



# CAPITAL REGION BOCES FACULTY ASSOCIATION

## TRIAD

June 2009

Vol. XXXIII No. 10

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

### News from the President

Colleagues,

As we finish up another school year, things are winding down. Or are they? Officers are still hard at work. Issues/problems are popping up and there is unfinished business to work on.

As we move in to summer mode, I look forward to the change in activities and hopefully peace. However, the work of the Association continues. I find summer a great time to reflect on our past year(s) and think about the future. As we move forward we need to be ever vigilant in our duties and union stewardship. Though change is inevitable, especially in the information age, we can and must work to manage change for the betterment of students and members. In turn, we will make a better future.

Also, we must remember our past and learn from it. If we don't, we will repeat our mistakes. I believe we need to always remember those who went before us and paved the way. Not only are we the members and leaders of today, but also the caretakers of the work of our predecessors.

The retirement dinner was a success. I enjoyed myself immensely. The opportunity for fun and fellowship with colleagues is always a treat. Coupled with a chance to recognize and pay tribute to members who have given so much to the students, the Association and education in general made it a wonderful and rewarding evening.

This dinner was a bit unusual, in that we paid tribute to a 20 year executive board member, **Gail Radecky**. Gail has always been a dedicated hardworking union activist, always going the extra mile to

help a member. She will be missed.

Thanks to **Lanny Barsale** and her committee for a doing a great job in planning and organizing this event.

The VOTE/COPE campaign is on hold. Anne Conway, a dedicated unionist who has chaired this for many years has announced her desire to step down. We need one or more of you to step up and chair or work on this committee. This committee raises funds to support our state political action programs. Now, more than ever, at least in my recollection, is this committee needed. This is not the time to sit idly by and let someone else do the work. If you are new and want to know what you can do to help, here it is. Call me, e-mail me, or stop me in the hall.

I want to take a moment and thank all the members and leaders who have helped this Association operate this year and in the past. This year has been a success because you took the time to serve on a committee(s), work on an election, prepare refreshments, serve on Rep Council, write a newsletter or serve on the Executive Board. You have done so much and I want to thank you – all of you. I truly feel your support.

I also want you to consider what you might do to help your Association in the future. Maybe you are someone who didn't have any spare time you could give. Consider what time you might have and offer what you can. It is your Association. There is plenty of work to go around. There are still many things we need to work on. Your talents would be a great gift to give in support of your Association, to your fellow members and yourself.

**Looking Forward,**  
**Doug**

### CALENDAR

CAPITAL REGION  
BOCES FACULTY ASSOC.

#### EXEC. BD. MEETING

05/27/09

#### BOCES BOARD MTG.

06/15/09

07/20/09

#### REP COUNCIL

School Support Services

09/2/09—10:15 AM

Union College

Summer School

7/6-8/14/09

Newsletter Committee

#### TRIAD Article Deadline:

08/1/09

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# COMMITTEE OF 100 By Jim Owen, (SW, Sp. Ed.)

This year, the Committee of 100, NY-SUT's member participant lobbying effort, convened a special meeting in February, in addition to the usual lobbying days in March and in May. This was in response to some drastic cuts first proposed by Gov. Patterson in his response to the financial crises. In the end, after the infusion of stimulus funds, teachers fared well as compared to other public sector employees. Nonetheless, districts all across the state reported significant job cuts in teaching staff and educational positions. (I lobbied with the President of the Troy Teachers Association, where they ended up letting 53 positions go, including two teachers with 28 years in the district.) Things could have been worse, but that doesn't make the sting of cuts any less painful for those who have lost their job and sole source of their income, and that may well include some BOCES staff.

Two large issues linger on after the dust has settled on this year's budget process. There is still a very strong push to implement a Tax Cap on property taxes across the state – a move that would jeopardize many educational programs in our public schools. NY-SUT understands the burden of prop-

erty taxes in NYS, but instead supports a "Circuit Breaker" system, that would cap the property tax for individual homeowners when their taxes hit a set amount of that individual's total income. In this way, homeowners of moderate means could save their homes, and not be forced to sell due to climbing taxes.

