



hilltopper

Tourtellotte Memorial High School Alumni Association Newsletter

Volume 3 , Issue 6

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

October/November 2010

Robyn Young '04



**ACTRESS,
DANCER,
CHOREOGRAPHER**

Left: Robyn Young TMHS '04, followed her dreams of becoming an actress, dancer, and choreographer to New York City where she currently resides and works. Robyn recently finished an off-Broadway show and will be shooting a TV pilot for the show On the Verge. Photos compliments of Robyn Young Class of 2004.

Tourtellotte Memorial High School has always had a long tradition with the arts. The original TMHS auditorium, now called the Jerome Ryscavage Auditorium, is the result of Mrs. Tourtellotte's wishes to provide the Town of Thompson a first-class venue for the arts; it became one of the very best in New England. One hundred years later the room she helped design and build is still being used by Thompson's citizens and students (see photo page 5).

Many of our graduates followed her love for the arts and became music teachers, musicians, dancers,

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1962 TMHS Valedictory Speech

BY RUTH CHAPMAN

We received the following Email from Jane (Chapman) Jackson TMHS Class of 1960. It was presented by her sister Ruth in 1962. The Email read:

Hello, TMHS Alumni Association. Attached is the valedictory speech in June 1962 by my sister, Ruth Chapman Mroczka.

In fall 2009, I visited her in Pennsylvania, where she is retired from a long career as programmer/analyst at Educational Testing Service (ETS) in Princeton, NJ. She showed me her handwritten valedictory speech, and I convinced her to word-process it. It is interesting, in light of your alumni newsletter articles last summer about the Memorial Room. I encourage you to photocopy it and make it available to visitors to that room. It clears up the meaning of the 200 pennies! And it answers several other questions and discrepancies in your articles last year.

Ruth interviewed Alice Ramsdell, who told her much of the information. (I remember Alice Ramsdell from 4th grade in West Thompson: the one-room school building; our class walked down the road to her sheep farm and watched sheep being sheered. I seem to recall a train engine there, too.)...

THE SPEECH READS:

As we gather here tonight for the graduation exercises of the class of 1962, some of you may recall the night of your own graduation from Tourtellotte. You may remember the frantic preparations you made for that memorable evening; you may remember the way the school looked then, its majestic splendor dominating the hill.

But how many of you can remember the reasons why Tourtellotte stood then and stands today? How many of its 1200 graduates ever knew the history of their alma mater? All too few, believe me.

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producers, and actors. One of our more recent alum to follow this path is Robyn Young, TMHS Class of 2004.

While at TMHS Robyn was a member of the softball team, X-country, track and field, Jazz Band (bass guitar) & regular band (tuba & percussion) and was a majorette captain. Robyn loved Metals class with Mr. Joyce and states, "I always had tons of fun creating art from scrap metal. My favorite teacher was Mr. Daigle even though we didn't always get along; he was pretty passionate about his art class."

After graduating from TMHS, Robyn attended Dean College School of Dance located in Franklin, Massachusetts, and the University of Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Nevada earning a Bachelor's Degree in Dance, with a minor in Psychology. This curriculum is not for the faint of heart as Robyn reports, "I always had a full class schedule of about 10 classes a semester divided into four to five regular classes, five dancing/arts classes." Acting, Musical Theater, Character Studies, Tap Dancing, Horton, Limón, Ballet, Hip Hop, Jazz, Dance Composition, Dance History, Pedagogy, Music Theory, Rhythm Analysis, and Early Childhood Education/Teaching were among the many areas in which she studied.

She also trained in CPR, First Aid, and the Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) method of Psychology to work with children with autism.

Robyn has been involved with many dance and theater productions to include Sesame Street and the off-Broadway musical Crazy Sexy Disco where she played the femme fatal Victoria. Currently she is in pre-production for an AFTRA (American Federation of Television and Radio Artists) TV Pilot titled *On the Verge* which begins shooting in early December.

