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THE NORDIC TRIBUNE

What the Journalism Class is Reading?

By Sunnie Lavigne

Kati Merrill is a junior at ND who has just finished the great book The Final Eclipse by Lynne Eung. The book is the final one of the series Daughters of the Moon. This book is about four girls who have been chosen to save the world from darkness and to keep hope alive. These girls, who all have special powers, ride their destiny out to fight an ancient evil called Atrax. Kati recommends these books to anyone with an imagination; she said that she was very happy she started the series and read all thirteen books.

OFFICE NOTES

March is Reading Month!

Thursday, March 13th, the Nordics will be hosting a Community Wide Read-In from 6:00-8:00 P.M. This event is free to all and everyone. Many prizes, games, books and shows will be presented through out the night. Our theme this year will be "Take a Knight out to Read". Children, parents, and grandparents are encouraged to come dressed up as a prince, princess, knight or whatever costume that can be found from a medieval times era. Students are getting excited and teachers are working hard to make this event successful. Snacks and drinks are available for those who need a break from the party.

The North Dickinson Elementary students have been challenged to read as much as possible at home during the month of February for this year's Nordic Read-In, "A Knight to Remember". For each 15 minutes they

read, they will win one raffle ticket that can be used the night of the Read-In. The student who reads the most in each class will have a chance to win a remote control dragon. Many other fantastic prizes, donated by Mr. and Mrs. Brule, will be up for grabs in the raffles the evening of the Read-In. Also, for each book they read, they get their name put on a dragon scale and the class that has the most scales on their dragon will win a popcorn and movie party and each child in the class will get a chocolate castle sucker.

The students are also busy drawing Medieval pictures to enter in the K-12th grade art show. They will also receive a raffle ticket for entering the show and can win an awesome prize. Every student who enters the door the evening of the Read-In will also be given an envelope with five free raffle tickets. They can also win wonderful prizes in each room throughout the school. The teachers will

tally the students efforts before the Read-In and the dragons will be awarded to the winners the day of the Read-In.

Japanese Education- Part III (A day at Kurakawa Junior High School)-by Claude Siders

This is the fourth in a series of articles about my trip to Japan last October and the third article on the Japanese education system. Our group of twenty educators arrived at Kurakawa Junior High School (KJHS) at about 8:00 AM on Thursday October 25th. KJHS is a small school of about 160 students and is part of the Tainai City School District. As in all junior high schools in Japan, KJHS houses students in grades 1 through 3, our equivalent of grades 7 through 9.

After a brief orientation by the principal we were taken to the gymnasium where, as with Kanajo Elementary School, we were greeted with a standing ovation and the school song. The principal and several

students read speeches to us which were translated into English. One of our group members read a prepared thank you which was translated into Japanese. Our group then sang “It’s a Wonderful World” to the students. They were polite enough to applaud our meager performance.

We were then permitted to wander the school and visit any of the classrooms. I was able to visit classrooms representing most or all of the subject areas offered at the school. I was particularly interested in the English education class. We had already visited English education classes in Kanajo Elementary School. It was interesting to see the progression of English skills from the elementary to the junior high school. Students were writing complete sentences with a much larger vocabulary. Students used spoken and written English. However, students did not feel confident in their spoken English. They were reluctant to speak to us in English.

We were asked to eat lunch with students in their cafeteria. Each of us sat at different tables with a group of students. We were able to communicate some. The students are very interested in our country. Music was played during lunch on the PA system. At first we thought the music was played for our enjoyment. The music was from the Carpenters. Junior high school students love the Carpenters.

We joined the students in the courtyard after lunch. One group of students played a form of “Red Light, Green Light”. Several of our group joined in on the game.

After lunch we visited more classrooms including their computer lab. The lab is new with the latest

equipment. Students initially login to “Yahoo Japan” for searches and links. There is very little technology used in the classroom, which is surprising. We think of Japan as being a high tech society. The technology has been slow to reach the educational setting.

I had an opportunity to talk with a couple of grade 3 (freshmen) girls after lunch. I asked them if they had a lot of homework. Surprisingly, the answer was no. I was told teachers believed students should decide what areas they need to study and be self-disciplined enough to do that. It is up to the student to study well in order to pass the entrance exam for high school. Students receiving the highest scores on the exams qualify to attend the best high schools in the prefecture.

At the end of the day (3:30 PM), most students and teachers remain until about 7:00 PM for after school sports and clubs. Most students are involved in these activities. Sports include baseball, basketball, volleyball, ping pong, badminton, dance, gymnastics and several other sports.

Kurakawa students live close to their school, which is at the base of the Tainai Mountains. Many bicycles are parked out front. It is dark when everyone heads home.

Next month we will visit Kanajo High School.

Community Presentation on Japan, Its Education System, Culture, Sites and More...

Claude Siders, Superintendent will be presenting pictures, video and dialogue on his trip to Japan last October. The presentation will be held in the Middle/High School Library on March 27th from 7:00 to 8:30 PM. Admission is free. Coffee and snacks will be provided. Everyone is welcome.

