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THE NORDIC TRIBUNE

What's the Journalism Class is Reading?

By Sunnie Lavigne

Sophomore, Dorlita Doyle, is reading Eclipse by Stephanie Meyers. Dorlita explains that the book is the third of the Twilight series. The book is based on a girl, Bella, who falls in love with a gorgeous vampire, Edward. In this book she discovers that she is also falling for her best friend, Jacob, who happens to be a werewolf and completely hates Edward. As Bella's stress grows, she also has to deal with an army of vampires that is trying to take over Seattle, Washington. Dorlita is towards the end of the book, and she says, "Eclipse is amazing."

Senior Spaghetti Dinner

On April 6th, there will be a spaghetti dinner, 11:00-4:00, to help the seniors cover the cost of their class trip to Minneapolis, MN. The cost of the spaghetti dinner is \$7.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children. Seniors will also be raffling prizes at the dinner.

OFFICE NOTES

Japanese Education- Part IV (A day at Nakajo High School)-by Claude Siders

This is the fifth in a series of articles about my trip to Japan last October and the fourth article on the Japanese education system. Our Japan Fulbright Memorial Group of 20 educators boarded our chartered bus for Nakajo High School in Tainai City early on Friday October 26, 2007. We arrived at the high school around 9:00 AM. The assistant principal greeted us at the door and as is customary, we changed from our street shoes to clean tennis shoes as we crossed the threshold.

We were directed to a large meeting room. Unlike the previous schools we had visited, there was no large welcoming by students and staff in the gymnasium. Instead, we met with the assistant principal and several teachers. The principal was unable to meet with us due to a previously scheduled meeting.

During our time with the assistant principal we learned about the organization of Kanajo High School. It is in its 98th year of operation. In 1910, when it opened, it was primarily an agricultural school. Today it serves 705 students in Grades 1, 2 and 3 (our equivalent of grades 10, 11 and 12). Grades 1 and 2 have 6 classes each. Grade 3 has seven classes. At least 98% of the students graduate. About 40% go on to universities, another 40% go to specialized vocational schools and about 20% go directly into the workforce. I learned that Japan is seeing a sharp drop in the younger population. As here in our own school, Japanese schools throughout the country have to deal with fewer students and the problems that come with it.

The school facility consists of three main buildings connected by enclosed corridors with two gymnasiums branching off the connecting corridors.

Two of the main buildings are three stories high and the other was two stories. There are several other sports structures on the property but not attached to the school building.

Kanajo High School employs 46 teachers providing instruction in history, English, Japanese, oral communication, mathematics, science, physical education, home economic, politics/economics, ethics, information technology and geography. At the end of the regular school day, about 3:35 PM, students and teachers stay for a wide variety of extra-curricular activities including many sports and clubs. Students and teachers alike typically will not leave school until around 9:00 PM.

Students come from all over Niigata by bullet trains, some ride as much as one and one-half hours each way. One observation I made while visiting classrooms is that as many as 10 of 35 students in a classroom

were sleeping. Usually teachers did not disturb the students. I later learned there are several reasons for allowing students to sleep in class. There is a general belief that if the student is sleeping, he or she needs to and it is the students' best interest to let them sleep. Each student knows that it is their education and that they must get good scores on the university entrance exams when they are in grade 3, therefore they are responsible for getting and learning the material that they would miss while sleeping. It was also stated that it is better for the teacher and the rest of the class to let the student sleep. If the teacher awakens the student he may become a trouble maker and disrupt education for everyone.

As in our own school and schools throughout the United States, students with cell phones in the classroom are a new problem. Most classrooms have signs warning that cell phones are not permitted. I was observing in the back of a classroom and noticed a female student had a cell phone on her desk. It was not visible by the teacher at the front of the room. A light on the phone started blink indicating an incoming call. The student started to reach for it then looked at me and withdrew her hand. If I were not present she, no doubt, would have answered and probably engaged in text messaging.

Class sizes are large compared to our standards. Most classes had 35 to 40 students. There was a special education classroom. However, there were very few students in the room and most were more severely handicapped.

As I observed in each of the three schools I had to remind myself to keep an open mind. The Japanese

education system was built from a very old culture that has prized education. It underwent dramatic changes after the occupation period in the late 1940's and 1950's. Japanese students place well in the world in knowledge of science and mathematics. There are some very strong points to the Japanese system as well some weaknesses. I have learned much and also know there is much more to learn and understand about Japanese education.

