



hilltopper

Tourtellotte Memorial High School Alumni Association Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 1

Happy Presidents' Day

February 2010

Alumni Banquet

Saturday, June 19, 2010 at the Thompson Speedway Restaurant

Reservations can be made beginning April 1, 2010, by contacting Eileen Deary at TMHSAA@Charter.net or calling Eileen at 860-928-2154. Cost is \$25.00 for members and their guest, \$35.00 for non-members and includes the social hour. Seating is limited - FIRST COME, FIRST SERVE!
Please note: This year, our function will be ticketless. We will have a list of attendees, and you will give your name upon arrival.

Banquet Day Program:

- 2:00 - 4:30** 1st Annual Athletic Hall of Fame presentation and school tour at the district auditorium. Open to everyone!
- 5:00 - 6:30** Social hour – Thompson Speedway – Reservations needed!
- 6:30 - 7:30** Dinner – Thompson Speedway
- 7:30 - 11:00** Dancing – Thompson Speedway

Membership Drive – Seeking Friends Making Connections

Membership and renewal applications can be found in the December 2009 edition of the Hilltopper. Remember dues are due!! \$15.00 for regular membership - \$5.00 for senior citizens.

1909 Auditorium Named after One of Thompson's Very Best

AFTER MANY MONTHS OF WORK THE JEROME RYSCAVAGE MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM A REALITY

BY: Joe Lindley

After many months of work by both the TMHSAA and the School District Naming Committee, the Thompson Board of Education unanimously passed a resolution on January 12, 2010 naming the 1909 Auditorium, located in the original building, the Jerome Ryscavage Auditorium in honor of Mr. Ryscavage's many years of service and accomplishments.

Few people in Thompson's history have had a bigger impact on our education community as a whole as had Jerome Ryscavage. Jerry worked for the Thompson school district for 23 years, starting as a math teacher in 1948, finishing his career as superintendent in 1971. Throughout his career at Thompson, he also served as Tourtellotte's vice principal and principal, making countless contributions to the academic and athletic growth of the Tourtellotte Memorial High School.

According to the Northeast Connecticut Oral History Project (1978), as the Town of Thompson's Superintendent of Schools, Jerry, in the late 1940's, launched a ten-year campaign that combined the many district (village) schools into two units and then eventually one centralized school, something incredibly progressive for the time.

After years of tireless effort and several contentious referendums, the Town of Thompson agreed with Jerry and finally approved the consolidation effort. A short time later, the Thompson Memorial School (now the Thompson Middle School) was constructed and elementary and middle school students from all over town were being educated for the first time, in one location.

Four years later, the consolidation and educational growth continued, and Jerry led the charge to construct the Mary R. Fisher Elementary School.

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After the consolidation process subsided, Jerry, never the one to sit on his laurels, turned his attention to the development of the town's first kindergarten program, once again, proving his thinking was years ahead of many of his contemporaries. Jerry understood the value of adding early childhood learning and development to antiquated pedagogy.

Other than the donation of the 1909 Tourtellotte Memorial High School by Dr. and Mrs. Tourtellotte to the Town of Thompson, few events in our town's history have galvanized our community more than consolidation of our primary and early learning schools. No one person did more to make that happen than Jerome Ryscavage.

Jerry started life as the son of Lithuanian immigrants. His father worked most of his life in the dusty coal mines of Pennsylvania. In spite of the fact that few in his family had much more than a primary education, Jerry and his family understood the value of a good education. As a young man he, like his dad, worked the mines of Pennsylvania as a means to help support his family and to help pay his way to a college education. Jerry excelled in college and developed an irrepressible love for teaching, a love that would last his entire life, and a love from which we, the citizens of Thompson, benefitted greatly.

Mr. Ryscavage had two sons who attended Thompson schools and graduated from TMHS, Jerry '55 and Paul '58. Both boys added greatly to the TMHS community both academically and athletically – Their dad would not have had it any other way. The district and TMHSAA's current plan is to make the formal announcement during the 2010 commencement exercises to be held in June, 2010.



Left: Thompson Superintendent of Schools Jerome Ryscavage circa 1955. Mr. Ryscavage performed many functions during his years with Thompson to include teacher, administrator, athletics promoter, and mentor to many administrators and teachers. A plaque bearing his name will be added to the 1909 auditorium in March. Photo compliments of TMHSAA.

2/15/93
1987 Photo

Jerome J. Ryscavage
Jerome J. Ryscavage, 74,
Former Thompson Supt.

QUINEBAUG, Conn. — Jerome J. Ryscavage, 74, of 6 Topview Drive died Tuesday morning in his home.

Mr. Ryscavage was superintendent of schools in Thompson from 1947 to 1969.

His wife, Viola (Kazlusky) Ryscavage, died in 1971.

