

inside

STAFF

South COLONIE Spring 2007

NEWSLETTER

Lisha Kill teacher earns 2007 Leadership Award

► A 'CHAMPION OF CHARACTER'

Lisha Kill Middle School fifth grade teacher Roxana Tassie has earned the 2007 Middle School Teacher Educator Leadership Award in Character Education.

Tassie was recognized in March at the "Champions of Character" award banquet sponsored by the Academy for Character Education at The Sage Colleges in Troy. Presenting the award was New York State Senator Joseph Bruno and Lisha Kill Principal Francis Cocozza.

Tassie was recognized by the Academy for her leadership, positive actions and the example she has set as a role model in nurturing civility in her school and positive character development in the community.



Lisha Kill Middle School fifth grade teacher Roxana Tassie, left, is presented with the 2007 Middle School Teacher Educator Leadership Award in Character Education.

Mark your calendars

► BUDGET VOTE SET FOR MAY 15TH

South Colonie Schools will hold the annual district budget vote on Tuesday, May 15th, with the polls open from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the five elementary school buildings. If you live in the school district please don't forget to vote.

The proposed budget totaling \$83,864,400 was approved by the South Colonie Board of Education in April after several months of public discussion and workshops. The budget continues to support a strong educational program for all students while remaining fiscally responsible to district taxpayers.

Among the new initiatives proposed for next year are the addition of another section of first grade at Roessville Elementary School to meet new enrollment demands and the expansion of Transitional Kindergarten at Shaker Road Elementary School. This will mark the second school to offer Transitional Kindergarten after the program was successfully piloted at Roessville Elementary this year.

The overall budget proposed for the 2007-08 school year represents a 4.94 percent spending increase over the current school year. Though equalization rates will not be known until July, the district projects about a 4.12 percent residential property tax increase for Colonie homes to help finance education next year. This is a base increase and does not reflect any STAR savings a homeowner may be entitled to.

Several factors are driving up the cost of education here and in most school districts across the state. Employee health insurance continues to escalate from one year to the next and legally-required district contributions to New York State retirement systems are increasing as well. Employee benefits alone account for a \$1,054,126 or 6.1 percent increase in the 2007-08 budget.

Making up the rest of the projected increase are instruction (+\$1,371,907), special education costs (+\$598,975), student transportation (+\$211,036), operations and maintenance (+\$407,148), and library & media instruction (+\$52,581).

For more on the budget visit the district web site or check your mailbox for a more detailed *InFocus* budget publication.



Sand Creek Middle School Principal David Perry congratulates Allison Bush (center) and Sally Heritage for being inducted into the National Honor Roll's Outstanding American Teachers.



South Colonie News & Notes

▶ OUTSTANDING AMERICAN TEACHERS

Congratulations to Sand Creek Middle School educators Allison Bush and Sally Heritage, who have been inducted into National Honor Roll's Outstanding American Teachers.

This organization was developed to recognize educators who have made a positive difference in their students' lives. National Honor Roll firmly believes that the future is in the hands of all children and that teachers who help their students reach their full potential make the greatest contribution to society.

▶ LISHA KILL TEACHER JOINS EARTH EXPEDITION

Lisha Kill Middle School science teacher John McKee was one of only 20 educators selected to participate this summer in Earth Expeditions — a cooperative learning venture between the University of Miami (Ohio) and the Cincinnati Zoo.

Earth Expeditions is a global conservation program offering educational opportunities in Africa, Asia and the Americas. The goal of the program, through field and zoo expeditions, is to build an alliance of individuals with firsthand knowledge of inquiry-driven learning that benefits ecological communities, student achievement and global understanding of the environment.

McKee's Earth Expedition will be in Costa Rica in July. For more visit www.earthexpeditions.org. Last year, McKee took an educational excursion to China as part of the People to People Ambassador Program.

▶ MAY OPEN ENROLLMENT FOR HEALTH PLANS

May is Open Enrollment for health insurance. The district offers the following health plans: Capital District Physicians' Health Plan, Blue Shield of North-eastern New York-Traditional Blue-907 and Traditional Blue POS 211. Benefits become effective July 1, 2007. For more information and rates regarding these insurance plans, please contact the Insurance Department at the District Office, 869-3576, ext. 2450.

The Energy Educator

▶ THE HUMOROUS SIDE OF THE JOB OR WHAT PEOPLE HAVE BEEN SAYING BEHIND MY BACK BY DISTRICT ENERGY MANAGER JAMES BROWN

Many times when something is not working just right in the district, a story usually gets back to me about how I am to blame in the name of energy conservation. I take assurance in knowing that most of these comments are said in jest, aren't they? Here are just a few examples:

- I've been nicknamed "The Prince of Darkness" by one of our custodians.



- After leaving the lights on in my vehicle, a friendly employee who offered me a jump start reminded me that leaving the lights on was not conserving energy, and thus not setting a good example.

- One time I kindly pointed out to a district mechanic that a vehicle had a headlight out. He responded that it was part of the new district policy to conserve energy.

- Reporting to work one day I was surprised to find there was a power outage. As I walked into the building many people commented on how happy I looked.

- Calling the District Office one day I was told by the greeter that they were saving all kinds of energy that day. When I inquired as to how, she replied that the power was out.

- Once before the start of a football game at Colonie Central High School, the stadium lights would not turn on. Someone was overheard saying, "Jim Brown sabotaged the wiring."

- Noticing a large bruise on my youngest son's face, a colleague asked if I had disconnected his night light, causing him to walk into a wall.

When we first began our energy management program, there were more than a few nay-sayers. Thank you for proving them wrong, and for making our program such a success. The past six years have gone by quickly. To quote an old saying, "Time flies when you are having fun!"