



December 2013

Vol. XXXVIII 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,

Well, it's hard to believe, but the Holiday Season is upon us. Sometimes I wonder why we call it the Holiday Season. The kids are usually wired for sound. With company coming and shopping to do, with all the added work and stresses, you would think we would be more like Scrooge.

Why is it we tend to deal with these things and keep smiling even though it often ends up being a ton of work? I think it is because we believe in the magic that surrounds the holidays and we really enjoy. What do you think?

We traditionally see the holidays as a time for sharing and for being thankful for all we have. I admit that the last few years have been difficult. It seems that the efforts our state is making to reform education (again) are ill conceived and shoved down our throats. It seems that our Commissioner of Education is more concerned with forcing poorly planned reform than planning reform that makes sense and would move itself forward.

I believe that the qualities this commissioner has demonstrated are not those of a leader who understands what we do and how to lead us, but more of a little man who lacks insight and the leadership qualities that cause people to want to follow. If you have to force your will upon, in this case, your educators, then the plan is flawed and the delivery is even worse. If you can't sell your message and get folks to buy in, you absolutely need to rethink what it is you are selling and how you are selling it. Only a foolish leader would think that is not necessary.

It is my hope that the plan and delivery will change for the better. It is my hope that this commissioner will start to fix this mess,

or the top NY politician will replace him. If this does not happen, then I have to believe this mess is the plan and destabilization of one of the finest public education systems in the country, is the goal.

Since this is a time for reflection and thanksgiving, I would like to do that. I would like to thank all our members for being the hard working professionals that they are and for their continued support. The children we serve are so much better off because of your efforts and dedication. You are the ones that make education happen, regardless of what your role is.

I would like to thank all the members of Rep Council. Your hard work is what makes this Association alive and operational. Your judgment and wise decision-making at our Rep Council meetings keeps us going in a positive direction.

Thanks to all chairs and members of committees, communications committee included. You do all the important tasks we ask of you. I am always impressed with the way you take on a job and follow it through to its completion. You do it with a sincerity and enthusiasm that I find refreshing and inspiring.

I would also like to thank the members of our Executive Board for all of their hard work. These are the folks that often spend many hours a week doing Association business. I'm sure it seems that some nights the phone doesn't stop ringing. The dedication they have and work they do is tremendous.

I hope that when you see any of these folks who work so hard for you and your Association, you will thank them for the fine job(s) they do.

Looking Forward, Doug

CALENDAR

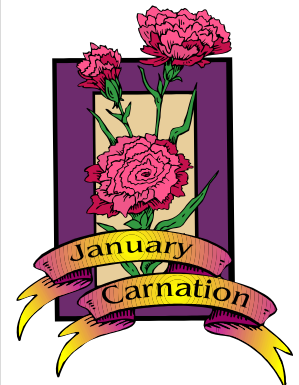
CAPITAL REGION
BOCES FACULTY
ASSOCIATION.

REP COUNCIL

Dec. 18, 2013

BOCES BOARD

Dec. 16, 2013



Happy New Year

**TRIAD Article
Deadline** 1/3/13 for
January Newsletter

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Sample Retirement Letter of intent to retire during the next fiscal year.

Deadline is January 15, 2014

Mr. Robert Zordan, Director of Human Resources
 Management Services
 Capital Region BOCES
 900 Watervliet-Shaker Road
 Albany, New York 12205

Dear Mr. Zordan:

Please accept this letter as written notice, as required, of my potential decision to retire from my position during the 2014-15 School Year in order to receive compensation for unused sick leave.

Should I decide to retire during this time period I will notify (name of appropriate Division Director), Director of the (?) Division.

Please feel free to contact me if any additional information is needed.

