



# Reflections

Volume IX    Number 2    Bethel High School Alumni Association, Bethel, CT    Winter 2011

## *Do You Remember*



*Dan DeBlois*

Dan DeBlois was hired at Bethel High School in 1965 with a certification in Chemistry, Physics and General Science. He started as a chemistry teacher that same year and has been here ever since. In 1983-84 he became the coordinator of computer science teaching one computer class along with several chemistry classes. In 1984-85 he started teaching computer science full time. He was instrumental in expanding the computer program throughout the school system for staff and students from K-12. He has been the driving force behind the computer programs for staff and students since technology was introduced to the system.

In February of 2001 he became the Supervisor of Information Technology. Throughout the years he has served the school system in a variety of ways, from coach to class advisor — even the folk music advisor! He was an active member to the BEA, served as President on various committees, and has always looked for ways to develop the curriculum by making it more relevant to the students. His expertise and innovative ideas did not stop there. He also helped to develop the photography program and consumer science program.

Dan has a strong ability to work well with others, of being innovative in his thinking, of engaging students in the classroom and in training teachers. He has always been willing to go above and beyond.

He is now semi-retired and is working part time for the Bethel School District. (His wife, Maureen, is still teaching music at Berry School.)

Dan DeBlois is a man totally devoted to making a difference in the Bethel School System.

On his original application for employment he wrote: "I have chosen the teaching profession as my life's work. There are three outstanding reasons for this decision:

- The great deal of satisfaction that can be obtained.
- Economic security.
- A chance not only to teach but to be taught."

## *Athletic Hall of Fame*

Bethel High School has decided to honor past individuals, and or teams by creating an Athletic Hall of Fame. This year's induction ceremony took place on November 12th at Ridgewood Country Club. The inductees were also honored at the football game on Friday, November 11th.

The Following criteria must be met in order to be eligible for nomination to the Hall of Fame:

### **Athletes must:**

1. Have graduated from Bethel High School.
2. Have graduated ten (10) years prior to consideration.
3. Have made significant and conspicuous achievements in their sport of sports as demonstrated, where possible, by statistical documentation, newspaper articles or the number and stature of awards received. Post-graduate athletic achievements will also be considered for BHS athletes who have earned a varsity letter.
4. Have a nomination submitted on their behalf detailing the special nature of their contributions to BHS' athletics.
5. Have conducted themselves in a manner that has brought credit to Bethel athletics.

### **Coaches and Administrators must:**

1. Have made a long-term exemplary contribution to the BHS athletic program.
2. Are retired at least five (5) years from coaching at BHS in the sport in which they are being considered or are retired from coaching at BHS and at least 60 years of age.
3. Have a nomination submitted on their behalf detailing the special nature of their contributions to BHS' athletics.
4. Have conducted themselves in a manner that has brought credit to Bethel athletics.

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## From The Presidents

Dear Fellow Alumni:

Hard to believe we are writing this letter a few days after Halloween with snow on the ground and 99% of Bethel residents having no electricity. Winter storm Alfred has hit this area and has done more devastation than hurricane Irene which we dealt with only a month or so ago. Schools will be closed for three days. Other towns are keeping the schools closed all week. It is a heart break to drive through town and see the number of trees that were lost and to know the storm caused a local death.

Your association has had a busy but productive summer. The Senior Alumni picnic for those who graduated before 1961 was another huge success. Two hundred twenty people attended. For the first time we has it catered and were most pleased with P.J. O'Neil, a Bethel caterer. They could not have been more helpful or served better food. The new building at Bennett Park provided by the Lion's Club of Bethel was also a positive change. O'Neil's served the food in this building which helped the serving go more smoothly. We thank the picnic committee for their hard work and the weatherman for once again providing the best weather possible.

At the picnic we recognized those who were chosen for the Who's Who wall of fame. Be sure to read the related article to see who the candidates were this year.

