



**The Wheatley School**  
**50<sup>th</sup>**  
**Anniversary**

**RETIREE'S RECOLLECTIONS**  
**1956-1965**

Prepared by Betty Bradley & Ann Karp ~ October 2006

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*Typist: Ann B. Karp*

## RECOLLECTIONS OF EVELYN BARROW

I'd been Lillian Shapiro's replacement for one term at Willets Road, while going to Library School. The powers that be, realized that two professionals were needed to run a proper Library for as many students as Wheatley had then.

They also wanted to try keeping the Library open two nights a week. I was just finishing my MLS at Post and was offered the job but had a few more months to go. I don't know how I got together with Esther Rothstein but we kind of sold ourselves as a package – we would share the job. We promised they would never have to call a sub, we were both qualified and we were willing to come in, each one night a week from 6 to 8. So it came to pass.

One of my early nights was April 4, 1968, the day Martin Luther King was assassinated. I remember coming to the Study Center with a small portable radio, sitting glued to it with not another soul in the building. There may have been a custodian, but he was not visible. It was such a momentous event and scary to be there alone.

There was never enough use of the Study Center after school hours to justify keeping it open, but they did keep the second professional position and we lived happily ever after, for ten years, until we were transferred to Willets Road, not by choice. But that too was another experience...

My daughter Nancy forwarded a link which I could not successfully print. But if you reach it, it has a marvelous story of Gary Gottlieb's ('73) accomplishments; <http://www.brighamandwomens.org/publicaffairs/leadershipbios.aspx>. If I get other revelations, I'll be in touch with you. Really looking forward to the whole affair.

EB:abk

## RECOLLECTIONS OF DR. ELIZABETH (BETTY) BELASCO WHEATLEY ...AND LIFE AFTER....

### Advisor to ICU (Inter Cultural Unity)

Started out to dispel some of the racial and ethnic biases within the school

We sponsored cultural events (performing arts of different cultures, foods of different cultures, etc.)

We branched out into community service: visited retirement homes (played games with residents, brought 'golden oldie music, etc.) ; visited school for retarded (mentally, physically, emotionally) children; visited pediatric wards in hospitals

We sponsored an international lunch (kids cooked, community members cooked, restaurants contributed; kids served, cashiered, cleaned up) to raise funds for Adopt-A-Family. To me, the best part of this was that all the kids worked together, regardless of racial, religious, or ethnic or socioeconomic background - and they never even noticed because they were working toward a common goal. We also had a number of fund-raising games for the same purpose.

We also sponsored a 5K run for "Jerry's Kids" and were represented on TV with Jerry for our efforts.

I understand that this group continues to function today, although the name might be different. That makes me VERY proud.

### Co-Advisor to Ecology Club (along with Henri Dold)

The focus here was on preserving and protecting our environment. At that time, newspaper collections were a big thing, and every week we would go into a different part of the community to collect newspapers, and raised enough funds from this to build the Wheatley greenhouse - built almost entirely by Wheatley students and a few parents. Legally, we had to use licensed plumbers and electricians, but all the 'sweat work' was done by us. I remember one blistering hot August day as we were laying the patio blocks on construction sand for the floor, when one of us grabbed the hose (it might even have been I...) and squirted everyone in sight, leading to a general melee amidst great giggling fits).

### A new Science Wing and a new teaching concept (team teaching)

It was great to have our own science wing, but a lab of 48 stations was a real challenge to teach in. I understand this was later modified down to a reasonable size. I'm not sure we ever really 'got' the concept of team teaching, although we tried mightily.....

### Musicals at Wheatley

I enjoyed producing and directing musicals at Wheatley and also learned a lot about the craft. The ones in which I was involved were: How to Succeed, Pajama Game, and Damn Yankees.

### Field Hockey Fan

Having played field hockey throughout my college days, I followed the team at Wheatley assiduously. I remember that the girls challenged the football team to a game

of field hockey. Despite my advice to the girls to rely on skills rather than on strength, they persisted in attempting long drives at which the guys were infinitely better. My personal thrill was that I was able to referee the whole game without losing my breath – having quit smoking just a few months earlier!

Most of all, I remember the friendships I enjoyed with so many of the kids – some of whom I still correspond to this day!

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## LIFE AFTER WHEATLEY

Never having been very religious (I was a church dropout for many years), I found myself drawn to the church and to the ordained ministry several years before I retired from Wheatley. So, while still teaching, I attended seminary and became much more sympathetic to my students with the burden of learning as I too had to find time for studies – the kids really enjoyed watching me sweat the days I would be facing a quiz or had a paper due!

Six months before I retired (June 1985), I was ordained a deacon in the Episcopal Church. Deacons are sometimes described as having one foot in the church and one foot in the world. We bring the church to the people and the people's needs to the church. My specialties with this are in the fields of pastoral care and bereavement counseling, although I am also a jack-of-all-trades.

I spent the year from September 11, 2001 to the end of May 2002 as a chaplain at Ground Zero. Some of my work was to 'chaplain' the workers – firemen, police, construction workers, port authority police, EMTs, etc. We were housed in TMort (temporary morgue) where remains were first brought for identification, photographing, recording of location where found (via GPS), examining the remains, etc. Every time we were notified that remains were found we would go, first to the 'pile' and later to the 'pit.' If the remains were identified as from an MOS (member of service), we would gather at the base of the ramp with the Police or Fire Commissioner and I would do a service of commendation with the ramp lined with members of service standing at attention. I later learned that this was broadcast throughout Ground Zero, and every one remained standing and silent during this brief service.

At the closing of Ground Zero, I was invited to serve as chaplain at Memorial Park, where the unidentified remains are stored, pending identification. (42% of the victims are not yet identified.) Families and friends come to visit, bring flowers, leave letters, stuffed toys, etc, and we are there for them. This is entirely interfaith, since visitors come from many different faith traditions: Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, etc.

As a result of my work there, I became part of a small team called Compassionate Responders in June of 2005. We spent close to a month listening to Sri Lankans who had lost family members in the great tsunamis. All we did was listen to their stories. They had been provided with the necessities of life, even though crude: water, shelter, food. But no one had ever heard their stories. You have to tell your story! And so that is what we did – we enabled them to tell their stories.. We will probably be returning to Sri Lanka in late spring – early summer, when we might also be working with refugees from the north of the island where there is currently fierce fighting. In all likelihood we will also be going to Indonesia to listen to victims of tsunamis, earthquakes, and mud slides. Some of my Christian friends are horrified that we do not attempt to proselytize, to convert to Christianity. That is not our purpose. In Sri Lanka, most of the people are devout Buddhists, and I have not only learned a lot about this religion, but I have gained much respect for it.

In my spare time, I donate platelets and join the walk for MS. I still do handwork and garden and travel. Life is good!

How many people are blessed to have not one but two professions that they truly love!

## RECOLLECTIONS FROM COLIN BENTLEY

I was appointed Curriculum Associate for Science as of September 1959. My first impression was that it was going to be an opportunity of a lifetime to join the Wheatley faculty. Dr. Boyan, and his staff, were so professional and talented. I knew I would be working at a first-class school. The location of the school was another factor that impressed me. The setting was a beautiful one for a school that wanted to be known as one of the best on Long Island. It was such a pleasure to be part of the best faculty I have ever worked with in my forty years of teaching and administration.

Dr. Sullivan wanted to be on the fringe of every new approach and new program. We all tried to reach that goal. My first negative impression came with the attempt of the two new successors to Dr. Boyan to administer Wheatley. It was almost a disaster. Thankfully, they left, and Wes Wathey was appointed Principal. I became Assistant Principal and the next nine years were far better than the first two. I enjoyed those years more than any other of my time in Education.

Lastly, my most important impressions: The faculty, student body and parents all wanted Wheatley to be the best. They succeeded. We all worked hard to accomplish our tasks. Teaching and being an administrator at Wheatley prepared me to take over my own high school later on. Wes allowed me to participate in every facet of running a school. When I became a principal, I was well prepared to deal with the myriad of problems to be encountered, especially in the 1970's.