The Governor’s Education Proposals

In February the Governor gave her annual State of the State address. She made several significant proposals regarding education. These are all proposals and each must be acted on by the Legislature in the form of laws that would be agreed to by both chambers in the Legislature and the Governor. Below are listed some of the proposals and some issues that will need to be considered:

All day, every day kindergarten-- Research has shown this is an effective strategy to get students off to a good start in school. Concerns that must be addressed include additional space needed in crowded schools and funding for twice as many kindergarten teachers.

21st Century High Schools--This is not as well documented as all day kindergartens as a strategy to increase student performance. The idea is to build small high schools in urban and suburban areas to more personalize education for students. This will require investing \$32 million each year over the next several years to build new smaller high schools and train or re-train staff to teach differently in these smaller buildings. Bonds must be sold to fund this project. The cost of the bonds over a 10 year period may run from \$300 million to \$1.2 billion.

Increasing mandatory school age from 16 to 18— As high school graduation requirements increase and the demand for a more highly skilled workforce is necessary, dropout students will become a burden on our society and a waste of human

potential. Increasing the mandatory school age will address this concern but raise several other concerns. This will be a significant cost increase for the State as more students remain in school rather than dropping out. The revenue for schools is already strained because of a weak economy. This will further exacerbate the school funding problem. In addition, the students who would drop out are typically the neediest and would require more specialized teaching techniques which are more costly.

Increasing the per pupil funding amount by up to \$216 for each pupil— This increase is a 3% increase (approximately the cost of living increase) over this current year's funding. Those districts at the bottom of the funding level per pupil, now \$7204/pupil, would receive the full \$216 increase. Those districts receiving between \$7205 and \$8433 would receive \$108 plus a prorated portion an additional \$108. Districts currently receiving more than \$8433 would only receive an additional \$108 per pupil.

The effect of this proposal would be to narrow the gap between the districts receiving the

lowest amount of per pupil funding and those receiving the highest. This may become problematic to fund if the State's revenue projections decrease due to lower income tax, sales tax and other tax revenue collections.

Transportation subsidy for small, rural and sparsely populated districts— This subsidy would apply to a number of small districts like ours and would provide additional funding to operate our transportation system. Small sparsely populated districts have additional costs to get students to schools that other districts do not. An example would be to compare our transportation costs to a district like Iron Mountain. Iron Mountain transports very few of their students because most can walk to school. They receive the same per pupil funding as North Dickinson, \$7204. They are able to spend more of their per pupil funding on instructional programs than our district. This subsidy is about \$1.3 million per year for the entire state and a very small portion of the multibillion dollar state education budget.

Legislatures will be taking up these proposals over the next few months. A lot of the changes will depend on how the State's revenue improves which is dependent on the State's economy as a whole.

Sinking Fund Projects for Summer 2008

The School Board approved three projects for this summer to be funded with the Sinking Funds that were renewed last year. There are three major projects: 1) several door replacements within the building, 2) installation of a shop and art area ventilation system to remove paint, welding and auto fumes and 3) an addition to the playground equipment that was added last year. The additional equipment will provide a comprehensive fitness area. Fundraising will provide about \$6,000 of the expected total cost of \$20,000 for the playground project.

Sinking fund dollars will also be used this summer to complete payment on the wood furnace upgrades done this last fall and to make a payment on the Qualified Zone Academy Bonds that were used this past summer to renovate the science labs. These bonds are interest free.

The Board, administration, staff and students thank you, the voters, for making these funds available to improve our school. Without the Sinking Fund these projects would not be possible.

Scholarship Applications

If any seniors wish to apply for a scholarship, they may pick up the application form from Mr. Trask. Students need to get started on the scholarship applications well before the deadlines. It is your responsibility to get the applications in before the deadlines. Some scholarships may require letters of recommendation from others. Give these people plenty of time - show consideration and appreciation.

The more scholarships one applies for the greater chance they have of getting one. However, it is better for seniors to put in a lot of work to do a few that are good, than to put in a little work to send in many that are sloppy.

If any senior wishes to search out more scholarships than what is listed, they may come to the Guidance Office to go through the "Scholarship Book". If seniors have access to the "web", they may use other scholarship search services for free. Seniors can find this service by checking out the links on the Guidance web page for North Dickinson School.

See Steve Trask if there are any questions.

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.

A list of scholarships and deadlines will be mailed out to parents of seniors.

Board Highlights – February 2008

*Approved to seek bids for two (2) sinking fund projects to be completed after July 1, 2008. The projects are a ventilation system in the shop area and the replacement of doors within the school building.

*Approved the Superintendent Evaluation Procedure to be completed and presented at the March 2008 board meeting.

*Approved the purchase of training and implementation of Power School for student data services.

*Approved to seek quotes for purchase of a fitness playground center with installation being done by volunteer help.

*Discussed the seeking of quotes for contracting of substitute teacher services with the Dickinson-Iron I.S.D. and other I.S.D. Districts.

