

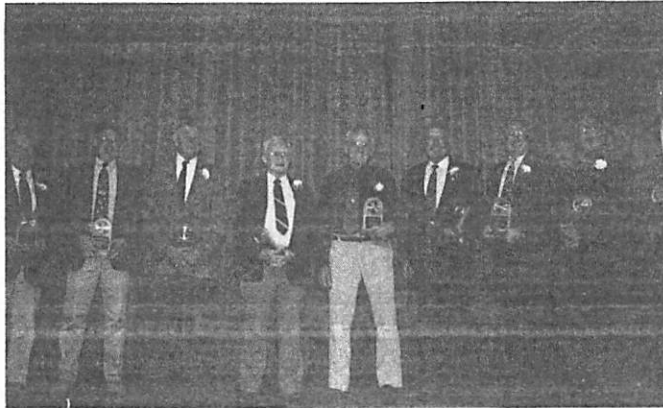
Blue 'n' Gold

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Spring 1997

Alum Association Back in Business Housy Hall of Fame Debut

Back in the forties and fifties, there was an active Alumni Association at Housatonic Valley Regional High School. Dr. Stoddard saw to it. But along about 1960, according to some who were involved, it entered a dormant stage. Each year since, at



graduation, a small Alumni Scholarship has been presented using interest (some \$7,000) built up over the years from old dues and occasional donations. In 1989, at the 50th Anniversary Celebration, there was considerable talk about resurrecting the Alumni Association, and some members of the 50th Anniversary Committee, prompted by the Twenty First Century Fund Committee, have come together to do just that. So far, the members of this Alumni Committee are Dorothy (Winn) Cecchinato, Class of 1947; Dale Prindle, Class of 1953; Bunny (Cecchinato) McGuire, Class of 1955; Patricia (Allyn) Mechare, Class of 1964; Judith (Thormann) Moore, Guidance Counselor and long-time Housy loyalist; and John Mahoney, former principal and member of the Class of 1995 (Honorary). With help from some other alumni in the local area, they have launched a campaign to identify a class agent for each of the classes. The agents will maintain up-to-date lists of classmate addresses and collect news items from classmates to pass along to the Alumni Committee for inclusion in

the newsletter. One agent from each decade will serve on the Alumni Committee.

The plan is to produce two issues of the newsletter each year, one in the spring and one in the fall. Featured will be reunions, transition (weddings, births, deaths), notable achievements, and news of the school today.

A long range goal is to make a difference at the school through some major contributions, but for now the need is to come up with enough dollars to get started. One mailing of this newsletter to 6,000 alumni costs \$900 just in postage alone. So we ask that you send a donation to HVRHS, Warren Turnpike, Falls Village, CT 06031, Att: Bunny McGuire. To be sure they are tax-deductible, checks should be made payable to: 21st Century Fund, Berkshire Taconic Foundation.

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The E. Louise Frink Cafeteria was a festive place on Sunday, November 17, 1996. The occasion: a luncheon to honor the first ten inductees into the brand new Housatonic Sports Hall of Fame.

The Hall of Fame is the brainchild of current Director of Athletics David Bayersdorfer, who secured administrative and board support for the idea in early 1996. The primary objective is "To honor past Housatonic Valley Regional High School athletes, coaches, and community resource people for their contributions to the school and community." Applications are made to a review committee by supporters of nominees. Members of the review committee are Principal Kathleen Burkhart, Athletic Director Bayersdorfer, first athletic director Roland Chinatti, senior coach David Lindsay, former coach, teacher and principal John Mahoney, and Board of Education member Val Bernardoni. They will be joined next year by two of the ten new inductees.

The plan is to elect ten new members each year for ten years with emphasis on selections from the 1940's to the 1970's. An evaluative review will be conducted at the close of the ten-year period.

Successful nominees are honored, along with their families, at a fall luncheon where each is presented a Hall of Fame Plaque. The person who nominated the recipient makes the presentation. A permanent record of the award appears in the Hall of Fame display case in the glass hallway near the gym.

In a cafeteria packed with people come to celebrate Housatonic's "glory

days" and to honor her heroes, the presentations began with a salute to a woman. As mother, grandmother and fan, **Ann Segalla** had become an integral part of sports at Housatonic. She had passed away earlier in the year, and her family and friends presented the Hall of Fame display case, built by HVRHS graduates **Phil Ghi** (Class of 1980) and **John Ongley** (Class of 1981), as a gift to the school to honor her memory.

And then came the inductees:

***Frank Perotti**, Class of 1954, excelled at football both in the six-man and eleven-man eras. As a senior he led Housy's first eleven-man team to an undefeated season. A prime mover behind the Friends of Football, which he helped to found in 1978, Frank has been a member of the HVRHS Building Committee for many years.