CB:abk

## RECOLLECTIONS FROM ELSIE BODNAR MISS 'B'

How did Aurora come to be?

When Wheatley opened its doors on Bacon Road, we had no senior class. The juniors came mainly from Mineola and were an unhappy lot. They missed their former classmates, teachers and activities. They were especially worried they would not experience the usual senior 'entitlements', and they wanted a yearbook, as much for memories as for college applications. A small delegation approached me requesting help. I don't know to this day how they knew I had been yearbook advisor in my former school in PA. I was taken aback. I thought I had left all that behind. I was not prepared to assume all those responsibilities again, but the students looked so distressed that I reluctantly agreed.

I warned them that they would have to work harder than they then realized. We would have to work starting from scratch. We had no work place, no equipment, no supplies, no seed money with which to start. We had NOTHING! As I spoke, I recalled that in my former school, I had shared responsibilities with a colleague who took care of the finances (sales, bills, supplies, etc.). I supervised the editorial, photographic and artistic end. When I realized I would now have to do it all alone, I was ready to panic; they were ready to work.

My memory is fuzzy about how much we accomplished, during their junior year. I think they recruited classmates over summer vacation. I was not sure the students who volunteered were well suited for their assignments. I did not yet know the students well enough to judge, but it turned out that the editors had chosen well.

We met in my classroom. Later, we inherited a janitor's broom closet down the hall from my room, in which we could store a used, slightly abused typewriter, a file cabinet (also used and battered) and supplies as we acquired them. It was a tight squeeze for two or three of us to work there, so we shuttled back and forth from my classroom to the broom closet. We did our best to make the proverbial lemonade.

Early in the school year in English class, we read the Greek plays and included the mythology. When the name Aurora, goddess of the dawn and the beginning of things, attracted their attention, I crossed my fingers and hoped. They did choose the name Aurora for their yearbook, despite the grumbling of the boys who wanted a name from their athletic team, or wild animals, or Indian Chiefs, or such. Aurora prevailed.

It was not difficult to sell the yearbook to the seniors, but I fear they strong-armed the under-classmen. We decided we could not accept their payments in installments. We needed full payments in order to meet our quarterly payments to the publisher. If we were a little short, I contributed whatever I could. The business staff also sold doughnuts after school. Whoever had a car was given permission to leave early from a free period to bring back the doughnuts -- fresh, aromatic and warm from the ovens -- I can smell them now. They sold well. But I'd be horrified at the thought of selling all that sugar and transfat today.



We couldn't afford the highest quality paper, or the finest material for the cover, or an elaborate design for the cover. The yearbook representative was generous enough to sketch a rising sun with sunbeams reaching out to a new day, a new beginning. That design in one configuration or another served as the Aurora logo in ensuing years.

Each year proved a little easier, but no less demanding. When I was first asked by a few of my top-colleagues how much I was compensated for my time, I was surprised to realize I was working Pro Bono. They had a fit! I had been too busy to think about such matters. It was not until several years later, that I received any remuneration.

To my knowledge, the most well-known Aurora Editor-in-Chief was Carol Alt. She became a famous fashion model whose beautiful face appeared on countless magazine covers. She then acted in movies in Italy. In recent years, I saw her selling cosmetics on Q.V.C.

It saddened me over the years that neither the school-at-large nor the senior class in particular ever realized how hard their classmates had worked to produce their yearbook each year.

As I think back over the years to all the Aurora staff members, it is with the greatest of admiration I remember them.

I send greetings and best wishes to all,

With Fond Remembrances

Miss 'B'

EB:abk

RECOLLECTIONS  
ESL Program  
Dr. Jacqueline Friedman Borruso

I began the ESL program at Wheatley in January 1976 as a part time program. At the time I was Ms. Friedman. I taught in Mineola Junior High School in the morning and then came to Wheatley for afternoon classes. I was interviewed and asked to come to Wheatley by Ed Ouchi, Curriculum Associate of English, and Dr. Ethel Staples, the school psychologist. It was amazing that I got the position at Wheatley at all since I arrived late to my initial interview because I had gotten lost on Hillside Avenue. Imagine that Ed Ouchi actually overlooked that and hired me anyway!

I thank Ed for doing that, as these have been the best years of my professional life. I have been at Wheatley 30 years now, except for a brief child care leave. There were two other teachers who substituted for me when I was on leave, Joan Riley and Josephine Estrada.

Initially, the students came from several different countries, including Italy, Portugal, Guatemala, Korea, Poland, Greece, and Iran. Throughout the years, the students have been representative of countries which reflected the events in the world, places where there were wars and from which people came as refugees. Students come from similar countries today. Over the years, students in the program have come from Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina, Chile, Puerto Rico, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Panama, Belize, Honduras, Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Mainland China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Israel, Russia, Hungary, Republic of Georgia, Czech Republic, Croatia, Albania, and probably others. We have had students who came here with their families, ones who came without their parents, ones staying with other relatives, ones who came specifically to learn English, and some seeking political asylum.

It is extremely gratifying watching these students learn English and our culture. It is even more interesting watching them negotiate "The Wheatley Way." Probably, one of the most interesting aspects for me as the English as a Second Language Teacher is that I learn as much about their cultures and backgrounds from them as they learn from me. After all, that's what education should really be about.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF BETTY (O'CONNOR) BRADLEY

First, I want to say I did my very best to gather and include as many retirees' Recollections as possible. If any of you have been excluded, we had to go to press. I humbly apologize.

Ralph Waldo Emerson's quote "Happy is the school that teaches and shelters" flashed through my mind on May 1956 when I arrived at the North Side School to be interviewed for a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade position. Little did I know that not one but two administrators would interview me; Wes Wathey the new assistant principal of Wheatley and Frank Heroy the new principal of North Side .. two "top guns". I truly don't know how I came through it because the experience was a blur then, but I was hired and welcomed to East Williston.

In September, the annual welcoming luncheon for all faculty members given by the Board of Education was held at the Swan Club. What a way to begin the new school year.

Since I am the only faculty member who taught in the three schools, the focus of my contribution to this booklet is sharing memories, stories, incidents and anecdotes that if I detailed all of them, my recollections could be as lengthy as Tolstoy's War & Peace. So I'll share some and chat about others at the 50<sup>th</sup>.

### North Side School

During my ten years at North Side, I was fortunate to teach 5th and 6th graders too, and became involved in a wonderful summer recreation program headed by Bob Foerschner for many years. A short anecdote involving Marge Byrnes and Bob must be told. In my third year, I received tenure. Dr. Sullivan left a note in my letter box that he would be observing my class on a Thursday. Little did I know the note was false. Marge typed it up and Bob used Dr. Sullivan's stamp. So that day I was frantic and Dr. Sullivan was a no show. When the legitimate note arrived, I didn't believe it and was shocked when Dr. Sullivan walked in. Word reached him that I didn't believe his note so he wrote me another saying "When I write a note telling you I'll be observing your class – believe me!"

Several years later, there was another anecdote I'll share and this time some of my 6<sup>th</sup> grade students were the culprits. Usually on Fridays, I stayed until 4 p.m. planning the following week's lessons. I left .. walked to the parking lot .. voila .. no car. I rushed to the office and told Mr. Heroy my car must have been stolen. We walked out the door, found nothing and reentered the building near the kindergarten classrooms and yes, the car was parked in the alley. So the Nassau County Police never were called. John Geery, Bruce Artim, Jamie DePasquale, and John Poulos were the culprits.

Final remembrance of North Side: Every June, the 6<sup>th</sup> graders challenged the faculty to a baseball game .. a highlight before moving up to Wheatley. Mitch Perlstein was my designated runner because I was temporarily disabled with a dislocated knee cap a week before on a field trip to Jones Beach by John Cresenzi who tackled me in a tag game. Several parents including Ed Artim took me to the First Aid Station. John Cresenzi is now in Hawaii banished forever. What a send off to Wheatley as a replacement for a member of the English Department grade 7 for one year.

Thank you talented North Side teachers, Helen Sherman, Rose Marie Conway, Bill Stevenson, etc., dedicated parents and a most supportive Board.

