



# hilltopper

Tourtellotte Memorial High School Alumni Association Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 2

November 2008

## IT'S OFFICIAL !!

### Alumni Banquet Scheduled for Saturday, June 20, 2009 at the Speedway Restaurant.

Through the hard work of Eileen Deary '77 and other alumni, we have secured a date for our annual alumni banquet. The banquet, being held on June 20, 2009, 6:30–11:00 PM at the Thompson Speedway, Thompson, CT, is the first of its kind in many years. The banquet is open to all TMHS graduates and their guests. Look for more information in our December newsletter and on our website found at [alumniassociation@thompson.ctschool.net](mailto:alumniassociation@thompson.ctschool.net)

### TOURTELLOTTE ROLL OF HONOR Alumni Who Served During WWII

BY: Staff Writer

Anyone who has walked the halls of the 1909 Tourtellotte building has walked past the large glass display located in the foyer. Many who pass the large display listing 161 names of Tourtellotte alumni take little notice and the significance of the display, sadly, is lost.

The years between 1939 and 1945 were a tumultuous time for the students of Tourtellotte and

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### Memorable school events: Harmony Unveiled



*Tourtellotte art teacher, Guy Daigle and his masterpiece "Harmony" at the statue unveiling ceremony held October 15, 2008. Harmony is permanently located at the entrance to the new TMHS auditorium.*

### EXTRAORDINARY GIFT GIVEN TO TOWN

BY: Staff Writer

On the evening of October 15, 2008, the Town of Thompson and the Thompson school district was presented an extraordinary gift. Guy Daigle, a long time art teacher presented to the town his work, *Harmony*. *Harmony* is a bronze cast statue that took nearly two years to create.

The presentation and unveiling began with a musical presentation by students of the Mary Fisher Elementary, Thompson Middle and Tourtellotte Memorial High School. The musical portion of the night's event ended with a slide show presentation that described the construction process of the statue. Mrs. Carol Rosetti, music teacher, accompanied the slide show presentation with wonderful piano music.

Mr. Daigle began his career as an art teacher at Thompson in 1977 and quickly became a student favorite. His pleasant personality, skills and talent, and the love he constantly demonstrates for the arts make it easy for him to excite students and foster their talents.

*Harmony*, a ballerina in an arabesque attitude, could not have come at a more appropriate time. In such troubled times, art like *Harmony* reminds us of all

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their families. Germany invaded Poland and a war, the likes of which the world has never seen, had begun. Many citizens of Thompson still had family in Europe and were deeply concerned. The United States, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, declared war on Germany and Japan. Like all Americans who lived during this time, the students and alumni of TMHS responded and did their share, many answering the call of duty. Students as young as 16 left their town and school to join the Army, Navy, Marines and the Army Air Corp. All tolled 161 students and former students left the safety of their families and life in Thompson and enlisted. Many returned to Tourtellotte to finish their high school education.

Their names are forever listed on the walls of the 1909 building. The next time you pass, stop, take a look and reflect.

In November we celebrate Veterans days and the staff of the hilltopper could not think of a more fitting article. Those who served were:

- |                         |                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Adelard Desrosier       | Frank Goloskie    |
| Alander Maitland        | Frank Olson       |
| Albert Frissell         | Frederick Murolo  |
| Alexander Budzynkiewicz | Gale Greene       |
| Alexander Maitland      | George Angelo     |
| Allan Logee             | George Bates      |
| Alvin Lachapelle        | George Condos     |
| Andrew Vogel            | George Jensen     |
| Anna Waldron            | George Law        |
| Anthony Lada            | George Pedley     |
| Anthony Wasilewski      | George Pompeo     |
| Axel Johnson            | George St.Marie   |
| Benoni Morse            | Guy Thorton       |
| Bernard Sherry          | Harold Hatch      |
| Bernice Evans           | Harry Bovia       |
| Burton Elliott          | Harry Elliot      |
| Carl Vinton             | Harvey Hebert     |
| Charles Seney           | Hector Gundon     |
| Chester Zmitukiewicz ** | Hector Morin      |
| Christopher Tanca       | Henry Beaulac     |
| Clayton Cudworth        | Henry Rivers      |
| David Cassells          | Henry Suprenant   |
| David Keily             | Herbert C. Guile  |
| David Rawson            | Herbert S. Jewell |
| David Sherry            | Herbert Sward     |
| Donald Clark            | Hollister Pedly   |
| Donald Gleason          | Howard Johnson    |
| Dorothea Macintrye      | Kenneth Mayo      |
| Earl Mead               | Kenneth Vinton    |
| Edgar Elliot            | Leo Beaulac       |
| Edgar Johnson           | Leo Wasilewski    |
| Edward Ierardi          | Leonard Lee       |
| Edward Olesiak          | Leonard Wielock   |
| Edward Vose             | Irene Duquette    |
| Evangelos Angelo        | James Smith       |
| Everett Mayhew          | James Coppola     |
| Everett Sheppard        | James Maitland    |
| Floyd Cole              | James Molinaro *  |
| Francis Coderre         | Jeanette Laporte  |
| Francis Fitzgibbons     | John Canty        |
| Francis Kitka           | John Eddy         |
| Frank Bednarz *         | John Hoar         |

