MINNETONKA

AlumniMagazine

2011





IT'S TIME TO RECONNECT





International Connections

3RD ANNUAL

MINNETONKA Alumni Awards

BRUNCH AND ANNUAL MEETING



Saturday, Sept. 24

MHS Homecoming Weekend

10 a.m.-Noon

Minnetonka High School

Purchase tickets or make a nomination at www.minnetonkaalumni.com!

Award Categories:

- **Distinguished Alumni Award**
  2011 Recipient: Lee Blessing '67, Learn more on pages 12 & 13
- **Distinguished Service Award**
- **Young Alum Achievement Award**
- **MHS Skippers Hall of Fame** (Arts, Activities, Athletics)
- **Minnetonka Faculty Hall of Fame**

Nomination deadline: July 1

The Minnetonka Alumni Magazine is an annual publication of the Minnetonka Alumni Association (MAA) and the Minnetonka School District. The MAA includes graduates of Minnetonka High School, Excelsior High School, Deephaven High School, non-graduates who attended those high schools for at least one year, and all present and former members of the faculty, administration and school board. Membership is free.

Story suggestions, news, events and comments are always welcome, but submission does not guarantee publication.

EDITOR, CARRIE HILGER
ORIGINAL DESIGN:
KAREN LAFFERTY
KarenLaffertyDesign.com

MINNETONKA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Bonnie (Board) Niles '67
Vice President	Brad Bohlmann '69
Past President	Cornell Anderson '66
Secretary	Kathy (Kramer) Richardson '69
Treasurer	Bonni Walz '83

Directors
Gail (Wartman) Bollis '67, Mike Bright '83, Nancy (Palm) Countryman '59 Elizabeth Wright '96, Marietta Jacobsen '70, Joy (Davis) Fruen '71, Andrew Pike '98, Elise Peterson '02, Gail (Thacker) Ofstehage '68, Mary (McGinn) Morseth '71

The MAA is actively seeking Alumni interested in helping the organization achieve its goals.
E-mail alumni@minnetonka.k12.mn.us to learn about opportunities to get involved!

Minnetonka Alumni Association
P.O. Box 103
Excelsior, MN 55331

alumni@minnetonka.k12.mn.us
www.facebook.com/minnetonkaalumni
www.minnetonkaalumni.com

FROM THE MAA PRESIDENT

Dear Alumni,

Some of you may recall the words from our MHS Rouser: "Go Skippers go, Fight for victory, Spread far the fame of our dear name….." The Minnetonka Alumni Association has taken these words to heart in setting goals for our organization. Our key focus during the past year (and every year) is to encourage and maintain a relationship between alumni and the Minnetonka School District. MAA has done that in the past several years by reaching out to our graduates, faculty/staff, administration and school board members in a variety of happenings and events. Many of them are highlighted in this magazine.

This year's highlight event was our third All-Class Reunion last summer. We kicked off the weekend on July 30 with a 50s concert in the MHS gymnasium, featuring teen idols Fabian and Bobby Vee, sponsored by alums and owners of the General Store of Minnetonka. The next day 250 people enjoyed brunch and tours of the high school led by current teachers and students. The main event gathered nearly 3,000 alums for a Street Dance in downtown Excelsior. Individuals reconnected with classmates, enjoyed great food by local vendors, and danced late into the evening.

In October, our second Minnetonka Alumni Awards Luncheon and Annual Meeting (Homecoming weekend) recognized alums and teachers from all walks of life, from near and far, diverse in their careers, but all inspired with a passion to excel in their chosen field. We recognized 10 alumni and former faculty for their contributions to MHS and our community. It is a wonderful event that you will want to attend this September.

The MAA is proud to fund and endorse grants in the area of the Fine Arts. We continue to support the visual, performing and literary arts in the Minnetonka Public Schools. This year we selected and funded six of 13 proposed Fine Arts grants submitted through the Minnetonka Public Schools Foundation. These projects include all grade levels (K-12), a variety of disciplines in the Fine Arts and will affect as many children as possible within the District. We are committed to supporting the Fine Arts and it is our hope that you will consider giving back to the Minnetonka School District through charitable contributions to Minnetonka Fine Arts Endowment Fund.

The past several years we have collected and encouraged our alums to donate copies of the creative published work to our Alumni Collection which is currently displayed in the MHS Media Center. The collection includes books, music, and plays published by our alums. We are anxiously looking for new publications to be added to the outstanding alumni library.

In addition to the information in this magazine, be sure to follow us on Facebook and visit our website to connect and stay informed. And of course, keep showing your Skipper Pride and, "Spread far the fame of our dear name!"

Sincerely,

Bonnie Board Niles '67

Bonnie Board Niles '67

The Minnetonka Alumni Association meets the third Tuesday of every month at 6 p.m. at the Minnetonka School District Service Center, 5621 County Road 101. Meetings are open for all alumni to get involved.



Bonnie Board Niles '67, MAA president

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FROM THE MAA PRESIDENT 1

2011 GRADS WITH ALUMNI PARENTS 2

UPCOMING EVENTS 2

WHAT'S UP MR. ADNEY? 4

ALUMS AROUND THE GLOBE 5

MHS INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS 8

FINE ARTS ENDOWMENT FUND 10

A LEGACY OF INNOVATION
Minnetonka Public Schools Foundation 11

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD
Lee Blessing '67 12

STATE CHAMPS
Minnetonka Boys Swim & Dive 14

ALUMNI NOTES 16

MHS 2011 - FIVE TO WATCH 18

ALL-CLASS REUNION 2010 20

BECOME A FAN!

www.facebook.com/minnetonkaalumni

Alumni on the cover: David Boden '82 (top left), Sarah Larsson '08 (top right), Tim Felty '98 (bottom left) and Ryan (Anderson) Opaz '93 (bottom right)

Keeping it in the Family

Graduating from Minnetonka High School is a family tradition for these 2011 graduates who join their parents and grandparents as proud MHS Alumni this year.

Robbie Allen and parents, Cathy (Bakken) '71 and Bob Allen '71

Marcie Bachler and parents, Amy (Thompson) '80 and Gary Bachler '81

Shane Baer and parents, Cynthia (Jensen) '83 and Todd Baer '83

Bennett Batzli and parents, Jeanne (McInerny) '78 and Brian Batzli '78 and grandparents Mary Jane (Peterson) '44 (D) and Robert McInerny '44 (D) and Robert Batzli '40 (E) *Great grandfather is former Deephaven Superintendent C.D. Peterson!*

Elizabeth Bazany and mom, Patty Wein '79

Madelynn Berndt and mom, Paula (Mott) '77 and Greg Berndt '77

Autumn Blatz and mom, Vicki (Hendrickson) Blatz-DeJongh '78

Brooke Burdick and dad, Brian Burdick '77

Jon Carmichael and dad, Todd Carmichael '78 and great aunt, Carol Carmichael '58

Anthony Christesen and mom, Kimberly (Christesen) Voaklander '93

Katherine Crist and dad, David Crist '75

John Dawson and dad, Tom Dawson '73

Georgia DeMun and dad, Robert DeMun '76

Carolyn Draayer and dad, Dirk Draayer '81 *Grandfather is former Minnetonka Superintendent Don Draayer!*

Kristian Edson and mom, Erica Shaw Campbell '88

Kendall Eitreim and dad, Derek Eitreim '82

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 25 **Class of 1971 Reunion**, NorthCoast Restaurant, Wayzata

July 1 **Deadline for Alumni Awards Nominations**

July 21-Aug. 6 ***Anything Goes*, Minnetonka Community Theatre**, MHS

July 29 **Class of 1991 Reunion**, BayView Events Center, Excelsior

July 30 **Class of 1981 Reunion**, BayView Events Center, Excelsior

August 6 **Tour de Tonka** bike ride, MHS

August 12 **Class of 1986 Reunion**, Bayside Grille, Excelsior

August 19 **Class of 2001 Reunion**, Pinstripes, Edina

September 17 **Class of 1961 Reunion**, TBD

September 10 Visit the MAA booth at **Apple Day** in downtown Excelsior

September 23 **Minnetonka Homecoming Football Game** versus Edina

September 24 **Alumni Awards Brunch and Annual Meeting**, MHS

November/December Watch for **Alumni athletic events** sponsored by MHS booster clubs

February 4 **Minnetonka Public Schools Foundation Dream Makers Dinner**

February 15 **Arizona Alumni Picnic**, Mesa, AZ - contact Kay at khf7807A25@yahoo.com for details



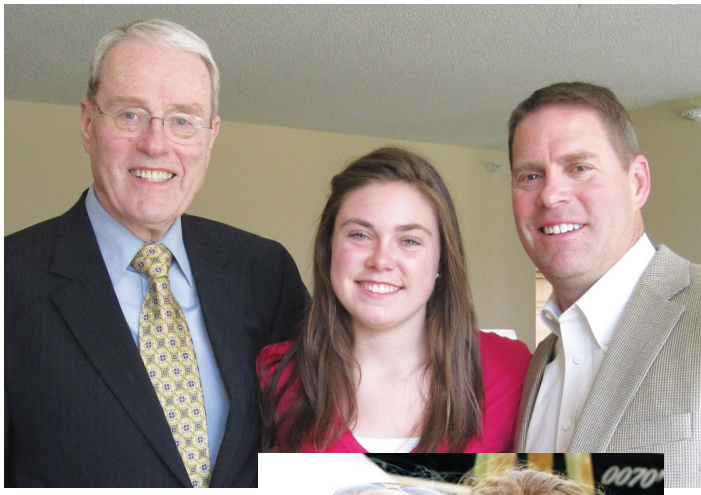
Former MHS Hockey players gathered for the annual Alumni Game at Pagel Ice Arena in December.



