

USA INFORMATION

UNITED STAFF ASSOCIATION OF PUTNAM/NORTHERN WESTCHESTER BOCES
 LOCAL 15-175 NYSUT LOCAL 3072 AFT



FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT...

As the nation's economy remains stagnant and states contend with crippling budget constraints, union members, and in particular, those employed in the public sector like teachers, have come under an unprecedented level of attack nationwide. There are some in Albany who want to abolish the Triborough Amendment, end seniority right and dramatically change the pension law. Meanwhile, through the new APPR tenure has come under fire as well. These are direct attacks on collective bargaining and on public unions, which will continue as our economic problems persist. These attacks are aimed to strip away worker rights and destroy the collaborative partnerships that have been established between labor and management. They are NOT about pay, benefits, pensions and/or health care.

While studies show that public workers actually make less in total compensation than their private sector counterparts, the real question here is: Why are our elected leaders playing partisan politics-scapegoating teachers and other union workers instead of working together to create jobs? Teachers and unionists throughout the nation are speaking up for basic labor rights that give voice to the working people. We are standing up and speaking out for what we believe. This is the very cornerstone of democracy, and we should not shy away from speaking about our values. We need to get educated about the topics by going to NYSUT.org.

As New York State heads toward another challenging budget year, we must continue to stand up and be heard. Local school budget votes will be held statewide this year on Tuesday, May 15th. This will be the first year school boards will confront the ill-advised tax cap lawmakers passed in 2011. It is more important than ever for you to pass your school budget, especially if you live in one of our component school districts. Now more than ever, we need to encourage our members to not only vote, but to reach out to others as well. We have to support our public schools and BOCES component school districts.

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There has been conversation and action from districts about retaining students and discontinuing our services. Some districts are looking at opening alternative programs, and some are looking into providing specialized programs. This would be unfavorable to many of us that work for BOCES. We must not waiver from our duties and responsibilities and continue to provide the best possible services to our students. Unfortunately, the path of our current economic climate was set in motion by corporate greed, but it's up to us to navigate through as best we can.

This was difficult for me to write due to the tenor. I wanted to share with you the verbiage that I have been navigating through. This deplorable situation isn't just coming from the Governor and our administration but from our surrounding school district union leaders as well. I want to assure you that the Executive Board and I are fighting the battles that need fighting and will not yield.

We all have a vested interest in standing our ground together to maintain a fair and safe work place. Like those activists whom paved the way before us, we must stand together, support each other, and face the continued challenges which lie ahead. There is no doubt in my mind that standing unified, as one strong force, we can overcome the threats and challenges ahead.

Remember don't just be in the union; Be The Union!!

In solidarity,

Larry



*Upcoming
Executive Board
Meetings:*

April 10, 2012

Projects Building
3:00 P.M.

Union Representatives

PUTNAM/NORTHERN WESTCHESTER B.O.C.E.S.
YORKTOWN HEIGHTS, NEW YORK 10598
(914) 962-9579

Executive Board:

President..... Larry Marino
1st Vice President..... Alfred Santoli
2nd Vice President..... Doug Andreotti
Secretary..... Jenn Guiffre
Treasurer..... Dan Gottfried
Membership Chairperson..... Debra Haggerty
Grievance Chairperson..... Mary Ann Alvord
Negotiations Chairperson..... Al Cotoia
Building Rep Chairperson..... Carolyn Schneider

Program Representatives:

Administrator	Representative
Jim Bellucci.....	Michael Tomaseski
Michael Sowul.....	Lynn Ammann
Steve Lowery.....	Marie Russo
Marla Gardner.....	Robert Angiello
Adam Vanderstuyf.....	Catherine Armisto
Judy Spaulding.....	Judy Gillet
Bob Keldershouse.....	Elisa Longo

*Upcoming
General Membership
Meetings:*

May 8, 2012

Murphy's Bar and Grill, Yorktown Heights
3:00 P.M.

**United Staff Association Welfare Fund
c/o Daniel H. Cook Associates
253 West 35th Street, 12 Floor
New York, New York 10001**

Chairperson..... Dawn Wargula
Secretary..... Nancy Finsmith
Treasurer..... Janine deGrouchy-Hraska
Trustees..... Larry Marino
Jenn Guiffre
Doreen Trani

Consultant..... Flo Laicher

Administrator..... Daniel Cook Associates
(914) 250-0700
(212) 505-5050
FAX# (212) 714-1454

Legal Fund..... (914) 997-1576



BOCES Rights to Your Staff Computer:



SUBJECT: STAFF ACCESS TO NETWORKED INFORMATION RESOURCES

Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES Policy Manual: 2010; 5270: Personnel

Electronic information research skills are now fundamental to preparation of citizens and future employees during the age of information. All electronic and telephone communication systems, owned and/or operated by the BOCES, and all communication and information transmitted by, received from or stored in these systems, are the property of the BOCES and as such are to be used solely for BOCES related purposes. However, de minimus [“so small or minimal in difference that it does not matter” Webster Dictionary] personal use that is not political, religious, or related to business or profit-making, is also permitted.