He leaves two sons, Jerome Ryscavage of Oakland, Md., and Paul M. Ryscavage of Washington, D.C.; a sister, Anne Ryscavage of Plymouth, Pa.; three grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews.

Born in Plymouth, he was the son of Andrew and Domicella (Venslauskas) Ryscavage.

He was graduated from Mount St. Mary's College in Emmitsburg, Md., in 1931 with a bachelor of science degree. In 1932, he received a master of arts degree from the same school. Mr. Ryscavage also attended the University of Connecticut, where he did post-graduate work.

In 1935, Mr. Ryscavage moved to Thompson, where he became a faculty member at the former Marianapolis Preparatory School. He taught chemistry, math and science.

In 1937, he became a faculty member of Tourtellotte Memorial High School in North Grosvenor Dale, where he taught math and sciences. He also continued teaching at Marianapolis on a part-time basis.

He was principal of Tourtellotte High from 1947 to 1961.

In 1947, he became superintendent of schools in Thompson, where he remained until retiring in 1969.

Left: This article was found by Joyce Desruisseau. It was originally published by the Windham County Transcript on February 15, 1983. Mr. Ryscavage was 74 when he passed away. He worked in the Thompson School System from 1937 until 1969 (32 years) and was responsible for the combination of the district schools in what we now know as our middle and elementary schools. The Thompson Board of Education voted unanimously, during its monthly January meeting, to name the 1909 auditorium the "Jerome Ryscavage Auditorium", in honor of Mr. Ryscavage's work at Thompson Public Schools. Many agree that few have accomplished more.

We are looking for articles of past classes! Send us your comments!

Send them to:
TMHSAA@Charter.net
Or to our office at:
PO Box 437,
North Grosvenordale, CT 06255

Memories from Maureen Mulligan Degan, '68

Few people in the Town of Thompson were as close to long-time town historian Alice Ramsdell as were the Mulligans. Matriarch of the family, Isabella Beauregard Mulligan '27, became friends with Alice Ramsdell when the two were school mates at TMHS. The friendship lasted a lifetime. Maureen Mulligan Degan '68, stated, "As a youngster, I can remember visiting Alice often. She was a part of our family. I even remember helping her chase boys out of her field who were hunting."

Maureen sent us photos she found, several follow, while investigating her connection to the Arnolds, Harriett Tourtellotte's family. According to Maureen, she has confirmed that Charles and Delia Arnold were her mother's godparents and that Delia was related to her grandfather. Charles and Delia's portraits hang in the Memorial Room.

According to Maureen, her grandparents, Anna and Francis Beauregard, managed the Tourtellotte Memorial High School teacherage which was located where the current Route 12 TMHS exit now exists. The teacherage was used as a boarding house for single teachers and was, at least in part, supported by the school district. It was eventually removed to make room for a larger school exit.



Top-left: Anna Beauregard, grandmother of Maureen Mulligan Degan '68. Anna and husband Frank managed the TMHS teacherage. The photo shows Anna on the front steps of the teacherage which was located below the school next to what is now the TMHS exit. North Grosvenordale can be seen in the background. Top-right: Isabella Beauregard Mulligan '27, Maureen's mother, grandparents Anna and Francis Beauregard and Delia Arnold. Bottom-left: Isabella Mulligan and friend standing in front of the 1909 TMHS entrance circa 1925. Bottom-middle and bottom-left: Teachers at the TMHS teacherage. If anyone has any other pictures of the TMHS teacherage, please send them to TMHSAA@Charter.net. Photos compliments of Maureen Mulligan Degan '68.



More from Maureen Mulligan Degan



Above: Lawson Robbins, Isabella Mulligan (Maureen Degan's mother), Helen Chandler and Ruth Gordon. We believe that Mr. Robbins and Mrs. Gordon were originally part of the class of 1927. Isabella Mulligan, long-time friend of Alice Ramsdell, opened the Memorial Room on those days that Alice did not feel up to it. Bottom picture: Alice Ramsdell, Helen Chandler and Isabella Mulligan.

Members of the 1927 Class:

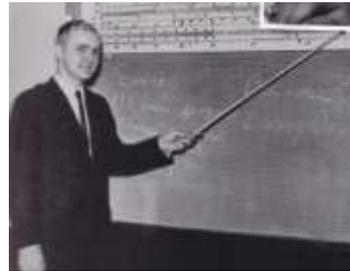
Along with Alice Ramsdell and Isabella Beauregard Mulligan, graduating members of the 1927 graduating class included, John Blid, Wallace Chandler, Raymond Chubbuck, Teresa Coderre, Franklin Converse, Sotir Cuca, Alice Johnson, Leroy Johnson, Clara Leveille, Arthur Racine, Estelle Ravenelle, Wyla Rawson, Francis Reardon, Curt Seastrand, Harold Theroux and Edward Vito.

