

Yellow Jacket

SPRING 2021

ALUMNI MAGAZINE OF THE GILBERT SCHOOL





DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS...



Dr. Anthony Serio, Head of School: I am delighted to announce that at its special meeting on March 15, 2021, the W. L. Gilbert School Corporation appointed **Mr. Greg P. Shugrue** its new Head of School, effective July 1, 2021. Mr. Shugrue has served as Principal of New Milford High School for the past 16 years. The Head of School position combines the duties of Superintendent and Principal of The Gilbert School. Mr. Shugrue is a veteran of four years in the Air Force. His educational career started as a Social Studies teacher in West Palm Beach, then Jupiter, Florida. He moved to Meriden, CT, in 2000, where he spent three years as Assistant Principal at Orville H. Platt High School, then two years as Principal of Maloney High School prior to moving to New Milford High School in 2005.

Mr. Shugrue received his Bachelor of Science from Palm Beach Atlantic University, his Master's from Barry University, his 6th year from Southern Connecticut State University, and his superintendent certification from Sacred Heart University.

The School Corporation Chair Steven Sedlack said, "The Gilbert Head of School Search Committee, including all members of the School Corporation plus representatives of the administrative and teaching staff, took very seriously its responsibility to find the best possible new leader for Gilbert as we enter our 126th year serving the educational needs of Winchester's middle- and high school students."



*New Head of School
Greg P. Shugrue*

Mr. Shugrue told the Gilbert Search Committee, "I pride myself in building collaborative relationships... in an open, sincere, and compassionate manner. I bring experience, passion, and energy into the workplace each day and pledge to bring that same level of commitment to the Head of School position at The Gilbert School." Welcome Mr. Shugrue!



Susan Sojka, Principal: It is hard to believe that it has been a year since our students have been in our building for full-time in-person learning. This past year has been filled with fear, confusion, and separation, but also with strength and compassion. I have witnessed our faculty, staff, students and their families work together to support and assist each other during a very difficult time. Whether we are facing a pandemic or not our priorities remain the same; to create positive relationships and school culture, to maintain high expectations and academic excellence, all while supporting the social-emotional well-being of our students and faculty. I could not imagine being anywhere else or with any other school community during this past year than with the amazing faculty, staff, students and families of The Gilbert School.



Timothy Cronin MBA, Director of the International Program: Greetings from the Gilbert International Program. As we cross the one-year mark of a challenging enrollment year, our international program, for the first time since its inception in 2013, is receiving applications from new and different countries from around the globe. Applications have been sent from excited high school students from Russia, Brazil, Mexico and Germany. Last fall, our program welcomed students from two new countries of South Korea and Vietnam. This new interest is encouraging for our program as we look to diversify our school community with students of new cultural backgrounds.

continued

On the cover:

Seniors Annalise Currier and Leslie DeSanti get ready to sled down The Gilbert School hill with Principal Sue Sojka during Senior Fun Day. Story on page 4





Timothy Cronin, continued

Keeping The Gilbert School mission of “*heritage, innovation and opportunity*” at the forefront of our focus, the international program is covering all of these objectives for our students. With global travel bans mandated last summer, half of the international students were unable to return to our residency hall. Designed in collaboration with Mrs. Julie McDougall, Director of Student Services, and Mrs. Hyewon Noh, ESL Instructor, an innovative on-line program was quickly set in place, allowing these students to continue earning Gilbert School credits while in their own country. This opportunity allowed the students to stay on task and complete their yearly course work with amazing independence and discipline. Looking to the fall, we are excited for their return to campus and for welcoming new students to the program.

The heritage of hundreds who have walked the Gilbert hallways has become an amazing melting pot of passionate, hardworking, talented, and successful graduates. In many cases, three Winsted generations of families have graduated from Gilbert. How inspiring it is to add the names of international students to these lists of outstanding graduates.

From the desk of the International Office, our team extends our best to you and wishes you a safe and healthy summer.



Charles Seaback, Class of 1972, President, The W. L. Gilbert Trust: *Heritage.*

Innovation. Opportunity. For several years, these three words have been the motto under The Gilbert School logo. In 2021, these words could not be more appropriate in defining The Gilbert School.

As an alum or friend of Gilbert, you know the incredible **heritage** of The Gilbert School, and 2020-2021 marks the 125th anniversary of our founding and tradition.

Think of all the events and experiences – worldwide, local, personal – that have been woven into Gilbert’s legacy since 1895.

Innovation has been at the heart of the evolution of Gilbert from its founding to the educational institution it is today. Today’s challenges of the pandemic showcase the dedication, talent, and creativity of Gilbert students, faculty, staff, administration, parents, and friends. We are fortunate that the spirit of the gold and blue is alive and well in the Gilbert community.

With 125 years of experience as a foundation and springboard, we have the **opportunity** to help Gilbert students now and to look ahead for those to come. The world of education is continuously evolving and increasingly important. It’s exciting, and it’s also expensive.

On behalf of the Trust and The Gilbert School family, I ask you to consider contributing to our 2020-2021 fund drive. Your gift can help us provide the education and fond memories you at Gilbert had to new generations of young people. I also invite you to spend some time reading about our current students and our alumni, possibly your classmates and friends. **Heritage. Innovation. Opportunity.** It’s a proud and distinguished legacy and we appreciate your support. May you and yours be safe and well.

PLEASE SUPPORT THE GILBERT SCHOOL! THANK YOU!

School News

Senior Fun Day!

By Susan O. Sojka, Principal

Our seniors have missed out on so many things - junior prom, homecoming, awards night, and sports just to name a few. They have not attended school in our school building with all of their classmates since March 13, 2020. Although they lost many of the experiences of their junior and senior years, they have been patient and hopeful that things will soon change.

On February 17, 2021, a presentation was made to The W. L. Gilbert School Corporation for their final approval to begin the process of transitioning students back into our building. The transition process began on March 1 with our seniors. The senior class was chosen to begin first because they had lost the most, and we wanted them to feel special by having them be the first class to be back in our building full-time.

Before bringing our seniors back into our school for learning, we decided to give them a "Senior Fun Day". The day began with students learning remotely in the morning and meeting at the school at 12:15 p.m. on February 26 for a special luncheon. Our seniors and the entire faculty enjoyed a barbeque lunch hosted by Bears Smokehouse Barbeque in Windsor, Connecticut. Students enjoyed pulled pork or chicken, macaroni and cheese, and cornbread with honey butter. With full bellies, it was time for the activities to begin.

The fun began outside with students choosing to either go sledding down the school hill, snowshoeing, or building a snowman. Mr. Michaud, one of our PE teachers, took a group snowshoeing on the trails around our school property. A few teachers began building snowmen, and the majority of students grabbed lunch trays and sleds and began zigzagging their way to the bottom of the hill, avoiding classmates and trees. Their smiles, laughter, and giggles warmed even the coldest of hearts.

After the outside activities were completed, everyone gathered in the cafeteria to play a few rounds of trivia. Groups were formed with one faculty member per group and no more than six members to a team. Mr. Levesque, 8th grade science teacher, was our DJ and quiz master. The category was "Are you smarter than a 7th grader?" Mr. Levesque asked questions from the 7th grade curriculum and the competition between the teams was tense. Strategies were used to intimidate, confuse and hopefully get opponents to second guess their answers. In the end, a group of senior boys led by middle school counselor, Amie Kutz, took the top prize. The day was a highlight for not only our students, but the faculty and staff as well.



Leslie DeSanti and Annalise Currier sledding down the Gilbert hill



Martin Rodriguez enjoying senior day sledding



Caleb Goodell and Mason Goodell with classmates and faculty, ready for lunch tray sledding



Sam King, Caleb Goodell, Mason Goodell, Math Teacher Chris Affie, Evan Blass, and David Lukowski enjoying trivia



School Counselor Kim Fudicia and Brett Marvin, choosing their Bear's BBQ



8th Grade Math Teacher Sarah Schackner, Sophia Pasternack, and Abigail Goncalves

An Athlete at Gilbert During COVID Times

By Dylan Crowley, Class of 2021

Being an athlete at The Gilbert School has been a wonderful experience over the past four years. This year we have had to face some new and difficult challenges such as COVID and the weather. Although we must face many challenges on the basketball court, I think it is safe to say that we are all thankful to be able to have a season at all.

The toughest challenge we face during this basketball season is wearing a mask while playing. The mask makes breathing harder and makes it even hotter while running up and down the court. At first, getting used to the mask was a struggle for all of us, but everyone pushed through the challenge and made it work. The constant thought that our season could get shut down or cancelled at any moment was very stressful for everyone, especially for the seniors.

Even though there have been many differences with a season during a pandemic, there is much that has remained the same. Our team still worked hard and played hard to get wins, even with the added challenge of having to wear a mask. Bus rides as an athlete were one of the most fun parts of our season, because we got to listen to music, talk to one another, or choose to sleep before a game.

I have been absolutely fortunate to have been able to play sports at The Gilbert School. Being able to share the soccer field and basketball court with my teammates and friends has been an incredible highlight of my high school career. This basketball season I was extremely thankful and blessed to have scored my 1,000th career varsity point. Being able to achieve my dreams and goals alongside my friends and teammates has been amazing.

My favorite thing about being an athlete, especially during the added struggles of the pandemic, is knowing that if I make a mistake, my teammates will have my back and always support me. There is no doubt that I have missed playing in front of the wonderful student cheering section at our home and away games, but Gilbert, along with the other schools in the Berkshire League, did an amazing job of live streaming games for all of our fans to watch. Rivalry night against Northwestern wasn't quite the same, but we still battled hard and made it fun.

With my senior year coming to an end, I think it is safe to say that nobody will forget it. COVID messed with our ability to attend school, play sports, and see friends. COVID has also made us stronger as athletes and as people, and we will never forget having to play through this pandemic. I will forever be grateful for my four years as an athlete at Gilbert, but my senior year will always be the most special.



Dylan with parents Kevin and Christina Crowley, after scoring his 1,000th point



Together to Cure

By Rebecca Dowling, Class of 2021

My name is Rebecca Dowling, and I'm a senior here at the Gilbert School. I've always loved being involved with our community and trying to make even the smallest of impacts. That's why I am so honored and excited to have been nominated and accepted into the 2021 Student of the Year campaign. The Student of the Year program, run by the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS), is a seven-week campaign designed to raise awareness and funds for blood cancer cures. I am incredibly grateful to be the first student in our district to be given this opportunity and to have the ability to form our multigenerational team, Together to Cure.



