

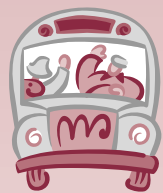
in

south  
colonie  
central  
schools

# focus

Preparing World Class Citizens

March, 2006



Budget update .... pg. 2

Sand Creek students  
have a heart ..... pg. 3

Sex offender  
notification ..... pg. 4



Daddy/daughter  
evening ..... pg. 4

Bye Bye Birdie at Sand  
Creek M.S. .... pg. 4

Transportation request  
forms due ..... pg. 4



## Lisha Kill's thoughts are 'inside the box'

### Students & staff from 'Elevators' team lift the spirits of local vets

When it comes to encouraging creativity in school and in life, South Colonie teachers are continually challenging their students to think "outside the box." But Lisha Kill Middle School students put an interesting twist on that theory recently by writing down their most private thoughts and sealing them inside a box for a special someone.

Those special someones were military veterans from the Stratton VA Medical Center in Albany. Lisha Kill seventh and eighth graders working on a citizenship project around Valentine's Day wrote and collected hundreds of notes, letters and personal messages from throughout the school community, sealed them in "wish boxes" and delivered them to the hospital veterans one day.

The project was organized by a teaching team of educators at Lisha Kill known as The Elevators, which was appropriate since it really lifted the spirits of these local veterans.

*Continued on page 2 ... Lisha Kill*



Students and staff at Roessleville Elementary School dress as mushers and give a warm send off to third grade teacher Patricia LoPresti (holding sign). Lopresti is traveling to Alaska for the Iditarod — the world famous 1,112-mile dog sled race across the state. She has established a web site for the school and will be reporting back daily as students study the race.

## Mush! Roessleville School teacher races off to Alaska

### Students hitch their sleds to rare learning experience

South Colonie teachers will go to the ends of the earth it seems to bring back a valuable learning experience to their students. Just ask third grade teacher Patricia LoPresti, who bundled up in her warmest winter gear this March, said her good-byes to her Roessleville Elementary School family and headed off to Alaska for the world famous Iditarod dog sled adventure.

The Iditarod — a 1,112-mile race across the state — has been a part of LoPresti's curriculum since 1997. But this time, she will experience it firsthand and report directly back to her school each day as they learn and study the journey as part of their elementary school curriculum.

*Continued on page 3 ... Iditarod race*



Lisha Kill Middle School students and staff visited with veterans at the Stratton VA Medical Center in Albany. Students delivered wish boxes and hero letters to the patients as part of a community service project.

## ... Lisha Kill

*Continued from page 1*

"We couldn't believe how much our students embraced this project," said science teacher and Elevators team member John McKee. "It was a really great experience for all of us."

To set the mood, students watched a movie in class entitled *Letters From Home* — an emotional story about the lives of soldiers serving their country far away from their friends and loved ones. The movie inspired the students to convey their appreciation in the notes and letters.

Their personal messages were placed in the wooden wish boxes that had been painted and decorated in patriotic red, white and blue themes. The letters were rolled into scrolls and tied together with yellow ribbons.

Once assembled, a group of about a dozen students and teachers hand delivered the more than 100 wish boxes to the Stratton Center. While there, they had a chance to visit with veterans from World War II, the Korean Conflict and Vietnam, listen to their stories and share their messages.

"Most of the messages thanked them for being a hero and wished them a happy, peaceful life," McKee explained. "When they opened the boxes the tears began to flow. It was a great feeling for all of us and our students realize immediately how worthwhile this project was. Their new friends were very appreciative."

So were the middle schoolers as they experienced a true lesson in community awareness and civic-mindedness that they could have never gotten from a textbook. And, after all, that's what the project was all about.

"Education comes in many different forms," McKee said. "It doesn't always come out of a classroom. Sometimes it's about developing citizenship and producing graduates who are, yes, knowledgeable, but more importantly, good people. We want them thinking about how they can give back to their communities and help their fellow man. For that reason, alone, it was a great experience for everyone involved."

## District budget planning process gets underway

### Facing another difficult year of controlling costs

South Colonie Schools began another difficult year of budget planning for the 2006-07 school year in the wake of rising educational costs and limited state aid for schools.

The Board of Education has hosted four public budget information workshops since January in preparation for adopting a proposed spending plan on April 13. A public hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, May 3, at 7 p.m. at Saddlewood Elementary School. This year's budget referendum and school board elections will be held from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Tuesday, May 16, at the district's five elementary school buildings.

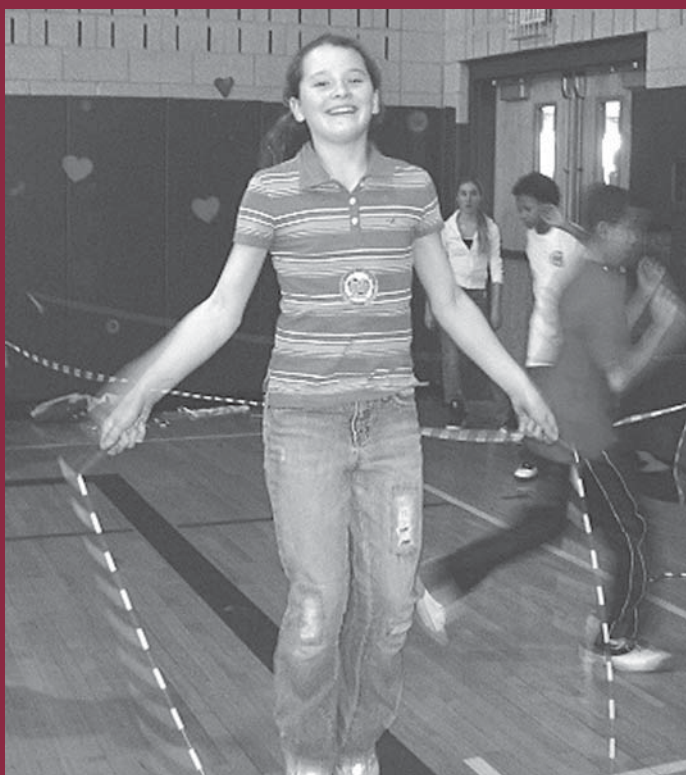
Among the steepest budget increases for next year will be seen in the areas of employee health insurance and district contributions to the New York State retirement system, transportation fuel and building heating costs. Some of these increases will hit very large percentage hikes over the current school year. The administration and school board are looking at each department and examining specific areas where cuts can be made without hurting the educational program.