Laura (Jambeck) and Derrick Abblett, Dave Jecha and Tina Paulsen last summer at the MHS Class of 1985 25-year reunion.

Ali Hanus and dad, Ken Hanus '76
Austin Harrington and dad, Rob Harrington '78
Trace Herman and dad, Randy Herman '77
Kamiko Higashi and dad, Jay Higashi '81
Daniel Highland and parents, Ingrid (Bekeris) '80 and Kevin Highland '78
Ally Hillstrom and mom, Cheryl Hillstrom '87 and grandmother Nancy (King) Hillstrom '64
Maggie Jeter and mom, Laurie (Winters) Jeter '75
Ainka Johnson and dad, James R. Johnson '72
Natalie Jordal and parents, Janie (Shadler) '75 and David Jordal '76
Laura Kerber and dad, Rick Kerber '76
Nick Kerber and parents, Nancy Willette '78 and Terry Kerber '75
Kayla Klein and mom, Angela (Klein) Vukovich '89
Layne Krantz and mom, Susan (Ringstad) Krantz '79
Grandfather is former MHS teacher David Ringstad!
Aleah Laughlin and parents, Jody (Uran) '77 and Mike Laughlin '81 and grandparents, Sheila (Drenth) '59 and Jerry Laughlin '60
Mark LaPointe and parents, Lynn (Solfield) '79 and Brad LaPointe '72
Grandmother Naomi LaPointe was a secretary at MHS from '64–'71!
Molly Leatherman and mom, Mary (Marklund) Leatherman '82
Tyler Lundberg and parents, Stacy (Hexum) '81 and Dave Lundberg '84
Lindsey Maghan and dad, Brian Maghan '80
Vanessa Martinson and dad, Rich Martinson '80
Sam Matthews and mom, Susan (Shanesy) Matthews '73 and grandparents Anne (Mason) '49 (D), and Dave Shanesy '50 (D)
Kati Meiusi and mom, Rhondi (Larson) Meiusi '79
Leslie Newberg and parents, Sandy (Comer) '76 and Dan Newberg '76
Hannah Noll and mom, Jodi (Hullsiek) Noll '80 and grandfather, Don Hullsiek '43 (D)
Austin Norby and dad, Dan Norby '83
Nathan Oliver and mom, Ronda (Peterson) Oliver '87
Taylor (TJ) Palm and mom, Noelle (Kane) Palm '86 and grandparents, Carol (Guerre) '64 and Jim Kane '64
Kelsey Peterjohn and dad, Dave Peterjohn '70
Michaela Read and dad, Mark Read '74
Calvin Samborski and mom, Denise DeBoer '78
Max Samuelson and dad, Larry Samuelson '71
Ella Schwarz and dad, Kurt Schwarz '81
Oliver Shields-Nordness and mom, Melissa Shields-Nordness '84
Juliana Smith and dad, Jim Smith '73

If you are an alum with a 2012 MHS grad in the family, email us at alumni@minnetonka.k12.mn.us.



Don Draayer (former Minnetonka Superintendent), Carolyn Draayer '11 and Dirk Draayer '81





Kati Meiusi '11 and her mom, Rhondi (Larson) Meiusi '79

Kelsey Peterjohn '11 and her dad, Dave Peterjohn '70

Zachary Stettner and grandparents, Norma (Libbey) '61 and Dave Morse '61
Laura Studer and grandparents, Nancy (Hullsiek) '49 (D) and John Liberg '48 (E)
Katie Thompson and dad, Peter Thompson '77
Parker Weinstock and mom, Kristi (Gartner) Weinstock '81
Sara Wilhelm and parents, Lavena (Norton) '80 and Dale Wilhelm '78
Kyle Wong and parents, Carol Erickson '77 and Henry Wong '77
Aidan Wyer and dad, Skip Wyer '79
Ian Youngstedt and dad, Steven Youngstedt '81
Mackenzie Zenk and mom, Lori (Andrews) Zenk '78

What's Up Mr. Adney?



What a legacy! Like others before it, the class of 2011 has left its mark on Minnetonka High School. The class has an average ACT of 25.7, a 99 percent graduation rate and 91 percent are college bound. Two of the three Minnesota U.S. Presidential Scholars are from MHS: Ryan McCartan and Lili Peng.

Our 2011 graduates are leaders in academics, the arts, athletics and service. Over the last four years the class of 2011 helped raise more than $100,000 for those in need during our annual Heart Week and more than 85 percent spent their last two days of high school giving back to the community through Seniors Serve.

This year we won three MSHSL State Championships in girls hockey, girls alpine skiing and boys swim and dive. The MHS theatre production of *The Laramie Project* won the State One-Act Play Festival, earning its seventh consecutive "starred" rating in state competition. Three seniors participated in the National Women's Honor Choir and our bands and choirs continued their run of consecutive superior ratings in state competition.

Minnetonka High School's long history of making global connections was expanded this year. As part of our new International Studies Program (read more on pages 8 and 9), we hosted our first exchange classes and had students visiting MHS from Russia, Serbia, China and the Netherlands. First semester, social studies teacher Doug Kennedy was selected to travel to India as a Fulbright Distinguished Exchange Teacher, which opened new doors for our students.

Skippers, it's been another exciting year and you can be proud of your alma mater's world class legacy!

Sincerely,

Principal, Minnetonka High School

RECONNECT TO MINNETONKA SCHOOLS

Minnetonka High School is fortunate to receive tremendous support from community organizations.

Minnetonka Skippers Booster Club
www.minnetonka.k12.mn.us/mhs

Minnetonka Public Schools Foundation
www.minnetonkafoundation.com

Anchor Club
www.mtkaanchorclub.org

Buckets Club
www.tonkabuckets.org

Curtain Call Club
www.minnetonkatheatre.com

Diamond Club
www.minnetonkadiamondclub.org

Minnetonka Band Boosters
www.minnetonkabandboosters.org

Minnetonka Vocal Support
www.minnetonkachoir.org

Minnetonka Lacrosse
www.mtkalax.org

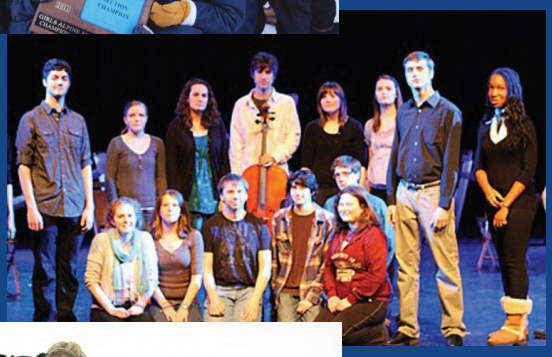
Tonka Pride
www.minnetonka.k12.mn.us/tonkapride

Touchdown Club
www.minnetonkafootball.org

All of these organizations welcome volunteers, and gifts are greatly appreciated. An envelope is included with this magazine for financial donations to these organizations.



The Minnetonka Girls Alpine Ski Team won the State Championship this year. The boy's team finished second at State.



Minnetonka earned it's seventh consecutive "starred" rating in the State One-Act Play Competition last January with their production of *The Laramie Project*.



The MHS Girls Hockey Team won Minnetonka's first state hockey championship.

Alums Around the Globe

BY MELANIE LUNDHEIM

In the heart of New York City, a choreographer dreams up the steps and movements her team of dancers will perform on stages worldwide. On the opposite side of the globe in Singapore, a corporate director helps international business leaders plan their product sales strategies for success. In between, an Internet entrepreneur based in Spain promotes wine to global audiences.

These alums represent just three of the many MHS alums who've ventured beyond our nation's borders to pursue their personal – and professional – passions.

From Minnetonka, we connected with these three MHS grads in real time – across time zones. They shared with us the profound impacts that their past experiences, including their times at MHS, have had on their present success.



Annabella Gonzalez in 1958 (above right) and 2009.

Annabella Gonzalez '58

Back in the 1950s, such American icons as Elvis Presley and Marilyn Monroe were at the peak of popularity. The hottest dance moves among teens included the jitterbug, swing, Lindy, Bop and Twist. In Minnetonka, the Excelsior Amusement Park was in its heyday. It was an exciting time for Annabella Gonzalez to move from Central America to Minnetonka.

Now a New Yorker, Annabella was born and raised in Mexico City, Mexico, where she was exposed to rich cultural experiences, a diverse heritage and a keen appreciation for – and interest in – the arts. Although Annabella was an accomplished student, she says, "None of my female cousins went to university. They were expected to get married."

Such a life wasn't in the cards for Annabella.

Her path changed dramatically when she, her sister and mother relocated to her stepfather's hometown in Excelsior, and she entered ninth grade at Minnetonka High School.

While she had many exciting and new experiences, the most profound impact MHS had on Annabella was the empowerment of young women she had observed, even in the 1950s. "It was really amazing to see American girls doing sports, wanting to travel and planning for college," she says.

