

Blue 'n' Gold

Winter 2018-19

HVRHS Alumni Association

Volume 21, Issue 1

Strever is the New Principal



Ian Strever is Housatonic Valley Regional High School's newest principal. He was named to the post last April, after serving as assistant principal since 2011. He replaced Jose Martinez, who was at the helm for four years before retiring in June.

Strever said he believed he will bring stability to the school because he's familiar with its landscape in terms of policies, faculty, students and families. He is pleased to be living and working in the region, and

looks forward to "helping students get what they need from us," he said.

Strever spoke of being honored to know the history of some of the school's long-term, well-respected principals, such as Paul Stoddard and Jack Mahoney, and to be joining that lineage. He served as interim principal in 2013-14 and was asked to consider the principalship then.

"I needed more seasoning," he said. "I wanted someone to mentor me. I thought this was where I wanted to be. There aren't many schools that have such an intimate relationship with the community. It really is a special place."

As he said when hired, Strever, 43, has changed the leadership structure, giving the leadership team—department heads and other faculty members—organizational and communication responsibilities.

"That's important because they need the autonomy to execute important academic decisions," he said. "They are a

talented and well-informed faculty, and can determine where we go." The school has also returned to the system of department chairmen conducting teacher evaluations. That was changed at some

continued on page 2

Schibi is New Assistant

Moving into Strever's seat is Steve Schibi, who came from Lewis Mills High School in Burlington, his alma mater, where he was Dean of Students. His philosophy of dealing with students involves being non-punitive, while working toward connectedness and developing relationships.

Looking at his role at Housatonic, he said, "I'm not coming here to reshape what they have, but to embrace what they have." At 6-foot-6, Schibi played basketball and now coaches the sport. He and his wife, who teaches physical education and health at Masuk High School in Monroe, have two sons. They live in Burlington.

2018 Athletic Hall of Fame

The inductees into the 2018 Housatonic Valley Regional High School Athletic Hall of Fame have gone far and wide, but they all attribute their success in part to what was instilled in them at the school.

Ten men and women were honored at a ceremony on Sunday, Nov. 11, for their contributions both as students and their accomplishments later in life. Many familiar former coaches were there to make the presentations.

Those who were named in the 12th ceremony since the Hall of Fame originated in 1996 are: coach Susan Kennedy; **John O'Hara**, class of '47; **Ben Bain**, class of '04; **Jordan Bayersdorfer**, class of '98; **Robert Stoddard**, class of '74; **Kristie Miller**, class of '98; **Katie O'Dell Staszewski**, class of '90; **Adam Kelsey**, class of '91; **Willis "Hoot" Belter**, class of '68; and **Martin "Marty" Whalen**, class of '61.

David Bayersdorfer, a retired teacher and coach at the school, served as master of ceremonies. He said the inspiration for establishing the hall was longtime coach Ed Tyburski's induction into the Ansonia High School Hall of Fame. "It gives the school a sense of history and dedication," he said.



The inductees into the 2018 Athletic Hall of Fame, are, from left: John O'Hara, Susan Kennedy, Hoot Belter, Kristie Miller, Martin Whalen, Ben Bain, Adam Kelsey and Jordan Bayersdorfer.

Retired teacher and coach Denise Dower presented Kennedy with her award. She was at Housatonic for three years in the 1970s, where she taught, developed the softball program and

continued on page 5

Your Association at Work

A Message from Chairman Patricia Allyn Mechare, Class of '64

Most of you know that the Housatonic Valley Regional High School Alumni Association distributes a newsletter, the Blue 'n' Gold, several times a year, updating alums on various earmarks and activities regarding our classes and also informs you of events that are a current part of our alma mater. But did you know that the association's activism goes far beyond that?

The association is committed to providing financial assistance to various projects that are important in enhancing the school's educational, student and community goals. Over the years we have financially supported construction of the school's tennis courts and worked with the school's Arboretum Committee to financially assist in various landscaping projects and deal with eradicating invasive plants on the school's property.

We made a substantial donation to saving the Clark B. Wood building and renovating a part of the building that now houses the Mahoney-Hewat Science and Technology Center. The center is an innovative classroom and extra curricula space for the school's robotic and Envirothon teams.

