**CATANIA EXAMINES YEAR IN RETROSPECT**

By MARY McGOLDRICK

Now it is appropriate to call on the principal, Salvatore Catania, to share feelings about his first year at Darien High.

"I feel much more comfortable, much closer to many more kids," stated Mr. Catania. "The attitude is good." Mr. Catania, who has been a teacher for 31 years, has been widely receptive to him. Just the mere instance of meeting and talking with students, whether in the hall or at a ball game, pleases Mr. Catania. He appreciates the receptiveness of students as well as the faculty and is very satisfied by it. "I feel very good about being here."

Mr. Catania is exceptionally satisfied with the School Council and the amount of quality work they have accomplished this year. "I think the members did much more than they probably expected. At the beginning of the school year I think they probably felt quite discouraged," he explained.

"There were many beautiful surprises produced from the School Council," Mr. Catania commented.

He was also very happy with the faculty members as well as the students who were part of the various options committees. Mr. Catania emphasized how pleased he was with the "unbelievable receptiveness" and the "remarkable cooperativeness" of the teachers on the committees.

One of the fine accomplishments of these committees, says Mr. Catania, is the Alternate School proposal, which is now in its final stages of ratification.

The new credit or no-credit system in which each student is able to take one course each semester on a credit (pass) or no-credit (fail) basis will be incorporated into next year's schedule. A course taken under the plan will not affect a student's GPA. A work-study program devised by the options committee will hopefully be functioning next year also.

A problem that Mr. Catania noted for DHS this year was the continued on page 3

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**MUSIC CAREER ENDS ON HAPPY NOTE**

By GARRY LEONARD

"Student discipline has not diminished over the years. The students are more independent, certainly, but what independence they have, they've earned," commented Luther F. Thompson, who has served as the head of the Music Department in Darien for 31 years.

Mr. Thompson recently announced he would retire at the end of this year and N erad retold his feelings on the Music Department and school system in general.

"When I first began to teach, the high school was housed in the original building which is now a part of Mather, and the graduating class consisted of about sixty students. The music staff consisted of myself and one other music teacher. We taught not only the high school but elementary and junior high as well. Now we have twelve music teachers in the school system."

Mr. Thompson said he saw major changes in the youth of Darien over the thirty years he has been working with them. "I've always been able to take them on field trips into New York and we have never had to direct them with ultimatums; you can discuss things with them. They're terrific kids and have genuine common sense."

Mr. Thompson will not be severing all ties with music education when he retires. He has accepted a position as executive secretary of the Connecticut Music Educators Association, which is responsible for running the All-State Band, Orchestra and Choral Festivals and clinics.

Mr. Thompson's main hobby is woodworking, and he has been able to devote more time to it after his retirement. In addition, to cabinet making, Mr. Thompson has built a grandfather's clock, a harpichord, sound to music system, and a laboratory for the high school. He has also constructed many of the props in summer theater.

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**HEAVENLY STAIRWAY DEEMED DREAMY BUT STEAMY**

By MARTHA CONSTABLE

Commentary

The Junior-Senior Prom "Stairway to Heaven," held at the Long Shore Country Club in Westport on May 17, might have beenbetter entitled "Stairway to Hades," in accordance with its sweltering setting. Two hundred eighty-two blissful couples dipped and dripped to the music of Uncle Woe and Copper Lake, which provided a good selection of pieces from be-bop to AM rock, although the ratio of fast dances to slow ones may have been too high to be compatible with the temperature. During the meal and the time between courses, many people attempted to move out through the side exits and were forced to remain in the heat, but were often thwarted by policemen, a definite annoyance.

The option of wearing a matched suit and tie was had by all. Refreshments consisted of cookies and soft drinks, and though mundane, the beverages were at least cold and therefore ambrosia to a crowd which was shocked about the vastly changed role of the man's play.

