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Preparing World Class Citizens

June/July, 2011

Saddlewood Stars Leading Man Steps Out of Spotlight

The following is an abbreviated version of the story. The full story is available on the district website.

The "Leading Man" for the Saddlewood Stars has walked the red carpet for the final time. On June 30th, Ernie Casile stepped out of the spotlight after 14 years as Saddlewood Elementary School Principal.

Casile started his 34 years in education as a Catholic school teacher after attending Siena College and the College of Saint Rose. He was later hired to teach social studies at his alma mater, Christian Brothers Academy (CBA). Four years later, the head master asked him if he'd like to take over as Assistant Principal of the CBA junior high school program. He ended up doing that for eight years.

"I really never intended to be a Principal," Casile recalled. "I was always going to be a teacher, I thought, in history or special

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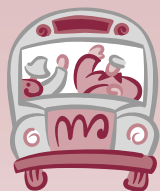


Colonie Central High School held its annual June commencement ceremonies for the Class of 2011 at the Empire State Plaza in Albany. For a photo gallery of this event visit the district website.

Three new alumni inducted into CCHS Hall of Fame

Colonie Central High School was proud to induct three new alumni into the Hall of Fame in June with the 2011 graduating class. This year's Hall of Fame inductees are Paul Gordon, Raymond Roland and Brian Palazzolo.

Since 1994, Colonie Central High School graduates have been honored in the Colonie Central High School Hall of Fame. The inductees represent a variety of high school classes and accomplishments. The purpose of the Hall of Fame is to identify role models for CCHS students and to illustrate to them that South Colonie Schools provide the educational foundation necessary to build a successful life. To read more about this year's Hall of Fame class please turn to page 2. To read about past inductees visit the district website.



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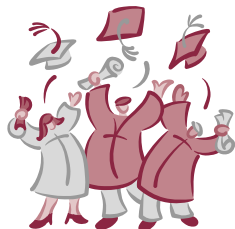


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IMPORTANT! Attention new parents

Enclosed in this newsletter is a census form which must be completed and mailed back free of charge so the district can begin planning for future enrollment.

'11 Hall of Fame inductees

The following are abbreviated bios. Full bios are available on the district website.

Paul Gordon – Honorary Inductee

Paul Gordon — an honorary Hall of Fame inductee — had a long and distinguished career serving on the South Colonie Board of Education. Although not a Colonie Central High School graduate, Gordon was presented with an honorary degree with the Class of 2011 at commencement ceremonies in June for his dedication to the children of the district.

Gordon was first elected to the South Colonie Board of Education in 1987 and served nearly five terms. He was elected school board Vice President in 2006-2007. Gordon is a life member of both the PTA and Friends of Music and served as South Colonie Friends of Music (SCFOM) treasurer for six years. He also chaired the committee that developed the district's summer music program. In 1978, he founded the Regional Spelling Bee that has grown to include the entire Capital District and sends its winner to the National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C. Gordon has been an educator in both New York State schools and in Department of Defense schools in Europe. He taught Social Studies at Colonie Central High School and completed 34 years in education before retiring. He also earned a Teacher of the Year Award in South Colonie.

Raymond Roland – Class of 1956

Raymond Roland — Class of 1956 — has logged well over 50 years as a dedicated public servant in the Town of Colonie, both as a police officer and volunteer firefighter. He had a long and distinguished career as a Colonie Police officer for nearly 40 years, serving 35 years as Sergeant. During that time he was a board member for the local Drug Abuse Resistance Education program better known as DARE. DARE teaches school-age children about the dangers of using drugs and alcohol and helps build positive self-esteem in our young people.

Roland was also a 55-year member of the Midway Volunteer Fire Department, and served as President for two terms. He was twice voted Fireman of the Year. He also served on the Midway Colonie Ambulance Service for 20 years.

He has been recognized with several professional awards including the New York State Chiefs of Police Medal of Honor, the Heroes Award for rescuing and saving a woman's life, the Edward Gibson Lifetime Achievement Award, a 50-year plaque for his service to the Midway Fire Department.

Brian Palazzolo – Class of 1992

Brian Palazzolo — Class of 1992 — is a self-made businessman. At age 19, just out of high school and with a business loan of \$10,000, he established Albany's Classe Catering. Today, Classe Catering is a \$2.5 million-a-year special events planning and hosting business, employing more than 100 workers and serving hundreds of clients.

Over the years, Palazzolo has shown creativity and leadership by diversifying the business to weather economic swings in the Capital District. This includes developing two additional catering product lines — Gourmet Express and Big



Sand Creek Associate Principal, Jill Penn, has been recognized with the 2011 Capital District Association for Women in Administration Leadership Award. CDAWA is a New York State Association that promotes gender equity in administration and advances equity and diversity in schools throughout the Capital District.

