

The Living Room Times

EXTRA

309th overall edition — 31st special edition of 1995-1996 season

Friday, June 7, 1996

SCHOOL
DAYS
LEFT UNTIL
VACATION:



FIRE! FIRE!

NHS evacuated twice in one day



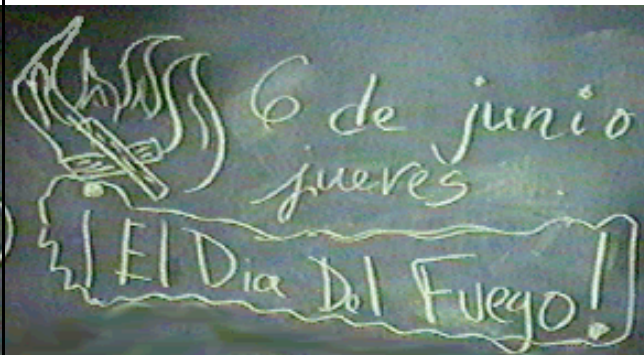
“This is one of those days you wait for your whole life. It’s like, ‘Oh my God, the school’s burning down,’ and now it really is.”

That’s how one Newington High student, freshman Liz Janelle, summed up the wild and crazy day at NHS yesterday.

Bill Kenny gave a slightly different summary of the day: “This is the best thing that’s happened in this school year,” Kenny, a

(Continued on page 2)

“This is the best thing that’s happened in this school year. It’s the highlight of the year. I think that we should have a fire everyday.”
—**Bill Kenny**



Far Above: A firetruck comes down Willard Ave. during the second fire.
Above: A Spanish message saying “Thursday, June 6: The Day of Fire”
Right: The scene in Mr. Lombardi’s room five hours after the first fire.



Not 1, but 2, fires at NHS

Classroom, art room affected by unrelated blazes

(Continued from page 2)

Meanwhile, as janitors and firefighters tried to clean things up and determine the cause of the fire, NHS students were relishing in their chance to hang around outside when they would normally be in first-period class.

"This is the highlight of this year," Bob Aniello declared. But he then added on a more negative note, "I had homework to do, and now I can't do it."

Joey Guerrero explained his theory of what was going on inside at about 7:35, forty-five minutes after the fire began. "Obviously, they would have extinguished it by now, and now they're inspecting for any fires that might be in the walls and ceiling."

"I wonder how many people actually know what happened," mused Kate Harbison. "Our bus had, like, twelve different stories in five minutes."

In addition to rejoicing in being out of class and theorizing about the cause of the fire, students were jokingly accusing each other of setting the fire.

"I have a feeling that one of the two candidates for vice president in the freshman class set it, so that way, they couldn't lose," said Josh Rubin.

"Claudio, is it true the Mafia set a fire?" Brendan Loy asked Claudio Gualtieri.

"If we set a fire, this building would be down, not just like this," the G-Man responded, laughing.

When students and teachers were finally let back into the building, there was more talk—of course—about the morning chaos.

"I wish it had all burned," Jenn May commented. "Because then I wouldn't be so tired and I wouldn't have to do my English homework."

One question that was raised was how a history teacher—not a science or cooking teacher, but a history teacher—managed to set his room ablaze.

"He was trying to recreate one of the wars," said Jessica Olson.

"They were studying the Great Chicago Fire, and they wanted to do a hands-on demonstration," Brendan Loy suggested. "And it just kind of got out of hand."

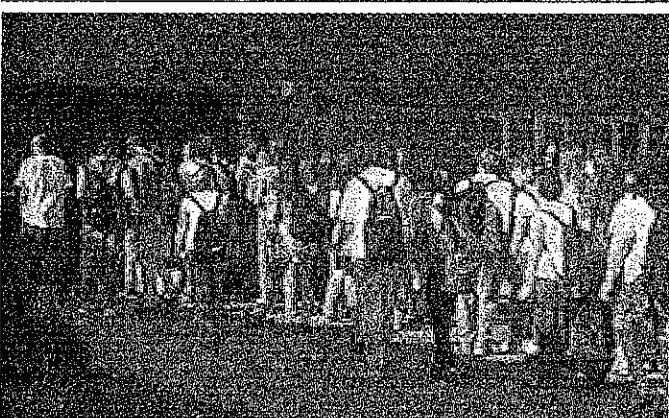
About the fire in general, Loy said, "What this means is that was more smoke in the building this morning than in the boys' bathroom on an average day."

Principal Paul Hoey gave the official word on the cause of the fire over the intercom.



