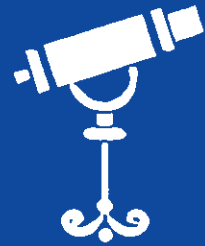




# FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Saratoga Springs City School District



VOL. 18 NO. 1

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FALL 2007

## DIVISION & CAROLINE

### CELEBRATE 50TH ANNIVERSARIES

**A** new era in elementary education in Saratoga Springs began a half-century ago, when the then ultra-modern Division Street and Caroline Street Elementary Schools opened their doors. Both schools celebrated their golden anniversaries in October, with tours, special ceremonies and events open to the entire community. When the identical schools opened in September 1957, they were a dramatic contrast to the five aged and deteriorating schools the students had attended, three of which were built in the 19th century. Along with other buildings in the school district, the “twin schools” received major upgrades as part of a districtwide bond issue approved by voters in 2000, and are well equipped to continue serving current and future generations of young students. The anniversary events were held on Oct. 13 at Caroline’s East Side location and on Oct. 20 at Division, located on the West Side of Saratoga Springs.



1958 class photo from Division Street Elementary School



1957 class photo from Caroline Street Elementary School

## Russians and Saratogians celebrate Space Age anniversary



Members of the Saratoga Springs High School NASA Club, foreground, and visiting Russian educators, back row, participated in a videoconference with NASA’s Mars Space Flight Facility at Arizona State University Oct. 9. A new image from the Odyssey satellite involving the students’ ongoing study of Mars was unveiled during the videoconference. The Russians’ eight-day visit to the area occurred during World Space Week, an international event marking the fiftieth anniversary of the launching of the Russian satellite Sputnik I, an event which ushered in the space age. In the photo below, the Russian visitors pose with Saratoga Springs educators and hosts prior to a luncheon and panel discussion.



## New professional staff welcomed during orientation



The school district welcomed new teachers and administrators during an orientation program held Aug. 28-30. New teachers are: Andrea Alderman, remedial reading, Division Street Elementary School; Tenaya Bannon, school media specialist, high school; Nicole Beaubriand, elementary, Caroline Street; Julie Blakeley, mathematics, high school; Kurt Borchardt, industrial arts, high school; Joseph Bruno, mathematics, Maple Avenue Middle School; Janelle Bubeck, science, Maple Avenue; Jennifer Burton, elementary, Dorothy Nolan; Dana Bush, remedial reading, Geysers Road Elementary School; Karen Cavotta, industrial arts, Maple Avenue; Krista Concha, speech, Geysers Road; Leanne Donelan, social studies, high school; Jeannie Duval, elementary, Dorothy Nolan; Nancy Ferguson, elementary, Lake Avenue Elementary School; Vanessa Flynn, elementary, Geysers Road; Johanna Friedman, English, high school; Mary Beth Goliber, elementary, Lake Avenue; Amy Grant, elementary, Dorothy Nolan Elementary School; Gina Grosso, music, Dorothy Nolan; Jeffrey Halstead, music, high school; Polly Hannur, art, Caroline; Denise Harrington, elementary, Caroline; Nikole Hearn,

### 25-YEAR EMPLOYEES HONORED



Employees with 25 years of school district service were honored during a Sept. 27 reception and Board of Education meeting. Left to right in the front row are Elizabeth Jahn, Dorothy Nolan Elementary School, speech teacher; Cheryl Johnson, Division Street Elementary School, speech teacher; Donna Dobush, high school, math teacher; and Barbara Carlson, high school guidance counselor. Left to right in the back row are Joan McDonough, Maple Avenue Middle School, math teacher; Elizabeth Miklas, high school, math teacher; Deborah Lagoe, Maple Avenue Middle School, psychologist; Dr. Richard DeMartino, high school, student advocate; Candice Crane-Lawrence, high school English teacher; and Thomas Coons, Maple Avenue Middle School, business teacher. Not in the photo are Joan Healy, Division Street Elementary School, teacher, and Ronne Israel, Division Street Elementary School, teacher.

school psychologist, district; Jennifer Heerwagen, elementary, Lake Avenue; Erin Holohan, remedial reading; Justin Hoskins, science; Megan Janack, music, Maple; Kathleen Keating, special education, Maple; Nora Ketcham, home & careers, Maple; Cassandra Lavigne, elementary, Caroline; Trisha LeMere, English, Maple; Claire McEwan, elementary, Division; Christine McKane, elementary, Greenfield; Teresa Perone-O'Beirne, art, Dorothy Nolan; Polly O'Connell, elementary, Lake; Kiersten Ogsbury, elementary, Division; Jessica Poremba, elementary, Dorothy Nolan; Stacey Ralston, business, high school; Mary Rocco, music, Dorothy Nolan; Catherine Ruggles, art, high school; Preston Sweeney, industrial arts, Maple; Jonathan Warner, science (physics), high school; Amy Weed, science, Maple; and Hannah Weeden, English, Maple. Also welcomed were new high school assistant principals Lynette Whaley and Joshua Walker.