Another more mind boggling and infuriating move that has gotten support is to create a new Tier V pension plan for new employees, and include three dangerous and alarming provisions. Proposed is that new employees would pay 3% of their salary into their retirement for their entire employment. (Presently, employees pay 3% for 10 years, then pay nothing into the system.) It is also proposed that new employees would have to wait 10 years before being vested, rather than the present 5 year wait. But in my mind, the most egregious of these proposals is to set the **minimum** retirement age for all employees at age 62. A few points came up during lobbying. Can you imagine the strain on staff in an elementary setting (think kindergarten) if all teachers had to stay on till 62 in that very physically demanding climate? I'd like to see our legislators

who are past 60 spend a 7 hour day tying shoes, getting up and down off the floor for reading groups, and taking care of the physical and emotional needs of maybe 20 five year old children in a typical class. Another thought is that if a teacher starts in a district at 22 (graduation year), he/she couldn't retire for 40 years, and the district will be paying out top of the scale salaries for 7 additional years. Now some teachers can stay on top of their performance level for that many years, but many can't – and shouldn't be forced to by the system.

One thing is clear. Tier V would not create a savings for the state for 10 years (when new employees would still pay their 3% beyond 10 years), and it would create real burdens for districts who will eventually be very top heavy in their salary structure. Please look out for NYSUT's requests for action on your part to defend against these changes – the future teachers need our help now.

## Capital Region BOCES Faculty Association Leadership

POSITION	NAME	PHONE	E-Mail Address
President	Doug Harple	862-4776	hdharple@msn.com
Vice President	Patricia Gollub	862-4716	Gollub02@yahoo.com
CVP TA/EA	Colleen Condolora	356-8349	condolora@aol.com
CVP Service	Susan Kusalonis	393-5598	maidmrn300@aol.com
CVP Spec. Educ.	Gail Radecky		gradecky@verizon.net
CVP C T E	Jeannine Moran	862-4816	jmmoran@hotmail.com
Recording Secretary	Christine McDonough	273-1512	camed9@yahoo.com
Corresponding Sec'y.	Sue Davis	456-0574	scdavis@nycap.rr.com
Treasurer	Deborah Sorvari	334-1296	debmom39@nycap.rr.com
Membership Chair	Lisa Mink	464-3979	lmink8@hotmail.com
Grievance Chair	E.J. Hanley	321-0485	ehanley1@nycap.rr.com
EAP	Kevin Eglit	454-9650	Employee Assistance Program

# ELECTION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION CHAPTER VICE-PRESIDENT AND AFT TO BE MAILED OUT AGAIN

**PLEASE DISREGARD THE FIRST  
BALLOT YOU RECEIVED FROM THE  
PREVIOUS CHAPTER VICE-  
PRESIDENT AND AFT DELEGATES  
MAILING!**

An error with return address labels was made, and one Chapter did not receive ballots. Due to the error, we are asking you to vote again. **I apologize for the mistake and I am making every effort to assure no future mistakes are made.**

A representative from each Chapter will be reviewing the membership address labels to be sure their members are accounted for.

Your Association needs your support and every vote we get back is important to us.

I would like to thank those who participated by returning their ballots for the election.

If you did not return your ballot that **you received**, please show your support by returning your new ballot by mail in the enclosed return addressed envelope you will be receiving within a timely manner. The new ballots will be mailed out by June 26<sup>th</sup>.

If you do not receive a return addressed envelope or if you have made a recent change of address, please contact me at my personal email address; [MsSmarty-pants429@aol.com](mailto:MsSmarty-pants429@aol.com).

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

**The Nominations & Election Committee**



## *Mentor Program*

I am proud to say that we are completing the fifth year of the mentor program. I am presently taking applications for new mentors for the 09-10 school year. Applications have been mailed out to members of the teachers bargaining unit. In conjunction with a completed application, you will need a letter of interest, a letter of recommendation from an administrator, and a letter of recommendation from a colleague.

The State Education Department requires all new, non tenured teachers to participate in a mentoring experience. This BOCES also provides mentors to teachers who are new to us but have been tenured elsewhere, and have changed positions within the BOCES. When changing positions within the BOCES, the mentor can help the intern adapt to their new responsibilities and roles, as we all know how diverse our organization is.

The role of the mentor is to provide support for teachers in order to ease the transition. Mentors are expected to communicate with their interns regularly, as well as attend monthly meetings. This year, meeting topics focused on the familiarization of mentor/intern program expectations, APPR, EAP, Benefits, Instructional Strategies and Techniques, Classroom Management, overview of the role of the union, technology and web based resources for teachers, and a meet and greet with our new Superintendent. Planning is already underway for the 09-10 meeting topics.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [pwilliam@gw.neric.org](mailto:pwilliam@gw.neric.org). I look forward to another successful year of the mentor program, and am thankful for all of your continued support.

