

# C COPIAGUE Connections

Spring 2012

COPIAGUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS - A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN

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## HONORIFICABILITUDINITATIBUS: Copiague Named National AP District of the Year

The Copiague School District has been named the National Small School AP District of the Year by the College Board for opening Advanced Placement (AP) classroom doors to a significantly broader pool of students while maintaining or improving the percentage of students earning scores of 3 or higher on AP Exams. Being named a District of the Year nationally recognizes and acknowledges Copiague's success and efforts to expand AP access, performance and commitment to increasing student achievement. Copiague is the only district in the nation to receive the honor of being named Small School AP District of the Year.

From 2008 to 2011, Copiague School District has increased the number of students participating in AP by 32 percent, with 212 AP tests scheduled to be taken this May. The percentage of students earning AP Exam scores of 3 or higher, the score typically needed to earn college credit, rose by 35 percent from 2008 to 2011.

On March 8, members of the Board of Education, students, teachers, and district and school administrators were joined by local and state officials, and College Board staff to celebrate these achievements during an awards ceremony.

"As we continue our efforts to expand access to AP while



maintaining or improving performance, districts like Copiague offer a model of success that can be replicated all across the country," said College Board President Gaston Caperton in a press release. "The College Board is proud to recognize the students, faculty and administrators of Copiague for their innovation, commitment and belief in themselves. Congratulations on a job well done."

Added Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig, "Things like this do not occur by accident. In fact, this has occurred as the result of a vision and a lot of people working very hard toward that vision. This vision began a few years ago with a simple idea to help raise student achievement through advancing and growing a college-going culture in Copiague...growing the hope, the possibility and the reality of going to college for students from diverse backgrounds, from families where no one had attended college before, where conversations about going to college perhaps had never occurred."

Mr. Leunig continued by thanking the Board of Education for both their philosophical and budgetary support of the vision, the administration team of Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kathleen Bannon, Director of Guidance Dr. Mary

Klein, High School Principal Jeanette Altruda, and retired High School Principal Albert Voorneveld for making the vision a reality, and the Advanced Placement teachers and students for going above and beyond every day.

Also speaking at the awards ceremony were Principal Altruda, AP teacher Michelle Penyy, AP Scholar with Honors William Marmol, and Trevor Packer, Senior Vice President, Advanced Placement and College Readiness for the College Board.

During his speech, Mr. Packer received thunderous applause from the AP students and Copiague Middle School National Junior Honor Society members in the audience when he referred to them as "honorificabilitudinitatibus," which means the state of being able to achieve honors.

"Your scores have gone up faster than other districts in the country for a district your size," said Mr. Packer, explaining why Copiague students had the dubious honor of being referred to with the longest word in the English language featuring alternating consonants and vowels.

Following the ceremony, a video and photography crew interviewed AP students and staff for a video that will be shown at the College Board's annual convention, taking place in Florida this July.

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Copiague, N.Y. 11726

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# A Message from the Superintendent

Welcome to the Spring 2012 edition of Capiague Connections! As you thumb through our latest district newsletter, you will find that our students, staff and Board of Education members have been hard at work. As this issue hits your mailbox, we are also coming to the close of the third marking period and are entering the home stretch of the school year.

The cover feature of this newsletter is one that should make our entire community proud, as we are only one of three school districts in the entire nation to win this prestigious National Advanced Placement Award.

Also in this issue are highlights from our annual Legislative Breakfast and Community Summit, where approximately 200 residents, staff and community leaders attended to advocate for our school district with our local and state legislators. We have a number of other features focusing on both students and staff members who have received honors and recognition for their various efforts and achievements. And finally, we provide some information about fun and enlightening programs that have been taking place throughout our schools. The common thread of these features are our highly motivated students who excel at the numerous activities our district has to offer thanks to the generosity and support of our community.

As I close this message to you, please know that in addition to ensuring that these wonderful programs are available for our students, your Board of Education and Administration have been working on building next year's school budget for several months and will be bringing the budget-building process to completion as you read this. I am happy to report that the Board will once again be bringing a sound comprehensive budget to the community that continues the fiscal discipline that has been necessary to weather the economic storm that has occurred over the past few years. I am also pleased to share that this "right-sized" budget, which will be adopted on April 16, continues to preserve all present academic programs and extra curricular activities for students and is the first budget in three years that doesn't include a reduction in staff.