Capital Region BOCES Faculty Association Important Dates for 2013-14

<i>BOCES Board of Education</i>	<i>Executive Board</i>	<i>Representative Council</i>
December 16, 2013	December 4, 2013	December 18, 2013 900 Watervliet-Shaker Road
January 23, 2014	January 8, 2014	January 22, 2014 900 Watervliet-Shaker Road
February 27, 2014	February 5, 2014	February 26, 2014

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
CVP Service	Sandy Smith	869-7421	229-1403	shortmom02@yahoo.com
CVP Spec. Educ.	Flora Fasoldt	674-0223	377-9018	electflora@aol.com
CVP C T E	Jeannine Moran	587-7662	862-4816	jmmoran@hotmail.com
Recording Secretary	Barbara Burnham	334-1193	862-4720	baburnham@gmail.com
Treasurer	Deborah Sorvari	452-8138	334-1296	debmom39@nycap.rr.com
Membership Chair	Lisa Mink	372-7240	464-3979	lmink8@hotmail.com
Grievance Chair	Kristen Lashway			

From The Editor

By Lanny Barsale, Teacher, Spec. Ed.

So here we are in the last month of 2013. And my last Christmas message as co-editor of the TRIAD. So...do I wax eloquent or just say it like it is? The latter is more my style.

I'm still laid up with a bad leg and ankle, opposite sides, and facing shoulder surgery. Is this any way to spend my last year with BOCES? I hate missing the time but my body said, "Enough!" when I tried to muddle through. I actually missed Rep Council in November (thank you to the person who did the Highlights) and now I'll miss December and possibly January. I won't be doing a lot of writing since it's my right shoulder that goes under the knife. And I won't be driving nor doing much of anything for at least a week. Then the physical therapy starts. I have a high pain threshold but this one might get to me. So it's definitely not my year.

Christmas will definitely be different. Price Chopper had a deal with gift cards where you earn 4 times the fuel advantage points so I have done my Christmas shopping, such as it is. My usually overly decorated home will be much more sedate. My hope is that I'll be healed enough to join family in Florida but I know that I won't be alone even if that doesn't happen. I will really miss Christmas with the kids at school but my preplanning ensures that they will still have a wonderful holiday. I've always been so pleased to see their excitement over receiving school supplies. But still, it will all be very different.

The hard part for me will be the dependency on others for so much. When you only have one arm work-

ing and moving will be painful, one really needs to rely on the goodness of others. I am so blessed to have such a strong support system, especially through my church. But it's still been hard to have to ask for so much help. Part of me wishes people would just somehow know my needs but I don't have any mind readers among my long list of friends. So I just have to "suck it up" and ask. And the blessing is, there has always been someone to fill whatever the need is.

In a way, it compares to the needs of the Association. Those needs are always present. The hard part is that we have to keep asking for those needs to be addressed. However, we have to accept that our members are not mind readers. I will continue to challenge our Association leaders to make lists of those needs available for people who are not necessarily a part of Rep Council. Keep reading your TRIAD and you will learn of those needs and hopefully step up. Many have, but there is always more to be done. I have been blessed by the many people who have supported me. Let's work on being the blessings that our Association needs.

As I write, Hanukkah has begun. I hope that those who celebrate this holiday enjoyed it to the fullest. I send Christmas greetings to others as well as a Happy Kwanzaa. And a Happy New Year, full of challenges and surprises.

In Solidarity, Lanny Barsale, Co-editor

Dates to remember:

January 1 – the First health insurance market-place plans established by the Affordable Care Act go into effect.

January 26 – Grammy Awards

February 2 – Groundhog Day

May 15, 2014—Celebration Bash

May 16, 2014- BOCES Prom

Teaching Assistants/Aides

Colleen Condolora, Chapter VP

Dear Constituents,

The wonders of the holidays are upon each of us once again. This time of year is filled with hustle and bustle and very hectic schedules. We each are trying to stay afloat of the demands of the holidays as well as do our daily chores of family duties, work, appointments, cooking, baking and shopping for our family and friends. Please remember to take some time for yourselves. We tend to forget and end up putting ourselves at the bottom of the list. This is not a healthy choice for ourselves to be making. Our mental, emotional and physical health matters to so many, so please go out and find something you enjoy. You truly deserve the break!!! Remember, burning the candle at both ends will only lead to a very quick burnout.

For all Teaching Assistants who were unable to attend the December 3rd faculty meeting, please make sure you touch base with someone on your team to get the updates that were presented. This information is very important to ensure everyone is on the same page regarding the Student Learning Objectives (SLO's). If anyone has any questions, you can always reach out to me for the updates.

