



# the Reporter

The Official Newsletter of the Three Village School District

www.3villagecsd.k12.ny.us



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

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**DISTRICT TAX CODE – 635**

When filing your State Income Tax form, please be certain to fill in the Three Village Central School District Tax Code (635) in the appropriate space provided. School aid will be affected if the school district or code number is incorrect or missing.

You must enter the name and code number of the public school district where you were a resident on December 31, 2006. This information applies even if you were temporarily absent, if the school your child attended was not in your school district, or if you had no children attending school.

**PESTICIDE NOTIFICATION UPDATE – 2007**

New York State Education Law, Section 409H, effective July 1, 2001, requires all public and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools to provide written notification to you regarding actual use or potential use of pesticides throughout the school year. In addition, the district is required to maintain a list of people in parental relation to children in the school buildings and any of each school's faculty or staff members who wish to receive a 48-hour prior written notification of specific pesticide applications which may occur in the district. The district must also provide notification of any pesticide applications made since the last written summary.

The district utilizes an integrated pest management program (IPM). The purpose of the IPM program is to restrict or eliminate entirely the use of pesticides in and around the district's facilities. The district's IPM program includes the use of a contracted firm, who are experts in conducting integrated pest management programs. This firm conducts monthly inspections of all district facilities and takes appropriate remedial measures to eliminate or reduce the presence of insects or other pests. If you wish to receive a notice prior to a pesticide application, you must apply by sending a postcard or brief letter to Robert Hanson, Three Village Central School District, P.O. Box 9050, E. Setauket, NY 11733-9050.



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**Frank J. Carasiti**  
Superintendent of Schools

Dear Residents,

The Board of Education is currently facing the challenge of formulating the 2007-2008 School Budget. This task

becomes more daunting every year as the Board tries to balance the educational opportunities available to our students with the obvious burden placed on the taxpayer.

Much of the budget is driven by contractual obligations and other mandated costs. Circumstances are such that during the past five years we have seen taxes increase 53.3%. Unfortunately, during this period of time our state aid has only increased 1.8%. Currently, our taxpayers contribute 74.1% toward the cost of educating our students. This is well above the norm and unfairly disproportionate.

Long Island schools and in particular Three Village are among the finest in the country. However, due to inadequate state aid we are struggling in our effort to maintain programs that are the pride of not only Three Village but also New York State. While Long Island schools educate 17% of all students in the state, our region receives less than 13% in state aid.

This also is disproportionate and unfair. Long Island's fair share could help alleviate some of our financial problems.

As yet, the state has not adopted its budget but the Governor's Proposal only increases Three Village aid by approximately \$814,000 (This same Proposal increases state aid to New York City by 48% and increases aid to Long Island by 8%).

As previously stated, the challenges are formidable as we strive to maintain educational excellence in the most difficult of economic times.

As a community member, you might want to communicate with the Governor and our legislative representatives to express your concerns.

## STUDENTS *Score Big* DURING SCIENCE COMPETITIONS

For several years, the district has been a perennial powerhouse during regional, state, and national science competitions. Academic teams from all three of the district's secondary schools recently competed against their peers from across the county to earn a spot at the state-level competition.

With many hours of practice, studying, and hard work under their belts, the Ward Melville High School, P.J. Gelinas, and R.C. Murphy Junior High Schools' Science Olympiad Teams participated in the Suffolk County Regional Science Olympiad tournament and each received marks in the top three slots. Both Ward Melville's and Gelinas' team ranked first in the county and Murphy's team placed third during the competition. With these high marks, Ward Melville's team quickly advanced to the state-level and placed third in New York State. The junior high school teams will go on to compete against the best science scholars from across New York State this April.

"Science Olympiad provides an opportunity for students to enrich their science and technology experience and expand their horizons," stated Gelinas Science Chair and team coach Gary Vorwald. "It is amazing to see how much the students can accomplish as they learn and master topics well beyond the typical science curriculum."

Additionally, for the fourth consecutive year, Ward Melville's Science Bowl team has placed first during the Regional Science Bowl at the Department of Energy's Brookhaven National Laboratory. The team, which is coached by science teacher Bob Spira, competed against 20 schools from Long Island, New York City, and Westchester during this year's competition. For their victory, the team received \$500 in gift certificates and will now go on to compete in the National Science Bowl in Washington D.C. this April.

