

## Colton Newcomers 'Mush' Way Through Winter

By DAVID PIERCE  
**MASSENA** — Area youngsters had a doggone good time Friday when they were given a rare opportunity to ride a sled pulled by dogs during Massena's Winter Expo '86 festivities.

Jerry and Celeste Swalnick of Colton brought their team of six dogs to East Orvis Street Park, a pit stop on their way to a set of

seven-mile races last weekend at Tupper Lake. The couple recently moved to the area in order to have better training conditions for the dogs.

"We just moved up here from Massachusetts because we wanted more snow and cold," said Celeste. "A lot of people think you're crazy when you say that."

However, the warm

temperatures and rain in Massena Friday provided poor running conditions. The Swalnicks say the colder the weather is, the less chance that the furry animals will become too hot from the strenuous exercise, and the more anxious they are to run.

"The colder it gets, the friskier they are," said Celeste. "It's unbelievable."

Jerry recalled racing the animals one recent evening when the temperature was 25 below zero. His forehead and upper legs became numb, but the dogs showed no signs of slowing down when he decided to quit after six miles.

The Swalnicks, who originally had one dog as a pet, first started dog sled racing four or five years ago. Jerry has raced the animals in both two-dog and six-dog competitions. But during the summer off-season the dogs are kept in kennels most of the time.

"In the summer when the dogs are playing with each other that's exercise enough," said Jerry.

Then in August, when the evening temperatures dip below 50 degrees, they start running the dogs a mile or so every day. A chariot is rigged to a bicycle frame for use before the first snow.

"It's just more or less to keep their interest up in the summer," said Celeste. "Then gradually you run more miles."

Eventually Jerry runs the dogs about nine miles per day. So far this season the team has logged more than 200 miles. Most of their dogs are Siberian Huskies or mixed Alaskan breeds. The two lead dogs — an Alaskan breed named Freyja and a mixed breed named Tyler — are particularly important to the success of the Swalnicks' team.

The animals are fed a steady diet of dry dog food mixed with raw meat. Jerry says the food bill is about \$3 per week per dog.

Though the Tupper Lake race has a purse of only a couple hundred dollars, other dog races in the east and midwest are starting to offer purses from \$10,000 to \$25,000.

"It's starting to get sponsorships sort of like car races," said Celeste. "So those who finish in the top two or three really do pretty well."

Some sled dog mushers are able to attract major sponsors, such as dog food companies. Jerry says he hasn't raced long enough to receive that kind of sponsorship, but says perhaps someone like the man he buys dog feed from might eventually serve that role.

"I don't worry about the people part and just try to concentrate on racing," said Jerry. "It's a lot of fun."



**TEAMWORK** — Freyja and Tyler, sled dogs owned by Jerry and Celeste Swalnick of Colton, get a word from their owner during Massena's recent Winter Expo '86 festivities.



**WHAT'S YOUR TOPIC?** — Potsdam High School English teacher Duncan Cutter is shown above, talking over writing topics with students Sean Seymour, center, and David Snyder.

## 'Real Audience' Improves Writing

Editor's Note: Duncan Cutter is a teacher of English at Potsdam High School.

BY DUNCAN CUTTER  
 Recall your feelings when your English teacher would ask you to take out pen and paper and write a composition.

Usually the topic was written across the blackboard: My Summer Vacation, or My Favorite Pet, or A Perfect Day. Usually you had one class period to complete it. Usually you didn't feel like writing on that subject — it wasn't you!

So you did what was expected of you: 250-300 words you hoped would satisfy the teacher and wouldn't come back bleeding red ink.

For the last few years I've tried a different approach with my high school students. Experience has taught me that many students write better if they write about things they care about most and if they write for a real audience.

After we read and discuss several readings on a similar theme (personal integrity, for instance), I suggest a number of ways we could use these vicarious experiences as a point of departure in writing about our own experiences. We have gotten so close to this topic in the preceding days that most of us have already made connections between ourselves and the people we have been reading about. Now we're ready to explore these connections in writing, each writer making his uniquely personal interpretation of the topic. Each writes a rough draft of his ideas. If a student prefers to choose his own topic because of a special interest at this time, he can opt for the "open topic" category.

