

CROSS ROADS

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Focus On ...

Oakland Historical Society

The Oakland Historical Society is dedicated to preserving the history of the Borough of Oakland and it has three special events taking place through the summer of 2003:

1. Restoring the Stream House, which was the dairy offices of Edward Page, a prosperous businessman and Mayor of Oakland. Volunteers are needed for all skill levels and meet on Saturday mornings at 8:30 a.m. So far the inside of the building has been gutted and the dormers have been structurally secured.
2. The Annual Military Encampment recreating the stay of George Washington and his troops at our historic Van Allen Homestead will take place on July 12 and 13.
3. A Colonial Survivors Camp will be held in August and is open to children entering third through sixth grade. The day will consist of preparing and cooking your own lunch on an open hearth; handcrafting colonial items; setting up a military camp; perfecting militia drills, marching and music; and learning about our Lenape tribe neighbors.

For more information:
OHS1776@aol.com; 201-405-7726



THE MAYOR'S MESSAGE ...

It goes without saying that this was a truly "wet" spring, and we are all looking for the sun to shine for more than a few days in a row. I think the most positive statement one could make about this spring was made by one of our residents recently — "At least it's not snow!"

I am asking all residents to help try to control this year's mosquito population by trying to keep all the areas where standing water can accumulate dry and clean.

As the summer approaches and schools are closing, I want to remind you that children are at play: Please watch your speed!

With the 2003 budget finally in place we look forward to setting plans for a busy summer. Several primary

concerns are approving this year's Capital Budget and getting started with the Bergen County Tax Re-evaluation for Oakland. Work on the Tax Re-evaluation will actually begin this summer, and will conclude at the beginning of next year for implementation in January of 2005. More details will follow in the coming months explaining exactly how and when the process will roll out within the Borough.

After a lengthy discussion and finally approving the sidewalks on Seminole Avenue and the southern part of Route 202, I am pleased to report that the contractor we awarded the bid to has just about completed the Seminole Avenue sidewalk and has begun work on Route 202. I will apologize in advance for any traffic congestion that it may cause; however, the improvement will be well worth the minor inconvenience.

We are working towards the completion of two additional wells for the Borough's water supply. Oakland's water is one of our most valuable resources and with this in mind in the near future we will begin plans for construction of an additional water storage tank.

I have spent a great deal of time working with the New Jersey

(Continued on page 4)



Mayor Robert Piccoli

Oakland Sign Ordinance Explained

The posting of garage sale signs or any type of advertising signs on telephone poles, street-sign poles or trees or placed in the ground is prohibited throughout the Borough of Oakland. It is a violation of Ordinance #98 CODE-180 Section 59-63 N.(9) - NO OFF-PREMISE SIGNS ALLOWED.

The only exception to the Ordinance is that a sign may be posted on the property where the activity is taking place.

A violation of this Ordinance will result in a summons being issued. A minimum fine of \$100.00 could be imposed by the Municipal Court.

— Robert Porrino,
Code Enforcement Officer

WANTED: OLD TREES

The Oakland Shade Tree Committee is requesting your help



on identifying any tree on your property that you believe is more than 100 years old for our Shade Tree Registry. Please notify us in writing listing the location of the tree via Borough Hall.

FROM THE OAKLAND SENIOR CENTER ...

If you are over age 55, and function independently, I strongly encourage you to join the Senior Center. As the Borough Council liaison to the Oakland Senior Center I would like to share this information with you about this wonderful group of men and women.

Each month the Senior Center publishes a free, four-page informational newsletter. It is filled with events, activities and pertinent news items that provide outstanding information. For example, this past year I arranged for the Supervisor of New Jersey Taxpayer Services from the Department of the Treasury to present a question and answer program on various property rebate programs available to seniors.

On a monthly basis we hold an informal discussion group on a range of municipal issues and share information on such topical issues as drug prescription assistance programs such as PAAD or SENIOR GOLD. Each month a day-by-day calendar of events and classes is published.



Free transportation is provided by the center and it is available for scheduled shopping trips. The mini-bus is equipped to accommodate the disabled. Special arrangements can be made for transportation with reservations made in advance for this service. All of this is available to you by just contacting us at 201-405-7731. So make the call and get involved!

