

U S A INFORMATION

LOCAL 15-175 NYSUT; LOCAL 3072 AFT

FEBRUARY 2010

Next Executive Board Meeting:
March 2, 2010
3:15 p.m.
 PBS Conference Room

NYSUT Representative Assembly
April 28 - May 1, 2010
 Washington, D.C.

News from Retirees
Read what's happening with retirees old and new.
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NYSUT Summer Leadership Conference
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NYSUT BOCES Leadership Conference
Read about the fall conference held in Albany, NY
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Next General Membership Meeting:
May 11, 2010
3:15 p.m.
 Adult Dining Room

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Calendars for 2009-2010
Lists of important dates. Phone numbers for Welfare Fund info...
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From the Desk of the President

As many of you know, I will not be running for president again. Now is the time to start thinking about the future of your union. Come September, you will be nominating members for president, 1st vice president, 2nd vice president, treasurer, secretary, membership chair, delegates to the NYSUT Representative Assembly and program representatives.

The duties of the above officers are located in our Constitution and By-Laws booklet. It has a yellow cover and was revised in 2002. Carolyn Schneider, our program rep chair was kind enough to scan the document so it is available electronically. Please let me know if you need a copy.

Officers of the Executive Board should have representatives from both Tech and Special Ed. Keep in mind that many of the elected officials have been serving

you well for a long time. Some of them may retire some day. Will you have some one ready to take their place?

Please become involved in your union. Know your contract, look at our Constitution. Be knowledgeable. Get to know your elected officials by coming to union meetings. You may not be ready to step into an elected position this year due to family commitments or educational commitments, but that doesn't mean you should not prepare yourself for the future.

We are in difficult economic times, not only on the federal level, but also on the state level. The budget crisis is going to effect us in one way or another. Your new leadership will be negotiating our next contract. They are going to need your input and support.

You may be asking how can you participate in your union. We are going to be asking for volunteers to serve on the elections committee. Vito Rinaldo has been doing it for many years. Our Constitution provides explicit

instructions for elections. Now is the time to find out about this committee and make a commitment to participate in your elections.

The VOTE/COPE drive will be starting soon. It is through our contributions that NYSUT is able to lobby Albany in our favor. This is a big undertaking. Carolyn Schneider will give you more information about this effort, but she needs volunteers to help her educate members about the VOTE/COPE initiative, distribute materials and many other things.

These are just two ways to get involved in the union without spending a lot of your time but definitely helping out. I hope many of you come forward and volunteer. Please contact me if you are interested.

In Solidarity,

Irene Snow
 President

News From Retirees

Irene Petrillo... "I am spending a few months in Florida on North Hutchinson Island in Fort Pierce. I am trying to keep busy after the loss of my husband Augie to pancreatic cancer in August 2009. We bought a condo on North Hutchinson Island five years ago, but did not use it much as I was working at the time at the Tech Center. I hope to enjoy the winter months in Florida and the rest of the year in NY. One of my sons is based in Miami Beach and one is in NYC so I will get to see them both. Hope all is well with you."

Marie VanValkenburg's husband died last summer. She has been in contact with former USA president Carol Underwood and her team social worker Helen Murray.

Terry Keegan... 'We had a new grandson, Liam Edward Keegan on 8/31/09, born to son Ed and his wife Julie and big sister Grace. Another one coming the end of February to daughter Rosemary in Reno, Nevada. We will be off to Reno from Florida when the call comes."

Janine DeGrouchy Hraska... "Not much new. I am looking forward to a trip to BVI (British Virgin Islands) to escape the winter!

Jerry and Ida Blotcky..."The biggest news here in Florida is the prolonged cold spell that we had for about a week and a half. We had record breaking freezing weather night after night, during that time. For the first time since we have been in Florida, Jerry kept all of his motorcycles parked in the garage and did not use them for more than a week. ...Ida has gone back to work as volunteer, helping adults prepare to pass their high school equivalence examination. The employment situation has helped many see the need and value of an education. We are still in the planning stage of our next big adventure."

Lorraine Ward..."I'm doing well and getting ready to leave on this Monday, February 11 for another deployment to Charlotte NC. Sterling's school is year round so he gets four weeks off every three months. Looking forward to seeing and spending another month with Ken and Sterling."

George O'Brien... "Everything is fine on Cape Cod. I'm getting a little tired of the winter but a couple of trips to Florida and Myrtle Beach will pick me up."

Adrienne and Howard Forbes..."January cruise was possible for us this year, and the weather cooperated with plenty of sunshine and happy sailing. Howie has an amazing electric wheel chair that can just about stand him on his head. Technology is truly wonderful. We look forward to going again in a few months since it is a very easy trip for both of us. Not much to see but ocean and beaches, but very curative for rest and rehab.....

Challis Thompson... "I saw Cathy Neary (she was an aide at PB in the '70's) last month! We met in Key West , FL for the weekend. She & Ray had flown down for a few days, so Peter & I drove down for an overnight. Carol and Marcel Vales have been down in FL and we all had dinner. They had made some plans to get together with **Fran Carbarano** near Ft. Lauderdale."

