

USA INFORMATION

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

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT...

Welcome back! I hope you had a restful summer. As the new school year begins, it brings with it new hurdles for our union to navigate. On top of our duties to our students, we have a tremendous amount of work ahead of us as a union. This year will be the last year of our current contract. We will be organizing our unions' negotiation committee as soon as we can. The negotiation chairman and I have already met several times with our NYSUT Labor Relation Specialist (LRS). Together, with our LRS, the committee will plot a course that best suits all of our unions' members. If you are interested in participating on this committee, there is information about it later in the newsletter.

As well as our contract expiring, we are also facing new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) guidelines that are mandated by the state. This new evaluation system has to be in place for the 2012/2013 school year. Our union is represented on this committee by three other union members, in addition to myself. We have been working since last year, as well as, over the summer, to put together an evaluation system that is practical and equitable to all involved. As of today, there is not anything that has been finalized as part of our APPR.

Rest assured, together we will succeed, not with just these two large hurdles but with any other issue that may come up. One issue, that may seem as it is over, is the tax cap that was voted on last year. The next couple of years are when we, as educators, will see the effect this tax cap has on us. School districts will be forced to make drastic cuts in the services that they provide due to the tax cap.

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We serve 18 of these districts that will be looking for cost saving measures- possibly looking at PNWBOCES as one of those measures. It's important for all of us, especially those who live in the districts we serve, to get out to school board meetings and help districts keep an optimistic attitude toward PNWBOCES.

I am determined and committed to serving you as best I can. With the help of our executive board, program reps, committee members and you, we will move our union forward. As president, my place is on the frontline involved in the struggle to protect our members' interest. Each members place is to do their part - no more or no less- whenever they are needed. It takes all of us working together to move forward. I invite all of you to become active again in support of our union. It needs you now more than ever! I hope to meet with you all soon.

In solidarity,
Larry Marino

Upcoming Executive Board Meetings:

September 13

Location: Pinesbridge Conference Room
3:00P.M.

Upcoming General Membership Meetings:

Stay tuned for the 2011-2012 meeting schedule.

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

Thinking About Retiring???

The Retiree Council of NYSUT E.D. 15/16 is sponsoring two workshops on Pre-Retirement. They will be conducted on Tuesday, October 11, 2011 and on Tuesday, October 25, 2011 from 5:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. at the NYSUT Regional office in Tarrytown.

For more information:
NYSUT Retirees-Westchester/Putnam
520 White Plains Road Suite 400
Tarrytown NY 10591
www.westputretirees.com

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

Chairperson..... Lola Smerdon
Secretary..... Nancy Finsmith
Treasurer..... Janine deGrouchy-Hraska
Trustees..... Larry Marino
 Jenn Guifree
 Doreen Trani
Consultant..... Flo Laicher

Administrator..... Daniel Cook Associates
 (914) 250-0700
 (212) 505-5050
 1-800-DHCOOK1
 (1-800-342-6651)
 FAX# (212) 714-1454

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

NYSUT TARRYTOWN REGIONAL CONFERENCE SUMMARIES:

I attended two conferences over the summer. One conference was held at NYSUT headquarters in Albany. This conference gave me the opportunity to network with NYSUT's leaders, including the president Dick Iannuzzi. I also met and talked with presidents from over 100 locals throughout NY State. I learned a tremendous amount of information about what NYSUT offers, not only to me as president, but to our members. This conference gave me a better perspective on how to help move our union forward. I also got to tour NYSUT's headquarters and see our union dues at work. NYSUT's employees made us all feel very welcome and went out of their way to talk with us and answer any questions we may have had. This conference was for new presidents and offered a lot of information about how to organize, run, and maintain our local union. I spent 4 days over the summer at this conference because my level of commitment and resolve to you and our union are unyielding.

Another conference I attended this summer was the Regional Conference held in Princeton NJ. This conference was attended by over 400 union leaders from schools across our region. I attended several workshops on contract exchange. These workshops were invaluable to me because they offered me the most current information and strategies about what other school districts are doing to negotiate contracts. I will take this information and share it with the negotiation committee, which I am a member of. I also got the opportunity to network with union leaders from across the state. I got some good information on how others districts are dealing with the new APPR guideline and negotiating tactics being used for and against teacher unions. I will be attending a BOCES wide conference later this month and will have information in the next newsletter about it.

In Solidarity,
Larry Marino

Hello. My name is Elisa Longo and I am a union program representative for Bob Kelderhouse's programs both in Walden and in our local districts. I was fortunate enough to be able to attend the Tarrytown Regional Offices Summer Leadership Conference in New Jersey which took place from August 16-18, 2011.