Since I also serve as the Council's Land Use Liaison, a number of questions came up at the June Senior Center discussion group regarding the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment (Zoning Board). Members of the Planning Board are by mayoral appointment, with the exception of the Borough Council liaison, who is appointed by the Borough Council.

- The Planning Board's activities deal with "permitted activities." In essence, its obligation is to deal with site plans and subdivision ordinances that establish a set of guidelines an applicant is to abide by. The Planning Board's duties deal with the implementation of policy set forth by the Master Plan. An applicant must demonstrate hardship to qualify for a variance. Financial hardship is not considered a valid reason to qualify for a variance. An applicant is never entitled to a variance; he must demonstrate a hardship to receive one.

- The Board of Adjustment is referred to as the board of "non-permitted" uses. For example, it grants relief for bulk variances such as area of lot, side yards and front yard. It also grants use variances for uses not permitted in a specific zone. The applicant must also demonstrate a need for a variance by meeting certain criteria.

Every member on these boards serves in a quasi-judicial capacity. They are land use policy makers with direction provided by either the Master Plan or Municipal Land Use Law or Zoning Ordinance manual.

— Councilwoman Donna Kurdock

Out With The Old, In With The New For Fire Department

The Oakland Volunteer Fire Department (OFD) would like to thank the citizens of Oakland for the many years of support you have shown us. We are going to keep you informed on what the OFD is doing and our special events by contributing regularly to CrossRoads.

As most residents have already heard, the Borough has purchased a new firetruck to replace the one at company No. 2 on Hiawatha Blvd. (or as we refer to it, "The Hill"). This truck is going to replace a 1975 Mack pumper that has served this town for 28 years.

In 1990 the body of the Mack rusted out, causing the OFD Association, which is funded by donations, to replace the body. This effectively gave the truck another 13 years of service to the community.

About one year ago, our truck committee, headed by the Chief of the Fire Dept., Ed Tryon, started working on the current project of replacing the Mack. The specifications were put together by the committee and reviewed by an outside professional consultant as requested by the governing body of the Borough of Oakland. Then the specifications were sent out for public bid. In the fall of 2002 the



bid was awarded to Pierce Manufacturing in Wisconsin.

Chief Tryon and three of his committee members actually traveled to Wisconsin in January for a pre-construction meeting with the representatives of Pierce. The truck was then built and again at the end of May the Chief and three committee members had to go back to Wisconsin for the final inspection. Two weeks later the new truck was delivered to The Hill.

There is still more that we have to do to put our new truck in service, but hopefully within a few weeks it will be serving the Borough of Oakland for many years to come.

The Oakland Fire Department Officers and members would like to extend an invitation to any citizen of the community to stop by the firehouse at Yawpo Ave on July 11th between 7:00-9:00pm to take a look at the new Fire Engine.

Garbage and Recycling Collection Changes Take Effect In January, 2004

The Borough's garbage collection days will be changing for all Oakland residents on January 5, 2004. This is the first Monday of the new year. This change is made every four years to be fair to the side of town without a pickup on the Monday holidays.

Here's how it will work:

- The homes that currently have their garbage picked up on Monday and Thursday will switch to Tuesday and Friday. The current Tuesday and Friday

pickups will switch to Monday and Thursday.

- Yard waste will be picked up on the opposite Monday or Tuesday of your garbage pickup.

When we recycle, we save energy and natural resources and we help the environment. We need the cooperation of everyone in town to make our recycling program effective and to realize cost savings. Each ton of recyclables is one less ton that goes to the landfill.

— Eugene MacMahon

Mayor's Message

(Continued From Page 1)

Department of Transportation to complete the final punch list items on the Doty Road Bridge. I also have been working with the Army Corps and New Jersey Dept. of Environmental Protection on the remaining issues from the flood project and newly installed boat ramp. All are moving forward with the usual governmental swiftness.

Hopefully by the fall all outstanding items will be completed and the Army Corps of Engineers and the NJDEP will finalize the second part of this project to install the gates at the Pompton Lakes Dam. The

upstream work we had approved will be going out to bid shortly and that work will hopefully be completed this summer as well.