**Submitted by  
Paula Williams, Lead Mentor**

# TEACHING ASSISTANTS/EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS

By Colleen Condolora, Chapter VP

June has arrived, and I know everyone is scurrying trying to wrap everything up before the end of the school year. These are very busy days for everyone, please remember to take a deep breath along the way, and just go with the flow. I hope everyone has an enjoyable and restful summer.

I have received several emails and calls regarding the TA pool and the prospect of layoffs. As of yet, I have not received any notification regarding a reduction in force. I should soon be receiving shortly a list of TA/EA's who will be in the TA pool this June. The pool will be held on June 12<sup>th</sup> at 3:00. **Sarah Adriance, Chris McDonough, Cathi Aini-Jakway and I** will be in attendance to insure the process goes smoothly and productively. I understand this is a stressful time for everyone involved. Please call or email me with your concerns or questions.

On another note, I have received several inquiries regarding the seniority list for our unit. I spoke with Human Resources and was informed that the list will be completed shortly. At this time I need to make some clarifications regarding the seniority list. Since all Continuing Certified Teaching Assistants (pre February, 2004) were certified on the same date, the list will have all Teaching Assistants from that date grouped together. If you have taken any leave time or any days in which you were off payroll the days will be deducted from your seniority time. Also, if you have the same seniority accrued, the tie-breaker is your official date of hire with BOCES. **Please do not confuse seniority with your step. They are two separate issues.**

Thank you to, **Todd Moslander, Carol Clark, Chuck Fuller, Lynn Brown/Chris Suriano and Kathy Menzies/Lena Herbert** for show-

casing their Growth Plan projects at the TA/EA Recognition event. The showcases were well-received and they exemplified all the achievements our unit has accomplished. I shared with each presenter an email I received from Supt. Chuck Dedrick applauding their outstanding work. I am very proud of your accomplishments and I mention it at every opportunity.

I would also like to thank all my Faculty Association Reps, **Sarah Adriance, Chris McDonough, James Reed, Mary Elliot, Mary Ruby, Pat Veve, Cathi Aini-Jakway, Fay Argirakis, Chuck Fuller, Vicki Belyna and Julie Wilson** for their continued effort to keep our members informed. Your dedication is well appreciated by everyone you represent.

There will be four dates for Opening Day this next school year, July 14<sup>th</sup>, August 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> and September 2<sup>nd</sup>. **The September 2<sup>nd</sup> date is the official BOCES Opening Day.** The summer sessions, July 14<sup>th</sup> (8-12) and August 12<sup>th</sup> (12-4) are being held for 12<sup>th</sup> month employees and each of these dates have approximately 15 openings for ten-month employees. The August 11<sup>th</sup> date from 3:15-5:15 PM is being held to accommodate ten-month employees working summer school who will be unable to attend the September 2<sup>nd</sup> date.

In closing, I wish everyone a wonderful summer vacation. I hope you receive the rest, relaxation and enjoyment you all deserve. Please put your feet up and pat yourselves on the back for a job well-done this school year. I ask everybody to go have some fun. You all have earned the break.

**In Solidarity,  
Colleen Condolora**

## Service Chapter VP

By Susan A. Kusalonis

It is with hope and belief that all will be better at BOCES as we proceed through the times ahead.

I personally want to congratulate **Linda Stapleton** on her new position with the PAO Unit next year. Linda is a Sr. Keyboard Specialist at Special Ed. and has been with us for about six years and has periodically taken Albany County Civil Service Tests she was eligible for. The timing is perfect for her to be offered the Administrative Aide position with the new Regional Grant that will be housed at SSS. Linda's current job is ending on June 30<sup>th</sup> and she had not been offered anything in her current title. She had been applying for any position that were posted (which may have been just a title change for someone else who has been doing the job and also taking tests for it). You never know!! Good luck Linda and stay in touch with the Service Chapter.

We also congratulate **Ralph Cogswell** on his new position as Head Custodian. This position was recently brought into the Service Unit. Ralph will be working closely with Dan Haggerty, Supervisor of Buildings and Maintenance.

Hope to see some of you over the summer. Enjoy a good book and relax.