## Superintendent's Column

By Janice M. White  
Superintendent  
of Schools

The 2007-08 school year is well under way, and I am happy to report that our 6,900 students and 1,100 staff are off to a great beginning. I am pleased to have the opportunity to lead the Saratoga Springs City School District into the future. With the help of Board of Education leadership, the support of school district personnel and the community, and the passion we have for educating young people, there is much we can achieve.

Dr. John E. MacFadden, who retired as superintendent in June, left us with a solid foundation, and it is my challenge to work every day to build on that, with a goal of creating the next generation of leadership at all levels.

Throughout our school district, we view the student as the most important person in our school, the purpose of our collective work and the lifeblood of a school community. Our challenge and commitment is to develop the knowledge and skills to serve each one well.

We are proud of our accomplishments, from the strong academic achievements of our schools to the excellent collaborative relationships with the community and parent groups. This Board of Education has developed a common vision for excellence in all facets of school district operations. Our community has a long history of support for education, and we are fortunate to have a high-quality leadership team, an outstanding work force, and facilities that are well-designed and maintained.

For every superintendent and district team, it is important to inspire and engage citizens, staff and students, individually and in groups, to create a community vision and long-range plan. As your superintendent, I pledge to provide the caliber of leadership you have come to expect.

## DISTRICT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The Board of Education adopted the following goals and strategic objectives for 2007-2008 at its Oct. 9 meeting:

**Goal 1: Empower students to achieve local, national and global academic standards at essential proficiency levels. Objectives include:**

- Power Standards Implementation:
  - ✓ Implementation of organizational skills continuum
  - ✓ Initiation of vocabulary development and critical thinking strands.
- Exceed by 5% all New York State and No Child Left Behind student achievement targets
- Develop a research-based vision for the high school
- Continued emphasis on literacy instruction and 21st century learning skills in all K-12 content areas
- Research and development of a K-2 Response to Intervention
- Model to meet the needs of all students
- Development of English/language arts curriculum maps
- Explore options for K-12 foreign language
- Develop K-12 technology standards
- Conduct a program review in the following: K-12 science audit; K-12 art; and business.

**Goal 2: Nurture a safe learning environment that is responsive to and stimulates academic, social and emotional development while inspiring personal initiative within our 21st century learners. Objectives include:**

- Monitor and measure the instructional application of technology to enhance learning
- Expand character education initiatives
- Expand the vision of the District Facility Advisory Committee to reflect the 3-5-year needs of our 21st century learners and surrounding community
- Enhance safety and security measures as needed
- Initiate a study group to review the use of outdoor classrooms and athletic fields to promote personal health and fitness.

**Goal 3: Ensure that the Saratoga Springs City School District recruits, hires, develops and retains a high-quality staff committed to educational excellence in an ever-changing global society. Objectives include:**

- Review current recruitment procedures:
  - ✓ Develop a recruitment profile for a 21st century teacher
  - ✓ Identify strategies for minority recruitment
  - ✓ Develop and initiate a K-12 teacher recruitment fair by Spring 2008
- Negotiate successful bargaining agreement with the Saratoga Springs Teachers Association
- Establish a committee to review and recommend professional growth opportunities aligned with district goals.

**Goal 4: Engage the community in partnerships that actively support Saratoga Springs City School District initiatives. Objectives include:**

- Expand levels of communication with our parent community
- Emphasize communication and partnerships with community members, businesses, and higher education.

**Goal 5: Oversee the district's resources in a proactive, responsible and efficient manner in the best interest of the students, staff and community. Objectives include:**

- Evaluate staffing trends to assess immediate and long-term needs
- Oversight of the EXCEL project
- Review and make recommendations regarding financial matters and audits
- Promote community awareness of the components of school revenues and their impact on local property owners
- Review and implement cost-containment strategies for health insurance and other employee benefits
- Pilot and assess alternative fuel sources for buses.

