

'In the Loop' with the Lewiston-Porter Board of Education

'High-risk' fall, winter season sports to begin

BY JODEE RIORDAN
Board of Education President

The Lewiston-Porter Board of Education met this week for an engaging monthly meeting.

The board focused on budget development, with the approval of the 2021-22 budget-development calendar and a deep dive into long-range planning with a review of the state-required five-year plan. The five-year plan, together with the building condition survey and five-year facilities plan, provides priorities and parameters for building the budget. The building condition survey and five-year facilities plan were both presented to the board by Brad Vaillancourt of Trautman Associates at its Dec. 14 work session.

The five-year plan provides a blueprint for allocating resources and ensuring long-term stability. It creates a foundation for supporting Lewiston-Porter's educational vision.

Dr. Patricia Grupka, assistant superintendent for administrative services, reviewed each component of the plan as it aligns revenues and expenditures, plans for capital improvements to ensure building safety and facilities development, provides clarity on cost trends (utilities, benefits, contractual costs), and offers insight on long-term challenges and opportunities faced by the district and the time needed to plan to meet each.

A drawback to the plan (required by New York state since 2018-19) is that it requires a high degree of assumptions, especially in aligning revenue to expenditure, as the state and federal budgets local districts rely upon for funding offer no predictability and only certain expenditures can be fully forecast.

This pandemic year has only demonstrated how quickly the landscape can change, and how important a solid instructional plan and fiscal stability are. Lewiston-Porter has been able to meet these challenges because of years

of conservative fiscal planning and strong instructional leadership, and through the board's commitment to governance and its fiduciary duty.

That said, as the board begins to tackle both the 2021-22 budget and academic school year, please buckle your seatbelts; it's going to be a bumpy ride. The BOE will meet next for a budget development work session at 8 p.m. Monday, Feb. 8. It continues to meet via Zoom and the public is welcome to attend virtually.

Sports Update

Speaking of things changing quickly – following Gov. Andrew Cuomo's surprise announcement late last Friday, previously restricted "high-risk" fall and winter season sports will now be able to begin. Updated season timelines for the remainder of the year (inclusive of sectional play) are: Winter season (basketball, ice hockey and wrestling), Feb. 1-March 27; fall 2 (volleyball, football and cheerleading), March 22-May 15; and the spring season (all spring sports), May 10-June 30.

With the approval of the five county health departments (Erie, Niagara, Orleans, Chautauque and Cattaraugus) now in place, Section VI plans to move forward with the start of winter high-risk sports. Basketball, ice hockey and wrestling may begin practice on Monday, Feb. 1, with the approval from each district. This was unanimously approved at Monday's BOE meeting with the appointment of coaches.

Winter low-risk sports (bowling and boys swim) were already underway. Cheerleading (competitive and sideline cheer), normally included in the winter, will be moved to the fall 2 season.

Guidance is still being developed for section sports (Lew-Port is in Section VI) and league (Lew-Port is in the Niagara Frontier League) levels, so please closely follow updates from Athletic Director Brad Halgash and/or Superintendent Paul Casseri. All

NYSDOH/NYSPHAA guidelines must be enforced as documented in the Jan. 22 governor's interim guidance for sports and recreation guidelines (<https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/sport-and-recreation-master-guidance.pdf>), and NYSPHAA guidance (issued Monday, Jan. 25).

In addition to this guidance, Section VI will also mandate that no spectators be allowed for competition for the winter 2021 season. The Niagara Frontier League will meet tomorrow (Jan. 30) to work within the context of these guidelines and timelines to establish schedules and specific safety protocols, including mask wearing, social distancing at practices and competitions, as well as quarantine guidelines in the event a team member or coach becomes COVID positive.

Athletics are a vital part of life at Lewiston-Porter, and it is exciting to be able to offer a season to our student athletes, even if it may look and feel very different than what we may be used to. Stay tuned.