In solidarity, Susan



## LAUGHTER AND PLAY IN THE WORKPLACE

In this serious economy, the atmosphere in many workplaces may be uncertain and/or glum. But according to Stanford University school of Medicine psychiatrist William Fry, M.D., it is important to ensure that we fill our daily quota of laughter. Fry, who has been studying laughter for more than 40 years, says the positive impact on our body is easily measured. For example, 20 seconds of laughter gives us the same health benefits as rowing or working out for 10 minutes. We feel better after a good laugh, have a more positive mood and often can return to our tasks with renewed energy.

Fun and work are not mutually exclusive. Michael Kerr, author of *You Can't Be Serious – Put Humor to Work*, believes that there are literally hundreds of ways to lighten the mood at work. They include putting up a humor bulletin board and having staff participate in theme days. A number of management experts are convinced that all work and no play makes employees unhappy and unproductive. People are learning that work can be play and play can be extremely productive. As comedian Bill Cosby says, "If you can laugh at it, you can survive it."

SOURCES AND CONTRIBUTORS:

Tom Moran; Darryl Alexander; The Office Professional;

# RETIREES CORNER

Jeanette K. Christoff, Teacher, Retired

Happy June Everyone,

What a wonderful send off we gave our new retirees at our annual Celebration Bash and Retirement Party. The event was again held at the ever elegant Mohawk River Country Club and Chateau. The dining room was filled to capacity with members and guests. The reception table held an album for each retiree in which guests could express their good wishes and farewells.

Laughter, hugs, the renewal of friendships and life's stories were shared while enjoying made-to-order hor'derves and the grand buffet of appetizers, this year offering even more delicacies than in the past. We proceeded on to the dining room with its crystal chandelier, white covered chairs, rose bouquets and rose petal-adorned tables. Dinner was superb with all items butler served.

The program followed dinner and in addition to the new retirees, recognition was given to 20, 25 and 30-year employees. Each who attended received a certificate and complimentary dinner as a guest of the Association.

Our best wishes to our new retirees, **William Andrews, Kathleen Bartow, Anne Gabriel, Linda Griffing, Candy Keis, Helen (Walsh) Ketterer, Julia Magnano, Anthony Marotta, Joy Moch, Linda Oliver, Barbara Philipson, Judith Prest, Gail Radecky, Beverly Rosen and Kathleen Strollo.**

Thank you to **Lanny Barsale** and her committee for a job well done, **Cathi Aini-Jakway, Carolyn Beattie, Theresa Bennett, Susan Kusalonis, Christine McDonough, Brent Pierce and James Reed.**

## RETIREES UPDATES

We saw **Joyce Brockway** recently working out at the Sunnyview Wellness Center. She is busy in retirement with trips to Alaska and Disney World and working for Hospice.

Attending the Rose Bowl in January, a trip to Aruba, skiing in Colorado with family and visiting their 4 children and 10 grandchildren in Massachusetts, Idaho, Florida and Colorado, keeps **Carolyn Kozubal** and hubby Ted packing and unpacking their suitcases. Five of their granddaughters are students of ballet and two performed children's roles with the Boston Ballet. Carolyn also tries to keep tabs on her Mom who is 91, living independently in her own home and drives where she needs to go.

## AT THE PARTY

We were greeted, hugged, met new friends, saw former co-workers and retirees; **Lanny Barsale, Lauren Lyle Duffy, Terri Orsini Cuomo, Kathy Collen, Linda Percent Sawyer, Michelle Rosenberger, Ann O'Brien-Teta, Barbara Muller, Stormy Shane, Will Aubrey** (now blacksmithing), **Mary Murphy, Diane Horne-Jones, Mary Ruby, Ruth Bushey, Paula Williams, Susan Stewart, Sherry Karcher Hewitt, Michelle Blakely, Valerie Tabak, Jim Reed, Victor Jakway, Amy Ruzza and Sylvia Goerg Hauser.** Thank you to all who came by to chat and expressed their enjoyment of our RETIREEES CORNER.

# Special Ed. Teacher Chapter Meeting

May 20, 2009 at School Support Services

The Special Ed. Teacher Unit met on May 20th from 3:30-4:00 at School Support Services (before Rep). Topics discussed included:

**1. Strand Meetings:** Are they working as faculty meetings or staff development, or both? Are they meeting the needs of the teachers? There is some concern about the quality of communication between teachers and principals especially regarding student placements for next year.