When asked how she became interested in the arts, she replied, "I was always interested in theater and

dance, but sadly TMHS was just beginning to create programs like show choir... However I did get to choreograph parts of the dance numbers used by the TMHS majorettes. I sometimes led the rehearsals and taught choreography, which gave me the opportunity to create dance moves and work with other dancers and artists." She continues, "I also participated in most school shows from middle school until my senior year at Tourtellotte. If it had anything to do with art I was in. My favorite show was my freshman year talent show when I sang Cher's 'I Got You Babe' with my friend Ned Lange who played Sonny. We even got our picture in the newspaper. I did leave my mark on TMHS when Mr. Daigle allowed Jen Cole and me to paint a mural outside the music auditorium. This was the best week of my life at TMHS."

Robyn greatly enjoyed her time at TMHS especially with close friends Andrew Morrison (WINY Radio personality), Kyle Johnson, Carrie Coderre, Katie Kimball, Sarah Abrams, Ryan Audette, to name a few.

Robyn's goals are to choreograph a Broadway musical, film, or television show. She also dreams of tap dancing her way around the world learning and teaching what she can about dance.

Robyn is the daughter of Kay Morello Young and Mike Young of Thompson, CT. She has one sister Rosey and two dogs Hercules and Chipper. Her brother John, TMHS Class of 2002, lives in Boston and still plays drum-set, guitar, harmonica, and sings.

We all wish Robyn much luck and a great deal of future success.

Visit Robyn at <http://www.robynwithay.com/> or you can find her on Facebook.

HALL OF FAME NOMINATIONS DEADLINE DRAWING NEAR

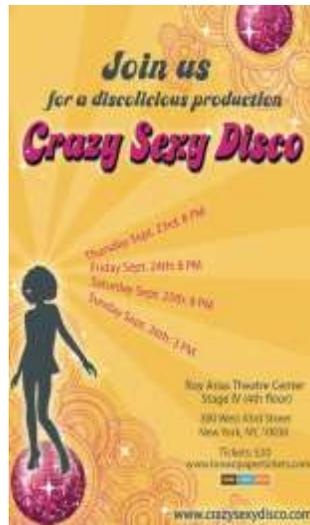
The Athletic Hall of Fame Committee will meet in December to start the 2011 Athletic Hall of Fame selection process. The process begins with nominations made by alumni or HOF Committee members. Requirements and forms for nominations can be found on the TMHSAA site at:

www.thompsonpublicschools.org/TMHSAA/index.html or by calling TMHS Athletic Director, Deb Spinelli at 860-923-2350.

The committee is also looking for new members and is specifically seeking younger members who have graduated in the 80's, 90's and 00's. If interested call Deb at the above number.



Left: The current Athletic Hall of Fame plaques located outside the Carty Gymnasium in the new TMHS building. Remember the process starts with a nomination. TMHSAA photo.



Above-left: Robyn during one of her recent photo shoots. Above-right: The billboard for Robyn's recent off-Broadway show - Crazy Sexy Disco where she played Femme Fatal - Victoria. Robyn is currently in pre-production for the TV pilot *On the Verge* and hopes to tap dance her way around the world. . We wish her much luck! Photos compliments of Robyn Young '04.

WHERE DOES OUR MEMBERSHIP MONEY GO?

Some have asked so here it is!

- Hilltopper Newsletter
- TMHS Athletic Hall of Fame celebration and plaques
- Scholarships
- TMHSAA archive office and supplies
- Student tours (These have included students from other towns!)
- Sponsoring the 1909 Tourtellotte Memorial High School building to the State Historic Register
- Memorial Room civic group tours and classes
- Alumni Banquet
- Memorial Room art research and cataloging
- Art inventory
- Special history projects
- Professional development

With your continued support and payment of our nominal annual dues will we be able to continue to maintain and expand these very important projects.



Left: We are uncertain from which newspaper this came (we suspect the Worcester Telegram) or what exact year this is from, but it gives us a little detail about Mr. Sellig's college background.

TMHSAA Fall Presentations Included Local Rotary Club



The TMHSAA Tourtellotte Committee has had a very busy fall season. The committee, charged with the responsibility of developing ways to better utilize the Memorial Room and spread the Tourtellotte story for educational purposes, has had three major events this October and November.