- John Martis
- John O'Brien
- John Rhodes
- John Strait
- Joseph Fitzgibbons
- June Whitney
- Louis Molinaro
- Mae Pizzotti
- Maurice Dery
- Merril Johnson
- Merril Seney
- Merton Harvey
- Michael Thomas
- Milton Johnson
- Morris Negip
- Nicholas Constantine
- Norman Deselteau
- Pandalay Gity
- Paul Auger \*
- Peter Demeter \*
- Peter Sulkowski
- Philip Masley
- Ragland Oakley \*
- Ralph Donnelly
- Ralph Vose
- Raymond Aucoin
- Raymond Bates
- Raymond Carignan
- Raymond Elliot
- Raymond Johnson
- Reginald Russ
- Reino Asikainen
- Rene Martel
- Reuben Munyan
- Reynolds Babbitt
- Richard Collum
- Richard Herrick
- Richard Lieban
- Richard Rawson

- Richard Swanson
- Robert Blanchette
- Robert Hagstrom
- Robert Johnson
- Robert Luster
- Robert Nadeau
- Robert Reynolds
- Robert Robbins
- Roland A. Blain \*
- Roland Dery
- Roland J. Blain
- Romeo Alim
- Rose Demetri
- Russell Gerard
- Samuel Beno
- Stanley Tanca
- Stuart Nelson
- Thaddeus Bednarz
- Thanasa Celia \*
- Theodore Lenky
- Thomas Fatsi
- Toivo Lehtinen
- Vasil Becca
- Vasil Thomas
- Vernon Wilkinson
- Victor Sochor
- Walfrid Olson
- Wallace Brodeur
- Walter Eddy
- Walter Pratt
- Walter R. Johnson
- Walter W. Johnson
- Willfred Lamaureux
- William E. Joslin
- William Graff
- William O'Keefe
- William Thorton

“\*” Indicates Killed in Action

For those killed in action or unable to finish their high school education upon returning from the war we would like to offer Honorary High School Diplomas either in person or posthumously to their families. If we missed anyone or if you would like to request an honorary diploma on behalf of a family member please contact the TMHSAA.



Another picture of Guy Daigle's wonderful gift to the school district - HARMONY

**Visit the TMHS Website at:**<http://www.thompson.ctschool.net/TMHS/index.html>**10 things you may *NOT* know about TMHS**

1. In the early years, TMHS was the cultural center of our town. Weekly concerts, plays and musicals were held in the auditorium on the second floor of the 1909 building. On Friday, April 4, 1924 "Princess Chrysanthemum" an Operetta was presented by the students of the TMHS.
2. The separation of church and state was, at one time, not as big an issue as it is today. The 14<sup>th</sup> Baccalaureate held on June 15, 1924, included a hymn, prayer, scripture lesson and Benediction.
3. A December 4, 1924 minstrel show included many familiar family names. They were, Peter Burnett, Lucien Coderre, James Kenney, Henry LeClair, Lawson Robbins, Francis Reardon and James Smith.
4. Formally published class yearbooks did not appear until the early 1940's.
5. Susan Pompeo was the only female member of the nine-person 1965 golf team.
6. In a tradition established decades ago, students of TMHS graduating class made their way to the large clock located in the 1909 building to place their name among the rafters. We hope to do a story on this in a future issue of the *hilltopper*.
7. Tourtellotte boys' basketball is tied for first place in the total number of CIAC State Championship Wins for small schools at seven and is ranked number two for State Championship showings at nine.
8. The 1938 TMHS girls' basketball team, under the direction of Miss Agnes Gahagan, went undefeated winning 12 straight games.
9. Before TMHS was constructed the Town had Thompson High School located on Thompson Hill. The school only operated for a short period of time in the 1800's before being closed due to an epidemic that ran through the area.
10. Class colors for the Class of 1921 were purple and gold.

**What is the story behind...****-The Lewis Iron?**

In reviewing old articles and yearbooks we are finding evidence of a long lost tradition. What is the Lewis Iron? The Lewis Iron Trophy itself is located in the main display case in the 1909 Building. According to the trophy, the last recipient was Holger Krohn, class of 1976.