Together to Cure Bracelets

"Rebecca and her team held RED OUT days in March at The Gilbert School to raise awareness and funds to help to create a world free of blood cancer. The first 200 people who donated received a silicone bracelet with the slogan "Together to Cure". Rebecca is compassionate, intelligent and a true example of the power our youth have to change our world." ~ Gilbert Staff

Our team's work has special meaning to me because I dedicated this campaign to my second cousin, Bryan Leonard, who passed away from T-Cell Leukemia in 2018. LLS played an integral role in Bryan's treatment, helping as he fought his courageous battle against this disease. Bryan was the pillar of his community - a bright light to his friends and family - and witnessing the hole left when he was gone was heartbreaking. Unfortunately, Bryan's family is not alone. Supporting this campaign was our way of "paying it forward" and passing on Bryan's legacy. Our team's motivation was to be a part of the work to help end the loss and tragedy caused by this devastating disease.

My team, Together to Cure, was primarily composed of Gilbert students and staff. During the seven week campaign, we worked hard to fundraise using social media, emails, and letters. The Gilbert Administration Team was amazing during this entire process, supporting us in our efforts and enabling me to speak on behalf of the team and LLS at a Board of Education meeting, as well as at a W. L. Gilbert Trust meeting.

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Cierra Church, Brandon Gonzalez, Rebecca Dowling, Felicity Flores



Jeremiah Leach, Mariah Castillo



Jesse Schmidt



Left to right: Brandon Gonzalez, Jovan DeLaCruz, Principal Sue Sojka, Leslie DeSanti, Annalise Currier

Together to Cure, continued

In addition, we were allowed to run our Red Out Days for the middle and high schools as a way to show our Gilbert spirit, raise awareness for blood cancers, and get donations. The challenges we encountered were pandemic related, such as having to promote events virtually, not having daily interaction with students and faculty, and not being able to collaborate with other schools.

Being a candidate in the Student of the Year program has helped me grow in ways I couldn't have imagined. It has given me the confidence to seek new opportunities, improve my presentation skills, speak to new people, and hone my writing skills through promotional news articles and social media posts. Having a campaign during a pandemic has had its challenges, but throughout our process we wanted to showcase Winsted - and our school's - kindness and positivity. In addition to our desire to help LLS create a future without blood cancers, Team Together to Cure wants to open doors for future students to become candidates and to share the lessons we have learned and the tools we have built, to allow them to be even more successful. We hope this will be our legacy.



Madison Perry



English Teacher, Jennifer Gilley



Rebecca Dowling – Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's 2021 Student of the Year Program Participant and winner of the Citizenship Award.



Head of School & Superintendent, Anthony Serio



Business Teacher, Valerie Poirier & English Teacher, Shannon Whitney



Nathaniel Northup

A Musician During the Pandemic

By Dylan Zawisza, Class of 2021

Being a music kid during this pandemic has been quite the ride. Before everything went downhill last March with the COVID-19 virus, there were many amazing music opportunities for me. The school musical was scheduled to open days after the pandemic shutdown. The music department was scheduled to take a trip to Washington, D.C., to perform alongside other high school singers and musicians. I was supposed to be on my way to my first All-State music festival, and the Music in Our Schools Month concert, that the entire music department had been working hard on, was scheduled for the end of March. The shutdown really took the wind out of my sails, and definitely affected my peers and teachers in the same way.

When the pandemic took away all of my planned music activities, I knew that I still had to stay busy working on my music. So, essentially, I did what I do best! I kept my saxophone chops up with not only frequent practice, but through virtual band rehearsals that Mr. Minnerly held every week. I kept banging on my drum set and made leaps and bounds in my guitar playing. I always kept the keyboard plugged in, so I could sing my little heart out with it all day, every day. I also really got into writing music, which allowed me to release my first original song "[Dystopia](#)" on YouTube.

These were positive consequences of the pandemic, but there were also negatives. I think the biggest setback throughout this past year was the inability to play with others. Making music together with other people is where I and many musicians make the most strides, and honestly have the most fun. No one was able to perform with one another, or even practice together. I do definitely recognize that being forced to stay inside throughout this past year gave me a chance to really work my craft, and so in some ways, it may have been a bit of a blessing in disguise.

Recently, there have been many exciting and new things in store for us in the music department at Gilbert. This coming June we will be opening *Snoopy: The Musical*, which I am really looking forward to. In the Rock/Pop ensemble class, taught by Mr. Minnerly, we have made great strides to make TGS FEST 2021 a reality. We have also been working on many new songs in both Symphonic Band and in Concert Choir. Hopefully we will be able to craft a spring concert in the next few months. There are also great possibilities for Jazz Band and Chamber Choir in the works. After a whole year of shutdowns, masks, and social distancing, it's incredibly rewarding to be able to come together again, and just start doing. I will be graduating this June, so it is really nice to be able to start making music again.



Dylan Zawisza



Marching Band



TGS Musical Willy Wonka

Nursing a Community Through a Pandemic

By Kelli-Ann Gilbert, School Nurse

Social distancing, PPE, flattening the curve, and Unprecedented times...these terms and phrases that we did not know a year and a half ago, have all become part of our “new normal”.

As school nurses during the pandemic, Darlene Webb and I first watched coronavirus affect the families of our international students. The families of our students were banned from traveling, restricted to their homes, and their children, our students here in the United States watched from afar. As coronavirus traversed the globe, the constant fear and worry associated with this virus was equally as debilitating as the physical effects of the virus itself.

As school nurses in a school that prides itself on its sense of family, we at The Gilbert School expanded our roles to meet the needs of our small community. We continually poured over local, state, and national data as well as familiarizing ourselves with new research regarding the virus. Our goals were to educate our school community, focus on reducing virus transmission through mitigation efforts, and provide resources to our families. In the beginning of the pandemic when mask supplies were low, we worked with local sewing groups and provided donations to area hospitals.

As school nurses, we have been a valuable resource for The Gilbert School staff, students, and families. We are a point of contact to answer their questions, provide referrals, education, and sometimes just to listen. Throughout the pandemic we followed up with people who were ill, checking in with them on a regular basis, offering suggestions to assist in their recovery and the prevention of further virus spread. For families who found themselves on quarantine and unable to get to the grocery store, it was often TGS nurses who delivered bags of groceries to their front steps. In cases where our students’ parents were ill, TGS nurses were a familiar

voice on the other end of the phone when they had concerns.

TGS nurses played a critical role in policy development and implementation throughout the pandemic. We surveyed classrooms with measuring tapes in hand, arranging desks and ordering plexiglass to help keep staff and students safe. We also helped with arranging music classes and sports protocols to make those areas safer.

Students who have been ill have been contacted by TGS nurses to assess COVID potential and make the appropriate referrals. We have implemented mask mandates and assisted

staff and students with mask fitting when needed. Sometimes we even delivered masks to mailboxes for those families who needed them.

In cases where someone has been exposed to someone with COVID, the nurses are the ones who contact families, calculate quarantine dates, coordinate COVID testing, and follow up with them. Currently, we are assisting our teachers with the vaccination process -- sure sign that we are turning a corner in the fight against this virus. Although we are starting to see hope

that the pandemic is on a downswing, it is still so important that we continue to wear our masks, wash our hands, and socially distance.

As we go forward, there are some things that changed with this pandemic that I hope are here to stay. So many of us offered to help others in so many ways. We forgave minor problems quickly (who cares that the dog is barking if you are trying to have a google meet)? We learned how to advance ourselves with technology. Personally, I had never zoomed in my life before this! Most importantly, kindness, caring, and compassion embraced this school community and this town. People checked in on neighbors and friends and helped when they could. The Gilbert School has always prided itself on being a family. It makes me proud to be a part of this community where people matter.



The Gilbert School Nurses, Darlene Webb and Kelli Gilbert

Middle School Creativity and Energy Thrives During the Pandemic

By Tina Keegan – English 7 Teacher

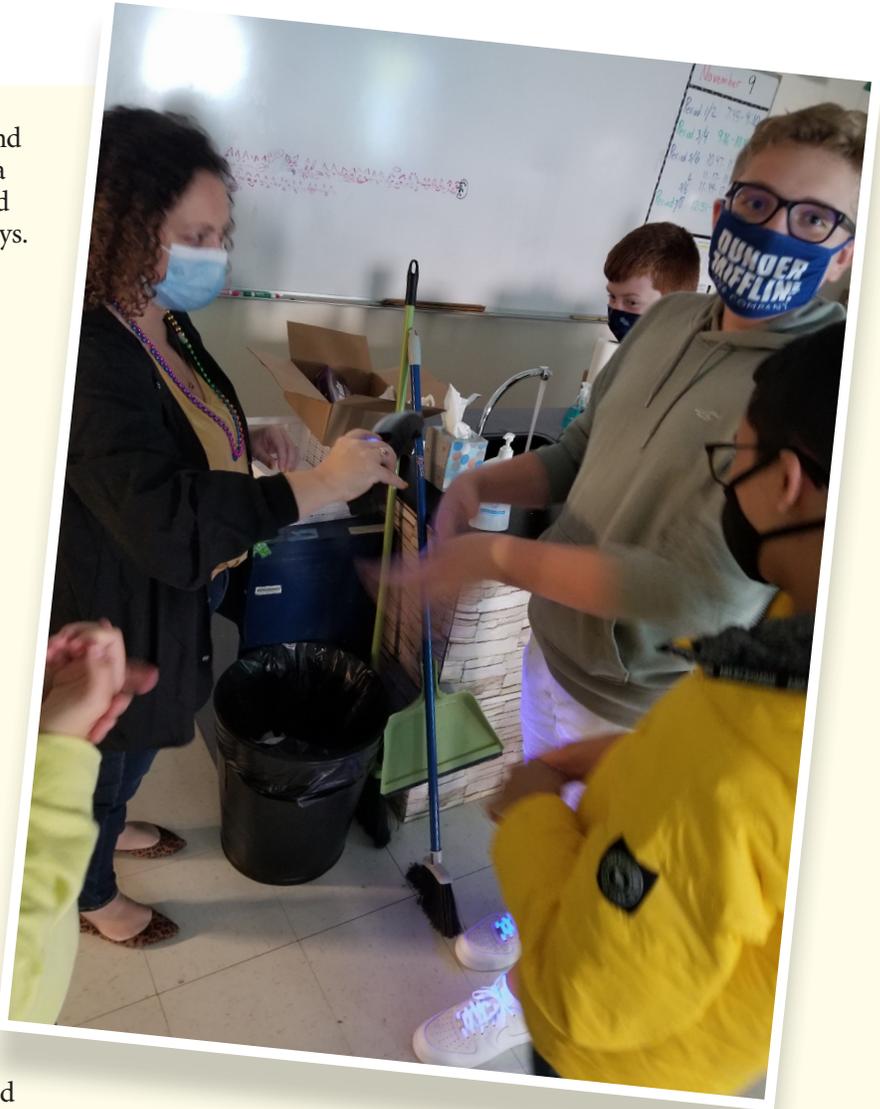
Take a look at The Gilbert Middle School and you will see kids involved in Spirit Week, a pet contest, the annual spelling bee, spring and fall sports, and seventh grade Wild Wednesdays. Middle school energy hasn't stopped because of the pandemic. These middle years are an exciting time of change, and while this year looks different than any other in history, it continues to be full of enthusiasm at The Gilbert School.

