

# CAPITAL REGION BOCES FACULTY ASSOCIATION

## TRIAD

December 2009
Vol. XXXIV No. 4

Affiliated With NYSUT [10-195] & AFT/NEA AFL/CIO-[Local 2991]

### **News from the President**

Dear Colleagues,

It seems like just the other day we were starting another school year and now the holiday season is here. It is certainly a special time. It is truly a time to be thankful and forgiving. I am thankful for the work I do, for my family and the people who are my friends. I am thankful to be pretty healthy and able to make a living. I am thankful to live in a country where I have so many more freedoms than in a lot of other countries, like China. I could go on, but I am sure you get the idea.

Is my life perfect? Nope, not even close. I am very busy and often do not have time for many of the things I want to do. My students are beginning to wind up and I doubt they will really settle down until about mid January. It feels like there is the constant worry about economy and the potential mid-year cuts in state funding. There may be reason for long faces. These aren't the best of times. All of that is not pretty, yet I truly am thankful. Somehow I know we will be okay.

There is a definite magic to the season. This magic makes us smile in spite of what is wrong. There seems to be something mystical that causes us to be a little bit friendlier and a bit more giving. I can't explain it, but the truth is, it is there.

The magic is there and I am thankful for that. I am also thankful for all the hard work you, your Executive Board, your Rep Council and the various committees have done to help your Association operate. This newsletter is one example of this. I want to thank the editors and staff for the fine job they do.

And finally I would like to thank you for your continued efforts on behalf of our students and your Association

I wish you the best in this holiday season and hope that you might enjoy the magic and share it with your friends and family.

Looking forward,
Doug

#### **CALENDAR**

CAPITAL REGION
BOCES FACULTY ASSOC.

EXEC. BOARD MEETING

12/03/09

**BOCES BOARD MTG.** 

12/21/09

REP COUNCIL MTG.

Maywood School 12/16/09

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukah and Kwanzaa



Newsletter Committee

TRIAD Article Deadline:

12/24/09

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## Rep Council Highlights,

**Appointments:** Melissa Kiss Eberhardt was appointed as a new Sp. Ed. Teacher Rep.

New Business: Colleen Condolora reported on the NYSTRS (New York State Teacher Retirement System) Convention. New website being promoted called MyNYSTRS, can track and calculate benefits. Currently NYSTRS is placing all energies into opposing TIER 5.

<u>Negotiations:</u> Teacher and Service Units contracts are up for negotiations in June 2010.

**Budget:** Budget committee will be selected at the next meeting. Audit committee includes: Kate Clarke, Teacher Chapter, Service Unit, CTE and TA Chapter pending.

#### **Select Committees:**

Philanthropic Request: Funds were requested for two DHH Farnsworth Middle School students to attend a four day Marine Biology Education Experience in Key Largo Florida. Cost of experience is \$1400. \$700 per student. Funds requested were \$100 for each student. Passed.

## Maywood Recycle Program



Soda cans and bottles
Water bottles
Plastic, Glass, Cardboard, Paper
Ink Cartridges
Laser Cartridges
Cell Phones
Send to Alison Mesick
Maywood School



## Capital Region BOCES Faculty Association Leadership

 POSITION	NAME	PHONE	E-Mail Address
President	Doug Harple	862-4776	hdharple@msn.com
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EAP	Kevin Eglit	454-9650	Employee Assistance Program

#### **Capital Region BOCES Board Meeting – 11-16-2009**

#### By Susan Kusalonis

#### HR Portal –Real Simple Syndication (RSS)

Carl Strang displayed the different look and capabilities of this portal.

All personnel file will be on this site – within two years no paper will be kept on hand.