We provide an annual scholarship to a senior whose parent and/or grandparent was a Housatonic Valley Regional High School graduate. We have organized reunions of the high school, such as the 50th, 60th and, more recently, the 75th celebrations, as well as supporting classes in gathering information for their own class reunions.

We have more recently financially supported the work of a new and emerging program at the high school-the Career/Work Experience Program and the reemergence of the International Travel Club. In addition, we have financially supported the school's Athletic Hall of Fame ceremony with a luncheon for the recipients and guests. We instituted, a year ago, the Wall of Honor showcase and a celebratory program and luncheon that recognize achievements of alums in their chosen field, in volunteer service or in making significant contributions to the Regional School District #1.

The Alumni Association is on the move! We would appreciate any donations you might be able to make to continue our all-important work. Thank you in advance for your contribution.



2018 Alumni Scholarship

The winner this year is **Autumn Freudenberg**. Her parents are **Susan Gregory Freudenberg**, class of '92 and **Matthew Freudenberg**, class of '93 and grandparents are **Diane Campbell Freudenberg**, class of '72 and **Kirk Freudenberg**, class of '67. Autumn will attend Montana State University.

HVRHS Wall of Honor

Applications are now being accepted for the 2019 induction into the Wall of Honor. To nominate someone, go to hvrhsalumni.org or call Julie Lang at the high school at 860-824-5123, ext. 162.



Back Where He Should Be

Honest, Abe has moved. The beloved Abraham Lincoln statue that has long been a prominent figure at Housatonic is now at the entranceway, where he stood for many years. He was moved down to the end of the hallway many years ago for safety reasons. But facilities manager **Jeff Lloyd**, '78, proposed it could once again be placed in front of the auditorium's doors and so he and the custodial staff and Bob Sheldon of Sheldon Glass recently made it happen. The alumni association funded the project.

Principal *from page 1*

point to give the responsibility to the principal and assistant principal. With nearly 40 faculty members, it was a very time-consuming task for the pair.

Strever said teachers are working together to improve instruction. "They are well-suited for this since they are in the classroom, and have experiences in curriculum and instruction. They can help each other and facilitate each other.

"Generally, programs are teacher driven," he continued "When people see their ideas come to fruition, it's pretty gratifying for them. It helps improve

morale and that's something we need to address."

The new grading system, which allows for no failures, led to controversy last year. Students cannot receive a D or F, but only an NYP (not yet proficient) if the material has not been learned.

"Grades are the most emotional-laden topic for parents, teachers and students," he said, adding he and the leadership team are working to be sure all are part of ongoing conversations.

Declining enrollment is another issue the new principal is addressing, noting

the situation makes staffing decisions difficult.

Strever holds a bachelor's degree from Albright College in Reading, Pa., a master's in English with a focus in writing from Western Connecticut State University and a sixth-year administrative certificate from the University of Bridgeport.

He taught English at Danbury High School for 13 years and was department head for part of that time. He is divorced and has one daughter.

Alumni News by Class and Decade

1940s

Catherine Turrill Lupi, '68 writes that she and her father, **John Turrill, '42**, who lives in California, have occasionally been on the mailing list for the print versions of the newsletter for HVRHS alumni. She said she was wondering how many members of his graduating class are still alive (he turned 95 this past year). My sister **Barbara Turrill, '69** is a guitarist and singer-songwriter in Newport, OR. She is a scholar and art historian in Sacramento, California (both recently retired from our jobs, with more time for our passions).

1950s

Richard Oliver, '52, enjoys receiving the Blue 'n' Gold. "I was especially pleased to hear about **Larry McCabe's** accomplishments. He was a good friend in our 1952 class, and I knew his dynamic personality would carry him far. After graduating in 1952, I went on to college at Cornell, followed by three years in the Army where I learned Russian and served in Germany. Russian was then taught at the Army Language School, which is located on the beautiful Monterey Peninsula in central California, where I have spent most of my adult life working in the insurance business. Ginny, my wife of nearly 60 years, and I raised our two boys here. Our son Rich is a five-time motorcycle racing national champion and our son John is self-employed in his computer business. I retired from my insurance agency 20 years ago and now spend my spare time

composing for, and playing the piano, and writing short stories and poetry. In closing, I hope life is good for you and all my classmates."