I hope you enjoy these spring months as we approach the end of the school year. We have much to be proud of in the Capiague Schools!

Sincerely,



Charles A. Leunig  
Superintendent of Schools



Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig, High School Principal Jeanette Altruda, and members of the Class of 2012 Top Ten are congratulated for their AP District of the Year Award by New York State Senators Fuschillo and Johnson, as well as Assemblyman Sweeney.

## Legislative Breakfast & Community Summit

On Saturday, March 17, more than 200 members of the Capiague community gathered together for the annual Legislative Breakfast and Community Summit. The Board of Education and administration welcomed members of the Walter G. O'Connell Capiague High School Top Ten and their families, the PTAs, and local organizations, as well as New York State Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr.; New York State Senator Owen H. Johnson; New York State Assemblyman Robert K. Sweeney; Suffolk County Legislator DuWayne Gregory; Town of Babylon Supervisor Richard Schaffer; and Town of Babylon Councilman Tony Martinez.

"Each and every group that is represented here today has been very supportive of the Capiague school system, and for that, I thank you," remarked Board of Education President Michael Greb. "But now, we are looking for a little more. We need you to bring the information we are going to give you today back to all of the members of your organization to help us be advocates for the children of Capiague. We need them to contact Albany and let them know what we are doing here and that we want to continue to move in a forward direction and not regress backwards!"

Added Superintendent of Schools

Charles A. Leunig, "Over the last few years we have cut costs where we could, found efficiencies, and discovered how creative we can be to continue programs for our kids. However, despite all of the challenges, our children have continued to achieve. How did this happen? With a very talented and dedicated staff of professionals and a community pulling together to help keep it going."

During the program, Barbara Cronin, Executive Director for College Readiness Marketing from the College Board, presented Mr. Greb, Mr. Leunig, and High School Principal Jeanette Altruda with the National Advanced Placement District of the Year Award. Pastor Roy S. Kirton from Circle of Love Ministries, a 2000 inductee into the Hall of Fame, as well as each politician in attendance, also presented the district with plaques and proclamations.

Additionally, under the direction of Gina Occhiogrosso, the audience was treated to a rousing performance by the Walter G. O'Connell Capiague High School Madrigal Choir, as well as a video presentation highlighting student achievements put together by Director of Technology Todd Harris. The Class of 2012 Top Ten was also introduced by Principal Altruda, who shared information about each student's achievements and future plans.

## BOARD MEMBERS HONORED

Congratulations to Capiague School District Board of Education Vice President Doris Fischer and trustee Laura Gavey for their participation in New York State School Boards Association leadership and development training totaling 75 points. Superintendent of Schools Charles A. Leunig presented Mrs. Fischer and Mrs. Gavey with certificates from NYSSBA at the February 13th Board meeting.





# LEGO LEAGUE WINNERS

Congratulations to the Copiague Middle School Robotics team. Coordinated by Stephen Phillips, the students placed third out of 44 teams in the Long Island FIRST Robotics Championship held March 4 at Longwood High School. The team also took home the Judges Award, which is in addition to their first-place award for "Mechanical Design of a Robot," at the Regional Qualifier tournament, which took place in Massapequa's Berner Middle School this past January.

For the competition, teams must build and program an autonomous robot using LEGO MINDSTORMS technology to score points in 2.5-minute matches on a themed playing field. Additionally, teams must explore an actual problem that today's scientists and engineers are trying to solve, develop an innovative solution to that problem, and share their findings. The Copiague team focused their project on arsenic and how to remove it from food.

To prepare for the Long Island Championship, the group of students invited Suffolk County Legislator DuWayne Gregory to a meeting to discuss their findings and to ask for advice on how to best present their research.

Congratulations to the Copiague team members: Luke Bordonaro, Michael Buckley, Nick Favichia, Robert Favichia, William Feldman, Collin Fuchs, David Grinthal, Vicky Grinthal, Anthony Molina, and Greg Morgan, their coach Stephen Phillips, manager Vincent Paterno, and mentor Christine Grinthal.