As many of you know, I recently formed the Oakland Shade Tree Committee in an effort to preserve trees in our Borough. The committee has been very busy at work reviewing tree ordinances from other towns and preparing an ordinance that they feel will work best for Oakland. I am sure that you will see something introduced very soon.

Remember to mark your calendars for the Town Carnival June 26th, 27th and 28th, culminating in a great fireworks show on Saturday night.

Finally, the next priority on my agenda is to begin work on Phase II of the Downtown Beautification Project. As you are aware the right-hand turn lane completed late last year is working out very well and I am working with the County to not only provide the funding for this project, but implementation as soon as possible.

As always, I look forward to hearing from all residents on any issue that you would like to discuss. Email me at mayorbob@oakland-nj.org, or, of course, my phone number is in the phone book.

I wish you all an enjoyable and relaxing summer.

— Mayor Bob

Nature's Air Conditioners

For a town with the name "Oakland," our trees are a true treasure. Courtesy of the Oakland Shade Tree Committee, here are some benefits of planting and maintaining trees on your property.

If you have ever escaped from blazing sun in a shady spot under a tree, you know how these natural air conditioners can make you feel more comfortable. In fact, trees, in a parking lot can reduce air temperatures by up to 25 degrees.

But beyond comfort, planting trees around your home is a great way to lower your energy bills, beautify your yard and increase your home's value. Adding three trees in proper spots – west, north, and east of your house – can save the average household up to \$250 a year. Add a full landscape of trees and shrubs, and you can cut your utility bills 25 to 50%. Trees cool in the summer and protect from harsh winds

in the winter. Their photosynthesis releases beneficial water vapor into the air as well.

Before designing an energy-efficient landscape you need to know your home's orientation to the sun as well as the intensity and common direction of the wind around your property. Planting trees and shrubs that shade as much of the roof, walls and windows as possible on the east and west sides of your home is recommended. Deciduous trees, which lose their leaves, offer the double benefit of allowing warming sunlight into your home in the colder months.

When picking out trees, the California Energy Commission (CEC) suggests selecting those with the height, growth rate and shape that will provide the shade you need. A less dense tree that shades a larger area is better than a denser tree with smaller shade.

In addition to large shade trees, the CEC advises planting smaller trees and shrubs a few feet from your home to

direct cooling breezes indoors. Put shrubbery next to your foundation to reduce soil temperatures. Place shrubs and grass around your patio and driveway to offset the hotspots.

Trees don't just make a difference in the summer. To cut winter energy costs, the most common approach is to plant evergreen trees and shrubs on the north and northwest side of your property.

Beyond energy savings and beauty, homeowners who take care of their trees and keep manicured yards find the value of their properties increase. A research study lists maintaining beautiful landscaping as a cost-efficient way to increase the value of a home. In a comparison of house prices to house characteristics, location and landscape quality, the study showed houses that obtained an "excellent" landscaping rating from a local landscaping professional could expect to sell at a price 6-7% higher than equivalent houses with a "good" landscaping rating. Improving landscaping from "average" to "good" resulted in a home premium of 5%.

OCC Working For Open Communications In Borough

In addition to the highly visible results of the work being done by the Oakland Communications Commission – the airing of the Mayor & Council meetings on Channel 77, this CrossRoads newsletter, the up-to-date Oakland website at www.oakland-nj.org – the Commission has been busy behind the scenes developing and instituting the policies and procedures that assure we carry out our mandate of providing unbiased, non-partisan, open communications for the Borough of Oakland.

Among these developments:

- As the Primary Election was approaching in June, the OCC's primary goal (pardon the pun) was writing policy specific to political programming on Cable Channel 77. Our goal was to formulate guidelines that would be equitable to all political parties and give all candidates equal access and exposure to Oakland voters. When the OCC's Political Programming guidelines were presented to the Mayor and Council, we were pleased to see that our governing body was satisfied with the results of our work. During the primary all political programming ran smoothly on Channel 77 and residents will certainly see the results of this policy as the General Election approaches in November.

