuals who have earned postgraduate acclaim in their careers and lives on June 18. Jennifer Parkinson, Class of 1995; Brooke Ellison, Class of 1996; and Dr. George Baldo, Class of 1970, all returned with families and invited guests to their alma mater to celebrate their induction. The fourth inductee, Frances Conroy Class of 1970 was unable to attend the ceremony. Her sister, Helen DelGuercio, accepted the award on her behalf. Plaques inscribed with the inductees' accomplishments and recent photographs were unveiled in the main entranceway of the school.

In addition to the Wall of Recognition, the students also began a tradition of honoring alumni who have lost their lives in service to the community or nation. On June 18 Ward Melville honored the lives of Frank J. Bonomo, Class of 1977; Thomas Dennis, Class of 1976; and William Stone, Class of 1992, with a Tree of Remembrance. The names of these three individuals were inscribed beside a beautiful mural created by Ward Melville student artist Lilia Royanova, and hung in the main entranceway opposite the Wall of Recognition.

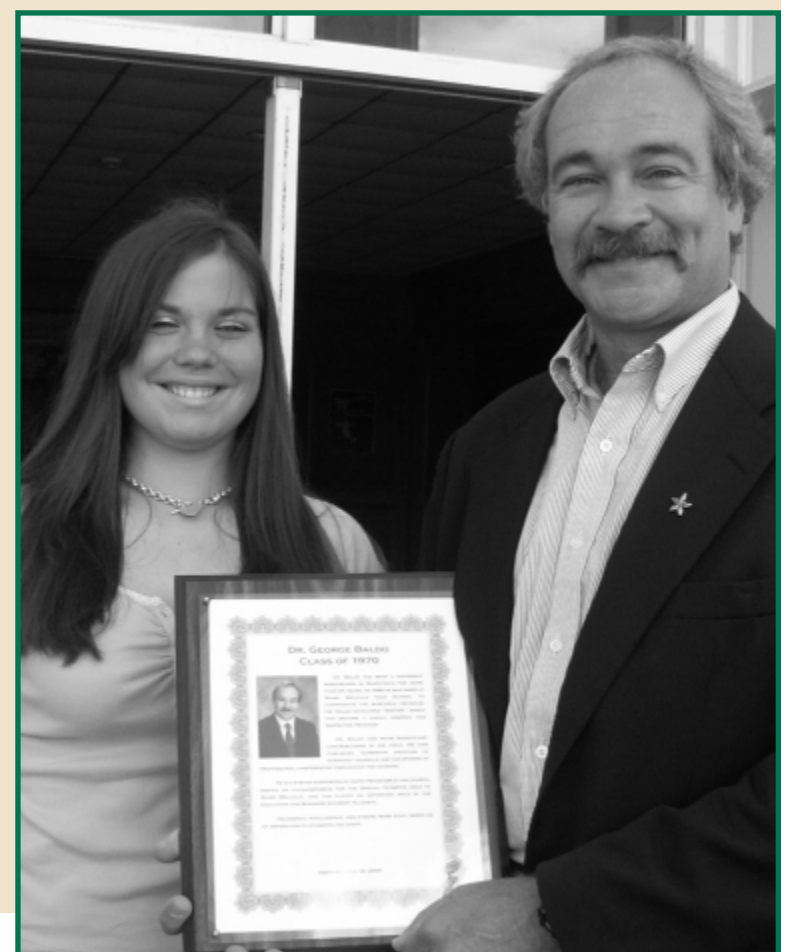
For months Student Government representatives Tricia Candela, Jenna Rothstein, Allison Caiati, Kelsey Domino, and Megan Murphy worked hand-in-hand with Principal Dr. Leon

Beckerman in their student government class to plan for the creation of this display. "We hope that the wall will serve as a reflection of what our alumni have accomplished and will inspire current students to pursue their dreams," stated Allison Caiati. "There have been many talented people who have gone through our district and we believed they should be acknowledged and rewarded for their accomplishments," added Jenna Rothstein.



"We hope that the wall will serve as a reflection of what our alumni have accomplished and will inspire current students to pursue their dreams."

***- Allison Caiati,
Ward Melville Student
Government Representative***





EVERY ENDING BRINGS A NEW BEGINNING

Class of 2005 Begins New Life Chapter

The air was filled with a vast array of emotions as the 594 graduates in the Ward Melville High School Class of 2005 emerged from the school on June 26 to take the first step in the next chapter of their lives. Draped in Ward Melville's colors, the graduates marched to the sound of "Pomp and Circumstance" past proud parents, friends, administrators, and the Board of Education to take their prominent seats on bleachers, which blanketed the school's front lawn. "Commencement means beginning...and today marks a new beginning for each one of you in the graduating Class of 2005," stated Board of Education President William F. Connors, Jr. Reflecting on the class' makeup, Principal Leon Beckerman stated, "This year's class contains artists, writers, actors, singers, dancers, mathematicians, musicians, scientists, business entrepreneurs, and students who have completed

programs in such specialties as cosmetology, aviation, and auto technology. As you can see we have a very diverse group of graduates."