#### **NERIC Web Site -**

- Info updated and timely Organizational Structure Updated
- My Site
- Linked into student data systems for parents.
- We are selling service to other districts, Scotia-Glenville is 1<sup>st</sup> customer

#### **Capital Region BOCES Web Site**

Deb Bush and Megan Allen

- The are over 40 sites in our BOCES. 2000 pages to review and update.
- Most used links: Job offerings, Staff Directory, Spec. Education, Contracts
- FOCUS Groups and on line survey and web traffic reports have indicated these possible changes:
- New logo –colors
- Consistency, Simpler structure, Organization, staff information, communicate BOCES Mission, Web 2.0 tools
- Dr. Dedrick will have a Blog Possible name "Charles in Charge" LOL

## Capital Region BOCES FA Representative Council Meeting Dates for 2009-2010

Rep Council Dates	Rep. Council Location	
Dec. 16, 2009	Maywood School	
Jan. 20, 2010	School Support Ser.	
Feb. 24, 2010	Maywood School	
March 17, 2010	School Support Ser.	
April 21, 2010	School Support Ser.	
May 19, 2010	Maywood School	
June 9, 2010	School Support Ser.	

All Rep Council meetings run from 4:15-6 PM unless there is a motion to extend.

#### **Tech Valley HS**

This past weekend Kathryn Gerbino presented on behalf of BO-CES, panel discussion with representatives from IBM, Knowledge Foundation, MP21, New Tech Network

#### Albany County Civil Service – Audit of Payroll

Mostly 4035 payroll

[50 % of total salary for positions, meet minimum qualification, etc.]

<u>Labor Relations</u> – Liberty Central SD has bought service for Negotiations

<u>Eminent Domain – Schoharie</u> – Mark Jones (Asst. Supt.) noted that everything is on track. The 3,850 Sq. Ft. affected will basically redoing the entrance way and not have to move the sign as indicated earlier.

#### **Guilderland SD Meeting**

Good open discussion, surprised that our budget has been going down, 20% co pay on health insurance is the same as theirs. They had voted "no" on our budget. This meeting was good for open communications with districts.

Dr. Dedrick will be meeting with other boards of: BKW, N. Colonie, Green Island, Galway

#### **Special Education Newsletter**

Board members were very impressed with this.

#### **Special Education Division Memo**

RFP has gone out with a deadline of Nov. 30. They hope to bring to December Board. Sent to 5 groups, on Bid Net

### **Conference Dates 2009-2010**

#### 2010

#### February 4-5

CDRO Regional Presidents' / The Gideon Putnam - Saratoga Springs, NY

#### March 20-21

Regional SRP Leadership / The Otesaga Hotel Conference - Cooperstown, NY

#### March 22-23

Committee of 100 / The Desmond Hotel - Albany, NY

#### **April 28-29**

NYSUT Local Presidents Conference / Marriott Wardman - Washington, DC

#### April 29-May 1

Representative Assembly / Marriott Wardman Hotel - Washington, DC

#### July 7-11

AFT Convention Washington State Conv & Trade Center, Seattle, WA

#### TEACHING ASSISTANTS/EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS

By Colleen Condolora, Chapter VP

**Dear Constituents:** 

I want to begin by wishing everyone a warm and wonderful holiday season. I hope your holiday break is filled with a plethora of enjoyment as well as some well deserved relaxation with your friends, family and loved ones.

In the coming weeks, I will be meeting with a few administrators to make a webinar on the evaluation process. I have received many emails and phone calls regarding this process so my goal is to implement another resource for everyone to access. The webinar will have information available to assist you with any questions you may have regarding the evaluation process. My goal is for the unit to have alternatives that are easily accessible from both home and at work. Please keep in mind that I am still available for any questions you may have during the year regarding the annual evaluation.

As you may have noticed during the last month, the money available from the Special Education budget for professional development has been released to each region's principal. Please avail yourself of the opportunities being offered and continue to enter your professional development hours into PDP Timekeeper. If anyone needs a refresher course on Timekeeper, I will be doing trainings on a monthly basis at NERIC.

In November, I attended the New York State Teacher Retirement Convention as your delegate. NYSTRS is requesting all members to please sign up for MyNYSTRS in order for you to access the secure area. In the secure area you will be able to check out your personal profile, beneficiaries, benefit plan, number of years and much more. Please check out the retirement system at www.nystrs.org, there is valuable information for you. Also, NYSUT and NYSTRS are requesting your help in stopping the legislation from implementing a Tier 5 into the retirement system. They are asking all members to go to www.nysut.org to send your legislature a letter stating you do not want Tier 5. Tier 5 will remove many benefits for new employees that were lobbied hard for and won in previous years. We don't want to start losing ground when it comes to retirement benefits.