- We also met with the Oakland Emergency Management (OEM) team to discuss how we could work effectively together in the event of an emergency. There will be ongoing discussion between the OCC and OEM regarding how OEM can best utilize Channel 77 to alert Oakland residents to potential or actual emergencies with up-to-the-minute information. Karen Colyer has been appointed OCC liaison to OEM.

- We have actively been going out to the public to spread the word that the OCC is "Open For Business." In the past month OCC representatives have made pre-

sentations and met with the Recreation Commission, the Board of Education, the Senior Citizens Center and the Borough Mayor & Council. If you want us to come to your group to explain how you can benefit from partnering with the OCC, give us a call

- We have made a concerted effort to attract volunteers to the OCC and we are glad to report these efforts are bearing fruit. We would like to thank our growing stable of volunteers: Cable TV Committee – Dawn Oblak, Ben Jaffe, Ben Wallad and Joe Zimmermann; Web Site Committee – Dimitri Koslovski; CrossRoads – Karen Marcalus.

We still need many more volunteers! The Cable TV Committee enjoyed filming the Memorial Day Parade in May (you may have seen us out there in our bright red Channel 77 Film Crew shirts). With



other events coming up in town and more of our Borough Committees and Boards asking us to televise their meetings, there is plenty of opportunity for anyone who wants to get behind a camera or control board. We will be expanding our Control Room over the summer, so there is plenty of room for everyone.

If you've been considering becoming active in the Oakland community, please give us a call at 201-405-7590. It's a great way to meet new people and provide an invaluable service for your community!

— Karen Colyer

Submitting a Bulletin Board Announcement

Any individual or organization in Oakland can submit an item to be posted on the Channel 77 Bulletin Board.

There are three ways to do this.

1. Pick up a Bulletin Board Submission Form at Borough Hall, fill it out and leave it with the Borough Clerk.
2. Fill out the form online at www.oakland-nj.org and it will automatically be sent to the OCC.
3. Download a form at the Oakland website and drop it off at Borough Hall or Fax to OCC.

School Year Ends, Busy Summer Begins

This has been a school year of tremendous accomplishments! Not only have our students reached new heights of academic achievement, but they have demonstrated impressive abilities in the arts and in athletics. Our hearts are filled with pride at all that they have done!

Additionally, the development of our young people's caring nature has touched so many people in our community. In this issue of CrossRoads, you will discover all that is "right" in public schools, the result of "a learning community committed to excellence."

In addition to our students' many accomplishments, our school district was re-certified this winter by the State's Department of Education, through April 1, 2010! After a rigorous review of our school's compliance with State regulations for program and services, facilities, personnel and finance, the State's evaluation team applauded our community's schools and awarded a commendation for the end product of our work — our students' achievement.

The summer months are now upon us, and during July and August the nature of what we do changes. This year, our schools will be providing various summer opportunities for learning for Oakland's young people. Teachers will be involved in curriculum workshops and curriculum specialists will be analyzing student testing data and identifying needs. Custodians will be busy cleaning and repairing. Secretaries will be preparing student and teacher schedules and sorting books and supplies. Administrators will be interviewing candidates, planning for the new year and orienting new staff.

Although many of our students will not be engaged in formal schooling for the next several weeks, we

ask parents, grandparents, and community members to encourage students to continue their learning.

In planning for the children's summer months, we all need to remember that too much unstructured time for young people may not be productive.

As we look ahead, our goal is to make the next school year even better than the one that is ending. Our commitment to you is that we will continue to build a school district of which you can be proud and which reflects the greatness of our community.

Each of you has our deepest appreciation for your unwavering support of education, our schools and our children. Our community



Dr. Richard Heflich
Superintendent
Oakland Public Schools

continues to inspire school staff and students to ever-greater accomplishments. May each of you have an enjoyable and safe summer.