***Willis Belter, Sr.**, Class of 1942, who passed away so unexpectedly some years ago, was an outstanding basketball player. He captained the team in his senior year and went on to be inducted, along with brother **Hank**, into the Dutchess County Basketball Hall of Fame, the only two Connecticut residents to be so honored. An all-around athlete, Willie served his community of Salisbury in many ways, including as a member of the board of education.

***Edward Kirby**, Class of 1945, has written some of the brightest chapters in the book of Housatonic sports. He has been a player, teacher, coach, athletic director, principal and assistant superintendent. As baseball coach he compiled a record of 153 wins and 38 losses, made ten appearances in the CIAC baseball tournament, had five of his players sign professional contracts, three of whom made it to the majors, and one, of course, became a World Series hero. In 1983, Ed was inducted into the Connecticut High School Coaches' Hall of Fame.

***Ross Grannan**, Class of 1947, was an outstanding football and basketball player, and he was good enough in track to hold, for a brief shining moment, the state record in the long

jump at twenty-one feet, six inches, Housatonic's record for thirty-six years. Ross has been vitally involved as a supporter of the school down through the years, and he and **Lib Lumpkin**, also Class of 1947) are superfans of sports at HVRHS.

***Tom Parsons**, Class of 1957, was an overpowering high school pitcher who went on to play for the Pittsburgh Pirates, New York Mets and Houston Astros. Living in Canton, Ohio, and unable to attend the luncheon, he wrote, "I feel my greatest accomplishment was being a kid from

"...a kid from a small town playing in the big leagues with players like Mays, Spahn, Clemente and many more." -T. Parsons

a small town playing in the big leagues with players like Mays, Spahn, Clemente and many more."

***Americo "Ben" Bedini** came to Housatonic in 1946. He would coach football, basketball and baseball, and all his teams did well. But he is most remembered for his fierce six-man football teams that accomplished wonders in competition with much larger schools. He went on to direct athletics at Rye High School in New York, work in the football programs of Iona College and Fordham University, and end up in professional football, first with the Cleveland Browns, later with the Kansas City Chiefs. Living in Raleigh, NC, he could not be at the luncheon, but sent these words, "I have very fond memories of my days at Regional and the very special people, both those who were colleagues and those whom I coached."

***Edward Tyburski** taught physical education at Housatonic from 1962 to 1992. Over those years he was head coach of football (6 years), basketball (15), golf (5), gymnastics (5), and softball (1). But it was as athletic director for twenty-six years that he made his deep, indelible mark on sports at HVRHS. When he took over in 1966, there were six sports offered; when he retired in 1992, there were twenty-one. Under his leadership, the opportunities for young women in sports expanded enormously. In 1989 the athletic program that he had built

was recognized as the most outstanding in Connecticut: HVRHS won the coveted Michaels' Cup over all other schools in the state, large or small.

***J. Henry Belter**, Class of 1941, was a good enough basketball player to be a star in high school, high scorer and most valuable player in two Poughkeepsie leagues, and along with brother **Willie**, a Connecticut inductee into the Dutchess County Basketball Hall of Fame. He was also a good enough baseball player to lead the Interstate League in home runs and to be signed by the New York Giants. Hank has been active in community affairs, including serving on the Salisbury and regional boards of education, and is today an avid golfer.

***Roland Chinatti** came to Housatonic in 1954, serving as teacher, coach and athletic director until 1961. He returned in 1970 from Hawaii to serve as guidance counselor and coach until his retirement in 1995. The quintessential coach, at various times he could be found as head coach of football, girls' tennis coach, coach of freshman football (after serving as head coach), or junior varsity coach of girls' basketball. Whatever the sport, Coach Chinatti taught respect for the game and joy in its play. Retired or not, he continues to coach tennis and has become an avid bowler.

***Steve Blass**, Class of 1960, experienced some success as a baseball pitcher. On the strength of an outstanding career at HVRHS under Coach Kirby, including five no-hitters, he was signed by the Pittsburgh Pirates. Over ten seasons in the majors with the Pirates, 1964-1974, Steve built a record of 103 wins and seventy-six losses with 896 strikeouts. His biggest moments came in the 1971 World Series when he won games three and seven against the Baltimore Orioles. Today he is a witty and articulate member of the Pirates' broadcast team for both radio and television. And he still talks about his days at HVRHS.

Athletic Director **Dave Bayersdorfer** would like nothing better than to show to alumni the new display case with its first ten plaques.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Replacing Warren Clark, who had died that winter, Frank Ruotolo joined the high school staff in January of 1967. He had grown up in suburban Hartford, graduated from UConn and done post-graduate work at Central. When the call came from Superintendent Bill Nolan, Frank and Maggie had been married a month. Now, thirty years later, she teaches kindergarten at North Canaan Elementary (since 1983), and they are the parents of five Housy graduates: Frank ('86), James ('88), John ('89), Betsy ('91) and Thomas ('94).