Observing her female peers opened Annabella's thinking about her own future. So, after high school, she completed further studies in Mexico City, New York and Switzerland. She holds a bachelor's degree in Art History from the University of Minnesota, a master's degree in Dance Education from Columbia University Teachers College and language degrees from the University of Geneva in Switzerland. She is a trilingual (Spanish, English and French) freelance interpreter for the United Nations. A lover of travel with an adventuresome spirit, she has visited 52 countries, including seven weeks (in the early 1970s) hitchhiking through the African Sahara.

Today, Annabella is a critically acclaimed choreographer, dancer and teacher, with an impressive, and long, list of credentials. She first fell in love with dance during a movement-for-actors class, focusing on dance. After that, she took as many dance classes as she could, wherever she could within and outside the United States.

In the process, she began to immerse herself in the art of choreography – efforts that were soon validated with awards, donations, grants and media coverage. Decades later, Annabella and the dance company she formed in 1977, the Annabella Gonzalez Dance Theater (AGDT), continue to perform throughout the United States, Latin America and Europe, including a one-week educational demonstration in the Dominican Republic.

AGDT has a repetoire of more than 65 abstract, theatrical and comedic dances which they have performed at national and international venues including the Brooklyn Academy of Music and Carnegie Hall and at prestigious festivals including Joseph Papp's Latin Festival and Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors.

In 2008, Annabella participated in the First Encounter of Artists and Creators in Chihuahua, Mexico. The following year AGDT performed at Chihuahua's 2009 Palomar Festival. Just last fall the company appeared at the National Autonomous University of Mexico and at the Museo del

Templo Mayor (Museum of the Main Temple of the Aztecs) in Mexico City.

Along with her son, Enrique Gonzalez Grimm and her husband of 33 years, Richard Grimm, Annabella remains in the prime of her career, with plans to continue working well into her 70s.

David Boden '82

Singapore-based David Boden has fond memories of living in close proximity to the lake. On a typical Saturday, he and his friends would ride their bicycles to their boats, load them on and motor across Lake Minnetonka to downtown Excelsior or Wayzata. "We could cover a lot of ground on a boat and get places even faster than by car," recalls David.

Boating also made it possible for David to explore faraway biking trails, venture out to various restaurants, or take in movies at the Excelsior Dock or the old Wayzata Theater. He greatly enjoyed the freedom life near the water allowed – especially before he was old enough to get his driver's license.

David's parents encourage him to explore and learn more about the world beyond their doorstep, whether it was reading *National Geographic* or watching PBS specials on TV. Each summer they would take David, his brother Andrew (MHS '76) and his sister Martha (MHS '83) on an annual road trip across the U.S. or Canada. They also made frequent trips to New York to visit extended family.

If these first encounters sparked David's love of travel outside Minnetonka, two of his high school teachers ignited it. In particular, his German teacher, Mr. Green, and his social studies teacher, Mr. Kundzins, had a tremendous impact on David's career path.



In high school David performed in the rock 'n' roll band he formed with friends, "Meandering Sno-Cones." Today in Singapore, David is lead guitarist and co-founder of a classic rock band called "Mid-Life Crisis." Although the band draws enthusiastic crowds, he hasn't quit his day job as Director of Consumer Industries for Asia-Pacific and Japan with Hewlett-Packard for life as a rockstar.

From these teachers, David learned that, despite our differences, we're all socially, politically and economically intertwined. He experienced this concept first hand while traveling abroad with his German class for six weeks during his senior year in high school.

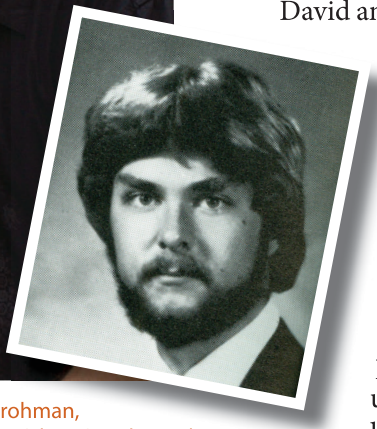
After graduating from the University of Minnesota with a degree in retail merchandising, David's career took him from Minnesota to New York, where he met and married his wife of 16 years, Nancy Frohman.

Together they pursued professional positions in Indonesia before settling in Singapore to start a family. David is currently a director of consumer industries for Asia-Pacific and Japan with Hewlett-Packard, and he just completed a six-year term on the board of the American Chamber of Commerce.

David and Nancy have two daughters, ages 10 and 12, whom they take pride in raising to be global citizens. Both girls are fluent in Mandarin Chinese, and the eldest aspires to one day lead the United Nations.

This ambition comes as no surprise to David, who strives to ensure his girls are rooted in good values, poised to pursue their passions and armed with a broad understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures.





David Boden and his wife Nancy Frohman, and his daughters, Mariel and Alexa (above) and David in 1982 (right).

In true Boden tradition, the family often tours regions David travels for work, such as Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, the Indonesian island of Bali, Shanghai and Beijing in China, Hong Kong, Laos, Angkor Wat in Cambodia and Malaysia. David says that his daughters are so accustomed to travel, a 24-hour flight to New York City is easier for them than a three-hour car ride!

Ryan Opaz '93

Growing up, Ryan (Anderson) Opaz was always a creative and curious kid, qualities instilled in him by his parents Cornell (MHS '66 and former MAA president) and Patti Anderson. They taught Ryan and his sister, Jennifer (MHS '96), to live life without boundaries.

Ryan explains that while his father had Minnetonka roots, his mother, an "air force brat," lived all over the United States as a child. Upon retirement, his mother's parents sailed the Mediterranean and Atlantic for years, "dropping their kids off along the way," Ryan laughs. One of his aunts married a Norwegian. One of his uncles married a Belizean. His parents also had siblings in Florida and Hawaii. So before graduating from high school, Ryan had visited his relatives in all of these places during summer vacations. These experiences helped Ryan understand how much life has to offer outside his usual surroundings.

Through high school, Ryan poured his passion for life, as well as his creativity, into his favorite subject: art.

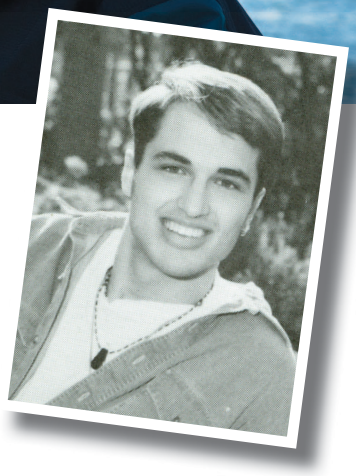
Reflecting, Ryan says his two favorite art teachers, Mr. Alexander and Mr. Cunningham, greatly influenced him. Both challenged Ryan to realize his creative potential and talent to the fullest extent. At one point, Ryan painted a composition that his peers loved, but Mr. Cunningham felt was less than stellar. This feedback put Ryan off for about a week until he realized: Mr. Cunningham was right. Why settle for "good enough," when he could push himself to "great?"

Ryan took this life lesson to heart, deciding to live a year abroad in Brazil after graduation with a Rotary Club scholarship. It was there that he was able to explore Brazillian culture and cuisine in depth. "I knew what it was like to be a pseudo native after spending summers in different locations. But after a year in Brazil, I gained an entirely different perspective on the world," observes Ryan.

Ryan returned to attend Moorhead State University in Minnesota, where he earned a Bachelor's degree. Upon graduating, Ryan returned home to teach before eventually learning about and working in the wine industry. During this time, he met and married his wife, Gabriella, and the two formed a new, shared last name, Opaz. They also shared a mutual desire for a drastic change of scenery by the mid 2000s.

On a leap of faith, Ryan (once again) challenged himself to push beyond settling for the status quo. With very little money, he and his wife sold everything they had and bought one-way tickets to Barcelona, Spain. Without jobs, a place to live or knowledge of the Spanish language, the couple began to carve out new lives abroad.





Ryan Opaz and his wife Gabriella in London (above) and Ryan in 1993 (right).

At first, Gabriella taught English while Ryan pursued a job in a winery. Shortly after pounding the pavement and getting nowhere, Ryan leveraged his creativity and built an online blog site: Catavino.net. Ryan explains that the name is derived from two Spanish words. *Catar*, which means "to taste" and *vino* the Spanish word for wine.

The blog, among the world's first devoted to wine, quickly gained a following as one of the leading online wine blogs. The site also caught the eye of winery owners who saw the need to bring their vinyards into the digital age. Before long, wineries were turning to Ryan for online marketing.

Ryan and his wife, along with a third business partner, now manage a variety of pursuits, including the Catavino blog and another blog at WineConversation.com, facilitating the Born Digital Wine Awards and they founded the European Wine Bloggers' Conference. They also run Vrazon, a marketing, consulting, event planning, social media and communications business serving wineries.

Although he says it can be challenging to bring 21st-century technology to the 17th-century mentality of wine marketing, Ryan says the social irony of his career is extremely gratifying. "Wine is a social lubricant, and we're in the business of social media. Everyday, we get to meet with new people and talk about new ideas. And usually, we're sharing a glass of something delicious."

MHS International Programs

BY PAUL MOORE

During one of the coldest stretches of a particularly brutal winter last February, 27 students from halfway across the world found out what it was like to be Minnesotans for a week. And they had the time of their lives. They were visiting from China and the Netherlands, the key participants in a one-of-a-kind independent study course offered to students at Minnetonka High School.

