

TRITON VOICE

Triton High School

Triton's Student-Produced Newspaper

March 15, 2024

Triton: Past, Present, Future

Part 2 of 4: Our History, Our Heritage, & Perspectives on Past Triton

This week in our four-part series, Triton: Past, Present, Future, the *Triton Voice* offers articles that detail the history of Triton. One article focuses on the history that students can find highlighted within the library and a hallway near the band room. A second group of reporters looked at Triton's starting point and what Triton looked like in its earlier days. Yet another conducted research and interviews about what happened in 2001 when the school was renovated. Reporters also interviewed Triton alumni and senior teachers, including Fred McAskill, who have experienced what Triton was like in its earlier years.

Alums Look Back, Remember Better Building Triton Community Offers Opinions on School Then, Now

By Genna Young and Emily O'Shea, Staff Writers

A short walk for a Triton student through the narrow halls of Triton and into the ancient bathrooms is enough to make them wonder: What did this school used look like? What could it look like?

Triton High School was founded in 1971 and since then not many changes have been made. The school has begun to be more and more outdated. Triton has applied twice for state money for a remodel and continues to be denied funding.

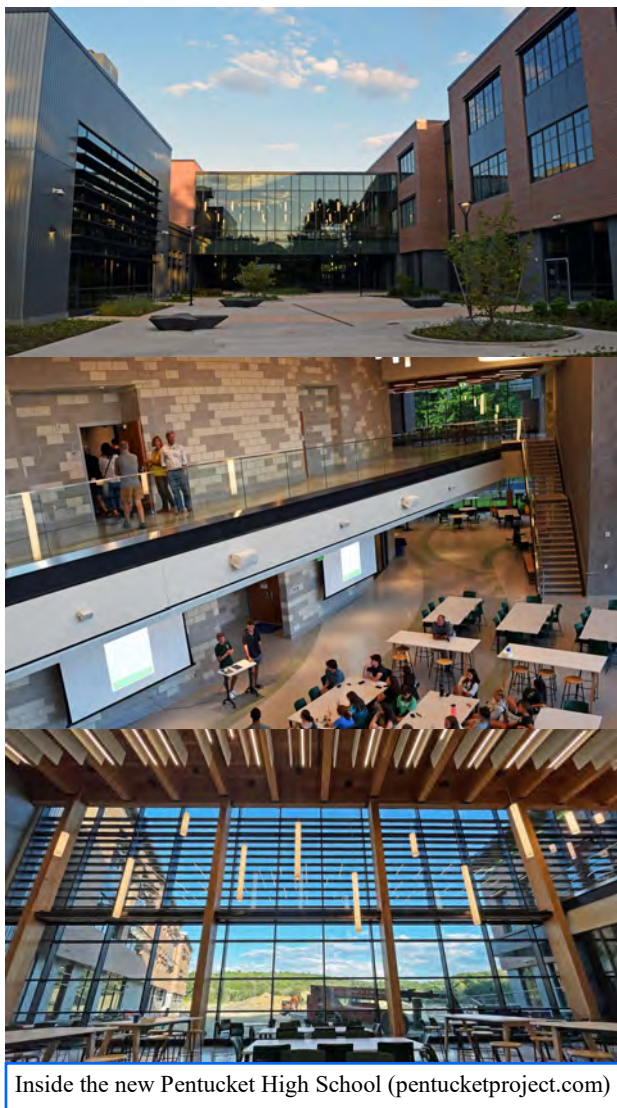
"Not much has changed that is noticeable, other than there being no more "smoking lounge," said Triton 1992 graduate Laura Fernald. "I have also noticed in my recent visits that the bathrooms could definitely use some love; that would probably be my first thought — safe and clean bathrooms. Compared to other high schools that I have seen while watching sporting events, Triton is definitely lacking."

Not only is the Triton atmosphere affecting students during the academic hours of the day but also after school during the time that clubs and sports take place. After 2:13, parents, coaches, other teams and so many more people come into Triton.

"The gym is practically falling apart, so when we have home games it's just kind of embarrassing for the team," said Triton student and athlete Reese Renda. "I also think that it would help school spirit and more people would come to sporting events."

"I'm only ever at Triton to support my granddaughters in things like sports," said Triton 1979 alumni Jim Hilton. "I have watched the promenade a couple of times, so the parts of the school that I have recently seen along with a lot of people I would think are the gym, auditorium, lobby and bathrooms. I think the auditorium is still very nice compared to when I was at school here, but the gym is definitely worn down and needs remodeling along with the bathrooms for sure."