## BRIGHT LIGHT

Copiague Middle School eighth-grade science teacher Allison Barone was honored by the Association of School Supervisors of Educational Technology (ASSET) for her exemplary use of educational technologies in the classroom. Recommended for the award by Copiague Middle School Principal Andrew Lagnado and Coordinator of Science Dr. Daniel Leccese, Ms. Barone was recognized at the ASSET Bright Light Luncheon held at the Timber Point Country Club on January 18.



"Technology is utilized in my classroom to engage my students and to assess their prior knowledge and comprehension of content material," said Ms. Barone.

SMART Boards, SMART Response software, and laptop carts are just a few of the technologies used in Ms. Barone's science classroom. She also maintains an eBoard for each of her classes which contains information about upcoming assignments, as well as links to great websites that students can use to further explore a topic or prepare for upcoming exams.

"I am very grateful to work in a school district where administrators and the Board of Education provide teachers with opportunities to grow as educators, and with the technological resources necessary to prepare students with skills for the 21st century," remarked Ms. Barone.



## DECA TAKES GOLD

The Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA), under the guidance of advisor Louise Curci, represented the District in the State Career Conference held earlier this winter. The Copiague chapter of DECA won eight top ten gold medals and two second-place trophies.

Congratulations to:

- Zachary Wilson:** Gold Medal - Marketing Human Resources
- Katarina Junge:** Gold Medal & Second-Place State Trophy - Broadcast Advertising
- Tatyana Bellamy-Walker:** Gold Medal - Public Speaking Prepared
- Isabel Colon:** Gold Medal - Wholesale Selling
- Abigail Keiper:** Gold Medal & Second-Place Trophy - Visual Advertising
- Sasha McKenzie:** Gold Medal - Public Speaking
- Nubia Villatoro:** Gold Medal - Public Service Visual Advertising
- Sarah Jordan:** Gold Medal - Wholesale Selling

## Administrator of the Year

Benjamin Bonaventura, Assistant Principal at Copiague Middle School, was named Administrator of the Year by the Western Suffolk Counselors' Association. Every year, the association presents the award to an administrator who has provided outstanding support to the counseling profession.

"Mr. Bonaventura was recognized for his years of service, the wonderful way in which he works with students and colleagues, and especially for his dedication, support and willingness to do whatever it takes to help anyone in need," said Middle School Principal Andrew Lagnado.

Nominated by middle school counselors Melissa Solomon and Francesca Spinelli, along with letters of support from Assistant Principal Claudia Prisinzano and social studies teacher Marie DeBlasio, Mr. Bonaventura was recognized at a reception held at the River View Restaurant in Oakdale.

"Ben is a consummate professional, supportive administrator, lifelong teacher, expert coach, and kid-centered human being," wrote Ms. Solomon in the nomination letter. Added Ms. Spinelli, "Ben is a counselor's administrator. He is able to keep order while making both students and faculty feel valued; he builds relationships."

In response to his award, Mr. Bonaventura remarked, "The greatest honor is to be honored by your peers."





# It's All Elementary

## Nights of Literacy

Recognizing the importance of not only teaching literacy in the classroom but also expanding it to the homes, the three elementary schools in Copiague – Deauville Gardens, Great Neck Road, and Susan E. Wiley – hosted evening activities geared toward increasing parent involvement and student excitement for reading.

At Great Neck Road, the Shared Decision Making team partnered with the PTA to host Family Literacy Night as a kickoff to their Parents as Reading Partners Program. With the theme “Find the Treasure in a Good Book,” more than 140 students and their families gathered at the school to enjoy dinner, arts and crafts, and a magic show. Additionally, the school hosted a book distribution in which students and their parents were allowed to choose an age-appropriate book to bring home and add to their personal libraries.

Deauville Gardens Elementary School held its annual Pajama Read Night for first-grade students. During this event, the students were set up in small groups in which they listened to teachers read them stories and received a light snack. They were also given a book to keep so that they could continue their reading practice with their parents. While the first graders were with their teachers, their parents were learning how to help their children with literacy through a presentation given in both English and Spanish.

The Literacy Committee at Susan E. Wiley organized an “Iditaread,” a takeoff of the popular Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race in Alaska. During the event, students and their parents watched a video, created especially for Susan E. Wiley families from musher (driver of a dogsled) rookie Jaimee Kinzer, which took the students along on a practice run. They were also provided information about the race. After watching the video, the families gathered in small groups to complete their own race – the “Iditaread.” Following a trail, the students had to read a passage about the Iditarod and correctly answer questions before heading off to their next checkpoint. After the students correctly answered the last question, they crossed the finish line in the gymnasium, where they picked up free books and bookmarks.