A generation ago, a high school student's "international" involvement may have included writing a few letters to a pen pal, or if they were lucky, a school trip to a foreign country. At Minnetonka High School, the pen pal has gone the way of blackboards and erasers, replaced by a program that utilizes the latest technology to connect students with their counterparts around the world. The International Studies Program is just one of many Minnetonka initiatives designed to prepare students for the future by teaching them how to make global connections.

"We believe we are educating future corporate, national and world leaders," says Minnetonka superintendent Dennis Peterson. "They need to be exposed to varying cultural dynamics and the global economy they will work in one day."

"It's estimated that 70 to 80 percent of today's college graduates will work overseas during their business careers," says Chris Pears, an MHS teacher who helps run the International Studies Program. "This program helps students develop skills that will allow them to prosper in the 21st century. It gives them the opportunity to begin practicing those skills in a high school environment."

> **"This program helps students develop skills that will allow them to prosper in the 21st century."**

The program is a full-year, independent study course in which each of the 74 enrolled MHS students connects with a student from one of five schools in four countries: China, Russia, Serbia and the Netherlands. The eight monthly assignments range from the personal history of the foreign student to international economics. Students can only complete the assignments through one-on-one personal correspondence with someone in another country, usually through email, Skype and Facebook.

"The wonderful thing about this program is that it allows students to use technologies they're comfortable with to connect with the international students," says Erin Adams, a Minnetonka school board member. "It's student-centered and student-driven."



International Studies student Alex Pears (right), at the Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport in February to meet her Dutch "buddy" (left).

"This is not a pen pal relationship," says Pears. "We're giving them specific, rigorous assignments to do. As teachers, we're really facilitating a student's own learning. By putting a structure on top of it, it gives students the framework to really get to know someone and develop a deep friendship."

"The class is really interesting," says MHS student Hayley Sharma, who hosted a Chinese student during the February visit. "You learn about a lot of things you wouldn't even think about. And it was really cool to have a person from another country come stay with us – I learned even more from her."

Indeed, technology can do wonders, but it can only go so far in giving students a true picture of life in another country.

"You can't really escape the stereotyping when you come over, especially if you've never been here," said Anja Lindaart, a Dutch teacher who accompanied the students. "And I think that seeing how things work and meeting people in their own families really takes that away and I think open mindedness is so essential for everyone."

Many Minnetonka students will get to return the favor during planned overseas trips, another essential part of making global connections. The international program hopes to eventually be able to provide financial help for

"We believe we are educating future corporate, national and world leaders ... They need to be exposed to varying cultural dynamics and the global economy they will work in one day."

students who need it for travel, one of the reasons it's beginning a fundraising effort through the Minnetonka Schools Foundation. Program leaders are counting on support from previous generations of students who remember the profound impact their international experiences had on their lives.

Travel is not limited to students in the International Studies Program, however. MHS Spanish teacher Tim Felty '98 has been annually taking a group of International Baccalaureate (IB) and accelerated Spanish students to Peru, where they perform service alongside Peruvian IB students. Last year, the MHS students used money they raised during the school year to help build a library for students in the impoverished village of Manchay, near Lima.

"The kids who go are able to form relationships with IB students in Peru," says Felty. "So anytime these guys want to travel down to South America, they will have contacts. I have friends from when I was abroad in Spain that I'm still in contact with."



MHS Spanish teacher and MHS alum Tim Felty '98 (front, 3rd from right)has been annually taking a group of IB and accelerated Spanish students to Peru. Last year, the MHS students helped build a library for students in the impoverished village of Manchay, near Lima.

Sometimes it's the teacher who travels and brings the experiences back to students. MHS social studies teacher Doug Kennedy spent the fall of 2010 in India as a Fulbright Distinguished Exchange Teacher. His study topic: How the IB Theory of Knowledge class is taught in different cultures.

"I can bring back another unique perspective that the (MHS) students can latch on to," says Kennedy. "Just the sharing of ideas with other teachers was so beneficial. It was an incredibly enriching experience."

The idea of making international connections is not new to Minnetonka. The District has been exchanging teachers with the Hangzhou Foreign Language School in China for more than 20 years, as well as facilitating countless international student trips. But expanding its world reach to accommodate the realities of the 21st century global community makes perfect sense when technology is making the world smaller—and the opportunities for students unlimited.

Minnetonka Schools - Educating Citizens of the World

Elementary Language Immersion

Minnetonka Schools offer a Chinese or Spanish Language Immersion option, in addition to the well-respected English program, at all six elementary schools. These options provide English-speaking children the opportunity to acquire fluency in a second language during elementary school. In an Immersion classroom, 100 percent of the curriculum is taught in the second language, beginning the first day of kindergarten. The children come to know their teacher as someone who understands English, but only speaks in Chinese or Spanish. Students develop proficiency by hearing and using the Immersion language to learn all school subjects. Currently, 50 percent of kindergarten families in Minnetonka enroll in an Immersion option.

High School International Baccalaureate Programme

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme provides an international standard of excellence and intellectual rigor for college-bound MHS students. Its aim is to develop a student's individual talents and teach them to relate their experiences in the classroom to the outside world. Students become critical thinkers, lifelong learners and informed participants in local and world affairs. MHS students may enroll in IB courses during grades 11 and 12. In 2010-11, 332 MHS students enrolled in IB classes.



Minnetonka students at the District's Chinese New Year Celebration.

Fine Arts Endowment Fund



The Original Stars from American Bandstand Concert at MHS featuring teen idols Bobby Vee (right) and Fabian (left) helped raise $5,000 for the FAEF during the All-Class Reunion last summer.

FINE ARTS ENDOWMENT FUND (FAEF)

The Minnetonka Alumni Association Fine Arts Endowment Fund is a permanent legacy that will help ensure a vibrant future for fine arts education in the Minnetonka School District. The Fund, administered through the Minnetonka Public Schools Foundation, makes extraordinary opportunities possible for Minnetonka teachers and students in the visual, performing and literary arts–opportunities beyond and separate from a school's normal operating budget.

School districts, like Minnetonka, that value the arts, provide a full education in the deepest sense of the word — one that prepares students to appreciate the interconnectedness of humanity and thrive in the future.

THANK YOU TO OUR ALUMNI DONORS!

Dr. Lee Hermann '43
Don Schuetz '50
Clarke L. Wilhelm '53
John O. Enockson '55
Darrell Schuetz '56
Dan Graham '57
Virgil Johnson '57
D. Bruce Johnstone '59
Sara (Timmers) Posegate '59
Roberta Fontaine '63
Chris '65 and Gail (Wartman) Bollis '67
Sara (Keefe) Wagman '67
Jane Anderson Howard '70
Marcy and Randy Betcher '75
Thomas W. Egger '77
Steve Carlson '79
David A. Stenklyft '82
Sue Stuebner Gaylor '89
Elaine Anderson Jahnke
Patricia Holloran
and several anonymous donors during the All-Class Reunion

Add your name to this list using the enclosed envelope and help support the initiatives of the Minnetonka Alumni Association.

As part of the All-Class Reunion weekend in July 2010, alums and General Store of Minnetonka owners Chris '65 and Gail (Wartman) Bollis '67 organized and sponsored The Original Stars from American Bandstand Concert to benefit the FAEF. The concert featured teen idols Bobby Vee and Fabian and was held at Minnetonka High School.

The event raised $5,000 for the Fine Arts Endowment Fund and enabled the Alumni Association to fund more Teacher Grants this year, than in any other. The generosity of the Bollises and those who attended the concert, along with the Fine Arts Endowment contribution, will allow the MAA to fund $6,684 for six grants for the 2011-12 school year and directly support fine arts in Minnetonka Public Schools classrooms.

Please help us continue to support the Fine Arts in Minnetonka Schools with a donation to the MAA Fine Arts Endowment Fund!

Alumni Association Fine Arts Endowment Fund Grants:

2005
- Display cases for the Arts Center on 7 at MHS
- MHS Jazz Ensemble travel expenses to perform at National School Boards Convention (partial funding)
- Performance royalties for Theatre productions (partial funding)

2006
- Ethnic dance instruction at MHS
- Vocal specialist to work with MHS choirs

2007
- A negative scanner for MHS photography classes
- Woodworking tools for Minnetonka Theatre at MHS

2008
- Supplies for 4th graders to learn how to make paper
- Boomwhackers percussion tubes for middle school music classes
- *Cantus* chamber choir in-service with MHS choirs (partial funding)

2009
- Art DVDs for all District elementary schools

2010
- Art posters for all District elementary schools

2011
- Art room library and resource center at Minnewashta Elementary
- Weaving loom at Excelsior Elementary
- Chinese music residency at Scenic Heights Elementary
- Guest musician clinics at Middle School East and West
- Drama rehearsal camera at MHS

A Legacy of Innovation

BY LIZ (HOLCOMB) NORTON '82



The times, they are a changin' – in fact, they've changed a lot since we departed the halls of MHS!

The biggest change for most public school districts, including Minnetonka, is the harsh reality that state educational funding is neither guaranteed nor secure. So, unlike in our school days, communities that value a high quality public school system have had to step up and fill in the gaps. Thankfully, the Minnetonka community has done just that.

In 1986, a group of school district and community leaders foresaw the impending challenges and established The Minnetonka Public Schools Foundation. The Foundation's mission is even more important today than it was so many years ago: "to support innovation in educational programs that enrich the learning experiences of all students served by Minnetonka Public Schools."