Academically, students have explored new areas, virtually and in person, learning about the world around them and developing the skills they need to become active global citizens. Their journeys in social studies have included discovering the western hemisphere in seventh grade, and for eighth graders, a first time look at U.S. history.

In science this year, eighth grade students have experimented with the phenomenon of sound causing objects to move and are now learning about the evolutionary history of life on Earth. Seventh grade science topics have included a study of hurricanes and why they occur. Students are currently becoming doctors exploring the human body in solving a medical mystery about a girl named M'Kenna who is sick.

Middle school math builds a strong bridge between the basic math skills covered in elementary school and the advanced demands of high school math classes. Seventh graders are focusing on rational numbers, expressions, and proportional relationships. In eighth grade, students are building on their understanding of proportional relationships by studying linear relationships and functions with one and two variables.

In English and language arts, students continue to hone their writing skills and have made good use of our library's collection of e-books as they



Continued...

Middle School Creativity, Continued...

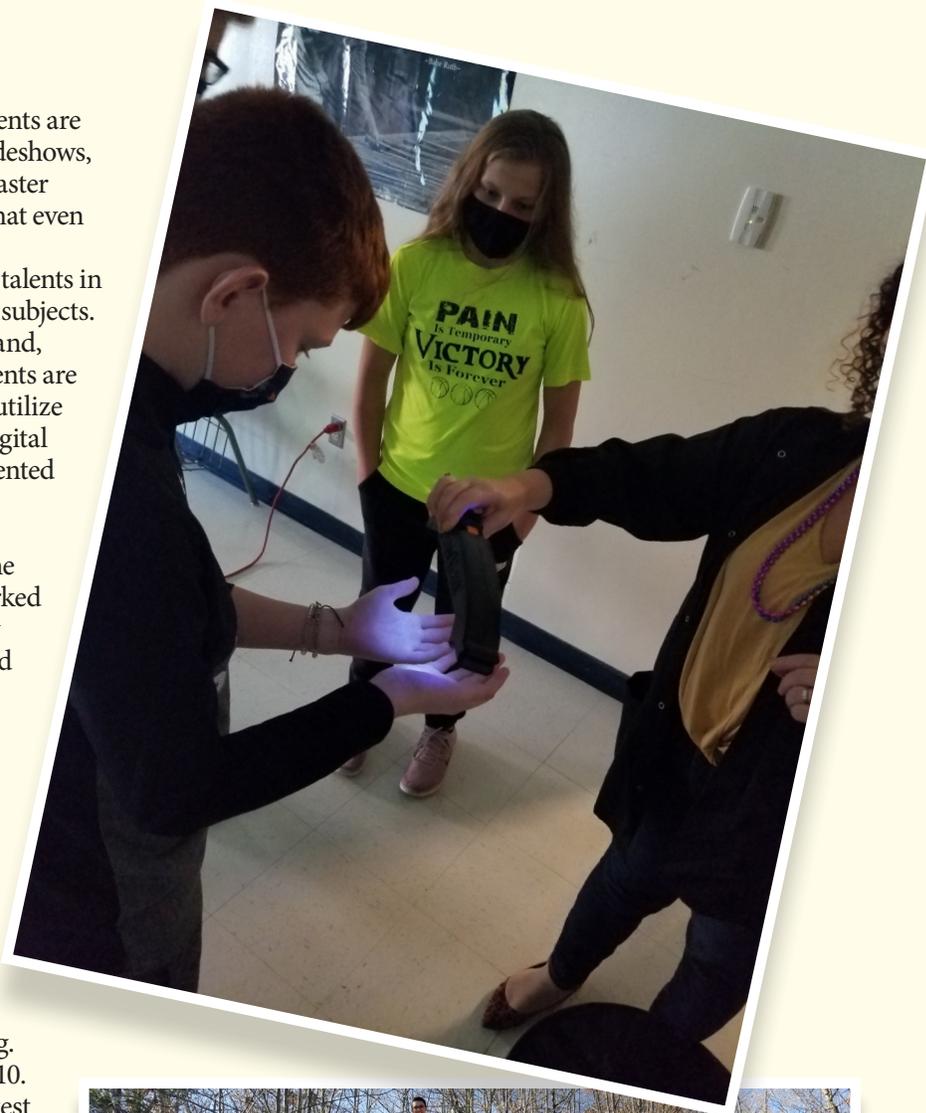
expand their exposure to good literature. Students are publishing pieces using Google documents, slideshows, and websites. Students have worked hard to master foundational grammar skills and have found that even “Grammar Rocks” on a digital platform!

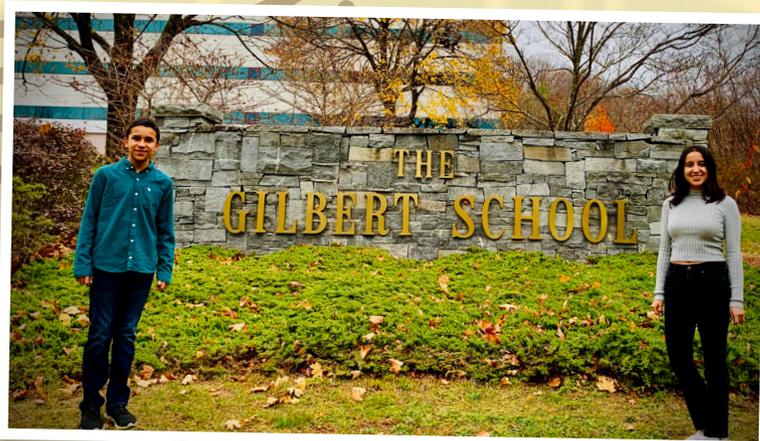
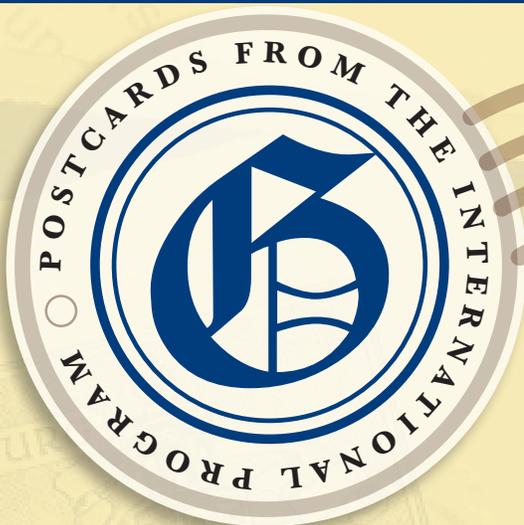
Our middle schoolers have developed their talents in their unified arts classes as well as in their core subjects. Students are developing musically in chorus, band, and general music classes. Students’ artistic talents are developing in art class, in Tech-Ed where they utilize computer-aided design and drafting, and in Digital Graphics. Students are also learning career-oriented skills in Info-Tech and business classes.

Gilbert middle school students continue to have a positive impact on their community. The National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) has worked to support the Open Door Soup Kitchen. They held a food drive for Thanksgiving, a health and hygiene item drive for Valentine’s Day, and are selling face masks to “Help the Hungry.”

Exciting events continue to happen in our middle school. Recently, Emily Fedorowicz won our school-wide spelling bee and will go on to represent Gilbert in the Connecticut Spelling Bee on March 21. The Student Council held “Spirit Week” which included such dress-up events as “Character Day” and “Wacky Hair Day.” The fun continues with “Wild Wednesdays” in which students will have spirit day activities while distance learning. We started with “Wild, Wild West” on March 10. The NJHS is also hosting a “Pet Party” pet contest in which students can enter pets and stuffed animals in categories such as “Best Dressed” and “Cutest.”

The Gilbert middle school students and staff continue to plan engaging events to culminate our year and look forward to a spring of in-person learning in which we hope to harness the amazing energy that middle-schoolers bring to The Gilbert School.





This fall, siblings Sebastian Ahumada Villa, grade 8 and Ana Karen Ahumada Villa, grade 11, from Mexico City, Mexico, joined the international program for a one semester educational experience. Due to COVID closing schools in Canada, the family looked for an alternative semester and were grateful to find TGS. Parents, Bogart Balmori and Laura Villa, rented a home on beautiful Highland Lake so that they could share the US experience with their children. Both Sebastian and Ana Karen were amazing students and were admired by their teachers and fellow classmates. With their love of soccer, they both played on TGS soccer teams this fall.



For the second time, the International Program welcomed a student from Vietnam. On a fall afternoon, Dean of Admissions, Debra LaRoche Walls shared a tour with student Ben Kien Nguyen at the scenic Saville Dam in Barkhamsted, one of the most beautiful spots in this corner of the state. A ninth-grade student from Ho Chi Min City, Ben jumped right in to his new American school system, achieving high honor grades his first semester. He is the oldest of three boys in his family and is an avid piano player. This is his first time to the United States.



