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Red Hook Alumni Association helping past and present grads plus community

by Daniel McIntyre

The Red Hook Alumni Association knows the importance of family ties. Each year, in addition to offering scholarships to all Red Hook graduates, the Association also presents special scholarships to graduates directly descending from previous graduates in their family.

“The aim of the Association is to encourage direct descendants of alumni to apply for the scholarships,” said 1940 Red Hook High School graduate and Red Hook Alumni Association Treasurer **Emma Coons**. Emma added that the funding for the grants comes from donations from Red Hook alumni. “The scholarships are possible because of the generosity of the members,” she said.

The Alumni Association gives out six \$500 scholarships to direct descendent graduates each year. They also give out two \$100 scholarships, which all graduates are eligible to apply for, including students who are not direct descendants.

Applications for the scholarships can be obtained at the guidance office at Red Hook High School. To date, the association has given out approximately \$40,000 in scholarship dollars to graduates. **The deadline for applications is April 16.**

To let old friends connect, the Alumni Association holds an Annual Dinner Dance on the fourth Saturday of July every year. This year, the **25th Annual Dinner Dance** will be held on **Saturday, July 24 at Cappucino by Coppola's Italian-American Bistro in Red Hook**, located on Route 9G across from Bard College. Emma said that the dinner is often the focal point of a weekend that many graduates plan other events around with their fellow school mates and family members. Favorite events surrounding the dinner dance often include picnics and Hudson River cruises.

“The Dinner Dance encourages people to meet and be together,” Emma said. The Dinner Dance is also a time when the Association takes the time to honor people who have served the **Red Hook Central School District**. The association has honored teachers, bus drivers, aides, secretaries, and a wide variety of people whom have served the district with years of service. Emma said that much has changed in Red Hook since she graduated in 1940. “There have been a lot of changes in Red Hook,” she said. “When I graduated there was one school. Now, there are three.”

As a way to connect with the community, the Alumni Association also takes part in a number of community events. The Association sets up tables at *Apple Blossom Day in May* and *Hardscrabble Day in September*.

“We have old yearbooks set up at our table,” Emma said. “It makes for an interesting time to chat with people. In addition to the yearbooks being displayed at the booths, the Association keeps them on file at the Red Hook library for the public's use. We want to have a presence in

the community on those two popular days,” said Red Hook Alumni Association Council member **Joe Jozefowicz**. Joe (class of 1956) said that **the council meets once a month and is always looking for new members**. “I’d like to see the council grow,” he added. *“I’d also like to impress on people that if they graduated from the Red Hook Central School District, we would appreciate their support, especially by paying dues.* The dues help with our expenses. The more people *we have* as members the better. We have good people who give the organization stability and leadership. They all work hard to give us that stability. People like Emma and our president **John Douglas.**”

Part of the council’s work includes sending out a newsletter, keeping track of an ever changing list of names and addresses, and planning events.

The Alumni Association recently received an \$8,000 grant from the **Red Hook PTA**. *The group has a plan in the works to build a pavilion at the **Mill Road School**.* The plan is to begin building this summer. The Association has received permission from the administration and all the planning and preliminary work has been done. The Association intends the proposed pavilion to be used as an outdoor education site as well as a recreation site.

*To keep its members and the public informed about the goings on at the Association, they launched the Web site **www.redhookalumni.com**.* *The comprehensive site features an alumni forum which gives graduates the opportunity to find old friends. Additionally, the site features an alumni email directory, alumni news, contact information, upcoming events, and links.*

For additional information about the Red Hook Alumni Association, call Corresponding Secretary, Judy Walsh Troeger at (845) 758-9148.