In closing, enjoy your holiday break everyone and remember to take some time out for yourself. The holidays are a hectic and sometimes stressful time of year. Try to stay healthy; it is your health and mental state that will get you through these busy days ahead. Also, enjoy your loved ones; they will be the people who will give you your greatest joy.

#### In solidarity, Colleen Condolora



## Service Chapter VP

#### Susan A. Kusalonis

Dear Colleagues,

As you read this I hope you have recovered from the Thanksgiving food and shopping. Now we are on the home stretch for Christmas, Kwanza or Hanukah.

I was looking around the other day and thought about what could I do to help my co-workers, something that does not cost money, maybe jus a little of my time. As you know, a lot of buildings are kept clean and sanitary by our custodial workers. If we help leave our space picked up, chairs on the desks (classrooms), boxes off the floor maybe the vacuuming or sweeping would not take as long and then more time could be given to cleaning our work space. Everyone has a job to do and any help we get from our co-workers is appreciated. I know I tend to be scattered with boxes and paper all over my office. Think about it!!

At the recent Board meeting on Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>, Chuck Dedrick (DS) and the Board members expressed their thanks and appreciation for the work that the School Related Professionals do and hoped that we had a good day on November 17<sup>th</sup>. Please let us know how your day went.

Recently NYSUT held a SRP Round table at their headquarters. Their Legislative Liaison, John Green, spoke to the group. Here are just a few of the Bills that support our Chapter that NYSUT is supporting this year: Family Health Plus Cove rage-A2228; Workplace Violence Prevention in Schools-A2136-A & S2124-A; Medically Fragile Students – A979 & S28 both in Education Committee; Health Insurance for Domestic Partners –A2368-A & S960-A; Sick Leave-A2560. One interesting bit of information was that it cost over \$150,000 to bring each legislator back for a special session (this includes cost of their staff, travel, etc.).

The Schenectady Chamber of Commerce will be having a city wide celebration the week of Feb. 13-20, 2010. There will be lots of fun things for children (planetarium) and adults (proctors). NYSUT members will have VIP status during this event. Go to the NYSUT website for more information.

Margaret McCarthy spoke about SRP's and wanted us all to know that we are the hidden hero's in our student's lives. [Strong, Reliable & Proud, says SRP]

We want to welcome **Jodie Gay**, Payroll Clerk, **Christine McGrath**, Receptionist, **Denise Mohr**, Clerk 1 and **Lorna Newell**, Sr. Account Clerk. All are stationed at 900 Watervliet Shaker Road location.

Enjoy your upcoming holiday, relax and come back refreshed for the New Year.

In Solidarity, Susan

## WHEN MEDITATION DOESN'T WORK

The ramification of stress gone unchecked can have serious consequences on our productivity and our mental and physical health. We all use various means to deal with the stress that is a big part of our everyday lives. Meditation is a popular method. According to an article on stress management by Elizabeth Scott, relaxation techniques can stop being effective. Maybe you were able to meditate for five minutes during a morning coffee break, but now it no longer helps your stress level.

Scott recommends the following alternatives: writing, journaling or blogging. Writing about what's going on in your life can help to ease stress. But also write about solutions to your problems; action: creative actions like gardening, music or painting can make you feel at peace with yourself. Whatever activity you choose, by focusing on what you are doing at the moment, you can decrease your stress and anxiety levels; and persistence: Don't give up on meditation. Put it aside for a few months and return to it with a fresh eye. You may find it is once again helpful.

AFT PSRP E-NEWS November 9, 2009

### RETIREES CORNER

Jeanette K. Christoff, Teacher, Retired

Holiday Greetings to All,

As the hours of daylight shorten and the nights lengthen, we find ourselves slowly evolving back into our hibernation mode. It is time to give attention to the accumulation of unfinished projects, to follow through on ideas noted, to answer those e-mails and snail mails put aside and to read news articles we saved which piqued our interest.

The 5 AM sunrise no longer arrives to beckon us to the out-of-doors and we miss the summer air which bathed us with warmth. The birds no longer flitter about at the now frozen birdbath, nor do critters scurry in their play and search for their morning sustenance. Gone are the lacy spiders webs which glistened with dew, illuminated by the first ray of sun as it rose above the horizon. Our neighbor's kitty is home and warm, no longer greeting me with her gentle purr. How we miss those summer mornings.

But as the early darkness befalls our world, we look to the sky. The clear cold air reveals stars hidden by the summer haze and clouds. The constellations we have watched through the

years have once again returned as the winter solstice brings them to view. Orion, with his brilliant belt again marches across the sky and the Great Dipper makes its annual journey around the polar star, now having traveled from our front sky to the back. A meteor streaks across the sky, disappearing into the darkness as suddenly as it appeared. We are awed attempting to comprehend how many stars, how many galaxies, how long ago they sent their light. It is humbling to recall the words, "Thy power throughout the universe displayed".

The cold air tells us it is time to return to indoor warmth. Soon the pristine beauty of the first snowfall will cover unraked leaves and withered flowers. We are anticipating celebrating the origins of our Spiritual beliefs. These ancient mysteries, as the origin of our universe, are beyond our knowledge and comprehension. We accept them as we accepted with certainty that this day will be followed by night and the sun will again rise tomorrow.

Blessings to all as you pause to reflect upon the wonders we <u>do</u> understand and accept those not yet made known to us.

**For AFT retirees and others receiving Medicare,** assistance in figuring out which Medicare Part D plan you should choose is available at www.medicareinteractive.org/teachers.

The "Medicare Interactive Counselor" is being made available to members by the AFT and the AFT-affiliated New York State United Teachers.

Because Medicare private drug plan (Part D) costs change every year, now is the time to review Medicare drug coverage options for 2010. Knowing the new rates can help Medicare recipients avoid surprise charges.

To learn more about the costs and coverage under Medicare Part D, or to find out how to qualify for extra help or a Medicare savings program, which will help pay for Medicare-related costs, log on to the Medicare Interactive Counselor at www.medicareinteractive.org/teachers. Medicare Interactive is a resource provided by the Medicare Rights Center, the largest independent source of health care information and assistance in the United States for people with Medicare.

[AFT Electronic Newsletter-For your Information-This may or may not affect you if you have CDPHP, MVP or NYSHIP.]



## SAMPLE RETIREMENT LETTER

The letter of intention and resignation will be used in determining the compensation for unused sick leave benefit. This letter must be submitted to Mark Jones, (Assistant District Superintendent) by January 15, 2010 for the 2010 - 2011 school year.

Your Name Street Address City / State / Zip

#### Date you type letter

Mr. Mark Jones Assistant District Superintendent for Management Services Capital Region BOCES 900 Watervliet-Shaker Road Albany, New York 12205

Dear Mr. Jones,

Please accept this correspondence as notice of my possible intent to retire during or at the end of the **2010-2011** school year. If I do decide to retire, I would ask for compensation for unused sick leave as provided for in the (Teacher Unit; Service Unit; EA/TA Unit) Contract. I will notify my Supervisor when I have made a definite decision as the date of my retirement.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. My contact number is: (Type in your Phone number where you can be reached.)

Sincerely,

## Special Education Teacher Chapter meeting minutes—NOV. 18, 2009

By Susan V Stewart

Thank you to all the teachers and support staff who are taking the time to come to these meetings. The issues being raised are important to all of us. Remember, our Chapter VP, Flora Fasoldt, attends these meetings. She is able to answer many of our questions and to take our concerns to Dr. Jacobs. This is a great means of communication for all of us.

Issues discussed at the November 18<sup>th</sup> meeting included:

Supplies- there is still some confusion about how to get necessary supplies. Please e-mail your principals and let them know about your needs. Necessary supplies will be provided. The technology committee has recommended that you send in a PO if you need ink.

Special Education – a Request for Proposals was due to be sent out the first week in November with a November 30th deadline for return. If hiring goes as expected, the report may be delivered by mid March.

It was reported that there is a change in due dates for IEPs and that they may be due three weeks before the annual review date. We need to have this new process clarified.



## Special Ed. Teacher's Chapter Meeting

## Mark You Calendar We Need you!

Dec. 16, 2009 Maywood School Feb. 24, 2010 Maywood School April 21, 2010 School Support June 9, 2010 School Support

Jan. 20, 2010 March 17, 2010 May 19, 2010 School Support School Support Maywood School

(Before Rep Council) 3:30-4:00 PM

## SCHOOL MEALS HELP FIGHT FOOD INSECURITY

School meals are a lifeline for some students. In today's depressed economy many families are struggling to meet basic needs. According to the USDA's Economic Research Service, which recently published a report on food insecurity, 17 million households or 14.6% experienced food insecurity. This is the highest recorded prevalence rate of food insecurity since 1995, when the first national food security survey was conducted. And an increase from 2007, which reported 13.1 million households or 11.1% experienced food insecurity.

According to the report, more than half of food-insecure households participated in a Federal government food and nutrition assistance program. A finding that the USDA highlighted to support federal nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, in meeting this growing need, and the importance of strengthening the programs during the approaching Child Nutrition Reauthorization.

Tom Vilsack, Agricultural Secretary, acknowledged that, "It is vital that we make it easier for families and administrators to bring eligible children into the program and eliminate gap periods when children struggle to find the nutrition assistance they need whether at school, during summer, and in afterschool settings."

Go to **USDA'S web site** to see the report. Also contact your member of Congress for their support of the Child Nutrition Reauthorization.

# Capital Region BOCES Faculty Association Student Incentive Award

Capital Region BOCES Faculty Association will again offer the Student Incentive Awards. Applicants must be dependents of Association members. Awards are two scholarships for \$1000 each to be used for post-secondary education. One award will be given based on need and the other based on scholarship. Applications are available on the Association Website www.capregbocesfa.com and due by April 1st 2010. Selections are made by the Student Incentive Committee.

Mail applications to:
Lanny Barsale
PO Box 762
Cobleskill, NY 12043

## O, TANNEBAUM! A SOURCE OF INDOOR MOLD?

The fragrance of pine from a live decorated Christmas tree is one of the joys of the holiday season for many people. But could this iconic holiday symbol also have a dark side? According to a recent study by the American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology, the answer for people with allergies may be yes. The study examined the relationship of mold growth on a live tree and poor indoor quality, and grew out of a consistent and dramatic increase in asthma and sinus complaints every winter, which is especially pronounced during the holiday season, notes study researcher John Santilli.

The researchers hypothesized that since mold growth is common in the area surrounding outdoor foliage, the presence of a Christmas tree may be contributing to indoor mold. Mold counts were measured 12 times in a 65-68-degree room containing a live Christmas tree placed 10 feet from a heat vent for a two-week period. The first three days saw counts at 800 spores per cubic inch, but by the 14th day the spore count was at 5,000 per cubic inch. Normal indoor air has 500-800 spores per cubic inch.

The study demonstrated that a live Christmas tree can be a significant source of mold spores. Santilli recommends families with allergies in general and mold allergies in particular not keep a live Christmas tree in their homes for more than a few days and remove it sooner if there are signs of increased allergy symptoms. "An artificial tree may be a solution" says AFT health and safety staffer Darryl Alexander. "But remember that artificial trees and ornaments that have been in storage collect dust, which can be another source of allergy irritation."

Contact Darryl Alexander at **dalexand@aft.org** or Mike Lohman at **mlohman@aft.org** for more information about molds and allergies.

### **Dear Gabby**

Dear Gabby,

The principal of the building where my class is located called me in to his office to tell me he disagrees with my approach in dealing with the behavior of an out of control student. The approach was agreed on by our classroom team to provide consistency. All staff have received TCI training.

It was very humiliating to be called on the carpet. Should I have had a member of my team or other Association members accompany me to the principal's office?

#### **Humiliated** in Hartford

Dear Humiliated,

It is often difficult for persons who are not accustomed to dealing with students with challenging behaviors to understand why certain interventions are being used with a particular student. While we make every effort to design programs to support student success in achieving appropriate behaviors, it is seldom a smooth road!

First of all, you have done the right thing by receiving the training that BOCES provides to staff who work



with students with behavior issues. Secondly, you have done the right thing in having a clear behavior plan, in accordance with

TCI training, that is supported by your classroom team. Thirdly, you did the right thing in helping the principal understand the situation.

You don't necessarily need Association representation at this point. You didn't say how the meeting turned out, but assuming all went well, this should be the end of it. Gabby might suggest that you let your principal know about the situation in case the building principal has further questions about your procedures. In future, perhaps once the team has decided on a plan that may be controversial, you might consider informing the principal upfront. That way the principal would be prepared if building staff came to her/him with concerns about what they might be seeing.

It would have been better if the building principal had asked you to explain the incident rather than jumping to judgment, but it sounds like you handled a difficult situation well!

Gabby

Dear Gabby,

My principal told me that all supply orders were on hold until further notice. I purchased many necessary classroom supplies with my own money. Later I heard that other teachers had received their requisitions. What gives?

#### **Tapped out in Taconic**

Dear Tapped,

You would not believe how many letters Gabby has received on this topic! Oh, the confusion. When it comes to things like this that impact all of us, it would be nice if we all received the same information at the same time.

However, it is Gabby's understanding that supplies necessary to run your program will be provided to you. In particular, the Technology Committee recommends that you submit a purchase order if you need ink cartridges. If you are not receiving necessary items, please explain the situation to your principal. If that does not work, please contact your Chapter VP.

Gabby

Got a question? Maybe about your contract or job situation? Contact Dear Gabby, through the editors, and see what she has to say. Always looking for more topics to look up.



#### WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Reality Check is a youth lead movement within the New York State Department of Health, Tobacco Control Program that is committed to exposing the manipulative and deceptive marketing practices of the tobacco industry. Every year tobacco companies spend \$12.8 billion to advertise their deadly product.

It is no accident that youth are their primary target. The tobacco industry purposely markets teens to be replacement smokers. Published research studies have found that kids are twice as sensitive to tobacco advertising as adults. Movies are the ideal venue. Youth ages 12-20 are only  $1/6^{th}$  of the population, yet purchase  $\frac{1}{4}$  of all the movies tickets

According to a study by Dartmouth and Harvard Universities, exposure to smoking in the movies recruits 52% of all new adolescent smokers in the United States. In 2008, PG films delivered 11.7 billion tobacco impressions. We need your help to change this practice. Reality Check is collecting 60,000 stubs to represent the number of lives that would be saved is tobacco imagery was removed from movies "Kid" rated. The movie stubs will then be sent to studio heads to let them know that real theater patrons support this initiative.

Students and teachers throughout New York State are collecting movie ticket stubs to ensure that teens no longer become the next generation of replacement smokers. To join this campaign contact Katie for more information or mail ticket stubs to:

Katie Pincher, Reality Check Coordinator
Capital Region BOCES
900 Watervliet Shaker Road Suite 102
Albany, NY 12205
(518)464-5141 or kpincher@gw.neric.org



Have you got 45 minutes you could spare once a month during the school year? The TRIAD could use a runner to pick it up at Albany CTE Building D and bring to the Post Office on Karner Road.

Contact Lois or Susan to offer your assistance. WE need you help!!

The TRIAD is published monthly for the Capital Region BOCES Faculty Association Membership. We appreciate any comments or suggestions you may have.

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#### TRIAD GOING GREEN

If you want to <u>opt out</u> of receiving a hard copy, please email **Lisa Mink (lmink8@hotmail.com).** Please give her your name and Chapter you belong to and your home email address.

Please contact **Lisa Mink**, Membership Chair with any change in address that you have. You can reach her at <a href="mink8@hotmail.com">mink8@hotmail.com</a>. In doing so, you will be assured of receiving all that correspondence that the Association will send you including your newsletter, the TRIAD.

If you know a member or retiree who should be getting the TRIAD, give them this information.

## PERSONNEL PERSONALS

Condolences to **Mimi Remington** (Speech, Sp. Ed.) and **Pattie Naccarato** (TA/EA Sp. Ed.) on the recent loss of their mother, Nancy DeCastro, who passed away on October 20 at the age of 81.

Congratulations to **Patricia Veve** (TA, Sp. Ed.) on the birth of her granddaughter on October 30. The new baby's name is Savannah Grace, 6 lbs, 4 oz.

Get well wishes to **Stacy Sylvester** (TA, CTE).



#### Sunshine Chairperson

If you know of someone who could use a little cheering up, our sympathy, or a get well card, please contact:

#### **Theresa Bennett**

23 Harriet Street, Albany, NY 12205 869-2367