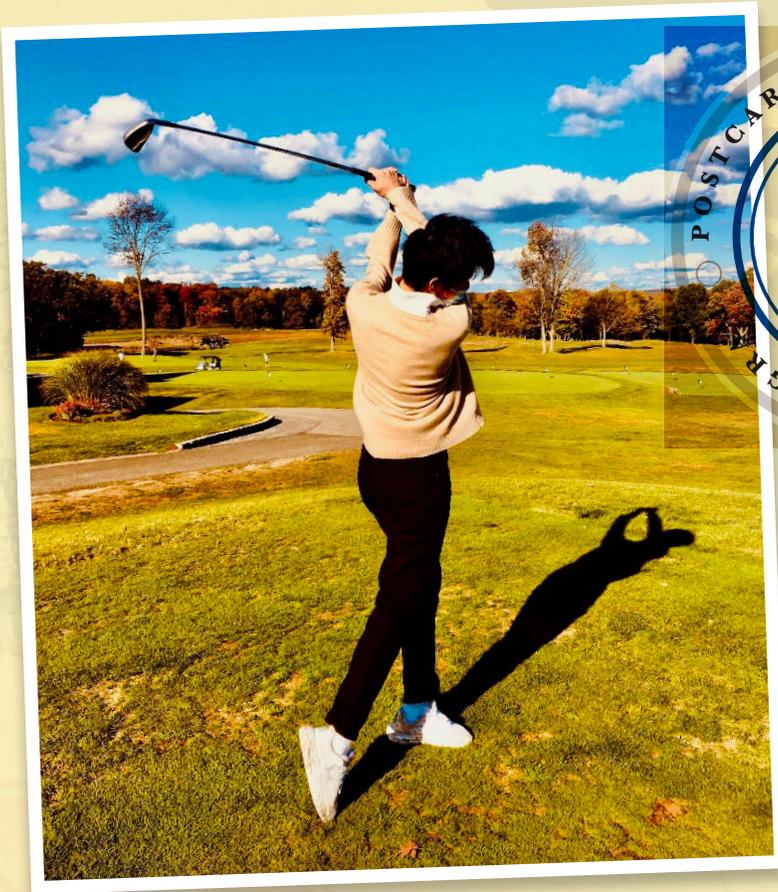
Ben Nguyen, grade 9 and Danielle Dao, Class of 2020 Gilbert graduate, both from Vietnam, met for the first time during "Game Night" and tree trimming festivities at the Residency Hall, Common Room. Danielle met Ben during a Skype talk after he was accepted to the TGS International Program. They kept up their communication for several months until Ben moved in to the dorm.



In October 2016, student Leo Xu and Dean of Admissions, of the International Program, Debra LaRoche Walls met in Beijing, China during a recruiting tour. After the admissions interview, Leo was accepted to TGS as a ninth-grade student for the spring 2017 semester. This June, Leo, who is in his senior year, will graduate and continue on to a US college or university to further his studies.



This fall, the International Program held three days of Orientation for new students. They enjoyed making new friendships during activities that included playing miniature golf, an ice cream social, and go karting at R & B Sports World. Ben Nguyen, grade 9 from Vietnam and Alan Wan, grade 11 from China, liked go karting the best.



Frank Guan, grade 11, enjoys a fall afternoon of golf at the Fairview Farm Golf Course in Harwinton with fellow classmates Ben Nguyen and Alan Wan. This fun outing was hosted by Residential Coordinator, Mr. David Rutherford, from the faculty of The Gilbert School.



Ninth-grader, Andrew Park joined the International Program as the first student from South Korea this past fall. On February 3, 2021, all of the international students at the dorm gathered to celebrate Andrew's birthday with an Oreo ice cream cake of his choice. Andrew is doing very well for his first time in the US and he made the honor roll his first semester at TGS. He has a strong love for basketball and hopes to play on the varsity team next season.



Bruce Zheng joined the International Program in January 2019 as a tenth grade student. From Beijing, he was one out of hundreds who was selected for his outstanding drum talent by the Hartt School of Music Program in West Hartford. Needing a secondary education program, Bruce was offered dual enrollment with both The Gilbert School and Hartt School of Music. Weekly, since his arrival to Gilbert, Bruce has taken marimba lessons with Professor David Feng, from Hartt School of Music. Bruce is also a member of The Gilbert School Marching Band. Bruce has won many competitions for his drum playing in China and most recently he received a certificate of recognition for his pursuit of excellence in as a member of the Northern Region High School Festival Concert Band of 2021.

SPORTS SCRAPBOOK



Fall Sports Compete in Spite of a Pandemic Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, there were varsity and junior varsity sports during the fall season. Buckley Morgan, who has worked with our Gilbert sports teams over the past five years, started in July of 2020 as our Athletic Director. "It's been really tricky because everything in our life has been impacted due to COVID," Morgan said. He reported that during the fall season our athletes and coaches followed all health guidelines, including sanitizing their equipment after each game and practice. As for spectators for each game, only adults were allowed to watch the games, with limited tickets for each family, with each spectator practicing social distancing and wearing masks. "Overall, the fall season was a great success," Morgan said. "We did not really expect to have much of a season because of the pandemic. Not only did we have a season but we completed every sport that started for the fall season. This was quite an amazing feat given the pandemic. All of our athletes and coaches did an outstanding job this season under very challenging conditions." **Photo:** Athletic Director Buckley Morgan with the Spring 2019 Girls Tennis Team



Boys Soccer: While our boys' team did not have a winning season, coaches Pat Cooke (Class of 1989) and Charlie Harbach led their teams through a successful season. Our athletes worked hard, improved greatly and were able to complete their fall season. This is a great accomplishment considering we were not even sure we would be able to start the season at all during the pandemic. The team organized a winter clothes drive and managed to collect hundreds of winter items for those in need, demonstrating their teamwork both on and off of the field.

Boys Soccer individual accolades go to:
 Gilbert Flores was selected All-Region first team
 Gilbert Flores was selected All-State
 Gilbert Flores was selected Academic All-State
 Max Cruz was selected All-Region second Team
 Caleb Goodell was an Honorable Mention for All-Region



Girls Soccer: Coach Katie (Serafini) Wood (Class of 2004) and Assistant Coach Marcela Moreira led a team of hard-working athletes this fall. Our Girls Soccer Team struggled through the season but showed much improvement as the season progressed. They are developing well as a team and should be ready to go for next soccer season.

Girls Soccer individual accolades go to:
 Rebecca Dowling was an Honorable Mention for All-Region
 Ajla Gutic was an Honorable Mention for All-Region



SPORTS SCRAPBOOK 



Nicole Ladd



New Volleyball coach Marci (Moore) Fritch (Class of 1998) and her daughter, Madison Fritch (Class of 2021)



Abbey Beecher

Girls Volleyball: Volleyball this year had a new coach, Marci (Moore) Fritch (Class of 1998). She and her assistant coach Lisa (Mangione) Brochu (Class of 1984) coached the team to a 4-7 record. The girls came out on top with their sportsmanship, winning the Ted Alex Award. **Volleyball individual accolades go to:** Abbey Beecher was selected All-Region second Team



Connor Marchand



Gabriela Sustache

Cross Country: Cross Country had a productive season with some top-notch runners. Coach Scott Mueller trained a small team of five boys and two girls. With a team of only two, the girls were not able to effectively compete, but our two runners had as much heart as their opponents' entire team! The Gilbert boys team took second in the Berkshire League Championship. **Cross Country individual accolades go to:** Connor Marchand placed as an All-region all-star Connor Marchand was selected for GHSCA Cross Country All-State



David Lukowski



Varsity Soccer Team Wins Big off the Field

In November, the boys' varsity soccer team collected hats, gloves, and socks for The Winsted Open Door Soup Kitchen and the Second Congregational Church Diaper Bank. Members of the team gathered at both Northwest CT Realty and Tractor Supply Company for their yearly community service project. As well as collecting much needed items, the project raised \$350 which will be split by both organizations. The project was organized by the three team captains of the team: Caleb Goodell, Mason Goodell, and Gilbert Flores. "We all feel great about this project," Caleb said. "It's something we have enjoyed doing every single year. We wanted to give back to the community so everyone in town can keep warm during this winter season." "It feels great to give back to the community and to the people who do not have as much as we do," Mason said. "It feels amazing giving back to people that are in need," Gilbert added.



Ted Alex Award

Congratulations to Coach Fritch, Coach Lisa Brochu, and their entire Girls Volleyball team for tying with Terryville in winning the Fall 2020 Ted Alex Award. The Ted Alex Award is given to the team that best demonstrates good sportsmanship throughout the season. The winner is chosen by the recommendation of all of the coaches and captains in the Berkshire league for their specific sport. Well done, team!



Gilbert Flores

Flores makes All-State Academic Team

Senior, Gilbert Flores, was named to the CSCA Class S All-State Boys Soccer Team. Flores is the first soccer player from Gilbert in many years to make All-State. The competition is very competitive within the Berkshire League and he not only won in his league but all across the state as well. Flores was also selected for the All-State Academic Team for Boys Soccer. To be eligible for the All-State Academic Team, Flores had to be a senior, be awarded the title of All-State First Team in Soccer, and have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher for the past four years. The nominees must also exhibit and practice outstanding character and citizenship in school, in competition, and in the community. Congratulations to Gilbert Flores and to his family who never miss a game.

KIM PARISI O'MEARA, 1988

Gilbert graduate, now a nurse, describes extraordinary times during the COVID-19 pandemic

By Shaw Israel Izikson

Kim (Parisi) O'Meara graduated from The Gilbert School in 1988, earned her Bachelor's Degree in Nursing from Fairfield University in 1992, and has been working as a registered nurse for 20 years. "I got into nursing because I like to help people. I enjoy helping others," O'Meara said. "My father, John Parisi, owned Ivery and Dudley Pharmacy in Winsted for over 40 years. And my mother, Kathy Smith, is also a nurse."

O'Meara worked at St. Mary's Hospital in Waterbury for 19 years, both as a Registered Nurse and, starting in 2011, as an Infection Prevention Clinical Coordinator. At the start of the pandemic, O'Meara was still working at St. Mary's Hospital.

"A pandemic has certainly been nothing I ever thought I would be a part of," O'Meara said. "It seemed like everything changed minute-to-minute, from the amount of personal protective equipment we had, to what we needed to wear, or not wear, and the protocols for how we had to care for patients. We watched patients that we should have been able to save, just die for no known reason, because Covid was something we had never dealt with before."



Kim O'Meara working during the pandemic at Saint Mary's Hospital in Waterbury



A sign to help with morale at St. Mary's Hospital

O'Meara was tasked with creating an emergency management program at St. Mary's Hospital. "I had to figure out how to keep all of our staff who were on the frontlines safe," O'Meara said. "My responsibilities also involved being out on the frontlines of care, as well as figuring out how to do the best we could for the patients in a time where everything was constantly changing."