Lee Fuller Hoag, '52, writes that she has been a happy Floridian for the last 22 years. Quilting with a group from her church is a big part of her life. They make quilts for ill and bereaved people, as well as children in the Methodist Children's Home. They also make table runners and placemats, etc. to sell at the semi-annual sales, along with quilts. Music, knitting, reading and golf take up a lot of her time.

In a note from **Lydia Coleman Hutchinson, '57**, she said, "Dwight and I continue to live in Middletown, MD, in our 200-year-old German federal-style farmhouse. As I did then at HVRHS, I raise and show cairn terriers. Our kennel is credited with 275 A.K.C. champions. I also judge dog shows all over the United States and in more than a dozen countries."

2010s

Alexa Curtiss, class of '12, earned a master's degree ('17) in Child Life and Family Centered Care from Wheelock College's accelerated dual degree program, sat for her certification exam and is now working as a certified child life specialist at the Children's Hospital at St. Peter's University Hospital in New Brunswick, NJ.



Some members of the **class of '58** held a mini reunion. From left are: Rose Vandebogart, Sandi Smith, Pat Bachetti and Jean Milici. Seated is Lynn Cline.

The Class of '72 enjoyed a reunion this year.



The **class of '73** reunion was held on Friday, Sept. 21, for a meet-and-greet at the Hayloft Lounge at Lone Oak Campsites in East Canaan hosted by classmate Peter Brown. A reunion dinner was held on Saturday, Sept. 22, at the Canaan Country Club. About 30 classmates and their spouses were in attendance. Paul Erickson of Steamboat Springs, CO, had the honor of traveling the farthest to attend. Reunion committee members were Joann Gleason Whitmore, Paula McGivern Rogers, Allyn Hurlburt, Perry Gasperini, Peter Brown and Gary Davis.



The **class of '65** held a reunion this past July.

Back row: Bob Christinat, Forbes Loverin, Peter Marston, Roxann Roulin Lehberger, Sandra Stanton, Gail Neville Hammond, Judy Gobillot Soule, Linda Lundeen Estabrook, Harold Posselt and Richard Boscardin.

Middle row: Nancy Waldron Smith, Jane Caron McGarry, Kathy Larkin, Carol Kinsman Gillette, Madeleine Durand Byrne, Linda Carley Pierce, Marylou Carlson Bradley, Sally Gustafson Schoonmaker, Lynn Rebillard Reifsnnyder, Donna Castagna Getchell and John McGuire.

Front row: Fern Cubley Hammer, Mike Redmond, BJ Ducillo Christinat, Michele Markey Witowski and John Breasted.

VISITING WITH SOME GRADUATES

Thomas Gailles, Jr., Class of 1958



Thomas Gailles, Jr.

The class of 1958 was so fortunate to be able to attend a high school staffed by great teachers who were led by the remarkable Dr. Paul Stoddard. Unfortunately, I was far from the top. Dr. Stoddard took me aside shortly before graduation and inquired how I had not distinguished myself with my studies while the IQ test that he made all students take in their senior year had me near the top. He wanted an explanation of why my school record was so upside down.

“Well, sir,” I said, “it was Latin.” My mother made me take Latin as a freshman so I could qualify for entrance into Hotchkiss (which I did not want to attend). I failed Latin—twice! Poor Miss Estey. Anyway, my grade point average was destroyed by that subject.

Shortly after graduation, I entered the Navy. I became a radioman which involved communications between ships and shore. My first assignment was a dream, working in the communications center in London, England. I served more than three years there, meeting Wendy, the young lady that I would marry and who has put up with me for 57 years.

Upon returning to the United States with my family, I re-enlisted in the Navy, attended submarine school, and spent the bulk of my 20 years of service associated with subs. I rose quickly through the ranks and, by my ninth year, I had become a chief petty officer. I then took the exams for warrant officer, of which 4,000 took part and 400 would be selected. I was one of the 400 and thank God, Latin was not included. I was assigned to the Atlantic Submarine headquarters in Norfolk, Va., where 40 of the 400 warrant officers were promoted to lieutenant. Again, I was lucky to be one of those promoted.