Officially retired (June, 1995), Frank is still vitally involved at HVRHS as coordinator of adult education and supervisor of a new program to enable students to earn their diplomas through evening classes.

Asked to reflect upon the changes at Housatonic over the years, he noted that "Classroom instruction has gone from being pretty much teacher-centered to being much more student-centered," but he was quick to add that "kids do not change very much." His fondest memories: "Teaching the children of my former students - and having my own kids here was a kick."

Funniest moment: "As a new teacher I was trying to be quiet and inconspicuous in 133 as a colleague was giving a lecture to the seniors in Contemporary Problems. But my metal attache case fell onto the cement floor, and I became the center of attention." Frank is proudest of three contributions: (1) the network of outstanding guest speakers he brought to social studies classes; the late Harrison Salisbury was a regular; (2) the hands-on civics experience he presided over with each incoming freshman class that culminated in voting for class officers on real voting machines; (3) the units on local history he taught wherein he saw kids connecting with a story from the past that was close to them.

Asked what advice he would offer to new teachers, he responded, "Think first of student needs, but maintain

that professional distance. Be animated in the classroom, try to get inside those minds and hearts. And get out of your classroom to the games and concerts and dances. Commit 100 per cent."

With greatly enhanced personal freedom, with lots of reading and hiking, Frank Ruotolo, one of Housatonic's finest teachers, is enjoying his well-earned "retirement."

"Classroom instruction has gone from being pretty much teacher-centered to being much more student-centered..."

F. Ruotolo

HOUSY TODAY: SOME GLIMPSES...

*As of July, 1995, the fifth principal of HVRHS is Kathleen Burkhart, the first woman to serve in that position. Mrs. Burkhart, who lives in New Milford, comes to us from Hamden High School, where she was a very popular assistant principal.

*Student Council President Juliet Lyon of Cornwall is not your average high schooler. An outstanding student, she also happens to be captain of the wrestling team - yes, the boys' wrestling team - and CHAMPION OF THE BERKSHIRE LEAGUE at 105 pounds. She is also in the top ten percent of her graduating class.

*Kate Schapira of Salisbury is a National Merit Scholarship Finalist. Kate is also waiting to hear if she will be chosen as a Presidential Scholar through the National Foundation for the Arts. She is an accomplished poet and writer.

*Housatonic's spectacularly successful Academic Bowl Team won the UCONN Academic All Stars Challenge last year with a victory in the finals over a nationally-recognized New Milford team. This year they are off to a 7-1 start that includes two victories over Torrington High School - and one over a team of HVRHS faculty members!

*The rate at which students participate in Housatonic's widely recognized athletic program (now up to twenty-two sports) far exceeds the average for other high schools in the state. In Falls Village the rate is 59% while it is only 22% for the rest of Connecticut.

*The member of the faculty with the most seniority is Robert Gambino, Chair of the Vocational Agriculture Department and President of the HVRHS Faculty Association.

*The statue of Abraham Lincoln given to us years ago by Hotchkiss School now stands at the extreme north end of the front hallway. During code compliance renovations in the late eighties, the fire marshal decreed that Abe had to move from near the doors to the auditorium, where he had stood for years. He was "impeding egress."

*The White Oak still stands, magnificent as ever, in the senior courtyard. We all owe a debt to Scott Monroe (Class of 1972), whose tree company has often provided expert care at no charge.

'47 at 50

The Class of 1947 will hold its 50th anniversary celebration this summer. During a thunderstorm, eighty-six students graduated on June 13th, a Friday, in the room now used as the cafeteria. Nine classmates have since deceased. Reunions have been held in 1967, 1972, 1977, and 1987. Many members of the class also attended the school's 50th Anniversary celebration in 1989.

The weekend of July 12-13, 1997, has been set for the celebration by the committee: Lewis Weber and Dot Cecchinato of North Canaan, Ed Pedersen and Barbara Bartram of Sharon, Robert Perotti of New Milford, Peter Marcon of Larchmont, NY, and Barbara Gereg of Kent. Phone 860-824-7517 for details.

Communicate! Tell us your news...

If your mailing address is different from the one used here, or if you have a fax number, or an e-mail address, or a winter address different from your summer address, your class agent needs to know. A complete list of the class agents will be published in the fall newsletter. Meanwhile, address communications to the high school, c/o Bunny McGuire. Fill out the form below and send it along with a "get started" contribution... *Jack Mahoney*
Editor Blue 'n' Gold

Name and Class:

Mailing Address:

Fax #:

E-mail address:

Your News: _____

Blue 'n' Gold

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CLASS: 1947

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