**2. Seniority Lists:** Gail has found errors and has notified Robert Zordan. If you see any errors, please notify Gail.

Our last meeting for the year was **June 10th**, right before Rep Council.

Minutes submitted by Susan Stewart

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## Thinking About Retiring?

Then you should also Think About:

- Your Health Care Coverage
- Your Pension (check with TRS, ERS)
- Your Savings, Investments (remember that withdrawals from TSA's, IRA's must begin at age 70 1/2.
- Where you will live (and what accommodations to make)
- Signing up for Social Security (at age 62? Or wait until 67+) (Note Exception for 2009!)
- Signing up for Medicare Looking at Health Care Coverage (District, other supplemental?)
- Getting your most important papers in order (Will, Living Will, Health Care Proxy, Insurance, deeds, etc)
- Staying Informed—and Connected to NYSUT through membership in Retiree Council 10 and other retiree activist groups (NYSARA, CNYARA)
- Prepared for NYSUT Retiree Councils by Loretta Donlon and Jeanette Pietrantonio, in connection with "Walking Through Health Care in Retirement -From 35 to 65 and Beyond"

**Why Stay Connected to NYSUT?**

- \* Because the attacks on public education will not go away (sadly, in hard economic times, they will probably increase)
- \* Because you will find even more attacks on our

Defined Benefit Pensions, our health care coverage, Social Security, and Medicare (again, increasing at an alarming rate, especially during hard times)

\* Because with the power of NYSUT's 600,000+ members, we have some clout in getting legislation enacted, renewing the Health Care Moratorium (which preserves our district coverage from arbitrary action by the districts), in battling attacks on those issues of special concern to us as seniors and as public employee retirees

\* Because NYSUT was key in getting a pension COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) in 2000 -and is now working to increase the formula on which that COLA is based

\* NYSUT and its national affiliates have been successful in warding off attempts to privatize Medicare and Social Security

\* NYSUT now has FOUR retiree representatives on its Board of Directors - giving us a real voice in the state union that we worked so hard to form.

\* Camaraderie! Luncheon meetings that are informative, entertaining, and give us a chance to enjoy the company of our colleagues!

\* NYSUT provides us with the best way to battle the attacks on defined benefit pensions and to work toward a guaranteed pension for every working American.

\* Your Retiree Council has delegates to the NYSUT Representative Assembly - the policy-making body of NYSUT (and we submit our share of resolutions for action).

# Healthy Living; Living For Good Health

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

## Practice Sun Safety

Skin cancer is the nation's most commonly occurring form of cancer, and one person dies every hour from melanoma, the most deadly form of skin cancer.

The Sun Safety Alliance (SSA) encourages you to be safe by following these sun-safety tips year-round to help prevent serious skin damage. UV, or ultraviolet, rays are the sun's "invisible" burning rays. They can cause sunburns, and in some cases skin cancer. There are three types of UV rays:

**UVA:** Are more constant year-round and penetrate deeper into the skin's layers; UVA rays are also harmful and contribute to burning, premature aging of the skin, and the development of certain forms of skin cancer.

**UVB:** Are the primary cause of sun burning, premature aging of the skin and the development of skin cancer.

**UVC:** Are blocked by the ozone layer and do not reach the earth's surface.

Overexposure to the sun can result in skin cancer later in life. What are your family's risks from exposure to powerful UV rays? Consider these facts and statistics.

### **The Dangers of UV Exposure**

- You can sunburn even on a cloudy day.
- On average, children get 3 times more exposure than adults.

- Concrete, sand, water, and snow reflect 85% to 90% of the sun's UV rays.
- Depletion of Earth's ozone continues to increase your exposure to UV rays.

### **Skin Cancer**

- In some parts of the world, melanoma is increasing at rates faster than any other cancer.
- More than 1.2 million new cases of skin cancer are diagnosed each year in the US.
- Wear clothing that's dark and tightly woven.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses.
- Do not use sun tanning beds.
- Keep very young children (6 months or less) out of the sun.
- Use a broad-spectrum (protecting from both UVA and UVB) sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or greater to protect uncovered skin. Look for products that provide an SPF of at least 15 and contain ingredients like Avobenzone (Parsol 1789) or zinc oxide.
- For best results, apply the sunscreen 30 minutes before sun exposure and reapply every 1-1/2 to 2 hours even on cloudy days and after swimming or sweating. Both selection of the sunscreen and re-applications are important.
- Carefully examine all of your skin once a month. Early detection of melanoma can save your life. A new or changing

skin lesion should be evaluated by a dermatologist.