On October 3, 2010, the Alumni Association sponsored a booth at Thompson's Community Day held at Riverside Park on October 3, 2010 while the Tourtellotte Committee opened and manned the Memorial Room doors to Walktober Fest participants. Walktober is a series of walks that highlight the history of Northeast Connecticut throughout the month of October. Lis Burton, Tourtellotte Committee chair stated, "We had approximately 100 people visit the room. What was especially nice was it was a different type of crowd that included a number of families with children." Donna Lynch, Thompson Board of Ed chairperson and distant descendent of Mrs. Tourtellotte, and Charlie Seney, TMHSAA member and resident historian also manned the room.

On October 19, 2010, Rachael (LeFleur) Johnston '75 and Joe Lindley '74 presented Mrs. Tourtellotte's letter, the letter and presentation used during the TMHS centennial celebration, to 75 members of the local Rotary Club. Many Rotarians were unaware of the Tourtellotte story and were emotionally touched. Rachael stated, "I had people coming to me after the meeting saying that they saw people crying."

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TMHSAA Membership Renewal

Due January 1st of Each Year – Seniors (65+): \$5.00, All other Alumni: \$15.00

Name: _____

Maiden Name: _____ Class: Year: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Do you have a favorite story or photograph you would like to share with us? Please mail them along with this application.

PLEASE HELP US MAKE NEXT YEAR A SUCCESS!

Detach and mail to: TMHSAA, PO Box 437, North Grosvenordale, CT 06277

Contact us at: TMHSAA@Charter.net or Call Joe Lindley @ 860-928-5527

Visit the TMHS Website at:
<http://www.thompson.ctschool.net/TMHS/index.html>

5 things you may *NOT* know about TMHS

1. According to a 1962 Alice Ramsdell interview conducted by Ruth Chapman '62, Harriett Arnold Tourtellotte was a direct descendent of long-time Rhode Island governor Benedict Arnold (1615-1678). It was Arnold's great-grandson of the same name that switched sides and joined the British during the Revolutionary War.
2. Many of the paintings purchased by Dr. and Mrs. Tourtellotte during their trip to Europe were painted by American artists.
3. Mrs. Tourtellotte's brother Nason was one of the nation's first balloonists. Balloons were used by the US and CSA armies before the invention of airplanes.
4. There are 16 interior pillars and pilasters in the 1909 TMHS building.
5. We believe much of the gravel used in building TMHS in 1909 was from the same gravel bank seen on Rt. 12 just south of the school.

JOIN THE TEAM! WE ARE LOOKING FOR

- Webmaster
- Art and history researchers
- Part time Memorial Room curators
- History and art enthusiasts
- Newsletter writers and editors
- Scholarship Committee

Presentations Cont. *continued from page 3*

On November 3, 2010, students from Ms. Heather Krasnov's Thompson Middle School art class visited the Tourtellotte Memorial Room.

Students from five different classes learned about the Tourtellotte family and the art work displayed in the room. The art students left the room with a better understanding of the different types of art work in the room to include still life, landscapes, pastels, prints, portraits, and statuary.

If you have an organization that would like to hear the Tourtellotte story or visit the Memorial Room contact Lis Burton at lizzie_b@msn.com.



Left: Joe Lindley and wife Sue manning the TMHSAA booth at Thompson's Community Day while Lis Burton, Donna Lynch and Charlie Seney '39 manned the TMHS Memorial Room. More than 100 people visited the booth and room.

1962 Graduation Speech Cont.

I had heard various tales of Dr. and Mrs. Tourtellotte and their two daughters who died in childhood, but until this year, when the Student Council decided to publish a student handbook containing the history, did I uncover the true story. Miss Alice Ramsdell, one of the few experts on the Tourtellottes and the Tourtellotte Memorial High School, gave me the information she had, in order that more alumni and citizens of Thompson might know the history of these two great people and their generosity to the town.

Jacob Francis Tourtellotte and Harriet Arnold, both natives of Thompson, were born not far from each other during the nineteenth century. Jacob Francis was born in Wilsonville in 1835, and Harriet Arnold in the section of North Grosvenordale known as Masonville at that time, where her father was a part owner of the cotton mill.

The Tourtellotte ancestors had come to Boston in 1687, after being driven from Bordeaux, France, possibly because of their religion. They lived in Roxbury, Mass., and Newport, R.I., where they were merchants on land and sea. Polly Bates Ballard and Jacob Tourtellotte, the parents of Jacob Francis, are buried in a tiny cemetery on the Wilsonville Road, near the foot of Lowell Davis Road.

