

New Science Course To Be Offered At Newtown High School

BY SUSAN CONEY

Thanks to Frank LaBanca, biology teacher at Newtown High School, the school will add a new course offering this fall. The Board of Education approved the acceptance of a new course entitled Applied Science Research, which will be offered to grades nine through twelve at both college prep and honors levels. The course has been approved to begin in the fall with 24 students already enrolled.

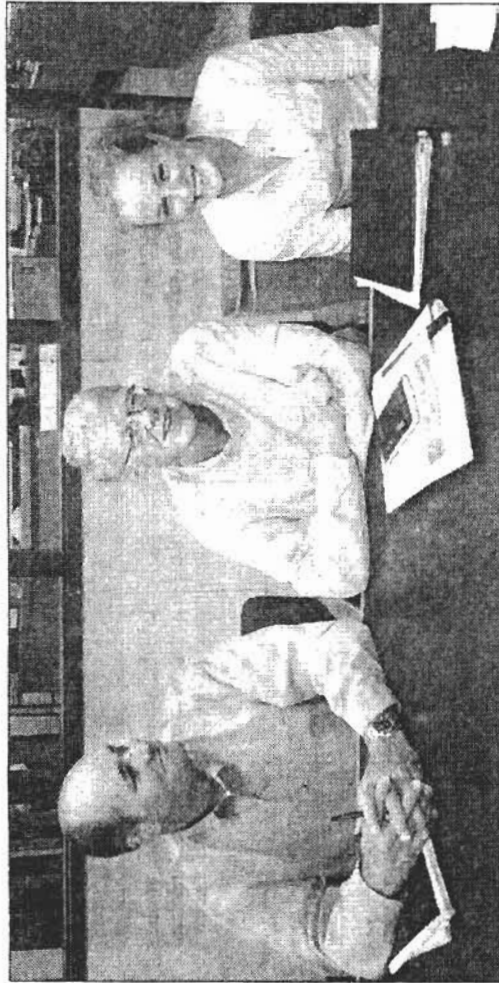
The advantage of the Applied Science Research course is that it is repeatable each year so that students can take it and either build upon previous years of research or study something new.

The course is very similar in nature to a course Mr LaBanca developed and directed at Stamford High School prior to his coming to Newtown. Mr LaBanca has a biology, genetics, and computer science background. He was recently recognized as an Outstanding Teacher of Science Fair Students by the Connecticut Science Fair Association and was a finalist for both the Connecticut Education Association

Teacher of the Year and National Association of Biology Teachers Connecticut Outstanding Biology Teacher. His awards and extensive works in his field are too numerous to mention.

Mr LaBanca is extremely excited about bringing this new course to Newtown. Along the course Mr LaBanca continues to search for new resources in the community to help his students in pursuing their studies. He said, "The key is to develop partnerships between businesses, community individuals, and colleges in the area, to harness the great capabilities and abilities of these students. As Newtown grows we have more science resources in the community available to us. This course is for the self directed kid who wants to go beyond the curriculum."

All students enrolled in the class will have to meet certain requirements. They will select one topic to thoroughly research then present their project to different science fairs and symposiums outside the school atmosphere. As a class, the students will produce a science research journal highlighting their independent proj-



James Boulden and Joe Hovious, both members of Trout Unlimited, joined NHS student Maggie Boulden as she discussed the results of her research into the impact of the Canaan House oil spill on Deep Brook. Maggie is a student of NHS biology teacher Frank LaBanca.

about the oil spill at the Canaan House in Fairfield Hills and the impact on Deep Brook. For her project she worked with community members, meeting with James Belden and Joe Hovious, both members of Trout Unlimited, to discuss her water contamination research. Both Margaret Boushell and Robert Grauer were selected out of 500 to receive the Stockholm Junior Water Prize.

Mr LaBanca hopes that as the students branch out in fields of study of their own choice community mentors will become involved and form partnerships with the school to foster the new Applied Science Research course. With 24 students enrolled for the fall program he is reaching out to the community for potential mentors. He stressed that it may be as simple as a one-day career shadowing experience or develop into a yearlong mentor relationship.

Mr LaBanca sums it up by saying, "The new course is designed to create an environment to promote student success at a very high level. We want to utilize the school and the community as resources."

Davis won Fair Second Honors at the Connecticut Science Fair and First Place at the Junior Science and Humanities Symposium for her project on the inhibition of the tricarboxylic acid cycle and cycle FADH2 synthesis. Robert Grauer won awards at the Connecticut Science Fair, Audubon Finalist,

Project Oceanology Award, Herbert Hoover Young Engineer Medalion, and several other awards for his Chitin bioremediation of sewage treatment plant effluent project. Margaret Boushell is a Barton Weller Scholarship Finalist as well as winning many other area awards for her project

that will be published in June 2006. Mr LaBanca hopes to have A Wall of Fame, a hallway with plaques in honor of students who successfully complete the course.

At the present time Mr LaBanca has several extremely talented students he has helped to mentor. Student Sara