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the Reporter

The Official Newsletter of the Three Village School District

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A Bright New Year



Frank J. Carasiti
Superintendent of Schools

Thank you for your support of the recent bond referendum. The Board of Education and administration worked tirelessly to ensure that the items included in the bond will work to address the district's much-needed facility needs and ensure that students are afforded the opportunity to continue to achieve, excel, and thrive during their educational journey. The projects included in this bond were detailed in previous editions of the district newsletter and can still be found on the district's website under the bond information tab.

With only the first few months of the school year behind us, I am proud to report that our students have already begun to build upon the tradition, vision, and pride that distinguishes the district as a premier school district on Long Island. Several of our high school scholars have been recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Program as Semifinalists and Commended students; student-athletes have continued to excel on the athletic fields; this year we boast our highest number of student-musicians invited to perform during the upcoming All-County and All-State festivals; and our young artists have let their talents soar during local and state competitions. These are all commendable accomplishments in a short amount of time, and I look forward to watching our students continue to achieve greatness.

I encourage our parents and the entire school community to stay involved in our district. I am committed, as I know the Board of Education is, to maintaining the reputation of the Three Village School District.

Thank You!

Community Supports October Bond

With a near 500 vote margin, on October 16 the Three Village school community voted in favor of the district's proposed \$72.8 million bond proposal. New York State will reimburse this bond in the form of state building aid at a rate of approximately 66%, or \$45.2 million, leaving only \$27.6 million of the project to be paid by local taxpayers over the next 20 years.

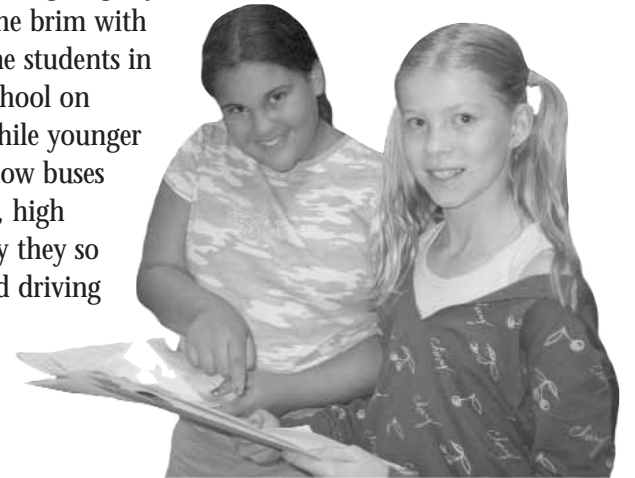
"Our schools are in dire need of infrastructural and instructional updates and repairs. Thanks to the community's support we can now work on addressing these needs and bring our facilities up to 21st century standards," stated Superintendent of Schools Frank Carasiti. "We are extremely happy with the results of the referendum and look forward to getting the projects underway."

Now that it has voter endorsement, the district will work to seek state certification on the projects. The state must review and approve all proposed capital work before the projects can commence. The district will be submitting projects for approval in phases and estimates all work will be completed by the 2011-2012 school year.

The district will keep the community informed of its progress in future editions of The Reporter.



With the sun shining brightly and backpacks filled to the brim with new school supplies, the students in the district went back to school on Wednesday, September 5. While younger students boarded familiar yellow buses traveling around the community, high school seniors took pride in the joy they so rightly owned by buckling up and driving themselves off to start their last year of high school. Looking ahead, it is sure to be a great and successful year.



Familiar Face, New Responsibilities

Starting this school year, Cheryl Pedisich, who has worked in the Three Village Central School District for the past 24 years, assumed a new role – the role of Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services. Ms. Pedisich, who until recently was the Executive Director for Pupil Personnel Services, brings a plethora of educational experience to her new role.

With a Master's degree in School Counseling and a School Administrative degree from Long Island University/C.W. Post, she has spent her educational career in Three Village serving in a number of capacities. Starting out as a guidance counselor, Ms. Pedisich quickly climbed the professional ladder to become the Department Chairperson of Guidance, Assistant Director for Pupil Personnel Services, and then, most recently, served as the Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services for the past seven years.