## FITNESS FUN

Physical education is an integral part of a well-rounded educational curriculum that aids in the overall development of a child. The Copiague School District provides its students with a program that helps to develop skills such as balance, coordination, and good sportsmanship as well as enhance physical, mental, and emotional health.

This March, students at Deauville Gardens, Great Neck Road, and Susan E. Wiley Elementary Schools had an opportunity to showcase what they had learned in gym class to their families and friends during the district's annual Spotlight on Fitness Night, an event highlighting different elements of physical education.

During the nights, each building welcomed students and their families to participate in various activities designed by the physical education staff. Deauville Gardens

families showcased such heart-healthy activities as jump roping, basketball, and dancing. At Great Neck Road, Big Al's Family Fitness and South Bay Physical Therapy engaged families in Zumba, KOGA, and other aerobic activities. While stations, including an obstacle course, were set up for families to enjoy at Susan E. Wiley.

Members of the Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School Varsity Club volunteered their time to help run the fitness nights.





# SECONDARY SPOTLIGHT



## Building Character

Students from the Copiague Middle School Builders Club have been working together to give back to their community. In February, the students visited the Tanner Park Senior Center, where they dedicated time from their school day to visit with the senior citizens, create handmade cards, and learn various line dances.

"The Builders Club is based on community service," stated club advisor Maria Ostrofsky. "I wanted to engage the students in an activity that would allow them to interact with community residents as well as build their character."

In March, the club received a special visit from Mr. Jim Byrne, a volunteer for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Suffolk County, who thanked them and presented them with a certificate for their donation to Make-A-Wish. The students and Ms. Ostrofsky were pleased to hand Mr. Byrne a check for more than \$740, which was collected during their ornament fundraiser. During his visit, Mr. Byrne showed the students a video of children who had their wishes granted because of groups like the Builders Club, as well as shared stories and answered students' questions.



## Lessons in Service

Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School junior and senior government students received a lesson in community service when Suffolk County Legislator DuWayne Gregory, Babylon Town Councilman Antonio Martinez and Lieutenant Colonel/Babylon Town Councilwoman Jacqueline Gordon visited the students this past December.

To begin the day, Legislator Gregory and Lieutenant Colonel Gordon had breakfast with a number of student leaders. "During breakfast, the students found common ground with our local elected officials, and many made a personal connection," remarked teacher Alline Torrey. Following the breakfast, the students entered the auditorium for a three-part lecture series, followed by a question-and-answer session.

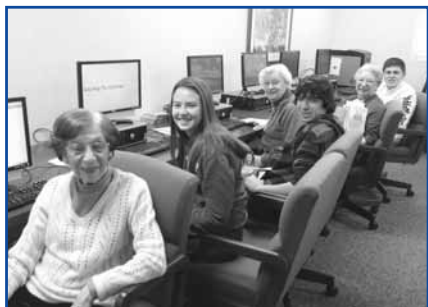
Legislator Gregory discussed his lifetime dedication to public service and explained the responsibilities of a Suffolk County legislator, while emphasizing the value of education and discussing how his college degree in justice and public policy helped open many doors for him.

Councilman Martinez engaged the students in the Socratic method of lecturing by asking them questions about their knowledge and interests. He explained the struggles that he has faced as an El Salvadorian immigrant and related them to the experiences of many of the students in attendance. "The students were quite receptive to his energetic demeanor," said Ms. Torrey.

Lieutenant Colonel Gordon concluded the lecture series in her capacity as Babylon Town Councilwoman. The councilwoman, who was deployed to Afghanistan a few weeks following the presentation, dressed in her full uniform and explained the many roles she has lived in life. She discussed her role as a learner, a teacher, a guidance counselor, a soldier and, most importantly, a mother. She spoke of the sacrifices she has made for herself, her family and her country throughout her life, and emphasized the importance of doing things for the right reason.

"This event, and those like it, serve to provide our students with good role models and shows them how to give back to the community," noted Ms. Torrey.