Dr. Richard G. Heflich
Superintendent of Schools

Music Reaches Across Generations and Boundaries

By Dr. Christopher Lane, Valley Middle School Principal

Two very special musical activities took place recently at Valley Middle School. During the first event VMS Show Choir members shared their talents with members of the Oakland Senior Citizens Club. The seniors traveled to VMS one afternoon, where Show Choir members served coffee, cake and beautiful music. The choir began their concert with We're Doin' A Show featuring **Sarah Zimmermann** on piano. The second performance was Angels in Waiting with **Max Rudd** on violin. Other songs included; Bring Him Home from Les Miserables with **Kaveh Sadeghian** on piano, and If You Can't Rock Me featuring VMS teacher **John Neral** on piano. The concert concluded with a rousing rendition of An American Salute with **Ashley Guthrie** on piano. This intergenerational program was a very special event for seniors and students alike.

Ms. Marcia Marino, Oakland Public Schools strings teacher, came up with an idea to cross another type of boundary. She and her husband, Larry, strings teacher at Thomas Jefferson Middle School in Teaneck, planned an exchange program with their students. They invited the strings students in grades five through eight to participate in the "Spring String Fling." This was an informal event meant to motivate middle and fifth grade students to continue in the strings program. The strings students had the opportunity to rehearse, socialize and perform with the Thomas Jefferson students on May 28.

Although the exchange was meant to foster good will between the students and encourage further study of the violin, viola and cello, children and parents alike enjoyed the opportunity to make friends with their neighbors from Teaneck.

OAKLAND SCHOOLS REPORT

ON THE ROAD WITH OAKLAND'S KIDS

By Dr. Barbara Tillman,
Manito School Principal

During early June, all elementary school children in Oakland embarked on a Global Education journey. Without leaving town, the students spent approximately two weeks immersed in the culture, history, geography and daily life of another country.

Teachers integrate this unit throughout all subjects, and special area teachers provide a different dimension, adding music, art, games, and children's stories to this study. The areas selected at each grade level remain constant so that all children will have "visited" six countries throughout their elementary school years. The countries are:

Kindergarten: Mexico

Grade One: Australia

Grade Two: Great Britain

Grade Three: Japan

Grade Four: Eastern Africa

Grade Five: The Middle East

It is our hope that the Global Education experience will help Oakland's children to develop a further interest in the world around them, as well as foster a respect for the rich diversity of culture and tradition we all share as members of the human family. In the past, the children have enjoyed this unit very much and we expect that next year will be another valuable learning experience for all.

This year's experience featured a special extension unit on India. Three Oakland parents of Indian culture – **Mrs. Bhargava**, **Mrs. Charles** and **Mrs. Thakkar** – shared their knowledge of India with all of our elementary children, concentrating on the areas of Indian dance/music, fashion and literature. This program is

also integrated with explanations about the geography of this sub-continent of Southeast Asia.

A special note of thanks goes to the Global Education Committee that works so hard every year to get us ready for our journeys: **Ms. Faith Geruldsen** (Heights School), **Ms. Holly Butler** (Manito School), **Ms. Lori DelBuono** (Heights School), **Ms. Pat Schlenker** (Dogwood Hill School), **Ms. Nancy Dziubinsky** (Dogwood Hill School), and **Ms. Tara Reischel** (Manito School).



Oakland first grade students 'taking off' for Australia.

Students' Hands Felt Throughout Our Community

By Kerry Ann Fusco and Donald Dean, VMS Teachers

The Oakland Public Schools are dedicated to encouraging high academic achievement in a nurturing and caring environment. In addition to teaching our students to do their best academically, we encourage them to do "what's right." Valley Middle School provides a framework for every child to develop the habit of caring and reaching out to help others in need via its Community Service Program.

At the beginning of each academic year, a "Community Service Log" is sent home to aid students in choosing and keeping track of their community service hours. Although some of the community service projects are organized by VMS, many children work with their families and the community to find opportunities for personal involvement. During the school year, five hours of community service time is recommended for sixth graders, eight hours for students in the seventh grade, and 10 hours for eighth graders.

Since the start of the 2002-2003 school year, VMS students have handed out unity candles at the "Oakland Remembers" ceremony, decorated Christmas bags for disabled Veterans, collected canned food for the "Souper" Bowl, volunteered as junior camp counselors for Oakland's Summer Recreation Day Camp, shoveled snow and raked leaves for their neighbors, and participated in both the Relay for Life Cancer Walk and Multiple Sclerosis Bike-a-thon.