The Arnold family originally came from England in 1635. They settled in Hingham, Massachusetts, and later in Warwick, R.I. Benedict Arnold, three times the governor of R.I., was a direct descendant of Harriet Arnold.

After their early education, both Harriet and Jacob Francis Tourtellotte attended school in Dudley. The story goes that on Friday afternoons it was the custom for the young men and ladies to walk around the grounds together. And as one particular miss walked about on the first Friday she could not help watching one handsome young man, and she said to herself something like this: "Oh, I wish that he would ask me to walk with him." The young man did ask her, and Dr. and Mrs. Tourtellotte have walked together ever since.

After studying at Columbia University in New York, where he received his medical degree in 1861, Dr. Tourtellotte served as a surgeon in the Civil War, resigning at its close.

He married Harriet Arnold in 1865 and later moved to the town of Winona, on the borderline of Minnesota and Wisconsin. In Winona, he served as a physician, and became a financier, acquiring his wealth in real estate, stocks, and bonds.

The first of their two daughters, Harriet Lucina Mary, was born to the Tourtellottes on August 10, 1869, but she died the next year - - just eight days before her first birthday.

Their second daughter, Frances Harriet, came into the world on July 28, 1874, and must have given her parents great delight during her 10 years with them. But death claimed her also, on March 14, 1884,

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CONTROVERSY FOUND TMHS AND THOMPSON IN 1938

Robyn Young '04 Cont.

SUPERINTENDENT MELDEN E. SMITH RESIGNS

BY: Staff Writer

Charlie Seney '39, our resident historical authority, recently found a Putnam Patriot newspaper article dated circa 1938 that sheds little light on an old TMHS controversy.

While many of the details have been lost to time, Charlie, a Tourtellotte student in 1938, recalls a disagreement existing between the Thompson Board of Education and the Superintendent, Mr. Melden Smith.

Mr. Smith, according to our recent superintendent and principal research, served as the Thompson's superintendent and TMHS principal from 1937 to 1938 (Hilltopper, 2010, Sept., p. 6). He replaced Mr. W.G. Colby as TMHS principal.

If you have any further information about Mr. Smith's departure or have any old newspaper articles about Tourtellotte Memorial High School send them to TMHS@Charter.net or contact Charlie at cseney@ct.metrocast.net

Thanks Charlie!

M. E. Smith Resigns As School Head

Has Been Superintendent in Thompson For Past Year.— Gave No Reason For Quitting —Is Also T.M.H.S. Principal

Came From Mass.

Melden E. Smith, superintendent of schools in the Town of Thompson and principal of Tourtellotte Memorial High School in North Grosvenordale has submitted his resignation to the Board of Education, it was announced last Friday evening, following a meeting of the board. The resignation will become effective in June of this year, following the close of the Spring term.

Mr. Smith, who has been head of the Thompson school system for the past year, coming there from Provincetown, Mass., where he was superintendent of the schools in Provincetown, Truro and Wellfleet, gave no reason for quitting this post which he held for only one year. However, he did say that he had considered other positions before making his decision.

Mr. Smith was educated at Coburn Classical Institute in Waterville, Maine, and at Columbia University in New York, where he majored in the administration of school systems. He started his career in the educational field as principal of the public schools of York, Maine in 1924. He held a similar position in Barre, Mass. in 1926 and in Montague, Mass from 1927 until 1934. From that year until 1936 Mr. Smith was superintendent of schools in Bellingham and Mendon, Mass.

During these years, Mr. Smith has taken summer studies at the University of Chicago, Columbia University and Harvard University. He is at present studying for his M. A degree at the latter university.

The Thompson Board of Education has, as yet, taken no action on the appointment of a successor to the resigned superintendent.



Above: More shots of Robyn Young '04. You can visit Robyn's site at www.robynwithay.com. Photos compliments of Robyn Young.



Above: Ruth Chapman and the Class of 1962. Photo compliments of the TMHSAA.