"Unfortunately, it's another difficult budget year for education in this state, but we are doing our best to balance our school needs with our responsibility to local taxpayers," said Superintendent Michael Marcelle.



## Hey, where are you going to find ...

**A complete history, information update and continuous photographs of South Colonie's ongoing capital improvement project? Now, it's only a click away under the Capital Project category at [www.southcolonieschools.org](http://www.southcolonieschools.org). Give it a look today!**



### **Sand Creek students jump at chance to help AHA**

Sixth graders at Sand Creek Middle School raised more than \$6,000 for the American Heart Association at the fourth annual Jump-a-thon.

## ... Iditarod race

*Continued from page 1*

"To borrow a quote from Michael Jordan, 'You miss 100 percent of the shots you don't take,'" is how LoPresti described it, just before leaving on the two-week trip across country. "I am so excited to be able to go to Alaska and share this great learning experience with all the students."

LoPresti, who has a friend living in the Anchorage area, will be there for the ceremonial start of the race and in Wasilla for the actual start. Some 90 men and women, called mushers, will compete and LoPresti will be in Nome to see the first dog sleds cross the finish line. She will also spend time volunteering at the race and visiting Alaskan classrooms talking to children and staff about school life in New York.

Throughout her journey she will be in daily contact with Roessleville, sending journal emails, musher progress sheets and photographs from the event and Alaskan life. She has even set up her own web site at <http://iditarod2006.blogspot.com>.

### **Lots of learning while she's gone**

The Roessleville School family gave LoPresti a warm send off at its March morning program, wearing musher clothing and kicking off their character education theme for the month — Perseverance. "Just like the mushers you'll be learning about, when facing a difficult task in school or at home you must keep trying and never give up," LoPresti told the children. "If you want something bad enough you have to work hard to get it. Where there's a will, there's a way."

In her honor, the school launched a new Parents as Reading Partners campaign entitled "Join the IditarREAD." Students are challenged to read at least 15 minutes a day, five to seven days a week, during the 20-day campaign. They earn a paper paw print each time they accomplish that goal and compete for prizes. A giant Alaskan map is displayed in the school and will be updated daily to mark LoPresti's whereabouts and the changing positions of the racing sleds and mushers.

In addition to reading, the Iditarod learning experience will also encompass other subjects like writing (penning letters to the competitors), math (graphing musher progress on line graphs), social studies (learning about Alaskan biomes and land-forms), science (studying the effects of weather on race conditions) and technology (visiting and researching various Iditarod web sites).

## Transportation requests due to district by April 1

South Colonie Central School District residents who want transportation for their children to non-public schools during the 2006-07 school year must file written requests with the district by April 1, 2006. Written requests for transportation are to be made every year. Request forms are required for all actual and anticipatory (students on waiting lists) non-public school enrollments.

Request forms are available from the district's Transportation Department, located at 2 Winston Place, Albany, New York 12205. Forms can also be requested by calling 869-8527 between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m.

## Bye Bye Birdie at Sand Creek

Student actors at Sand Creek Middle School will stage the theatrical production of Bye Bye Birdie on April 6-8. All performances are at 7 p.m.



Forest Park Elementary School girls dance the night away in February at the annual Daddy/Daughter Evening sponsored by the school PTA.

## Sex offender notification

The Town of Colonie Police Department makes available in each public building in the town, each district school main office, the district office and school transportation building a monthly updated notebook. This notebook lists Level 2 & 3 sex offenders living in the Town of Colonie. These books are available for review upon request. Residents may also visit the Town of Colonie web site at [www.colonie.org/police](http://www.colonie.org/police) for more information or call the Colonie Police Department at 783-2744 with questions, concerns or suspicious reports. A school district mailing will occur if the Colonie Police deem a sex offender to be a serious threat.

**Michael Marcelle**  
Superintendent of Schools

**Anthony DeBlois**  
Assistant Superintendent for Instruction

**Peter Haessig**  
Assistant Superintendent/  
Management Services

**Beverly Miller**  
School Business Administrator

**David Seaver**  
Director of Human Resources

**Board of Education**  
James (Tim) Ryan, President  
Paul Gordon, Vice President  
Brian Casey  
Robert Domenici  
R. Thomas Faughnan  
Vernon Fonda  
Shelle Jaquish  
Neil Johanning  
John Monteiro

In Focus Editor: John K. Noetzel

### SOUTH COLONIE

102 Loralee Drive • Albany  
• New York • 12205



Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Albany, New York  
Permit #135