### Willets Road

Although I was only there a year-and-a-half, adjusting to a change of teaching style, a half year of English on a split session schedule prepared me for the next full year in which social studies was added to my schedule and with the help of Sam Phillips and May Dehler serving as team leaders – another great experience.

I enjoyed coaching girls' soccer and remember Meryl Brofsky and her team of terrific players. Now on to Wheatley!

### The Wheatley School

Before being accepted to cover grade 7 English for one year, Mr. Wathey told me to prepare a lesson and to speak with Harold Wells and Ruth Brofsky regarding the assignment. I was to introduce the students to Jack London's Call of the Wild on a Friday, last period of the day before Spring recess. Harold Wells, Isabelle Auerbach and Ruth Brofsky observed. When it was over I remember saying to myself "Welcome to the 'Big time'".

Returned again permanently in 1969. These are my impressions about 11 Bacon Road. Faculty Meetings were stimulating, challenging, argumentative, rowdy and at times hilarious at every session. I never knew what to expect. But there always was a spirit of comradery among the staff, clericals and custodians. After the sessions, would I raise my hand? Nada? Not when the following brought up topics, concerns etc.: Warren Loring, Jack Devlin, Ed Keenan, Elito Bongarzone, Tom Cautela, Mel Rosenstein, Isabelle Auerbach, Joan Feindler, Alice (Rutenberg) Kasarsky, Herb Wheeler, Audrey Erickson, Ted Tchack, Stu Doig, John Pagliaro, Carolyn Wilfert – no way.

I kept remembering I'm an elementary school teacher .. what could I add? I faced the same situation at our English Department meetings. Mr. Ouchi was always so thoughtful and asked me if I had any thoughts to share and my pat answer for many years was "no, everything has been covered". If one is a neophyte and sits with Isabelle Auerbach, Richard Nixon, Elsie Bodnar, the Ruths' ..Brofsky and Rockmore, Jackie Hennelly, and Rosemary Bartul (she is a walking Library of Congress whiz), how intimidating that was.

Eventually, I became more active and joined after school activities. Student Government was my first choice because I respected Herb Wheeler's ethics and his fairness with our students' viewpoints. Then I decided to accept Wes Wathey's challenge to be the next cheerleader sponsor for Varsity and Jr. Varsity squads. Meeting the athletes of football, basketball, soccer and wrestling teams in and out of class was a thrill. There are so many stories about our bus trips to and from many Long Island schools .. some a bit scarier than we expected in some communities and not in others. We'll chat about that if you are interested alumni!

Setting up a Constitution written by the cheerleading squads, selecting uniforms, holding elections for Captains and Co-Captains (some years), setting up a fair judging procedure, selecting Lori Wilson Roux, Phoebe Gordon and a representative from Hofstra's cheerleading group (usually the Captain) was a very daunting task. By the way, Phoebe Gordon's daughter a college cheerleader, volunteered and taught the girls examples of good skills, how to do jumps, etc.. Since I'm not a math gal, I selected Barbara Kandybowicz, Georgette Macrina, and Nancy Bixhorn as mathematicians to do the tallying of all votes. Truly bless them all for their expertise .. which for me was a most daunting activity. And I know Michael Glennon, Principal, said to me -- regarding a problem I faced and needed his help -- "I'll never look at Cheerleader's contributions to our school in the same way".

Kudos to all in our district for being so innovative.

A special thanks to Dr. Darrell R. Lund for imbuing the faculty with the thought that good ideas originate from the teaching staff and it is the responsibility of administrators, the Superintendent and the Board to not only support but nurture them and approve them after studying each and every proposal from schools carefully and accepting or rejecting them. You were a breath of intellectual stimulation! By the way, you were the first Superintendent who majored in History and taught before you continued your administrative requirements to receive a Ph.D.

I was so glad to be the President of the Teachers' Association during your tenure. Yes, I know you demanded excellence and we, the faculty, defended our proposals and some you found fairly good, others were exceptional and these proposals were put into practice. For that our faculty thanks you more than you will ever know -- Now you do!

Zelda Rosenbloom -- a dear Board Member who was a serious educator and once asked me at a Board Meeting "why are you appearing before us to receive a second tenure?" I didn't have an answer. So now I hold two tenure certificates.

Thank you Jane Ann Smith for working so closely with me re: negotiations on a new 3 year salary schedule and Tom Cautela, Mel Rosenstein and David Israel for brokering a good settlement.

How can those of us not thank the “Engines that truly run our every day operations so smoothly in North Side, Willets Road and Wheatley”.

So from my viewpoint .. Secretaries are on the top of the list, business personnel and our custodians –Marge Byrnes, Principal Secretary at North Side, Ben Tillman and Fred Eubanks, Custodians. At Willets Road Joy Calvo and MaryAnn Drew, And Custodians Sam Tucker and crew, and at Wheatley Jeannie Boehm, Mr. Wathey’s Secretary, and Rita Walcoe, Michael Glennon, and Rick Simon’s Secretary and Linda Leff, Rick Simon’s current Secretary, and Linda G, Jim O’Briens and our new Assistant Principal Karen Klapper’s current secretary.

I also want to mention Dolores Cooke’s contribution to the Assistant Principal.

I have fond memories of the Wheatley custodians Ike O’Connor, Tiny Belle, Damon Troutman, and gentle Mr. Carter.

All staff members of the Business Office of the East Williston School District deserve special praises for all their efforts on behalf of our entire staff. With special thanks to Antoinette Salvadori, our payroll lady.

If I omitted anyone it is because my computer (my mind) is on overload .. so please forgive me. I meant no offense.

I suppose by now this is the end. No, not yet .. my last memories regard the social life of the teachers of the East Williston Union Free School District. Yes, we do have another side – as busy as we were teaching, and many after school activities, we still found time to socialize. Bowling was on the top of the list. The setting was Sheridan Bowling Alley in Mineola. Fifteen teams consisting of faculty from the three schools – moderate, medium and good power bowlers were the classifications.

I remember Mr. Wathey telling me to improve my bowling skills or I’d be sent back to Willets Road.

Treasure Hunts every Halloween were a ritual. Wes attempted to bribe some of the teachers to tell him where the next clue was, but we caught him in the act – laughs galore. Gala Christmas parties in the library and faculty room that included singing, Wes playing the spoons and grab bag gifts were a very good beginning for the Winter Recess. The annual June Barbeque ended our year of activities prior to summer vacation.

It’s been our pleasure collecting and sharing with the graduates of The Wheatley School and the East Williston Union Free School District our Recollections. We hope to see you at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and reconnect.

Thanks Ann Karp, secretary in the Business Office for typing my, as well as other retirees Recollections and helping me organize, edit and compile this booklet. A special thanks to the Media Center, Rose Castora and Josephine Sdao.. Their efforts to multi task the demands of the principal, the faculty, the graduates and the retirees deserves special recognition .... for which we will be eternally grateful.

## RECOLLECTIONS FROM JACK DAVIS

The Wheatley High School PE Department staff as of 1956 were: Fred Brightman Chairman, Jack Davis (Cat) Football and later Bill Lawson joined the staff. Shelley Maskin was a Guidance Counselor and coached Basketball, Bill Stevenson (Bear) Wrestling and Soccer, Audrey Erikson, Head of Girls' PE Department and Field Hockey Coach. Audrey was a member of the U.S. Field Hockey team that played in the Olympics. Lori Wilson Roux joined the staff later as a Field Hockey Coach. Dr. Paul Nodell came on board as Department Chairman between 1958 and 1959. The first class of juniors had many good football players from Mineola High School which had a terrific record for several years of being undefeated, and so they were the backbone of a fledgling Wheatley team. Wheatley also had an undefeated experience a few times.

All classes were taught in the 300 corridor and the focus was on health, because the gym did not have a floor. As for the teams Football and Soccer, all sessions were held outdoors. In 1958, the gym opened for indoor sports.

