

# The Messenger

New Richmond High School, 1131 Bethel-New Richmond Road, New Richmond, Ohio 45157

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## New Richmond High School wears new look Construction declared "necessary inconvenience"

By Brandi Dickerson and Trish Richter

*Time to begin a new year, New Richmond High School students. How was summer break? Upon pulling in to the high school parking lot, jaws dropped. Where were the pale brick walls? The train of square, prison-cell windows? The canopy over the front door? And why were there men climbing all over the roof?!*

Confused students were ushered into mine-shaped hallways hastily made by plywood and nails, with metal lanterns hanging from the ceiling every few feet; a scene described by an anonymous senior as the "setting of *E.T.*" Who would have thought this shady looking tunnel led to the front doors of the high school?

As the 2007/08 school year resumed, the construction on the building still wasn't finished. But it wasn't supposed to be. Superintendent Tom Durbin said the construction, so far, has been going smoothly.

"We have been very fortunate in that everything is going according to plan without any major delays," said Durbin. "We were only about two days behind schedule because some of the parts that were ordered didn't come in on time and the sub-contractors weren't able to get the materials they needed."

But the actual construction met its deadline. "The inside is finished, we're only waiting on pipe paneling," said Durbin. "The outside should be completely finished by September 24<sup>th</sup>, including landscaping and staging areas, and the fencing and trailers should be gone."

So it's almost finished; students have been seeing fewer helmeted workers walk past their second story windows, and the *E.T.* tunnels were removed from the front entrance of the school by September 14<sup>th</sup>. And now that it's cleaned up a bit, students have to admit, the high school's face lift looks pretty nice. It's layered in red brick, with a detailed sand-stone design. The windows, once resembling a railroad track, are now tall and arched, perfect for staring out of in class. The belly of the canopy over the main entrance, for those of you who have never looked up while walk-

ing into school, is black metal framework with an interesting design. And above that, big black letters of the school's initials in a bright red circle to let visitors know that we *are*, indeed, NR.

But "student morale," as Durbin put it, wasn't the only reason the high school was reconstructed over the summer.

"The walls on the outside of the building needed to be repaired to prevent water from running between the block and the brick," he said. "But more importantly, the building is better insulated. There's actual insulation between the building and the blocks, so we should see a saving in the heating and cooling costs as well."

In order to make the necessary repairs, the board first wanted to make sure the building would look different before the major project went underway and money was scooped out of the permanent improvement fund. "We transferred about \$1 million from the general fund to the permanent improvement fund to make sure we had enough money to pay for it," said Durbin. The total cost: around \$2.2 million, "and we're not over-budget," he stated.

But hey, at least there won't be water leaking through the window panes anymore.

On another, higher pitched and more annoying, note: putting up with the hammering, pounding, lack of computers and phones, etc. hasn't been easy this first month of school. "I appreciate the cooperation with the staff over the construction because I realize it has been an inconvenience," said Durbin.

No kidding! But as science teacher Wayne Endicott put it, "it's a necessary inconvenience"

Students may have noticed an absence in greeting this year, when they realized there was no lurking science teacher at the top of the third floor staircase. No, Wayne Endicott hasn't retired, he was simply moved to the multi-purpose gym, aka, the dungeon.

His relocation was assigned to him

during the first staff meeting of the school year. Endicott said that it's been predicted that he'll be reintroduced to room 312 after they wrap up the construction and move his computers back into the room.

"The only problems that I have are concerning lighting and sound. The big advantage has been the cold air, although it's a bit *too* cold now," said Endicott. "This room is probably the best fit for my class, the only problem has been hunting down and gathering supplies."

But his fourth bell for Chem. I has made things a bit easier. "They know what they need and want to do and they're polite," he said. He would also like to mention that his fourth period class loves peanuts.

Math teacher John Callebs said that although the construction has been an inconvenience, the communication from our administrators was excellent.

"We were given extra time on the two work days to get ready and all is well. But I am in my room and very happy. I cannot speak for those who are not in yet. But they are professionals and I am sure learning has not suffered. We all have problems; it is how we deal with them that determine the person," he said.

Aside from not being granted access to the school building over the summer and the two days without air conditioning, English teacher Laani Wuest said that the construction hasn't been much of an inconvenience.

"I was pleasantly surprised that school started on time with relatively little hassle. Having all the students to help me set up my classroom made the beginning of the year almost normal. I usually do most of my preplanning at home and take what I need over the summer home at the end of the previous school year," she said.