Communication over networks should not be considered private. Network supervision and maintenance may require review and inspection of directories or messages. Privacy in these communications is not guaranteed. The BOCES reserves the right without prior notice to access stored records in cases where there is reasonable suspicion to expect wrong-doing or misuse of the system. Courts have ruled that old messages may be subpoenaed, and network supervisors may examine communications in order to ascertain compliance with network guidelines for acceptable use.

In general, employees are expected to communicate in a professional manner consistent with state laws governing the behavior of school employees and with federal laws.



KNOW YOUR CONTRACT...

SECTION IX - PERSONAL BUSINESS LEAVE

Personal business leave shall be granted upon application to and approval by the Director of Human Resources and Administrative Services. Except for emergencies, written application must be received in the Human Resources and Administrative Services Department at least three working days in advance of the day for which leave is requested.

Personal business leave shall not be accumulated from year to year nor shall it be used to extend vacation or holidays.

What this means:

Personal days, which are within the parameters of the language above, do not need to have supporting documentation, just a reason for the day. If the request for the leave is less than three working day notice, you may be asked for further documentation to have the day approved.

Any personal day, be it compelling or not, shall not be used before or after any scheduled vacation or holiday.



The USA Staff Association would like to congratulate
Deborah Ashley and Michelle Gonzalez
 on National Board Teacher Certification!



Deborah Ashley

Congratulations!



Michelle Gonzalez

National Board Certification is recognized as the highest standards and practices that lead to improved teaching, learning and leading.

Deborah Ashley, who teaches New Visions Education and New Visions AP Environmental Science courses at The Tech Center, earned her certification in Adolescence and Young Adulthood Science with a subspecialty in Biology.

Michelle Gonzalez, a Special Education teacher in Walden, earned her certification in Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/Early and Middle Childhood.

Congratulations!

Congratulations!



NEGOTIATION NEWS...



The negotiation process is ongoing and will continue until we reach an agreement with the BOCES school board. Our broad based negotiation committee has met several times and has developed a reasonable package to present to administration.

Our negotiation table team is scheduled to meet for the first time with administration on March 13th. At this meeting, we will exchange proposals and set a schedule for future meetings. After this meeting, we will reconvene the negotiation committee, review administration's proposal and start working toward our common goal; a fair and equitable contract for our membership.

WELFARE FUND INFORMATION:

PAYMENTS RECEIVED FROM Dental, Optical, Variable, and other self-insured benefits.

- Payment for claims is paid to the member.
- Unless you pay in full at the time of your visit, it is your responsibility to forward payment to the dental, optical, or other service provider upon receipt from the Welfare Fund in a timely fashion. Remember to endorse the check before submitting to your service provider as the checks are made out to individual members.
- If you paid your service provider in full prior to receiving your check from the Welfare Fund, please cash your checks as soon as possible.

County Dental (dentist that many of our members utilize) now requires payment for service(s) rendered from ALL United Staff Association members **AT THE TIME OF VISIT.**

Please be mindful of member benefits. For further information on your Welfare Fund Benefits, contact Daniel H. Cook Associates at (914)250-0700, support@dhcook.com, log on to your personal account at www.dhcook.com or contact a Trustee.



Conducting Union Business:



Student learning and achievement is the main concern in our ever changing 21st century education system. During the workday, we, as teachers, aides, assistants, nurses, therapists, are obligated to support school and student's improvement and success. This cannot be accomplished when union business is conducted during the workday.

All union business should be handled before or after the members primary work day.

There is a certain protocol that must be maintained if you are thinking of speaking with administration in Building A. Any union related issue should be addressed to the president before moving forward. This protocol, which has been in place for many years, is to protect the integrity of the union as a whole. Any person who is voicing an opinion and making statements to other parties should make it clear that they are speaking for themselves only.

Especially during a contract year it is very important not to give administration the idea that we are not united. We, as an organized labor force, need to be aware that one person's opinion and even actions can reflect on the entire membership in a positive or negative light. If anyone has any union related issue(s) that they feel need to be addressed, please do so by contacting the president first.



When we ask for contributions to VOTE-COPE, we are asking for contributions to protect our own profession and the institutions in which our members work. This is the goal of VOTE-COPE, the non-partisan political action committee of your union.

There is tenuous state support for our schools, colleges and universities. Last year we endured a \$1.4 billion cut in state aid and hundreds of millions in cuts to public higher education. There is a threat of privatization. The New York State School Boards Association is attempting to eliminate tenure and repeal the Triborough Law, the statute that prohibits public employers from cutting benefits and salaries when contracts expire. You don't have to look far to make the connection between politics and the terms and conditions of our careers and the places in which we work.

If you haven't switched to making contributions via payroll deduction, please do so this year. It's an automatic, painless and very effective method of raising political contributions. This is a one-time deduction which will be taken out of your 1st paycheck each May.