The Foundation's work encompasses two main components: the annual Teacher Grant Program and the Endowment, which was established to support long-term educational initiatives. Both programs make a major impact on the day-to-day experiences of Minnetonka students, teachers and staff in every Minnetonka classroom and school.

The best part of the Foundation's story, however, is not the fact that we've fulfilled nearly 400 Teacher Grant requests totaling more than $530,000 since 1997 (including Fine Arts grants supported by the Minnetonka Alumni Association's Fine Arts Endowment), nor that we partnered with the District to create The Writing Center – rather, it's the undeniable truth that our community recognizes the value of innovation in our schools and has demonstrated this understanding in many tangible ways. From the 550 plus guests (including many alums) who recently attended our annual Dream Makers Dinner to long-term donors to the Endowment. Minnetonka community members clearly value a top-quality public school system.

THE MINNETONKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

www.MinnetonkaFoundation.com

From classroom volunteers to Writing Center coaches, members of the Foundation's Board of Trustees or volunteers at Minnetonka Alumni Association events, our reputation as a dedicated and involved community is stronger than ever.

The Foundation, like the MAA, is eager to connect with Minnetonka alumni who are interested in contributing their time, talents or funds to support excellence in Minnetonka schools. We welcome volunteers in many areas, including marketing, fundraising, financial management and communications. Visit our website www.minnetonkafoundation.com to learn more.

Alumni Board of Trustees

Four Minnetonka alumni currently serve on the Foundation's Board of Trustees. They've chosen to donate their time and talents to Minnetonka schools!

"As a child of Minnetonka educators, the husband of a Minnetonka school teacher, and the father of two Minnetonka middle school students I see first-hand the unparalleled opportunities Minnetonka schools provide students and families, and I want to be part of helping to expand the innovative and creative opportunities for teachers and students."

- Carl Adamek '82, insurance executive

"I began to volunteer in Minnetonka schools 8 years ago because I realized that others before me had given so much and that it was now my turn."

- Charlie Kanan '69, marketing executive

"As an alumna and the mother of twin Minnetonka fifth grade boys, I am proud of Minnetonka's consistently high rankings and the talented individuals in our district. My involvement with The Foundation allows me to help teachers and students as they work to continue that excellence".

- Lance Madson '86, CPA

"My involvement with the Foundation has enabled me to see the big picture and to contribute to Minnetonka's reputation for excellence and innovation. The community support and the Foundation's work on behalf of Minnetonka students, teachers and staff is heart-warming and makes all of our efforts worthwhile".

- Liz Norton '82, marketing consultant

LEE BLESSING '67
PLAYWRIGHT

BY PAUL MOORE

When Lee Blessing was a senior at Minnetonka High School, his English teacher assigned the class a theme paper – about thirty pages long.

"I knew I had to get out of that," says Blessing. "So I asked Mr. Hoenig if I could write a one-act play. And he said absolutely."

Neither he nor Charles Hoenig realized it at the time, but that play represented the first contribution to a body of work that has placed Lee Blessing '67 among America's most respected and renowned playwrights. His work has been produced all over the world, from small playhouses across the United States to the most prestigious stages in New York, London, Paris and Moscow.

He may have written his first play as a senior, but his writing took root in his earlier Minnetonka school years.

"I started writing in junior high, with Mr. Holden," Blessing says. "And when I went to the high school, I had three more years of extraordinary English teachers: Tom Bauman, Bill Chisholm and Charles Hoenig. Those four teachers had a tremendous amount of influence on my becoming a writer."

Even with an interest in writing, he still did his share of acting at Minnetonka. "I was always somewhere on stage. I did odd roles. In a Harold Pinter play I remember playing a middle-aged truck driver, even though I weighed about 110 pounds." He also remembers being part of the crew in the *Diary of Anne Frank* and playing Biedermann in a summer production of *Biedermann and the Firebugs*.

After graduating from high school Blessing enrolled at the University of Minnesota. The following summer he wrote a play that he and a friend produced, staging it in the carriage house on the grounds of the old Burton mansion on Lake Minnetonka. The carriage house was broken down, but the land had not yet been sold and subdivided. It turns out they weren't the first thespians to entertain at the scenic Deephaven locale.

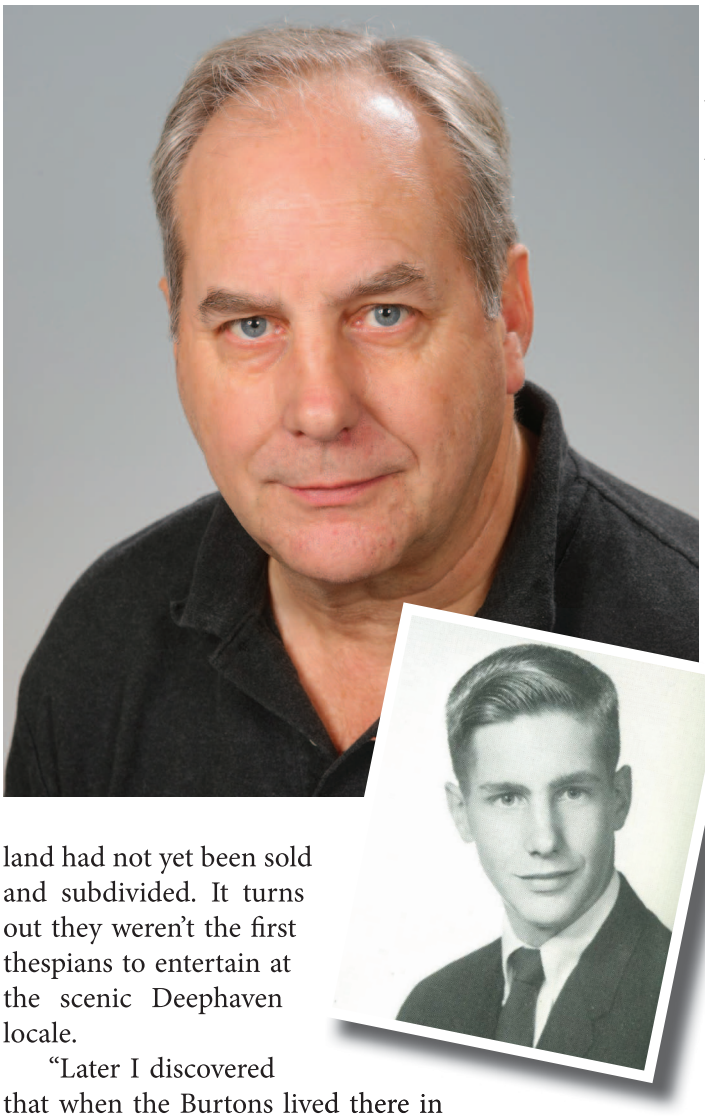


Photo courtesy of Larry Levanti/Mason Gross School of the Arts.

"Later I discovered that when the Burtons lived there in the early part of the 20th century, they had Dame Sybil Thorndike perform on their lawn, so apparently we were carrying on some sort of theatrical tradition," Blessing chuckles. And how was attendance at his show? "It was good because it was all friends and family."

At that time, and all through college, Blessing considered himself more of an actor and a poet than a playwright. That changed when he was in graduate school.

"I was about 25 and I realized I couldn't remember my lines even at that age. It just didn't bode well for when I got older," he says. "And I was never entirely comfortable on stage, even though I enjoyed acting. "

Lee Blessing will be recognized with a Minnetonka Distinguished Alumni Award on Saturday, September 24 at MHS. Nominate a classmate for an award or purchase tickets at www.minnetonkaalumni.com.

In the years since, he's written more than 30 plays, most taking on serious and in some cases controversial subjects. Blessing was asked to write *Patient A* by the family of Kimberly Bergalis, who acquired HIV during a dentist appointment and later died of AIDS. Last year, the Minnetonka High School theater department's performance of *Patient A* received the highest rating at the state one-act competition. Blessing said he was "delighted" when he heard how his alma mater had done with one of his works.

Another of his plays, *Independence*, was the subject of a legal case that nearly went to the Supreme Court after a teacher in North Carolina was disciplined for choosing the play for her students to perform in a statewide competition. The play had language and characters a parent found objectionable.

"I tend to write serious plays that use humor," says Blessing. "Mostly I'm trying to get the audience to go through an experience, emotionally. It's a subtle emotional thing that happens not altogether in the conscious mind when you watch a good drama. You realize you're going through something that has become important to you emotionally. That's what I'm after when I write plays, to do that to audiences."

Blessing's career really got rolling in the early '80s, when he received a number of grants to write plays. And it took off in February of 1988, when his play *A Walk in the Woods* opened on Broadway, starring Sam Waterston and Robert Prosky. The play was nominated for both a Tony award and a Pulitzer Prize. It was later produced in London's West End and in Moscow, among other places, with Sir Alec Guinness making his last stage appearance in the London production.



Photo courtesy of Rob Downey/Riverside Theatre.

A sports fan, Blessing has used baseball as the backdrop of several of his plays. His play *Cobb*, which explores the many sides of baseball legend Ty Cobb, won a Drama Desk Award for Best Ensemble during its run at the Lortel Theatre in New York.



Lee Blessing (circled) in the 1967 Drama Club yearbook picture.

