

Quigley will move to Gill this fall

Teacher Karen Quigley's fifth grade class is leaving Highmeadow Common Campus and so is she.

Quigley was temporarily laid off this spring as part of a Farmington school district cost-cutting move, and for a while the rookie teacher wondered where she might be - if anywhere - in 2001-02. But she landed on her

feet at Gill Elementary School. The recent decision of a Gill third-grade teacher to retire created the opening she needed.

"I'm very glad to have a job," said Quigley last Thursday, the final session of the school year. "It's sad to leave Highmeadow, but I'm excited to go to Gill."

- Tim Smith

Ceremonial flag burning slated at American Legion post

The American Legion Groves-Walker Post 348 in Farmington will hold a flag burning ceremony at 7 p.m. today, June 14.

Any used or worn flags burned off before 7 p.m. will turn during the ceremony. The Post is located at 31776 Grand River. Call 478-1800 for additional information.

First-year teacher honors students

Karen Quigley doled out certificates to every student in her class during the final day of the school year, for various accomplishments and unique tendencies.

Some of the awardees:
 ■ "Author's Voice" award, for creative writing, Murphy Thiel;
 ■ "Soccer Jock" award, Mike Jones;
 ■ "Drama Queen" award, Christie Scott;
 ■ "Team Player" award, for going with the flow, James Godfrey;
 ■ "GQ Savvy" award, Jerome Mulligan;
 ■ "Math Whiz" award, Eric Blankinship;
 ■ "Artsy Artist" award, Bob Coleman;
 ■ "Reading all the time" award, Jill Rosa;
 ■ "Volunteer of the year" award, Michelle Heller.

Other members of Quigley's "class of 2001" included Melissa Bizer, John Bowden, Bradley Chunn, Seth Culbertson, Tim Gilbert, Jeffrey Gorniewicz, David Eysenhow, Jamie Loftus, Joel Millman, Benjamin Pevon, Alyssa Ried, Matthew Scott, Baratt Shanaman, Molly Tyza, Caroline Watts and Kathryn Wittbold.



Highest bidder Murphy Thiel and Michelle Heller look at the potpourri ball that Michelle won in the class auction, just one of the events designed to make students' final day of school memorable.

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DREKES

Last day from page A1

Campus fifth-grade teacher Karen Quigley and her class, it was more like a bittersweet going away party among high school graduates.

There were cameras clicking, yearbooks making the rounds for autographs and continuous good-bye hugs. Tears were streaming down many faces. Heads were shaking from side-to-side in disbelief that their time together already was over.

The hugs followed Quigley from classroom to playground, where youngsters broke a candy-filled piñata and bought Good Humor ice cream from a vendor.

The obvious love from the students flooded Quigley - finishing her first and only year at Highmeadow.

"If you cry this much now, what are you going to do when your own kids go to college?" one of the students asked the red-faced teacher.

During a rare quiet interlude, Quigley acknowledged that the last day was brutally tough from an emotional standpoint.

Breathing room

"It's killing me, I'm telling them to stay away from me," said Quigley, soon transferring to Gill Elementary School. "I can't believe it's gone, honestly. It's sad to think that they're already leaving me."

The end of the year was far different from the beginning. Last August, Quigley somehow dug out from under boxes and furniture to get ready for business and then proclaimed on the first day that her classroom was

n't going to follow the traditional "teachers talk, students listen" model.

Quigley followed through all year on her philosophy. It proved to be the secret to a special year which included innovative activities and collaborative learning - not to mention special adventures such as turning their classroom into a "ship" or traveling to Fort Malden in Ontario for a hands-on historical excursion.

"It's that relationship I talked about at the beginning," Quigley said. "They know I love them, there's a mutual respect. ... And they can decide how they learn. They develop some ideas and what our goal is and figure out how to get to that goal."

Pretty sweet

One year-long activity had a sugar-coated conclusion, if you will, when Quigley hosted an auction featuring candy, candy and more candy among the items (all donated or bought by the teacher) for bid. Students bid by dipping into their mock checkbook accounts, compiled since the fall.

Throughout the year, students maintained individual checkbooks, where they would add "money" for doing various classroom chores or subtract from their account for not doing their homework, for example. That exercise not only taught them about managing a checkbook, but how to spend wisely and not impulsively, noted student James Godfrey.

Baratt Shanaman ponied up

\$1,600 of his stash for what Quigley described as "a whole lot of chocolate," actually a tub of chocolate-covered cookies.

On the desk in front of Eric Blankinship was a pile of Tootsie Pops, pocket paperbacks and other items he bought. Out of his beginning ledger of \$2,087, he only had about \$37 left when the day neared its conclusion.

While students scrambled for various lower-priced auction leftovers, Quigley said the activity was merely done as "the reward to all those days when they got paid. It's just a fun ending to the year."

Don't forget to write

Meanwhile, what had been a very strong teacher-student bond showed no signs of weakening any time soon.

In her final class assignment, Quigley gave out postcards to her young graduates, who will be now moving on to middle school. Their task is to jot down some summertime musings.

Because Quigley stamped those postcards and wrote her home address on them, the teacher said there'd be no excuse for students not staying in touch.

Most indications are that they will follow through on that assignment.

It will enable students such as Murphy Thiel to extend what truly was an educational, fun and rewarding year.

Besides, noted Murphy, "Miss Quigley really was more like a big sister."

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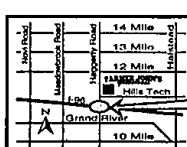
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