U S A I N F O R M A T I O N

IS AN OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
UNITED STAFF ASSOCIATION

of

PUTNAM/NORTHERN WESTCHESTER BOCES
LOCAL 15-175 NYSUT; LOCAL 3072 AFT
YORKTOWN HEIGHTS, NEW YORK 10598
(914) 962-9579

Editor: Athena Swikata

Circulation: Athena Swikata / Joan Irvine

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News From Retirees

Kathy Feenaghty...“We had some cold weather in Florida but it is finally warming up. We had a great Christmas with the family....Tom & I are doing great and were so excited to visit with **Linda Frankenberg** and **Marina Rea**. Linda had come down to visit Marina and took a trip to The Villages. We all have mutual friends here so it was a wonderful afternoon. **Bob** and **Ann Esposito** were with us also. We see them regularly and they send their regards to all. They are both working at St. Mark Catholic Church and love it. I am substituting in the Villages Charter School, usually in kindergarten or first grade. I really enjoy being with the kids for a day and then going home with no lesson plans to write or reports to get done. Tom & I will be traveling to Austria & Germany in May and are very excited about that. I enjoy reading the news letter and keeping up with my fellow retirees.”

Dick and Theresa Donahue...“Our daughter, Elizabeth, was married to Matthew Moore this summer. The wedding took place on the Pemaquid Peninsula in Maine. Elizabeth, who is certified as a NYS School Psychologist, is now completing her post-doc hours to also become licensed as a Clinical Psychologist. Matthew, who has escaped the Minnesota winters for our balmier ones, has just been admitted to the NYS Bar.”

Pete Smith...“We just went through the worst cold spell in our seven years at The Villages. We had one day that it never reached 40. It is back to normal temperatures now and all is good I guess we can't complain with the weather you have been getting up north. We took a cruise to Cozumel in October and had a ride on a dolphin. Saw **Rosemary Longo** when she was visiting her cousin in "The Villages". She looked terrific, retirement must suit her well.

Rita Wolfson...“Nothing new or exciting here. Enjoyed the holidays with family. Now we are waiting for the weather to get real warm. At least the cold weather is better than a hurricane...I hope you and all the others are doing well.”

Barbara Fiedler...“I have a second grandchild, Miles who is now 5 months old. Isabella is now five. They live

locally so Walter and I are having a ball. No big trips planned for now. We will take our annual drive to Naples, FL to visit family. In April we are visiting Branson, just like other retired people.”

Several of the friends of **Jo Goldstein** joined for a preholiday dinner at Four Brothers in Mahopac set up by **Kathy Heller**. Jo goes back many years with BOCES as an aide with Putnam BOCES in Carmel before the merger in 1968. Jo worked in so many programs: Loyola with the TMR program, Shrub Oak, Walden and she subbed for many years after retirement in LSB programs.

The Pines Bridge group continues to have lunch the last Friday of the month. In February they are going to Charlie Browns, Route 6 at noon. If you want to come... join us.

Rosemary Wong was with us in January and she is feeling well and had some great pictures of her four grandchildren, who live in Chappaqua. The three oldest are studying private Chinese lessons. Both her son and her other daughter were married in the past year.

Olga LaBoy had a Christmas get together for our group at her beautiful redone condo in Heritage Hills.

We heard **Bill Broadnax** has just returned from a special birthday trip to Hawaii. So many of our former coworkers spend the cold winter months in FL we would love to include something in our newsletter. Please forward it on. Wam48@aol.com

Wynnie McCarthy
Retired Member, Actively Involved

From the Editor

We need articles! If you are a Committee Chairperson, the newsletter is a great way to reach our members! Please send items you want published to

aswikata@pnwboces.org (Athena Swikata)

If you have attended a conference or have an item you would like to bring to the attention of the membership, please send to the above e-mail address.

If you prefer to drop it in interoffice mail, I'm located at Walden School on campus.

NYSUT Summer Leadership Conference

Wyndham Princeton Forrestal

Hotel and Conference Center

Plainsboro NJ

The New York State United Teachers Association Tarrytown Regional Office sponsored the Summer Leadership Conference August 12- 14 2009 at the Wyndham Forrestal Hotel and Conference Center. As in the past there were many professional workshops available such as : Advanced Leadership Program, Basic Grievance, Basic Negotiations, Basic Union Representative and 16 other informational presentations.

I attended the Advocacy and Taylor Law workshop that proved to be excellent on all counts. The presenter Eric Marshall provided a wealth of information on the Taylor Law, which is a New York State Collective bargaining statute that covers all public employees in New York State.

The Taylor Law:

- Grants public employees the right to organize and be represented by employee organizations (unions) of their choosing
- Requires public employers to negotiate and enter into agreements with public employee organizations regarding their employees terms and conditions of employment
- Establishes procedures for dealing with impasse, and in resolving collective bargaining disputes
- Defines and prohibits Improper Practices
- Prohibits strikes by public employees

- Establishes PERB- The Public Employment Relations Board – to administer the law.