- See a dermatologist if you notice an unusual mole, a scaly patch, or a sore with local persistent bleeding or that does not heal. This may be a pre-cancer or a skin cancer. If you develop severe itching or rashes in the sun, this may be an allergic reaction.
- For children, the SSA recommends sunscreen with an SPF 30 or higher.
- Apply sunscreen before going outdoors and reapply often.
- Reapply sunscreen after swimming, perspiring, and toweling off.
- Provide complete sunscreen coverage for your skin including neck, ears and lips!
- For people with thin or thinning hair, apply sunscreen to the scalp as well.
- And remember stay in the shade whenever possible!

The more intense the sun, the greater your exposure to UV rays. The amount of UV that will reach you depends on the following:



Healthy Living continued.

**Time of Day**—UV is greatest when the sun is at its highest in the sky (between 10 am and 4 pm) and less in the early morning and late afternoon.

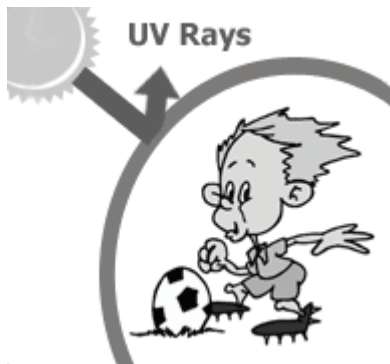
**Season**—While UV exposure is the greatest in the summer (May—August) it is important to remember that UV rays reach Earth every day and you should be sun safe year-round including wintertime! Snow can reflect 85% to 90% of the sun's UV rays!

**Altitude**—The air is cleaner and thinner at higher altitudes, so UV exposure is greater in the mountains than in the valleys.

**Location**—UV is strongest at the equator and gets weaker as you move towards the poles. Be prepared and take your sunscreen with you on family vacations.

**Exposure Time**—The longer you are out in the sun, the more UV rays you receive.

For more information:  
[www.sunsafetyalliance.org](http://www.sunsafetyalliance.org)  
email [info@sunsafetyalliance.org](mailto:info@sunsafetyalliance.org)



## The 2009 Tour De Cure Ride for Diabetes

### “Pedal Power Works!”

by Catherine A. Jakway, TA Spec. Ed.

The Tour de Cure Ride was held on Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup>. It was a great day to ride and the weather was perfect. **Brent Pierce**, Teacher, Sp. Ed, **Mike Todd**, Instructor of Welding and Metal Fabrication at the Capital Region Career and Technical School, and **Carolyn Beattie**, Teacher, Sp. Ed, joined thousands of cyclists around the nation who rode in the Tour De Cure to make to make a difference in the lives of more than 23 million Americans with diabetes. Since the Tour de Cure's beginning in 1991, thousands of individual riders and teams have participated to support the American Diabetes Association's mission: **To prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes.**

There were 220 riders in the 100 mile course and over 1700 riders altogether! Many riders who wore a "red rider" jersey to show they ride and they are also diabetic.

- Brent and Mike rode 100 miles!
- Brent's goal was \$1,000. He raised \$1,050.00!
- Mike's goal was \$1,000. He raised \$1,138.93.
- Carolyn rode 25 miles. Her goal was \$250.00. She raised \$260.00.

The money they raised helps support the fight to stay ahead of this deadly disease.

### Dear Editor,

If you weren't at the Mohawk Country Club on May 20<sup>th</sup> for the Retirement Celebration Bash you missed out on a marvelous evening. The room was packed with over 160 of your co-workers and their families. The retirees were given a rousing send off!

If you have never attended a Celebration Bash, please mark your calendar for the next May and bring your whole team!

Thank-you to the Celebration Bash committee for giving us such a marvelous event.

Susan Stewart, Speech, Sp. Ed.

# Dear Gabby

Dear Gabby,

Thank you for your response to the recent letter regarding reductions in force (rif). Now I am wondering how much seniority I have. Is there a way to find out how many persons are below me in seniority?

Thinking in Thurman

Dear Thinking,

To find out about your seniority level, please contact your Chapter VP. If you don't know who that is or how to contact them (gasp!), look at the Executive Board information printed each month in the TRIAD to reach your VP.