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Inside the new Pentucket High School (pentucketproject.com)

Students to Teachers

Viewpoints from Alumni-Educators

By Jacob & Kiara Kenney
Staff Writers

Have you heard about the broken windows theory? This theory, according to Wikipedia, argues that physical signs of neglect and deterioration encourage criminal behavior because they act as a signal that this is a place where disorder is allowed to persist. Could the same idea of the broken window theory be happening at Triton?

The *Triton Voice* took a field trip to the newly remodeled Pentucket school last month. Pentucket students explained their detailed experiences and facts about their school. We learned about the process and changes regarding their big renovation and got a chance to talk to Triton Alumni who attended when our building was newer: beloved school guidance secretary, Rebecca Pieciewicz, physical education teacher—for 31 years, Donna Anderson, and mathematics teacher, Matthew Haley.

Pieciewicz reminisced about her time as a student at Triton, and how different the environment is today. She graduated in 1984. She was heavily involved in the Triton community. From sports to extracurricular activities, she did it all—even made it to the superlatives twice. In 2017, she decided that she missed Triton and came back. She has been working as Triton's guidance secretary ever since. "I had not been back since I left in June of 1984. It was weird because the office and library were the same, I sort of liked it. It felt good because the library didn't change," says Pieciewicz. She explained how bittersweet the feeling was seeing that some things didn't change. Pieciewicz spoke about the difference between being in a new school compared to being in a worn out school. "When I entered seventh grade, the building was only eight years old so it was really modern and cool and pretty compared to the other high schools in the area. The school was clean and shiny, so students had respect for the school."

Anderson, too, was heavily involved in the Triton community as a Triton class of 1978 student and a teacher who has worked here for 31 years. As a student, she was a three-sport athlete and was involved in a few clubs during her time.

"The school was relatively new when I was a student. That was a huge difference," she said. "I will say, the turf was not here when I played and I would have loved to have that surface when I played here! I also think we had a bit more pride in the school and in our teams then I see today. Anderson said she believes that students aren't as involved in the school as they were when she was a student. "Today there are a lot more distractions

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Flashback: Top, Mrs. Donna Anderson in 1978, Bottom, Mrs. Rebecca Pieciewicz in 1984 (Triton Yearbook photos).

A Long, Quiet Adventure

Longest-Serving Teacher: The Career of Mr. Fred McAskill

By Lucas Bistany
Staff Writer

Byfield is the home to Triton High School, where many generations have gone to school. If you are reading this you most likely are a student at Triton or live in Rowley, Newbury, or Salisbury, the three towns served by Triton. Many of your parents attended Triton as the school has been around since 1971. Some teachers such as history teacher and wrestling coach Mr. Shawn McElligott, and long-time instructional aide, Ms. Frieda Boyle, have been here for over 20 years sharing their experiences to students.

However, among the teachers who have done wonders for the education here at Triton High School, there is one individual whose impact may go unnoticed—Mr. Frederick McAskill.

Picture this: It's 1977, Triton is in its sixth year of operation, while many of Triton's current students' parents were not even born. Fresh out of Fitchburg University, McAskill began looking for jobs. Having moved to Salisbury at age 8, he had attended Newburyport High School, and wanted to remain in the area. McAskill needed a full-time job. At the same time, Triton, such a new school, needed staff.

"It's the first place that offered me a full-time

job," McAskill stated in a recent interview with the *Triton Voice*.

Starting as a math tutor in middle school, McAskill was later moved to the high school. He said he never looked back.

"I liked the people I was working with and they became good friends," said McAskill. Despite the possibilities of other jobs, McAskill stayed due to family circumstances. Making many friends along the way, his job changed to one as an instructional aide, similar to a tutor, but now working with kids who had special needs.

For 43 years, Mr. McAskill dedicated himself

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Longtime educator, Mr. Fred McAskill (TRSD photo).

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From Inauguration to Deterioration

A Timeline of Triton’s Major Building Projects

Years before Triton’s construction, students in the three towns of Newbury, Rowley, and Salisbury had to choose a neighboring school, leading to overcrowding at schools such as Newburyport and Amesbury High. This prompted the consideration of a new school, equipped with all the latest amenities.

Today, many of those amenities are relics of the past. Despite the luxuries we once boasted, the school has begun falling apart, with the last renovation to the campus occurring with the addition of a middle school wing in 2000.

On December 28, 1966, the citizens of Salisbury, Rowley, and Newbury overwhelmingly voted in favor of the Triton Regional Agreement. One year later, the towns voted for the funds for the land and planning of Triton. The school's location, spanning 135 acres on the former Whitney Farm on Elm Street, was selected.