Above: For most of the day, several classrooms on the third floor near Room 331 were blocked off by a fire line, as you can see in the picture.

Right: A close-up of the fire line sign.



Above: NHS students return to the building after the first fire evacuation. It wasn't long before they were back outside again, running from another fire.

(Continued on page 4)

Fires lead to crazy day

(Continued from page 3)

"As you're aware, this morning we had a small fire in Room 331, which was an electrical fire in a fan which was left on overnight.

"I have to commend the students and the faculty for their help and assistance in seeing that everyone was moved out to the soccer field and away from the building."

"Since this was a real situation, we've learned a few things today. Any time that there is an evacuation of the building for a fire alarm, we need to move far away from the building, and away from the front roads and parking lots, because this is an area where emergency vehicles and fire department members will be coming in and parking their vehicles....In the future, any time we have a fire alarm or a drill, those people who exit from the front of the building should go way out to the sidewalk area."

When he made his announcement over the intercom at 8:24, little did Mr. Hoey know that the "future" meant just a few minutes after homeroom ended.

But it did. Early in first period, a calm announcement came over the intercom advising students to "quietly" evacuate the building. It was another fire.

"This is awesome!" exclaimed a laughing, smiling, and seemingly amazed Matt Kagan as he walked out of the building in response to the day's second emergency.

In response to Brendan Loy's previous allegations of a Mafia conspiracy, Todd Stigliano asked Loy, "Brendan, I'm right here! Did I do this one too? It's all in the mind. It's all in the mind. My Mafia hitmen are up in the roof and you don't ever know what they're going to do."

Because the order to evacuate the building had not specifically said there was another fire, one theory was that the evacuation was caused by unsafe after-effects of the first fire.

"Some girl in my class was right by—I'm in 327 homeroom—she started gasping for air because she couldn't breathe because she had asthma, so they took her down to the nurse. So I don't know, maybe it's not safe, or something," guessed Bryan Rudolph.

The actual cause of the evacuation was a second fire, as described by Mr. King later in the day.

"In Room 417, students were doing an art project with hot, hot, very hot wax, and some of the wax overheated, got onto the paper, and created some smoke."

Although the second fire was actually less significant than the first, the whole unbelievable situation of two unrelated fires in one day caused rejoicing throughout the school among students who were happy that the day was so interrupted.

"I love it," said Todd Stigliano. "It's great."
Cindy Klubnik and Alison Lucey both described the

fires as "cool."

"More fires!" demanded Todd Kean.

"This is, like, the perfect day for a school kid," stated Kate Harbeson.

"I think that it's very uncanny to have two fires in the same hour," Liz Rubasky pointed out.

Some students demanded that they be released and sent home because of the fires.

"If they don't send us home now, I'm taking my shoes, and I'm walking my ass home," declared Dayna Madore.

Some students actually did just that. They left the school and went either home or to 7-Eleven down the street. Apparently, the convenience store was mobbed with truant high schoolers during the evacuation.

"Rescue's coming, and we're going home! Who!" yelled an elated Chris Simcik as a firetruck came down Willard Avenue. "Because they have to call school. Two in one day!"

As students went back inside and it became clear that, in fact, school was not being called off for the day, Brendan Loy asked a firefighter inside the building, "I have a question. What is the legal limit on the amount of fires in one day before you get to go home? What's the law on that?" The fireman replied, "There is no legal limit."

When asked later if there was ever any serious consideration of sending students home because of the fires, Mr. King said, "The answer to that question would be no, because we knew we could contain the fire; We knew we could make the building safe for everybody. There might have been thought of 12:15 early release, legal length day, but the scope of the fires really didn't warrant another day off."

"I thought everybody acted like troopers. Students in teachers that were in the building at 7:00 got out quickly. Students waited outside orderly," he said, referring to the first fire. As for the second fire, he noted, "Our average evacuation on a fire drill is, like, 2 minutes and 42 seconds, and we actually evacuated the building in, like, around 2 minutes and 7 seconds."

Asked if anything like yesterday's events had ever happened before at Newington High, Mr. King replied, "About 18 years ago, we had a series of toilet fires. We had a student in the school who was lighting toilet bowls on fire. We had to evacuate the building. There was smoke. But we've never had two classroom fires of this nature ever before."

"Certainly not in one day," Brendan Loy added.

"And especially on one day," Mr. King agreed. "For sure."

Mr. Lombardi agreed. Asked if he's ever seen anything like the events yesterday during his career, he answered, "Never in twenty years. Never."

seemingly

→ and