**-The Olivetti - Underwood Award of Merit?**

What year was it last awarded and what subject was it related to??

that is well with the world.

Guy used the project as a learning experience and art students from several classes had the opportunity to learn how a statue of this nature is created. Guy also allowed and encouraged students to participate in the creation of *Harmony*, something we are certain they will remember the rest of their lives. The TMHSAA strongly suggests a trip to the new auditorium to view this extraordinary piece of art. To make arrangements contact Deb Spinelli at [AlumniAssociation@thompson.ctschool.com](mailto:AlumniAssociation@thompson.ctschool.com)

**THE 1909 AUDITORIUM STILL A BIG PART OF THE SCHOOL IN 1965**

BY: Staff Writer

In spite of the new gymnasium (now the middle school gymnasium), the 1909 auditorium was still a big part of learning in 1965. Former and current music teachers have said the acoustics in this room are "absolutely superb," a testament to the careful design of the building over 100 years ago.

The room, located directly across from the Tourtellotte Memorial room, was recently refurbished and brought back to its days of grandeur. When visiting the room one can't help but imagine all the past performers who graced this magnificent stage.



1965 Tourtellotte Memorial High School Band in the Tourtellotte 1909 auditorium. Captain, Peter Lachapelle, Sergeant, Jean Pieper, Lieutenant, Carol Burdett

**We are looking for articles of past classes!**

Send them to:

[AlumniAssociation@thompson.ctschool.net](mailto:AlumniAssociation@thompson.ctschool.net)

Or to our office at:

785 Riverside Drive,  
North Grosvenordale, CT 06255  
Attention: Alumni Office

## Photos from the past



Students from Mr. Saunders' 1961 Freshman English class. From the book, "Memories of 1960-1961, Tourtellotte – Thompson Memorial Schools, North Grosvenordale, Connecticut.

Do you recognize anyone???

## From past hilltoppers

### 1963 WORDS FROM THE JEWELL FAMILY

Compliments of the Jewell Family

The following is an article that was published in the *hilltopper* in 1963 (making it now 45 years old), written by the Jewell family. It speaks about Tourtellotte in 1938. Enjoy!

### 25 Years Ago at Tourtellotte High (1938)

*Let us turn back twenty-five years and take a look at our school as it was in the year 1938.*

*Mr. Melvin E. Smith was the superintendent of schools in Thompson. Miss Mowery, Miss Gahagan, and Mr. Jerome Ryscavage were familiar teachers at Tourtellotte. Agriculture was taught by Mr. Henry Dunleavy.*

*Nineteen thirty-eight was the first year that T.M.H.S. decided to name its school newspaper the "hilltopper." It was also the year that Tourtellotte became known as the "Tigers." Most of the students at the high school were seen for the first time displaying tigers on their jackets and sweaters.*

*The graduating class that year consisted of thirty-eight students. All but two of the entire class went on the annual Washington trip which amounted to \$48 (What a difference compared to the \$151 of today [1963]).*

*The chaperones for the trip were Mr. and Mrs. Frank. The seniors went by school bus to Providence and by boat at night from Providence to New York. The remainder of the trip was by bus. Stops were made in Philadelphia to see places of interest, including the*

*Liberty Bell. Visits were made to the Shenandoah Caverns and all places of importance in Washington. Students arrived home after travelling through Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York.*

*The Depression had not been long over in 1938, so the majority of the people were very much poorer than they are now. Not many children had spending money, and the clothes worn were mostly plain. School clothes that were worn did not match from head-to-toe as today, and it was not unusual to see students walking around with holes in their shoes.*

*Very few students went to college after graduation: three or four lucky ones would go each year. No scholarships were given then by the school or any other organization.*

*One or two fortunate students had their licenses and were even more fortunate to have a car of their own. "Daddy's car" was used only on special occasions, such as the Junior Prom.*

*There were only two school buses in those days. Each bus made two trips in the morning and at night. Half of the year, students would get home after 4:00 each night. Joseph Stein was one of the first two bus drivers.*

*Classes started each morning at 9 o'clock and ended promptly at 2:30 p.m. They consisted of six periods for forty minutes each with a ten-minute recess in the morning and afternoon. During the lunch period, which began at noon, warm lunches could be bought that were prepared by the home-making students under the direction of Miss Helen Mack. Students were allowed to eat out-of-doors if they wished. Many times, reckless students would start fires during their lunch period so they could stay outside and fight them instead of going to their afternoon classes.*

*St. Joseph School had no high school in 1938, so all students in town had to attend Tourtellotte.*

*An overall average of 85% was required for the honor roll and a 90% average for the high honors roll. Students were marked in numerals instead of letters.*

*There were no yearbooks then, but there were class rings. The rings ranged from \$8-\$9 each.*