## Prestigious grant for high school

Gardeners could see bigger blooms and juicier tomatoes as a result of an invention under development by students at Saratoga Springs High School with funding from the prestigious Lemelson-MIT InvenTeams program.

The high school is one of 16 nationwide this year - and the only one ever in upstate New York - to be awarded a Lemelson-MIT grant, which will provide up to \$10,000 for development of an intriguing device featuring extensive data on soil conditions. The information will help gardeners decide which plants could thrive - and which might wither - in their own patch of ground.

Technology teacher Michael Gallagher, who submitted the winning application last spring and learned of the award in October, said 14 seniors in his Engineering, Design and Development course are already hard at work on the project. They'll develop it over the next eight months in preparation for showcasing their invention before an audience of thousands in the spring at the InvenTeams Odyssey at MIT in Cambridge, Mass.

Gallagher said the students are developing a prototype device that will be placed in soil, where a probe will measure variables such as sunlight, moisture, and acidity. The students will also develop computer software with a database that can be linked to their invention, matching data on soil conditions to information about plants best suited for that environment. While there are products on the market that measure individual soil variables, there's nothing currently available offering the breadth and depth they hope to achieve.

"The kids are really excited to be involved in this project," Gallagher said. "In the engineering world, this program is as big as it gets."

Gallagher said Saratoga Springs also has the distinction of being the first Project Lead the Way school to ever be selected for the Lemelson-MIT program, which began in 1994. Project Lead the Way is a national pre-engineering program involving hundreds of Saratoga students in a series of five courses culminating in the capstone Engineering, Design and Development class. Gallagher said it's possible the project could continue beyond the current school year because schools can apply for smaller matching grants to sustain interest in inventions in future years.

## STAR applications due Nov. 30



Applications for the 2007 Middle Class STAR Rebate Program are due by Nov. 30. The state Department of Taxation and Finance mailed applications in September to Saratoga County property owners.

New to the rebate program this year, basic STAR recipients must apply to the tax department online or via mail to receive the rebate checks. The tax department will calculate household incomes and send rebate checks based on the tax bracket of the applicant.

The rebate is also available to those aged 65 and over who receive an enhanced STAR exemption. No application is necessary for those in this category, who will receive their checks automatically.

The rebate check is in addition to any tax relief homeowners receive as a reduction of their school tax bills under basic or enhanced STAR.

For more information, please call the toll-free STAR number (877-678-2769) or your local assessor's office.

## NY Harvest for NY Kids



School lunch director Margaret Lamb and Jerry Cosgrove, deputy commissioner of the state Department of Agriculture and Markets, watch as Lake Avenue Elementary School students sample apples during an Oct. 1-5 celebration encouraging nutritious food choices among children. The school district offered an extensive program of activities at all schools as part of "New York Harvest for New York Kids Week." The event was part of the state's ongoing "Farm-to-School" program, which promotes the use of fresh New York products on school menus. The deputy commissioner chose to visit a Saratoga school because of the district's commitment to supporting good nutrition and buying products from local farmers.

## Child development program benefits younger and older students



First-grader Kelsey Chmiel with senior Rachel Palmateer at the Division Street Elementary School.

**A** new, advanced course in child development is offering more hands-on opportunities for high school students who may pursue careers in early childhood education and related fields.

The Child Development II course, offered for the first time this semester, builds on the skills students learned in Child Development I, which was introduced last year. The one-semester courses are taught through the Family and Consumer Sciences Department by teacher Beth Morris. Students who complete both courses can earn three credits at Maria College or Schenectady County Community College.

Students in the advanced course have been visiting the Division Street Elementary School and the Head Start program located on the high school campus to observe and interact with young children.

“The wonderful administrators and teachers at Division Street and Head Start are making it possible for our high school students to take what they’re learning in the classroom and apply it in settings with young children,” Mrs. Morris said. “It’s an invaluable experience for them.”

This semester, there are 45 students enrolled in Child Development 1 and 23 students in Child Development II.

## Meetings held with legislators concerning tax revenue from racing

**S**chool district officials met with state legislators during September and October to ask that the Legislature ensure continuation of tax revenues to the school district when it makes a decision about the state’s racing franchise.

The New York Racing Association, which currently holds the franchise, has been billed \$824,556 in school taxes for 2007-08.

Gov. Eliot Spitzer’s proposal calls for NYRA to continue operating the Saratoga, Aqueduct and Belmont horse tracks for another 30 years, but the state would get clear title to the race tracks.

Because state-owned properties are generally tax exempt, school district officials are concerned a significant portion of the district’s tax revenues could be lost if the state becomes owner of the tracks.