Above: Children from TMS attending a November 12, 2010 show at the Ryscavage Auditorium. Maybe this group has the next Robyn Young! Photo compliments of Bill Birch TPS Maintenance Director.

Dr. Timothy Monahan, M.D. TMHS Class of 1981

The following is reprinted with the permission of the Norwich Bulletin. The article was written by Bulletin reporter Emily Groves and it appeared in the September 17, 2010 edition. Many thanks to the Norwich Bulletin!



Dr. Timothy Monahan, M.D. Dermatology or LTC Timothy P. Monahan served from October 25, 2007 to December 23, 2008, in the Iraq war, Operation Iraqi Freedom in the U.S. Army, 3-7 Infantry Battalion. Photo compliments of Norwich Bulletin.

By **EMILY GROVES** - Norwich Bulletin

Posted Sep 17, 2010 @ 11:17 PM

Age: 47

Branch of military: U.S. Army

Years of service: 1981-2010

Hometown: Woodstock

Service

Timothy P. Monahan is a 1981 graduate of Tourtellotte Memorial High School, in Thompson and a 1985 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He initially was assigned as a military intelligence officer to a tank battalion in what was then West Germany.

He saw the Berlin Wall before it was demolished and later was assigned to Seoul, South Korea, where he helped prepare daily estimates on what the North Korean military was doing. He received an Army scholarship to study medicine at Hahnemann University Medical School in Philadelphia. He interned at Tripler Army Hospital in Hawaii and completed his residency in dermatology at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore.

After 1 1/2 years as chief of dermatology at Fort Stewart, Ga., Army Hospital, he was promoted to lieutenant colonel and assigned to an infantry battalion in Iraq as a battalion surgeon in October 2007, remaining there until December 2008. He was awarded the Bronze Star for his service in Iraq.

Outside military life

In early May, Dr. Monahan joined the Day

Kimball Hospital staff as a dermatologist. His office is in the hospital's Danielson Health Center, on Green Hollow Road. He grew up in the Wilsonville section of Thompson, the third of seven children of Robert and Cecile Monahan. He was the first member of his family to attend college.

He and his wife, Melita, have a daughter, Kiara, 9, and a son, Tristan, 8. He said he likes being part of the hospital staff because he doesn't have to run the office and can concentrate on practicing medicine.

In Iraq, we were set up on a small cove of the Euphrates River, constantly working under combat conditions. We went out with a forward aid station during offensive operations to clear the area of terrorists, often treating battle casualties while under fire. ... When we could, we would set up a clinic at a school or other location and treat the Iraqi population. On one day, I, along with a physician's assistant and medics, treated approximately 400 people.

Happy Veterans Day to Dr. Monahan and all our other veterans!

TMHSAA Seeking Fund Raising Ideas

The TMHSAA is seeking fund raising ideas, specifically ideas that will not interfere with the existing volunteer based organizations at the TMHS such as Project Graduation, athletics, cheerleading, etc.

While we strive to keep our costs as low as possible there are costs associated with the good work we do. Any ideas? Email to: TMHSAA@Charter.net

WE WANT YOUR OLD PICTURES AND STORIES!

We are looking for pictures and stories from your time at TMHS. They can be about anything Tourtellotte and can include athletics, classmates, plays, special events, etc. Each month we would like to feature pictures from the past. Send them to: AlumniAssociation@thompson.ctschool.net or mail them to **Tourtellotte Memorial High School Alumni Office**, 785 Riverside Drive, North Grosvenordale, CT 06255. We'll scan them and send them back.

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: Joe Lindley '74'

*Staff Members: Jim Sali '51' - Gladys Tucker '52' - Jane Ellison '61' - Eileen Deary '77' - Sandy Becker '79' - Rachael Johnston '75' - Alex Kirkland '08', Kris Blanchard '87, Charlie Seney '39
Archives: Gladys Tucker '52' and Rita Rohr '56*

If you would like to contribute short stories to the hilltopper please contact us at TMHSAA@Charter.net

1962 Speech Cont.

leaving the Tourtellottes to walk on alone. Desiring to use their wealth to serve humanity and honor the memory of their two daughters, Dr. and Mrs. Tourtellotte chose to build a memorial, the benefit of which might be felt throughout the years. But not just any cold, stone memorial would serve their purpose; it had to be the finest and most useful piece of architecture possible. Especially they wanted their money to serve the youth of the community, to give the young people the opportunities that their two children would have had, had they lived longer. Remembering their hometown, they returned to Thompson and made plans for the construction of a high school here.