"Student discipline has not diminished over the years. The thing he will miss most about his time here is the varied and often hilarious relationships between men and women, and the way they see each other, will be expressed in a series of one-acts, featuring an adaptation of James Thurber's short story, "The Cather in the Rye," Georgia S. Kaufman's play If Men Played Cards as Women Do, excerpts from You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown, and pieces written from student improvisations.

Some of the improvisations focus on life and love in the high school, but also include sketches on life among commuters, and a Rip Van Winkle-type story about a man who fell asleep in 1929, awakens in 1975, and is rather shocked about the vastly changed role of the woman in society.

The theme of the evening, the varied and often hilarious relationships between men and women, and the way they see each other, will be expressed in a series of one-acts, featuring an adaptation of James Thurber's short story, "The Cather in the Rye," Georgia S. Kaufman's play If Men Played Cards as Women Do, excerpts from You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown, and pieces written from student improvisations.

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Neirad

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By HANK STANTON
Students buying prom tickets this year found a set of "prom guidelines" included in their ticket envelopes. The guidelines, and the fact that they were handed out with the tickets, were an in­voluntary attendance of them to the prom.

The prom is supposed to be a time for students to relax and enjoy themselves. By handing out a set of written rules to abide by, it is possible to frustrate the spirit of the prom. We urge the seniors to take the initiative in finalizing the plans for a potentially very successful day.

By GARRY LEONARD
There is a social event in June involving the seniors at DHS known as the graduation ceremony.

The answer, rather simply, is the date selected. There is always a photographer who shoots a picture just as the hands meet. If that person who immediately announces it to the waiting crowd. Why the student does not say it himself has escaped me. You might say (mainly because it wouldn't do any good). Suffice to say that the ceremony that it should be abolished. The main objective is to hand a diploma to each senior—a process that could probably be accomplished in an ex­panded homeroom. Why then do we set aside a whole evening, require each student to spend money renting a glorified sheet and cardboard hat, and then invite the public to witness the spectacle?

The graduation ceremony is decem­perative. To arrive in a classroom at designated times? Why weren't we being insulted this year?

The prom guidelines were un­fortunate and inappropriate. Perhaps they were a mistake or an oversight on the part of the administrative advisors. Let's hope the same mistake does not occur next year.

A Legalized 'Skip' Day?

Senior "skip" day, a tradition at DHS, is approaching. In the past, some students have been late to school on a certain day, hoping that their numbers would discourage any disciplinary action. The administration might take.

This year, seniors have the opportunity to legalize their "skip" day, in fact making it a "day off" only for students who are approved by the seniors themselves to organize and finalize the plans.

Some students are excited about the advantages of a legal day versus the illegal "skip" day. One shortcoming of the plan is that seniors would have to all agree and go at the same time, which may not be feasible. It is possible, however, to stagger the bus departures to make them more convenient for everyone.

We feel that despite some restrictions placed on students, the advantages of a legal day outweigh the drawbacks. Class unity would be promoted by everyone traveling together and the transportation would be "free," the money coming out of the senior class treasury. In addition, seniors could be guaranteed space on the beaches if reservations are made far enough in advance. Also, students would not have to concern themselves with avoiding parents or teachers as they would if they were illegally absent from school.

Perhaps legalizing this formerly secretive activity eliminates much of the thrill associated with a "skip" day. However, we believe that by operating through the administration, seniors could claim that they are "legalizing" their "skip" day, in fact making it a "day off" only for students who are approved by the seniors themselves to organize and finalize the plans.

We urge the seniors to take the initiative in finalizing the plans for a potentially very successful day.

Graduation — Who Needs It?

The events of the ceremony are deceptively social. How and why was it that the prom-goers were treated virtually as children, the obvious being spelled out for them. For example, rule number six: "Courtesy to chaperones, members of the bands, parents, and Long Shore personnel, will, of course, be expected." This statement is absurd. Why do the people who wrote these guidelines think we are anyway, a bunch of daydreamers who are going to spit at the first chaperone we see?