On the other hand, the construction has left some teachers a bit frazzled and unorganized, such as business teacher Mary Ann Dalton.

"I know for me personally, I usually like to start preparing my classroom in the beginning of August. I would typically come in 2-3 days/week for a couple of hours so everything wasn't so rushed at the beginning of the school year. Since we weren't allowed in the building during the summer, we really didn't get "settled" until the Monday after school started," she said.

English teacher Nicole Parker said that the initiation of the school year has been much more stressful than usual and the heat hasn't helped either.

But she said she was very impressed at the way everyone handled it. "The custodians and maintenance staff did a tremendous job getting the



*E.T. come home!* Yes, the infamous tunnel students were ushered through in order to reach the main entrance. Photo:// T. Richter.

building ready. The students who came to help move things were absolutely lifesavers (I know I never would have been ready without them!), she said. "And the entire student body has handled the inconveniences in stride. I will be glad when it is all over, but it certainly could have been so much worse," she said.

The lack of computers has caused math teacher Pat Verwold the most strife, forcing her to make daily treks to the library or computer lab in search of a one.

"Not all computers were hooked up...some are still not, and we still have to go to the library or computer lab to copy from our computers as they are not yet connected to the school copier," said Verwold. "The heating/cooling system irregularities have also been a challenge. I still have boxes to unpack! It did make getting ready for the first days difficult," she said.

It seems the school construction has been a bit of a pain, even to the students. About 63 of them didn't have lockers for the first few weeks of school. They could be seen hobbling around the halls with bookbags ripping at the seams; a spinal deformity waiting to happen.

Senior Alex Thomas said he's been left lockerless and baking in the choir room. "I either have to take all my

books home with me or scatter them around the school like an Easter egg hunt," said Thomas. "And the choir room is so warm that somebody's passed out. Isn't fainting a little inconveniencing?"

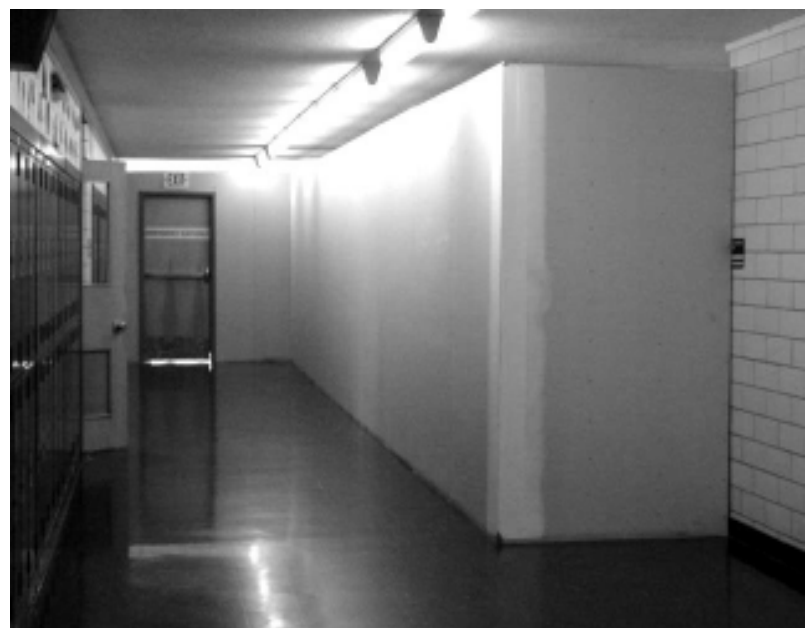
The locker situation left several students sharing a locker with a friend, such as junior Heather Newberry.

"Sharing lockers makes things very crowded and difficult to stay organized. All of our things get mixed together," she said.

Junior Matthew Lancaster has adopted a routine of switching off the weight of his books throughout the day.

"For the past month I've carried half of my books in my book bag and switched halfway through the day, keeping the other half in Mr. Heflin's room," said Lancaster.

Everyone's managed to adjust to the chaos, it's just a matter of patience. But we're doing it, staff and students alike. The construction is almost finished, most students have been assigned lockers of their own, and the main entrance is tunnel-free. Sue Griffin is still waiting on a phone to be hooked up in her room, and Endicott, well, he's still waiting on his classroom. And like he said, it's a "necessary inconvenience," but it will be well worth it.



*Remember the days when classrooms had doors?* The side entrance and certain rooms have been closed off due to construction on that corner of the school. Photo:// T. Richter.



*Are you afraid of the dark?* With signs and arrows, it's unmistakable that the school entrance lies just beyond the light. Photo://T. Richter