"In my new role I hope to continue to foster teamwork, respect, and collegiality within the school community," stated Ms. Pedisich. "I have been in the district for more than 20 years and hope I am also able to bring a historical perspective to the position. I am hopeful that my knowledge of the district and school community at large, will help to identify needs, address concerns, and build upon our existing accomplishments."

As the Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services, Ms. Pedisich is hoping to continue the district's initiatives with regard to Differentiated Instruction; implementing the performance appraisal system; addressing emergency preparedness issues; establishing standardized procedures for response to intervention; creating an electronic elementary report card; and revising and updating district policies.



District Welcomes New Business Official

This year, in addition to a new Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services, the district also welcomed a new Assistant Superintendent for Business, Jeffrey Carlson. Joining the Three Village School District from the Levittown School District, where he served as the Assistant Superintendent for Business for the past five years, Mr. Carlson comes with some new, innovative financial planning ideas for the community.

Mr. Carlson, who has worked in the field of school business administration for the past 14 years, received his Bachelor's degree from Hofstra University and Master's in Education Administration from Long Island University/C.W. Post. He is an active member of the NYS Association of School Business Officials, was a member of the Executive Committee of the Nassau Chapter, and is on the Board of Directors for the NYS Management Advocates for School Labor Affairs.

"I hope to carry on the tradition of excellence that has been the hallmark of Three Village," stated Mr. Carlson. "My goals for the year include beginning to work on getting the buildings back into great shape and to provide for the educational services for all of the students in the district in the most cost-effective manner possible."

Prior to his time as an Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Carlson also served as a school district accountant, director of business, and assistant superintendent for business and personnel.



Board Welcomes 2007 Student Representative Matt Wilkins

Matt Wilkins, a senior at Ward Melville High School, joins the Three Village Board of Education for the 2007-2008 school year as a student representative.

Matt is the current President of the high school's Student Government, on the Varsity Tennis and Swim Teams, as well as an active member of the jazz and symphonic bands, for which he was nominated to the 2007 All-County Music Festival. During his time at Ward Melville, Matt has also participated on the Cross Country and Winter Track Teams and been named a Tri-athlete. Matt is also a lifeguard and Long Island Marathon finisher.

"I am honored to have been given the opportunity to represent Ward Melville as a member of the Board of Education," stated Matt. "I plan on representing my school and the student body to the best of my ability in this capacity."



School Resource Officer Welcomed

Over the past several years, school safety has become an ever-increasing topic of importance. With national events like the tragedies that took place at Columbine High School and Virginia Tech, schools across the country have begun looking inward to develop a safety plan that is not only reactive, but also proactive. In early 2005, the Suffolk Police Commissioner developed a program to help schools do just that.

The School Resource Officer (SRO) Program was created in order to provide schools with a police officer regularly assigned to aid the district. In Three Village, that person is Officer Paul, who was the first SRO in the Sixth Precinct. Now in its second year, the program has grown tremendously to include several newly trained SROs and is being implemented throughout the county and in all schools in the Sixth Precinct.

Throughout the year, Officer Paul will be available to the district in order to help maintain a safe environment for learning, to develop relationships with teachers, students, and administrators, and offer his services when needed. In order to help strengthen his partnership with the school district, starting this fall Officer Paul was provided with an office at Ward Melville High School, where he will be assigned two days a week. Periodically during the year he will also make visits to the junior high and elementary schools to familiarize the students with the program.

"When there was a police officer in the schools that used to mean that there was a problem – this is not so in the 21st century; having a police officer in the schools is now a good thing, a resource," stated Officer Paul. "The SRO Program works to create an environment of trust and allows me to work as a liaison between the district and the police department. In case of a real emergency most individuals are directed to dial 911 – this program provides a more personal and direct line of help."

Prior to joining the SRO Program Officer Paul became an active member of the Community Oriented Police Enforcement (COPE) Unit, where he continues to work today. Officer Paul joined the force in 1990 and began working in Suffolk County in 1995.

GUIDANCE PROGRAM EXPANDS To Sixth Grade

The job of a school guidance counselor goes well beyond college and schedule planning. A guidance counselor also serves as a mentor, advisor, and a person to turn to for emotional support. For these reasons and many more, the district elected to expand its secondary guidance program to incorporate the sixth-grade level at each of the district's five elementary schools.