*Much emphasis was placed on sports, as it is today. Students prepared for sports in the small gym in the high school (the present shop room. During their gym period in the winter, students did a few exercises and then split into teams of five and played basketball games of five minutes each or until one team scored a designated number of points. In the summer, gym class was held either on the old tennis court or on the hill among the tree and stones where students played mostly baseball. Quite a few of the school's windows were broken when baseball was played on the tennis court.*

*Soccer, girl's field hockey, baseball, and girls' and boys' basketball were the major sports of the day. Alice Bednarz, Luva Mead, Rose Patterson, and*

## Where are they now?

### BIOGRAPHIES OF FORMER GRADUATES

BY: Staff Writer

During November we celebrate Veterans Day. It is a time to honor those who have served, and a time for us to reflect upon the sacrifices they made. TMHS had their share of those who served.



*Lt. Col. Francis Sheriff, Vietnam*

### Colonel Francis Sheriff (US Army Ret.) Class of 1947

Francis Sherriff has several distinctions that set him apart from the crowd. From a TMHS perspective he was the first among us who received an appointment at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

In 1946 Francis sought, and received, an appointment to West Point from Congresswoman Chase Going Woodhouse. In July of 1947, upon graduating from TMHS, he, "totally unprepared for cadet basic training," entered military life. He, like thousands of others before and after him, survived the arduous training and was commissioned a second lieutenant in June of 1951.

Francis attended Army Officers Basic course and received training in Fort Monmouth, NJ as a Signal Officer. In February of 1953 he was assigned to the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in Korea as a Platoon Leader and was then promoted to Company Commander. In 1954 he returned to Fort Monmouth and served, for a brief time, as Commanding Officer of a student company. He then was selected as Aid-de-Comp for General Victor Conrad, a man who had great influence on Francis' life.

In 1955-57 he attended Harvard Business School where he received an MBA. The 1960's brought him assignments in Germany, Fort Leavenworth, KS and as a signal instructor at West Point.

In July 1967, Francis became the Commander of the 121st Signal Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division stationed in Vietnam. The middle of this tour found Francis in the middle of the Tet Offensive which he later described in a letter to his family, as a "challenge." History would prove this to be an understatement.

Upon returning to the United States Francis attended the Industrial College of the Armed Forces and was assigned to the very prestigious Department of Defense Weapons Systems Evaluation Group.

In early 1972, now with a wife and three children, Francis decided to leave military life and focus his attention on his family.

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*Beatrice Patterson were among the best players on the girls basketball team. Miss Gahagan coached the girls' to a successful season. Girls' games were always held the same night as the boys' games. The girls' would play first; then the boys junior varsity and varsity games were held.*

*The boys' varsity basketball team of 1938 consisted of Captain Herbert Jewell, George Bates, Ray Bates, Henry Suprenant, and Pando Gity. The Tigers played such teams as Northbridge, Bartlett, St. Louis Mary Wells, Cole Trade of Southbridge, Stafford, Putnam High, Putnam Trade, Plainfield, and Pomfret Preparatory school. The overall record was 18 wins and 4 losses. The team won fourteen straight before being defeated by St. Louis. Although they lost in the semi-finals of the state tournament, they did win the Quinebaug Valley Championship. Two impressive scores during the season were T.M.H.S. 71 – Woodstock 10; T.M.H.S. 63 – Putnam 8. Ray Bates and Herbert were both picked for both the Quinebaug Valley All-Star Team and the Webster Times All-Star Team. Herbert Jewell was also chosen for the Second All-State Tournament Team. This was the first year that the ball was taken out of bounds after each basket was made. In 1937, after each basket was made, the ball was taken back for a center jump.*

*Players seemed smaller in those days, and if the team had one six-footer, it was considered lucky.*

*Nineteen thirty-eight was the first year that T.M.H.S. played its (home) games at the Cluett Peabody Athletic Club. All previous years the games were played in the "Bandbox," as it was called in those days.*

*Mr. George Selig, who is now [1963] superintendent of schools in Webster, Massachusetts, was coach of the basketball team. He was not as calm as Mr. Canty, as he paced the floor most of the game. Although his teams never won a state title, they went as far as the finals and semi-finals on several occasions.*

*The baseball team also boasted a very good record of 11 wins and 3 losses. In one week, five games were won in five days. This is probably some sort of record because usually only three games were played in one week. The players on the baseball team consisted of George and Ray Bates, Pando Gity, Henry Suprenant, Herbert Jewell, Louis Leo, Hector Morin, Robert Reynolds, Bernard Beausoleil, Ray Elliot, and others. The coach was Mr. Sellig. Home games were played in the North Grosvenordale field.*

*Our thoughts move forward once again, and twenty-five years from now, someone will relive our days at Tourtellotte as we have just relived those a quarter of a century ago.*

Many thanks go out to the Jewell family for this very interesting piece of Tourtellotte history.