O'Meara said that both she and her coworkers got through the toughest times of the pandemic with each other's support. "We worked 80 hours a week. Sometimes we worked in the cold because we had to learn how to test people for Covid in that environment," she said. "I worked with an amazing team at St. Mary's Hospital throughout all of it. I am now in Florida at a different hospital almost a year later, and we are still working through the pandemic. Fortunately, we now have a lot more treatments for our Covid patients and a lot more knowledge."

Kim and her family moved to Tampa, Florida in November of last year where she now works as the Director of Patient Safety at Saint Petersburg General Hospital.



*The O'Meara family:
Tim O'Meara (Class of 2018),
Kim (Parisi) O'Meara (Class of 1988),
Erik O'Meara (Class of 2020) and
Tim O'Meara (Class of 1987)*

JENNIFER TIETJEN RUFFNER, 1993

Gilbert Graduate Became MRI Technologist to be Part of the Solution

By Shaw Israel Izikson

Jennifer (Tietjen) Ruffner, who graduated from The Gilbert School in 1993, has worked in the medical field for 22 years, but said that she has not ever seen anything like the Coronavirus pandemic.

Ruffner first became interested in working in the medical field when she volunteered for the Winsted Fire Department. While volunteering as a firefighter, she took EMT classes, which then got her interested in radiology. Ruffner attended Naugatuck Valley Community College where she graduated with a degree in Radiologic Technology. She then continued her education and graduated from the University of Connecticut with a Bachelor's Degree in Allied Health.

After getting her degree, Ruffner worked as an MRI Technologist at Hartford Hospital, Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, and is currently working at Rhode Island Hospital in Providence.

"This pandemic has been a very



Jennifer Tietjen Ruffner



Jennifer working during the pandemic

interesting time for me and others at the hospital," Ruffner said. "During the first months of the pandemic, we were very busy all the time. A lot of people were very scared and they did not want to come to the hospital because they did not want to be exposed to the virus."

"Everybody is wearing a mask now and we have gotten used to it," she said. "I was one of the first ones at my hospital to be vaccinated in December. Being able to get vaccinated is a big advantage when you are working for the hospital system. We have a lot of cancer patients, and their treatment can't stop, not even for a pandemic."

Ruffner said that, despite all of the challenges that came during the pandemic, she is very happy to be working in the medical field. "I'm happy to be part of the solution by helping people to get their medical care," she said. "It's good to be there when people need you."



MRI Technologist with protective equipment during the pandemic

BECKY LACHANCE, 2007

2007 Graduate Went Back to Nursing to Help People

By Shaw Israel Izikson

For two years, Becky LaChance left her career in nursing behind to become a fitness trainer and lifestyle blogger. But when the Covid pandemic hit last year, LaChance, who graduated from Gilbert in 2007, went back into her old career to help others.

“It was an easy transition to go back into nursing, but the pandemic itself is hard,” LaChance said. “When the pandemic started, it was the busiest time I have ever seen in my nursing career.”

After she graduated from Gilbert, LaChance attended Western Connecticut State University and graduated with a degree in Nursing. She spent several years working at an Intensive Care Unit in Hartford. She then took her first travel nursing assignment at Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center in Torrance, California.

In 2018 she left her nursing career to become a fitness trainer and started her blog becksliveshealthy.com. “That’s where my passion was, focusing on health and fitness,” she said. “I got my



Becky LaChance

trainer certification and ran a bunch of marathons.”

She said that getting back into the field of nursing was an easy choice. Now after two years of working outside of the medical field, she works back at the same medical center as she did when she left to pursue fitness training. “I just want to help people, and I figured that nursing was the best career to do so,” she said. “Working in this pandemic has been very hard. Luckily, I like my co-workers and that made working through Covid a little better. We had a lot of people die during the pandemic. Families were not allowed in the hospital, so we had to play that role as well. It’s been a tough year.”

LaChance added that while it has been a difficult year, she is thankful to be back working in the medical field. “I feel very grateful to have a job and to be able to help people in this way,” she said. “Luckily things are slowing down now, but a few months ago it was the busiest it has ever been in my nursing career.”



At work in the hospital



Training at the beach in California



Full nursing uniform, including PPE

MATTHEW JOHN BASCETTA, 2000

Gilbert Alumnus Brings Sweet Sounds to Musical Instruments

By Shaw Israel Izikson

Matthew John Bascetta, Class of 2000, has turned his passion for music and two decades of working in various aspects of the music industry into House of Tone Pickups. He is living in England, making guitar pickups for musicians all over the world.

Before graduating from Gilbert, “Like a lot of other people, I was thinking about going down the road of trying to be a rock star,” Bascetta said. “Once I started working at repair shops, it just turned out that it was something I wanted to do. I worked at FolkCraft Instruments in Winsted, which is where I got the bug to make instruments.” Bascetta also spent some time working at guitar restoration and repair shops in Winsted and Torrington before moving to England a few months after graduation.

When he got to England, Bascetta started a musical instrument repair, restoration, and manufacturing company called [Bascetta String Instruments](#) in Chester, UK. He eventually founded [House of Tone Pickups](#). There, Bascetta and his team create and manufacture electro-magnetic pickups for electric guitars and basses. “The pickup is what converts the string’s vibration in an electric amplifier,” he said. “We make custom hand-wound versions that we sell to customers all over the world.” According to the company’s website, some of



Playing Guitar in His Office



Luthier at Work

Bascetta’s customers include the legendary country band The Kentucky Headhunters, along with guitar makers Crimson Guitars, and Ragh Guitars.

Bascetta’s worldly musical journey all started at The Gilbert School, and he fondly remembers what he learned there.

“Music teacher Adam Atkins knows his stuff and I will never forget him,” Bascetta said. “He taught me a lot about the discipline of playing music, including how it works. It’s one thing to say that you love one artist or another and to say that those artists don’t do theory or read music. But then Mr. Atkins used to say, ‘Well, that’s all well and good. But you really shouldn’t go out breaking all the rules until you know all the rules. It’s fine to break all the rules but know them first.’”

Bascetta said he learned a lot from Atkins (Class of 1990, TGS Music Teacher and Choral Director) about discipline and why it’s important. He added that he also learned about the art of persistence from many of his teachers at Gilbert. “If you want something badly enough, you’ll get it,” Bascetta said. “If you work hard enough and focus, just keep going for it. Don’t think that you can’t. It’s not about can’t. It’s about how much effort you want to put into it.”

For more information about Bascetta’s company, The House of Tone Pickups, go to houseoftonepickups.com.



House of Tone Pickups



Creating Guitar Pickups



House of Tone Pickups

ELIZABETH DEVANNEY OTTO, 2002

Alumna now Teacher in Abu Dhabi

By Shaw Israel Izikson

For Elizabeth (Devanney) Otto, life has been an adventure since she graduated from The Gilbert School in 2002. After receiving her degree in theater education and her elementary education teaching certificate, she began her teaching career in Connecticut, teaching in preschool, fourth and fifth grades. In her tenth year of teaching, she is currently a homeroom teacher at the American International School in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Otto said that her journey to a distant land was inspired by a fellow Gilbert graduate. “In 2007, I took a trip to Tonga with fellow Gilbert alumnae Jill (Barberet) Harriman, (Class of 2002) and Lauren (Jones) Dombrowski, (Class of 2002) to visit Sarah LaRosa, (Class of 2002),” Otto said. “This is where my interest in travel started.” Otto explained that LaRosa, who was later teaching with her husband in Morocco, encouraged both Elizabeth and her husband, Jed Otto, also a teacher, to look into international teaching programs.

“We were surprised at all of the amazing international teaching opportunities there were,” Otto said. “It was a big leap to move and work abroad. It has been an incredible opportunity to be able to teach in such a diverse school in Abu Dhabi.” The students in her class are from over 10 different countries. “Colleagues at our school are also diverse and we are introduced to new traditions, customs and foods quite often,” she said. “While it is difficult to be so distant from family and



Elizabeth and Jed Otto, visiting the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi. Elizabeth is wearing an abaya with covering and Jed is wearing a kandora.



Snoopy Island in Fujairah, UAE

friends, I have been able to better develop an international mindedness, which helps me to create rich classroom lessons.”

Otto said that part of that global understanding comes from National Day, which happens every December 2nd. “It’s a big celebration in the school, just like the Fourth of July in the United States,” Otto explained. “Students in the school participate in activities such as dance, eating traditional foods, henna painting, riding camels, and even holding falcons. My husband and I have been able to appreciate the traditions and culture here through celebrations like this.”

Working abroad has given Otto and her husband many opportunities to travel. They have been able to visit other emirates in the UAE such as Dubai and Fujairah, as well as travel to Italy and Sri Lanka. They had to pause their travel plans due to COVID-19, but hope to continue when it is safe to do so.

Family and friends of Otto have been able to take advantage of their location to visit them and experience many exciting cultural opportunities. Her brother, Chris Devanney, (Class of 1994) and his family visited, as well as Sarah LaRosa, (Class of 2002), and Victoria Berger, (Class of 2005).

As for the advice, she would give current Gilbert students, Otto said “Gilbert is one part of your story. Be a risk-taker and include others, both the quiet and the loud,” Otto said. “You never know what might inspire your next adventure.”



Sunset in the desert



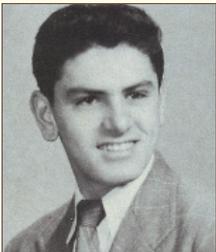
Tea fields in Sri Lanka



One of Otto's former classes on Learning Day, showcasing the biography museum.

ClassNotes

Alumni News Items included in the Class Notes Section of the YellowJacket are submitted directly to us by alumni or are gathered from public sources such as local newspapers. The purpose of alumni news is to pass on good news, good wishes, and to recognize your accomplishments. The more information we receive from you, the more fun and informative we can make this section, so PLEASE keep us up to date on your latest news!