I am projecting out this negotiation information, since I am writing this article at least three weeks before you

receive it. Our Labor Relations Specialist, Mike Rowan, should have given our proposals to Administration and we will be looking to make some dates to begin negotiating. We have not received any information regarding the Health Insurance piece as of yet, so I am unsure where we stand with any updates on the Health Insurance front. I will keep you abreast as we move forward.

I want to take this time to thank everyone for everything you do in the classroom and to the many work related committees you serve on. Thanks to everyone in our Chapter who volunteers their time for the Faculty Association. We would not be able to do everything we do for our members without your dedication and service.

Please enjoy your Holiday with your family and friends. Remember to take some time for yourself. This is one time you can be selfish and treat yourself to something you enjoy. Please get some much needed rest also; we tend to try to do too much this time of year. Sleep is a very important component to allowing us to keep going strong. Happy holidays everyone! Enjoy your time off!

Colleen Condolora

Very Useful WebSites

Better Stress Relief: Relax mind and body with breathing exercises, guided imagery, journaling, muscle relaxation and other techniques.

WebMD.com/balance/stressmanagement/default.htm

Toys for Special needs: Products that help kids improve communication, focusing, motor and sensory skills. FunAndFunction.com

Choose a cruise: Select by date, destination, duration, home port and other criteria. Includes special deals...reviews of specific ships/cabins/excursions...information on hidden costs...more. CruiseCritic.com

Highlights of Rep Council – November 20, 2013

By Kate Clarke, Speech Teacher, Special Ed.

Minutes approved
Treasurers report-approved

Mike Rowan was here today at 3 to train new reps.

Chapter VP Reports

Special Education Teacher Chapter: Flora Fasoldt

- Flora meeting with Peter Taramino - 1 sub has been recalled to teacher position, new 6:1:2 class, RA 1 IMN to be opened at Schalmont.

Service Chapter – Sandy Smith

- Sick Bank meeting with Robert Zordan was held and a person who requested days got them. People donated one more day.

TA/Aide Chapter – Colleen Condolora

- Peter Taramino agreed to pay TA's who will be attending the faculty meeting.
- Colleen to email teachers to remind them to read emails.
- Mike Rowan pressing issue on health insurance- will be addressed in near future

Doug Harple appointed **Kristin Lashway** to the Teacher negotiating team

Budget committee -- 1 volunteer from each Chapter requested.

Request of philanthropic committee to make donation to RA 1 in memory of Kaitlyn Low.

1) Member Needs-\$100.00 amount available. Mary Ruby and Shelly Peck-- 2nd motion- unanimous approval,

2) Donation to classroom students for supplies- Iris Conway to this RA1 has team accepting donations for this purpose.

Wording from Flora - "Friendly Amendment" A donation to Katlin's class in honor her memory. Unanimously approved.

Standing committees Report

Membership report provided

Negotiations and health insurance update- committees met today to work on concerns about language to be presented.

Mike Rowan will contact administration and facilitate a move forward towards resolution of this matter.

Doug discussed moving toward settlement of health insurance issues. Hoping for January or February of 2014.

Doug spoke of current factors affecting stability of the organization.

Audit

Catherine Jakway (a member of the committee) said that time will be needed to finish report-will be submitted at next meeting.

Grievance Chair—No grievances

District PDP- ESS presented-

Select Committees:

No current news from Special Ed. Committee

TRIAD meeting will be Tuesday, 11/26/13

Board Meeting Report

Colleen Condolora presented the notes from Susan Kusalonis as she could not make the meeting. Please see the TRIAD for the complete report.

Representative Lists for Rep Council

People aren't sure who their reps are-list to be made available again. Reps should contact their members through personal email or phone.

Motion to adjourn.

Carolyn spoke about the Social Committee-asked for volunteers- 11-1 on 12/7/13

Social committee met about Children's X-Mas party. **Notes submitted by Kate Clark as Lanny could not be at the meeting.**

RETIREES CORNER

By Jeanette Christoff

Greetings for the Season,

The recent reports and interviews to mark the 50th anniversary of the demise of our 34th President brought to mind memories of our long-ago-life, as we knew it, and the dramatic contrast with life in the present.