This past May the Alumni Association awarded two \$1000 scholarships to deserving seniors. One recipient, Marissa Rosado, is now studying criminology at WCSU. The other recipient was Kayla Lance who is attending Keene State College studying developmental psychology.

Most important, if you have a membership renewal enclosed in this newsletter, this will be your last *Reflections* unless you renew your membership. We hope you will continue to be part of our association.

Very truly yours,  
Lynn O'Donnell Fenn '71, Lois Heckler Weiss '57  
Co-Presidents

### Board Of Directors

Tom Bartram '67	Lynn O'Donnell Fenn '71
Ada Ferry Cole '45	Jim Leonard '54
Kevin Cleary '69	Barbara Andrews Negri '53
Edward English '59	Ted Taylor '53

Lois Heckler Weiss '57

### Officers

Lynn O'Donnell Fenn '71	Co-President
Lois Heckler Weiss '57	Co-President
Barbara Andrews Negri '53	Recording Secretary
Ada Ferry Cole '45	Corresponding Secretary
Ted Taylor '53	Treasurer

### Committee Chairs

Edward English '59	Scholarship
Lynn O'Donnell Fenn '71	Who's Who
Jim Leonard '54	Picnic
Lois Heckler Weiss '57	Newsletter

### Newsletter

Gordon Gereg '56	Carol Gereg Murphy '57
Jim Leonard '54	Lois Heckler Weiss '57

### Consultants

Dan DeBlois	Technology Supervisor, Bethel High School
Frank Forster	Retired Associate Principal, Bethel High School
Gary Lawlor	Assistant Principal Bethel High School
Bill Swanson	Retired Athletic Director
Chris Troetti	Assistant Principal Bethel High School

## Wildcat Mascot

In our last issue we had an article regarding the origin of the BHS Mascot. We asked readers to help us if they knew the origin. We received the following from Edward Leserd, Class of '38.

"Prior to 1934 I don't know if Bethel High had a mascot name. But starting in 1934 we were called the *Barnum Towners* due to a big event a New York radio station had about Barnum's birthday. "Ed goes on to explain," after the 1938 Connecticut basketball championship games played in Hartford, coach Tom Woods had the student body vote for a mascot name." Ed does not remember the names selected or the outcome of the voting, however, it was after this that the Wildcat was used. Ed feels something happened during the championship games to bring this about.

Speaking to Bob Bartram at the Senior Alumni Picnic, he felt the Wildcat mascot came from the Wildcat district which is what the area where St. Mary school now stands was called.

Any other info our readers have, please let us know. You may e-mail me at [loisohara@aol.com](mailto:loisohara@aol.com).

# Staying In Touch



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*Athletic Hall of Fame Recipients*

## **Distinguished Bethel High School Alumni must:**

1. Have earned a varsity letter at BHS and bring honor to their alma mater by making significant contributions to society in their chosen field of endeavor.
2. Have graduated from BHS at least ten (10) years prior to consideration.
3. Have a nomination submitted on their behalf detailing the special nature of their contributions to BHS' athletics.
4. Have conducted themselves in a manner that has brought credit to Bethel athletics.

Exemplary Contributors to BHS Athletic Department who do not qualify for consideration under any of the foregoing categories may also be eligible for induction if they:

Have a nomination submitted on their behalf detailing the special nature of their contributions of BHS' athletics.

Have conducted them selves in a manner that has brought credit to Bethel athletics.

Outstanding Teams of surpassing achievement may be eligible for induction.

Deceased Contributors to BHS Athletics in any of the foregoing categories are immediately eligible for induction of the Hall of Fame.

The recipients of this year's Athletic Hall of Fame are:

Scott Daniels  
Fran Selleck  
Burr Carlson  
Tom Duffy  
David Burke  
Erin St. John  
Greg Sutton  
William Swanson  
Ralph DeSantis  
1996 Boys Soccer team - coached by Ray Flanigan

## **Who's Who Awards**

The Who's Who Committee of the Bethel High Alumni Association again took on the difficult task of choosing the year's most outstanding alumni from the many who contribute so much to the school, community and/or their profession. Over the past two years, four recipients (two per year) were chosen and recognized at the biennial picnic this summer. Name plaques and each honoree's bio are currently displayed on the Bethel High School Wall of Fame.