Telling the students not to wear sneakers or jeans is, as is the rule in cases two and four, is again ludicrous. We are not ignorant or unable to determine the proper attire and etiquette for the oc­casions. We do not need to be told what to wear.

"Students are encouraged to be at the prom by 9:30 p.m. and remain until 1:30 a.m. What other high school dances have there been where students were "allowed" to leave at designated times? Why didn't the prom committee set up a time clock at Long Shore and we could have punched in and out.

But of course there was the redeem­ing change this year. Students were "allowed" to wear a matched suit. There are few students in the high school who own a matched suit and even fewer who wish to wear one. This is the leniency that has been granted us out of the goodness of the rule-makers' hearts.

In the past, rules for the prom have not been written out and included in the invitation. Why then was this the case this year? The prom has been a success before without a set of guidelines to help us stay on the path of righteousness. Why were we being insulted this year?

The prom guidelines were un­fortunate and inappropriate. Perhaps they were a mistake or an oversight on the part of the administrative advisors. Let's hope the same mistake does not occur next year.

Election Changes Emphasize Spirit

In order to try to promote more school spirit the election procedure for both class and school councils and activities councils have been changed. Elections will be held June 9 and will involve class campaigning, and a speech assembly.

From May 27-29, literature such as school connection applications for the office, descriptions for the various officers, was passed out in the halls. Any student who wished could apply for an office, and if a student does not wish to run for office, they will be homework primaries on Monday, June 2.

The actual campaigning, including posters in C-wing only for seniors and B-wing only for juniors, and from the stairs leading to the office down to the intersection for the School and Ac­tivities councils, will take place after the possible primaries from June 3 through June 6.
Junior High Alumni Hit Dead End on Memory Lane

By TWO RETIRING REPORTERS

With graduation less than a month away, the Senior Commons has turned into a madhouse of pranks and sarcastic sentimentality. While standing in line to be measured for our cap and gowns, a group of us recounted our fond years in the Darien school system. “It seems like only yesterday I was in junior high,” wept one girl. “Yes,” sniffed a classmate, “Don’t you wish we could live those days over?”

To the younger members of the Neirad staff, the idea of returning to junior high seemed “gross.” But for two senior reporters, who would soon be leaving Darien for the uncertainties of college, the opportunity to return to the safe and predictable world of junior high school was too good to pass up.

“What better way is there to end our high school journalism careers,” we thought, “than to write a nostalgic piece about the happy times we had in junior high and revisit the teachers who worked so hard to prepare us for DHS?” So, we took a little coaxing, but after a while we convinced the vice principal of our junior high into letting us come to spend one day at our alma mater.

“We won’t be teachers be catastrophic when they see us again,” we thought, as we were driving to the junior high. Our hearts fluttered as we entered the building and saw one of our former math teachers. “What the hell are you doing here?” shrieked the teacher gaily.

“We’re doing a story for the high school newspaper,” we shouted, bowing our heads to dodge the math book that must have slipped out of his fingers.

Our math class had disappeared by the time we regained our balance, so we decided to head towards the main part of the building, where we hoped to find some of our former teachers. Walking down the narrow halls, we noticed how small everything looked in comparison to DHS. The little desks with their pristine inhabitants made us feel like Gulliver in the land of the Lilliputians. To say we felt awkward would be an understatement.

Every time we approached a teacher in the hall whom we recognized, a look of shock would lighten his face. Most teachers did not appreciate the concept of our Neirad story, and the few who welcomed us to sit in one of their classes proved to be as clumsy as the math teacher we encountered in the hall. As an example, while a science teacher (whom we both had in eighth grade) was jabbing into the sharp end of a pencil, a bunsen burner accidently dropped on us.

“Goodness,” he commented apologetically, “maybe you better go to the nurse... up at the high school.”

Extremely frustrated and upset with the reception we were receiving from the junior high faculty, we dashed out of the building and sprinted to the car.