The 50's and early 60's were good years. Food and gas were no longer rationed and we could even buy bubble gum again. Our old threadbare winter coat could finally be sold for rags and replaced. Yard goods were available and we taught ourselves to sew on grandma's old Singer treadle machine. Most folks did not have many items of clothing as observed in old photos. Homes were sparsely furnished and austere with only the basics. Witness the set in old movies on TCM. Factories were retooling from war materials to consumer goods, which were still scarce. Folks who were "setting up housekeeping" made do, with donated items from relatives and friends until consumer goods could meet the demand.

With the return of our servicemen from the "war to end all wars", new families began. Life moved at a gentle, leisurely pace. Almost everyone knew someone who had been killed, had been a POW or was wounded in action. People were respectful of each other. With the millions of war casualties, life was valued as the precious commodity that it is.

A good many of my friends had parents who also were first generation Americans, as was my Dad. Many of them had to leave school to help support their families. They instilled in us the importance of an education as they knew the drudgery of factory work.

We loved school. Our day began with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer. We followed whatever directives or announcements that came from the office. We respected our teachers and they respected us. We walked through the hallways with never a thought that any verbal or physical harm would come to us. We walked to school, the movies and just about everywhere without concern.

Although it was not specifically taught, the "common core" of Biblical values that defined right from wrong was observed without need to say them. Manners and etiquette were taught and practiced. Fashions were modest and student gained recognition through scholastic achievement, community work and volunteering.

Just as the radio united our Nation during the war, television united us during the 50's and early 60's. With only a single station initially, all who had a TV, watched the same news and the same entertainment. Our Tuesday evenings were reserved for Uncle Milty (Berle). "Your Show of Shows" with Sid Caesar, Imogene Coca and Carl Reiner kept us laughing on Saturday evenings and Lucy and Desi completed our weekend. Their antics were often a topic of conversation the next day.

College was terrific with so much to learn and so many interesting people. Finally old enough to vote, we chose JFK who reflected our own youthful, idealistic optimism. During his brief presidency, progress was made in the Civil Rights movement and work was underway to land a man on the moon. Peace Corps volunteers went to all parts the world. Although the Bay of Pigs was a fiasco, our president showed his mettle in keeping us from a nuclear disaster during the Cuban Missile Crisis. President Kennedy gave our Nation a sense of security and Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) were located at Strategic Air Command (SAC) bases throughout our country to deter any potential nuclear attack. We had confidence in our President and in the future of our Nation. Then the unthinkable happened, and everything changed. Our age of innocence and the era of Camelot had ended.

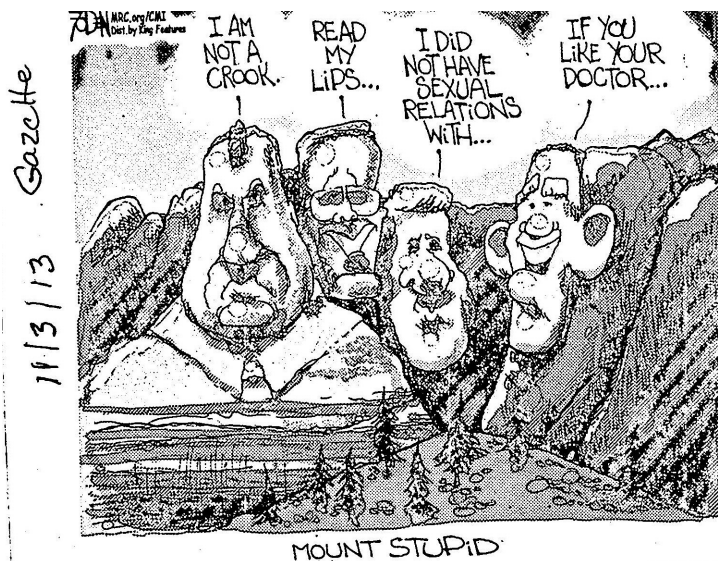


Fast-forward 50 years. Now, much of what was then the norm, that defined our relatively sheltered lives and gave a sense of security, is gone. The leisurely pace of life has become a frenzy of activity. School prayer, and in some places, the Pledge is illegal. Right and wrong has become a personal choice. Fashion is increasingly risqué. Items that are still useful are trashed and replaced with newer and better and are usually made in a foreign country. The media drowns us with a cascade of news and entertainment.