The district congratulates all of the Science Olympiad teams, Ward Melville's Science Bowl Team, and the coaches on these commendable accomplishments!



## CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATE

**On January 30<sup>th</sup> district residents took to the polls to vote on a two-tiered bond referendum geared towards updating and renovating each of the district's eight schools and two administration facilities. Proposition 2, which was a \$7.5 million proposition that took advantage of a \$2.5 million state aid allocation, was passed by voters while proposition 1, a \$77.6 million dollar school improvement plan, was defeated.**

Recognizing that the projects included in both parts of the proposed bond are crucial to the health, safety, and educational program offered to district students, the Board of

Education and administration have been examining the options they have to address these issues.

Initially, a plan to put the original bond in its entirety up for a revote during the May budget vote was expressed. However, after some deliberation and two public meetings of the Board's Facilities Committee, this plan was considered not to be the most prudent. In a report given to the Board of Education during their March 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, the committee recommended to postpone a second bond referendum until early fall – a recommendation that was ultimately accepted by the Board. Several key factors contributed to this decision;

namely the Board's desire to reexamine the projects included in the bond and the time that would be required to diligently accomplish this task.

Over the next six months, the district will be discussing the projects included in the proposed bond referendum and will reexamine ways to potentially cut costs. Several meetings of the Board's Facilities Committee will also be conducted and all community residents are invited to attend these meetings to further be a part of the new bond's development process. The district will continue to keep residents up-to-date on the upcoming bond referendum in future issues of the district newsletter.

# New Math Curriculum Unveiled



With new graduation requirements, State mandates, and a rigorous testing schedule, the district has been reviewing and revising the mathematics curriculum currently offered to secondary students in grades 7-12.

Beginning in the 2007-2008 school year, a new math program will be implemented in schools throughout New York State, including Three Village. Math A and Math B will begin to be phased out over the next three years and replaced with three new courses, Algebra, Geometry, and Algebra II and Trigonometry.

"International studies of mathematics and science performance have shown that U.S. students do not perform as well as their peers in other countries," stated district Director of Secondary Education Elise Russo. "We intend to continue to provide a rich and solid math experience for all

our students so they are prepared for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The courses that will now be included in our district offerings have been developed with the national math standards in mind and are sure to enable our students to continue to excel."

In addition to the Regents and advanced course levels offered, the district's math department has drafted a plan for a theory sequence, which will start in the eighth grade. This sequence will provide a more challenging program for students who are especially drawn to the study of mathematics. In the upcoming months and during the summer, the district's math teachers will be meeting together to adequately plan for the new courses and attend professional development workshops.

## Mount's Math Night *Adds Up To Success*

While growing up, students often ask their teachers, parents, and friends how do the lessons learned in the classroom relate to the real world? To help answer this question, and provide students at W.S. Mount Elementary School with some insight into how mathematics relates to the workplace, the school recently hosted their annual math curriculum night. Students in grades K-6 attended this year's program, themed "How Math Is Part of Daily Life".

Throughout the evening program, students and parents visited informational booths set up in the school's cafeteria to learn from a variety of presenters how math is used in their profession. Topics included baking, music, reading, and map skills. Additionally, students were able to participate in some math games at a computer station, open a savings account with Chase Bank, and enjoy a math-related performance.



## A Program Inspired

BY HARRIET TUBMAN

In collaboration with the Ward Melville Heritage Organization and in celebration of Black History Month, the fifth-grade students at Minnesauke Elementary School recently participated in a hands-on, interactive videoconference called "Escape to the Promised Land."

In preparation for the videoconference, the students studied the Underground Railroad, created an escape route for the slaves to reach the promised land of Canada, researched individuals important to the success of elimination of slavery, and examined the role quilting played in how the slaves communicated with each other.

During the program, which was coordinated by art teacher Christine Fieldman, the students presented their escape routes and interacted with an instructor who was portraying a 'conductor' on the Underground Railroad, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the divide that existed in our country over the issue of slavery, as well as the function of the railroad.