Then, on February 6, 1969, during a meeting regarding the new school, each town allocated \$7.8 million for its construction. The contractor and construction crew were hired, and ground broke for the project on March 7, 1969. In September of 1971, Triton had its inaugural day of school, marking the beginning of a new era, one that would last a few decades too long.

The first major addition came in April of 1999, when a new cafeteria and auditorium were added, along with significant changes to the hallways. Construction on the new middle school wing also began in 1999, with its opening in 2000. In 2001, a new boiler room was added, visible from the back lot and the tech hallway.

Following these additions, construction seemingly halted until 2016 when the brand-new stadium opened, allowing the class of 2017 to be the first to graduate there.

Initially, Triton was a state-of-the-art facility, complete with lecture halls, intercom systems in each classroom, recessed lighting, and a cafeteria boasting a decadent view of the Newbury marsh. However, the classroom lighting is unbearable to many students, and the lecture halls and intercom systems have been removed. Along with all of this, the once beautiful marsh view has been marred by additional buildings, fields, and walkways.

Triton has become outdated compared to its former glory while neighboring districts are erecting new schools. During a recent field trip to Pentucket High, these issues became even more apparent to *Triton Voice* reporters. Triton today also harbors numerous problems and serious issues, from squishy tiles to leaky ceilings. Additionally, the gym features a mysterious brown stain on the wall, showcasing the school's true age. Since its construction, few improvements have been made, with the major renovations and changes spread out over many years.

Triton may be riddled with issues inside and out, but at least we have our \$2.5 million stadium to admire.



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away from school that perhaps causes students to be less a part of the school.”

Haley, a class of 2013 alum, attended Triton schools from K-12. He was a class officer and a community service club member.

“Years ago, there were dances and pep rallies all of the time,” said Haley. “We also made it a point to go to as many performances and games as we could. One of my classmates even made Viking Ship shirts that we wore, and a banner that we hung up at every game. Students now are involved in their own activities and jobs, where it seems like the school doesn't come together as often — both during and outside school.” He expressed that Triton’s community during his time here as a student, had the school spirit and today the Triton community is more focused on their own lives. Triton’s present-day community isn’t all bad—When asked what were the best changes of school, Mr. Haley said, “Allowing students to have iced coffee in the mornings! Believe it or not, we weren't allowed to have coffee. We had to toss them in the trash on our way into the building each morning!”

We saw the broken window theory in effect while taking a field trip to the brand-new Pentucket school. Students there have been attending their new remodeled school for less than two years but have already seen a difference.

“Students started to perform better in a building with nicer qualities,” said one student. “People have more respect for a newer building, and are more appreciative.”

As you walk through the hallways of Pentucket’s newly remodeled school, you can smell the freshness in the air. They have little areas called “breakout rooms” where students can get some extra work done. Another strong aspect of their new school is an open seating type of cafeteria, where they don’t exactly have seating arrangements in one particular spot but are allowed the freedom to sit in any of the available areas around the main concourse of the building. These “chill spots” are throughout the school for students to converse and eat with their friends while not feeling like they are in a crowded environment. While the process of re-doing their school began, faculty and administration there took what some of Pentucket’s prior students’ opinions and incorporated them into the blueprint. This is where the cafeteria design came into play as well as their lack of lockers. Students brought up to faculty that lockers really aren’t “a thing” anymore. “Students enjoy carrying their belongings on them and don’t really use their lockers.”

When the time comes where Triton gets their remodeling, our community can potentially see how the broken window theory goes in effect by seeing if students had pride and respect like back in the day, or even currently at Pentucket.

What They Think Now

Past Students Discuss Their Histories With Triton

By Mackenzie Chaisson & Ashley Sabino
Staff Writers

What do the past students of Triton think of the school now?

Alumni, as well as present students, have one thing in common. They all agree the Triton building has slowly gone downhill and is soon to hit its breaking point. Whether it is the look of the school, school spirit, the students’ outlooks or something else, people agree the school environment needs attention.

“The high school building pretty much hasn't changed, except maybe the brown sludge that runs from the walls in the gymnasium,” says past student Jared Ewell, a class of 1994 graduate.

The *Triton Voice* interviewed Triton students from the past about the school and how they feel it has changed. They say Triton has been losing its school spirit and that today it is students worrying about their grades more than anything while many students do not want to go to school.

Back in 1988 when Jared Ewell started at Triton Middle School, many things were different at that time. Back then, the 7th and 8th grades were separated by floors. The 7th was on the bottom floor and the 8th grade was on the top floor. Students were also separated by colors, blue and white.