## RECOLLECTIONS FROM LORI (WILSON) ROUX ABOUT DR. AUDREY ERICKSON

Dr. Audrey Erickson introduced Field Hockey with the help of her student teacher Lori Wilson. Little did they know at that time how many championships they would win in Nassau County. Carle Place in Nassau, and Southampton High School in Suffolk were two fierce rivals. Both powerful teams. Dr. Erickson and Lori Wilson introduced basketball, and softball followed. Dr. Erickson introduced the Leader Core, similar to the Boys Varsity Club. Leader Core became very popular with the girls as they soon learned to assist fellow students who had difficulty during Physical Education classes. Every Saturday, they took time to visit hospitals and orphanages in the area, assisting in whatever was needed by the staffs. Every June, the girls looked forward to their Mother-Daughter banquet with the Leader Core members serving dinners. After dinner, they entertained with demonstrations of skills learned in class, and planned Color Wars. Camping trips were also planned to Upstate New York with Martha Mickelbank school nurse, and Marion Schulze joining the group. Eventually, the Sports Banquet changed and all male and female athletes were honored together.

RECOLLECTIONS OF STEVE HEILBRUNN  
Forever Grateful for the Higher Aspirations of Tom Cautela

I came to Wheatley in September of 1979. After being excessed from a neighboring district, I blanketed the Island with applications. I received a call to interview for a Woodworking teaching position at Wheatley. I had never heard of Wheatley or East Williston but that certainly didn't matter. I needed a job. Upon further investigation, I found out it was a one-year replacement position. Tom Cautela, the Woodworking teacher at the time, was to fill in for one year at the Assistant Principal position. Assistant Principal Richard Nixon was to serve as the Principal for the year while a permanent Principal was hired. When that happened Richard and Tom were to return to their original positions and I was to be out the door.

However for me, a most fortunate turn of events took place. Richard Nixon also decided to retire and Tom decided to apply for the Assistant Principal position. East Williston knew a good thing when they had one as they selected Tom to fill the position. I then became a tenure track teacher and as they say, "the rest is history." That was 27 years ago.

I have told Tom many times that I am forever grateful for his higher aspirations. I am also very grateful that I was able to work with him for many years afterward. Filling his shoes was no easy task. He was a master teacher and a wonderful asset to The Wheatley School. To his credit, he always gave me my own "space" and allowed me to pave my own way. Of course, he was always there for guidance, words of wisdom and to lend a helping hand.

I feel very fortunate that the paths and events in my life led me through the doors of Wheatley. I feel equally fortunate to have followed and to have spent many years working with the 'higher aspiring' Tom Cautela.

Sincerely,  
Steve Heilbrunn

SH:abk



RECOLLECTIONS OF ALICE (RUTENBERG) KASARSKY  
A Rose by any Other Name.....

Once upon a time, there was a huge area tucked away in the Science-Phys Ed corridor of the new building. It was called the "Library". The stacks were filled with books. The key to the collection was the card catalog. The new wooden tables and chairs shone.

In time, the "Library" was moved, front and center, a veritable "pass-through" from the lobby to the Junior High wing of the building. The "Library" became the "Study Center" and was furnished with the then popular individual study carrels. A periodical room was added and there was access to the departmental offices and to AV from the "Study Center".

Today, the new glassed-in wing is known as the "Media Center" with a high tech approach to seeking information. The Wheatley School certainly keeps up with the times. So new and exciting, a photo appeared in Sunday's "The New York Times" a year ago.

Regardless of the name, the location, the furniture, the card catalog vs. computer, the curriculum and recreational needs of students and staff were always met. Over the years, fifty in all, the several librarians and the clerical staff did their best because they all believed so deeply in their "mission". That never changed!

ARK:abk

## RECOLLECTIONS OF AARON KURILOFF

Submitted by: Debby Kuriloff

TO: EVERYBODY  
FROM: CAVE OF MEDITATION  
DATE: INFINITE  
SUBJECT: SOUL SEARCHING – PROBE NO. 1 – “FAILURES”  
(No more F’s at Wheatley)

1. Does the F – Failure help the student to succeed, perchance to grow?
2. What does the student really fail?
3. What does the teacher really fail?
4. Who created failures?
5. When a student fails that means the teacher hasn’t taught.  
If the teacher taught, the student couldn’t fail.
6. Failing students know they failed. Why compound the failure?
7. Why can’t students and teachers succeed together – rather than fail together?
8. Nothing fails like failure.
9. Does anyone fail when they look at the sky or hear a bird sing?
10. If the student sees the sky but not the cloud – he fails. If he hears the bird but doesn’t see the bird – he fails.
11. Why can’t the teacher point to the cloud and point to the bird and then no one fails and no one gets an F; and then students and teachers can walk hand-in-hand toward the Promised Land.
12. If you don’t give failures – then how will you know who the good guys are and who the bad guys are?
13. Why doesn’t the teacher turn around and look at the sky?
14. Does the sky have failures?
15. There are no failures unless you make failures.
16. If you can make failures, why can’t you take failures away?
17. Why?
18. Why can’t we turn around?

/abk

## RECOLLECTIONS OF LARRY LEVIN

My experience in 1959 as a new Teacher at Wheatley.

When I came to Wheatley in 1959, Norman Boyan was the Principal (leaving almost immediately). Warren Loring was Chairman of the Social Studies Dept. and Stu Doig is the colleague I remember.

I had come from the city, where kids raised their hands when they wanted to answer and the Wheatley kids quickly disabused me of that idea. They didn't have to raise their hands to answer.

Dr. Neil Sullivan, the new Superintendent—who died recently—came in on my second period class the first day and Clayton Akin, the Principal, came in the last period. I was nervous. It didn't happen that way in the city schools; but both classes had gone fine.

There was a nice young lady in one of my classes who played the Viola and went on to play in the New York Philharmonic, where I'd see her playing!!

I had just married, gotten a new apartment, and had a baby on the way to be born fairly soon. Everything was in order. I had gone from a settled position of teaching Social Studies and English in the Bronx to a new public high school on the island where I was to teach only Social Studies. Everything was new, different and challenging.

Stu Doig and Warren Loring were marvelously supportive, creative and innovative. The team teaching we developed was exciting and fulfilling. I'll never forget our working together. It was great.

LL:abk

## RECOLLECTIONS OF EDWARD (ED) OUCHI

My first teaching job in the mainland United States (that's what we Hawaiians called the continental US) was as an exchange student to Lincoln High School in Jersey City. It was an enjoyable experience with excellent students and a most congenial staff of English students – but nothing like my first year at Wheatley two years later.

Although I was offered a job “on the spot” at my interview at Syosset, I put them off saying I was waiting to hear from East Williston. Something about my interview with Dr. Norman Boyan and Wes Wathey had made Wheatley more enticing. Was my instinct ever so true! Wheatley fit my picture then of a suburban school; low, one story building full of windows looking out on an open expanse of green. The personnel was excellent in talent and congeniality. We had the greatest respect for one another and for Wes and Dr. Boyan, who always made me smile whenever he called me “Oui-chi” (I took it as a mark of distinction). The English staff was a close-knit group of professionals featuring Curriculum Associate Harold C. Wells and Isabelle Auerbach, Elsie Bodnar, Betty Bradley, Howard Storm and others I can't recall at the moment. But I do remember John Pagliaro and Carolyn Wilfert, who may have taught English and Social Studies back then. And, of course, we had outstanding CA's in Warren Loring, Jack Devlin and Joan Feindler with their stable of outstanding teachers. The entire faculty enjoyed excellent relationships with the Board whose commitment to excellence permeated every facet of life at Wheatley. In fact, the school was named “The Wheatley School” to make it sound more like a private school and we compared our standardized test score with private school norms. The Board and the students' parents expected us to get their children into the best colleges. And they did! They did so, not only because of the professional staff and the support from the top and their parents, but because of their quality as students. The one English 9 class I will always remember from 1957 taught me a lesson I carry with me to this day. It was a class that ranged in ability from below average to highly exceptional, a fact brought back home to me when one student scored 232 points out of a possible 241 on a 45 minutes quarter exam. One question was “Name the five parts of a letter?” That student left it blank. Later he told me he knew the answer, but he thought I “would not ask such a simple question!” I was shaken, for I know he knew the answer. He would have scored 237 out of 241 points. I had expected the top score to be closer to 210! From that day on, I never underestimated the abilities of Wheatley students. Wheatley in 1957 was truly a family (later epitomized in *The Wheatley Wives*) of talented and dedicated personnel, committed parents and highly motivated students truly a community in “an oasis in the desert.”