## Where are they now?

### BIOGRAPHIES OF FORMER GRADUATES

#### Betty Willett LeClair

#### Class of 1947

BY: Staff Writer

**Betty Willett LeClair of Quinebaug – TMHS Alum, former teacher and long-time resident and volunteer.**



During the initial stages of re-establishing the TMHSAA we have been blessed with the help of Betty Willett LeClair. Betty's inexhaustible efforts and treasure troves of historic school documents have been the impetus to our successful organization effort.

Betty is a 1947 TMHS graduate. Upon graduation she attended Teachers College 1947-1949 and Annhurst College, S. Woodstock, CT. 1958-1960 earning a Bachelor of Science degree, majoring in Accounting with a minor in Social Studies.

While in college Betty was very active in the A.V. Club, Commerce Club, and she acted as chairman of the committee which wrote and published "Letter to Lulu" for incoming freshman who would live at Marcus White Hall, the women's dormitory.



*Betty Willett LeClair in the classroom at TMHS during the 1962 school year. She taught business at TMHS from 1960 - 1968. If you notice the blackboard in the background you can see that she manned one of the many classrooms in the 1909 Tourtellotte building.*

Betty married George LeClair on July 8, 1950. They had three children – Peter, Alicia and Richard. After a long life together George passed away in April of 2002. Like many of her generation Betty finished her education the hard way by working full time, raising a family and carrying a full load of courses.

As a TMHS student Betty was heavily involved in the student council and the National Honor Society. She was her class' vice president and Valedictorian.

Fond memories from her years at TMHS include classmates Burton Elliot and Leo Courtemanche being part of the 1944 Boys' State Basketball Championship team and the appointment of classmate Francis Sheriff to the United States Military Academy at West Point.



*Betty with her 1966 homeroom class. Left to Right: First Row Betty LeClair, D. Benjamin, M. Gilbert, G. Corman, M. Courtemanche, D. Bissonette, C. Davis, N. Gomes, S. Dumas, D. Elliot. Middle Row: D. Fatsi, Pat Dunican, Pris Dunican, K. Eccleston, E. Cooney, M. Bibek, S. Tuxford, R. Blackmer, C. Gion. J. Asikainen. Top Row: J. Grzych, R. Dumaine, R. Baker, J. Furno, G. Arsenault, P. Cuhna, R. Chandler, M Burdett, D. Cauty*

Betty remains an active member in our community. She is currently involved with the Thompson Historical Society and was instrumental in the publication, *Echoes of Old Thompson*. She donates her time at the Historical Society store, at the Thompson Public Library's annual book sale, and as a volunteer during elections for District 3. Betty has been a lifelong member of St. Stephen's church.

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## School District Seeking Reading Assistance from Alumni Association

Dr. Michael Jolin, Thompson Superintendent of Schools, has approached the TMHSAA seeking reading volunteers.

Meeting state and federally mandated reading requirements on tighter budgets remains a challenge for many school districts throughout the state and country, and communities are seeking more innovative ways of helping children to better learn how to read. With the large number of retired teachers and professionals in the alumni ranks Dr. Jolin feels the alumni is a perfect place to seek the needed help.

As an additional benefit to the volunteer, numerous studies suggest that active adults committed to life-long learning/teaching live longer and fuller lives than those who don't. Volunteers must have a high school diploma and be willing to participate in 2-3 hours of training provided by the school district. If interested in volunteering at the school as a reading volunteer please contact Danielle Pederson at 860-923-9581.

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Betty is a retired teacher having taught business at TMHS 1960-1968 and at Southbridge High from 1968 – 1985. Betty remains active in our community by volunteering in many organizations to include The Thompson Historical Society, Senior Citizens Group and now the TMHSAA. Betty is known throughout the community for saying, “if you need me and I am home, I will be glad to help out.”

When Betty was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade her class studied about Machu Pichu and always wanted to visit the site. At the age of 75 she got that opportunity and climbed to the site, although she admits it was only with the “help and encouragement of the wonderful people” she travelled with. She took another very special trip to Fiji, New Zealand and Australia. While at Australia she helicoptered to the glacier Franz Joseph where, up to her knees in snow, she was able to throw snowballs in a most unexpected place.

Betty resides in the same house her grandfather built in Quinebaug. She remains an active member in our community and we, at the TMHSAA are very grateful for her help.

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## **Tourtellotte Family Gave More than a School**

BY: Staff Writer

In a local newspaper article donated to the TMHSAA dated 1914 we find that the Tourtellottes gave more to the town than just the school.