Gabby

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Gabby,

I am a non-tenured teacher. I have been formally observed by my principal twice this year (with a pre-conference, observation and post-conference) and have received my written evaluations. The first evaluation seemed to be a good reflection of my teaching skills, but the second has me concerned.

The principal wrote critically of some things that she had not discussed with me. I believe that I have evidence to show that her comments are incorrect and I do not want erroneous information to stay on my evaluation. How do I handle this? Also, what will happen during my summative evaluation?

Non-tenured in North Colonie

Dear Non-tenured,

You would be surprised at how many questions Gabby receives about the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process. Goodness, you would think that after 7 years we would have this down pat! (Gabby needs a moment to calm down.)

Okay. First of all, it is good to hear that your principal is following the APPR process of having a pre-conference, observation and a post-conference. This is intended to give you both plenty of time to discuss all aspects of the observation process using the language in your rubric to guide you in understanding what BOCES and Association believe represents good teaching. You have read your rubric, haven't you?

As a teacher, the information regarding the "procedure to ensure all individuals have an opportunity for written feedback regarding their personal APPR" can be found on pg. 15 of your Teacher Unit contract. Basically, you have the opportunity to attach written comments to the classroom observation feedback form (and the summative evaluation form). You might also read pg. 16, "Assistance after observation", just for your information.

Gabby recommends that you first contact your principal and see if you can come to a meeting of the minds. If so, your principal can edit the evaluation. If not, then feel free to write your concerns down and forward them to your principal. Make sure you state your evidence.

During the summative evaluation in April, you and your principal will discuss your overall teaching for the year in all 4 of the domains (planning and participation, the classroom environment, instruction and professional responsibilities), not just your performance during a formally observed lesson. Read your rubric and come prepared to discuss all your skills. You **DO NOT** submit a self-review to your principal. The self-review is just to prepare you for the discussion.



Good luck!

An exhausted Gabby

## Employers' Anti-Union Behavior Is Intensifying

For those who question the need for the Employee Free Choice Act, a new study by Cornell University professor Kate Bronfenbrenner provides a sobering and persuasive response. Her research shows that not only do employers engage in punitive campaigns of intimidation, but their tactics are getting worse. In *No Holds Barred: The Intensification of Employer Opposition to Organizing*, Bronfenbrenner provides a comprehensive, independent analysis of employer behavior in union representation elections supervised by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) between 1999 and 2003. According to the report, in NLRB election campaigns, it is standard practice for workers to be subjected by corporations to threats, interrogation, harassment, surveillance and retaliation for union activity.

## HOMWARD BOUND NEEDS YOU!

Homeward Bound, a local dog rescue group out of Colonie, is in desperate need of foster homes. Becoming a foster parent to a pooch offer lots of advantages:

- \* a chance to help a homeless puppy or dog by providing love, time and shelter
- \* company for you, your children, or another animal (who must be up-to-date on vaccinations)
- \* a risk-free opportunity to test out pet ownership without making a long term commitment
- \* no costs for food, supplies, or vet care
- \* choice regarding age, breed-type, temperament, etc.

On your end, you would need to take your foster pooch to adoption clinics at Bensons Pet Store, Wolf Road, on Saturdays from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. You have the choice to drop off the dog, or stay with him or her during the adoption clinic. Homeward Bound recommends staying, if you can, so you can meet the potential adopters and make the transitions for the pooch less stressful. However, if you can only drop off and pick up, it's OK.

Ideally dogs stay in one foster home until adoption, however if you can only commit for a limited time (for instance, summer) that is OK.

For more information please call Carol at Homeward Bound at 374-0817. Please let her know you are affiliated with Capital Region BOCES.

## ***DISTRACTED WALKING: THE NEW DANGEROUS PRACTICE***

What is distracted walking? It is when pedestrians are totally oblivious to their surroundings and fail to see oncoming vehicles or other hazards as they cross the street. This situation is so prevalent that the term "Podestrians" (iPod + pedestrian) has sprung up to describe these foot travelers. Students of all ages are particularly vulnerable when they cross streets listening to headphones, gaming on handheld consoles or talking and texting on cell phones. The same is true for adults. The danger of distracted walking was recently highlighted by the death of a Rhode Island teenager who was fatally injured crossing the street while wearing headphones and looking down at her cell phone.

