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School years are remembered for the occurrences during that particular year, both good and bad. School openings, favorite teachers, performances, championships, last minute losses, trips, and tragedies are the some of the memory markers that help us remember a certain school year, and they are standard fare at class reunions when classmates reminisce about “way back when.”

This school year has a different feel to it so far. Yes, there is certainly excitement in the air, as all of our other schools open tomorrow and join Asbell and Happy Hollow in the 2009-2010 school year. But there’s a new atmosphere this year. Maybe it’s because it feels like we really didn’t have a summer this year, since there were so many things happening in the district over the last 90 days. Maybe it’s that we have Vicki Thomas as our new superintendent, taking over as only the ninth superintendent in the history of the Fayetteville Public Schools. If you haven’t met her yet, stop by the Farmers’ Market on Saturday; she will be there!

Maybe it’s the opening of the new Butterfield Trail Elementary School on Wednesday. One of the “schools without walls” is now bright, open, and flooded with natural light. The cafeteria transformation is perhaps the most dramatic. The old cafeteria was in the center of the building with no exterior windows or doors. The new Butterfield cafeteria has windows that stream in light from all four directions and includes a performance stage. If you walk into the cafeteria and you did not see the former cafeteria before its demolition, you will be impressed. If you did see the former cafeteria, you’ll be delighted by the new one!

The last of the schools without walls is Happy Hollow, and construction will begin this year on the new Happy Hollow. Another happy dedication day is in our future!

Maybe it’s the September 15 election and what hangs in the balance on the outcome of this election. A successful election will set in motion a series of events that will result in

the students and staff at Fayetteville High School finally having a facility of equal caliber to their award-winning efforts. It's taken four years to get to this point, and all of us have a stake in it, whether we have children in the school or not. It may be the biggest school election in this school district to date.

Maybe it's the H1N1 virus and the much-predicted flu outbreak. The Centers for Disease Control has issued guidelines for schools, and we have plans in place to deal with whatever may come, though it's no fun to walk around under that cloud. It's a guarantee you'll hear more about that, so, in the meantime, wash your hands. When you're finished, wash them again. And don't sneeze on me.

So, it's a brave new year, with many things yet to be decided. We have great influence over some of them and very little over others. Some are daunting, others not so much. 2009 promises to be yet another un-boring year! Let's mount our Rocinantes and charge ahead!

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