### **MRS. TOURTELLOTTE GIVES HOUSES TO TOWN OF THOMPSON**

**Mrs. Harriett A. Tourtellotte has donated to the town of Thompson**

*Two parcels of real estate known as the “Janitor’s cottage and the Principal’s cottage. The property which is valued at approximately \$10,000, was formally accepted by the town at a special town meeting called for that purpose Wednesday night. There was considerable enthusiasm shown by the voters and the acceptance of the gift was unanimous.*

*Both houses are near the Tourtellotte Memorial high school and as their names designate, are to be used for the janitor and principal of the school respectively. The houses are fitted with all modern conveniences and are in the best of repair.*

*The janitor’s cottage is given to the town outright while the principal’s cottage is held in trust. The following extract from the deed as given to the town will explain the “conditions under which it has been accepted:*

*“To be held forever as a residence for successive principals of the Tourtellotte Memorial High School, located at said North Grosvenor-Dale, which said principals are to pay a monthly rental of at least*

*twenty dollars, and the net income derived each year from such rentals, after paying the insurance, taxes if any, and the cost of repairs and upkeep, to be paid over each and every year to the successive graduating classes of said Tourtellotte Memorial High School, to be used to defray in whole or in part the expenses of a trip by each of said graduating classes to Washington, or some other place of interest which such graduating class may select.*

*“Said grantee agrees and takes this deed upon the express condition that it will keep the house on said tract amply insured and in good repair at all times, and that, in case of loss by fire or other cause covered by the insurance, the insurance money received on account of such loss shall be used to rebuild or repair said house, so that same, when rebuilt may continue as the home of the principal to be paid over each year to the graduating class of said school as hereinbefore set forth.*

*“In case any principal of said school shall fail to rent said building as a home, the grantee is authorized to rent it to some other suitable tenant until it shall be desired by any principal of said school, the net income derived from such rental to be paid over annually as aforesaid to the graduating class of said school.*

Having a high school principal living at or near the school in which they led was common practice during much of the early 1900’s. Much of this had to do with lack of efficient transportation available in those days. If you have any further information about the “cottages” please send it to:

[AlumniAssociation@thompson.ctschool.com](mailto:AlumniAssociation@thompson.ctschool.com)

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## **THE CANTY YEARS- Project Update**

BY: Joe Lindley

Over the past few weeks I have had the incredible privilege of speaking with several of Mr. Canty’s basketball and baseball players. They include Jim Sali, Jim Naum, George Dargati, Danny Almquist, Tasi Vriga and Mike Bellasario. I have also had the pleasure of meeting Jim Canty Jr., Mr. Canty’s son and Mr. Canty’s grandson Tim. To help us write the story about the *Cantymen*, and the man who led them, we are looking for any information you may have on Mr. Canty, his players or TMHS during the years 1942-1971. We are also looking for updates on all of Mr. Canty’s players. Also if you have any personal stories about that time or what that time meant to you please send them to [joelindley119@hotmail.com](mailto:joelindley119@hotmail.com)

We are quickly finding that Tourtellotte’s own Mr. Canty was the standard from which all other Connecticut high school basketball coaches are measured... but more on that later.

It is our intent to eventually publish a book on the story.

# Class of 1965 dedicated their year to one of TMHS's best

## MR. DAVID JOHNSON

BY: Staff Writer



Dave Johnson 1965

In spite of the fact that he had been at Tourtellotte Memorial High School for only four years, the class of 1965 decided to dedicate their yearbook, a distinguished honor, to Mr. David Johnson. In their yearbook they offered the following:

"We the class of 1965, wishing to express our profoundest gratitude for your selfless contributions to all our endeavors, are proud to dedicate our yearbook to Mr. David Johnson.

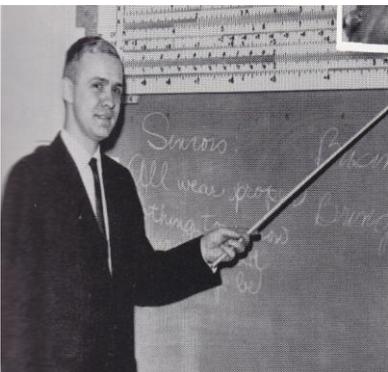
Our fondness for you may be accounted for by the fact that we entered Tourtellotte the same year you began teaching here. Your winning smile has brightened these past four years, and your abiding concern for our welfare has made an everlasting impression on all of us.

Because of your devotion, we take pleasure in dedicating the 1965 TIGER to you."

Dave, a long time resident of Thompson earned both a Bachelor's and Master's from the University of Connecticut.