Having demonstrated their commitment to academic excellence and persevered over every obstacle and challenge placed before them, many of the graduates will now move on to pursue a degree in higher education from some of the top institutions of higher learning in the nation. The students listened attentively as the class Valedictorian Shira Mitchell and Co-Salutatorians Aditi Ramakrishnan and Neal Wadhwa addressed the commencement attendees. "Whatever path you choose, choose it with dedication and commitment," stated Neal, who will be attending Harvard University in the fall. "You are all such a diverse group of leaders...remember you don't have to be the best or at the top to survive, you just need compassion and dedication," added Aditi, who will start Yale University this fall.

The Class of 2005 paid a final tribute to the Ward Melville community by donating \$1,300 to an organization that provides underprivileged children with school supplies.

"All you have to do is be true to yourself," stated Superintendent of Schools Frank J. Carasiti. "Live the story no one else can live, the story of your life." Following the presentation of the diplomas and the official certification of the Class of 2005, graduation caps flew high into the summer air and the newly named graduates left the school for the last time, feeling prepared for life's next journey.

Class of 2005 At A Glance

- Of the 594 graduates, 74% will be attending 4-year colleges, 24% will be attending 2-year colleges, 1% will be joining the military, and 1% will be entering the work force in the fall
- An outstanding 91% of the graduates earned a Regents diploma
- Out of the Class of 2005, 20% of the graduates will be attending Tier I schools and 9% will be attending Ivy League schools
- As a whole, the graduates have received more than \$1.1 million in scholarships from colleges and universities and \$52,000 was awarded in local scholarships



Moving up to Begin A New Chapter

Energy and excitement filled the halls of R.C. Murphy and P.J. Gelinas junior high schools as the ninth-grade classes entered the schools' gymnasiums to participate in this year's moving-up exercises. Proud families, friends, and school educators filled the bleachers to watch and honor the students during the ceremonies that marked their transition from junior high school to high school.

The moving-up ceremonies included the presentation of the moving-up certificates, awards based on academic excellence in the areas of social studies, global languages, math, and science, as well as physical education awards for personal wellness and leadership in athletics. After the ceremony, the students celebrated their achievements with a luncheon barbecue where they received their yearbooks and reminisced about their years in junior high.

"Never stop thinking young," said R.C. Murphy Principal Thomas Colletti. "Then you will continue to have a thirst for learning and never tire of discovering new things. I am so proud of each of you."

"You have risen to every occasion, overcome every challenge that was set before you,

and exceeded everyone's expectations," stated P.J. Gelinas Principal Gustave Hueber. "Always remember that it is the journey that is the reward."



Moving-Up & On To New Adventures

Standing tall and smiling brightly, sixth-grade students throughout the district proudly entered auditoriums filled with parents, administrators, and faculty to participate in an event seven years in the making -- their sixth-grade moving-up ceremonies. School administrators, recognizing and applauding this year's sixth graders on their many accomplishments and achievements throughout their time in elementary school, assured them that they were prepared to transition into junior high.

One by one students walked across the auditorium stages to receive their moving-up certificates and to say their final goodbyes to the building they have known as a second home and the teachers who have watched them grow.

"This class has truly touched me with their kindness, intelligence, compassion, and community service mindedness," stated Arrowhead Principal Marissa Redden. Addressing the students, Setauket Principal Paula Bienia added, "Remember to always believe in yourself, because you can do anything you set your mind to, as long as you are willing to work hard and never give up."

ARROWHEAD FOURTH GRADERS *ADOPT A PARK*

How long does it take to clean a whole park? If the cleaners have the speed and determination of the fourth-grade students from Arrowhead Elementary School, it can be done in no time.

With the help of a Service-Learning Grant acquired by fourth-grade teacher Christina Maffia, and fully equipped with safety gloves and trash bags, the fourth-grade students in Jennifer Giarriso's, Trish Macaluso's, Kristen Theorfield's, Christina Maffia's, Paul Mueller's, and Brianna Wyllie's classes tirelessly worked to beautify Percy Raynor Park in South Setauket, a park commonly used by the students for soccer and baseball games. The grant, which permits the school to adopt a neighborhood park, will span two years and enable three different groups of fourth-grade classes to help their community with the cleanup. "This project was a wonderful experience for the students," stated Ms. Maffia. "Many of them use this park for recreational activities and this effort enables them to feel a sense of pride and ownership for something that brings them joy."