KaHoona — which has enabled Classe to maintain steady growth, recognized quality of service and significant market share. Palazzolo has also served as a role model and mentor for his employees, providing tuition reimbursement, scholarships to encourage students to attend culinary and hospitality schools. He serves on the advisory board to Schenectady County Community College's (SCCC) nationally-ranked Hotel and Restaurant Management and Culinary Arts program and contributes his time and knowledge as a guest speaker at many colleges and organizations including the New York State Restaurant Association, SUNY Cobleskill, SCCC and Hudson Valley Community College.

He has received numerous awards including the Excellence in Small Business Award, the Flavor and Flair Award, the Bronze Medal Salon Award, the SCCC Dedication Award and the Entrepreneurial Excellence Award presented by the Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce.

... Casile retirement

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education. But a few people along the way convinced me I'd do a great job as a school administrator. That was sort of flattering to me so I gave it a try and I really enjoyed it."

The CBA job led him to South Colonie where he first worked as Associate Principal at Sand Creek Middle School (two years), then Veeder Elementary School Principal (four years), then Saddlewood Elementary School Principal (14 years). He chose to end his career at Saddlewood because his three sons had all graduated from there and that year his daughter was preparing to start Kindergarten.

Today, four framed photographs of Casile handing his children their Colonie Central High School diplomas sit proudly on his office desk. The last went to his daughter in the Class of 2010.

Thanks for the memories ...

One of Casile's most enjoyable memories was his time as a real Saddlewood Star when he would often dress in costume to highlight the PTA-sponsored Parents As Reading Partners (PARP) program. Royalty, wild animals, the Big Bad Wolf were just some of the celebrities he played. But his favorite was when he was asked to play an astronaut for the "Read to the Moon" campaign.

During his time, Casile said he is most proud of his school's academic achievement record and, in particular, Saddlewood being named a Top 20 School of Improvement on the grade 4 English Language Arts exam. "The teachers and staff work so hard here and I was pleased to see them get that recognition," he said.

As Casile took that final walk down the carpet, he said he will truly miss the interaction he's had with the children on a daily basis and knowing that he's helped make a difference in their lives.

How would he like people to remember him?

"I want to be remembered most as someone who really cared every day about the students who came to Saddlewood," he said, "and to know in my



Retiring Saddlewood Principal Ernie Casile in one of his dress-up gigs.

heart that our parents believed their children were in good hands and safe here. The Saddlewood community has always been very supportive of me because I think they see me as one of them," he added. "My kids came here just like theirs and I spent a lot of years at the Little League field with the parents. That's how you earn people's trust. That's been something special for me."

News & Notes ...

District obtains 100 computers from HVCC

South Colonie has obtained 100 new state of the art computers and an HD printer at no cost to the district as part of the ongoing school to college program with Hudson Valley Community College. The computers, obtained by the district Information Technology Department, are Dell Precision T1600's, specifically designed for the CAD, Engineering and Graphics programs taught by the Technology Department at Colonie Central High School. These machines have both the power and graphics capabilities needed to run the application software. The total value of this equipment, funded by HVCC, is about \$140,000. CCHS students who participate in these courses receive college credit from HVCC as part of the school to college partnership.



Hundreds attend CCHS STEM Expo

263 students from 13 different area schools and colleges attended the Colonie Central High School STEM Exposition in May at the Holiday Inn Turf. Nearly 40 presenters were on hand, including Global Foundries, General Electric and Hudson Valley Community College. Students and their parents were able to witness product demonstrations, engineering exhibits from the Project Lead the Way program, and learn about opportunities that exist in fields related to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.

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Forest Park Elementary School students are all smiles at their June Kindergarten celebration ceremony.



Retiring bus driver earns AAA award



South Colonie bus driver Myron Kniskern was honored by the Hudson Valley chapter of AAA in May with an Exception Driver Award for his superior dedication to the

district during his 22-year career. Kniskern was nominated for the AAA award by the South Colonie Transportation Department for his exceptional accident and safety record, attendance and job performance, and interaction skills with students and staff. He began driving for South Colonie in 1989 and retired in June.

“Kniskern treated his students with respect,” said Transportation Director Peter Tunny. “He treated all of his students as his own. That in a nutshell is how he has won the love and support of his students and their parents over the years. For these reasons I wish I could clone Myron and keep him here for a few more years.”

Suburban Council Champs

Congratulations to our Colonie Central High School athletes who captured five Suburban Council Spring South Division Championships this year. The Varsity Championship Teams are: Boys Baseball, Girls Softball, Boys Lacrosse, Girls Track & Field and Boys Track & Field. Congratulations also to Kevin Jette (Varsity Softball) and Kevin Halburian (Varsity Baseball) for their selection as 2011 Suburban Council Coaches of the Year in their respective sports.

Residents pass budget

South Colonie residents went to the polls on May 17th and approved an \$91.1 million budget for the 2011-2012 school year by a vote of 1,548-1,061. They also elected newcomer Edward Sim to his first term on the Board of Education and re-elected incumbent Neil Johanning to a new term. In a close vote, Sim defeated Daniel Waters, another newcomer running for the first time, 1,053-1,038. Johanning ran unopposed and received 1,734 votes. Sim replaced long-time board member Paul Gordon, who did not seek re-election after serving for 24 years.