United States Northeast Show Band to Visit TMHS April 22, 2010 – Cost Free!!

Mark your calendar!! One of the most exciting USN Bands will be visiting TMHS on April 22, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at the district auditorium. TMHS Band Director, Kacey Howard, organizer of the event, is a member of the CT National Guard, 102nd Army Band and her husband Chris is a U.S. Coast Guard Musician 1st Class stationed at the USCG Academy in Groton.

TOURTELLOTTE BOARD OF TRUSTEES WELCOMES NEW MEMBER Dave Johnson Long-Time Thompson Educator

The Thompson Board of Finance did something recently that they have been doing every year since its inception – they elected a chairman. This year the honor goes to David Johnson, Tourtellotte Class of '57. By virtue of this position, Dave replaces Karen Charbonneau, also a TMHS alum, whose term on the Tourtellotte Board of Trustees recently ended.



Left: Dave Johnson as a math teacher at TMHS in 1965. Board of Finance member, school building committee member, and now Tourtellotte Board of Trustee member are among the many town volunteer positions Dave has embraced over the years. Photo compliments of the TMHSAA.

The Board of Trustees, which includes the president of the Thompson Historical Society, chairpersons of the Boards of Finance and Education, First Selectmen, president of the TMHSAA, Thompson Superintendent of Schools and Thompson Finance Director, is responsible for the management of the Tourtellotte endowment fund and meeting the town ordinance which follows Dr. and Mrs. Tourtelottes' original wishes and wills.

The Board was established by town ordinance on June 10, 2009 during a town meeting.

"Dave was a key supporter of the 2009 Memorial Room Restoration and Inventory Project and has always been a supporter of the Tourtelottes' wishes," stated Joe Lindley, president of TMHSAA. "As a member of the TMHSAA, former teacher, coach and administrator, Dave spent a good part of his life inside those walls." Anyone wishing a copy of the ordinance can contact the Thompson Town Hall or contact us at TMHSAA@Charter.net.



Above: The U.S. Navy Show Band – Come join us for a night of great music in our new auditorium. The cost is free and open to all local residents and alumni. Photo compliments of Navy.outreach.

SPOTLIGHT: THE CLASS OF 1952



Valedictorian: M. Esther Kelly

Salutatorian: Thelma Barker

Class Officers

President: Nevzat Ali

Vice President: Peter Windsor Bertschmann

Secretary: Janet Elizabeth Daniels

Treasurer: Mary Tegius

Class Colors: Blue and Silver

Class Flower: Blue and White Carnation

Class Motto: "We Build the Ladder by Which We Climb"

What things cost in 1952:

Car: \$1,850

Gasoline: 27 cents / gallon

House: \$17,000

Bread: 16 cents / loaf

Milk: 96 cents / gallon

Postage stamp: 3 cents

Stock Market: 292

Average Annual Salary: \$4,500

Minimum Wage: 75 cents / hour

Also in 1952:

- The Today Show with Dave Garroway began in January.
- I Love Lucy is watched by 10.6 million homes in April, setting a new record.
- UHF Channels (14 through 83) were approved by the FCC in April.



TOURTELLOTTE MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
Eighth grade graduates, June 1948

Front: Loretta Misiewicz, Ella French, Jane Lafontaine, Mary Toppis, Janet Daniels, Kathryn Nason, Nevzat Ali, Peter Bertschmann, Edward Donovan, Lucian Laliberty. Row 2: Beverly Beasley, Pauline Giber, Esther Kelley, Barbara Godzik, Rudolph Ahnquist, Frederick Witkowski, Fabian Benjamin, John Mack. Row 3: Mary Benson, Ellen Carpenter, Fleurette Bourbeau, Joseph Augustynski, Laurence Houle, Diane Lester, Donald Victor. Row 4: Gladys Kringsman, Jeanette Leclair Glezon, Thelma Barker. Row 5: Sue Cassman, Corrado Tappier, Vera Dossert, Arnold Kelley, Harry Filfield, Philip Gratton, John Thomas, Ronald Drayton. Row 6: Mrs. Mary Fisher, teacher; Mr. Erni Himmelfinger, teacher; Nicholas Proulx, John Colburn.

Courtesy of Gladys Tucker



TOURTELLOTTE MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
Senior Washington Trip, Class of 1952

Front: Loretta Misiewicz, Nevzat Ali, Lucian Laliberty, Paul Wajer, John Thomas, Frederick Witkowski, Peter Bertschmann, Rudolph Ahnquist, John Mack, Ronald Drayton. Back row: Joseph Augustynski, Pauline Giber, Colby Lachapelle, Kathryn Nason, Gladys Kringsman, Mr. & Mrs. James Casey, Chapman, Jane Proulx, Vera Dossert, Jane Lafontaine, Esther Kelley, Barbara Godzik, Mary Toppis, Ella French.