**1952
Fouad "Fred"
Ferris**

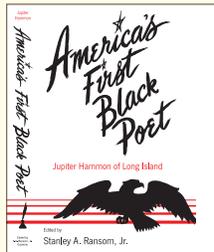
writes, Gilbert has been and continues to be the foundation that my successes in life are based upon. I have memories of music with "Ma" Sonier and the 4 Roses with Roger Herman (Class of 1953), Ernest Plude (Class of 1951), Charles Brooks (Class of 1953) and myself. I was involved in politics, becoming Chairperson of the Democratic Party in Winsted. I served on committees to elect Governor John Dempsey, Governor Ella Grasso, Mayor and then Representative John Groppo (Class of 1940), Mayor Tony Cannavo (Class of 1945), and many more.

After my graduation from Gilbert, I earned my B.S in Education from Bryant University and my MBA from UConn, all the while letting everyone know of Gilbert's reputation as the best school in Connecticut. I am now a retired HR Director for the State of Connecticut -- Department of Mental Health, and my hobby these days is serving as an AKC Dog Show judge.

I have enjoyed accomplishments in many things that all began at Gilbert. This is the reason that I have always and will continue to support The Gilbert School.

**1945
Stanley A. Ransom, Jr.**

writes, Dear Gilbert School Alumni and Friends, I am a 1945 graduate of Gilbert and a retired Library Director in New York State. I have written a new book on a black poet. It is a timely book which deals with using Black Poetry Day, October 17, to help ease racial tension and to recognize the contribution of black poets to American life and culture. It also contains a four-part gospel choir arrangement of Jupiter Hammon's poem to Miss Phillis Wheatley, composed by me and arranged by Shirley Baird, which may be used by school choirs, gospel choirs or other groups without charge. [America's First Black Poet:](#)



[Jupiter Hammon of Long Island](#) is available on Amazon.com.

Stanley also notes, I attended The Gilbert School from 1941-1945. I was 13 years old and as a college-bound freshman, was required to take Latin. On my first day in class, the teacher, Miss Annie May Larkin, welcomed me to her class. She observed to the class, "I hope you attend in your class better than your father did!" She had taught my father in 1910 and 1911, and remembered him! I worked hard in that class!

CALLING ALL ALUMNI!

Send us your news for the next issue!

Whether you've recently married, celebrated an anniversary or an addition to your family, received a promotion, changed occupations, started a business, written a book, won an award, went on an adventure, or just want to send greetings to your classmates, – we want to know!

Photos for publication are always welcome!

Send your news to the Alumni Department at:
gilbertalumni@gilbertschool.org.
Let us hear from you!

REUNIONS!

Due to the pandemic, many of you have not been able to celebrate your class reunions. When you are ready, please let us know, we can help!

Contact us at :
gilbertalumni@gilbertschool.org



**1954
Effie (Francis)
Oellers**

writes, You may remember me as my father had a grocery store on Elm Street

in Winsted. With a large family we couldn't afford to go to college, but I got a job with the US Government (CIA), which turned out pretty good! I spent three years in London and two years in Athens. I am now retired and living in Port St. Lucie, Florida. I wonder if anyone from our class lives nearby. If so, contact me! Note: If anyone would like to get in touch with Effie, please send a message to [The Alumni Department](#) and we will pass along her contact information.



**1958
Gary Foskett**

writes to share some history and updates. I obtained my FCC amateur radio call sign W1ECH in 1955

and started the Gilbert School Amateur Radio Club. I also attended Boys State as a representative of Gilbert, sang in the chorus (attended All New England two different years), and was a member of the band. Our radio club was mentored by Steve Johnson, an Industrial Arts teacher at Gilbert, and we obtained the FCC amateur radio license K1AAC, which we used at the Gilbert amateur radio station for several years.

Jim Guglielmino and I correspond regularly on email and were both saddened by the death of our dear buddy Mich Francis, of course, all members of the Class of 1958.

I am especially thankful to Bob O'Connor, a fellow graduate and president of our class, for keeping me in touch with Gilbert. We have enjoyed attending several reunions down there!

My wife Elaine and I are still

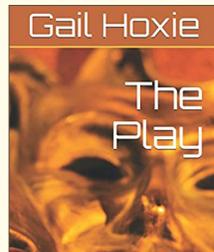
happily ensconced on our ridge up here in Clarendon, VT. We enjoyed our 58th anniversary this summer at The Mooring B&B in Georgetown, Maine. We have three children and six grandchildren.

Thanks SO much for sending the YellowJacket out via email! I read the entire August 2020 Issue, sometimes with tears in my eyes, but enjoying it all. I felt pride in many of the things noted, especially the creative way the class of 2020 managed to celebrate commencement! Fabulous! Stay well. Peace.

**1962
Gail Hoxie**

has been writing poetry and fiction since she was 10 years old. She also writes and records her own music in her home studio and has been working on non-fiction family stories at the urging of her granddaughter.

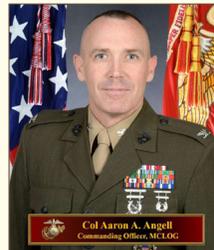
Visit [Gail's Amazon Author Page](#) to learn more about her books, including her new release, *The Play*.



**1993
Col Aaron A. Angell**

Marine Corps Col. Aaron Angell, took command of the Marine Corps Logistics Operations Group in late June 2020.

Aaron, his wife, Megan, and their three daughters recently moved from the Marine Corps Logistics Base in Albany, Georgia



to the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, California.

Aaron describes the Marine Corps Logistics Operations Group as the "Top Gun School for Marine Corps Logistics." He just completed 23 years of active service in the Marine Corps. He has served at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, Camp Pendleton and Miramar Air Station in California, Marine Corps Base Quantico and the Pentagon in Virginia, and most recently at the Marine Corps Logistics Base, Albany, Georgia. He has deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, Bahrain, Germany, and aboard ship in the Mediterranean Sea.

According to a statement, as Aaron thinks back to his childhood in Winsted, he recalls many experiences that helped to develop his dedication to service and his seeking challenges. "He fondly recalls his experiences in Boy Scout Troop 27, as a summer camp counselor who worked at Camp Workcoeman on West Hill Pond, and working with the American Red Cross chapter in Winsted," according to a statement from his parents, Tim and Debbie Angell.

According to his mother, Debbie Angell, "I am a very proud parent ... I recall Marine Ted Marolda, (Class of 1942) a WWII veteran, speaking to Aaron. We lived across the street from the Maroldas. Aaron would frequently cross Wetmore Avenue to talk to Mr. Marolda and to eat Mrs. Marolda's (Margaret (Carroll) Marolda, Class of 1942) cookies. To this day, Ted continues to keep in touch, always looking for an update on Aaron. Several of Aaron's teachers continue to stop by and ask as well. They were such an important part of his life."

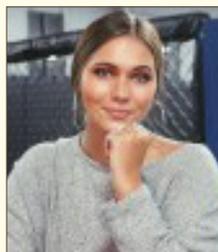


**2011
Jessica Battista** is using her artistic talent to leave her mark on some local suds. Her artwork has been spotted on lager

and stout cans, brewed locally at the Norbrook Brewery in Colebrook, CT. Visit [Jessica's website](#) and [Instagram Page](#) to see more beautiful examples of her art, including her work for the Thimble Island Brewing Company in Branford, CT, and the Winsted Hospital for Animals.

**2015
Julie Vincent**

writes, I'm excited to share I've accepted a full time role with Acara Partners as a Social Media Marketing Specialist. My career post-grad. from Susquehanna in 2019 has been nothing close to traditional. In October 2019 I took a marketing



position at The Cage JSA. Ultimately, I found myself working with professional and amateur athletes on an individual basis developing their personal brands and presence on social media. I have met the most amazing individuals and had the chance to dive into my creative side while combining my analytical thought process to design and run high performing accounts. With the lack of live events and the unknown of the live sport/event ticketing industry I found myself craving more. I was excited to find Acara Partners, a business consulting firm in the aesthetic medical industry. The current growth of the industry and the passion from the employees excites me for the future. Although I look forward to this new position, I will certainly miss the thrill of live sports. I will be staying on part time at The Cage JSA to continue freelancing and consulting athletes on an as needed basis. Cheers to new beginnings!

**2017
Molly Aiudi**

was named to Susquehanna University's dean's list for the fall 2020 semester. The dean's list recognizes students who achieve a grade point average of 3.4 or higher out of a possible 4.0 for the semester. To qualify, students must complete a minimum of 12 semester hours. Molly is a Creative Writing and English-Publishing & Editing major. Congratulations, Molly!



**2018
Liz Wexler**

was named Commonwealth Coast Conference Person of the Week. Without conference competition this past fall due to the pandemic, the Commonwealth Coast Conference (CCC) recognized a [CCC Person of the Week](#) during each week in the fall semester. The series demonstrated that competition is only a small part of what student-athletes, coaches, and administrators accomplish. Liz was featured as a Roger Williams basketball student-athlete.

Liz is a junior who is double majoring in management and mathematics with a minor in business analytics. She is currently working with Edward Dougherty, a mathematics professor



at Roger Williams, on a research project analyzing data that will help scientists understand how stimuli affect Parkinson's disease patients differently. She is the embodiment of a Division III student-athlete who is able to explore her academic endeavors, while also continuing to compete.

When asked about her plans after college, Liz said, "Ideally, I would like to work in some kind of big business, possibly in the analytics field. Then I'd love to coach high school basketball and teach high school math one day." When asked about her biggest inspiration, Liz answered, "I'll have to say my high school basketball coach, Gerry Hicks. He helped me apply to colleges and helped me to make my college choices. He gave me great advice with basketball and academics. Also my grandfather. He taught me to be humble and kind to others and to do absolutely anything to reach my goals."

Kelly Thompson, Roger Williams Head Women's Basketball Coach has this to say about Liz, "In our program, we value character, passion, and selflessness, and Liz Wexler is a shining example of those qualities on and off the court. Since her arrival at Roger Williams, she has excelled in the classroom and in turn has been a tremendous resource for others as both a tutor and peer mentor. She has teamed up with one of her professors to drive tremendously impactful research regarding Parkinson's disease, all using data analytics and other mathematic principles she's learning in the classroom. Everything Liz does is guided by her desire to help others. She goes out of her way to help her teammates learn, and sets the tone for our program by putting in extra work outside of practice. Her commitment to always putting the team first is admired and appreciated by everyone in our program. She is an A+ student, player, and person!" We could not agree more, Congratulations, Liz!





**2019
Penelope Rein**

Congratulations to Penelope for being named to the Muhlenberg College Dean's List for the Fall

2020 semester. Muhlenberg College students and Muhlenberg College School of Continuing Studies students with a term GPA of 3.50 or higher are recognized for this academic achievement. Penelope is majoring in Environmental Science and minoring in Italian Studies. Well done, Penelope!