At first they looked for a site on Thompson Hill. Catching their eye was a piece of land belonging to a Major Beebe, just to the right of Marianapolis' entrance on the Hill. They had pictured a magnificent building in the colonial setting of the Hill with a lawn sweeping gracefully to the Common; but some of the townspeople strongly protested that the influx of students to the Hill would bring an undue amount of disease and illness to the town. This storm of protest forced the Tourtellottes to look elsewhere for a location.

The second time they chose the present site, a 14-acre pastureland within sight of Mrs. Tourtellotte's childhood home. The Grosvenordale Company donated the acreage, and Clinton S. Andern, an official with the Company, was made general supervisor. The cornerstone of the building was laid in 1907, and work was begun.

Much local material was used - - some 500 oxcarts of gravel were drawn from Elliot's Hill to be used in cementing the walls of the building. Elliot's Hill is the one in back of the river and the mill in Grosvenordale.

In addition to this local source, some \$13,000 worth of Indiana limestone was brought in, and \$6,000 worth of marble and granite. All in all, the total cost of the building alone was \$104,000.

Added later were the furnishings, the granite steps in front of the entrance, and the two gateways, which might have been intended as the endpoints of a long retainer wall for a sloping lawn in front of the high school. These finishing touches made the grand total for the building and grounds over \$134,000.

But the Tourtellottes did not stop with this. They built a janitor's house at the foot of the hill and provided for the principal's home on Main Street.

Mr. Frank Rich was the first janitor of the school, and he lived in the nearby residence. Dr. and Mrs. Tourtellotte, when they visited Thompson, would stay at the janitor's house. Later, as the faculty increased and transportation was difficult, the building was used as a boarding house for teachers. Some of you may remember when it was being used as such. At one time the rent that the principals paid was allotted for the annual Washington trip expenses.

The Tourtellottes did not stop here either. They had built and furnished a high school and had provided for its principal and its janitor; now they endowed this institution with a monetary principal that provides approximately \$22,000 annually for the educational expenses of the high school. At one time this income took care of all the expenses; now it continues to provide a good portion of the education budget. It is likely that without this fund the town would not have been able to build and maintain a high school of its own; the youth would have had to attend schools in some other town.

This evening you are all welcome and urged to walk through the halls of Tourtellotte, to contemplate its story, and to pause for a moment in the Memorial Room on the second floor. There you will find some of the cultural objects collected by Dr. and Mrs. Tourtellotte on their trips to Europe. Also there, are some family portraits and one particular gift which is noteworthy. It was on the occasion of Mrs. Tourtellotte's 60th birthday that a friend of hers presented her with two letter bags, each containing 100 pennies. With them went the hope that she might live for a hundred years.

She died in 1919, a few years short of that goal, and was buried in Winona with her husband, who had died in 1912.

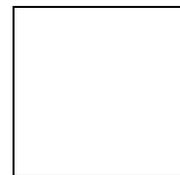
But through their generosity in memory of their two daughters, the fame of Dr. and Mrs. Jacob Francis Tourtellotte is sure to live on much longer than 100 years. They built this Memorial, but more than that, they have molded over 1200 other memorials since the high school opened in 1909, and these are the greatest memorials to the Tourtellottes, because they are living memorials. **THANKS JANE!!**



Left: Ruth Chapman's TMHS senior picture. Ruth's 1962 interview with Alice Ramsdell provided us much detail to the Tourtellotte story. With publications like the Hilltopper we are able to post the story in the E-world keeping the story alive and allowing all to enjoy. If you have any stories about TMHS please contact us. Photo compliments of the TMHSAA.

NEXT ALUMNI MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR 6:30 P.M. DECEMBER 1, 2010 AT THE RYSCAVAGE AUDITORIUM, TOURTELLOTTE MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL. COME ON BY AND SAY HELLO!

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



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED
PLEASE SEND US YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS TO:
TMHSAA@charter.net