Furthermore, they have assisted during Dogwood Hill School's Bingo Night and Simple Supper and at Manito's Spring Fair and Mini Courses. Some students have dedicated their time to working with adults with developmental disabilities and volunteering as personal aides for students with Cerebral Palsy. Believe it or not, these are only a few examples of the recent contributions made to the community by Valley Middle School students.

Please remind your child that there are always opportunities to make a difference. We commend them for their demonstrations of caring and their selfless efforts to better their community!

OAKLAND SCHOOLS REPORT

VMS STUDENTS CLAIM ROBOTICS GRAND PRIZE

Competing in a field comprised totally of area high schools, Oakland's Valley Middle School Robotics Team amazed all when it recently earned the Grand Championship Award in the Second Annual North Jersey Robotics Competition at Passaic County Community College. The middle school students' robot, dubbed "The Black Knight - Silver Edition," also garnered first place trophies in the Basketball Challenge and in the Construction Challenge.

The nine school teams in the competition were required to build a workable robot that could compete in various events. The VMS 12-member student team worked with faculty advisor, **Ms. Judith Vihonski**, and community mentors in designing and building the robot.

The Basketball Challenge tested the robot's ability to pick up balls and place or shoot them into an elevated hoop. The Black Knight was the only robot in the competition that scored in this event, thus earning the team First Place.

The Construction Challenge assessed each robot's ability to

pick up objects and place them on an elevated surface to create a structure. In this event, the middle schoolers' robot faced a strong challenge from a robot of an area high school. In a "play-off" to determine which robot could achieve the most points in this category, The Black Knight prevailed, thus sealing another First Place trophy.

Last year, Valley Middle School's Robotics Team won second place, and, at that time, Coach Vihonski smilingly said, "Wait until next year!" Her confidence inspired team members **Owen Quinlan, Nick Phillips, LeeAnn Sinapatanasakul, Josh Skelley, Peter Foley, Frank Pallien, Tyler Mingalone, Anthony Lepre, Tim Jensen, Elisabeth Tsubota, Susan Paykin** and **Kevin Quinlan** to this outstanding outcome in 2003.

This ambitious project brought together various parts of the school community, as the students benefited not only from the talents of each other, but also from mentors **Robert Murken**, the school district's maintenance specialist, parents **Joseph Mingalone** and **Richard Lepre**, engineer **John Schaubach**, and electronics specialist **Steven Luoni**.

Additionally, the project received much-needed support from **Jet Industrial Electronics, Oakland Marine and Equipment, Oakland Fathers' Club, the Valley Middle School P.T.O., DRS Photonics, the Riverside Nursery, Dogwood Hill P.T.A., Oakland Elks Lodge #2167 B.P.O.E., the Oakland Mothers' Club, the Rockefeller**

family, the Heights School P.T.O., and the **Normile** family.

SCHOOLS SET TO OFFER SUMMER ENRICHMENT COURSES

By Glenn Clark,
Dogwood Hill School Principal

The Oakland Public Schools' Summer Enrichment Program is two courses richer this year, with the addition of a hand bells music course and a hands-on reading experience. Students will also continue to have course choices ranging from traditional academics to music, art, drama and computers.

Last year marked the first time courses were open to children going into second or third grade. These courses, "Fun with Figures," and "Read and Grow," will again be offered. Both of these primary offerings will focus on higher order thinking skills and critical analysis. Therefore, a student who may have word recognition skills at the beginning of second grade can also benefit as much as the children whose reading ability is at the beginning of third grade.

This same approach has continued to make the reading and math courses in grades four through six so popular since the inception of the Summer Enrichment Program in July of 2000. Both, "FUNmatics," and "Fabulous Adventures" are returning for the summer of 2003. In all academic courses, topics are designed to change weekly, so those who may be out of town won't be at a disadvantage upon their return.

• Drama, one of the most popular courses from last summer, is back under the direction of



Valley Middle School teacher, **Jay Wordsman**. Designed for students entering grades five through eight, it again promises to be a popular choice.

- **Marcia Marino** is also returning this summer with two offerings. Strings instruction will be returning for those students who would like to continue their work from during the school year. Added to this is an offering in hand bells. This course is open to novice musicians entering grades four through eight.