On their last visit to the park the students were met by Wayne Sills,

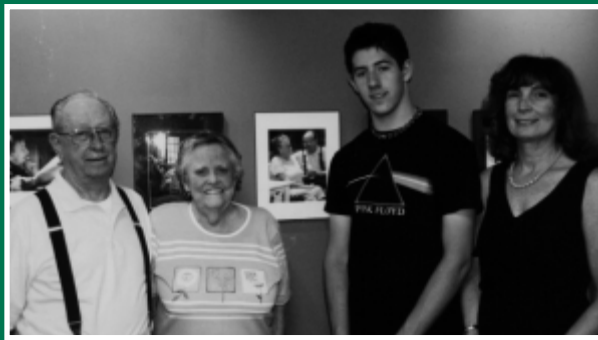
Secretary for the Brookhaven Parks Commissioner and Councilman Steven Fiore-Rosenfeld, who presented the students with honorary t-shirts donated by the town of Brookhaven and unveiled a plaque that has been erected in the park that notes that the park has been adopted by the fourth-grade students of Arrowhead Elementary School.

"The adopt-a-park program has been established for quite some time in this community," stated Mr. Sills. "Yet, each time it brings me such pleasure seeing the students take an active role in their community."



Artistic Talents Unveiled to Seniors

Photography students from Ward Melville High School joined the Jefferson's Ferry Retirement Community for an evening of intergenerational artistic expression as their Portrait Exhibit was revealed to the community's residents.



With the guidance of photography teacher Terri Demetriou and local commercial photographer Tony Lopez, the students spent countless hours visiting with residents, taking their photographs, developing film, making prints, and matting and framing their work. The students unveiled their portraits to the residents of Jefferson's Ferry in a special exhibit commending their subjects.

"It was so rewarding to make everlasting connections with members of our community," stated Ward Melville student Callie Brennan. "This experience has opened

my eyes to the challenges you face as a professional photographer. It was an extremely valuable opportunity."

"It was amazing to see the terrific talents these students possess," stated Jefferson Ferry Director of Philanthropy Debbie Hall. "Photography allows you to connect to a person on a different level. This project has allowed the students to see the residents as more than the elderly members of our community and, in turn, enabled the residents to see the students as smart, intelligent, and talented young adults."

This project continues in the Three Village School District's tradition of dedication and commitment to its community members.

Working to *Preserve Local History*

How much can we learn from history? Just ask the students in Paul Wilgenkamp's sixth-grade class at Minnesauke Elementary School. As part of a community service project aimed at preserving local history, the students joined together with historians from the Three Village Historical Society to collect and record information found on gravestones in the local Setauket Presbyterian Church cemetery. Using computer programs and data collection devices, the students diligently worked for months recording and organizing information and exploring patterns revealed through their research. Upon completion of the project the students presented their findings before community leaders, politicians, district administrators, and *Newsday*. A video diary of the project, the efforts of the children, and the items uncovered were

documented and broadcast on News 12 and the History Channel.

Most recently, the efforts and their authentic research have been acknowledged on a national level. Out of the hundreds of classes who submitted projects nationwide, Mr. Wilgenkamp's class was selected as the national winner of the History Channel-funded Save Our History Program Historic Presentation Classroom Award. Mr. Wilgenkamp, who was joined by local historian Dr. Frank Turano and two student class representatives, Virginia Ewen and Patrick O'Hea, were pleasantly surprised as their project was announced as the winner of the grand prize, \$10,000 for the school to use towards history education. The district congratulates Mr. Wilgenkamp's class for their outstanding commitment to this project and their community.



Life's Lessons

Learned Through Reading



Students at Setauket and Nassakeag elementary schools have demonstrated their compassion and desire to help others countless times throughout the year. Recently, the two schools diligently worked to raise money for two very worthy causes. Setauket students in grades K-5 embarked upon Project Heifer, a unique program that provides hungry families throughout the world with food-producing animals, while the students at Nassakeag worked with Action Against Hunger, a recognized international organization that helps fight against hunger by delivering emergency aid. These projects not only taught the students lessons about the reality of hunger and poverty occurring in various parts of the world, but also encouraged students to read. Parents, grandparents, and neighbors volunteered to donate funds to the students for each page or minute that they spent engaged in reading.

"It felt really good to see our school community come together to raise awareness of this problem and lend a helping hand," stated Nassakeag fifth grader Jake Stone. "It was so rewarding to realize that you can help people around the world, just by reading," added Setauket third grader Caroline McBrian.

It's Time For A Cure

After meeting and listening to motivational speaker Christopher Pendergast talk during a character education program about his struggle with ALS, commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease, the students at Mount Elementary School knew they wanted to do something to help fight this rapidly progressive, incapacitating, and fatal disease.

The school's students and staff rallied together to raise funds for Ride for Life, an annual event in which ALS patients ride electric wheelchairs 140 miles from New York City to Montauk Point to raise funds for a cure and create awareness. Through fundraisers conducted by the second grade, the student government, and Anthony Prinzo's fifth-grade class, the school collected and donated \$1,711.

During their 140-mile crusade, Chris and other members of the Ride for Life team made a special stop at Mount to thank the students for their generous contribution to help in the battle against ALS.