'One District, One Book'

Something else to celebrate and bring the community together: "One District, One Book" is back ... with a virtual twist! ODOB, now in its fifth year, is a program designed to create a shared reading experience across our school and community. Every student, grades K-6, votes for their preferred choice between two books. This year's choices include "Almost Super," by Marion Jensen, and "Fenway and Hattie," by Victoria J. Coe, and then everyone in the community reads – and celebrates – the same book.

"Fenway and Hattie" was announced this week as the winner. Each Lew-Port student now receives a copy for them and their family to read together.

This year's "One District, One Book" celebration is offering all of the same great events – family voting, reveals, dinner specials,

community specials, reading events and family night – and all with a safe and virtual twist. (See related cover story.)

"One District, One Book" is not just a literacy program, it is a community-building program. It is a fantastic opportunity for our whole community to connect. Even if you do not currently have a child in elementary school, you can instantly connect with a little one just by asking about Fenway, an excitable and endlessly energetic Jack Russell terrier, and his best friend Hattie.

Here is what you need to know about Fenway and Hattie to be "in the loop" and engaged with our "ODOB" readers. Fenway lives in the city with Food Lady, Fetch Man and – of course – his beloved short human and best-friend-in-the-world, Hattie. When his family moves to the suburbs, Fenway faces a world of changes. He's pretty pleased with the huge dog park behind his new home, but he's not so happy about the Evil Squirrels that taunt him from the trees, the super-slippery Wicked Floor in the eating room, and the

changes that have come over Hattie lately. Rather than playing with Fenway, she seems more interested in her new short human friend and learning to play baseball. His friends in the dog park next door say Hattie is outgrowing him, but that can't be right. And he's going to prove it!

Get a dog's-eye view of the world in this heartwarming, enthusiastic "tail" about two best friends. You can pick up your own copy at local libraries, including the Lewiston Public Library, Ransomville Free Library and Youngstown Free Library. You can also check out the "One District, One Book" webpage (www.lew-port.com/page/12786) to watch the video series of special guests reading each chapter, check out the fun activities and trivia, and get all the info on specials offered by our community partners.

The Virtual Family Night Celebration will be held Friday, March 12.

Happy reading!

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OBITUARIES

Thomas J. Carter

Thomas J. Carter of Niagara Falls, New York, passed away on Sunday, Jan. 24, 2021, in the Schoellkopf Health Center.

He was born on Jan. 6, 1926, in Olyphant, Pennsylvania, the son of the late John and Mary (Kelly) Carter of Broadford, County Clare, Ireland. After moving to Niagara Falls in 1942, he became an offset press operator with Moore Business Forms.

Tom enlisted in the U.S. Army during World War II and served with Company I, the 71st Infantry, 44th Infantry Division. He was wounded in Woelfling, France, during the Battle of the Bulge, which resulted in the amputation of his right arm. He was awarded the Purple Heart.

Tom loved sports, especially baseball, and played in both the Independent League and the Industrial League in the 1940s and '50s. He played for the Moore Business Forms, Niagara Falls Citizens, Niagara Falls Pirates, Niagara Falls Panthers and the Si-



Thomas J. Carter

mon Oils teams. He played center field and was always a favorite of the crowd.

Tom also loved handball and played in many championship games. He continued actively playing into his 80s.

Tom was a life member of the YMCA. He also loved camping and fishing and throughout the

years, had many fishing boats, truck campers and a motor home. His favorite place to camp and fish was on the Raquette River in the Adirondack Mountains, which he truly loved.

He is survived by his brother, Stephen (Barbara) Carter; nieces Maureen Carter and Mary Elizabeth (Joe) Burton; nephews Brian Carter and Sean (Maria) Carter; great-nephew Joseph Burton; and great-great nephew Joseph Burton Jr. Tom was the brother of the late Mary Burton, Betty Shaffer, John J., Joseph and Robert J. Carter, and was the uncle of the late Stephen J. Carter.

Private interment was in North Ridge Cemetery at the wishes of his family. Donations in Tom's memory may be made to St. Jude Children's Hospital or the Shriners Hospitals for Children.

Arrangements were made through the Rhoney Funeral Home, Lewiston. Visit www.rhoneyfuneralhome.com for guest register.