Although my Navy career was on track for further promotions, I wanted to experience what civilian life could bring. So, after 20-1/2 half years of military service, I retired and joined a company in New York City where my brother Gary (who was a Hotchkiss grad) worked. Unable to afford living in the city and having children in school, we moved to Long Island and I began working in one of the company's warehouse properties. While I was working on Long Island, the main office of Chilewich Corporation concluded a contract with the Soviet Union to supply most of the bulk food products for that huge country. Part of the contract required all bulk products to be shipped on Soviet vessels.

The first shipment was for 20,000 metric tons of Malaysian palm oil. All sorts of problems were happening with the loading of the ship. Frustrated, the boss Simon Chilewich demanded that someone in the company who knew something about ships needed to be involved. I was called at the office in Long Island and asked if I could fly to Malaysia the next day and solve the problems. It was unreal being on a Soviet vessel and although the ship's captain was sure I was a CIA spy, we got the ship loaded and it sailed for the Black Sea. I called my New York office to inform them I had the paperwork required to collect payment. I was told to proceed to Rotterdam where we were loading soybean oil. From the Netherlands, I was sent to Argentina to load 20,000 metric tons of sunflower oil. This whirlwind job lasted for the next seven years, and we ended up living in Singapore.

Having sold our Long Island home to move to Singapore, Wendy and I ultimately returned to the United States to start fresh and resume working in New York. After much thought, I chose Canaan instead. We had our furniture shipped to my family home, which was vacant following the passing of my parents. To provide an income, I purchased a package store. We sold the store and opened a restaurant at the

railroad station which was vacant at the time.

To shorten this story, we eventually owned three restaurants. During our time as restaurant owners, I served two terms as a selectman in North Canaan. If only I hadn't taken Latin, I could have been somebody!

Catherine “Teeny” Posselt Bachrach, Class of 1961

A highlight of Catherine Bachrach's high school career took place the first half of her senior year when she lived and studied in Italy as part of the AFS program. That experience led to an interest in travel and learning about other cultures that still exists today.

Like so many others who went through Housatonic, she was greatly influenced by a number of outstanding teachers, including Lincoln Foster and Donald Kobler. They provided her with knowledge and a sense of curiosity that allowed for that exploration.



Catherine “Teeny” Posselt Bachrach

But there were some tough parts of being a student from Kent in the early 60s, she noted. The distance to the high school was long and there was no late bus. That was also before the enactment of Title IX that called for the existence of girls' sports programs.

The AFS experience led to her interest in going into the Peace Corps., where again she was immersed in a different culture; this time in Turkey. She was a teacher during her tenure there. “I believed if I could go off to a foreign land at 17, I could do it at 22 after college at Berkeley,” said the Kent resident.

Bachrach's path then led her to a career in social services. She and her family—husband, Bill and two daughters—lived in Philadelphia, where she first taught at a high school and then concentrated in the area of social services. She later established an agency to support victims of crime.

“My small-town experiences and values played a role in that,” she said. “Philadelphia had a high level of responsibility and people took on problems. There was a small-town feel to Philly.”

After 30 years, Bachrach returned to Kent. Her elderly mother needed more care and her husband had moved back earlier to work as a teacher for Region I.

Since coming back to her hometown, she has become heavily involved in social service endeavors. “I brought my big-city experiences to Kent.”

For many years, she worked as the assistant director and program director at the New Milford Senior Center. Upon retirement, she hasn't missed a beat. She was the chairman of the Kent Village Housing for the Elderly, which oversees Templeton Farms, a senior housing complex, for many years. She was one of the founders of the Kent Community Fund and still serves on its board. That group helps town residents by paying for their emergency needs. She oversees the Meals on Wheels program in Kent, is a member of the Streetscape Committee and the Kent Memorial Library's development committee.

Bachrach is a strong advocate for volunteerism, obviously practicing what she promotes. “So many people of our generation have been able to make a contribution through volunteerism no matter where we live. We're able to use our work and life experiences in a productive way.”