Next month I will talk about Japanese life and culture including my host family stay.

High Cost of Fuel Increases Cost of Operating the School

As you are very aware in your own personal budgets, the high cost of fuel is driving the price of not only gasoline but everything that we consume higher. The school's budget is being affected in most areas because of higher fuel costs.

Obviously it is costing more to operate busses. However costs of all supplies are increasing as the cost to deliver them increases. One area hit particularly hard this year is our food service program. The cost of food has risen sharply. In addition, the food service program has had more difficulty obtaining USDA Commodity surplus food. When we cannot obtain these surplus items we must buy food for the breakfast and lunch programs at wholesale prices. This has also created some changes in the type and quality of the food we are able to obtain. The food service program is an important part of our instructional program. Making sure children have nutritious meals will help them stay more alert and focused in the classroom.

The superintendent, in cooperation with the food service supervisor, is striving to maintain costs while providing

appetizing and nutritious meals. This is no easy task. We have been meeting with several students this year to get ideas on how to improve our program. They have provided some helpful ideas that have been implemented. We will continue to find ways to lower costs for all areas of the budget including food services.

Informational Meeting for Parents of Prospective Kindergarteners

On Thursday, April 3rd at 6:00 PM there will be an information night at the Nordic Head Start Building for parents of prospective kindergarteners. Principal Dan Nurmi and kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Dixon, will be present to answer questions about kindergarten registration and the upcoming new school year.

Kindergarten Registration

North Dickinson will be having its registration for kindergarteners on Monday, April 7th. It is important for parents to enroll their children at this time so the school can make plans for the upcoming school year. Parents may register at any time during the day, however, if parents want to have a kindergarten screening appointment, please call the office at 542-9281. The screening takes about a half hour. Children are eligible if they are at least five years of age on or before December 1, 2008. Parents MUST have their child's immunization record and certified birth certificate (not the hospital certificate) at the time of registration. Certified birth certificates, can be obtained at the courthouse in the county where the child was born. We are also asking that parents bring the child's social security number and verification of vision and hearing tests. Appointments for vision and hearing screen-

ings can be made at the Dickinson County Health Department by calling 774-1868.

Spring Band Concert

The North Dickinson Spring Band Concert will be Thursday, April 10th at 7:00 PM

Senior Reminder

Seniors are reminded to turn in 3 pictures to the office as soon as possible. They will be used for the class composite, year-book, and The Daily News senior display.

Board Highlights – March 2008

Went into closed session for the purpose of two (2) expulsion hearings.

Authorized the administration to handle the disciplinary action for which the first hearing was held.

Expelled a student for which the second hearing was held for the balance of the school year.

Student may reapply in the fall under the condition that the student comply with the

attendance policy and procedures in the handbook. If the student does not, the student will continue with the current expulsion.

Approved the senior class trip to Minneapolis, MN

Accepted the sinking fund project bids from Valley Mechanical for the shop ventilation system in the amount of \$33,537.49. Accepted from Zawada for the door replacements in the amount of \$24,750

Set the driver education

fee at \$215 per resident student and \$265 per non-resident student for the summer 2008 driver education classes.

Approved the extension of the administrative contracts for the Business Manager, Building and Grounds/Transportation Supervisor, Principal, and Director of Technology by one (1) year (school year 2008-2009) at the same rate of pay as the 2007-2008 school year.

Went into executive session for the purpose of evaluating the

superintendent.

Approved the superintendent's evaluation.

Approved the extension of the superintendent's contract (school year 2008-2009) by one (1) year at the same rate of pay as the 2007-2008 school year.

Elementary Library

The new books in the elementary library this month are Gilbert in Deep and Gilbert the Great by Jane Clark, Dirt on my Shirt by Jeff Foxworthy, The Princess and the Peabodys by Betty Birney, Dogku by Andrew Clements, and several Michigan

research books. Some students are reading books. Army Rangers in being read by AJ Alexa, and Anyone But Me being read by Aleesha Carlson. Great Michigan Deer Tales is being read by Quenten Ackerman while Zachary DePotic is reading Monster Machines. The Cat in

the Hat is being enjoyed by **Savannah Longtin**.