Throughout his career at Tourtellotte he taught, coached and held several administration positions to include, Vice Principal at TMHS and principal at the Thompson Middle School. After retiring from the school district 1996 after 35 years of service, Dave turned his sights to other areas of community service and he remained active in the community by serving on the Board of Finance, the Inland Wetland Commission, the School Building Study Commission and the Thompson School District, Building Committee.

In one capacity or another, Dave has been associated with our school and has served our community for nearly five decades.



Dave Johnson 1965 math class. Here he is pointing to the large slide rule used for training. The slide rule was a common device used to make mathematical calculations before the advent of the calculator

Many of us do not appreciate the impact our high school teachers had upon us until we ourselves become adults. Send us your stories about your favorite teachers, coaches or those from Tourtellotte who had a special impact upon your life. Send them to: [AlumniAssociation@thompson.ct.school.com](mailto:AlumniAssociation@thompson.ct.school.com)

## Class of 1965 as reported in the December 1966 hilltopper

KAREN LANGEVIN married Robert Donais on September 5 (1966?) in the Sacred Heart Church in West Thompson, Conn. They are making their home in Putnam, Conn. KAREN BAYER is engaged to be married to Douglas Gagnon of Putnam. She is employed as a hairdresser in Auburn, Mass., and now lives in Sutton, Mass. ALAN CHANDLER is attending Willimantic State College. EDWARD M. MEAD, JR. enlisted in the Marine Corps on April 4. He is attending a 16-week course on jet mechanics in Memphis, Tennessee. MARIE VALADE is attending Dudley Hall Secretarial School in Dudley, Mass. CONRAD SENEAL, who is in the Air Force, is engaged to be married to Melanie Maheu of Putnam, Conn. The wedding will take place sometime in December. RICHARD ALLEN is in the Air Force in Mississippi as an Air Force Communications and Electronics Specialist. He recently completed training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas, RAYMOND DUCHESNE is presently employed at Superior Bakery in North Grosvenordale, Conn.

## Have Articles or Stories??

Submit them to:

[AlumniAssociation@thompson.ct.school.net](mailto:AlumniAssociation@thompson.ct.school.net)

Or mail them to:

**TMHS Alumni Association**  
**785 Riverside Drive, No. Grosvenordale, CT 06255**

*continued from page 5*

In July of 1972 Francis became the Vice President of Finance and Administration of Pensions Planners of Baltimore. The company was eventually purchased by the world's largest employee benefits company, Mercer Inc., where he remained as Vice President.

Unwilling to relocate with Mercer, Francis created his own consulting company and kept busy until his passing on January 3, 2006.

He took great pride in his family and he and his wife Doris had three children, David, Rob and Ken, and several grandchildren.

What little we have from Francis would indicate that he never spoke much of his military accomplishments, but his awards speak for themselves and included 2 commendation medals, 3 Bronze Stars, 2 Legions of Merits and a Meritorious Service Award. Colonel Francis Sheriff was truly one of our best.

## Local photographer helps Alumni Association

By: Joe Lindley

Last month we featured several copies of Ron Morin's work. Here's a few more he took of the new high school. Ron's TMHS collection can be found at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/hammerron/>



The new main entrance to the Tourtellotte Memorial High School



Main entrance to the new state-of-art auditorium. This new facility rivals anything we may find in New England and is a great addition to our Community

## Upcoming Events:

### MARK YOUR CALANDERS!

- Alumni Meeting – December 10, 7:30 PM at the TMHS library.
- Boys' Basketball Season Opener – December 1
- Girls' Basketball Season Opener – November 24
- Alumni Banquet – 6:30 PM June 20, 2009 at the Thompson Speedway
- December edition of the *hilltopper* – Scheduled for December 15, 2008
- January edition of the *hilltopper* – Scheduled for January 20, 2009
- February edition of the *hilltopper* – Scheduled for February 20, 2009

## 1946 TMHS Graduates may have predicted teleconferencing

BY: Staff Writer

It is a custom for high school yearbook staffs to predict the class's future. We found this in *Memoirs of the Class of 1946*. Maybe the class of 1946 is responsible for what we now know as teleconferencing.

*The years pass swiftly by. Emil ( Emil was a graduating student) who has since graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and has become a renowned physicist, returned to his alma mater as head of the Science Department in order to perfect his machine. His hair has turned gray, but no one could mistake those long strides which identified him years ago.*

*The stage becomes a maze of mechanical devices, electronic tubes, screens, wires, and gadgets that cannot be identified. From this conglomeration, a machine finally develops, filled with hundreds of dials, knobs, levers, and controls. The day is fast approaching for the premiere exhibition of the mysterious device.*

*The day, finally, arrives. Emil explains, that in order to select only the members of the class of '46, it was necessary to inject each member with atoms of polonium, a very rare element which gives off rays. These rays can be picked up only by this machine.*