Blessing appreciates the security he felt growing up in Minnetonka, but notes that a happy home life in a stable community isn't necessarily the best environment for a budding artist.

"I felt safe and had a supportive family which can be good and bad for a creative writer," he says. "It can be a little harder – you have to scratch your head a little more about what you're going to write about. It's not coming out of a tortured childhood."

His adult life has become pretty stable too, particularly in the last decade or so. Blessing lives in Brooklyn Heights, N.Y., and has been the head of the graduate playwriting program at Rutgers University since 2001. That also happens to be the same year he met another Minnesota native and playwright named Melanie Marnich. The connection turned into a romance a few years later and they were married in April of 2006. ("Since she's from Minnesota, it meant there was no language barrier," he jokes.)

The year after they were married, Melanie got an offer to write for the HBO show, *Big Love*. She has been based in Los Angeles ever since, making for a cross-continent relationship.

"When you write television, you don't travel, so I do all the traveling," says Blessing. "During summers I'm out there all the time and during the school year I'm out there about once a month."

His travels also include regular trips to Minnesota, where he and Melanie visit her mom in Duluth and his brother, Guy (MHS '61), and sister-in-law in Chanhassen.

Overall, it's a pretty good life for the kid who wrote his first play to avoid a massive senior paper and has been making an indelible impression on audiences ever since.

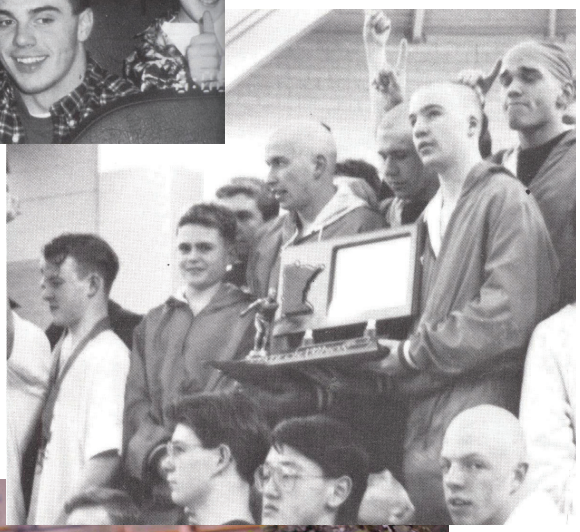
"I love writing, I love teaching. I'm very happy to be able to write plays. The best compliment someone can give me about a play is if they tell me they're happy or grateful they saw it. I love hearing when people tell me they went through something that they hadn't expected when they watched my play."

MHS BOYS SWIM & DIVE
State Champs

BY JOHN MUGFORD



1997



1993



2011

As four Minnetonka High School swimmers prepared for the final event at the Class AA boys' state championship meet in early March, there was enough tension inside the University of Minnesota Aquatic Center to cut the pool water with a jack knife, or perhaps a butterfly stroke.

Shaky metaphors aside, everything came down to this final race, with Minnetonka needing to finish ahead of Eden Prairie in the 400-yard freestyle relay in order to overtake the Eagles and win the state championship.

Finishing behind Eden Prairie would mean a highly respectable runner-up position, the fourth straight for Minnetonka. However, these Skippers swimmers, coached by alum Chris Guerrera '86, wanted the brass ring.

On this day, the Skippers relay team indeed came through, wrapping up Minnetonka's ninth overall state championship and adding to the school's proud swimming and diving legacy. The state titles started back in 1978, with seven championships coming between 1988 and 1997. MHS has also won 16 conference titles and 15 sectional championships to go along with numerous individual titles.

And while success is a big part of the proud Skippers' legacy, a number of former Minnetonka swimmers say the pride goes beyond just winning. It also includes attending what they consider to be an excellent academic high school, putting in many grueling hours in the pool with their teammates (whom even today they still consider friends), superb coaching and motivated swimmers who have always supported each other.

"I still look back on my time as a Minnetonka swimmer as a great time in my life," says Scott Gagner '92, who was on four state championship teams and two NCAA champion teams at

16 Conference Titles
15 Section Titles
9 State Titles
4 State Records
1 Common Bond

State Swimming Records

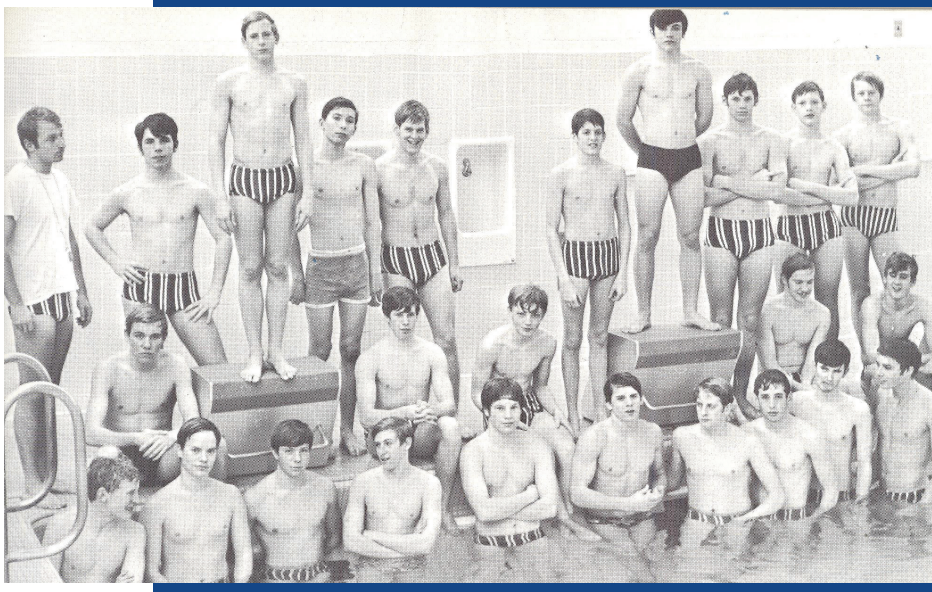
Not only does Minnetonka rank third in the state for Minnesota State High School League Championships, but our swimmers have set individual state records, as well. Four still stand today.

1998	100-yard Freestyle (00:44.96)	Jordan Watland
1993	100-yard Backstroke (00:49.21)	Jeff Dragsten
1992	100-yard Breaststroke (00:55.83)	Aaron Shapely
1991	200-yard Medley Relay (1:33.31)	Jeff Dragsten, Aaron Shapely, Brad Grabham and Scott Gagner

Stanford University. "It's something we still talk about when we get together, about that bond we formed while working so hard together and how that experience shaped who we are today. A lot of the former swimmers have done very well in their professional and personal lives and I think it's because of the work ethic and humbleness that was instilled in us at Minnetonka."

Jeff Dragsten '93, who followed Gagner to Stanford and now owns Pure Blue, a swimming store in Plymouth, agrees.

"That team unity and bonding that we formed back then stays with you for a long time," he says. "It keeps you tied to your teammates and the program. Back then we hung out together all the time, like I'm sure the teams do today, and today we stay in touch whenever possible."



Minnetonka formed its first competitive swim and dive team in 1970.

Dave Wells, a co-captain of the 1978 state championship team, looked through his Voyageur yearbook as he reminisced about his days on the swim team. Early in that season, Wells recalls, the Skippers were not considered a threat to beat their conference rival, Hopkins Eisenhower.

"When we beat Hopkins Eisenhower at a meet during the season we knew we had a good shot at winning the State Championship – we had depth, some of the top swimmers in the state and great coaching,," says Wells, who, after spending 22 years with the U.S. Navy, now lives in Omaha and works for General Dynamics. "We had a team of good guys that formed strong friendships, and quite a few of us still stay in touch through emails and Facebook."

Goal setting and dedication are what made Dragsten and Gagner forever part of Minnetonka swimming lore. In 1991, the two teamed with Brad Grabham '91 and Aaron Shapley '93 to break the national high school record in the 200-yard medley relay.

"Our coach, Tim Daly, had this plan for us to break the national record and he started preparing us for that early in the season," recalls Dragsten. "At first, that seemed incredible to us. But we worked hard all year and then broke the record at the state meet that year." Their time still stands as the all-time Minnesota record.

"Tim was a great motivator as well as a great teacher of swimming technique," says Dragsten.

Even though former Skippers swimmers are scattered near and far they know where to go once a year if they'd like to see a bunch of fellow Skippers.

A few days before the holidays in December each year, the alumni swim meet is held.

"It's just a great time, with all of the catching up that takes place," says Guerrera. "I never know who's going to walk in that door and I'm always surprised to see swimmers I haven't seen for a long time, or swimmers I've never met before but know by name."

And while the gathering involves plenty of talk about the old times, the practical jokes that helped them survive all the hard practices, the state titles and camaraderie, it's not just about fun and games.

"The alumni don't come back to just reminisce, they come back to compete," says Guerrera. "That's the way swimmers are. And every year that I've known about the alumni swim meet, the alumni have won it. They're hard to beat, as many of them have gone on to swim at big college programs, been involved in Olympic trials – you name it. The tradition is that strong."

It seems a long line of Skippers still believe strongly in that tradition and, if this year's State Championship is any indication, that tradition will continue well into the future.