**Leonard 'Link' Hurgin** was a member of the Class of '40. He entered the U.S. Postal Service in 1949 and became the postmaster in Bethel from 1969-1986. He knew just about everyone in town and they knew him. Link was an active member in St. Mary Church, volunteered and belonged to many community organizations and coached numerous youth sports teams. Sadly, Link passed away on February 17, 2011. His kindness towards others will always be remembered.

**Arne Johnson**, a graduate of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, was very involved with the military. He became a Naval Captain and from 1967-1979 he was on three command tours and assigned to various Navy missions. He received numerous Service medals, is a co-editor of the publication *'United States Submarines'* and was involved with the development of advanced combat systems. Arne was the Vice-President of the Submarine Force Library and Museum Association in Mystic, CT. and presently sits on the Board of Directors at Sonalysts, Inc.

**James Leonard** graduated from B.H.S. in 1954. He went into teaching in Bethel, but later moved on to Ridgefield where he became the principal of Branchville Elementary School for more than 20 years. He served on active duty with the National Guard and received several awards and retired as Captain. Jim was instrumental in developing the BHS Alumni Association where he was the president for 7 years. He is an active member on the Alumni Board and continues to be involved in many aspects of the association. His devotion to doing the right thing to help others is second to none.

**John 'Butch' Rist**, class of '67, made a tremendous impact on the Manchester School System in New Hampshire. During the 37 years he worked there, he was the principal of Central High School and Manchester School of Technology. He pushed students to become involved in activities, the dropout rate declined and test scores rose. He instilled a sense of pride to the staff, the students, and the Manchester community. Butch retired this past school year.



## *On A Sad Note*

*(Recent Deaths)*

Dennis Carroll '67	Sandra Johnson Pack '73
Darlene Crowell '78	Raymond S. Peck '38
Kevin A. Deering '78	Francis M. Reagan '40
Lillian Beschele Ellis '33	William B. Ruehl '85
Patricia Foshay Ely '69	Thomas L. Ryan '47
Joseph J. Falis '54	Jean Marie Schmuecker '71
Clarke Fancher	Grace Menton Surma '41
Al Janesky (Teacher)	Walker T. Taylor '38
Donald Edward Kayser '48	Maria Vaghi '40
Joseph F. Kilcran '54	Patrick K. Walsh '70
Rose Grasso Lawler '39	Jane Kenny Wanser '77
James B. Murphy '47	Franklyn Warren '49
Erik C. Oberhammer '83	

### *Al Janesky Scholarship*

The family of Al Janesky, a former BHS teacher, is setting up a scholarship in his memory. Each year a \$1000 scholarship will be awarded to a graduating senior. If you would like to donate to this scholarship fund, please make the check out to *Albert W. Janesky Memorial Scholarship Fund* and send it to Bethel Public Schools, P.O. Box 253, 1 School Street, Bethel, CT 06801.

### *BHS Alumni Web Page*

The Web Page for the Bethel Public Schools has been updated. If you go to the site, you will notice a list of topics on the left hand side. Scroll down to the fourth one, "Community Links," and click on it. Another list will open and again you will scroll to BHS Alumni Association. Click on this and it will take you to our page. Our page is also set up differently with the subtitles on the left where you would click to get to the topic you need.

### *Board Members Re-elected*

Three of our Board Members have agreed to serve another term on the Board of Directors. The members who were re-elected are Edward English '59, Barbara Andrews Negri '53 and Lois Heckler Weiss '57.

*Bethel High School Alumni Association  
c/o Bethel High School  
Deakin Educational Park  
Bethel, CT 06801  
Return Service Requested*

