



Dunckel students honor Henry Wadsworth Longfellow with a rendition of "Happy Birthday" during the coffeehouse poetry reading.

Students find poetry can be fun during Longfellow Week

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

Longfellow Week started with a small group of eighth graders from Dunckel Middle School in 1999 who discovered teacher Jerry Morrissey has the same birthday as the dead poet - Feb. 27.

"Jerry Morrissey is on the same teaching team as myself and Ninette Soares," said fellow teacher Steven Koponen, who talked about the after school event.

Students have thrown surprise birthday parties for all three every year, Koponen said. In the past, school alumni have come back to help celebrate.

"Fire-side Poets" because their work related to everyday, ordinary Americans.

"When you think of American poets, he was the American poet," Koponen said. "He brought poetry to the common people."

Longfellow Week was designed to do the same thing for Dunckel students.

"You see kids in a new light," said Koponen, who teaches language arts and math. "You see kids reading poetry who you wouldn't expect."

Longfellow was so respected that his 75th birthday was celebrated in schools across the country.

He is best known for "Paul Revere's Ride," written in 1861.

"Poetry and language affects our lives in ways we probably haven't thought about," Koponen said.

"Longfellow Week is a way to have some fun with the language arts and see how our

language applies to our everyday lives. We have so few opportunities to explore language in a nontraditional and fun way."

The week's events included:

■ **Lia's Club** - Players risked points as they decided who among a group of panelists was telling the truth. They are awarded points for correct guesses.

■ **Scrabble tournament** - Players sought high point totals as they created words from letter tiles in this classic crossword game.

■ **Match Game** - Contestants are asked to complete a sentence, story or phrase in the way they think the panelists (their teachers) will answer. The object is to match the most panelists.

Students also participated in a '60s-style coffee house. They brought poetry to read, either their own or someone else's.

They could choose to



Alicia Steele decorates the room for the Beatnik Coffeehouse for Poetry Reading.

PHOTOS BY KELL EPESLER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Holly Callahan and Inga Shoberg choose a poem to read during the coffeehouse readings.

accompany their reading or others by guitars, bongos, etc. The stage was theirs. Costumes featured French berets, gaudies, tiny mustaches and black clothing.

"We had one of our French Back to Back students (a French exchange student) do a poem in French," Koponen said.

AWARD WINNER

The last two years have been exciting for Koponen.

In the fall of 2001, he was named winner of a Milken Award, which recognized his dedication to the teaching profession. He received the \$25,000 award last June in Los Angeles.

The ceremony was choreographed with a full orchestra. Talk show host Larry King spoke, and governors from three states attended.

"Sidney Poitier was in the audience," Koponen said. "It was just cool."

While on the trip, Koponen and his fiancée, Sandy, became engaged. He said they've known each other for 15 years. Their wedding will be held this July at St. Alexander's Church in Farmington Hills.

sbuck@oe.hometoturn.com | (248) 477-5450

Youth to benefit from dinner dance

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

An evening of dining and dancing is planned Friday, April 4, at the Farmington Hills Manor on Orchard Lake between 10 Mile and Shiloh in Farmington Hills.

A partnership between Exchange Club of Farmington and Youth and Family Services, a division of Farmington Hills Special Services, the event will benefit Farmington area youth.

"It should be a fun night," said Todd Lipa, director of Youth and Family Services. "All the proceeds go to our youth activities."

The evening will consist of dinner, dancing, a reverse raf-

fle, 50/50 drawings and the auction of a Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

With each \$70 ticket, two diners are included, as well as an entry into the reverse raffle.

Throughout the evening, all activity will stop five times as raffle numbers are drawn; every 10th number drawn is a winner.

That ticket holder will then receive a prize package with a variety of gifts valued at \$100. The last three tickets drawn will receive \$500, \$1,000 and \$1,500, respectively.

The evening will conclude with the Harley-Davidson auction.

Lipa said Randy Hall will also be analyzing handwriting; participants will be asked to

make a donation to the cause.

Lipa said members are sending out sponsorship forms to help finance the evening. There are several ways to get involved: corporate sponsorship, table sponsorship, donating goods, services or any items a local company can give for the prize packages.

Recognition will be given to donors the evening of the event, on the event flier and in event publicity, Lipa said.

Forms for sponsorship are available at the Castick Activities Center on 11 Mile and should be turned in by March 28.

Call Lipa at (248) 473-1841 for more information.

pacep@oe.hometoturn.com | (248) 477-5450

CABIN FEVER

ESCAPE TO THE

HAMILTON HOTEL

Downtown Birmingham's European-Style Boutique Hotel

- Newly Remodeled Guest Rooms and Amenities Beyond Your Expectations Like Down Comforters and Plush Robes
- Your Stay Includes a Gourmet Breakfast Buffet
- Each Evening We Offer Complimentary Tea

CABIN FEVER SPECIAL

Includes all our regular amenities, plus a one night stay plus 2 tickets to the Birmingham Paladium Theater (Your Movie Choice)

\$109

(Offer good thru 3-31-03)

For reservations, please call 1-800-334-8086
35270 Woodward Avenue
Birmingham, MI 48009
248/642-6200
http://www.hamiltonhotel.com

HOME FURNISHINGS SALE JANUARY 24 THROUGH MARCH 24

WINTER SALE

Baker
FURNITURE • FABRIC • ACCESSORIES

BALCON BIRMINGHAM 36100 WOODWARD AVENUE BIRMINGHAM, MI 35242 651-6606
AVAILABLE TO DELIVERERS AT BAKER BUNNIP & TULLY
MICHIGAN DESIGN CENTER 17000 STATE DRIVE TROOP, MI 48068 616-6700
BAKERFURNITURE.COM