Minnetonka Aquatics

www.minnetonkaaquatics.org

In 2009, Minnetonka Schools opened the Minnetonka Aquatics Center. Located at Middle School East, the state-of-the-art $6.1 million competitive and recreational facility was funded, in part, by the Minnetonka Anchor Club. It is home to the MHS Boys and Girls Swim & Dive Teams, the Minnetonka Swim Club and a Learn-to-Swim program.





Sarah Larsson '08 and her friend Milka, whom she met during her trip to Kenya to work with the Lake Victoria Young Women's Group in 2009.

CATCHING UP WITH SARAH LARSSON '08

International Volunteer

As a kid growing up in Excelsior, Sarah Larsson's mom taught her and her brother, Meers (MHS '14), the importance of being an active participant in life.

Her mother's influence surely accounts for Sarah's long list of activities at Minnetonka High School which included playing the French horn, Book Club, National Honor Society, Hammer Club (a diversity organization) and Reach Out Volunteers. Academically she excelled in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate (IB) classes. Outside of school she was a member of the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphony and the Music Association of Minnetonka.

"There has always been something very natural to me about wanting to be involved," says Sarah.

While attending a climate change rally her sophomore year at MHS, Sarah was approached by a woman from Give us Wings, a Minneapolis-based organization that supports community development projects in Kenya and Uganda.

Following her instincts, Sarah got involved with Give us Wings and started learning more about the history, culture and challenges of the communities they served.

"I think I've always been drawn to African culture," says Sarah, who has completed five semesters of the Swahili language as a student at Yale University. "It is just so unlike my own. I love the colors, the music, the beauty of it … "

Sarah has always had a curiosity about other ways of living. Growing up she would listen to stories about the world travels of her aunt, who works for the Council of International Schools. She credits MHS teachers Sonia Saunders, Cheryl Duncan, Doug Kennedy and others for teaching her about life outside her own community.

In the summer of 2009 Sarah got the opportunity to visit the small village of Nyaoga, Kenya, with Give us Wings. For six weeks, she immersed herself in everyday life and worked with the Lake Victoria Young Women's Group on an education project.

The trip to Kenya inspired Sarah to seek out other ways to volunteer in Africa. During the summer of 2010 she traveled to the African country of Senegal to work with women at a democracy and empowerment camp. This summer she is going back to Nyaoga with Give us Wings to do research for her anthropology major.

In the fall, Sarah will start her senior year at Yale where, as her mother taught her, she continues to be an active participant in student life. Beyond her interest in world causes, she is a member of Yale's Swing and Blues Dance Society, the Yale Slavic Chorus and the West African Dance and Percussion Ensemble.

When she graduates, Sarah wants to move back to Minnesota. She says that while she has enjoyed her international experiences, she wants to learn more about the community development projects happening in the Twin Cities. With one more year of college, however, Sarah plans to keep living life to its fullest and watch for her next great adventure.

THANK YOU!

The following Minnetonka teachers and staff members retired this school year. Please join the MAA in thanking them for their service and dedication to the children in Minnetonka Schools.

Michael Albers	38 years	Middle School West
Jerold Bannister	10 years	Minnewashta
Derek Braun	10 years	MHS
Barbara Brovold	17 years	Clear Springs
Deb Engel	20 years	Clear Springs
Dr. Clark Evans	26 years	MHS
Barbara Frohbach	22 years	Scenic Heights
Joanne Haugsland	13 years	Middle School East
Merle Jensen	11 years	Clear Springs
Carolyn Jorgensen	25 years	Deephaven
Marlys Kimes	17 years	Middle School West
Cindy Laybourn	24 years	MHS
Danielle McHugh	28 years	Middle School East
Sandy Miller	24 years	Excelsior
David Neraasen	25 years	Buildings and Grounds
Karen Newell	20 years	Clear Springs
Joseph Ricke	18 years	MHS
Helen Robb	11 years	MHS
Peiju Ruan	17 years	MHS
Betty Salzl	24 years	Middle School East
William Schmid	17 years	Buildings and Grounds
Pam Scott	34 years	Superintendent's Office
Bill Searles	40 years	MHS
Jackie Terauds	24 years	MHS
Juris Terauds	35 years	MHS
Judy Trombley	35 years	MHS
Mardi Wegleitner	27 years	Minnewashta
Kathryn Williamson	13 years	Deephaven
Nancy Woelffer	23 years	Minnewashta/MHS
Karen Zubert	25 years	Transportation

ALUMNI NOTES

2009

Sam Coatta has committed to play hockey at Union College in Schenectady, NY for the 2011-12 season. He played in the USHL for the Sioux Falls Stampede for two seasons.

2008

Jake Gardiner, has signed a three-year professional hockey contract with the Toronto Maple Leafs.

2007

A.J. Pettersen, a University of Minnesota Baseball player, was selected by the Minnesota Twins in the 25th round of the 2011 MLB Draft.

2006

Theodor (Ted) Griggs will attend the University of Wisconsin Madison School of Medicine this fall. He is a 2010 summa cum laude graduate of the University of Minnesota, College of Biological Sciences.

2005

Anne Reason performed as Cindy Lou in the recent Plymouth Playhouse production of *The Marvelous Wonderettes*.

1999

Rheanna Haeg has joined the Minnesota Vixen Football team.

1997

Donny Mark opened the10 Sports Dome, an indoor sports facility in Long Lake, Minn.

1996

Erika (Goldsmith) Zielinski is currently a teacher at St. Charles Elementary in St. Charles, Minn. She and her husband Josh have two children Lincoln (2) and Harper (3).

1993

Heather (Duggan) Anderson owns Adi Shakti Studio, a pottery and Kundalini Yoga business in Canby, Ore.

1990

Tim Mahoney was a contestant on NBC's *The Voice*, a singing competition TV show, in May 2011.

1988

April Anderson is currently pursuing her doctorate in Higher Education, Community College Policy and Administration at Iowa State University.

Dr. Bradley Fogo received the Phi Delta Kappa International Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award in 2010. He is currently a post-doctoral fellow working as an instructor in the Stanford Teacher Education Program.

1986

Eric Dregni published *Vikings in the Attic*, a book about historic Scandinavian sites, tales and traditions.

1983

Mike Hanson, a visually impaired hiker, recently returned from a 1,700 mile solo journey along the Appalachian Trail.

1978

Kate Lundsten was inducted into the Minnesota Swimming Coaches Association Hall of Fame.

1960

John Seamans was inducted into the Minnesota Softball Hall of Fame.

DO YOU HAVE NEWS?

Send your update to alumni@minnetonka.k12.mn.us! Tell us about your promotion, move back to Minnetonka, the birth of a child or recent marriage.

IN MEMORIAM

Please remember in your prayers these and all Minnetonka, Excelsior and Deephaven graduates who passed away over the past year (April 2010-April 2011).

Sam Dominick-Ali Nahki '08
Kathryn Knutson '06
Alex Simanek '06
Lauren Smeins '05
Christine Lynn Baert '04
David Oberg '98
Sam Merz '94
Daniel Dyer '85
Kelly Anderson Ward '85
Lee Hatch '78
Nancy (Alyson) Ward Grupp '74
Kimberly Lane '73
Nancy J. Richardson '73
Robin Rosenwinkel '73
Dennis Leisz '72
Caroline Wyer Binger '71
Robert Richter '70
Gerald (Jerry) Bristol '66
Susan Palm Morris '62
Neil Carlson '57
Joanne Johnson Haugdahl '54
Joyce Nelson Comer '46 (Excelsior)
John Walker "T" Adams (School Board)

STATE CHAMPIONS

The following athletic teams are celebrating an anniversary of their State Championship seasons this year!

2006 Adapted Bowling
2001 Girls Soccer
1996 Boys Alpine Skiing
1996 Boys Swim and Dive
1991 Girls Cross Country
1991 Boys Swim and Dive
1986 Girls Track and Field
1981 Girls Cross Country
1976 Girls Swim and Dive
1976 Boys Track and Field
1976 Girls Volleyball

MHS 2011

FIVE TO WATCH

BY MAGGIE SHEA



Photos by Chris Dillmann Photography.

MHS Class of 2011 (Row 1 from L to R): Julie Friend, Thomas Pears and Kamiko Higashi; (Row 2) Ryan McCartan and Parker Weinstock.



RYAN MCCARTAN

"He moves the audience: he smiles and they smile; he cries and they will too," says Minnetonka Theatre Director Kent Knutson of Ryan McCartan, who has played leading roles in eleven MHS productions and earned four consecutive Hennepin Theatre Trust Spotlight Awards. Versatility is his strength: he shines in musical theatre and rivets audiences in serious acting roles, including his portrayal of a grieving father in this year's one act, *The Laramie Project*, which Ryan feels is his best acting to date. He sang his swan song to Minnetonka as the Phantom in *Phantom of the Opera* this spring. McCartan says of the iconic role, "The notes are operatic, ranging from evil and menacing to sweet and innocent. I have to rely on my voice because the audience can't see my face."

McCartan landed his first professional gig at the age of eight. Since then, he has performed in six Guthrie shows and many productions at Great American History Theatre, Children's Theatre, Chanhassen Dinner Theatre, and the Old Log Theatre. His sister Alison (MHS class of '08), a junior at the Boston Conservatory, inspired him to try acting.

In January, Ryan participated in the prestigious Young Arts Week in Miami, taking master classes from internationally renowned actors and working with talented teens from around the country. The experience was transformative, igniting a passion for the purpose and power of the arts. "Art should spring up into 3-D form and challenge what you know," he says. In May, he was one of only two students in the nation to be named a U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts for theatre and in June he won the Triple Threat Award at the Hennepin Theatre Trust's Musical Theatre Spotlight Showcase.