Courtesy of Gladys Tucker



1951 Cheerleading Squad

Front Row: Gladys Kringsman, Mary Fatsi, Millie Hrabos,
Back Row: Pam LaChappelle, Millicent Bates,
Norma Robbins, Barbara Godzik



Class of 1952 50th Reunion
September 21, 2002 at the Colonial Club, Webster, MA

From left: Rudolph Almqvist, Duane Luster, John Thomas, Camil Langefier, Frederick Witkowski, Lucien La Liberty, Paul Wajer, Alvin Colby La Chapelle

Front Row: Nezvat Ali, Barbara Godzik Langefier, Ellie French Moore, Kathryn Naum Peters, Gladys Krigsmann Tucker

THE CANTYMEN- Project Update

BY: Joe Lindley

We have just passed the 1962 mark and have nine more years to go. Thanks to former players, who have filled in many of the gaps the book is coming along better than expected. The research, while tedious, has been very exciting and I am amazed at the effect Mr. Canty and TMHS basketball had on so many.

I am searching for a young writer who might want to collaborate with me on this project. If interested, please call me at 860-928-5527 or email me at:

joelindley119@hotmail.com



Above: A picture of Mr. Canty circa 1952. The TMHS Hall of Fame Committee recently submitted Mr. Canty as a nominee for the CT Athletic Hall of Fame. Mr. Canty turned down a chance to become a member of this prestigious group years ago, most likely due to his quiet personality. Photo compliments of TMHSAA.

Have Articles or Stories??

Submit them to:

TMHSAA@Charter.net

Or mail them to:

TMHS Alumni Association

PO Box 437, No. Grosvenordale, CT 06255

**Don't forget the alumni Banquet!
Mark your calendar!**

ARCHIVES UPDATE Research and Photo Service Available

The TMHSAA is offering research services to anyone wishing a search of our records and database. For a fee of only \$10.00, we will search our rapidly growing database for photos, articles and information about former graduates. Our database includes all yearbooks from 1946 to the present, family collections, old photos, and a complete collection of all graduation ceremony programs, some in pristine condition.

If you are interested in having us search our records, contact our archivist/historian, Gladys Tucker '52 at: gladtuc@sbcglobal.net. Please include the full name of the person, the year they graduated, and the specific information you are seeking.

All proceeds will be benefiting the TMHSAA. All checks are made payable to the TMHSAA, PO Box 437, North Grosvenordale, CT 06255.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Initial membership due at time of application, yearly renewals due January 1st of each year

Regular Membership..... \$15.00

Senior Citizens (65 and older)..... \$5.00

Graduating Class..... Free

hilltopper Staff

Editor: Kris Blanchard '87

Staff Members: Jim Sali '51' - Gladys Tucker '52' - Jane

Ellison '61' - Eileen Deary '77' - Sandy Becker '79' -

Rachael Johnston '75' - Alex Kirkland '08'

Archives: Gladys Tucker '52' and Rita Rohr

If you would like to contribute short stories to the hilltopper please contact Kris Blanchard at

kris87slick@gmail.com

New members for the month of January, 2010

Welcome New Members!

Edward Asikainen – '68

Lawrence Bellerose – '56

Barbara (Chvirko) Chubbuck – '64

Claire (Rivers) Logan – '44

Theresa (Chaput) Pescosalido - '46

Ted Raszka – '55

Marvin J. Wilbur - '55

Shirley (Arnold) Wilbur - '39

A CLASSIC 1908 PHOTO



Above: One of those photos we never get tired of seeing, the 1909 Tourtellotte Memorial High School during construction circa 1906. We are searching for any other construction photos. If you have any contact us at TMHSAA@Charter.net. Photo compliments of the Thompson Historical Society.

AUDITORIUM SEATS UPDATE



Left: A refurbished auditorium seat. Available seats are running out fast. Anyone interested in purchasing a seat should contact TMHSAA@Charter.net ASAP. Applications and donation forms are available in the December edition of the Hilltopper and can be found at <http://www.thompsonpublicschools.org/TMHSAA/index.html>

5 things you may NOT know about TMHS - 1952

1. In 1952, the yearbook was called the "Scarlet".
2. In 1952, Jerome Ryscavage was the TMHS Principal and Superintendent of Public Schools.
3. In 1952, The "Scarlet" was dedicated to the parents of the graduating class.
4. In 1952, there were six courses offered: Agricultural, Civic, Classical, Cooperative, Commercial, and Scientific.
5. There were 27 graduates in the Class of 1952.

Tourtellotte Memorial High School Alumni Office
PO BOX 437
North Grosvenordale, CT 06255

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