Hunter Ed. Class 2008

Classes will be held at the Sagola Township Sportsman Club this year. Class dates are Saturday, April 19, Saturday, April 26th, with a field day on May 3. All classes and field day are from 8:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. CST. All classes and field day are required. Lunches

will be provided and you are responsible for your own transportation, we suggest you car pool to cut cost. Pre registration forms, permission slips and work books are in the school office. **Forms must be turned in by April 7th at the school office.** You need to complete the questions in the back of the work book prior to class.

This year the class will be able to provide more complete and interesting training as we will be able to work inside and outside. Any questions contact John Crady (906) 367-2320.

H.S. Student Council

There will be a Blood Drive on Thursday, April 3, from 2:00-4:45 P.M. April 11, there will be a

H.S. Tournament Night. It will go from 6:00 –10:00 P.M. Admissions is \$5.00 along with a concession stand. The games will include 3 on 3 basketball, volleyball, Guitar Hero, and Dance Revolution Tournaments.

April 14th -25th there will be a fund raiser for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. The teachers will

have a box on their desks for students to put money in. The teacher who raises the most money after two weeks, will be serving lunch to the students while wearing a lunch lady costume. During the month of May we will be electing our new student council members for the 08-09 school year.

PTO The PTO will meet at 6:00 on the second Monday of every month. Anyone interested in being involved is welcome to attend! PTO will be collecting milk caps, Econo Foods and Super One receipts. If you have any, please drop them off in the school office.

Girls Basketball

The girl's basketball team completed a tremendous season, ending it with a Regional Championship, the first ever in school history! The girls lost to Cedarville in the quarterfinal, 63-54. This loss ended their season with an over all 22-3 record. The girls completed the best season in school history with three championships under their belt: Conference, District, and Regional. **Jessica Roell:** Jessie was named All Conference Player of the Year, Class D U.P. Player of the Year, and First Team All State. **Betsy Holsworth:** Betsy was named First Team All Conference and Second Team All U.P. **Emily Lehto:** Emily was named Second Team All Conference, and Honorable Mention All U.P. **Megan Harper:** Megan made the All Conference Defensive Team. **Coach Roell:** Coach Mike Roell was named Conference Coach of the Year. Congratulations, Coach Roell and girls, on all of your achievements.

Track

Boys and girls track will start on April 7th. Track will once again be coached by Joe Reddinger and Mike Roell.

1st Grade- The 1st grade class will be planning their end of the year field trip. If any parent has an interesting job that the class could visit, please let Mrs. Mattson know. She will be sending home more information and will be asking for chaperones in early May. Please keep sending boots every day as our playground gets really muddy in the spring.

Mrs. Slagle's 3rd grade class. The Local Reading Olympics Competition was on March 31st and all of the teams did a great job. All of the Reading Olympics participants will be going to Kingsford on April 15th to compete at 9:00 A.M. The PTO will be providing lunch at McDonald's for the kids. Also Ms. Hiinonen has been student teaching and will be done in April. She's been doing a great job.

Mr. Lindholm's 5th grade class is extremely excited to be back in school, learning and socializing. The 5th graders are enjoying the amount of reading they have been doing lately. They are especially enjoying the chapter of "Sound" in science and they're happy to be on their 9th book report. The "Medieval Read-In" was a fun and exciting adventure for the students as they dressed in Medieval attire. The 5th graders are excited for summer and are also excited for the camp out which will take place the two last days of school.

In **Mrs. Santoni's classroom, 8th graders** just experienced what it would be like to be singled out by wearing yellow stars on their shirts for two weeks. It was a lesson about tolerance and exposed them to being labeled.

Mrs. O'Neil's 6th grade class is working on game boards for their language arts class. Also they are learning about DNA and RNA in science class. Several of the students are also excited for Fire Up on April 4th through the 6th. Fire Up is a church activity where students from different schools meet up in Marquette and stay two nights in a hotel or church. Students 6th-12th grade can attend.

Mrs. Wilson's 8th grade class just had an auction for the 6th and 7th grade to rent an 8th grader for a half day. The 8th grader's made over \$400 that will go towards their graduation party. 7th grade held their annual poetry party last Thursday.

The middle school student council is currently planning their field trip.