- The very popular art course,

"21st Century Rembrandts," is returning this year. This course, offering small group instruction to students going into grades four through eight, has produced some extraordinary pieces of work by the young artists in the past.

- "Books Alive," a new reading course, rounds out the options for the students in Oakland this summer. This course will follow up every story covered with a craft or cooking opportunity presented through the story.

These courses will be offered at Valley Middle School from June 24 through July 15, with the exception of art. Due to a schedule conflict with the teacher, 21st Century Rembrandts will run from Friday, June 18 through Friday, July 18. All courses will be fifteen sessions.

The registration form may be downloaded from www.oakland.k12.nj.us. Anyone with questions may contact Glenn Clark, the District's Summer Enrichment Program liaison, at 201-337-5822.

A Year in Retrospect

By John P. Szabo, Jr.,
Board of Education President



In looking back on the school year, I find we have much to be proud of and thankful for. We are proud of our students' many achievements and are

proud of their strong sense of purpose and dedication to their schools and community. We are thankful for their contributions that enrich our lives day after day.

Academically, our children won numerous awards and participated in academic programs that serve to raise our academic standards.

- Another Valley Middle School team competed in the Future City Competition taking first place in the Northeast region.

- For an amazing third year in a row, the sixth grade Workshop students received one of six finalist awards for their age group in the Toshiba/National Science

Teachers Association Exploration Awards program, one of the largest K-12 science competitions in the world. In the followup competition, our students placed second nationally!

- Our state-mandated test scores this year continue to show strong levels of academic performance in language arts, mathematics and science as compared to state averages and other school districts in the region.

These academic accomplishments alone, however, do not complete the profile of our students. Among the other highlights:

- Our students at Valley Middle School dedicated a day to honor and show respect to those members of our community who are presently serving our country overseas.

- The Student Councils held numerous fundraisers and food drives to serve the needy.

- The Show Choir performed for Oakland's senior citizens, bringing the generations together with song and conversation.

- Both the VMS Boys' and Girls' Track Teams won first place at the Ridgewood Invitational.

- The Valley Middle School

Competition Cheer Team won best overall, competing against 47 other teams in the UCC Fall Invitational Eastern States Cheerleading Championships.

As I reflect back on a school year that has gone by much too quickly, we are thankful for the continued support of our community. Despite tough economic times, the community voted to support the school budget for the twelfth year in a row. With the dedication and the help of the Oakland Education Foundation, the dream of a new science lab at Valley Middle School became a reality this year.

And, finally, we must acknowledge the contributions of the many volunteers who donate countless hours serving in the PTA/PTO's of their schools. It is through their hard work and dedication that such a rich and rewarding school experience is provided for our children.

It has been an incredible year because all of you, in the spirit of community, chose to make it so. On behalf of the Board of Education, I thank each of you and wish you all a joyous and safe summer.

Heights Olympics: Athletics With A Twist

By Barbara Ciambra, Heights School Principal

Each year Heights students participate in the locally famous Heights Olympics. But our Olympics are not just about athletics. The Heights Olympics also embody all that is valued in our school system – fairness, team spirit, leadership, community and respect.

Each year a theme pairs athleticism with good character attributes. This year's theme asked the question, "Why is it important to prepare mentally and physically for competition?"

In preparation, Heights students are divided into two teams and everyone wears an official red or white "Olympic Tee-shirt," depending on the child's assigned team color.

Day One begins with a procession of classes from the gymnasium around the school's recreation field, where parents cheer and clap for the athletes. Our Color Guard

leads the students around the field to the grandstands. The day is started with an official opening ceremony, complete with a torch runner. There are track and field events along with novelty events,

such as the fifth grade "Steeple Chase." Team game competitions take place on the second day of the Olympics.

Accolades go to **Ms. Ridner** and **Ms. Girr**, PE teachers, who plan, organize and set up this amazing event. It's hard to describe the feelings of friendship and fun that permeate the field for those two very special days.

**OAKLAND
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Mayor Robert Piccoli

James A. Geraghty **Council President**Council Members

John A. Biale • Donald T. Burns •

Donna Kurdock • Leo McGuire •

Betsy Staggs

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