EO:abk

RECOLLECTIONS FROM JOHN PAGLIARO  
Memories – My Journey

Where does one begin? I guess at the beginning. I received a slip of paper from NYU placement services regarding a teaching position in the East Williston school district looking for candidates for positions in a new Jr/Sr High School in the process of being built.

It was March or April of 1956 when I interviewed for the position. I went to the building site after the interview to view the school and my thought was that it would be a miracle if it would be completed to open in September. I received notice in late May that if I were still interested I would be appointed for the September opening of The Wheatley School. I signed the necessary papers accepting my appointment. At some point before the official opening, I remember meeting Elsie Bodnar and Jack North whom I remember fondly. They were two experienced teachers who were supportive and encouraging and put me at ease and made me feel comfortable.

Well, the school year was delayed a week or two but we opened in late September with thirty four faculty and approximately 600 students. One of the pluses was that we were operating on a construction site which had a food service wagon for the 100 or so construction workers. The wagon provided meatball and sausage heros as well as other delicious items.

The other positive aspect of being a part of a new school was that we were starting from scratch. Our faculty meetings were designed by the administration to encourage full participation and encourage input. To say that these meetings were exciting and energizing is an understatement. I can recall many meetings that went on for hours. It was an exciting time for students and faculty.

I have memories which were joyful, sad and rewarding.

I remember my extracurricular activity as an advisor for the World Affairs Club. We participated in the Model UN at Harvard, Yale, Georgetown and the University of Pennsylvania. It culminated in a trip with twenty students to the Soviet Union in 1987. I remember as advisor to the Jr. High G.O., Seth Bardo, then president, running down the corridor to inform me that JFK had been shot.

I remember my experience as JV Soccer coach losing Shep Messing, a freshman, to the varsity team. I sadly accepted his loss because it was in his best interest as a star player. For those of you who do not know, he went on to play professional soccer with the NY Cosmos along with Pele.

I remember having to evacuate the building on more occasions than I care to remember because of a telephone threat that a bomb was somewhere in the building. We had to remain outdoors until the police checked the building. Yes, sometimes it was raining, sometimes below freezing etc. After the third or so time the students became as annoyed as the teachers. I don't remember the total number of bomb threats but they were one too many.

I remember Bernie Kaplan and a group of SWS students encouraging me to become a part of their community. My last five years at Wheatley was as a member of the program. The experience was exhilarating, frustrating, exciting and challenging. I can't thank Bernie enough, as well as SWS students, for their support and their lobbying to convince me to participate. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you!!!!

On the last day of school in June of 1988, Mike Glennon was passing by my classroom as I was packing my personal items and paused to say goodby and said, "This must be a very difficult day for you". He continued on his way as the tears in my eyes streamed down my face.

John Pagliaro

## RECOLLECTIONS OF PETER PANE

### The Wheatley Band-1967-1985

During the summer of 1967, Wheatley's first band director, **Robert Pearson** left the East Williston school district thereby creating an opening for that position.

In October, **Peter Pane** accepted that position and took over the role of band director and band instrument teacher for all three schools in the district. At that time, the music department had a curriculum coordinator (chairperson) in the person of **Mr. Paul Margoff** who, together with **Mr. Sal Signorelli**, the orchestra director, managed to fill in until the new band director was found.

**The concert band**, in the late sixties, comprised of students from grades eight through twelve, numbered about forty- five. The eighth graders were bused in from the Willets Rd. School and arrived at 8AM when the band class began. Woodwinds outnumbered the brass instruments, especially lower brass such as tubas, euphoniums and trombones. This imbalance persisted seemingly because, with the exception of the trumpet, most beginning players were attracted to the woodwinds, especially the flute, clarinet and saxophone and even the oboe. A flute section numbering from eight to fourteen players was not uncommon. However, present in the band at that time was a very promising French horn player who went on to land a position in one of Canada's major symphony orchestras, the Vancouver Symphony. His presence in the band led to the performance by the band of the "Water Music Suite" of Geo. F. Handel with its demanding and striking passages for the French horns.. A much more recent and striking success story is that of a former Wheatley band trumpeter who now holds the position of principal (first) trumpet with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra; an orchestra which, in the opinion of music critics, has become one of the great orchestras of the world..

Beside holiday and spring concerts, band activities included, an additional concert in June on the Village Green( next to the fire house). After the village outdoor concerts, a very civic minded and enthusiastic resident, **Mr. Milton Mandel**, who was in charge of the event, never failed to arrange a 'treat' for the band at **Hildebrands**, often an occasion for much hilarity and fun.

The band was also asked to play and march in two parades; the Little League Parade and the Memorial Day Parade. In retrospect and only in retrospect, the episode described below involving one of these events is nothing short of hilarious.

**The Little League parade**, always on a Saturday, assembled on the street behind the North Side School. The band's role was not only to provide some music, but also to provide the street beat and cadence of the drums without which, parades become strolls. Now, It was understood by all that, in case of rain, the parade would be cancelled or postponed and therein lies the root cause of what ensued. A very enthusiastic and dependable band member and an excellent drummer, being aware of the limited space in **Mr. Pane's VW**, offered to help transport some of the drums and equipment to the site of the parade. For

the purposes of this story, he will be "J". The plan was that "J" would take the equipment home on Friday and come directly to the parade on Saturday. That equipment would include all of the drum sticks including the bass drum beater, a snare drum and a pair of cymbals. .

The day of the parade arrived, and the band members began to assemble at the appointed time and place. The weather near the North Side School was cloudy and a bit threatening but rain was not falling. However, unbeknownst to Mr. Pane and the assembled marchers, rain was falling in the vicinity of "J"'s house in Roslyn Heights. Not so unreasonably, he assumed that the parade would be cancelled and stayed home out of the rain. Minutes before the scheduled start of the parade, there was still no sign of "J". The nearest telephone would have been in the principal's office of the North Side School which was not open on Saturday. Desperation begat innovation. Mr. Pane espied several tree branches that had fallen nearby. Their size and shape seemed somewhat adaptable. Within seconds, the stick less drummers got the word to grab the most suitable branches and make the best drum stick possible under the circumstances. Taking the shop class at Wheatley paid off because within two minutes, they had fashioned, with their bare hands, rudimentary but useful sticks, some with protruding buds. The whistle blew signaling the start of the parade. The drums began their cadence, albeit somewhat muted but audible enough and the forward march began.

**The Dance/Jazz Band** was created by Mr. Pane in the early seventies using arrangements similar to those of the big bands of the forties such as 'String of Pearls', 'In the Mood', 'One O'Clock Jump', etc. Its popularity with the players was remarkable considering that the Beatles and Rock and Roll dominated pop music. As a result of this interest, the idea of holding a forties type dance night in the school gymnasium featuring the dance band was born. And so with the enthusiastic backing of the principal, **Mr. Wes Wathey** and the cooperation of faculty members, an evening of dancing to the music of the forties was scheduled and took place in the gym which was decorated appropriately with festoons and banners. The band needed a girl vocalist to sing some of the ballads that were on the program. Along came the lovely **Gloria Oliver**, who, until retiring a few years ago, was a veteran of the foreign language department. She handled the vocals with much verve and polish as the dancers glided by. Most Wheatley staff members of that time knew that math teacher, **Mr. Santi Porcino**, would, on weekends, shed his math teacher persona and teach ballroom dancing with his wife, Vera. For this occasion, he provided free instruction for students and teachers wanting to learn and perform dances of the forties such as the "Lindy Hop".

The **Woodwind Choir** was to become a very prominent feature of the instrumental program at Wheatley. In a sense, that bias toward woodwinds noted above resulted in the creation of this other musical ensemble, the woodwind



choir. Performances by this group at venues other than Wheatley, included the Old Westbury Gardens in Old West bury. However, the scarcity of music published for this combination did limit programming options necessitating some recycling of pieces heard in previous programs. A rating of excellence was earned by the choir after entering the annual NYSSMA competition (NY State School Music Assn.)