Life itself is no longer respected by many, as evidenced by the 52 million of pre-born who have never been given a chance to live. We hear a daily litany of shootings, stabbings and child abuse. The most recent method of violence reported is called the “knockout game”. People are unexpectedly hit with sufficient force to deliberately knock them down for the thrill of seeing them go down. Several have died. The video goes viral for all to see.

Today’s students are walking their school hallways in fear of physical or verbal abuse and cyber bullying has driven some to suicide. Teachers, as well, are subjected to physical harm.

So we grieve, not only for what was lost and what might have been, but also for those growing up now who will never know the serene sense of security we were privileged to have.



Service Chapter Report

By Sandy, Smith, Chapter VP

Hi Everyone,

By the time you read this, our bellies will all be stuffed with all those delicious holiday foods. I hope everyone had a fantastic Thanksgiving.

As you all know the negotiations with the contract are still at a standstill. Doug Harple and Mike Rowen have met with Robert Zordan a few times in the past few months and all have come to an agreement that we need to get the negotiations moving. Whatever our administration had planned with the “new health insurance plans” it is no longer in effect as of right now. So, with the entire Service Chapter’s contract on the table right now, some agreements should soon be made. I truly believe Administration wants the contracts settled just as much as we all do at this point.

A notice was sent out in the beginning of November to deposit a sick day to the sick bank. Hopefully you have sent your slip back to Linda Kelleher in HR by the November 30th deadline. May you never need to use it, but it’s comforting to know that it’s there if you should ever need it.

And you never know what curve life is going to throw you at any given time. I just changed the last part of this article because I thought I was leaving BOCES for a new job. After a lot (a real lot) of serious thought, I turned down the new position at another school district and decided to stay. Yes, many may think I’m nuts-but there is something to be said about liking your job and not really being at such a bad place. Sure, I complain just like you about favorites or people who don’t do their fair share or even the way the scales may seem tip to someone else’s favor. But all in all is BOCES that bad of a place to be? Is it “greener “on the other side? I think it’s a pretty cool place to be and there are a lot of really awesome people that work at BOCES. We are BOCES and sometimes you just have to smile and say “It is what it is”!!

Happy Holidays to you all.

In Solidarity, Sandy Smith

Capital Region BOCES Board Meeting – November 2013

By Susan Kusalonis

Carol d'Estienne (Principal, Special Education) led off by speaking about her initiatives at Maywood School and focusing on the positive with staff, students and parents.

Some of the initiatives were about: staff morale; support and collaboration; building conditions; aesthetics and safety; committees; Friday clubs; morning announcements; contests; character counts; transcripts and report cards; grading and attendance guidelines; APPR; **increased instructional time**; intake practices; **disciplinary practices**; CDOS: Instruction, WBL, Service Learning, Job Shadowing, The Grotto; Curriculum Support;

Special School Wide Events: **Drama Productions**, Meet the Teacher Night, Book Taxi, Health Presentation, Jr. Achievement, Blues in Schools, Career Fair, Therapy Dogs, Holiday Festivities. Community Connections; CTE collaboration; **relationships with parents**; weekly "Bright Spots" communications to staff.

Stay Tuned: "Maywood Matters", College & Military Fair (scheduled for April 4) ...

Q: Increased Instructional Time?

A: Teachers and TA's were in the classroom more as they no longer had to follow unescorted students around the building, even when they were not from their classroom.

Q: What is meant by Drama Club?

A: Teacher, Pete Reilly, had pulled together a skit on bullying. What it looked like and what it should look like.

Q: How are relationships with parents different?

A: I try to stay in touch with them even when it is a good thing, not just the negative. They seem more involved. Parents are doing the best that they can with the resources they have.

Q: Do you think you will see a drop in suspensions?

A: May have more since the rules are much defined and strictly enforced. Once they realize that there are limits, there may be less down the road.

- The Career Fair was coordinated by Miki Agresta with CTE's support and went very well. Students need to see what types of jobs are out in the community and what they need to do to be prepared for.
- Meet the Teacher Night, not packed, but went well.

Peter Taronina – The St. Rose night went well and he extended thanks to Kristen Lashway and Joanne Cogswell.

Also, please note that Mary Francese (Teacher), the classroom TA and a staff member from the Teacher Center will be published in the spring by Education Week.

