

Olivers will walk out together, just as they arrived 36 years ago

By ELIZABETH ANDERSON
Post Correspondent

This June, after 36 years, both Lake-Lehman High School (LLHS) Principal John Oliver and his wife, English teacher Carol Oliver, will walk out of those hallowed halls for the last time. They will be joined in their departure by their daughter, Joanna, as she graduates Lake-Lehman and moves on to West Chester University and her bright future.

"It is with mixed emotions that we're leaving," said John Oliver of his and his wife's decision to retire. "Lake-Lehman has been a big part of our lives. Thirty-six years ago, two eager young teachers, fresh from college, met each other their first day on the job in the lobby of the new Lake-Lehman High School. There was an instant attraction, not only to each other, but also to the school district that would become such an integral part of their lives for nearly four decades.

"We were just walking down the hall the other day and I said, 'Oh my god, John, the biggest portion of our lives has been spent in these corridors,'" said Carol Oliver. "It's amazing." The couple said they figured they have touched and been touched by the lives of perhaps 5,000 students, including the children of former students. But no grandchildren of former students.

"We always said we would retire before that happened," Carol Oliver laughed. "Everywhere we go, Joanna will say, 'mom and dad taught that man or woman,'" she said. "She is amazed at how many people we've taught."

The Oliver's were hired with six other young teachers. "The kids just loved it," she recalls. "We were like them. We were like the new Camelot, you know,



Carol Oliver stood behind John and Joanna on the family's porch in Dallas. John and Carol are retiring this year after 36 years at the Lake-Lehman School District, and Joanna is graduating.

that kind of thing."

She started the journalism club at the high school, which led to a journalism class. As the newspaper advisor, she stayed after school while her future husband coached wrestling. "The wrestlers used to follow us on our dates," she reminisced. "They were devils, but we had such a good time with them."

Both John and Carol had planned to teach but one year at Lake-Lehman. She was moving on to teach in New England and he was going to become an officer in one of the armed forces.

"It's funny how things happen," said John Oliver.

"It was a Lake-Lehman marriage, that's for sure.."

Carol Oliver

John Oliver taught Physical Education, Health, and Science and coached wrestling and football before earning his master's degree in administration and becoming the principal of the middle school 28 years ago. It took Oliver five years of evening classes to earn that degree from the University of Scranton. He served 16 years as principal of

the middle school and then moved on to become the principal of LLHS. As to why he chose to become a principal, his wife interjected, "He is the leader type." John Oliver agreed he fancies himself in that role, as do many of the Lake-Lehman faculty.

"He is very wise in his leadership style," said LLHS teacher and coach, John Baranowski. "Rather than react hastily to things, he's able to sit back and think about them before he makes a decision or completes an action."

Baranowski, a 31-year veteran of the district, said John Oliver

was one of the first teachers he met when he began teaching and coaching at the high school. "Certainly, he will be sorely missed," Baranowski continued. "His knowledge, wisdom and experience are something that is going to be really difficult to replace."

Richard Derby, LLHS art teacher has worked with Oliver for 27 years, first at the middle school and then at the high school. "He has pretty much been my boss most of my life," said Derby. "He has been an absolute gem to work for. I think that I will miss him a good deal."

Derby is a graduate of LLHS and had both John and Carol Oliver as teachers when he was a student. "I believe I had Mr. Oliver as a student aid in study hall and Mrs. Oliver was my senior English teacher. She is fabulous. Very energetic and creative."

One thing Carol Oliver said she would not miss is correcting essays.

"Mrs. Oliver has probably corrected a million written assignments and she is overdone on it," said John Oliver as his wife slowly nodded her head.

"That is the only part I'll miss," she said. "I love it all."

Many of Carol Oliver's former students have kept in touch with her over the years, sending her their published books and others their films. She ran into a former student who holds a special spot for her about five years ago. She helped him memorize his lines in Shakespeare's Macbeth after he broke down and told her he couldn't read.

"He wept and I wept," she recalled. "This big burly guy with muscles. Everybody thought he was just a bull, that he did not care about school, but he was trying to hide that he was illiterate."

She taught him to read after school.

John Oliver said he is getting almost daily calls from people learning of his retirement, saying they have the perfect job or project for him, but neither he nor Carol is interested at the moment. It is his first summer off in nearly 30 years and that is something different.