...

Following is a list of the names of some band members known to have chosen careers in music performance/education and in many case, with great success: Richard Mingus, French. Horn,, Lisa Goldstein, clarinet, Laura Frankfort, clar./sop.sax, Susan Rotholz, flute, Janice Minor, clarinet, Jerry Jacoby, percussion, Robert Orgel, piano, Alan Zahn, keyboard/sax, David Krauss, trumpet. .

With apologies to those whose musical success stories are not known to this writer and with whom a teacher/director relationship had existed, this trip down memory lane, written twenty years after retirement has come to its' Coda and Finale!

Peter Pane

\*From a musical perspective, one shared by the entire music staff, the inclusion of eighth graders with grades ten, eleven and twelve in the same band or orchestra was ill advised from the onset. The very wide musical skills gap resulting from this combination of grade levels was and still is detrimental to band development in several respects. Under these conditions, the choice of music that might be played is compromised. Quite often, a piece which would be challenging and interesting to the high school players will be too difficult and intimidating to the youngest players, thereby discouraging them. Conversely, a piece easy enough at the eighth grade level might be judged to be too simple and uninteresting by the advanced players thereby boring them.

It was quite common at Wheatley, to find several senior and junior year band and orchestra members attending instrumental instruction classes on Saturdays at pre-college programs at Juilliard and the Manhattan School of Music. Finding and programming music that both motivates and challenges these advanced players without intimidating and discouraging the youngest players was and is not always possible.

Ideally, and in practice in many if not most school districts, eighth graders are grouped with their peers in musical ensembles often including grades seven and nine. In fact, this had been the case in East Williston before the creation of the middle school.

RECOLLECTIONS OF HELMUT 'HAL' FRANK RESSMEYER  
1959 – 1967

My greetings to members of the Wheatley family, be they colleagues, former students and now friends!

I was appointed to the Wheatley faculty in the late summer of 1959 to teach Social Studies in grades 9 and 10. It was the late Warren J. Loring who recommended me to Norman Boyan, first Principal of The Wheatley School. Not many people knew that my previous teaching assignment was at Shaker Heights High School in Shaker Heights, Ohio where I taught five classes of Problems of American Democracy to Seniors. This was my first High School job whereas previously, I only had Junior High School experience. Unfortunately, I was too much of a young eager beaver (this only being my second year and not yet tenured). I became very active in the teachers' association and took on the job of editor of the teachers' newsletter which went out to 500 teachers, administrators and school board members. The contents were items from newspapers and magazines plus editorials that focused on issues that related to the teaching profession. Some of the material was not met with approval by the powers that be. In Ohio, the law provided that a teacher must be informed before April 1<sup>st</sup> that his contract is not being renewed. I and another Social Studies teacher, a lawyer by profession and an accomplished cartoon artist who drew a daily cartoon on his class blackboard with often stinging commentary who also drew one or more cartoons for the newsletter, were both informed that we were not having our contracts renewed.

I shared this experience in my interview with Norman Boyan. He directed two questions to me. 1) Have you learned your lesson? 2) Are you a good teacher? My answer to both questions was a resounding YES. He offered me the job on the spot. Today, almost 50 years ago, I again thank Norman Boyan and salute him in his 86<sup>th</sup> year.

Norman Boyan was a candidate for Superintendent of Schools of the East Williston School District. However, he was not appointed to the position by the then School Board. He moved on to the University of Wisconsin as Professor of Education and from there took a similar post at the "Harvard of the West" – Stamford University.

Now I would like to acknowledge the departed colleagues whose professionalism and friendship meant so much to me and hopefully to their former students. Warren Loring was Curriculum Associate for History. In other words, he was Chairman of the History Department and he was respected in that position. His World War II assignment was in the U.S. Army dealing with mules (that branch of the Army was permanently deactivated after the war). I believe that experience paid off when he had to deal with some of us. He knew how to reign us in – and our feelings were only ever so slightly bruised.

Stuart Doig, American History teacher, was Mr. Enthusiasm – a real live wire. No kid would fall asleep in his class. I'm sure many a memory will be stirred when I remind you of his 4 day drama of the Battle of Gettysburg. That smile was always there. He had all of his department colleagues invited to go sailing with him, but heavy rainfall called a

storm kept us all on shore – and that didn't keep us from a belly-full of laughs. Thanks for the memories, Stu!

Dorothy Knapp, American History teacher (also Latin American History), had a sense of humor. After school, she would be walking down the hall and would spot a couple “being friendly” and would inquire of them: “Are you waiting for the school bus?” She enabled them to save face. Miss Knapp was visiting an uncle in the Philippines who was a high ranking U.S. Army officer when the Japanese attacked. She was interned and during the war returned to the States aboard the Swedish ship, the GRIPSHOLM, which fully lighted crossed the Pacific returning Japanese and other Axis diplomats to Japan and then, took American and Allied diplomats and others back to the States.

John J. O'Donnell, World History teacher, had first followed a religious vocation, as a Roman Catholic Brother, but elected to change his vocation – and married. I remember how overjoyed he was when he became the father of a little girl.

These now departed colleagues and friends come alive again when I go through my yearbooks.

To those still with us, some of whom I see at EWTA retirement gatherings and others that I hear about, I wish you acknowledgement by listing you as those who made my day. With appreciation and gratitude, thank you Larry Levin, Gordon Ambach – who after he left us eventually became Commissioner of Education in New York State – John Pagliaro, Janice Cooper, Frank J. Cavaroli – my Social Studies colleagues.

Finally, I also wish to acknowledge the following dearly departed, namely, Joan L. Feindler, Anna Schmerzler, Ronald Metzger, John Devlin and Eugene Taslitz whose company I enjoyed. This also applies to others who were my Wheatley colleagues, namely Isabel Auerbach, Elsie E. Bodnar, Edward Ouchi (we were also colleagues for one year at Pleasantville N.Y. High School), Joseph McCormack, Marion C. Schulze, Kit Irvine, Colin Bentley, Martin Tierney, Jack Davis, Loretta (Wilson) Roux, Audrey Erickson, Evelyn Tegnell and Thomas Cautela.

I particularly wish to thank Wes Wathey for his leadership during my tenure at Wheatley. I often think of Jeanne Boehm who no longer is with us (Mr. Wathey's loyal, efficient secretary) who was such a good friend to so many of us teachers. When she got a Dachshund puppy, I suggested since he had a pedigree that she name him Maximillian VON BOEHM. The word BOEHM in low German (PLATTDEUTSCH) means “Tree”. I thought a tree is generally appreciated by a dog. And to my dear and good friend Carolyn Wilfert and her husband, Buddy, whom I have known these countless years since I first came to Wheatley, there must be hundreds if not thousands of former students who she guided and helped to get into a college who recall this sincere, dedicated lady.

Let's hope and pray that The Wheatley School – students and staff – will always maintain the high standards that are its very foundation. When I lived in the borough of Queens, I often took long walks that took me to parks and past cemeteries. At a Jewish cemetery, a mausoleum facing the street had a brief message inscribed on the wall next to its entrance which read, "As you are now, once were we, always act honorably." That message needs to once again be emphasized in our families, in our schools, in our faiths, and in our nation.

P.S. Here are a few more recollections that have just come to mind of this now 80 year old World War II U.S. Navy veteran who was recalled to service during the Korean conflict because I was a member of the 'inactive' U.S. Naval Reserve. In all, I gave 44 months to my country and was one of the lucky ones to be able to return home.

Speaking of war, I had a student in class who was not happy to be confined to a classroom. He wasn't a discipline problem, but he didn't communicate very much – the so-called John Wayne type. He caught all of our attention one day when he displayed new tattoos on his arms. Some years later, he entered military service and was killed in the Viet Nam conflict. I wondered if he had paid attention when we dealt with Viet Nam. – I met a Marine Lt. at the YMCA who had served in Viet Nam unscathed, but who lost a number of radio-men who were killed standing next to him. I invited him to address my classes and did he ever get the attention of everyone, especially the girls since he could have been a poster model for the Corps. I believe after I left Wheatley some high school students began to organize protests against the war. Wheatley and Pleasantville where I was now teaching witnessed protests by a vocal and verbal minority.