*Turning on the machine and manipulating several controls, a screen lights up and a picture forms on the screen. It is a local setting, showing a huge mill with a large neon sign on the top reading, "The Cluett-Peabody Company." The scene changes to an office inside where Judy Gagne is seen sitting behind the treasurer's desk, concluding a financial report to the board of directors. Tremendous applause is heard coming through the loud speaker because Judy has reported the greatest profit in the history of the company.*

### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

*Initial membership due at time of application, yearly renewals due January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year*

*Regular Membership..... \$15.00  
Senior Citizens (65 and older)..... \$5.00  
Graduating Class..... Free*

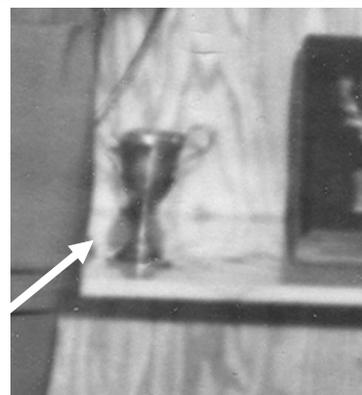
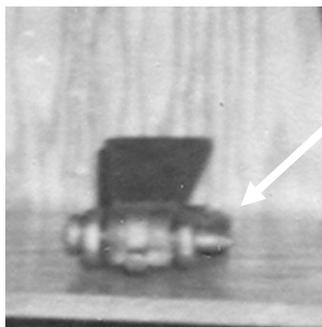
### **hilltopper Staff**

*Editor: Joe Lindley '74'  
Staff Members: Jim Sali '51' - Gladys Tucker '52' - Jane Elison '61'- Eileen Deary '77' – Sandy Becker '79' – Rachael Johnston '75' Alex Kirkland '08'  
Archives: Gladys Tucker '52'*

*If you would like to contribute short stories to the hilltopper please contact Joe Lindley at [joelindley119@hotmail.com](mailto:joelindley119@hotmail.com)*

**CSI TOURTELLOTTE - Can you help identify these items and their meaning?  
The Lewis Iron and the mysterious 1925 Championship Cup**

This is the Lewis Iron. From what we understand it was part of the original rigging used to lay the TMHS corner stone. Names were added to the Lewis Iron annually until it ran out of space. A trophy was obtained for subsequent names. From what we can tell the last name added was Holger Krohn '76.



This trophy seems to be only marked with "1925." It must have had significant meaning to Mr. Canty as it is seen on his desk in several old photographs. Both trophies are now located in the main display case of the 1909 TMHS building

**We're also looking for this painting. It hung over the display case for decades. Anyone know what happened to it? If so contact us at [AlumniAssociation@thompson.ctschool.net](mailto:AlumniAssociation@thompson.ctschool.net)**

**This month in 1965...**

- Students of TMHS had a difficult time doing their homework on the night of November 9, 1965. One of the largest power failures in American history hit the east coast. Caused by human failure it affected more than 25 million people.
- The Varsity cheerleaders led by co-captains Pauline Lepire and Kathryn Ward began their basketball season practice. Those who made the squad included Andrea Swanson, Mildred Freudenthal, Christine Lapierre, Kathleen Donnelly, Carol Rivers, Rhonda Pompeo and Stephanie Minchoff
- Elements of the United States Army's 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division landed via helicopter in the Ia Drang River Valley, Vietnam. The battle that ensued was later immortalized in the movie *We Were Soldiers* starring Mel Gibson.
- *Man of La Mancha* opens in Greenwich Village.
- French President Charles DeGaulle announces his intent to re-run for that nation's top spot.
- Cuban *Freedom Flights* began allowing Cubans to fly to the U.S.

**Alumni Officers Nominated**

Members of the Alumni Association nominated board officers for the 2009 year. According to current board policy, board members are elected for a two year term and can hold the office for four consecutive terms. Nominations are:

- President:** Joe Lindley '74
- Vice President:** Joe lamartino (Associate Member)
- Treasurer:** Rachael (LaFleur) Johnston '75
- Secretary:** Eileen (Boutin) Deary '77
- Archivist - Historian:** Galdys (Krigsman) Tucker '52
- Member At Large:** June Duclos
- Member At Large:** Alexandra Kirkland '08
- Member At Large:** Andrew Morrison '04

Also discussed at the November meeting is the addition of other positions that will be assigned by the board on an as needed basis. They include a recording secretary, archivists, and finance clerk. The TMHSAA Board also includes an Alumni Coordinator. This position is assigned by school administration. Voting is open to all registered members and can be done via Email at [AlumniAssociation@thompson.ctschool.net](mailto:AlumniAssociation@thompson.ctschool.net). All voting must be submitted by December 7, 2008.



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