Next year, Ryan will attend the highly competitive U of M/Guthrie Theatre BFA program. In the future, he aspires to try television and film in Los Angeles and theatre in New York; however, he loves the Twin Cities' thriving arts community and could easily see himself returning here.



THOMAS PEARS



JULIE FRIEND

2011 AP Player of the Year Julie Friend's focus on her craft as a hockey goalie has paid off handily this season: 23 wins, 0 losses, 1 tie; .74 goals per game average (the best ever for a Tonka goalie, male or female); 96 percent of shots blocked; and 12 shutouts. Add that to an outstanding team and the result is the first ever hockey state championship, culminating in a 3-2 victory over Edina in the final game.

A year-round hockey player since the age of 11, Friend was starting goalie for the Skippers by the second semester of her 9th grade year. Before each game, Friend reads player-penned motivational thoughts, adding in her own color commentary; signatures of every coach who has been part of her journey cover her helmet; and she couldn't start a game without first shooting pucks with forward Carolyn Draayer. "She's a leader, extremely dedicated to her team and to improving as a goalie," says coach Eric Johnson. An outstanding student and committed volunteer, Julie also relishes time with friends.

Next year, Friend will play Division 1 Hockey for St. Cloud State. Though east coast schools expressed an interest – including Dartmouth and Princeton – Friend chose St. Cloud for its program and its proximity to Skipper ice. "I wanted to stay in Minnesota and come back to watch the games," she says. "As state champions, we get to raise a banner at the Pagel Center. I wouldn't miss that for the world."



PARKER WEINSTOCK

"He's made of granite," says Minnetonka Lacrosse head coach Aaron Olivier of team captain Parker Weinstock. "He has fierce determination and you never have to question whether he gave 100 percent." Football coach Dave Nelson seconds this: "Parker has the will to win. He's on 100 percent not just on game night, but during the week." Weinstock plays pivotal positions in both sports: midfielder in Lacrosse, running back in football. Reflecting on his run as a Skipper, he says a highlight was starting as the midi-faceoff as a sophomore on the undefeated 2009 State Champion Lacrosse team, "It was the most unbelievable experience of my life," he says.

Next year he will play for Colgate University in Hamilton, NY, no small feat for a Minnesota player. "Kids are born with Lacrosse sticks in their hands on the East Coast," Olivier says. Weinstock is up for the challenge, planning to work on his agility and stick skills over the summer. Despite outstanding individual stats, he says, "At the end of the day, it's all about the team." Both of Parker's parents were college athletes--his mom, Kristi (Gartner) Weinstock, is a class of '81 MHS alum--and he credits them with encouraging him to always reach high.

Involved in student government since his freshman year, Parker is now President. "He's genuinely concerned about the quality and culture of the school. Parker has shown great leadership," MHS principal Dave Adney says.

"I hope to move back here some day. I wish Colgate was in Minnesota," Parker says. He unwinds by wake surfing, snowboarding and hanging out with friends, and he enjoys an occasional episode of the Discovery Channel's *Man versus Wild*.



KAMIKO HIGASHI

"There are so many unanswered questions regarding how and why we think the way we do," says MHS senior Kamiko Higashi, reflecting on her interest in neuroscience. "Is personality a result of electrical impulses or a product of how we were brought up?" Kamiko will pursue these questions at UW-Madison this fall, where she was admitted to the Honors Program.

Kamiko's genuine love of learning has impressed her teachers. "She is so authentic, so thoughtful," says IB English teacher Kelley Mosiman. "When she talks, all listen." Her interest in other cultures led her to enroll in the IB Diploma Programme.

An accomplished student with a 4.02 GPA, Kamiko was elected Homecoming Queen, an honor that surprised and delighted her. Her passion for dance began at age 3, when she started taking classes at DeAnne's Dance Studio. She has danced competitively for MHS and the nationally-ranked Supreme Dance Force Team since 10th grade.

Kamiko's Minnetonka roots run deep – she lives in the same house where her father, Jay Higashi MHS '81 grew up. Though she loves Minnetonka, she is eager to explore the world and seeks to answer life's important questions.

Thomas Pears has come full-circle: born in Hanover, N.H., while his father, MHS teacher Chris Pears was earning his MBA at Dartmouth, Thomas will return there this fall as a freshman.

A scroll through his accomplishments reads like a Wall Street ticker on the upsurge. As a sophomore, he took multiple AP classes and earned the designation of AP scholar. As a junior enrolled in the IB programme, he was a finalist in a Federal Reserve contest for his essay on reducing obesity by using subsidies; that year he also wrote his IB capstone project on the elasticity of demand during the recession. As a senior, he and a classmate made it to nationals in the Demand Tec Retail Challenge, earning a scholarship, a trip to New York and priceless hands-on marketing and analysis experience. "There are models that work well in theory but don't work so well in the real world," says Thomas of his interest in applied economics.

Pears' dual skills in writing and economics have served him well: he is Editor-in-Chief of *Breezes*, the school newspaper, and has been instrumental in launching the first ever online edition.

An accomplished singer and guitar player, Pears released a CD last year with his band the Wandering Bartletts; he wrote most of the songs and has enjoyed playing gigs with the band. He has also played a key role in organizing MHS Coffee House concerts, and his musical taste ranges from the British punk-pop band Arctic Monkeys to classic rock.

.

2010

All-Class Reunion

The third All-Class Reunion was held July 30-31, 2010. It was a weekend full of fond memories, fun and good friends.

The weekend kicked off with the Original Stars from American Bandstand concert featuring teen idols Bobby Vee and Fabian. The General Store of Minnetonka, owned by alums Gail and Chris Bollis, put on a wonderful event that raised money for the Alumni Association Fine Arts Endowment Fund and set the tone for the weekend.

On Saturday morning, more than 400 people attended the Reunion Breakfast at Minnetonka High School–the largest crowd ever! Alumni took tours of the school and were able to experience the many incredible changes that have been made to the building.

The weekend wrapped up Saturday night with a street dance on Excelsior's Water Street attended by about 3,000 alums. It was a beautiful Lake Minnetonka evening with good music and high school memories.

These events would not have been possible without the support and excitement of the alumni, numerous volunteers, generous sponsors, the downtown Excelsior businesses, city leaders, the Minnetonka School District and more.

Thank you to everyone who attended!





Bob Abel '65, Chuck Pillsbury '64, Corrine McCaul Abel '69, Cathy Meldahl Turner '66, Nancy Seibert Steenson '66



Debbie Kerber Odden '87, Dale Kerber '84, Jeanne Johnsen MacFarlane '63, Harold Johnsen '37, Dianne Johnsen Arold '62 and Reverend Carter MacFarlane '83



Kaye Simons Knutson '59, Todd Knutson '59, Nancy Palm Countryman '59



Bonnie Board Niles '67, Sandy Ryan and Liz Holcomb Norton '82



Front row - Brian Smith '97, Nancy O'Hearn Smith '66, Helen Workman Smith '34 (E), Bruce Smith '65, Lynn Smith Robey '59, Jerry Robey '56. Back row - Greg Greenwood '91, Reed Greenwood '20, Anna Greenwood '22 and Jennifer Smith Greenwood '91



Phil Hallin '58, Leanne Lewis Norman '48 (E), John Norman '47 (E), Tom Staska '58 and Kathy Staska



Laura Wilson Buss '77, Katie Markovich Driver '77 and Linda Cilley Hansen '77



Diane Deisher Kuznia '85, Debra Deisher Barr '80, Connie Talsoe Timmerman '80 and Sue Heeb Schaer '80



Helen Klinghorn '33 (Excelsior)



Ray Jezierski '56 (retired MHS teacher) and Carl Boertjens '74



Bruce Marmesh (retired MHS teacher), Anne Reason '05 and Jens Midthun '05

The fourth All-Class Reunion will be held in July 2014!

MINNETONKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Minnetonka Public Schools
Dennis Peterson, Superintendent
5621 County Road 101
Minnetonka, MN 55345
www.minnetonka.k12.mn.us

NonProfit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Minnetonka Schools
Permit 1287
Hopkins, MN

Congratulations 2010 Alumni Award Recipients and Hall of Fame Inductees!



2010 Award Recipients - Front (L to R): Dr. Prudence Lam, Mary Skoy, Kate (Oyler) Mulhern, Elaine Anderson Jahnke (widow of Einer Anderson) and Bill Carrothers. Back (L to R): Steve Seamans, Jim Brower, Jan Malcolm and Sue Stuebner Gaylor.

2010 Alumni Awards

Distinguished Alumni Award
Dr. Prudence Lam '89
Jan Malcolm '73

Young Alum Achievement Award
Kate (Oyler) Mulhern '00

Faculty Hall of Fame
Einer Anderson (inducted posthumously)
David Ringstad
Mary Skoy

MHS Skippers Hall of Fame
Bill Carrothers '82
Jim Brower '91
Sue Stuebner Gaylor '89
Steve "Stymie" Seamans '70

Save the Date!
The 3rd annual Alumni Awards Brunch will be held Saturday, September 24, 2011 at MHS. Learn more and make a nomination at www.minnetonkaalumni.com!

MINNETONKA Alumni Awards