District Superintendent Comments:

- Dr. Dedrick wanted to acknowledge that the Medicaid billing aspect has been going well thanks to Carol. Michelle _____, Medicaid Officer, stated that Carol and John Mattox, Internal Audit Officer had been of great help.
- Mohonasen Project: Concept of a POD for CTE in Schenectady. This will be a brand new building. This will be similar to the one in Ballston Spa. FYI - BOCES cannot build a building in a district as that would raise their tax cap.
- Risk Management – Bruce Bonnaquist commented on the Recycling Project that had been undertaken and was going well.
- Audit – the auditors are in the risk assessment stage checking time and attendance and how we track staff, itinerant staff in particular. After this is done they will tell us where they will focus their audit.
- Tech Valley HS will hopefully be moving into the new CNSE building within the year. Most of the districts at the recent Nano Science Con-

vention were from districts that do not have students attending presently.

- **Data Dash Boards** – Part of Race To The Top (RTT). Carl Strange stated that this was not a requirement for BOCES in the State and would not be an advantage to choose one. Some districts down state are dropping out of RTTT and returning any money they have received.
- **900 Move** – Mark Jones stated that Central Office, Management Services, Communication and Educational Support Services were all moved upstairs. Moving people and technology went well. The intent is to be back down stairs in offices by the first of March 2014.
- **NYSBA Convention** in Rochester ended early and Dr. Dedrick was very pleased to see that many staff and

administration stayed after they could have left to welcome Lynn Lenhardt (current member of BOCES Board) as the new President of NYSBA.

Board Member Comments

- Kevin wanted to say that the Chef Bruckers group won a silver medal at the Culinary Cornucopia. Their recipe was for red snapper.

The rest of the Board Agenda was moved and passed then the Board prepared for executive session to discuss personnel matters and the DS Contract.

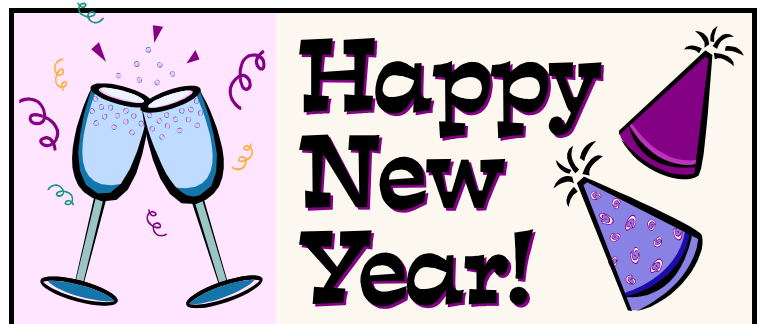
This was 7:30 PM and I left., Susan

AFT supports move on individual insurance plans

President Obama did the right thing in allowing insurers to **continue offering individual health insurance plans** for another year, even if those plans don't comply with the Affordable Care Act's rules for minimum benefits, AFT President Randi Weingarten says. "His action underscores his long-term commitment to work through the issues as we implement the Affordable Care Act and ensure it lives up to its promise of expanding access to affordable healthcare for all Americans," she says. "This law is already making a real difference in the lives of millions of Americans—for those with pre-existing conditions who were denied coverage before this law, for young adults who can remain on their parents' plans, for Americans who now have access to preventive care, and for those who would otherwise face a lifetime of debt to receive the treatments they need to stay healthy."

NYSUT upcoming dates

- The **RA 2014**: Convention Call and registration for NYSUT's annual Representative Assembly are now online. NOTE: The RA calendar is different this year - the convention starts Friday evening and ends on Sunday, rather than the previous Thursday through Saturday schedule.
- Registration has begun for the **Local and Retiree Council Presidents Conference** to be held Thursday and Friday, April 3-4, before the RA.
- Deadline for entries in the **NYSUT Communications Competition** is Jan. 6. Winners will be recognized at an awards conference at NYSUT headquarters in May.



Will you be naughty or nice this holiday season?

Tips for keeping your relationships positive and healthy

“People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

Maya Angelou

The most important experiences we have in our lives are the connection we have with other people. It's good for our health, it's good for our mind and we're just happier when we are surrounded by great relationships. A Harvard study which examined data from more than 300,000 people found that a lack of strong relationships increased the risk of premature death from all causes by 50%. This effect on mortality is akin to smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day, and has a greater impact than obesity and physical inactivity.