I was assigned student-teachers from Hofstra University a number of times. One of them was named Bob Brandt who proved to be the kids' favorite. Bob had an interesting background; had attended Dartmouth; worked on a kibbutz in Israel; served in the military (once engaged in a military exercise that involved he and others to disembark from a submarine and make a landing on a Long Island beach) which reminded me of a World War II episode when German agents were to disembark from a submarine and landed on a Long Island beach to carry out sabotage in New York City. Fortunately, they were caught; went to trial; were found guilty and all but one were executed. That one turned State's evidence. Does this episode have a familiar ring that can be applied to the present? The kids used to kid Mr. Brandt by suggesting he go into the closet and come out as SUPERMAN. Yes, he had a commanding figure and a voice to match. I could leave the class in his hands without me always being present. Unfortunately, that was not always possible with some of the other student teacher candidates. Some years later, Mr. Brandt was hired as a Social Studies teacher at Wheatley.

I don't recall why a number of us teachers decided to have a Pizza lunch at a restaurant. While eating, the question was asked, "Who or What influenced you to become a teacher?" Within minutes, both Mr. Devlin and Miss Schulze, members of the Math department, both spoke the same name – Miss Marie Luning, their 8<sup>th</sup> grade New York

City teacher. Boy, that really surprised me because she was my dad's cousin, her mother being my grandfather's sister. Yes, I knew Marie. She was a no-nonsense teacher who apparently would come to the aid of fellow teachers who had discipline problems. She retired in 1946 and lived to be 98 – could easily have been a 100, but decided to stop eating and passed away in 10 days.

When I came to Wheatley, I had been hired by the then principal, Norman Boyan, but now we were to be ushered into a period of about three years -- Who will be the principal this year? It had been decided to split the school into a High School and a Junior High School, each with its own Principal and so Clayton L. Akin was hired as High School Principal and Walter W. Wathey, as Junior High Principal. Dr. Akin was well liked and received as an administrator. He was a Christian Scientist in belief and well before his time was highly opposed to smoking, especially in the teachers' faculty room. Rumor had it that some teachers contacted School Board members protesting this ruling. Dr. Akin was no longer with us for a second year. So, we received a new High School principal who shall remain nameless. He too only lasted one year. His big mistake was to allow himself to be intimidated by the parents of a Senior boy to allow him to graduate by granting him one year's science credit for one year's wood shop. Wes Wathey was still Junior High principal (since I taught grades 9 and 10 these two years, I had two bosses). Which school rules applied? They weren't uniform! Which faculty meeting would I attend? I was given a choice – and I attended the Wes Wathey meetings. Someone finally came to their senses – and The Wheatley School became one under the leadership of Wes Wathey who should have had the job in the beginning.

One more most memorable event! It took place when the nameless principal was in charge. The Social Studies department was able to extend an invitation to Norman Thomas, the frequent 3<sup>rd</sup> party, Socialist party, candidate for President of the United States, who agreed to come and address the student body during school at an assembly program. It had been cleared with the administration. Then, there was a reversal of the agreement. The program could only take place after school. Would we have any kind of an audience scheduled at this time? The Social Studies department members made it a point to urge their students in their classes to attend this historical experience. When the Friday school day ended, every seat in the auditorium was taken. Mr. Thomas was introduced – and as elderly as he was, his words flowed as fast as his brain was able to spill his ideas and experiences to his audience. He spoke for about 45 minutes without interruption, except for laughter and applause. Suddenly, he stopped—asked what time it was—was told and said that he'd give us another half-hour before he would have to leave. About a third of the audience opted to leave. The remainder stayed glued to their seats for the remaining half hour. What's interesting about Norman Thomas, a former Presbyterian minister – and I may surprise some of you, I voted for him one time as a protest vote knowing full well that he wouldn't be elected – is that most of the ideas he advocated were eventually adopted (or stolen) by the two major political parties and were voted into laws. When the half hour was up, Mr. Thomas put on his hat, strolled off the stage and down the steps and walked up the central aisle waving goodbye and out the

## RECOLLECTIONS OF FLORENCE SAXON

*Contributed by: Michele Saxon, '65 and Stephanie Saxon Levine, '62*

When Wheatley opened its doors, Mrs. Florence Saxon, the sole Home Economics teacher, joined the faculty. Home Economics was a required subject for junior high students and a high school elective. High School course offerings included family living, fashion design and tailoring, gourmet cooking, and preparation for independent living.

Wheatley alumni may remember working with St. Christopher's Orphanage, Newday, Adopt-a-Family, and Abilities, Inc, as well as the Fashion Shows and Mother-Daughter Luncheons. Mrs. Saxon hoped these activities would inspire community spirit, generosity and happy memories for her students.

Mrs. Jeanne Boehm, Mr. Wathey's secretary, said that she was motivated to volunteer at St. Christopher's and she did for many years after going there with Mrs. Saxon's classes. Hopefully, many Home Economics students were moved to do volunteer work as well.

Florence Saxon retired from teaching in 1979.

MS:SSL:abk

door he went. Now that was a real live History lesson in the flesh which no Social Studies teacher could have achieved.

There's still more to tell, but the phrase that 'ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free' is not always possible in this age of so-called political correctness in which we at present find ourselves. May the day soon return when like a once divided Wheatley became ONE again, and the present divided good, old USA will become ONE again too. Thanks for the memory, Mr. Hope!

P.P.S. I wish to express my sincere thanks to Betty (O'Connor) Bradley for rounding-up surviving early Wheatley staff members like myself to fill in some of the blanks of those early days. There is still much that could have been said (like my 1963-1964 Fullbright Exchange to the Netherlands, for example) and some things that should remain unsaid. It's amazing how I have experienced so many flashbacks involving students, teachers, parents and others. There is enough material for a book, but a brief recollection will have to do. It has indeed been a "Between Tears and Laughter"\* lifetime experience.

\*A book written way back in the 1940s by Lin-Yutang.

Helmut "Hal" Frank Ressmeyer

## RECOLLECTIONS OF BILL "BEAR" STEVENSON

I began teaching full time K through 6<sup>th</sup> grade at North Side School in September of 1956, and also coached the Wheatley School varsity wrestling team. Wrestling took front and center stage after just a short period of time and became Nassau County champs several times. As the team would say "we were the smallest school beating some of the largest schools in Nassau". I also became the Varsity wrestling coach and taught several of my students Pole Vaulting skills for several years. There were so many talented, skillful, gifted players in those two sports that I don't have enough space to list all their names and their marvelous accomplishments for fear of omitting anyone..but my wife and I will be at The Wheatley School bash and look forward to meeting as many of my former students as possible. I do remember Irwin August "Auggie" joined me and coached the Junior High Wrestling team. He then coached Cross County and his crew were inducted on November, 2005 into the Wheatley Hall of Fame. He introduced our Fitness Program and was the Varsity Club advisor before moving on to the college level.

BBS:BB:abk



## RECOLLECTIONS FROM EVELYN TEGNELL

We came to our schools, I to the Wheatley School and Gordon to Garden City High in the Fall of 1960. At that time, the business department was located across the hall from the office. My 8<sup>th</sup> grade typing classes were too large for the number of typewriters and so I would rotate one row out each day. Later, many students remarked how helpful that thirteen week typing course proved to be.

Soon the business department was moved to larger rooms. The Wheatley School was a first in providing electric typewriters for its students. A year before my retirement in 1979 we installed a word processor/computer....big box. I remember Frank saying "come let's learn this computer" and can you believe I said "computers will never happen in my lifetime".

Wonderful memories flood my mind of Wheatley. The warm faculty relationships, my students...many of whom keep in touch...the pride we felt being a part of such a great school. How can we not say thank you to the association officers' and the school board for our contracts enabling us to live comfortably in our retirement.