Superintendent of Schools Janice White, Assistant Superintendent for Business Kurt Jaeger, Board of Education President Frank Palumbo, and Board of Education Trustee Stephen Rodriguez stated their case during a Sept. 20 meeting in Albany with Assembly Minority Leader James Tedisco and an Oct. 2 meeting with Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno. An Oct. 16 session was held with Assemblyman Roy MacDonald of Wilton.

“We want to ensure that when the state makes a decision, regardless of which company receives the franchise, the district does not experience a significant loss in revenue,” Jaeger said. “Such a loss would be reallocated to the other taxpayers in the district.”

Although state-owned properties are generally tax exempt, Jaeger and Mrs. White say a permanent funding methodology should be established to replace the revenue stream. In addition, the racing revenue should be adjusted for the consumer price index to avoid having an adverse impact in future years. Spitzer has proposed a 30-year agreement with NYRA.

Mrs. White and Jaeger said if the school district lost the equivalent of the NYRA tax revenue, other taxpayers in the school district would need to pick up the difference, resulting in an additional tax impact of approximately 1.25 percent.

## Lake Outdoor Experience



Lake Avenue fifth-graders find a comfortable perch during the school's fifth annual outdoor education experience.

**S**unshine and balmy weather greeted 93 adventurers from the Lake Avenue Elementary School community for the fifth-annual Outdoor Education Experience at a Fort Ann camp Sept. 25-28.

The school's program offers all fifth-graders four days and three nights of an outdoor program designed to expose them to the intricate natural world in which they live. Hands-on environmental lessons are interwoven with team building, character development, and respect for the land.

Fifth-grade teacher Michael Huchro said offering the program early in the school year lays the groundwork for enhanced interpersonal and academic connections throughout the school year.

A few of the many objectives include learning to read a compass and a map; identifying and analyzing plants and animals; dissecting owl pellets; and understanding issues concerning the protection and conservation of resources.

This year's program involved 51 students, 21 parent chaperones, and 21 other participants, including faculty, staff, community volunteers and outdoor professionals.

## Administration building dedicated in honor of former superintendent

**T**he school district's central administrative offices were dedicated as the "MacFadden Administration Building" on Oct. 25, in honor of Dr. John E. MacFadden, who retired in June as superintendent of schools.

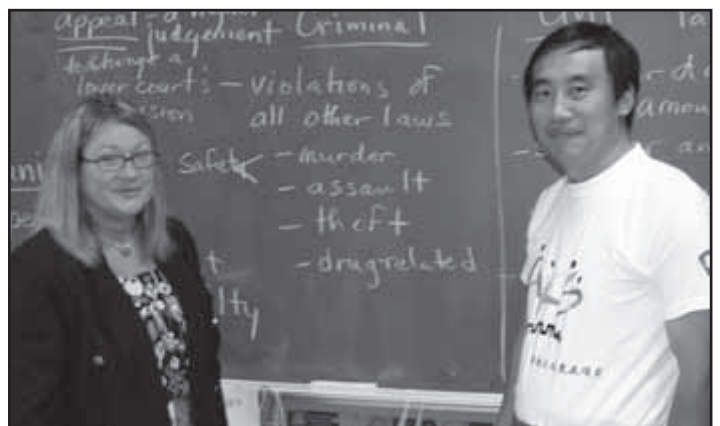


Dr. John E. MacFadden

Dr. MacFadden was employed by the school district for 38 years, beginning as a high school social studies teacher and serving later as a high school assistant principal. Following central administrative appointments as personnel director and assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, he was appointed as superintendent in 1991.

Dr. MacFadden was honored during a ceremony and reception in the lobby of the administration building, located at 3 Blue Streak Boulevard on the high school campus. A plaque designating the new name of the building was unveiled during the ceremony.

"We are pleased to recognize the achievements and leadership of Dr. MacFadden," said Superintendent of Schools Janice M. White. "This is a permanent reminder of his contributions to past and future students."



High school English teacher Roberta Reed, left, has served as a liaison to the AFS Visiting Teacher Program since 2000. At right above is Chunhui Zhang, an English teacher from Qitaihe, China, who is spending the fall semester at the high school. Zhang said a major difference between American and Chinese education is the smaller class size in the United States, which facilitates more classroom discussions. In China, where class sizes average 70 students, the curriculum is mostly lecture-based.



## National Merit semifinalist and commended students

Senior Caitlin Richter has been named a semifinalist in the 2008 National Merit Scholarship Competition.