Positive -and supportive relationships help relieve harmful levels of stress which can adversely affect our immune systems. Conversely, caring behaviors such as offering help, advice or affection trigger the release of stress-reducing hormones which improve our body's ability to fight disease and ward off emotional issues such as depression and anxiety.'

This holiday season consider making one of your New Year's -resolutions a .plan to strengthen your social relationships for the best possible happiness and success in 2014.

8 tips for stronger, more positive relationships;

1. **Be present:** Show genuine interest in other people and their lives by asking questions and stepping outside your own life in order to learn about someone else's. Be fully present as you listen without distraction (looking at your cell phone or texting while someone is speaking is a good example of how not to be a good listener!). The act of true listening is a rare but simple gift you can give to others and it can actually have a transformative effect on someone's life.

2. **See the good in others:** You will usually find what you look for in a relationship; meaning if you are always expecting the worst that is generally what you will find. Look for the' positive in people and lift them up rather than putting them down. Over the years I have had several people come to their first counseling session with a notebook listing all the flaws in their partner, mother, son or daughter. They bring this list so I can understand what they are dealing with. I listen, but to be fair, I make sure they work with me on a second list. This list covers the things they like or used to like about the person and also includes the ways in which they will begin practicing acceptance. Sometimes it's not about changing someone but learning to accept them - flaws and all.

3. **Be a positive influence:** Take some time to see yourself from another person's eyes. Do you get along with others? Are you a complainer in conversations? Theodore Roosevelt once said: "The most important single ingredient in the formula for success is knowing how to get along with people." If you are a-whirling force of negativity, people will eventually run the other way when they see you coming and you won't be consid-

ered a valuable team player in any workplace. Try sending out only your positive energy for a few days and see what happens. You will be amazed.

4. **Embrace differences:** Learn to be more understanding and have more empathy by relating to another person's feelings and needs without blaming, giving unwanted advice or trying to fix their situation. Every person has a different way of looking at life. Make an effort to understand the other person's point of view and accept that the two of you may always see things differently. That's okay.

5. **Learn to accept constructive feedback:** Be more open to hearing constructive feedback.

Consider it as free information or a different perspective. You can always choose whether you want to use it or leave it behind. If you are overly sensitive, you might become angry or defensive when you feel criticized, but you should instead use it to tap into your blind spot. That's how you grow.

6. **Pick your battles:** Don't expect to like everyone and don't expect everyone to like you. You're always going to get along with some people better than others and there may be a few you just can't stand. Practice tolerance and think of the old adage: treat people as you would like to be treated.

7. **Don't jump to conclusions:** Many relationships have been damaged by people jumping to conclusions and thinking the worst about the other person. Gossip, for example, can fuel unnecessary conflicts between two people. Try to give the person the benefit of the doubt and give them a chance to explain their side of the story. You would want them to do the same for you.

8. **Be kind to yourself:** The ability to be kind to others is directly related to the ability to be kind to yourself. Sometimes when people are hard on others, they are also hard on themselves. If you find yourself having repeated conflicts in your relationships, it may be time to take a look at how well you are caring for yourself and valuing yourself. Remember you can't really love someone fully unless you fully love yourself.

The holidays can be stressful because we are spending more time with family and friends. And, let's be honest, some of them will get right under our skin. Try using these tips to keep the conflicts to a minimum so that you can enjoy the season more fully. The added health benefits from having happier relationships is a nice plus. The saying I found on the inside of my Dove Chocolate wrapper today captures it best: "Those who bring -sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves." Enjoy the holidays!

Diane Lykes is a Principal of Synergy Counseling Associates in Albany where she specializes in individual and couples counseling, educational training and clinical consultation. (reprint from Capital Living)

Be reflective as the year closes

“Without reflection, we go blindly on our way, creating more unintended consequences, and failing to achieve anything useful.” Margaret J. Wheatly

The year is coming to an end and 2013 will be history. Rather than think ‘over and done with’, this is a great time of year to be reflective and take an “inventory” of sorts over the past year. Day by day we often lose sight of the key events and development of the past 12 months; however, it is critical to know:

Where I started

Where I am now

What has occurred in my life and career

What I have learned

What I have accomplished.