## A Lesson in Lifelong Learning



College and Career students at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School are participating in a pilot program where they volunteer at the Dominican Village, a not-for-profit independent, assisted living and respite care retirement community, to teach the residents valuable computer skills. During their Sunday visits, the business students work with the residents to instruct them on how to set up email accounts, send online greeting cards, and utilize programs such as Microsoft Word and Publisher.

"The kids are doing a great thing by going there on their own time over the weekend," said business teacher Louise Curci, who organized the program. "The residents are thrilled to learn these new skills, and the students enjoy taking on the role of teacher and sharing their technology skills."

While at the Village, the high schoolers also participate in "Fun Day Sunday," where they play games and participate in dance sessions with the residents.

## 3.14 = Pi Day

On Wednesday, March 14 (3/14), students and staff at Copiague Middle School put their brainpower to good use as they participated in various activities related to Pi (3.14). Organized by middle school math teacher Melody Cesare, students competed against one another to see who could recite Pi from memory to the longest digit. Placing first with 101 numbers memorized was Cristian Dilone. Cristian's closest competitor was Sofie Wilson, who recited 72 digits. Yanarys Lopez (47 digits), John Riggio (43 digits) and Tamia Blackmon (42 digits) rounded out the top five.

A schoolwide competition revolving around Pi also took place on 3/14, as 23 teachers wore shirts bearing the slogan "CoPIague Middle School Teachers Celebrate Pi," with a corresponding digit to Pi on the back. Students were tasked with putting the teachers in the correct order of Pi. With 343 entries, the winners were Brianna Uribe, Ivan Gonzales and Jael Torres.

"What do I hope the students got out of Pi Day? Fun," said Mrs. Cesare. "Any way you can make a math class exciting is always a good thing! The students learned and had fun. What more can any teacher ask for?"





# WEST SIDE STORY

Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School students Matthew Edlind and Dilara Altuner dazzled audiences as the iconic Tony and Maria in the high school's March production of *West Side Story*.

The award-winning musical is an adaption of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. The feuding families of the tragic love story are translated into two rival gangs from New York City - the Sharks, led by Bernardo (played by Angel Aracena), and the Jets, led by Riff (played by Trevor Coady). Their racial hatred escalates to a point where neither group can peacefully coexist in the same territory.

*West Side Story* tells the complicated love story of Tony and Maria and their allegiance to family and friends.

The musical features such fan favorite songs as "Tonight," "I Feel Pretty," and the wonderful "America," as sung by the characters of Lindsay Griffiths'

Anita, Stephanie Fischer's Rosalia, and the Sharks. While the actors were enchanting audience members with their performances, a multitude of students were hard at work making sure everyone looked and sounded perfect and that the show ran smoothly.

Gina Occhiogrosso directed the musical and received support from assistant director Michelle Budion, vocal director Marc Levenson, choreographer Sylvia Walsh, costume designer Meredith Wanzer, set designer Lauren Lefkowitz, and pit orchestra conductor David Abrams.



## KNIGHTS HONOR STUDENTS

This year, the Copiague School District teamed up with the Knights of Columbus to sponsor the Substance Abuse Art Poster Contest. Congratulations to Deauville Gardens fifth graders Natalia Kacala and Hailey Zito and Great Neck Road fifth graders Zuzanna Borczyk and Joshua Molina. These students received \$50 savings bonds and certificates from the Knights of Columbus and were honored at the February Board of Education meeting.



## POPS Concert

The annual Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School POPS Concert treated audience members to a vast selection of musical performances. The concert began with band director John Wevers leading the concert band in a medley entitled "Chillers and Thrillers: Themes of Suspense," which featured such iconic themes as *Jaws*' and *Darth Vader's* anthem, "The Imperial March."

Following the concert band, choral director Gina Occhiogrosso and her choir took to the stage to provide backup harmony to the soloists, who entertained the audience with their smooth vocals, fun costumes, and choreographed dance moves. Songs performed by the vocalists included Beyoncé's "Run the World," Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody," The Marvelettes "Please Mr. Postman," and Michael Bubl e's "Just Haven't Met You Yet."

After a brief intermission, and before the chorus returned to the stage, Mr. Wevers and the jazz band took the spotlight and played three songs, including "Two for Oliver: A Tribute to Oliver Nelson."