We come into class the next day with rough drafts; that is, a first version of what we want to say, our trial balloon which we will read aloud to others in small groups of three or four. A writer benefits from reading his work aloud. Often he catches many of the problems in his sentences as his ear judges their cadences. The others in the group, focusing not on his punctuation and spelling but on his ideas

and how he has organized them, give the reader feedback. They point out effective passages, and sections which would benefit from more work. I sit with conference groups, sometimes sharing my writing and reacting to theirs.

By the next day most students will have a revised version ready to hand in. Only at this point do I read students' writing — not to grade yet, but to write back to them, giving them additional feedback. They can continue to revise, edit and polish their writing right up to the time I ask them to pick the one piece that they feel represents their best writing out of, let's say, the last four they have submitted. That's the one I'll grade.

Between writing sessions — and we are usually writing every Wednesday and Thursday — I make time for brief lessons about some of the ingredients of effective writing. We talk about complete sentences, agreement between subject and verb, parallel structure, avoiding awkward or trite expressions, and choosing the right word or expression to convey a feeling. We also talk about sometimes breaking a rule if doing so aids communication. And I share with them short samples of student as well as professional writing which illustrate the ingredients of effective communication.

Students seem to respond positively to the chance to work out their own topics and to be heard by their peers as well as their teacher. Sharing your writing makes communication more real as well as more fun. It takes you out of isolation and offers a live audience which will react to your ideas and writing techniques. Writing becomes more rewarding. I hope

this process will make students more at ease and more adept with pen and paper than many of us felt when the teacher announced that it was time to write.

## School Bus Vote March 11

BY BETSY BAKER  
 Voters in the Potsdam Central School District will decide on March 11 whether to spend up to \$75,000 for a 60-passenger diesel bus and a diesel bus to transport handicapped students.

At its meeting last Tuesday the school board set the date for the vote on the buses.

District officials noted that a new Association for Retarded Children (ARC) facility under construction on Pine Street in the village is expected to open in the spring, which will add eight handicapped students to the district, six in wheelchairs and two who are ambulatory. The vehicle for the handicapped would be used to transport those students.

The board set Jan. 28 for its annual staff review and tenure evaluation for district employees completing probationary employment terms.

Superintendent Kenneth Daniels told the board that the district has completed New York State Education Department-mandated re-registration procedures with "no areas of non-compliance."

The district's students had a 99.4 percent competency rate, while the state requires 95 percent, Daniels said. And the district's retention rate is 96.9; 90 is required.

According to Daniels the re-registration process has now been replaced by the Comprehensive Assessment reports (CAR).

School board member Lynn Henry reported that the School Boards' Association's annual legislative breakfast has been set for Feb. 22.

State Senator John McHugh and Assemblyman John O'Neil have indicated they plan to attend, Henry said.

Topics of discussion will include state aid, liability insurance, seatbelt legislation, CAR reports, aid to non-public schools and federal programs, Henry said.

Citing the uncertainty over bus standee and seatbelt legislation, school board members decided not to go to district-wide busing, but to keep that option under consideration pending action by the state Legislature.

Assistant Superintendent Gary Snell presented job descriptions, some new and some revised, for various positions in the district, including teacher aide, teaching assistant, typist and senior stenographer.

Board member June Duryea commented: "I think it's a real step forward to have job descriptions for the employees."

The board voted to accept the job descriptions.

## County Will Advertise For Cook's Job

BY MICHAEL HIRSCH  
**CANTON** — The St. Lawrence County legislature's highway committee sent a clear message to John Cook when it today voted 4-1 to recommend that the full board take out ads to find who else may be interested in the county highway superintendent's job.

Cook, who has held the position 12 years, was seeking reappointment to another four year term.