**2020
Danielle
Dan Dao**

Eastern Connecticut State University recently released its Dean's List for



the fall 2020 semester. Among them is Gilbert alumna, Danielle Dan Dao, international student from Vietnam, who majors in Biochemistry. To qualify for Dean's List, full-time students must complete a minimum of 12 credits in letter-graded courses with an average GPA of 3.5 or higher in the semester. Congratulations, Dan!

**2020
Dylan Miller**

Rochelle Lind, Program Coordinator of ASAP! writes, we are happy to

share the wonderful news that Dylan Miller, a student from The Gilbert School, participated in the 2020 Celebration of Young Writers and his work has been selected by our judges as one of the Top 32 selections out of 150 submissions from 55 schools



throughout Connecticut. Please join us in congratulating Dylan Miller whose writing piece "Bone Box" will be published on our website and will be recognized as a selected writer on our social media platforms and in the press. We are so pleased to recognize the talent of Dylan Miller and we thank you for sharing the opportunity for your entire school community to participate in ASAP!'s annual Celebration of Young Writers. ASAP!, voted #1 Cultural Arts Organization in Northwest CT, is an organization whose mission is to foster creative, hands-on learning through the arts. Congratulations, Dylan!

Bone Box by Dylan Miller

I keep alot in my bone box

Like the word alot
I know it should be a lot but that is not how i say it
That is not how anyone says it
But i dont think i can do anything about it

So i will keep that in the bone box

People cut other people off while they speak
Sometimes i cut people off when i speak
I never intend to

Maybe that is just the bone box

So full
Rattling
Billion sided dice

Now thats an image
Cant even imagine that
How impractical
I would love to see it

I worry sometimes that my bone box is not made of bones at all

I feel metallic
Clanking
Pots and pans down the stairs

When will the tiny hamsters spinning the wheels give up the act
I know they are in there

I would have stopped long ago
Does not seem to be worth it
What are they getting at?

As long as they get their picket fence
They will be happy wont they

Its not for me is it

Guess i will keep that in the bone box



Tell your friends and classmates! We are turning our sights to the digital world. To help you keep up with all of the Good NEWS, please help us find you! Send us your updated contact information! Be sure we have your email address!

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Gilbertalumni@gilbertschool.org

Find us on Facebook 

Instagram 

Visit our website for updates and information!
www.gilbertschool.org

2019 – 2021 DONATIONS

THANK YOU ALUMNI AND FRIENDS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

The following donations were received between July 1, 2019 and February 28, 2021. Every effort to ensure accuracy has been made. However, if you locate an error or omission, please accept our apologies and notify the Alumni Office at gilbertalumni@gilbertschool.org

ENRICHMENT DONATIONS

Gilbert Circle (\$1000 +)

Dr. Joan Centrella, 1971 & Dwight Allen
JoAnn (Young) Leifert, 1980
S. Peter Manchester, 1958
Paul B. Manchester, 1960
Tony, Tanya & Tia, 2021, Mongitore
Charles & Ellen (Vaccari) Seaback, 1972

Blue & Gold Club (\$500 - \$999)

Jack & Pat Bourque
Beverly (Peterson) Davis, 1957
Karen (Horn), 1960 & Edward Dooks
Fouad G. Ferris, 1952
Christine (Wiarda) Hurley, 1987
Deborah (Glynn) Jones, 1970
Ellen C. Marino, Attorney at Law, 1983
Robert P. O'Connor, 1949

Patrons (\$200 - \$499)

Alison Bourque, 1994
JoAnn & Harry Briggs
Rita (Fracasso) Broggi, 1960
John Bushnell, 1951
Joseph Carrozzo, 1954
Alan & Pam (Flaherty) Colavecchio, 1969
Ted E. Davis, 1956
Philip J. DiCara, 1943
Heather (Case) Dzielak, 1986
Andrea (Darcey) Ellinger, 1982
Michael Elloian, 1990
John Filli, 1959
Jacqueline (Hunt) Flagg, 1954
Elaine Fortuna
Joseph Fortuna, 1982
Mary C. (Avery) Gessner, 1954
Michele (Walter) Glass, 1977
Gregory Hugues, 1968
John Lappin, 1958
J. Thomas, 1958 & Irene Light
Josephine (Staszowski) Ochotnicki, 1943
Dorothy (Wetmore) Robbins, 1954
Carlton C. Roberts, 1958
Donald Schiavone, 1948
Steven & Sheila (Dings) Sedlack, 1960/1963
Maria (Centurelli) Summa, 1989
David Torson, 1968
Mary-Jane (Nanni) Ugalde, 1981
Paul, 1966 & Linda Vaccari
Lynn (Sedlack) Vincunas, 1965
Mr. & Mrs. David Wilson

Yellow Jackets (\$100 - \$199)

Harry T. Attianese, 1960
Joseph Barber, 1989
Richard Beebe, 1972
Susan (Moore) Belle-Isle, 1970
Joyce (Barnum) Bianchini, 1963
Jenni Bourque, 1988
LtCol. L. Hunter Davis, USMC, Ret., 1957
James DiMartino, 1964
James & Loretta (Sweeney)English, 1957/1960
Cynthia Fixer, 1978
Robert & Sylvia (LePage)Forster, 1965/1966
Grace M. Fracasso, 1965
John Fracasso, 1975
Peter J. Fracasso, 1966
John & Beverly (Simons) Fratini, 1961/1963
Richard J. Gayer, 1953
Richard Grigos, 1965
Philip & Nancy (Grosso) Groth, 1972
Concetto & Ellen (Cormier) Marino, 1982/1983
Leon R. McKusick, 1947
David J. Molitano, 1987
Shirley (Kolega) Moore, 1943
Gerald Morton, 1965
Ruthie (Ursone), 1992 & Tony Napoleone
Mary (DiVita) Newman, 1964
Todd & Beth (Pinter) Parsons, 1979/1982
Robert Provan, 1956
Kristin (Lavieri) Roberts, 1983
Ray, Astrid (Haskins) & Molly Robitaille, 1989, 1989, 2015
Janice (Weber) Scarey, 1964
Mike, Sandi Lynn, Ian & Devon Scherer 1986, 1985, 2015, 2019
Craig Schroeder
Dr. Anthony Serio
Michael Shandra, 1975
Daniel Smith, 1952
Paul, 1960 & Linda Svetz
Matt Watson, 1977
Michael Zonghetti, 1976

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Elizabeth Allen, 1982
Christopher Atwood, 1973
Joseph C. Bazzano, 1960
Thomas, 1967 & Judith Bordonaro
Patricia (Christian) Brooks, 1967
Dorothy (Taslitt) Cohen, 1951
Barbara (Lynch) Collins, 1947
Evelyn D. Cornelio
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Jeanette Emerick, 2005
Frances (Fratini) Cooper, 1945
James M. Heller, 1957

Lisa Holmes, 1978
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Gail Hoxie, 1962
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Paula (Voight) Jause, 1970
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Kevin Lester, 1995
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Lois (Kellogg) Mangione, 1958
Sally (Crossman) Mangione, 1956
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A TRIBUTE TO A CLASSMATE, MENTOR, AND FRIEND

REMEMBERING JASON BOUTIN (CLASS OF 1995)

By Matt Werner (Class of 1998)

I am a graduate of The Gilbert School (TGS) class of 1998. I am now 40 years old, a proud father, and currently serving in my 5th year with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as a senior team lead responsible for deploying to numerous disasters including COVID-19 and the impacts from Hurricane Isaias. I am also a certified Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), an accomplishment dating back to my years growing up in Winsted, Connecticut.

The decision to become an EMT was life-changing, setting off a chain of events that has given my life its entire trajectory. However, the story I want to tell here isn't about me. This story is about the loss of my childhood friend Jason Boutin, a 1995 graduate from TGS.

Jason recently passed away suddenly from complications during his recovery from COVID-19. Upon hearing the news, I was in shock. I contacted my family and some of his closest friends to share the news. All of us were deeply saddened by his loss.

Holding back tears, I immediately began recalling the days when we were children playing together at Park Pond in Winchester, riding bikes through the neighborhood, flying together with my Dad, and camping in my backyard. Those days seem like yesterday. We were so young and innocent, just enjoying the fun and wonder of childhood.

Jason was nearly three years older than me and was someone I looked up to as a mentor. He helped prepare me for my high school days at Gilbert, which calmed my nerves as a freshman. He offered to drive me to school, which was so much "cooler" than riding the bus. He also introduced me to my first girlfriend, and we enjoyed those formative years together, double dating and learning about love. Jason introduced me to coffee, a simple pleasure I enjoy to this day – and our chats over coffee somehow always evolved into deep conversations about psychology, life, and philosophy. It is because of him that I will attribute a part of my own spiritual awareness. I could always count on him to be a great listener and provide me with thoughtful advice as I struggled as a teenager.

During the spring of 1995 as a freshman at TGS, Jason convinced me to join him for a "ride along" as an observer with the Winsted Area Ambulance Association (WAAA), the primary 911 emergency service. Jason had successfully completed Mr. Brady's EMT Course at TGS and was successfully certified. Mr. Brady was our biology teacher and had undertaken the unique initiative of offering to teach Gilbert students the official State of Connecticut EMT certification course as an after-school program. The initiative was one of a kind in CT – something TGS should be proud of offering – and allowed motivated young adults to learn a trade while also serving as a pipeline of new volunteers to WAAA.



Jason T. Boutin

Why am I sharing this story? Well, here is where my friend's loss has hit me the most. It was Jason who convinced me to enroll in Mr. Brady's EMT course in fall of 1995. I entered the challenging 120-hour training course as 15-year-old. Even I knew at the time that it was crazy that a young teenager could become trained in life-saving techniques and be exposed to trauma, death, and tragedy. The world of 911 Emergency Medical Services (EMS) would inevitably expose me to a side of my community that most of my peers would never see.

It was because of Jason's mentorship that I successfully completed the training course and became one of the youngest EMTs certified in the State of CT at age 16. With special permission from the Principal at TGS, I was allowed to respond to 911 calls during school hours. It was an extremely formative time in my life that I never understood the gravity of until I was older. It was also foundational in driving my passion for public service as well as

developing my own sense of personal resilience.