The major structural differences from 1988 to 2024 were that “the school was a little bit small because the addition had not been done at this time,” said Ewell. Triton Middle School was significantly renovated in 200-2002. “The stadium didn't exist as it does now,” added Ewell. He mentioned the condition of the bleachers back then were old and felt like “they would blow away whenever it was windy.”

A difference between the student body that Jared Ewell sees in Triton now and Triton back in his day was and is school spirit. Having children who attend Triton, he said he can see how much Triton lacks school spirit.

Looking back at his high school years he mentions “Sports like hockey were very popular when I was in high school,” as well as “the environment with the teachers and students seems to be worse nowadays.”

As for the school building, Ewell said it hasn't changed much from when he went to school to today. As a result, he said it seems to be “falling apart.”

Caitlyn Chaisson, a more recent graduate from the class of 2019 started her freshman year at Triton in the fall of 2015. She also said there have been very few improvements to the building: “The school is the same as it was when I went there.”

Chaisson said the major structural thing that occurred in her four years of high school was the construction of a new stadium and playing field.

“The new stadium was under construction during my first years of high school,” and that it was a big jump from the two metal sets of bleachers to the amazing stadium we have now,” she said.

Attending a school with a new stadium helped with school spirit and morale. “I think the best part about attending Triton was the school spirit represented,” Chaisson said. That spirit appears to have been lost



JARED SCOTT EWELL



Clockwise from above: Caitlyn Chaisson, class of 2019; Jared Ewell, Class of 1994; Sarah Ewell, Class of 2026 (images courtesy of those pictured and Class of 1994 Triton Yearbook).



since then.

Last month, the *Triton Voice* visited Pentucket High School and toured its brand-new building. We asked the Pentucket student tour guides if the school spirit had gone up with the new school and the new opportunities that were given. Sophie Marcus, a junior at Pentucket responded, “Overall there's just more school spirit because people are excited to go to new events.”

Sarah Ewell, the daughter of Jared Ewell, and current THS sophomore stated that her father often talks about his experience from Triton and how different the school environment is from when he went here. “Compared to Triton back in the day, my dad thinks the school has lost some of the many cool things it used to offer,” said Sarah.

Both Ewells said they felt that Triton used to offer many engaging, and helpful classes, such as a cooking class that was liked by many. There were also animals such as a monkey, snakes, owls, and more in the ARC animal program at Triton. Having these types of things helped boost the school spirit and even make kids want to learn, they said.

“I think back in the day Triton seemed to be a lot more fun than it is now,” said Sarah Ewell. Some of the fun things the school used to offer have been lost. Now, school to me is just how high I can get my GPA and how well I can do in

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wholeheartedly to his students and the love of his job until his retirement in 2020. This made him the longest-serving teacher at Triton. But McAskill is not done. Retirement has not dampened his passion for teaching and he returned to work as a substitute teacher here at Triton the next year. Why? McAskill says he loves his job.

Despite his many years of teaching, McAskill remains under the radar to many people in the school. A quiet guy by nature, McAskill does not mind if people know how long he's been here or not. He just continues to do what he loves.

In the history of Triton no one has done what McAskill has for the students who struggle. He says what he wants to do is help students while keeping a job he enjoys. Mr. McAskill’s story weaves quietly through the school's history, yet his impact on the students fortunate enough to be taught by him is immeasurable.

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Typically, friends and family of students are only at the school for performances or special events, and the goal is for all to think highly of the building and be interested in maybe sending their kids here or becoming more involved in the school.

However, students today seem to take less pride in the image of Triton. By renovating the school students would have more respect for the building and pride in hosting events, they say. After the journalism classes took a trip to Pentucket, in February many agreed that by having a newer school such as that district’s, students would be more productive and motivated to come to school. Triton student Taryn Lebreck said students would be more respectful if we had a new building.

“I think that we would have way less vandalism and by having a nicer new building a lot of people would realize how easy it is to keep it clean and be respectful,” said Lebreck.

These issues may have long term effects on whether or not people would choose to send their students to Triton if they have the option not to, students said.

“Personally, in the condition that the school is in right now, I would not send my future kids to Triton,” said THS 2023 grad Emma Campbell. There is quite a bit of work to be done to make Triton a school I would want my kids to play sports and attend classes.”

Students and alumni agree on Triton needing a remodel.

“I hope that by the time I graduate changes are made,” said TMS eighth grader Alec Young. “Triton is nice but could be a lot better especially in the high school gym and bathrooms.”