“Why were the teachers so creepy?” we wondered as we retreated to the safe and peaceful DHS community. “You’d think they’d be happy to see us. Did they think we were going to disrupt their classes? Did they resent the fact that we had grown taller than they? Did they think we were spies for the Board of Education and were assigned to evaluate their performance? Can we expect this same hospitality from high school teachers if we visit them in three years?”

Neither regrets that we cannot provide our readers with a nostalgia feature about the faculty and experiences that made junior high so special. However, we do offer some worthy advice: If you were contemplating a visit to your old school, don’t go... your happy and carefree reflections could very easily become shattered. Once you have been pushed out of the junior high next year, you can’t go home again.

The DHS Vaudeville Show will be held on Saturday, May 31, in the auditorium. Admission will be $1.00 at 2:00 and $2.00 at 8:00. The proceeds from this show will go to an impiement for the graduating seniors.

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John Gibson, Jeff Mclean and Nick Dubrowski rehearse The King Who Hated Birthdays for upcoming Theatre 209’s Evening of One-Acts, May 30, in the Senior Commons. (Photo by Gary Leonard)
**Racketeers On The Romp**

By KATHY McGUIRE, and FRANK BUCKO

At just over the half-season mark, the female racketeers have held true to their optimistic pre-season predictions of winning nine straight with no losses. Greenwich's, perhaps the most serious threat, was overcome 7-2 on May 7. Kris Kinney, at #1 for Darien, did not get a chance to meet Greenwich's formidable Ann Moore as Moore was ill that day. This caused Greenwich to move their singles line up one position, enabling the Wavers to easily take three of the four singles contests. However, it is probable that Darien would have won even if Moore had been playing for the Cardinals as the Wavers swept four of the five doubles contests, thereby needing only one more point to clinch the match. Coach Rebecca Strominger mentioned that at least one point would probably have been picked up in the four singles contests regardless of the Greenwich line-up, noting that co-captain Leslie Milne at #4 has been undefeated in singles competition throughout high school.

Darren then traveled to Norwalk on May 29, smashing to a 7-2 victory. Since then the Waver have racked up four consecutive wins: Westhill 8-17, Staples 9-0, Norwalk 9-0, and Ludlowe 7-2, making their season shot-out record a total of five.

Unless the Wavers face some unexpected opposition, the remaining matches should be a continuation of the expectation of a four out of five record for the State Tournament, June 12-14. Sophomore Kris Kinney has already qualified for States action as well as the #1 and #2 doubles teams of Katharine Bullock and Julie Hendrickson and Trude tenBroeke and Jane Adams.

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**Bat Babes Off Base, Foul Up**

By BETSY SULLIVAN

The DHS softball team has not done as well as the coach and the members of the team have hoped for this year. Their current record thus far is no wins and eight losses. No matter how hard the girls seem to try, their opponents always prove superior. In the Andrew Warde game the girls showed the first sign of really getting it together. But once again they fell apart toward the end of the game which they had been leading, to lose 12 to 8.

Although the team does not have an impressive record, members of the girls' team have shown great promise all through the season. One of these players is Wendy Rube, who has played consistently throughout the season. Wendy is the pitcher for the girls. As of press time Wendy has picked up eight people.

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**Tracksters Plagued By Injuries**

By TODD BURGER

The DHS tracksters continued their up and down season by traveling to Boyle Stadium to face Stamford and Staples, Tuesday, May 13.

Darien finished behind both teams and again lack of depth and injuries were the key factors to the defeats. The team has talented individuals but many are forced to participate in two, three or more events. ( Hank Rabson competed in four events.)

Those who aided the cause were Scott Heidemann in the 120 high hurdles; Ken Derbyshire in the 880; Jim Lewis, mile; and Steve Franklin (#2), Bob Harford (#4), and Jon Dahl (#5) all won their singles matches to assure victory for the Blue Wave.

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