Hall of Fame *from page 1*

reinstated field hockey. She holds a master's degree and Ph.D in adaptive physical education programming and for 26 years officiated field hockey, women's lacrosse and basketball.

Kennedy said she came to Housatonic just before the beginning of Title IX, which would open up sports doors for women. "It's been an interesting ride and I have Housatonic to thank for kicking me in the butt. I'll always remember this school."

Ed Kirby, '45, who was a coach, teacher and principal at Housatonic, and Region 1 assistant superintendent, gave the award to O'Hara. O'Hara was a co-captain of the basketball team and ran track. Kirby said he was one of the people responsible for bringing football to the school. He was an outstanding student and class president his junior and senior years.

O'Hara went on to become an attorney. In accepting the award, he recalled playing his last basketball game in Korea while serving in the military when he was accidentally knocked out. "I enjoyed this school and everywhere I went," he told the audience.

Bain was introduced by former teacher and coach Mike DeMazza, who spoke of Bain's prowess on the football field, noting his teams rode the "Bain Train." While an outstanding player, he always was humble and gave praise to his teammates. Bain talked about the many fond memories made at Housatonic, saying he owes a lot about the work ethic and code he lives by to the school. "This award is as much for the offensive line as it is mine," he said.

Jordan Bayersdorfer's childhood memories are of spending time on the Housatonic fields with his father. As a player, he said the coaches were his heroes, teaching him more than just the physical fundamentals, but the emotional and mental as well. He spoke with fondness about DeMazza and Michael Guy, saying they taught him to be a leader and deal with adversity. He also praised those he played with, saying, "Our games have changed, but we'll always be teammates." He played baseball, football and ice hockey.

Miller was introduced by her sister **Jaime Miller Crane, '94**, and niece Emma. Now an emergency room doctor in Austin, Tex., she was a four-year starter for Housatonic's field hockey and softball teams. She also played softball at Bowdoin College,

capturing many awards. She gave much credit to her Housatonic softball coach Mark Scozzafava, who knew she could succeed at first base.

"I always talk about how athletics improved my skills and helped in my success," Miller said. "I work in an ER where there is managed chaos. Sometimes I would love someone to pinch run, but at those moments I take a breath and form and exercise a plan."

Russ Coward, former teacher and coach, paid tribute to Adam Kelsey, who was on his tennis team, as well as playing soccer and basketball. He had talent on the court and gave inspiration to his team, participating in the school's first champion singles match," Coward said. He spoke about Kelsey not playing one season, but the athlete explained his eligibility was withdrawn because of poor grades. He said he learned many lessons at Housatonic, the best being that he was allowed to fail.

He went on to live in Denver and was a volunteer assistant at Denver South High School, eventually becoming a coach who was named coach of the year, a social studies teacher, dean of students and is currently the school's athletic director. "I will continue to strive to recognize Housy in the best way I can. I want to be like the coaches who impacted so many."

Belter comes from a long line of Housatonic athletes, including his father and uncle. He was a basketball and baseball player who received the Sportsmanship Award at graduation. After coaching in Arizona, he returned to Region 1 where he taught for many years and has coached numerous teams. He thanked all those who had more belief in him than he had in himself.

Whalen played basketball and baseball during his high school years and had the distinction of catching **Steve Blass, '60**, who went on to become a major league pitcher, said Kirby. He and his brothers were all good athletes. He came home after serving in the Army and coached youth baseball and basketball teams for many years. "I had a wonderful time at this high school playing ball," he said. "I learned a lot of lessons, some hard."

Stoddard, who was on the basketball, cross country and track and field teams, is now a dentist. He earned MVPs in cross country and track. Staszewski played three sports: soccer, basketball and track and field, earning state honors in soccer and track. Neither of them was able to attend.