Happy 50<sup>th</sup>.

ET:abk

## RECOLLECTIONS OF ALICE VISCO

1951 – “Gen” Batchelder rode her bike every morning from her house in East Williston (up the street) to North Side. A big high stool was her chair as she conducted the class.

With Mr. Sprague, Principal, at its helm, North Side became part time as Willets Road was being completed.

My morning first grade classroom was part of the cafeteria. Teachers ate their lunch at the other end while I was teaching.

1952 – The “big move” to Willets road – one class at a time on the school bus – teachers, students and as many materials as you could carry.

It was Frank Heroy’s first year as Principal of North Side when the big fire, which started in the art room severely damaged the back part of North Side.

Because of this, part time was reinstated. K-3 had to move to Temple Sinai. We had to share their classrooms.

On Friday’s at 3:00 we took all our materials off the bulletin boards, packed them away until Monday when we redecorated the room. A lot of work, but we learned much through this experience.

We did have our “laughing” moments. Bob Neidich and Joe Visco enjoyed some humorous times in the teacher’s room. They had gone fishing and caught a spider crab. Our music teacher was afraid of all “crawly” creatures so they put the crab in her music file. What a screech was uttered when she opened the file drawer.

It was all clean fun!

AV:abk

## RECOLLECTIONS OF WALTER W. WATHEY

Eighteen years as principal of The Wheatley School was a wonderful experience. Those years are incredibly etched in my heart and brain. To be able to be specific about any one incident or series of incidents is practically impossible but I did enjoy the opportunity of working with an outstanding faculty, a truly excellent student body and informed supportive community. We always were on the "cutting edge" of new programs and new ideas throughout my tenure of office.

Upon my retirement, I was offered the opportunity to join the staff at Arizona State University and on a number of occasions served on educational panels with other principals throughout the country. When it came my time to tell about my background, I always said with a great deal of pride "I was principal of one of the finest high schools in the country. It was called 'The Wheatley School'".

I sincerely hope that all those who are reading this are enjoying good health and are happy in their retirement years. I know I am.

Sincerely,  
Wes Wathey

P.S. Joan sends her very best to all of her friends.

WWW:abk

## RECOLLECTIONS OF HERB WHEELER

Hi, Fellow Wheatlies

Betty Bradley has asked me to write about some of my experiences at Wheatley, so here goes:

By way of introduction, I must tell you that the way in which I came to teach at the school was somewhat out of the ordinary. After holding several math teaching and administration positions during many years in the Berkshires of Western Massachusetts at minimal salaries on which to support a family of five, I decided it was time to move on. Accordingly, when the Federal Government under the National Science Foundation announced a program of Academic Year Institutes for post graduate training of math and science teachers, I applied and was accepted. I was to have a fully paid year-in-residence at Harvard, taking courses beyond those I had taken there for my Bachelor's and Masters' degrees. In addition, I could receive a stipend for my family. Presumably this would allow the United States to catch up with the Soviets who that year had successfully put the first Satellite, Sputnik, into space.

My year completed, I had to find a job for the next year. With this in mind, I hied myself to the Graduate School of Education Employment where I was known. When I explained my mission, who do you suppose was seated there? Dr. Norman Boyan, Principal of a new school, The Wheatley School. After introductions all around, a second meeting with Dr. Boyan, a first visit and tour of the school, and an interview with Jack Devlin, Math and Science Department Chairman, I was hired to teach math the next year.

The period of the 60s and 70s was somewhat unsettled as Dr. Boyan left at the end of my first year and the Board of Education, depending on Wes Wathey, Vice-Principal to fill in the gaps, scoured the country to find someone to succeed Dr. Boyan. After several abortive trials, the Board finally became aware that the best qualified man had been under their noses all the time and they appointed Wes to be Principal.

At the time, there was considerable unrest among the students as they sought to eliminate traditional restrictions and gain more freedom to manage their own affairs.

Some sort of student government was needed. Rejecting the usual, they opted for a Town Meeting as most democratic. At regular intervals, all those students who wished, with a moderator whom they elected, met in the auditorium to discuss and open those issues of current importance to them. Anyone could speak by lining up to await his turn at one of two microphones. Committees could be formed as needed. Wes asked Warren Loring and me to advise.

Despite my misgivings about the size of the group, the meetings were orderly and business was conducted smoothly, in part due to the talents of Todd Glickman, who was elected moderator, and in part due to flexibility and wise oversight of Wes Wathey who met regularly with the moderator and me to discuss the Town Meetings. After high interest, eventually the student government faded away because the students had obtained all their objectives.

Once my position at Wheatley seemed secure, my wife and I bought a house in Huntington, from where I commuted to Old Westbury, frequently by bicycle. One day (must have been a holiday), a group of my students on bikes, passed me going in the opposite direction. I thought of organizing a school cycling club. When I put out a call for members, the response was encouraging. From that day until I retired, the Wheatley Cycling Club was a regular part of our extracurricular activities. We took short rides after school on Fridays, luncheon rides on many weekends, and overnight camping trips once or twice a year, when our bikes, food and gear would be trucked to a reserved campsite out east and we would spend all of one or two days, taking exploratory rides around the east end of the South Fork. Here again I must site Todd Glickman for his incomparable help in planning and organizing our activities for many years.

Many Nassau County high schools belonged to the Mathletes, an organization which conducted on a regular basis throughout the school year, contests, sessions held in member schools, involving the timed solution of mathematics problems of a more difficult nature or off beat variety from those encountered in the regular curriculum.

When Wheatley came of age, that is to say finally reached the end of the growth process by which it gained a class each year, until there was a senior class, and thus a complete mathematics curriculum for secondary school, the math department decided to join the Mathletes. Jack Devlin asked me to be the advisor. Actually, apart from organizing and squiring the group to and from meets, there wasn't a great deal to do. Coaching in advance was impossible. I generally met with the students after the meet to critique the results and discuss the problems and to answer questions. Any advance preparation simply was the result of what they learned in their regular classes with an excellent set of teachers. On the whole the Wheatley math team performed at least as well as any, if not better.

Herb Wheeler

HW:abk

## RECOLLECTIONS OF CAROLYN K. WILFERT

- Guidance      The Beginning
- 1955-56      Junior High Division (Willets Road School) Grades 7-9
- 1956-57      The Wheatley School opens in Old Westbury Grades 7-11
- 1957-58      First Senior Class at The Wheatley School

Among the staff members that Dr. Boyan hired for the Jr. HS. division was Robert Gorman, a Guidance professional who became the first school counselor in the East Williston District. He served as a consultant for students, parents and staff. In addition, he assisted Dr. Boyan and others in the final planning for the opening of The Wheatley School in September, 1956. At that time, students who lived in the district who had attended either Mineola or Roslyn HS for the first two years of high school, entered Wheatley as juniors. Dr. Gladys Murphy joined Mr. Gorman as a counselor for the increasing student population. The new juniors became the class of 1958, the first graduating class. As the enrollment continued to increase, two junior HS counselors Carolyn Krepplein (formerly in Social Studies) and John North (formerly in English) were appointed in 1958. When Mr. North left Wheatley in 1959, Mr. Sheldon Maskin became a member of the Guidance Department.

CKW:abk

## RECOLLECTIONS FROM SYLVIA ZIMET

I joined the Wheatley staff in the Fall of 1959. At that time Harold Wells was department chairman of Foreign Language and English. He interviewed me and was impressed that I had two majors – English and French – and a master's degree in Spanish. He needed me to teach two sections of English and three sections of French and so I was hired.

Rick Frazoni, Joe Fradkin, Anna Schmerzler, Dr. Sylvia Scheinin, and Joan Feindler were some of my colleagues.

Eventually, the language department needed their own chairman and David Kotkoffe became the head of the department but it was a short stay of one year and when replacement time came again, Joan Feindler took over. The best choice!

Gradually the number of students interested in taking additional language courses doubled over the years. At that point I was transferred to the foreign language department since there was a greater need for my expertise in French and Spanish.

Presently I'm living in Florida since 1998.

P.S. What a terrific educator! Betty B

SZ:abk