

From the Superintendent

**DON'T YOU JUST WISH THERE WAS SOMETHING YOU COULD DO TO LOWER YOUR SCHOOL TAXES?** Well there is. Apply for STAR. Last chance!

Somewhere out there is a taxpayer who hasn't heard about it on TV or the radio. They haven't read about it in the newspaper or in their school newsletter. They haven't read the flier from their legislator or they haven't been told by a friendly neighbor in the know. And by the end of this month, if they're still in the dark, it will be too late for them to save from 14% to 100% on the 1999-2000 school tax bill.

March 1, 1999 is the deadline for people to apply for STAR, a special program initiated last year in New York State to help homeowners deal with the rise in school taxes which characterized all school districts ( not just Romulus) over the last decade or more. If you are the owner of a home, **no matter what your age or income**, and that home is your primary residence ( sorry, camp-owners), you are eligible this year for a STAR exemption on at least the first \$10,000 of your home's assessed value. For most people in the Romulus District, applying for STAR can save you more than \$150 on next year's school tax bill. For senior citizens the savings are even greater. Last year the Enhanced STAR Program was initiated with qualifying senior citizens only: this year ALL HOMEOWNERS are eligible. All you need to do is apply.

How do you do it? Applications are available from and need to be returned to your town assessor. Inside this edition of the Bulletin you will find details and phone numbers.

Please take advantage of this opportunity the legislature has made for all of us to save on school taxes on our homes. This money is reimbursed to the school directly from the State, and is a way of shifting the burden from homeowners onto other property owners and other sources of State revenue. In the past few years increases in State Aid have not been forthcoming to Romulus, nor have they kept pace with inflation elsewhere. This is the closest thing to additional State Aid we are likely to receive and it will go to the taxpayer directly instead of to the school. Make sure you get your share. Apply by March 1st to your local assessor to guarantee your savings.

As we begin to prepare our budget for next school year, we want to make certain everyone takes advantage of this first ever opportunity for school tax relief.

Chris Manaseri

# WANTED: GRADUATES of EXCELLENCE

Last summer's RCS@60 project saw Romulus induct six highly deserving people into our Wall of Fame as Graduates of Excellence. Chris and Dan McDonald, Sally Landrum, Phil Sorensen, Peel Long and Walt Gable share the attribute of having distinguished themselves in their careers and their communities, as well as the defining characteristic of being among RCS's 2200 Alumni. As such they were the first six Graduates of Excellence to receive this honor.

In preparation for the second annual induction, to be held at Commencement ceremonies June 26, 1999, we are looking for nominations of outstanding RCS alumni. Nominees should be exemplary citizens having distinguished themselves in their community, profession or career. They must have graduated from Romulus and done so prior to 1989. Selection from the nominations will be made by an anonymous committee representing the school board, the faculty and the community at large.

Nominations should be made through the Superintendent's Office. A brief form, which will be provided upon request, will be required. Please contact Mr. Manaseri's office at 869-5391 to obtain a nominating form, and help us recognize one more Romulus Graduate of Excellence.

## 4TCC Mobil Youth Program Begins

In an effort to provide meaningful activity for all of our young people during the often dangerous after-school hours, the 4 town Community Center will sponsor a special program for students in grades 7-12 on Thursday afternoons at the school in Romulus. The program will run from 3 to 7 p.m.. The same program will be available other afternoons in Interlaken, Ovid and Lodi.

Staffed by a director and youth outreach worker and funded by a grant supplied by New York State, the mobil youth program will offer kids not already engaged in sports or other activities one more supervised opportunity to interact positively with one another. Snacks and entertainment such as movies, hackey sack, air hockey and music will be part of the fun.

All teens are welcome to be part of this opportunity for socializing in a safe, supervised setting. Parent volunteers are needed as well, to help chaperone and provide snacks. If interested in volunteering, please call Sherry Burrows at 582-6726.

## School Board Considers Consolidated Business Office

In an effort to provide quality service at a reduced cost to local taxpayers, the Board of Education has voted to consolidate business offices with willing neighboring districts. This vote culminated two years of study of the suggestion which grew out of a joint meeting of the Boards of Education of Seneca Falls, Waterloo and Romulus held here in February of 1997. That meeting was held to explore the possibility of merging the three districts and to consider alternatives which might reduce costs to all schools and their taxpayers.

In 1997-98 a state-funded Efficiency Study conducted by Dr. Harvey Kaufman of Cornell University's Rural Schools Program indicated that increased state aid could be generated by running the routine functions of each school's business offices through BOCES. The plan was further refined by Wayne Finger Lakes BOCES Assistant Superintendent for Business, Larry Driscoll this past Fall and presented to a joint meeting of the Boards last month. Under the revised plan the three schools combined could net a savings of over \$200,000. Romulus's share of a three way plan would generate over \$49,000 in increased aid and savings combined.

If one or more of the other districts chooses to also go forward, a central office would be created to handle payroll, accounting, accounts payable and other routine functions at a reduced cost. Similar programs exist in the Verona, Binghamton and Adirondack areas of the State. The Board of Education is pleased to let the taxpayers of the District know continue to work to reduce cost and improve efficiency in non-instructional areas of expense with an eye on the bottom line.