"I think we're just going to kick back and relax a couple months," he said. "I think that is probably what we're going to do." John is a Dallas Borough councilman for the last two years and Carol is on the library board. There is gardening and house remodeling to do and visits to see Joanna and son, Johnny.

Their son, Johnny, surprised them with a retirement present of a Caribbean cruise. They in turn are gifting their daughter, Joanna, and taking her along. It is a graduation gift for the honor student. Joanna will be attending West Chester University in the fall, so it is empty nest time as well as the big change that retirement can bring.

"Might as well do it all at once," John Oliver said. "Having spent the last four years with her parents 25 feet away, it's going to be different for her also."

"It is time to move over and let some younger people move in. Give them the opportunity to do some of the kind of things that we have done and enjoyed," said John Oliver. "Lake-Lehman School District has been very, very good to us in all kinds of different ways. Providing us with an income is only a small part of it. There was a lot of personal satisfaction that we have enjoyed over the years as a result of being involved there."

"It was a Lake-Lehman marriage, that's for sure," his wife Carol added.

Lunch

(continued from page 1)

ment for the district for several years.

Mary Fuller, assistant regional manager for Nutrition, Inc., said her company is more than willing to work with the district but needs specific direction from the board to guide them. Fuller asked for a meeting to further discuss the district's requirements.

"Whatever makes it more appetizing to the kids, let's do it," said board member Michelle Coombs. "Give them good quality."

The price of meals to the students will not be raised. The board is expected to vote on the matter later this month.

Board President Charles Boytin, board member Charles Balavage and Douglas Trumbower, architect for the high school renovation/construction project, had a meeting to discuss the bidding of a proposed maintenance building and salt shed. A

budget of \$200,000 was set for the project some time ago. The size of the building will be about 100 feet by 50 feet and it will have five garage doors. Boytin said the building would be built to be expandable in the future but stay within the budget now.

Included on the work session agenda was a request for the board to approve \$162,670 in school district insurance policies with Pennsylvania School Boards Association Insurance Trust for the period July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003.

A special meeting to adopt the 2002-2003 budget will be held on Thursday, June 27, at 6 p.m. in the multi-purpose room of the Lehman-Jackson Elementary School.

The next regular meeting for general purposes will be held Tuesday, June 18, at 7 p.m. in the multi-purpose room of the Lehman-Jackson Elementary School.

Ground broken for Trucksville church expansion

Trucksville United Methodist Church broke ground June 2 to begin a \$1.7 million dollar building project for the construction and renovation of church property located adjacent to Church and Knob Hill Roads in Trucksville.

The building project will include the addition of a new wing to the present Education Building. This two-level, 15 room wing will provide space for the educational programs of the church, the Trucksville Nursery School and meeting rooms for Boy Scout Troop and Cub Scout Pack #155. The lower level will include a room for the relocation of the Back Mountain Food Pantry sponsored by the Back Mountain Ministerium. The project will provide for the renovation of the existing Education Facility. When completed the entire building will be known as the William and Melba Dickson Education Facility.

The building project will include the renovation of the church to provide a handicap accessible entrance to the sanctuary and a remodeled rest room in the lower level.

The firm of Architects + Engineering Group, Inc. of Wilkes-Barre has prepared the design for the construction and renovation of the buildings. The contractor will be A Pickett Construction Inc. of Kingston, Pa.

Participants, kneeling: Rev. W. Charles Naugle. From left, first row: Debbie Jury, Sunday School Superintendent; Betty June Mathers, Boy Scout Program Coordinator; Shannon Dingle, Youth Representative; Jeff Dickson, Donor, Dickson Education Center; Louise Hazletine, Campaign 2000 Committee; Margaret Johnson, Lay Leader of Congregation. Second row: Atty Ronald Santorz, Building Finance Committee; Ernie McCabe, A. Pickett Construction Inc.; Raymond Metzgar, Jr., Chairman Board of trustees; George Baerd, Chairman, Administrative Council; William Long, Chairperson Campaign 2000; Robert Montgomery, Architects + Engineering Inc.; Sharon Cosgrove, Director, Trucksville Nursery School; George Isaacs, Construction Committee. Absent from picture: Walter Meade, Back Mountain Food Pantry.



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