With the support and encouragement of my dear friend Jason, and that fateful decision to enroll in the EMT class at TGS in 1995, I went on to serve with multiple 911 squads over the ensuing two decades and eventually found my career in emergency management. It is also because of that decision that my beautiful daughter is here today – her mom is a Chief/paramedic and we met one another at a 911 squad in the Philadelphia area.

Perhaps what makes his loss the most difficult for me is that it's likely none of these amazing milestones in my life would have happened had it not been for Jason. I am not sure Jason ever realized the impact he had on my life path, as we had grown apart after our college years. However, no one can unwrite our history together. Our paths crossed for a reason... many reasons, apparently... and for that, I'll remain eternally grateful for my friendship with Jason.

Jason - thank you for joining me on this path of life together and helping me become who I am today. You will be missed dearly my friend.

[Jason T. Boutin Memorial Scholarship Fund](#)

A memorial scholarship fund has been set up at The Gilbert School in Jason's memory. Anyone wishing to make a donation may do so either by sending a check to the W. L. Gilbert Trust Corporation (mail to: The Gilbert School, 200 Williams Avenue, Winsted, CT 06098, with memo to the Jason T. Boutin Scholarship Fund) or digitally via The Gilbert School website by clicking on this link (list the [Jason T. Boutin Scholarship Fund](#) in the special instructions).

A TRIBUTE TO A BELOVED TEACHER AND INSPIRATION
REMEMBERING EDWARD F. KEELEY

February 24, 2021

Former long-time faculty member of The Gilbert School, Edward F. Keeley, passed away on February 24, 2021. Mr. Keeley directed The Gilbert School band program as an instrumental teacher and conductor of bands from 1964 – 1988. Mr. Keeley organized the Laurel City Summer Band with concerts in the park, created The Gilbert School Summer Music Program for students, and conducted The Pleasant Valley Players musical theater orchestra for many years.

Mr. Keeley contributed much to the growth of generations of students. With his ability to motivate and inspire he impacted many lives as a musician and educator. He leaves a lasting legacy at The Gilbert School.

Mr. Keeley's retirement from Gilbert allowed him to pursue his many and varied interests in cooking, gardening, travel, and golf, and to enjoy UCONN Women's Basketball, Hartford Symphony concerts and his greatest passion – his family.

After his passing, many of Mr. Keeley's former students and former colleagues expressed their thoughts on what a caring, inspirational, and talented teacher he was, as well as a vivacious, humorous, warm and generous man.

"Just got the news that my amazing high school band director, Edward Keeley, passed away a few days ago. To know The Gilbert School in the 60's, 70's and '80's was to know Mr. Keeley. I always marveled at the fact that in a school of less than 500 students, over 100 found their way to first period lunch and then band. My first trips to Florida, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and Boston were because of this man and his wonderful wife. And for four years of band practice, private practice, concerts, parades, and sporting events, we got zero credit on our report cards, but what we received in personal growth was immeasurable. Thank you, Mr. Keeley from the bottom of my heart. May you rest peacefully and bring your beautiful music to the heavens and beyond." – Paul Gallo, 1985

"The world has become decidedly less exceptional. Mr. Edward Keeley directed the Gilbert School Jazz Band, Concert Band, and Marching Band, all of which I was a part. He challenged us with the most remarkable arrangements; let me tell you, UCONN Concert Band was dim compared to the light we lit! We played those challenging arrangements and we played them well because of Mr. Keeley! Exchange concerts were creative and fun. Summer band brightened Wednesday evenings in the park. Being part of band got me through high school. I loved every minute. Thank you, Mr. Keeley!" – Jane Stoltze Loftus, 1982



"I've dreaded this day for so long What a blessing it was to have been able to connect and converse with Mr. Keeley on Facebook. He was my mentor throughout High School, and taught me to excel, achieve, and triumph. (E.A.T.) I love him for everything he stood for and a good part of him will always move forward with me through life, giving back to the ones I teach. My condolences to your whole family and to us, The Gilbert School Family, Thank you Ed." – Joseph Smith, 1987



Edward F. Keeley

"He was an inspiration and mentor to so many over his decades of wondrous achievement at Gilbert. Parents and students all adored his good nature and humor. He took what Ma Sonier and others who were involved in the music program at Gilbert started to an extraordinary level. RIP my friend" – Jim Cormier, 1984

"When I first saw him on Facebook a few year ago, he asked how my trumpet was . . . I was amazed that he would remember me and what I played. He had a good mix of pushing you to do better, praising you when you did well, being serious when he needed to and letting off some steam when he needed to also. My band time was among my favorite time in high school." – Ron Mele, 1978

"Mr. Keeley taught us more than the love and appreciation of music. He gave us a safe place to be different and to see parts of our world some of us would never have had the chance to see. More than anything for me, he taught respect -- for him, for others, and for myself. To see the gifts of others and to show us what could be achieved through hard work and dedication". – Joyce Ann Gallo, 1987

"Losing a beloved teacher is tough, but this is especially tough because Mr. Keeley affected all of us, even those not in band. He set the standard for the music department and encouraged everyone to rise to it and give their best. Oh yes, and learn from his example" – Lynn Schnier, 1975

[The Edward Keeley Memorial Fund](#)

A music department memorial fund has been set up by the W. L. Gilbert Trust in Mr. Keeley's memory. Anyone wishing to make a donation may send a check to the W. L. Gilbert Trust Corporation, with the memo line marked Edward Keeley Memorial Fund, and mail to The Gilbert School, 200 Williams Avenue, Winsted, CT 06098. Donations may also be made via The Gilbert School website by clicking on the link and listing the [Edward Keeley Memorial Fund](#) in the special instructions. All donations will benefit The Gilbert School Music Department.

In Memoriam

1935
Irene (Marquette) Tobin
May 20, 2018

1937
Elizabeth (Clark) Bartlett
February 21, 2020

1938
Joseph Bardino, Sr.
November 24, 2020

1938
Josephine (Amico) Nataro
January 8, 2021

1940
Beatrice (Yorker) Fancher
March 23, 2020

1941
Elisabeth "Betty" (Hawley) Erickson
July 22, 2020

1941
Ruth (Allen) Rogers
April 14, 2020

1942
Bernard L. Fields, Sr.
December 3, 2020

1943
Paul Pompa
December 21, 2020

1944
Mary L. Leblond
January 22, 2020

1944
Concetto S. Marino
January 23, 2021

1944
William P. Russo
October 29, 2020

1945
Grace L. (Paxcia) Kulinski
January 16, 2021

1945
James E. Smith
November 18, 2020

1946
Rose (Bardino) Lamberto
September 9, 2020

1946
Barbara (Fritz) Martin
April 10, 2020

1947
Shirley (Witman) Pixley
February 15, 2021

1948
John A. Brady
February 14, 2021

1948
Jean (Saunders) Flaherty
October 9, 2020

1948
William Howard Wilcox
January 18, 2021

1949
Ernestine (Ferrante) Narducci
January 30, 2020

1949
Frederick F. Williams
July 29, 2020

1950
Franklin W. Hall
November 19, 2020

1950
Francis P. Nichols
August 16, 2020

1951
John C. Bazzano, Jr.
November 24, 2018

1951
Doris (Fuller) Marino
August 10, 2020

1951
William Chester Sesko
July 30, 2020

1951
Lorraine (Beaudoin) Useforge
January 24, 2020

1953
Ellen (Webb) Carlino
April 11, 2020

1953
Mary English
March 2, 2020

1953
C. Grace (Ransom) Jones
May 4, 2020

1953
Robert LaFlamme
May 7, 2020

1953
John Charles Miller
January 11, 2021

1953
Paul R. Nanni
September 16, 2020

1953
John "Jack" Perry
October 25, 2020

1953
Norman John Schaefer
May 1, 2020

1953
Joseph F. Zecchin
December 21, 2020

1954
Joyce (Sylvernale) Mahoney
December 2, 2020

1954
David James Pequignot
January 26, 2021

1954
Joan Pelkey Sjoberg
January 15, 2021

1955
JoAnn (Thurston) Rines
December 6, 2020

1956
Ruth J. (Joyner) O'Neill
January 11, 2019

1957
Patricia (Sorel) Jasmin
April 26, 2020

1957
Gertrude (Marquis) Schlapfer
October 14, 2020

1958
Leon Stetson, Sr.
April 27, 2020

1959
Eleanor (Henry) Laforge
August 31, 2020

1960
Karen (Bascetta) Morgan
July 26, 1942

1961
James Fratini
September 9, 2020

1961
Lillian (Turgeon) Sampson
January 17, 2021

1961
Sandra (Jones) Veselic
February 26, 2020

1963
William F. Doubleday
January 30, 2020

1964
Donald L. Bunel
July 3, 2020

1964
Joyce (Cameron) Griffin
June 6, 2020

1965
Linda A. Luke
November 10, 2020

1966
Yvonne (Picard) Burinskas
December 14, 2020

1967
Heidi (Bronson) Melia
October 29, 2020

1968
Francis J. Aliano, Jr.
November 19, 2020

1969
Carol (Brady) Gaylord
October 13, 2020

1969
Michael Pinter
September 22, 2020

1969
John P. Stone, Jr.
May 20, 2020

1969
Donna J. Thomes
November 23, 2020

1970
Brian E. Van Alstyne
August 25, 2020

1971
William J. Sesko
August 30, 2020

1973
Beth (Prindle) Platt
January 30, 2020

1978
Glenn Pilipski
February 9, 2020

1979
James Thure Daniel Devlin
September 17, 2020

1979
Lisa (Lovetere) Knox
April 22, 2020

1986
Christopher Cassese
February 13, 2020

1987
Kelly Lyn (Mufatti) Wassung
January 27, 2021

1988
George Mills
September 9, 2020

1991
Diane Jarvis
December 21, 2020

1991
Thomas "Tommy" Obst
November 15, 2020

1995
Jason Thomas Boutin
August 24, 2020

2008
Jeffrey O. McDonagh
January 20, 2021

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The Gilbert School
Franklin W. Hall
November 19, 2020

*Franklin W. Hall,
Class of 1950, served
as Trustee of The
Gilbert School from
1977 - 2001. After
his retirement from
the Trust, Mr. Hall*



*continued to be an important part
of the history of The Gilbert School,
serving as Trustee Emeritus.*

Former Faculty
The Gilbert School
Edward F. Keeley
February 24, 2021



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