## Eagle Pride

Throughout the years, praise and championships have been bestowed upon Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School for its fine athletic teams and their hard play on the field. Recently, the student-athletes were recognized for their work in the classroom, as well as their contributions on the field. This winter, four of the varsity sports teams were awarded the New York State Scholar-Athlete Team Award for academic excellence by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association.

In order to earn the distinction of being named a NYS Scholar-Athlete Team, teams must have a composite average of 90 or above. Congratulations to the girls varsity basketball, varsity wrestling, and the boys and girls winter track teams.

Additionally, the District is pleased to announce that the varsity and junior varsity wrestling teams have been commended by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) for having best exemplified the spirit of sportsmanship during the winter 2011-2012 sports season. The boys varsity basketball team received the Suffolk County Basketball Officials' Association Sportsmanship Award for the second year in a row.

## Registration Now Open for Youth Tennis Program

Registration forms are now available for the Long Island Foundation for Education & Sports spring/summer tennis program for elementary and middle school-aged Copiague students.

Classes will be held on the Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School tennis courts, with the spring session beginning on May 12. For more information, please contact the athletic department at 842-4010. Each session costs \$40.



## Two Hundred Wins

Congratulations to Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School Girls Varsity Basketball Coach Carole Olsen for reaching 200 all-time wins. On December 13, in a game against Walt Whitman High School, the Lady Eagles defeated the Wildcats 59-29 to give Coach Olsen her 200th career win.

During her tenure as coach, Ms. Olsen has been League Coach of the Year (2000, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006), Suffolk County Coach of the Year (2002, 2003, 2009), All-Long Island Newsday Coach of the Year (2003 & 2009), NYS Public High School Coach of the Year (2003 & 2009) and Basketball Coaches Association of New York Coach of the Year (2003 & 2009). She has also led her team to becoming New York State Champions twice (2003 & 2009).

## WINTER ALL-STARS

Sport	Name	Grade	Award
Boys Bowling	Ramon Carcamo	12	All-League 3rd Place Singles Tournament 700 Series Award Sportsmanship Award
Boys Winter Track	Todd Barbarino	11	All-League High Jump
Boys Winter Track	Michael Benson	12	All-League 55 High Hurdles (League Champion) All-County 55 High Hurdles (County Champion) All-State 55 High Hurdles
Boys Winter Track	Manny Bonilla	12	All-League Shot Put
Boys Winter Track	Justin Brown	12	All-League Long Jump All-League Triple Jump
Boys Winter Track	Desmond Guidroz	12	All-League Long Jump (League Champion) All-League Triple Jump All-County Long Jump
Boys Winter Track	Kyon Johnson	10	All-League 300
Boys Winter Track	Sean Lee	12	All-League Shot Put
Boys Winter Track	Wesley Merriwether	12	All-League 1000
Boys Winter Track	Juan Taveras	11	All-League 3200
Girls Bowling	Norma Carcamo	10	All-League
Boys Basketball	Gregory Lane	12	All-League Academic
Boys Basketball	Vaughn Sessions	12	All-League
Girls Basketball	Ihnacine Grady	9	All-League
Girls Basketball	Domyae Ivory-Byrd	12	All-County Academic
Girls Basketball	Cypher McCloud	12	All-League, All-Conference, All-County
Girls Basketball	Tracey McFadden	11	All League
Girls Basketball	Mikaiya Moore	8	All-League, All-Conference
Wrestling	Justin Boone	12	All-League
Wrestling	David Bunn	11	All-League
Wrestling	John Dzikowski	12	All-League
Wrestling	Isai Gonzalez	11	All-League
Wrestling	Michael Illicete	10	All-League
Wrestling	Tamar Lowndes	11	All-League
Wrestling	Brandon Marmol	9	All-League
Wrestling	Christopher Smith	12	All-League
Wrestling	Jeffrey Urbina	11	All-League
Girls Winter Track	Janel Francis	12	All-League, All-County, All-County Academic, All-State, 2nd in NYS, Long Jump 6th in NYS, 55 meter 16th at Nationals, Long Jump
Girls Winter Track	Ashley Arquer	11	All-League
Girls Winter Track	Zyare Brown	10	All-League
Girls Winter Track	Ashley Jackson	11	All-League

## Winter Sports Honored

Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School held its annual Varsity Winter Sports Awards Dinner honoring the best and brightest of the Winter 2011-2012 season. Sponsored by the Booster Club, members of the varsity girls and boys bowling, wrestling, boys and girls winter track, cheerleading, step team, and boys and girls basketball teams were honored by administrators and coaches.