"I think for the effective operation of the county highway department, we should see if we can't find a new highway superintendent," said legislator Donald Smith (D-Waddington and Louisville) after the meeting.

The only highway committee member present who voted against advertising for the position was James McFaddin (D-Potsdam).

"It's a personal thing," McFaddin said afterwards when asked why he supported Cook. "That's all I want to say about it. Okay?"

Voting to advertise for the position were: Rosemary Sanford, chairman of the board of legislators; Donald Livingston (R-Oswegatchie); Robert McNeil (R-Lisbon and Madrid) and Smith.

Cook had asked the legislators, before they went into executive session, not to delay making a decision on his reappointment. His current term expires in February.

"If the county wants me, needs me, I should be told about it as soon as possible," Cook said. "It's not fair to me, my family or my staff to keep me waiting."

The chairman of the county

legislature's transportation committee said before the meeting that he thought the committee should decide today whether to recommend the reappointment of its veteran highway superintendent.

The transportation committee had three obvious choices in the matter: recommend to reappoint Cook to another four year term, recommend that the county advertise for other candidates for the post or delay making a decision on Cook's reappointment.

In the event of a delay, Cook will remain in the position after his term expires in February until an appointment is made, according to county bylaws.

But Donald Livingston (R-Oswegatchie and DeKalb), who served as chairman of the transportation committee for the first time this morning, said he was opposed to putting off a decision.

"I would hope the committee comes up with a recommendation," Livingston said. "I just assumed we would."

The Republican legislator, a long-time John Cook critic, said delaying the committee recommendation would "not be fair to the person in the position and to the county."

"I would hope we make some kind of decision and not put it on the back burner and have John carry over," he said.

"We should make some kind of recommendation to the full board. Now is the time we should be filling it (the highway superintendent's position)."

Legislator Robert Hayden (R-

Village of Gouverneur) brought a surprise proposal to reappoint Cook to the county reorganizational meeting on Jan. 2.

The proposal was discussed in executive session to give the new legislators a chance to gather information on the issue. Following the executive session, the matter was sent to the legislature's transportation committee.

This morning's meeting is the first meeting of the committee this year and the first time new members will get to discuss the matter.

## School Finance Officer Expected To Be Named

Members of the Potsdam Central School Board of Education expect to name a finance officer for the district when they meet in special session at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday (tonight) in the high school cafeteria.

A committee of the board — June Duryea, A. George Davis, and board President Larry Gumaer — was to interview three finalists for the post last Thursday evening, school officials said.

There were 38 applicants for the post vacated by Eileen Petrie when she became St. Lawrence County's administrative assistant, according to Superintendent Kenneth Daniels.

That number was screened to eight, with Daniels and assistant Superintendent Gary Snell recommending three names to the school board, Daniels said.

## Budget 'Disquieting'

BY BETSY BAKER  
 Predicting negative long-term effects for Potsdam College from Gov. Mario Cuomo's 1986-87 proposed budget, college President Humphrey R. Tonkin last week called the budget plan "extremely disquieting."

Information released by the college last week indicates that college officials are concerned about salaries, possible staff cuts and the long-term effects on programming.

According to Dr. Tonkin, "particularly in the area of salaries, the money available even to cover existing positions is very low, and we shall have great difficulty in meeting our obligations."

The Governor's budget proposal for SUNY calls for Potsdam College to receive a total of \$19,484,600 in 1986-87, college relations director George Allen said, a net increase of \$77,200 over last year's adjusted base total of \$19,407,400.

But that \$77,200 is only a 4 percent increase in the budget, Allen said.

While the budget does provide a "small inflationary increase" and money to cover negotiated salary increases for all bargaining units except the United University Professions (UUP), Potsdam College will be required to absorb new state-mandated charges in salary areas, Allen said.

UUP-represented employees statewide are still without a contract in their deadlocked negotiations with SUNY.

The spending plan calls for new "salary adjustments" and "salary savings" totalling \$229,000, Allen said — money that must be returned to the central administration of SUNY from Potsdam College.