The results of a recent study by the American Academy of Pediatrics, called Effect of Cell Phone Distraction on Pediatric Pedestrian Injury Risks, found that distracted children were less attentive to traffic; did not leave enough time between their crossing and the next oncoming vehicle; experienced more collisions and close calls and waited longer before crossing the street.

As this school year comes to a close, children and young people will continue to be "distracted walkers" during their summer vacation. The danger of distracted walking gives new meaning to the mantra "Stop. Look. Listen." This simple rule is one that we should constantly remind our multitasking children of all ages. Multitasking may have its place in the lives of our children, but busy streets and other dangerous areas like railroad tracks are places that require full attention.

American Academy of Pediatrics; Leonard Edmonds, editor

## **SMALL LOCALS MAKE GAINS IN TOUGH ECONOMY**

The economy is down, unemployment is rising and many people are feeling uncertain about the future. But even in the midst of this poor economic environment, a few SRP locals in New York made gains at the bargaining table. The 100 members of the Ravena-Coeys-Selkirk Teacher Aide and Monitor union won significant gains in a new contract that improved salaries and longevity payments between 3.5 percent and 5.5 percent and made the cost of healthcare more affordable. The negotiations were difficult for president Bonnie McNeilly because the school board sent district staff to bargain, instead of negotiating directly. But the union countered with members making strong showings of solidarity at board meetings.

McNeilly's advice to other leaders in tough-times bargaining is "prioritize and stay on point." This is exactly what Beacon Federation of Paraprofessionals co-presidents Linda Murray-Rodriquez and Candace Bentivegna did in the Hudson Valley of New York, which secured for their members a new four-year agreement. Their new pact includes salary increases of 3.5 percent, 3.6 percent, 3.75 percent and 3.75 percent and increments through 2011, half of their health insurance cost is paid by the district (previously the district paid nothing), and the teaching assistants have become full-time employees eligible to receive tenure by adding 15 minutes to their workday.

William Bailey, president of the Graham Federation of Teachers, prioritized and stayed on point when he negotiated a new three-year agreement for the teaching assistants and teachers at Greenburgh Graham, one of 13 Special act schools in New York for students who come from the court system, special education committee referrals and social service placement. Their new agreement provides a 3.75 percent raise each year, improved longevity payments, increased summer pay and new retirement incentives for teaching assistants and teachers. Health insurance contributions are now 1 percent of salary, with a \$1,000 cap beginning in September.

SOURCES AND CONTRIBUTORS: Bernie Mulligan, New York Teacher

# PERSONNEL PERSONALS

Congratulations to **Patty Brown** (TA, Sp. Ed.) on her recent engagement to Jim Cooper. A November wedding is planned.

BOCES staff at Maywood School donated to the Very Special Prom in memory of **Tom McTernan's** (Teacher, Sp. Ed.) father, Thomas Patrick McTernan. We all send our condolences to Tom and his family.

## Summer Opening Days

- July 14—8 AM to 12 Noon
- August 11—3:15-5:15 PM (Specifically for summer school staff unable to attend on Sept. 2nd.)
- August 12—12-4 PM

Space limited, contact Marcia Siver (862-4930 to register.

## TRIAD GOING GREEN

[Up to a Point]

If you want to opt out of receiving a hard copy, please email **Lisa Mink** ([lmink8@hotmail.com](mailto: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 [lmink8@hotmail.com](mailto: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.

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

## Student Incentive Award Congratulations to the two winners for this years incentive are:

Ashley Lynn daughter of **Dale Johnson** (Custodian, Schoharie CTE) and Michael, son of **Kelly Livingston** (Nurse, Sp. Ed.).

## 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

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

### TRIAD NEWSLETTER STAFF

#### Co-Editors:

Lois Leonard ([jleonar4@nycap.rr.com](mailto:jleonar4@nycap.rr.com))  
Susan Kusalonis ([maidmrn300@aol.com](mailto:maidmrn300@aol.com))

#### Contributing Staff and Committee:

Pat Gollub ([Gollub02@yahoo.com](mailto:Gollub02@yahoo.com))  
Dianna Bernard and Vocational Training & Transition Class  
Jeanette Christoff ([jankachristo@juno.com](mailto:jankachristo@juno.com))  
Cathi Jakway ([MsSmartyPants429@aol.com](mailto:MsSmartyPants429@aol.com))

Capital Region BOCES  
Faculty Association  
1015 Watervliet Shaker Road  
Albany, NY 12205

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