

Staff-student hockey game celebrates 49 years



By Bill Kilpatrick

On April 12, members of the North Hastings High School staff and members of the 2024 graduating class held their annual TG Welsh staff-student hockey game. The event, that was begun in 1973 and is now in its 49 year, is held to honor North Hastings High School carpentry teacher Tom Welsh, who taught during the '60s and early '70s. The game has become a time-honored event to not only remember Welsh, but as a fun competition between the staff and students for the coveted win, that this year finally went to the staff after multiple losses over the previous years and a brief hiatus during the COVID-19 pandemic. "It's a tradition of having a little rivalry between us and them," said educator Barb Gillis, "I think it's great because the student's have relationships with all the teachers and if you're teaching one of those students there's an instant rivalry and it's part of the fun spirit of being a student in Grade 12." Gillis said that there is always excitement that builds over the student's time at NHHS as students get to witness the yearly event eagerly awaiting their turn on the ice. "This year we really stressed the importance of honoring Tom Welsh," said Gillis, "being the 49 year and that this is done to celebrate his memory and the rivalry between staff and students." Gillis is hoping that the new student run "Chuck a Puck" fundraiser for the scholarship fund becomes a part of the yearly event. Students buy pucks and then have to try and throw the puck as close to center ice as they can and the closest wins a prize. For Gillis this will be a memorable year because three of the staff members who played also played as students, "This might be the highest number that we have had on staff," said Gillis. She also wanted to thank Switzer-Carty Bus Lines for supplying the free transportation to and from the game and the officials who donated their time for free. Graduating student and student Prime Minister, Mikayla Mills, was excited to carry on the rivalry between the staff and the students, "It's always been a blast," said Mills, "It's been something that everyone enjoys. At the school when someone runs an event it's a 50/50 shot at whether people like it or not, but the graduating game, everyone likes it." Mills added that the anticipation of the game creates "a really great atmosphere in the school during the week leading up to it." Mills was one of those students whose excitement to partake has been building over the years, "I've helped with it and watched it in the past years and to be able to actually play just made it that much more exciting." Mills got to do the puck drop with her father Jeff Mills, who is a member of the custodial staff, and for her this was a special honour, "It was really fun to be able to do that this year," she said. While Mills was not happy that they lost she said that it was still loads of fun to be able to participate in this NHHS tradition and she was very thankful to the staff members who worked so hard to put the event on. "Not many schools can say that they have been doing something like this for almost 50 years," exclaimed Mills.