As a follow-up to the program, the students will be creating quilts in their art classes, similar to the ones used during the time of the Underground Railroad to warn visitors of what was to come.



## STUDENTS SOAR TO TOP DURING STOCK MARKET GAME



The appropriate time to buy or sell, the meaning of a dividend and understanding a 52-week high and low are just a sampling of the things that the students in Carol Vonnies' Computer and Career Essentials class at R.C. Murphy Junior High School learned during their participation in the nationally recognized Stock Market Game. The contest, which is conducted through an online simulation, enables students to work in teams and use a virtual cash amount to invest in stocks and track their investments.

With an impressive total of \$23,312.37, ninth graders Sharon Clause, Nicole Wussing, and Shantashia Tomasicchio from Ms. Vonnies' third-period class took first place in the Long Island region, beating out 1,436 other schools in the area. Ms. Vonnies, with the assistance of teaching aide Felicia Voigt, successfully guided the winning team to their victory. Additional praise goes to Kerrin West-Shank and her fourth period class for their work in placing 12th, with an earning of \$13,019.65.

## Guest Scientists Week Celebrated at Arrowhead

Do you know the main difference between vinegar and dishwasher detergent? Well, from a scientific standpoint, one is an acid and one is a base. In celebration of the school's fifth annual Guest Scientist Week, Arrowhead Elementary School students explored the world of science with special guest instructors.

Throughout the week the students, under the guidance of their instructor, classroom teacher, Math, Science, and Technology Coordinator Chris Maffia, and tutor Sheila Sharpe, the students conducted a variety of hands-on experiments. The experiments, each of which was in line with the grade level, district, and state curriculum, enabled the students to explore a variety of topics, including the phases of the moon, electricity, Newton's Law of Motion, and the differences between acids and bases.

"Throughout this week, students were able to conduct educational experiments in the hopes of learning that science is not only found in a classroom, but that it is also all around us," stated Ms. Maffia. "Students studied how everyday substances, materials, and actions all have a part in the world of science.



It was also great for them to learn about these topics from our volunteers because each of them brought in their own expertise and tied it into a scientific concept."

Special thanks go to Arrowhead's guest scientists, physical education teacher Mike Wachholder, music teacher Joanne Raffaele, art teacher Phyllis Pastore, math paraprofessional Ellen Enco, speech teacher Angela Campo, reading teachers Nancy Maaiki, Maggie Capredja, Kristen Hahn, Collette Duffy, and Deputy Superintendent Dr. Lorna Lewis.

## What is Your Dream?

In celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, the students at P.J. Gelinis Junior High School conducted a variety of events centered on one of Dr. King's dreams – the acceptance of the world's diversity.

In the morning, as a kickoff to the day's program, the seventh grade gathered in the school's auditorium for the ninth annual "I Have a Dream" oratory contest.

Throughout the program, 16 brave seventh-grade students from Louis Laird's social studies class took to the stage to deliver speeches, structured after Dr. King's famous speech, expressing what their dream was. Topics included living in a world full of peace, having a woman president, becoming a professional athlete, and finding a cure for Type 1 diabetes. While each speech was awarding-winning in its own regard, the panel of judges selected Marshall Lifton (first), Andrew Grella (second), and Jayne Imperato (third) as this year's winners.

In addition to the oratory contest, the school's select singing group, The Vocal Vikings, visited the Bethel Church, many teachers conducted lessons centered on the theme of tolerance, and the ESL students sponsored the "passports to the world" event, which allowed them to teach their peers about their native countries and share international foods.

# WALKING TO A Healthier Tomorrow

Students at Setauket Elementary School have recently been getting a jump-start to the school day by arriving at the building early to participate in a unique morning exercise routine. The Setauket Health Walk is a program that was introduced in the school last year and has grown in tremendous popularity over the past several months.

The program, which is conducted on rotating Tuesdays and Thursdays, is coordinated by school Assistant Principal Greg Marino and physical education and health teachers Matt Brand, Mike Still, and Heather Leiewicz as a fun way to educate students about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. Each week, the program continues to grow and on average draws more than 20 students each session.