Caitlin Richter

Caitlin entered the program by taking the Preliminary SAT/ National Merit

Qualifying Test during her junior year. She is among the approximately 16,000 semifinalists selected nationwide from more than 1.4 million students who took the test. Semifinalists compete for merit scholarship awards that will be offered next spring.

An additional 11 seniors have been named as commended students in the National Merit program, indicating they earned outstanding scores on the qualifying test. Commended students are Anna Card, Sean Doescher, Kurt English, Kenneth Hammond, Abigail Larue, Joseph Lombardo, Jeffrey Pawlick, William Roberts, Laura Tremblay, Ariana Vacs Renwick and Sebastian Wheeler.

There were approximately 34,000 commended students throughout the nation. They do not continue in the scholarship competition, but are recognized for their exceptional academic promise.

riculum since 2001. Saratoga Springs is the only school outside of New York City to offer the program.

**Mandarin Chinese** is now offered at the high school, through a course broadcast from the

Galway Central School District to the high school's high-tech distance learning lab. The high school continues to search for distance learning courses that can add breadth to the current offerings, enhancing the academic experience for students.

### ★ Greenfield Elementary School students

raised \$590 for hurricane relief in September and October by donating \$1 each for the privilege of wearing hats in school. The money raised through "Hats On for Waveland" was used to purchase building materials in Waveland, Mississippi, which continues to rebuild two years after the massive destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina.

### ★ The school district won a red ribbon at the

**Saratoga County Fair** in July for educational exhibits created by students from the Dorothy Nolan, Geyser Road, Greenfield, Division Street and Lake Avenue Elementary Schools. The second-place finish among Saratoga County schools also earned the district a trophy, certificate and television. Individual honorable

mention awards of \$10 each went to **Emily Maizner**, Dorothy Nolan (art); **Meghan Bethal**, Dorothy Nolan (social studies); **Liam Neary**, Division Street (art); **Cassidy Driscoll**, Geyser Road (art); **Serena Egan**, **Gabrielle Celia** and **Trevor Francesconi**, Lake Avenue (science); and **Maizie Guzi** and **Anne Hollyer**, Lake Avenue (science).

### ★ High school math teacher **Mary Anne**

**Fantauzzi** has been awarded the Exercise Safety Association 2007 Luminary Award for her dedication to exercise safety. Ms. Fantauzzi was also honored in August with an invitation to present a seminar to New York City public high school teachers about the New York City Ballet Workout. She has been offering the ballet workout at the high school as part of the physical education cur-



3 Blue Streak Boulevard  
Saratoga Springs, N.Y. 12866

# In This Issue

50th anniversaries for Caroline & Division;	1
Space Age anniversary celebrated	1
New professional staff; 25-year employees	2
Superintendent's column; district goals	3
High school wins grant; STAR applications	4
Child development program; district officials discuss tax revenue with legislators	5
Lake outdoor program; "MacFadden" building dedicated	6
"Hats Off" to achievers	7
School closing plans; Homecoming 2007	8

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## Homecoming 2007



High school cheerleaders march down Broadway during the Homecoming Parade Sept. 28. Other highlights of Homecoming Weekend were a football game and dance. The weekend marked the end of an action-packed week of homecoming activities, which also included a pep rally and the Powder Puff football games, featuring the girls on the field, where sophomores and juniors posted the winning scores. The Powder Puff games raised \$500 for local charities.

**High school graduation**  
9 a.m., Thursday, June 26  
Saratoga Performing Arts Center



## School Closing Plans

**S**chool closings, delays and early dismissal in the event of inclement weather or other emergencies will be announced on local television and radio stations. In addition, information will be posted on the district Web site at [www.saratogaschools.org](http://www.saratogaschools.org) and on [www.cancellations.com](http://www.cancellations.com)

Beginning at about 6 a.m., information will be available on the following television stations: WRGB-Channel 6; WTEN-Channel 10; WNYT-Channel 13; WXXA-Channel 23, and Capital News 9. Announcements will also be made on these radio stations: WCKM-FM 98.5, WGY-AM 810, WRVE-FM 99.5, WYJB-FM 95.5, WFLY-FM 92.3, WENU-FM 101.7, WENU-AM 1410, WMML-AM 1230, WNYQ-FM 105.7, WFFG-FM 107.1, WKBE-FM 100.3, and WQAR-FM 101.3.

Parents are urged to listen to these stations or visit the Web sites listed above rather than calling the school district.