Everyone benefits from VOTE-COPE -- our teachers, teaching aides and assistants, bus drivers, food service employees, SRPs, college professors, health care professionals, retirees and our students. VOTE-COPE is your voice. Every member benefits from your contribution. Please begin today. "It Can't Happen Without You!" VOTE-COPE is key to your local political successes, as well as in Albany and Washington, D.C.

You will be receiving information shortly about Vote Cope. Please consider raising your donation by \$10 or \$15 dollars this year. If you feel you don't want to make this adjustment annually than consider a one-time donation of \$10 or \$15 dollars.

Save the date

*Retirement Party
Honoring
All United Staff Association Retirees*

Date: Friday June 8th

Time: 6:00-11:00pm

*Place: Colonial Terrace
Cortlandt Manor*

Details to follow!

*If you are a USA member and are planning to retire we
hope you will join us for the celebration!*

*Please email Darci Ettari at Dettari@pnwboces.org
so we can include you as our guest.*





I'd like you to meet MAC.



The movement that inspired the world was born right here in New York. People standing up, standing together, and making their voices heard. If you have had enough, too, it is time for you to join that movement.

Become an e-Activist through the NYSUT Member Action Center (the MAC)!

When you become an e-Activist, you are saying that you have had enough. Enough of teacher-bashing and scapegoating. Enough of treating educators like the problem rather than the solution. Enough of lawmakers valuing tests over teachers. As the President made clear last week: we cannot test our way to a strong middle class, but we can - and must - educate our way to one.

The NYSUT Member Action Center is here to help you make your voice heard and to build the movement around the priorities that matter most to all of us: education, healthcare, and issues that affect us all as working people. It is quick. It is easy. And it can be the difference between victory and defeat on the issues you care about.

Click now to check out the MAC and become an e-Activist!

Stay informed! Get engaged! Take action! Click to view our brief video at the NYSUT Member Action Center... and take just a few seconds of your time to become an e-Activist.

Seize the moment. Join the movement.

In solidarity,

Andrew Pallotta NYSUT Executive Vice President

P.S.: I can't do this without you.

March 25th marks the 101 year anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire.



On March 25, 1911, a fire broke out at the Triangle Waist Company in New York City on the eighth floor, rising to the ninth. As smoke and flames filled the air, the women rushed to the exit and it was locked. About 500 women were trapped; many clung to the breaking fire escapes. Firefighters tried to reach them, but their ladders stopped at the sixth floor. Women jumped hand-in-hand from the windows, crashing through the nets, and smashing on the sidewalk. Other women, caught inside, died of burns or suffocation. That night, the Twenty-sixth Street pier held 146 corpses. Two thousand people searched for their loved ones' bodies.

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire was the most deadly industrial safety incident in New York City, and resulted in public outcry to establish safety and labor reforms.

Among the results of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire and the public horror at the disaster, municipal state, and federal association reforms were established to ensure better working conditions and worker safety. Strong unions in the garment industry were formed to bargain on safety and working conditions and to lobby for legislative reforms.

Those who were killed in the Triangle disaster are only part, and a small part, of those murdered in industry during the passing year. There are only 146 incinerated and mangled. But there were thousands of others who met a similarly agonizing fate during this year of 1911.

This incident has had great significance to this day because it highlights the inhumane working conditions to which industrial workers can be subjected. To many, its horrors epitomize the extremes of industrialism.

Take time this month to pay homage to those who have sacrifice and continue to sacrifice for the labor movement.

“All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence.” Martin Luther King, Jr.



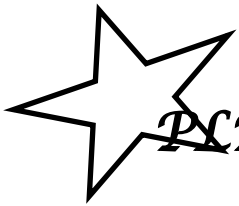
**SUPPORT WHAT
KIDS NEED**

All district residents who are U.S. citizens are eligible to vote (and non-U.S. citizens if the district allows).

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

<http://ny.aft.org/pnwb/>

*PLEASE HELP US BY SENDING NEWS!**Thanks to All...*

Thank you to everyone who contributes to this newsletter by submitting articles, important information, the bouquets or helping with the printing and/or distribution throughout the school year.

Please send retiree news for the newsletter to **Wynnie McCarthy** wam48@aol.com or 36 Cheshire Lane, Yorktown, NY 10598. We want to reach out to more retirees.

Please send any information that you deem is newsletter worthy to Meredith Markolovic (Tech) at mmarkolovic@pnwboces.org or (914)248-3815.

A Bouquet from Us:

In our thoughts...

Surgery or extended illness:

- Douglas Andreotti
- Steve Defino
- Geri Dillon
- Doug Geer
- Lisa Tobin
- Michael Tomaseski

Our Sympathy to...

Rita Brady who lost her mother.

Send items for *A Bouquet from Us* to Elizabeth Bowler at ebowler@pnwboces.org

USA PHONE NUMBER: (914) 962-9579



IMPORTANT...

Mary Ann Alvord is the Grievance Chairperson. She can be reached at extension **764**, or from the outside at (914) 248-2764.