The new program, which is designed to address the unique needs of these developing students, will assist them as they begin the transition from elementary to junior high school. The sixth-grade guidance program will consist of regular classroom visits, as well as various small-group meetings facilitated by school counselor Joni Zeller, who has been a counselor in the district for 25 years.

Throughout their experience with the program, students will be presented with information and will participate in activities designed to strengthen their skills in areas such as study skills, organization, test taking, decision making, peer pressure, and goal setting. Students will also be given a thorough introduction to the junior high experience.

"For many students their first experience with junior high school can seem impersonal and intimidating," stated Elementary School Guidance Counselor Joni Zeller. "They encounter an unfamiliar environment, more rigorous academic demands, more independence, as well as an expectation of increased individual responsibility. Giving them this yearlong program will help them prepare to transition into their new roles next September with ease and confidence."

"For many students their first experience with junior high school can seem impersonal and intimidating...this yearlong program will help them prepare to transition."

- Elementary School Guidance Counselor Joni Zeller

Ongoing CURRICULUM

In response to changes made to mathematics at the state level, several teachers each spent more than 16 hours this summer working to revise the current program offered in the district. The focus of the project was concentrated on the current seventh-grade honors curriculum and worked to align the new "theory" course, a more in-depth course that was proposed and approved last year, with current state and district standards.

The new program, which will enable students to go into more depth with math concepts and principles, took effect this year at the seventh grade honors level and is part of a multiyear phase-in curriculum project. Over the summer, teachers used the current New York State performance

indicators base Learning to de

For the first activities based skills they will work (summer will be develop review the new

STUDENTS HELP TEACHERS SPIN THE

It's not every day that students are afforded the opportunity to watch their teacher participate on a national game show, but students in Gina Varacchi's sixth-grade class at Setauket Elementary School will be glued to the television in November to cheer her on,

along with her game partner, Math, Science, and Technology teacher Eric Gustafson. Both will spin the colorful money wheel and compete for cash and prizes on the "Best Friends" edition of *Wheel of Fortune*. Also included in the special will be Ms. Varacchi's class, recently filmed by the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) while playing the game and being interviewed about what it is like to have a teacher play on a national game show.

"We are so excited for the experience," Mr. Gustafson said. "We are practicing all the time, on the computer and with each other."

"When I got the phone call, I was so excited that I called my husband and told all the neighbors," Ms. Varacchi said. "The pressure is now on. No matter what happens, though, we will have fun."

Wheel of Fortune first debuted in 1975 and was devised by Merv Griffin. It is the longest running syndicated game show in American television history. Both teachers applied to participate on the game show earlier in the year, and competed against other "best friends" teams before being chosen a few weeks ago.

Teachers like Ms. Varacchi and Mr. Gustafson are keeping the show's popularity alive by incorporating its principles in the classroom. Mr. Gustafson has created a SmartBoard program with a wheel and puzzles, which incorporate the class math and English Language Arts curriculum. The students are paired off in teams of four students each and then utilize their knowledge of probability, mental math, spelling, phonics, literature, and letter combinations to solve the puzzles. The exercise not only encourages

cooperation, but also brings the class together.

"We take all of our training as educators to the classroom and add cooperation and fair play," Ms. Varacchi stated. "At the beginning of the year, the students didn't really know each other, but playing this

game has brought them all together. This is the best beginning of the year I've ever had."

Mr. Gustafson explained that playing *Wheel of Fortune* gets the students on task and makes learning more fun. It also helps the students learn in other ways beyond traditional book learning.

Sixth grader John Ritter, age 11, is new to the Three Village School District and said he has never known anyone on a game show. He said playing *Wheel of Fortune* makes learning more interesting. "In other schools, I've never seen this," John admitted. "It makes school really fun."

Student Anthony Gabriele, age 11, said being able to play the game at home helps to solve the puzzles at school and makes it more fun. He also thought his teachers will do well when they compete. "Mr. G knows the basics of the game. He may have a real good chance of winning," he said hopefully.



Patriot Pride Abounds

School spirit and community pride were at an all-time high as spectators filled the stands at Ward Melville High School for the start of Homecoming 2007. Administrators, parents, students, and community members were all there to cheer for the Patriots as they took on Sachem East. Sunny skies and an unusually warm October afternoon provided the perfect setting for the game.