The college is expected to "save" the \$229,000 in employee costs, such as those achieved by not filling positions, Allen said.

And the Governor's proposed budget indicates that SUNY-wide

staff cuts will total 177 faculty positions and 51 academic support positions.

"Obviously a portion of those will come from Potsdam College," Allen said, noting that last year, with more "shallow cuts" in staff positions, Potsdam College's share was six positions.

Last year, the college was able to achieve its required cuts with retirements and unfilled positions, but Allen said it is too early to predict how the cuts can be achieved this year.

Impacts On All Campuses  
 Dr. Tonkin said that the budgetary constraints are a "university-wide problem that impacts on all campuses."

But he added that Potsdam College will be hard-pressed to continue to improve the quality of its programs because of financial constraints.

"Here at Potsdam," he said, "we will work hard to improve the quality of our programs, even in the face of such constraints, but over the longer run such a starvation of funds can only have a negative effect."

Allen noted that in this, the first year that the SUNY budget plan does not include funds for dormitories, Potsdam College is slated to receive \$526,000 in a separate budget category.

Chancellor Comments  
 SUNY Chancellor Clifton R. Wharton said in a statement last week that the SUNY budget proposal "presents the State University with mixed prospects for returning to full vigor."

While there are bright spots, including an allocation of \$3.9 million to upgrade computer facilities, provision for dormitory repairs and renovations, and increased funding for campus security, the Chancellor said that some University programs, such as those in program and enrollment areas, are at risk.

## College Unveils New Computer

BY RON ROBERTSON  
 Potsdam College's Computer and Information Sciences department last week unveiled a new Gould "super mini-computer" that experts estimate will increase on-campus computing capacity between 25 and 50 percent.

The computer is located near computer department offices on the third floor of Dunn Hall. Gould gave the college an \$87,000 grant toward the computer's purchase.

CIS faculty Michael Conlin said at the computer's unveiling that the Gould was two to three times faster than the college's larger, older Burroughs mainframe across campus.

Conlin explained that the Gould will be tied into the college's computer network and is available for use by students and faculty via telephone.

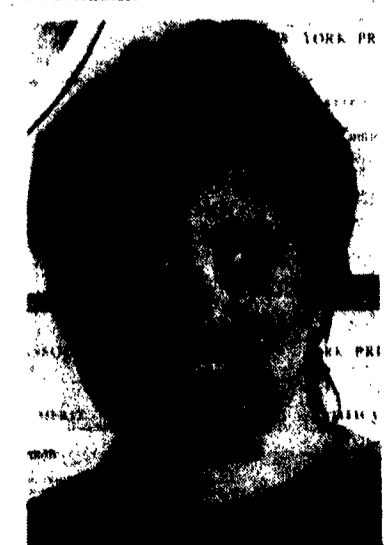
While the large mainframe is also connected to the network, Conlin said, it was designed mainly for administrative data storage and retrieval. The Gould, he said, is designed for high-speed computations.

The Gould, Conlin said, more than challenges the mainframe in speed, but doesn't have the larger computer's data storage capacity.

Many of the College's computer science students and most of the department's faculty own their own micro-computers, Conlin said, and can tap into the Gould or the Burroughs mainframe through the

campus network for additional computing capacity.

On hand for the unveiling was Potsdam College alumnus Anthony DiMento, a senior accounting manager of Gould and a former CIS student.



**SCHOLARSHIP WINNER** — Michelle Patraw of Canton is shown above after accepting the second half of her \$500 Potsdam Area Zonta Club scholarship for the 1985-86 school year. Patraw is a student at Cornell University. (Betsy Baker photo)



**RESIDENT MANAGER** — William "Gary" Garahan has been named resident manager of Potsdam Paper Mills, Division of Little Rapids Corporation, Potsdam. Garahan joined Potsdam Paper in June 1986 as operations resident manager and was appointed acting resident manager in August 1986. He previously worked for Willamette Industries, Great Northern, Nekoosa and Hammermill Papers. Garahan is a graduate of Niagara University.