"Wellness is such an important topic right now," stated Mr. Marino. "We felt we wanted to show our students how even something as simple as walking a couple of laps around the school can bring good health benefits."

In order to help track their progress, the students "log" the amount they walk in an activity log. Approximately two laps around the building is a mile and during the sessions each student is able to walk an average of five laps, or two and a half miles.

Additionally, students are encouraged to follow the Setauket Fitness Fun Calendar, which earmarks a different activity to complete each day. To help demonstrate to the students just how far their laps and activity exercises have taken them, the school created a map of the United States. In just a few short weeks, the students have already walked their way to California.



## WELLNESS POLICY

Due to the rise in child and adolescent obesity and in adherence to the New York State mandate, the district adopted a comprehensive Wellness Policy in June 2006 that includes stricter nutritional guidelines and promotes additional opportunities for physical activity among its students. The regulations in this policy will be gradually phased into the district's current nutritional offerings over the next several years.

"The Wellness Policy helps our students improve their personal health and fitness," stated Director of Child Nutrition Lois Chait. "Our classroom teachers will encourage students to engage in healthy behaviors and improve their knowledge of how to practice these behaviors within the school environment."

The policy follows label and nutritional regulations established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and is consistent with U.S. Dietary Guidelines for all foods and beverages served or available for purchase during school breakfast and lunch periods. Foods of minimal nutritional value will be prohibited from the beginning of the school day until the end of the last scheduled meal period. Sweetened soda water, gum and candy, candy-coated popcorn, and water ices, which do not contain fruit or fruit juices, will no longer be available for purchase by students.

The new wellness policy also prohibits students from selling food as a fundraiser during the school day. Furthermore, while cultural foods will be allowed as part of a celebration of ethnic diversity, snacks such as donuts and cupcakes may no longer be distributed throughout the classroom during holidays, birthdays, or seasonal celebrations.

## Keeping Hearts Healthy

For the past several years, students at Nassakeag Elementary have partnered with the American Heart Association to help fight heart disease. Recently, the school's students participated in the Annual Jump Rope For Heart Program in conjunction with their physical education classes. As part of the program, students learned about the importance of having a healthy heart, giving back to the community, and displayed their jump-roping skills.

The students helped plan and organize the event by securing donations from parents and neighbors. This year, the students at Nassakeag in grades three through six helped raise more than \$5,550 for the American Heart Association, \$1,160 of which was raised by sixth grader Christine O'Hara.



## The Title Stays At Ward Melville!



The Ward Melville High School Girls Varsity Fencing Team has won their fifth consecutive Long Island Fencing Championship. What's even more impressive is the fact that this competition has only been around for the past five years!

The team, which has been a part of the district's athletic offerings for the past eight years, is coached by Jennifer Salmon and comprised of 36 students in grades 7-12. In addition to their record of Long Island Championships, the team has gone on to have six undefeated seasons, as well as six league and county championships, and historically has sent graduates to some of the nation's top colleges, including Columbia, Princeton, Harvard, and Cornell.

"I am so extremely proud of these students," stated coach Salmon. "Many of these girls have been on the team since seventh grade and are now part of the legacy of Ward Melville Fencing. They have brought considerable pride to the district and distinguished the school as having a premier program."

Next year will be a rebuilding year for Ward Melville Girls Fencing, as 10 seniors, many of whom are the team's starters, will be graduating but Coach Salmon and the rest of the team look forward to continuing to field a strong team.

## Gala Event Features DISTRICT STUDENTS

Since last September, under the direction of high school music teachers Linda Contino and Phil Preddice, the talented students in Ward Melville High School's choirs and chamber orchestra have been diligently rehearsing in preparation for a special spring concert unlike any other.

This spring, during a formal Gala Concert at the Tilles Center on the campus of Long Island University at C.W. Post, more than 250 student-musicians from Ward Melville High School and Cold Spring Harbor High School will join together to showcase their outstanding musical talents and perform Mozart's "Requiem" under the direction of guest conductor Lawrence Doebler of Ithaca College. In addition to the students' show-stopping number,



Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra concertmaster Michael Ludwig will dazzle the audience with his legendary talents.

Congratulations to the students selected to be a part of this special and honorable event to remember.