



A first-rate teacher

Anthony Nardino shakes up his Latin classes By Tim Macko

As students all across Wall High school are struggling to stay awake, those lucky enough to be in Anthony Nardino's fourth-period Latin class are fully attentive as he preps them for the upcoming National Latin Exam.

"It's incredible to watch him go," says junior Mike Polasky, 17. "He takes things that I honestly don't care about and makes me want to learn them."

"The key," says Nardino, of Toms River, "is connecting with the students, even if it means being kind of silly."

Those connections have been made during 30 years of teaching, eight of which were at Monsignor Donovan High School in Toms River. Before he was a teacher, however, Nardino was a Roman Catholic priest for 10 years. He left the priesthood after he met his wife.

"Even when I was a priest, I was a teacher," Nardino says. "Only difference is, now I'm teaching in the secular world."

Last year, Nardino was

LATIN FOR BEGINNERS
Anthony Nardino of Toms River teaches a Latin class at Wall Township High School.
(PHOTO: TANVA BREEN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

named Princeton University's Teacher of the Year and is a nominee this year for a similar award given by The College of New Jersey in Ewing.

"The awards and things are nice," says Nardino, who also coaches the boys' and girls' tennis teams and is an announcer at the school's soccer games. "But the real treat is seeing the kids succeed, in my classroom or on the field. That's the best part."

Students from the beginning of his tenure here at Wall still write and e-mail him, even students who had little contact with him.

"Just the other day, I received a letter from a student I had a long time ago who wants to be a Latin teacher," Nardino says. "Those are the sorts of things that make me love this place and teaching here."

Tim Macko, 17, is a junior.

The key is connecting with the students, even if it means being kind of silly.

Anthony Nardino, Latin teacher



Meets and greets

Secretary Susan Ayles acts as the voice of Wall Township High School By Sarah Conner

The school day is quickly passing by as Susan Ayles, a secretary at Wall High School, carries out her job. Whether she is making public announcements between classes, answering phone calls, helping out in the guidance office or aiding parents and

students, she always does her job with a smile.

"She gives people a wonderful first impression because of her cheerful mood and the pleasant manner in which she deals with people," says Gary Azzolini, 46, assistant vice principal.

Ayles has been working as a secretary and receptionist at

MAY I HELP YOU? Sue Ayles, receptionist, secretary and PA announcer in the office.
(PHOTO: DAVE MAY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

the high school for 11 years. Despite the stress, she says she loves everything about her job.

"I don't think I dislike anything about it or else I wouldn't have been here for 11 years," Ayles says.

Ayles came to the high school following the sale of Cruise Connection, a travel agency she managed at Colfax Plaza in Wall.

There are differences between the two jobs. At her former job, she received perks that included free and discounted vacations. Now she likes having a flexible schedule where she can be free on weekends and during the summer, just like her children.

In fact, her son Kevin, 16, is a sophomore here. She says she likes knowing she is there for her son during the school day, but she rarely sees him.

Ayles says she does not consider her job a big responsibility, but when things do get stressful she runs a lap around the school and leaves for lunch. "She handles her job very well and with great expertise," says Donna Arnone, another secretary who works with Ayles. "She is a very sweet, helpful woman."

Sarah Conner, 16, is a sophomore.

They're knocking it out of the park

Wall Township High School's Crimson Knights to do battle on baseball field By Daniel Burns

The Wall High School baseball team faces a unique challenge as it prepares for the 2005 season.

After becoming the first team at the Jersey Shore to win the long-sought quintuple crown — the Crimson Knights captured all five of the championships they competed for, which included division, county, Shore Conference, Central Jersey Group III and overall Group III title — the team now will have one less day to practice for the daunting task of defending its titles.

Today's scheduled practice was canceled by an early-March snowfall.

"It is going to be next to

impossible to defend all of our titles," says senior pitcher Derek Beckman, 18. "But we will try our best."

The Knights remain optimistic about their approaching season, although the snow cost them an early preseason practice this afternoon. It may not seem like a lot, but the loss of just one practice can throw off players' rhythm and timing.

"It's interesting because every team is in the same boat," says head coach Todd Schmitt. "Everyone is trying to get as much practice time as possible."

The Knights posted an overall record of 28-7 last season, having won their final 14 games.

Having graduated many key seniors last season, Schmitt looks to replenish his team with six returning starters.

"Luckily we have many players who have some varsity experience and have tasted what it's like to be a champion," Schmitt says.

Knowing how tough it will be to fulfill expectations, the Knights are counting on returning senior standouts Chris Collazo, Chris Luick and Beckman. The players have had much experience in big games, having registered a 4-2 win against Raritan for the Group III championship last season.

"Our team has a lot of experience and depth," says Collazo, 18, a shortstop. "We are used to playing in big-time games and we have big-time players."

Regardless of the missed practice, the Knights continue to look to the future and work hard each day to hone their skills. They would like nothing more than to duplicate last year's success.

Daniel Burns, 16, is a junior.