The specific content of the statute is extensive but it was very interesting to get insight from Eric who has filed cases and been through the PERB process. The timelines for filing a claim are very specific and can make the difference between successfully scheduling a hearing or being ineligible. The workshop was very understandable and the questions that were discussed dealt with actual Taylor Law issues that have occurred in other districts. Overall, the time I spent in this workshop was well spent.

The accommodations were top shelf. There was unlimited access to refreshments and food. As I have said in the past if members can allocate the time, which I know is always in high demand; then a very enjoyable experience waits. Remember, NYSUT and our local, pay all expenses, including mileage and tolls. As we move forward in time, new active members are necessary to carry on the work that often goes unnoticed by the membership. If you are a person who has the ability to become more active and involved, then only good can come from this. As the older members retire and move on, new members must look to carry on, and continue to promote a strong learning environment for our students and a safe and fair work environment for our membership. We hope that the challenges ahead will be addressed by strong leadership and strong support from our members. In solidarity.

Al J. Gotoia
2nd Vice President

A New Feature

As promised in June, we are starting our new feature...

Ask the Board

If you have a question you can email your question to:

Larry Marino at lmarino@pnwboces.org

EXECUTIVE BOARD & GENERAL MEETING

DATES 2009-2010

- 2/2 Executive Board Meeting
- 3/2 Executive Board Meeting
- 4/6 Executive Board Meeting
- 5/4 Executive Board Meeting
- 5/11 General Membership Meeting**
- 6/1 Executive Board Meeting



To schedule an appointment with the lawyer members should call (914) 997-1576.

IMPORTANT!

Please Note:

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

Legal Fund Calendar

The dates for the legal services program are:

February 10

March 10

April 14

May 12

June 9

You need to call

(914) 997-1576

to set up an appointment.

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

Chairperson: Lola Smerdon

Secretary: Nancy Finsmith

Treasurer: Janine deGrouchy-Hraska

Trustees: Monika Biscoglio
Jennifer Guiffre
Steve Simpson
Irene Snow

Administrator: Daniel Cook Associates
253 West 35th Street, 12th Floor
New York, New York 10001
(914) 250-0700
(212) 505-5050
1-800-DHCOOK1
(1-800-342-6651)
FAX # (212) 714-1454

Legal Fund: (914) 997-1576

USA PHONE NUMBER: (914) 962-9579

Keep this page for future reference!!

NYSUT BOCES

Leadership Conference

I had the privilege of attending the annual NYSUT BOCES Leadership Conference in Albany this fall. As usual, the conference provided a wide variety of particularly relevant workshops. I chose to participate in the workshop on contracts and negotiation and was well rewarded. The workshop provided a detailed overview of the direction that negotiations and contracts are headed in both our region and other areas of NYS, and included a thorough review of the issues we may face as we enter negotiations when our current contract expires.

One of the most interesting things that I learned was that in the upstate area, the increase received when you move to the next step in the salary scale is included when salary increase percentages are negotiated. So for example, if a local negotiates a 3% raise, the increase is not the step plus 3%. The step is included, so a 3% increase may only be a 1% increase plus whatever the step increase is. This accounts for the lower salaries in those areas.

The workshop also dealt extensively with the various ways in which health insurance costs are being negotiated. Some locals have a graduated system, where everyone pays based on their salary, rather than each employee paying the same percentage. So for example, if you are on step 1 you may pay 5% of your health insurance premium, but if you are on Step 10 you might pay 15%.

Another issue of note was how different contracts are structured in terms of the health insurance payments for retirees. The presenter thought our contract had excellent language in this regard, and shared it with the other locals that were represented. We have our

retirees pay a flat amount that does not change, which everyone agreed was a good way to go because retirees are on a fixed income.

The workshop was well worth attending for both the perspective it provided on the major issues in recent negotiations, and the varied ways in which different locals have addressed those issues.

Dan Gottfried
Treasurer, United Staff Association of P/NW BOCES

From the Editor

I have attended a number of the NYSUT BOCES Leadership Conferences over the past several years. Each time is a treat. I get to go to some very informative and genuinely interesting workshops which are very relative to current issues in our classrooms. The Special Education Department meeting is always a hot bed of information on new and sometimes old mandates that come down from State Ed.

One topic often discussed is the NYS Alternate Assessment. It is a topic that is widely discussed on the floor, during breaks and meals among participants. It gives you an opportunity to touch base with fellow teachers from around the state who share in your concerns. You are not alone. It is also a great forum to exchange information and network with others. The nicest part is you get to do this away from your workplace and home, in the relaxing atmosphere of a nice hotel, not far from home, in the good company of other members of our union. There's no shortage of nice folks to share a meal or kick back with, or you can retreat to the comfort of your room and catch up on your reading.

There is no cost to you to attend a conference. The union will reimburse you, with just one little string attached - YOU HAVE TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE FOR THE NEWSLETTER!

Athena Swikata
Editor, USA InformationS

A Bouquet from Us

Get Well Wishes to:

Dave Hannan, on recovery from surgery.

Janet Stewart, on recovery from surgery

Our Sympathies to:

Steve Zavodsky, for the loss of his mother

Ron Taffner, for the loss of his father

Josephine Scala, for the loss of her mother

Dan Gottfried, for the loss of his father

Bob Taps, for the loss of his father

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