In Memoriam

Joseph Solan, '48

Mary Killawee, '50

Ruth Stoddard Dutcher, '51

Virginia Eaton Ferranti, '51

Laurence Smith, '52

William Gobillot, '53

Richard E. Osborne, '54

William Tobin, '54

Roger B. Clapp, '56

Thomas Coons, '56

Richard Calhoun, '57

Larry Jones, '57

Leigh Ford Candelent, '58

John Luning, '58

Nelson French, '61

Billy May Siena, '62

Craig Ford, '63

Shirley Riva Paulk, '63

Tom Carroll, '64

Tim B. Whalen, '66

Clifton Hawver, '67

JoAnn Luminati Plante, '67

Amy Whitcomb, '67

Beverly Tuncy Wilcox, '67

James Victory, '68

Virginia Lee Tatsapaugh Mieli, '77

Jeremy Tadiello, '94

Sarah Smith, '08

Deanna Silvernail, '14

Lukas Kosko, '18

Faculty

Holly Adams

Claire DeProdocini

Duncan Denny

HOUSATONIC IN THE SIXTIES

The 1960s were a tumultuous time in the United States. While students at Housatonic Valley Regional High School, a small high school in a rural part of Connecticut, were aware of the national scene and all that was happening, they were also focused on being teenagers and getting through their own sometimes anxiety-ridden days.

Several of those alumni shared their memories with current students of social studies teacher Peter Vermilyea last fall. He began by saying that the social studies teachers work with students to "make connections to the past and to understand national trends by examining local history." The teens spent four months researching individual projects of that decade, focusing on a wide range of events and issues. They then crafted questions to ask the visitors.

Armed with yearbooks, varsity sweaters and many photographs, the guests were only too happy to share their reminiscences. Hoot Belter, graduating class of 1968, said most students were involved either in sports or vo-ag. His class of 124 was one of the smallest during that period when enrollment reached nearly 800. (Today it's about 380.)

Belter, of Salisbury, talked about how the demographics of the area have changed over the years with weekenders buying second homes, resulting in many families having no roots here. He said relations between the private and public schools were closer back when he was growing up. He left the area in 1976 and returned five years later to find a real division. "That was not going on when I went to school. My father went here too, and he never saw that."

Peg Fracaro, class of 1966, of Canaan spoke fondly of the many good teachers she had at Housatonic, including Ed Kirby for science. He went on to become principal of the school and then assistant superintendent. She praised Stewart Luce, whom she had for math, and Jack Mahoney, who taught college English. He, too, went on to become principal in later years.

Many students were in the college prep track then, said Fracaro. The war in Vietnam was going on and several went onto higher

learning to avoid the draft. "We were encouraged to get an education," she said.

Fracaro spoke wistfully about the cliques that were strong at the school and looking back is sad that students weren't more inclusive. She regrets that there wasn't always enough compassion shown.

Paging through her yearbook, she showed the students a photograph of her in the junior prom court. Back then, the boys voted on which girls would be queen or on the court. She said later on she felt bad for those who didn't make it. She recalled her father bought her a velvet dress to wear for the evening and that some mothers felt it was too sophisticated.

Joan Segalla Baker of Canaan, a member of the class of '69, talked to the students about dress codes and how strict Principal Paul Stoddard was. He'd check out what girls were wearing when they arrived at school and some were sent back home to change if he didn't think their apparel was appropriate. She, too, spoke of cliques, and how those who went to elementary school together often hung out with each other during high school. Canaan in those days had the largest population at Housatonic and those residents tended to stick together, she said.

Her one regret from those days is not daring to ask her father if she could go to Woodstock. Asked how families got their local news back then, Baker smiled, and replied, "Through gossip."

Douglas Humes, Jr., of Canaan and a member of the class of 1965, was a bit taken aback when one of the students said, "My mother was born in 1964." Humes spoke about some of the differences between then and now, noting there were no organized girls' sports back then and students had a place to smoke on campus.

Students reacted positively to the program, saying they enjoyed learning about that time through those that lived it. The interviews were transcribed and Vermilyea said they have to read a percentage of them and then write a reflection. He spoke of the enormous benefit of preserving history through such interviews. Next year, the concentration will be on the 1970s.

Hoot Belter, class of '68, was among those who spoke to students about life in the 1960s



To reach the Editor: Ruth Epstein
Telephone: 860-927-4057; Email: KCSRuth@aol.com

HVRS Alumni Association
c/o HVRS
246 Warren Turnpike, Falls Village, CT 06031



Non Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit #5