



December 2011

Vol. XXXVI No. 4

CAPITAL REGION BOCES FACULTY ASSOCIATION

TRIAD

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

News from the President

Dear Colleagues,

It seemed like just yesterday we were starting another school year and now the holiday season is upon us. It is certainly a time of wonder. The students are a bit wired and full of anticipation. They may just be hoping for a snow day or maybe there is a magic that touches all of us.

I look forward to the holidays as a chance to visit with friends and family. I do enjoy the smiles of anticipation on the childrens' faces as the magic moment approaches. Is it better to give than to receive? I believe the two go hand in hand. You can not have one without the other. I receive so much enjoyment from the giving of a gift, that it seems like I am the one that receives the real gift.

To teach is a truly noble profession. I believe this. Yet it seems like teachers are being used as scapegoats for societies ills. I really don't get it. Can we help? Yes, I believe we can. As educators we have had and should continue to have a part in molding the character of a child. That is one of the most important things we do. However, it seems like we are expected to repair ongoing damage.

In addition to the normal issues kids face growing up, it seems that the economic recession we are in and the continuing erosion of the standard of living for people that work is causing increased hardships on many of our students and their families. I see far fewer kids driving to CTE than we have had in the past. At \$3.50+ per gallon for gasoline it's no wonder. If they don't

drive, they often can't earn money to work and pay for what they need. My students used to come to school with money in their pockets and think nothing of buying food etc from the school store. They seem to have much less now.

Many of the behavior problems we deal with are more social work than discipline. I hear this from my principals and I also see it in my own classes. It truly feels like these kids are dealing with problems that are so very basic in their order of needs. In a country with all the wealth and resources that this one has, that simply should not be the case.

Yes, these are tough times and may not improve much in the near future. Still, I consider my self very fortunate. I am working and I love the work I do, at least most of the time. Also, I know that what I do is important and worthwhile. I have plenty to eat and happily help my students get through the day by providing some snacks, as I'm sure many of you do. I have a great family and many good friends. So far my health has been good and to quote my dad "Doug, if you have your health, you have everything". I do feel fortunate.

I want to thank each of you for the fine work you do and for always being professional in your actions. I know the job you do is so important to the kids and colleagues you work with. I hope that your holiday season is wonderful and all your wishes come true. **Happy holidays.**

Looking forward, Doug

CALENDAR

CAPITAL REGION
BOCES FACULTY ASSOCIATION.

EXEC. BOARD

Jan. 4, 2012

REP COUNCIL

Jan. 18, 2012

BOCES BOARD

Jan. , 2012



Birthstone: Turquoise

Flower:
Narcissus



TRIAD Article Deadline:

Jan. 24, 2012 for
February Newsletter

In This Issue:

Rep Coun. Highlights	Page 2
Board Mtg. Notes	Page 3
TA/EA Chapter	Page 4
Retirees Corner	Page 5
Healthy Living	Page 6
Locks of Love	Page 7
Service Chapter	Page 7
Schoharie Fund Raise	Page 9

Capital Region BOCES Faculty Association

Rep Council Highlights November 16th, 2011 —by Lanny Barsale

Chapter Vice-Presidents Reports

TA/EA – Colleen Condolora

- The arbitrator that they wanted was assigned.
- Two NYSUT awards:
 - SRP contingency award – for someone in Leadership role that goes above and beyond for others.
 - Community Service Award
 Both awards can be found on the NYSUT webpage.
- Rep Assembly – deadline for resolutions is January 30th.

Service – Susan Kusalonis

- There has been a change of secretaries at RA I. This is because of a layoff.

- There is a new system for payroll

Special Education Teachers – Flora Fasoldt

- Rep Lists are completed. Tell Flora of any changes that you want to make.
- Professional Learning Circles – questions about whether in lieu of or in addition to region meeting. It seems to depend on the principal. Some are during the school day with release time. There can only be two extra meetings a year – one in each semester.

CTE – Jeannine Moran

- She attended the NY State Teachers Retirement conference and got some good information. There is much that you can do on-line – mynstrs.com. To sign in you need your membership number which is on your card or your annual statement.
- CTE – grievance. So far it is going well. Administration has 30 days to respond.

Kathryn Walter – appointed new special education teacher rep.

PDP –

- Will be doing a memorandum of understanding for this year. Usually the PAOs have the Friday before Christmas off and the clericals have half of that. The problem is that most schools are in session on that Friday.
- Still trying to resolve the problems with TCI and sign language database. When principals change and want information, it is difficult to give it with the current database. This information may be added to WinCap.

APPR

- New regulations will be that teachers are observed two times every year. This will count for 60% between that and other anecdotal. Then they are to be evaluated on how well students do on tests. This will be 20% and could become 40%. We need to look at the different models – NYSUT and Danielson. Doug and others will be attending training on this. This is state legislated and it's up to us, the administration and NYSUT to make it work.
- Value added assessments are being produced. They are more focused on districts than on our population.
- Questions about kids who can't be tested. There are other methods such as alternate assessment and Brigrance to name a couple. There is no real information at this time.
- CTE has national tests but they may not be able to use them. They will be looking at assessing tools and techniques. They have similar problems as special education because of the population that they serve.

Impending layoffs – Cancellation of grants in School Support Services could impact three people in special education. The Commissioner of education may have to make decisions about some layoffs since some of their social workers lost time when switched to special education.

Catherine Jakway had taken pictures of the Schoharie County flood relief concert and asked permission to post on Webpage. As long as no students in the picture, it's allowed.

Negotiations –

- TA/EAs – at impasse.
- Teachers and service will start in January.

Kids Holiday Party is December 3rd. We need more helpers.

Bus Trip – 42 + have signed up.

Communication Committee will meet Tuesday, November 22, 2011.

TRIAD –

- The Transition Program does the copying but doesn't assemble like they used to. We need to make a push to go electronic. Reps need to talk to constituents and get e-mail addresses. The TRIAD will also be archived on the Faculty Association webpage. We may have to make the decision to just "GO GREEN" and make the TRIAD mainly electronic except for special circumstances and retirees.

Capital Region BOCES Faculty Association Leadership

POSITION	NAME	HOME	WORK	E-Mail Address
President	H. Douglas Harple	899-1044	862-4776	hdharple@msn.com
Vice President	Patricia Gollub	583-1119	862-4716	Gollub02@yahoo.com
CVP TA/EA	Colleen Condolora	393-2244	356-8349	condolora@aol.com
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Capital Region BOCES Board Meeting –

November 21, 2011 by Susan Kusalonis

Dr. Jacobs and Peter Taormina updated the Board on how the goals of the Special Education Study were going.

1. Mission Statement – Principals Cabinets have been established. Jim Butterworth, from CASDA, has met with the Principals on how to form the cabinets and continues to meet a couple times a month to continue the process.
2. Communications – Listening and acting on
 - On Tuesdays, “What’s New in Special Education” by Christine Carpenter is sent out to staff. She meets with the Principals and reports out to the special education staff on what is happening and information they should know.
 - Board member, Jack Phalen wanted to know what about the communication with parents and hosts schools?
 - Dr. Dedrick indicated that this type of communication had not been the problem; internal communication was mostly the issue.
3. Important Issue of Technology throughout the Division!
 - We have a wonderful Tech support person and he has gotten donated computers that have helped with staff access to Medicaid reporting and communication in general. We have a full time Assistive Technology person who is helping classroom staff use the software in the classroom.
4. Professional Development
 - The introduction of Social Emotional Learning is helping
 - Curriculum mapping aligned with the new core standards
 - Expansion of Verbal Behavior model
 - Regional action plan on student achievement
5. Establishes a common Process based approach to improve and evaluate the various aspects of our division
 - Principal Cabinets
 - Regular Scheduled department meetings with similar focus and content
 - Regular attendance by Director and Deputy Director at Regional Meetings to increase access and visibility and to monitor consistent implementations

Board member John Bergeron wanted to know what Regional stood for: Per Dr. Jacobs it was an internal reference to Region 1, 2, 3, etc.

Dr. Dedrick stated that the next step would be for Dr. Jacobs and Peter to meet with the Steering Committee. Also, he told the board that Inge and Peter would report a total of 3 times on the process, this being the first.

Report from China by Dr. Kathryn Gerbino

Eighteen people went to China from Catskill, Cobleskill, Schoharie SD’s, CTE and a Board of Ed. Member. The discussion was very interesting.

Service Related Personnel

Dr. Dedrick wanted to recognize and thank them for all that they do! Without people in trenches we would not be able to run this ship.

NERIC Awareness Day – Dec. 9 - Location changed to Holiday Inn on Wolf Road

Schoharie County meeting

Dr. Dedrick thanked Meg Allen and Michelle (lawyer) who helped present on mergers of schools. Funding mergers and functional consolidation – some districts were very concerned. 53 people representing all areas were present.

Meeting with Lopez and Seward

Issues across the state. Per Dr. Dedrick, reform of the Taylor Law to allow for Regional negotiation is needed. This would save money for everyone.

Question from Board:

How do you know when you are at Educational Bankruptcy? When parents are suing because you are not providing adequate services to their children.

Congressman Lopez was angry about the term “Educational Bankruptcy” as this has not been fully defined by SED. The Burger Commission needs to make binding regulation on consolidation of schools. We believe the State is moving in this direction.

Comments made by Dr. Dedrick:

700 school districts will not be in existence in the future! This will impact this organization and this why we need to be better than ever.

Inter-municipal Agreement is an easy way to share Business Services and does not require SED to be involved. A shared Business Administrator between districts cuts down costs.

Superintendent Searches in process:

1. Albany City SD; 2. Burnt Hills; 3. Schenectady
4. Possibly RCS; 5. Possibly Watervliet

This will involve a huge amount of time. Dr. Dedrick will take the lead on all, but Michelle will help with Burnt Hills and Carl Strang will help with Schenectady. One thing that has helped greatly is the involvement of retired Superintendents with the searches. Dr. Gerbino is involved with 30 School Quality Reviews and Race to The Top and thus will not be able to help with the searches.

Executive Session: 7:35 to 8 PM

Motion was made by Kevin Harrin to have a certain employee undergo medical examination. Accepted.

We here at BOCES have reduced from 3 to 2 business administrators at this time. Adam Hotaling is now officially the BOCES Treasurer.

Dignity Act – SED will be coming out with new regulations early 2012 and a lot of staff training will be involved.

Saturday: Dec. 10 – Community Day 1-4 PM at Woestina (RAI). Schalmont SD, BOCES SW’s and State are putting this on for the community

Rick Tims – NYS School Boards Association is designing a video interview so School Boards around the State can use to help fight back on unfunded mandates coming out of the State.

Question: How did Big 5 get exempt from APPR? Dr. Gerbino is checking on this.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM

TEACHING ASSISTANTS/EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS/AIDES

By Colleen Condolora, Chapter VP

Dear Constituents:

Happy holiday to everyone! It is that time of the year when leisure replaces work as a priority. Please spend time with your loved ones and indulge in some luxuries for yourself such as traveling, sleeping in, or just relaxing in front of a fireplace with a good book.

The negotiation process is still at an impasse. We have a meeting scheduled on December 7th, with the mediator. Following this meeting, the team should have more information as to what direction we will be heading. This process has been extremely challenging for everyone involved but your team will continue to keep thriving for the best contract we can negotiate. Please send your good vibes our way for this process to go the way it should. Hopefully there will be light at the end of the tunnel soon and we will all be treated with fairness and equity. In late November, a few Teaching Assistants from CTE and Special Education attended the NYSUT SRP (School Related Professional) Roundtable. I was able to connect with other negotiators from school districts in our area. They also, are experiencing difficulty in getting their contracts finalized. I know misery likes company; but in this case I wish public employees didn't have to be the scapegoats for poor decisions and greed on the part of the large corporations. The poor economy has stifled any advancement for the teams who are negotiating contracts. We will keep forging forward though; you can count on that happening!

At our November Labor Management meeting, a brief discussion was mentioned by administration on the direction we will be going for our Professional Development database. The TA Subcommittee (**Sara Growick, Barb Burnham, Kevin Rheden and Colleen Condolora**) will be meeting with Dr. Gerbino on the options that will be available. Following our continued meetings and working with administration, we

will recommend a viable program for the Level III Teaching Assistants to utilize who have a 75 hour state mandate requirement. I should have more information to report following the Subcommittee meeting this month. For now, remember to keep your binders and shoeboxes updated with your professional development hours.

I was very pleased to report many Teaching Assistants chose to do a Special Project for their APPR evaluations this school year. The Special Projects are very unique and reflect all the great work we implement in our classes on a daily basis. Thanks for those who chose this option. It will be difficult for me to select candidates for the TA Showcase in May since there are a plethora of great ideas. However, it will be fun though, I am always so proud to display your accomplishments. Keep up the good work everyone!

NYSUT is sponsoring a Constituency Award for School Related Professionals who exemplify leadership qualities in their workplace, union and community. The winner will be honored at the Representative Assembly in April. If anyone is interested in nominating someone you believe demonstrates these qualities, please check out the NYSUT website www.nysut.org for the form and guidelines. The form must be submitted by January 18, 2012.

I want to wish each of you a wonderful, restful and festive holiday break. Remember to take some time for yourself and enjoy the wonders of the holidays to the fullest. Each of you deserves the best for all your tireless efforts on behalf of our students. Happy holidays and a Happy New Year!

**In Solidarity,
Colleen Condolora**

Rep Council Dates	Location Of each meeting
1/18/12	900 Watervliet Shaker Road, Albany/Schoharie Rms.
2/15/12	Albany/Schoharie Rms.
3/21/12	Albany/Schoharie Rms.
4/18/12	Albany/Schoharie Rms.
5/16/12	Albany/Schoharie Rms.
6/13/12	Albany/Schoharie Rms.

RETIREES CORNER

Jeanette K. Christoff, Teacher, Retired

Merry Christmas, Happy Chanukah, Season's Greetings to All.

The good news is that my friend Donna has found her other Kitty- Kitty who was lost when her house was flooded. But more on that later.

It has been a surprisingly interesting month, compared with most, in my relatively predictable life. After much thought and discussion, Stan and I have made a decision that we believe will positively affect our future together. As our Christmas gift to each other, we have decided to get a built-in, automatic generator. What a novel gift. Finally the words, "possible power outages" will not strike fear in my heart. So many times I have played the scenario in my mind of how I would care for him in a shelter, without all of the adaptations we have at home. Our good friends, Catherine and Victor took us in for a week during the ice storm of 2008, but what if they too were powerless. We have found that the weather of recent months has given many folks the same idea and the distributors are back logged. With heat, a few lights and my microwave, we can survive. Some friends who have one never have used it in 2 years, and that's good insurance for everyone.

Another interesting event that lifted my spirits in the month past, was having attended a planning committee meeting for the 55th reunion of my home town

High School Class of 1957. Fourteen attended and it was a pleasant surprise that four of us were from the Parochial School we attended and where we began Kindergarten together.

Longevity seems to be a great equalizer. Gone were the high school concerns over sororities, fraternities and college selection. Gone were the early adulthood discussions of career successes, of children, of new homes. In our mature years we had shared stories of worldly travels, photos of grandchildren and of their whereabouts. The word "retirement" had begun to creep into the conversations. Now, with all of us in our 70's, we congratulated each other on our survival and shared recent experiences: hip replacement, cancer, the loss of parents, a spouse, siblings, a child, a beloved pet. We shared concerns about financial (in)security and useful ideas to meet the challenges of daily life. Some are working as volunteers or have become involved in needs of the community and some as I, have become care givers.

A spirit of camaraderie encompassed us as we realized our resilience. We were saddened to learn of friends and classmates whose names have been added to our "Remembering" list. As my contributions to our Reunion, I will create a composite of year-book photos of those who have passed, 70 at this time, from our class of 294 students.

It was evident that we still shared the same tenants of the faith we had grown up with as well as interest in, and concern for, each others lives. Our friendships have become more treasured as the numbers in our generation have diminished.

Oh yes, and among those attending was my friend Donna who drove up from Pennsylvania. She is living with her son and wading through reams of required paperwork. One day, when she returned to the rubble that once was her home, she came upon two sources of joy. Donna found, wedged between two pieces of broken glass, the container with the ashes of her Jim who had passed just a year ago. It was a special moment as she realized how easily they might have been swept away. Adding to her joy was the return of her Kitty, who had been gone for over 30 days and thought to be lost forever. Kitty had reverted to his natural instinct, as cats can do. He was aloof and independent after having foraged in the woods those many days, to survive. His ordeal had changed him. He was no longer the cuddly lap cat he had been. But he has been found and maybe one day he will again jump into Donna's lap, purr and cuddle, if only for a few brief moments. We share in her joy.

Healthy Living; Living For Good Health

By Catherine A. Jakway, TA, Spec. Ed.

Why Yoga and What's In It For Me?

Every year I ask myself the same questions. Aren't Thanksgiving and the holiday season still months away? How could this happen so fast? Ready or not here we go again. Thanksgiving and Black Friday have already passed by. Were you on of those early bird shoppers fighting the traffic and the crowds trying to catch a really good deal? I dreaded leaving the house but I left late morning and I still had to wait in long lines. I was able to find the few things I wanted but I know it was just the beginning.

Lately I have felt like I am just a wind up top. I start spinning as soon as my feet hit the floor at 5:30 a.m. until I run out of energy at 8:30 p.m. The stress of the holidays has already hit me. I just got Thanksgiving cards out in the mail and now I have been thinking of how to get my Christmas cards out on time! Between work, home, and all of the demands on me in between I lose sight of me; what I want and more importantly, **what I need**. I rush around all day and it sometimes feels like the "what about me" is put on hold, again. My mind, body and spirit go unsatisfied. I have become nothing but a result of what I have done all day.

The crosses I have to bear make it hard for me to keep my body moving and with all that is still yet to come in the holiday frenzy, I need to be in a better position to manage my stressors. I have decided to give myself the

greatest gift of all; a healthy way to take the time for me to relax. There is one healthy exercise that may just be the best thing for me and for you as well. Yoga.

I have had a gym membership that takes me a half hour to get to. I usually use the hot tub and the pool. It's non-stop moving, bathing, and changing again. I love to swim but I'm more stressed when I leave than when I got there! So instead, I need something that will offer a balance.

What is yoga?

This ancient Indian practice of exercise, breathing, and meditation date back more than 5,000 years. The American Yoga Association defines yoga as the desire for greater personal freedom, health and long life. Heightened self-understanding gave birth to this system of physical and mental exercise which has since spread throughout the world. The word Yoga means "to join or yoke together," and it brings the body and mind together into one harmonious experience.

Yoga is generally safe for physically healthy people, but always let your health care providers know when you start a new activity.

There are many types of yoga, most of which combine physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation. I've never tried yoga but I am willing to try a beginners program. I never donated my hair to Locks of

Love either, but I did it. Maybe for all who are interested in joining me, it could be a new year of firsts! The AYA says just a few minutes of yoga three times a day can balance your body and mind. Researchers are finding that millions of Americans practice yoga to ease depression, anxiety, and stress. I am all for practicing something that can offer benefits that:

- Yoga may help you learn to manage stress better.
 - Yoga may improve your mood and sense of well-being.
 - Yoga may positively alter your brain and blood chemicals.
 - And, Yoga may help you cope with anxiety, insomnia, and depression
- I recently contacted Amy S. Brennan-Strack from CAPIT, Health and Wellness Instructional Resources and I asked her if there will be a yoga class offering. I hope I was able to plant a bug in her ear. Ms. Brennan-Strack said that she is looking into it. Wouldn't it be nice if we can get a class that can be a total "feel good" that can get us out of the house instead of coming down with the dark winter time blues? I will keep you posted in my future articles in the TRIAD. From all of us on the Communication Committee we would like to wish you a safe, healthy, and happy holiday season.

Social security tax rate to increase

Look for possible rate increase in Jan. 13, 2012 paycheck

The Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Re-authorization and Job Creation Act of 2010 provided a two percent payroll tax reduction for all employees in the U.S., including BOCES employees. This effectively reduced employee Social Security tax withholding from 6.2 percent to 4.2 percent, meaning employees have paid less federal taxes since 2010. All staff should be aware that the 2 percent rate reduction is set to expire December 31. Unless Congress acts prior to that date, the previous Social Security tax withholding rate of 6.2 percent will be reflected in the January 13, 2012 paychecks. Questions? Call 464-3902.

Want the latest Microsoft Office suite on your home computer?

NERIC-Microsoft licensing agreement can make it happen

As you may be aware, BOCES recently partnered with Microsoft on an Enrollment for Education Solutions (EES) agreement that provides licensing on core Microsoft products for every workstation in the entire organization.

This agreement allows employees to participate in Microsoft's Software Assurance Home Use Program (HUP), which enables employees to purchase and download a licensed copy of Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2010 or Office for Mac 2011 to install and use on a home computer for a very low price of \$9.95 (for an additional \$13, employees can also purchase a copy of the physical media, which must be removed from the "shopping cart" during the checkout process if employees do not require the DVD). HUP software can be used for the duration of employment and the corresponding software used at work has active Software Assurance coverage.

A staff e-mail that included a purchase code for BOCES employees only was recently distributed. If you have any questions regarding the Home Use Program, or need the directions/purchase code for accessing this software, please e-mail our NERIC Help Desk or call (518) 862-5400.

Service Chapter Report

By Susan A. Kusalonis, Chapter VP

Dear Colleagues:

The **Service Staff Development Subcommittee** will be starting up again soon with new members. I want to welcome **Gina Hanley** (Sr. Acct. Clerk II) and **Carol Sheeran (Correction from last Month-Data Entry Operator)** from NERIC and **Deborah Evans** (Secretary 1, Sp. Ed.). Again, I would like to emphasize that we really need some representation from CTE. Hopefully someone will find time to meet with the group. The dates for the rest of the year are Jan. 11th, March 5th, and May 7th. All meetings run from 3 to 4 PM and are held at SSS. If you work too far away to make the 3 PM start time we can do a conference call and you can be part of the Committee this way.

Twelve month staff that receive longevity days have had a concern on how the days will be accrued. Even though this is in contradiction of our contract, we were assured by Administration that **no one** would be denied use of their days if needed at any time during the year.

# of Extra Days Per Month	Additional Vacation Accrued per month	Regular Vacation Accrued	Total Vacation Accrued
1	0.08	1.67	1.75
2	0.17	1.67	1.84
3	0.25	1.67	1.92
4	0.33	1.67	2.00

We want to wish **Joan Kazmierczak** (Sr. Keyboard Specialist, CTE) well on her retirement. Also to welcome **Denise Stoliker**, (Clerk 1, Mgt.) to BOCES.

In Solidarity, Susan

LOCKS of LOVE CAMPAIGN 2011

December 2011 Update

Here's the Long and the Short of it!

The Final Countdown begins!

By Catherine A. Jakway, TA. Spec. Ed.

It is November 21st, less than a couple of weeks away from the December 1st **Locks of Love** cut date at the Albany BOCES CTE Cosmetology location.

I cannot tell you how much I am looking forward to this cut. I can't say anything that I haven't already said. But, as a reminder, I started this campaign to honor and remember family members, friends, and co-workers who are fighting or have fought cancer, and especially in memory of my Aunt Pat (Patricia Rivers) and our own fellow workers who fought a courageous battle but whose lives were lost.

I had a long way to "grow" and I went the distance. Now I look forward to making the cut and at the same time giving myself and those who join me a whole new look.

My goal is still 200 inches. That is just 20 people with 10 inches including me. I continue to hope that this campaign will be

a success. As the holidays approach, I can't think of a better gift that won't cost you anything but your hair. I have been thinking about making the **Locks of Love** Campaign an annual event. I would do it again and again for such a worthy cause. If you are not making a donation this year, would you please consider it for next year?

I thank you from the bottom of my soon to be shorter rootie tooties.

Catherine Jakway

My pictures of the "before" and "after" can be found at www.crbfa.org.



Union-backed autism bill becomes law

A new law, backed by NYSUT, will require insurers to cover screening, diagnosis and treatment for autism spectrum disorders. It includes routine toddler screenings, behavioral health treatments, speech therapy, occupational therapy and physical therapy. That should bolster early and effective treatment and save individual families as much as \$50,000 a year in out-of-pocket costs for 30,000 autistic New York children. The change will save schools and governments \$13 million a year in special education, Medicaid and social services costs.

The 2012 NYSUT RA is April 26-28 in Buffalo. The deadline for proposed resolutions is Jan. 30. The deadline for proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws is Feb. 24.

NYSUT Leader Briefing - Nov. 10, 2011

RETIREE UPDATES

We have been calling retirees in the Schoharie and Rotterdam Junction areas to let them know of our concern for them. We have learned the following: **Al Sellick** fared well as his home is on a hill. **Joe** and Mrs. **Bevins** were flooded. Their house is structurally sound and after cleaning and drying, repairs began. They are living in a motor home on loan from a friend. **Segrid Wood** did not lose her home but lost all that was in her shop. **Ruth Truesdell** is okay and also **Liz Blackmur**. Liz returned our call and shared the information on Joe, Segrid, and Ruth. **Donna Amberman** and her home are okay, but she lost her furnace and water heater. We have not been able to contact **Jean Foley** and **Bill Zuend** in Rotterdam Junction.

We had a nice chat with **Lois Abramson**, our colleague from the 80's and Maywood days, recalling many happy memories and the photos

she took. Loie's children are near and far. Her first grandchild, Adam, is working in Singapore. Lois sends her regard and enjoys "computing". Her address is: lomofoto@aol.com.

Long time friend, **Anita Riccio** cannot look at work without joining in. Anita has been volunteering in Rotterdam Junction and Schoharie. Grandsons Freddie, Jake and Aaron have joined in the effort. Keeps her young and slender. She will be looking for Bill and Jean. You may have seen her on Channel 6 News, working in Schoharie

The Gazette recently featured an article on the Capital Area Ski Touring Association (CASTA) in which retirees **Carol Baumes** and **Sarah Adrience** were pictured. The group has cross-country skied in Germany, Austria, Italy, France and Switzerland. (11/11/11)

To the Editor,

After reading the article in today's Gazette entitled "Special ed transition not smooth for all students returning to district", I felt the need to speak in support of Capital Region BOCES, and the specialized services they offer. As a Speech Therapist for this agency for the past 23 years, I can assure you that the students in all of my programs are offered the same public school opportunities as their peers, and participate in every concert and cultural arts activity that comes through the doors of the public schools we call home.

Having taught in BOCES programs throughout the Capital Region, I have seen my students many times over have the privilege of being part of "Meet the Families Barbeques", Halloween parades, school plays, and even be members of the school band and chorus. They also participate in a full range of inclusion opportunities available to them for art, gym, media and music, as well as for grade level classroom programs. Parents of our students are no less dedicated because their children's needs may take them to a school further down the road. In fact, we have always had a full measure of family involvement in "Back to School Night", in PTO sponsored events, and the like.

Of course, every parent would like their child to be educated as close to home as possible, but when a student's needs outweigh the benefits of a shorter bus ride, Capital Region BOCES remains an excellent option for a child-centered educational experience. While we as educators, parents, school districts and taxpayers are all under tremendous pressure to cut costs, we should also remember that we are all in this together, and that our children, our most precious resource, should always come first.

Sincerely, **Sherry Karcher-Hewitt**

(This letter was printed in the Schenectady Gazette.)

Schoharie Valley Rock-n-Roll Relief Fund Raiser Results

A Remarkable Outpouring of Human Spirit in Response to the Devastation

By Catherine A. Jakway, TA. Spec. Ed.

The Schoharie Valley Rock-n-Roll Relief Concert that was held on October 15th was a big hit to the tune of \$26,564.

This was a free to the public event and despite the intermittent rain and cool temperature, it drew a very large crowd that was estimated between 4,000 and 4,500 people. Schoharie Kiwanis Club President Michael Bailey stated the benefit was "one of the biggest events Schoharie has seen." The Kiwanis Club of Schoharie offered their time and assistance to coordinate and operate the occasion. This event was the inspiration turned reality of Schoharie residents Dean Haskin and Paul Locascio. As well as musicians who played at the benefit concert, they were instrumental in putting the community fundraiser together in less than four weeks.

Matt Millard, Teacher at Capital Region Career and Technical School Schoharie Campus attended the benefit as his band Flashback was one of the bands to play along with many others. Matt had the opportunity to wander through the crowds and speak with people that he had known for many years. "It was a much needed spirit lifting experience for those who were directly affected and also for the volunteers who came to help those who lost something if not everything due to the flooding. Standing on the stage and looking at all the people smiling and having an enjoyable time was both gratifying and heart wrenching. Gratifying in the sense I knew what we were doing was going to help even if in the smallest of ways. Heart wrenching in the sense that even though we were helping at that moment in time the fight and struggle for these people really was just beginning as some were still working to salvage what they had and trying to rebuild what was taken. All in all the day was a great success raising almost \$27,000."

People came from all over and from all walks of life to volunteer their time in any way to lend a helping hand. All aid given, from the professionals to those who could only provide moral support, raised the spirits to those in great need. These volunteers including children, shoveled mud and cleaned, supplied meals, water, financial aid, and helped to search for salvageable items, many of them personal that meant the world to the victims. Even in the wake of massive destruction and personal loss, these resilient people proved "when the going gets tough, the tough get going."

Although the Schoharie Campus did not sustain damage, employees were evacuated several times and one of those times was during their first week back. The school may have been spared but an employee's home was damaged along with most of its contents.

"Both Schoharie and Middleburgh schools started late so our student population was low. For the first few weeks the morale of both students and staff here was surprisingly very upbeat, I think in part due to the fact that school starting was able to return some normalcy to their lives."

Matt Millard continues to prove that he is no stranger to hard work. In addition to his daily teaching sessions at CTE, his students are receiving valuable experience by repairing small engine machinery and other outdoor equipment damaged in the flooding for community residents. He continues to accept projects for small engine repair or donation. Interested community members can call him at 295-3011 between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. Monday through Friday. To read the an article about how these Schoharie students are giving back to their community, go to http://www.middleburghcsd.org/News/2011_12/schboces1011.cfm

On Monday, November 7th at the historic Parrott House in Schoharie, Michael Bailey presented checks in the amount of \$26,564. and another check in the amount of \$294 to Jeannette Spaulding, Deputy Executive Director of the Schoharie County Community Action Program. This fund has given aid to over 600 households and there are still 170 plus households who are in need of this help.

As many as 3,000 pictures were taken of the devastating losses caused by hurricane Irene, a product of Mother Nature's most destructive wrath.

A two hour video of the Schoharie Valley damage will be put into a DVD to be sold in the future. Proceeds will benefit residents of Schoharie County. A second Schoharie Valley Rock-n-Roll Relief Concert is hoping to be planned a year from now on the anniversary of hurricane Irene.

Donations continue to be accepted with all proceeds going to the Schoharie County Community Action Program for Schoharie County Flood Victims.

Donations can be mailed to: Schoharie Flood Aid, c/o Schoharie Kiwanis, PO Box 305, Schoharie, NY 12157.

Pictures from the Schoharie Valley Rock-n-Roll Relief Concert can be seen on Face Book. The page is "Schoharie Valley Rock-n-Roll Flood Relief" and also on Matt Millard's band page, "Flash Back."

Pictures of the check donation presentation can be seen at our Capital Region BOCES Faculty Association website www.crbfa.org.

Are you up to the challenge?

If you're like most people, you make New Year's resolutions only to break them soon after. NYSUT Member Benefits challenges all NYSUT members to make and keep this one resolution: I resolve to draw up (or update) my will.

The importance of having a will to protect your loved ones and your wishes cannot be stressed enough. This is especially true if you have children under the age of 18. A will allows you to name a legal guardian(s) for your children. It also ensures that your estate will be distributed according to your desires. Without a valid will, these very important, personal decisions are made by the state.

The Legal Service Plan endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits Trust is a convenient vehicle to help you meet this challenge. It provides one simple will or update, free. A simple will provides for the proceeds of one's estate to be distributed to specifically named beneficiary(ies), with an alternate distribution plan in the event the primary beneficiary predeceases the writer of the will. With a simple will, proceeds are to be distributed outright with no conditions attached. Placing a condition on a bequest requires a trust, which can be obtained from the Legal Plan for a fee.

In addition to the simple will, you'll receive a durable power of attorney, living will and health care proxy, all important documents to have in place *before* the need for them arises.

The plan also gives you access to unlimited, toll-free legal advice from plan attorneys. These attorneys will make phone calls and write

The Legal Service Plan provided through Feldman, Kramer & Monaco, P.C. is a NYSUT Member Benefits Trust (Member Benefits)-endorsed program. Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement of 33.33% of annual participation fees received for this program. All such payments to Member Benefits are used solely to defray the costs of administering its various programs and, where appropriate, to enhance them. Member Benefits acts as your advocate; please contact Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 if you experience a problem with any endorsed program. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

third-party correspondence, at no charge, to resolve personal legal situations on your behalf before they become major problems. In addition, when you enroll in this plan, you receive two coupons for free, hour-long consultations with a plan attorney.

Is there a real estate transaction coming up in your near future? Do you have any traffic violations? You can receive legal assistance on a variety of personal legal matters when you enroll in the Legal Service Plan. If the matter can't be resolved over the phone or with a letter, you will be referred to a plan attorney in your area, who will charge you \$200 an hour or 40 percent off the usual hourly rate, whichever is lower.

Optional riders for Elder Law services and for business protection can be added to your legal plan coverage.

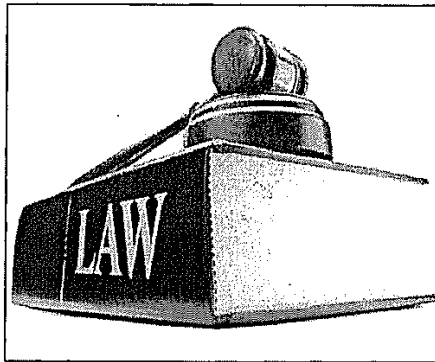
Don't put it off any longer! Draw up your will. Enroll in the Legal Service Plan and use its service to help you, or do it

another way, but just do it! The peace of mind you'll have once you know you have taken care of your loved ones far outweighs any unpleasantness associated with making up your will.

If you happen to belong to a local association that provides a group legal service plan to you through the local or its benefit fund, remember to take advantage of the plan's benefits.

If not, you can enroll in the voluntary plan online at www.memberbenefits.nysut.org, or view and print a descriptive brochure and enrollment form online.

You can also call NYSUT Member Benefits at 800-626-8101.



SED appoints special investigator for test integrity violations

SED Commissioner John B. King, Jr. appointed Henry M. "Hank" Greenberg to conduct a complete review of SED's procedures for receiving, reviewing and investigating reports of alleged improprieties involving the state's student assessments, including the Regents examinations. Greenberg, who will provide his services pro bono, was previously a counsel to then Attorney General Andrew Cuomo.

King said Greenberg will examine records of alleged test integrity violations and how those allegations were tracked and resolved. He noted that SED's state budget request includes funding for several test integrity measures, including erasure analysis and data forensics.

NYSUT action on special education mandate relief yields some results

Thanks to an all-out mobilization by NYSUT, bringing together members, parents and other advocates to voice opposition, the Regents backed off on an ill-advised special education mandate relief proposal: Rather than eliminating the school psychologist role on the Committee on Special Education (CSE) as proposed, the Regents agreed to maintain the psychologist on the CSE for meetings to determine a student's eligibility for special education services.

Regrettably, the Board of Regents this week endorsed some other problematic special education mandate relief proposals that would limit special education services. NYSUT will now raise our concerns with the state Assembly and Senate where almost all of these proposals will need legislative action in order to be implemented.

Among the proposals endorsed by the Regents:

- Eliminating the student's parent and the school physician roles on the CSE;
- Limiting the required participation of the school psychologist to the initial meeting to determine a student's eligibility;
- Eliminating subcommittees on special education;
- Repealing the required components for an initial evaluation; and
- No longer allowing a school psychologist to determine whether there is a need for an individual psychological evaluation.

NYSUT Leader Briefing - Nov. 18, 2011

Attention Rep Council Rookies

Here we go, another new year for the **Capital Region BOCES Faculty Association**. The veteran Reps are revved up and ready to roll. But certainly there are a few of you sporting a little apprehension.

Rep Council Rookies do not fret! You will do fine! Here are a few tips to make you feel more comfortable and to help launch your Rep Council service.

- Prior to every meeting you should be getting the meeting agenda and the minutes from the previous meeting via your personal email (make sure Sue Davis, Recording Secretary, has it correctly or it will bounce back). Minutes from the Executive Board meeting are also usually included. The agenda indicates where the meeting will be held, the time and date. Try to bring these documents with you, but if you forget there are usually copies at the meeting. The agenda has space for notes. Some Reps distribute the minutes to their constituents which is easy to do if you work in the same building or you can forward them via email. Rep Council highlights are printed in the TRIAD.
- Make an effort to contact your constituents so they know who is representing them at Rep Council. One idea is to contact them via phone and request their personal email address. Introduce yourself as their Association Representative and ask if they have any issues for you to bring to Rep Council or questions related to the contract. Keep your constituents informed of pertinent information and issues. GroupWise should not be used for Association communication.
- Every new Rep received a Rep Council Binder. Bring it to Rep Council because it contains... "Useful Information" such as notes on Robert's Rules of Order and Parliamentary Procedure; copies of your Chapter Contract and the Association Constitution; forms to request funds from the Philanthropic Fund, forms used to **make a motion** (motions need to be submitted in writing) and a mileage form. Reps can be reimbursed for mileage to attend Rep Council meetings. (Consult Travel Expense Policy on the back of the mileage form.)
- At the meeting, try sitting with a veteran (rep council member) so he/she can help you out, answer some questions. **However do not hesitate to raise your hand and ask a question.**
- Serve on a committee. Come on, you can do it! Consider serving on one of the many committees: the Website Committee, the Budget Committee, the Nomination and/or Election Committee, the Health and Safety Committee, the Social Committee, the Celebration Bash Committee
- Upcoming conferences are announced in the TRIAD or information is available from your Chapter VP. Look for a conference that might interest you and request to attend.
- Look for announcements for your Chapter Meetings and plan to attend.
- Keep coming! It is important that you try to attend every Rep Council Meeting. If you cannot attend, contact your Chapter Vice President so she can arrange for an alternate. The alternate can vote in your place. Frequently motions are passed by only a few votes so it is important that your Chapter is represented.

PERSONNEL PERSONALS

Congratulations to **Kayla Bisailon** TA in Jen Yamin's Classroom on her recent marriage to Jason Nagle on 11/11/11. Kayla is the daughter of Eric and **Billie Bisailon** TA in Nancy Koskoski's classroom.

Congratulations to **Iain** and Nicole **Munro** (Teacher, Sp. Ed) on the birth of son Isaac William on Nov. 14. His two older sisters love having a little brother to play with.

Congratulations to **Kristine Matatt-Gardella** (Teacher, Sp. Ed.) on the birth on July 7th of her son Asher Steven. His 3 1/2 year old sister Rowen is delighted.

We wish a speedy recovery to **Michelle Angelo** (TA, Sp. Ed.).

Congratulations to **Donna Richards** (OT, Sp. Ed.) on the birth of her grandson Liam James Sichler, Nov. 5th.

We Wish You A Merry Christmas, Happy Chanukah and Season's Greetings to All.



Sunshine Chairperson

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

Michelle Angelo

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(518) 370-3468

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Please contact **Lisa Mink**, Membership Chair with any change in address that you have. You can reach her at lmink8@hotmail.com. In doing so, you will be assured of receiving all that correspondence that the Association will send you including your newsletter, the TRIAD.

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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