The home team set the tone right from the start, but Sachem East provided a high level of competition. Hard work, determination, and skill put the Patriots on the

scoreboard early and kept them ahead throughout the first half, but it was in the fourth quarter that Sachem scored 20 points to give them the lead and the win.

During halftime, the band performed once again, while the color guard demonstrated their perfectly coordinated routine to a loud round of applause from the cheering crowd.

School spirit, a game well played, and community pride all contributed to making Homecoming 2007 a day to remember.



DEVELOPMENT

...d on the core curriculum for seventh grade and the Three Village Essentials for ...velop an enriching foundation for the course.
...t year of the phase-in teachers will incorporate new topics and prepare lessons and ...l on these topics, using the scope and sequence created to outline the content and ...be teaching throughout the year. The next phase will be continued curriculum ...: 2008) during which the grade-eight honors courses (algebra and algebra theory) ...ed. During the 2007-2008 school year teachers will be meeting periodically to ...v grade-seven honors curriculum and make any adjustments necessary.



Record High Music Honors

With their highest number in recent history, more than 50 talented Ward Melville High School student-musicians have been chosen to perform in the 2007 All-County Division IV Ensembles at Huntington High School on Friday, November 16. In addition, more than 20 students were selected to perform or be alternates at the 2007 NYSSMA All-State Conference in Rochester, November 29-December 2.

This honor, which is based on a student's ranking and superior adjudication rating at the annual New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) Solo Festival each spring, is extremely competitive. The Ward Melville students selected will be joining other top student-musicians from Suffolk County and New York State to perform under nationally recognized conductors in their respective groups.

"This is a wonderful honor for our students," stated Music Director Tom Jones. "I am extremely proud of the faculty and students. This is a wonderful testament to our district's music program"

Congratulations to the students and good luck during the All-County and All-State Music Festivals!



Terrific Ten

Ward Melville Seniors Announced as Semifinalists in National Scholarship Program

As a result of many years of hard work and determination, ten talented Ward Melville High School seniors were recently announced as Semifinalists in the 53rd Annual National Merit Scholarship Program. These academically talented students have an opportunity to continue in the competition for some 8,200 Merit Scholarship awards worth \$34 million, all of which will be awarded next spring. Approximately 90 percent of the Semifinalists are expected to attain Finalist standing and about half of the finalists will be selected as Merit Scholarship winners.

"I am extremely proud of these young individuals," stated Principal Tom Colletti. "They have the work ethic, fortitude, and tenacity necessary to be successful and productive members of our society. I congratulate each one of them on this accomplishment."

The 16,000 Semifinalists selected nationwide were chosen based on their 2006 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). The nationwide pool of Semifinalists, which represents less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors, includes the highest scoring entrants in each state.

The Three Village School District congratulates the following seniors who earned the designation of National Merit Scholarship Program Semifinalist:

Jonathan Adams
Herman Gudjonson
Teresa Kao
Henna Kochar
Hefei Li
Yang Li
Kalyan Ray-Mazumder
Andrew Roddin
Ethan Solomon
Ross Zhang



Budding Young Artist

The district is a breeding ground for young, talented student-artists. Recently, one of the students at W. S. Mount Elementary School had her artwork chosen as winning entries in two highly competitive art competitions. Maya Gouw, a sixth grader, was announced as a winner of Suffolk County's 'Embracing our Differences' contest, as well as the first-place winner of New York State's 'Kids Safe Online.'

As featured in *Newsday*, Maya's 'Embracing our Differences' piece featured the slogan "Together We Can Do It," and was created with colored pencils, showing the Earth surrounded by smiling children and animals. For being selected as a winner, Maya's artwork was one of 39 pieces enlarged to fill 16-foot by 120-foot panels and displayed in the Town of Huntington's Village Green in late September.

In the statewide 'Kids Safe Online' poster art contest, Maya's winning piece was placed on display at this year's Kids Safe Online Conference and VIP Reception in mid-October. Additionally, Maya was also presented with an iPod Nano donated by ClassLink. This year's contest is part of the state's larger initiative to teach parents and educators about the dangers kids face every day when accessing the Internet and to offer strategies and solutions for keeping them safe.





inside this issue...

New District AdministratorsPg. 1

District News..... Pg. 2-3

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