DRIVER EDUCATION UP-DATE

Informational letters regarding driver education will be sent out in late March or early April to the parents of the students who have signed up for the classes.

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

Parent-Teacher Conferences /

Early Dismissal Parent-teacher conferences will be held on Thursday, March 6, 2008 from 1:30 - 4:00 and 5:00 - 7:30 PM. School will be dismissed at 12:45 PM

Spring Break Spring break will be Monday, March 17th through Monday, March 24th. School will resume on Tuesday, March 25th. Blood Drive at N.D. - Thursday, March 3rd from 2:00-5:45 PM

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

Seniors

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

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.

Elementary Library

New books in the elementary library include: Six Star Wars chapter books, Disney's The Magic Kitchen Cookbook, Ice Wreck a True Story, and Hannah Montana chapter books. Valentine's Day Annual candy heart contest winners include: **Masyn Alexa, Brendon Steinbrecher, Steven Forstrom, and Mara Smith.**

Who is reading what? In third grade **Cassidy Morkin** is reading You Can Doodle It, **Jacob Strauss** has been enjoying Nuclear Jellyfish of New Jersey, and **Kiela Williams** is reading Love Stinks.

Keep Reading and don't forget the Read-in on March 13th.

Girls Basketball

The junior varsity will be sharing the Skyline Conference Title this year with Forest Park. Their conference record was 13-1 and their season record was 17-3.

The girl's varsity team had an excellent season making history in a few different ways. First they finished the season with the best record in school history at 18-2. The varsity also won their conference by being the first team in school history to go 14-0. "Congratulations girls in being the second team to ever win the Skyline Conference and by going undefeated in it. Thank you seniors for the years of dedicated service to the girl's basketball team," said Coach Mike Roell. The seniors this year are **Betsy Holsworth, Hannah Mikulich, Jessica Roell, Jasmine Jauquet, Megan Harper, and Nanao Sugiyama.**

The girl's also won their districts for the 2nd year running. The Nordic girls took The District 126 Tournament by storm. This tournament was held in Forest Park where the team faced Baraga in the semifinals of the tournament; they won with a score of 56-35. They then advanced to play Forest Park for the title. The final score ended as 46-35 with the Nordic girls on top. This is the third title in school history. Coach Roell would like to congratulate the girls on a solid team effort to win.

First Grade- The 1st grade class is reading, reading, reading! These kids are reading everything in sight! They have come a long way in seven months! In math they are really focusing on money and telling time to the hour and half hour. Thank you parents for donating pencils - they will surely use them.

Middle School News

Thank you to all the students who collected donations for the American Heart Association. Also thank you to the community members who donated \$805 to help the American Heart Association's efforts. These donations will help promote knowledge on heart health and fight heart and help stroke related deaths and illness.

Mrs. Santoni's 8th grade class is learning about tolerance through studying the Holocaust and reading The Devil's Arithmetic.

Mrs. O'Neil's student teacher, Mrs. Hiironen, left the 6th grade classroom on February 22 and is currently in the 3rd grade with Mrs. Slagle. The 6th grade is starting history reports where they are doing research and writing a paper. Many of the students were really excited for the Great Eight Winter Games that took place over on the 23rd. The sixth grade has just finish the poetry boxes and poems that they have been working on. If you would like to view the boxes, they are displayed in the middle school hallway. It would be much appreciated.

Anni Saare Anni Saare is our foreign exchange student from Parnu, Estonia and is currently living with Nancy and Brian Finendale from Felch. Her birthday is June 29th and she is 17 years old.

In Estonia, she has a 15 year old brother whose name is Mattias. Her parents' names are Karin and Toomas. She has a cat named Kurri.

Back home, Anni enjoys spending time at an art studio doing glass paintings and drawings. Her family folk dances which she also greatly enjoys. In the winter, Anni is most likely skiing, and snowboarding. Her favorite food in Estonia is whatever is served at Christmas time. Her favorite food here in the U.S. is Subway.

After school, Anni wants to further her education in astronomy and hopefully to one day visit NASA.

Jorge Vargas, from La Paz, Bolivia, is another foreign exchange student. He lives with Dan and Karen Helms of Channing. His birthday is October 1st and he is 17 years old. Back in Bolivia, Jorge has two sisters; one is 21 years old and his other sister is 26 years old. Their names are Melissa and Gianna. He has two dogs whose names are Trapito and Huesito. His parents' names are Sonia Quiroga and Jorgo Vargas.

His favorite food in Bolivia is Piquo a lo macho Salce, while in America his favorite food is tacos. In Jorge's spare time he enjoys sleeping, soccer and just hanging out with friends, and in the winter he likes to play baseball. After school, Jorge wants to go to college to be a patrol engineer.

Mardi Gras Madness

The Mardi Gras celebration was held in French classes on February 6th. The king and queen for each class were:

French II– **Dennis Brzoznowski and Betsy Holsworth**

French I (6th hour)– **J.J. Pringle and Julia Weiss**

French I (7th hour)- **Bryce Jauquet and Lindsay Peterson**

Congratulations to all of the kings and queens of Mardi Gras.