During the ceremony, the Golden Eagle Award was also presented to the student-athlete on each team with the highest average for the quarter. The Winter Sports Golden Eagle Award winners were: Gregory Lane (boys basketball), Caitlin Zowak (girls basketball), Avery Hodges (boys bowling), Julianna Muscietta (girls bowling), Zyare Brown (cheerleading), Gabrielle Davis (step team), Zack Wilson (boys winter track), Nicolette Vasseur (girls winter track), and Robert Gioia (wrestling).





## Dates to REMEMBER

**May 15**

School Budget and  
Board of Education Trustee Vote  
10:00 am - 10:00 pm  
Great Neck Road  
Elementary School



## Woman in Sports

To commemorate National Girls and Women in Sports Day, the Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School Booster Club presented a plaque to Karen Steigert, longtime Copiague resident and district employee, for her many years of dedicated service and contributions to the young women of the Copiague community.

Mrs. Steigert is an active member of the Copiague PTA, having held various offices at Deauville Gardens Elementary School, Copiague Middle School, and Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School. Currently, she is the associate director for the Suffolk Region PTA. In addition, she has been a Girl Scout leader for 15 years and a member of the Booster Club.

National Girls and Women in Sports Day is celebrated in all 50 states as a way of honoring the achievements and encouraging participation of girls and women in sports.

## Alumni Put on a Show

Copiague Middle School choir students received a lesson in success, as two Copiague School District alumni returned for a visit. Dr. Raina Murnak, a 2011 Hall of Achievement Inductee and member of the Class of 1997, and Derrick Davis, a 1996 Copiague graduate, spoke to the middle school chorus students about their professional lives as musicians.

Dr. Murnak is now a professor of music composition at the University of Miami and Mr. Davis has played Mufasa for the Broadway musical, Disney's *The Lion King*, and is currently playing the same character in the Las Vegas production. During their visit, both musicians wowed their audience with an impromptu duet of an Andrea Bocelli song and spent time answering student questions.



## Building (Bird) Houses

Second graders in the Copiague School District continued a handy tradition as they teamed up with Home Depot associate Jim Gilchrist to build birdhouses. Working with parent volunteers and dressed in brightly colored orange Home Depot aprons, the students sanded, glued, and hammered nails to create their perfect birdhouses.

Through this partnership with Home Depot, Mr. Gilchrist visits all of the district's second-grade classrooms and teaches the students how to build birdhouses. Home Depot provides the tools and materials that the students use to assemble and complete their birdhouses. The program gives students the opportunity to practice following instructions and working cooperatively in small groups, while further developing their hand-eye coordination.



## HOPE FOR WARRIORS

In memory of 2005 Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School graduate Sean Lapersonerie, members of the Key Club raised and donated \$500 to the Hope For The Warriors foundation. According to its website, the mission of Hope For The Warriors is to enhance quality of life for U.S. service members and their families nationwide who have been adversely affected by injuries or death in the line of duty.

To thank the students for their contribution to the foundation, Sergeant Debevoise, a wounded Iraqi War veteran, visited the Key Club and its advisors JoAnn Erwin and Jennifer Phillips. According to Mrs. Erwin, the students were inspired by Sergeant Debevoise's personal story of overcoming four gunshot wounds and subsequent paralysis with the help of donations to the Hope For The Warriors organization.



## Hall of Achievement Forms Now Available

The Copiague Hall of Achievement was created in an effort to recognize graduates of Copiague High School who have succeeded in their careers and lives. Inductees may also include those who have distinguished themselves by virtue of their contributions to community and society. The goal of the District's Hall of Achievement is to introduce positive role models to the school community. By their very nature, inductees to the Hall inspire students to adopt high aspirations. District residents should have already received a Hall of Achievement nomination form. If you know someone who meets the criteria, fill out and return the nomination form no later than May 31, 2012.

### BOARD OF EDUCATION

Michael Greb, *President*

Doris Fischer, *Vice President*    Rosemary Natoli, *2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President*  
Laura Gavey    Henry Johnson    Everett E. Newman III    Brian J. Sales

Mr. Charles A. Leunig, *Superintendent of Schools*