Only with this understanding can you look forward and begin to plan 2014. Thinking about your career and life future, and evaluating if you are happy and fulfilled (or not) takes reflection and clear unencumbered thought.

So what do you do?

Give yourself the gift of time

Just for you - no one else. Not sandwiched between phone calls, kids and more, but real alone thoughtful- time. On a park bench. Walking in the woods. In a quiet spot of your home. You choose the setting, but it must be:

Quiet—Removed—Comfortable—Detached

Reflection on your life and career will not happen with purpose as you are driving to work, bringing the kids to school, plowing through your email, etc. You are too distracted and not focused on the most important thing: You. Yes, you and you alone. No one else.

Your goal? Truly and honestly reassess where you are, where you are going and determine if this is where you want to be.

I know it seems too big to handle, but let's look at the process like you are building toward something and break it down into steps:

Step One:

Talk to yourself. During the holiday season spend time thinking about what you really want from a new job, career or life change. Not just a hit-or-miss thought, but thoughts you will then commit to writing.

Step Two:

Answer the tough questions by writing down the answers:

What did I learn — did I learn?

What did I accomplish that I can measure?

What was the greatest contribution I made - to myself or to my career — that I am proud of?

What has been my most significant roadblock or challenge I did not overcome?

For what am I grateful - Am I grateful?

Step Three:

Ask the simple yes-no questions:

Am I fulfilled?

Am I having fun?

Am I motivated?

Am I energized?

Am I proud of myself?

Am I proud about what I do in career? .

Am I happy with myself personally?

Am I happy with myself professionally?

Step Four:

Plan your actions, which are critical to success. Don't just “talk” it - plan it and commit to it. Nothing happens until you commit to success - and I dare you to prove me otherwise.

Ask yourself:

What is the one goal - the real one and most critical — that I will accomplish in the year/month/day ahead and how will I do this?

And how will I feel when I achieve it?

Will it be enough to make me feel fulfilled?

Step Five:

You asked yourself the tough questions, now take actions for success

Are you in the right job — answer no — Change it!

Fulfilled in your personal life — answer no — Change it!

In the right career that energizes and charges you - answer no — Change it!

What is your mind telling you?

This is an exercise of the mind - that very-powerful tool we all have that can drive us forward through positive thought and make us “stuck in the mud” with negative thoughts. Our mind also gives us personal insight, if we are willing to accept it, and I bet that your mind was providing you insight as you worked through this. Your mind told you either:

All is good ...

All is not good ...

Change

You discovered some “good news” and-not-so-good news. Focus on what is critical first, and begin to make changes, small at first, as you move forward. It may be committing to reading or conversations with someone you respect. Or Working a financial plan or talking with your family on the ideas of change you are committed to making. Again, nothing happens unless you take action and advance.

I wish you and yours a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

Dan Moron is president & founder of Next-Act, a career management & transition firm located in Colonie. Reprinted from Capital Living.

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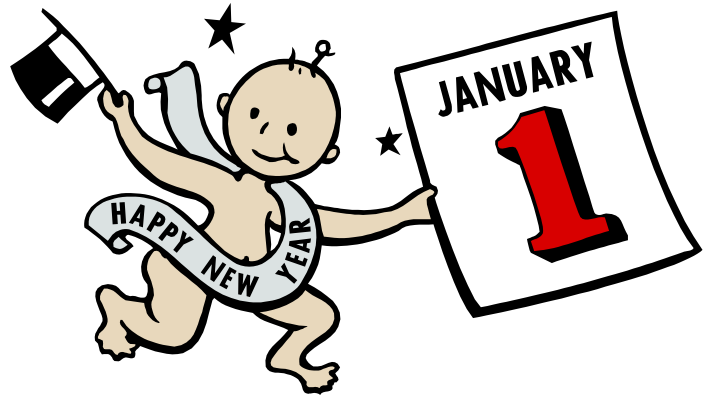
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Our condolences to **Karen Slater** (Secretary, Service-NERIC) whose Dad, John Joswick, Sr., died on Sunday, November 24 after a brief illness.

Wishing **Lanny Barsale** a speedy recovery.



Sunshine Chairperson

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

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Please contact **Lisa Mink**, Membership Chair, with any change in mailing address or to give her your personal email. 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.