I attended a major course titled "Basic Union Representative" which took place for 7 hours over 2 days. The instructor's name was Susan D. Cotellessa who is a Labor Relations Specialist for NYSUT. The group that I worked with was mostly comprised of upcoming union building representatives with the most senior member starting their fourth year. I will be starting my 3rd year this fall.

There are 4 major responsibilities of a union representative. I will list them below with characteristics for each:

Organizer

- Knows the contract, constitution, bylaws, employer handbook/policies
- Knows where to find answers
- Has the desire to succeed
- Has all materials
- Is visible
- Is indispensable
- Is innovative
- Communicates and attends all meetings
- Is issue-oriented/action-oriented
- LISTENS

Leader

- Educates members
- Interprets locals policies
- Speaks on the behalf of a member
- Gather's support for the locals programs and positions
- Assists members with problems and concerns
- Acts as a liaison with principal/supervisor
- Is available
- Knows where to find answers
- Models appropriate union member behavior
- Promotes and supports VOTE-COPE
- LISTENS

Advocate

- Is assertive on behalf of the members and the union
- Is supportive of the member with a problem
- Utilizes resources
- Prepares grievances
- Preserves confidentiality
- Maintains records/notes
- Determines how to best handle a problem
- LISTENS

Communicator

- Keeps members informed
- Dispenses timely and critical information
- Communicates constituents' needs to local leadership
- Maintains strong public relations image
- Promotes internal communications
- Makes themselves accessible to membership
- Not afraid to ask question
- LISTENS

Not only did we learn about the above, but workshop participants also learned about past practice, contract interpretation, the Taylor Law, and important education laws and commissioners regulations for school employees. I went to this course with the intention of honing my skills as a union building representative. It was comprehensive and definitely something that can be applied at our BOCES. Getting involved is the name of the game. Go to meetings, meet our BOCES union leadership, and ask questions. Together we can make a difference.

Elisa Longo
Building Rep-Kelderhouse
Walden School - Transitions Program

NYSUT Leadership Conference August 16-18 2011
Wyndham Princeton Forrestal Hotel & Conference Center
By Al J. Cotoia

This summer's union sponsored leadership conference held many informative and valuable workshops and presentations. As we all have been made very aware of schools, administrators, teachers, teaching assistants, teacher aides and school related personnel are all under attack from elected officials and the media. It seems that the hardwork performed and the high quality of education here in New York is not valued. The parent who struggles with ever shrinking resources wants schools to afford their child the best educational training with state of the art facilities and staff. Staff must follow the rigors of advanced education and training and ongoing professional development to maintain the certification required for their job qualification. As it is too often seen, the scape goats are the committed school employees whom are targeted and demonized. We are facing very real challenges to stem this tide of negative propoganda, which is so convenient for the media to push forth.

The foundation of labor unions has been and will continue to be the fair and equitable treatment of the worker. Past history has shown the individual has limited power to affect change in working conditions and benefits while the mass unification of workers standing as one united front can bring about a fair and reasonable working environment. Becoming educated and informed on what it means to promote and protect any union contract is something often overlooked by union members. Here is where each member should make a conscious effort to become familiar with their contract and hard earned rights through contract article language.

The workshops offered were many and in the limited time available, I was able to attend: Costing out Salary Schedules, Bargaining Health Insurance and Writing Proposals. Each offered current information and strategies directed toward negotiating contracts. The NYSUT specialists who shared their experience and knowledge base with attendees did a

very good job to keep information trends we face today current. I found the time well spent to gain further knowledge of those areas mentioned above. As we approach contract negotiations in the upcoming year, it will be important to come to the bargaining table with a realistic and grounded strategy. We look to work hard to come to an agreement with the BOCES School Board that is fair and reasonable. The economic times and climate today makes us scrutinize and analyze where we stand in respect with our component district teachers. Our common goal is to maintain the focus to negotiate in good faith.

In closing, I would urge all members to seek accurate information on any issues that arise. The best source of this is your Union Building Representative first. He/she will be in a position to give you accurate information or direct you to the president for help. Colleagues may have an interpretation of an issue or question but in the course of discussion, in many cases, facts get misdirected and spun into an entirely different version than originally stated. Finally, the Union is only as strong as the members who are willing to invest time and energy to keep it strong. The more members active and involved the more, as a whole, we can accomplish. We need continued interest in union activities and duties. The term "new blood" speaks to the younger members who are invited to get involved on any level to demonstrate support for our entire bargaining unit. Although personal time is a limited resource that must be first allocated to family and other important life demands, the better educated and informed union member the better service they can be to themselves and other members. What every member has to offer is experience of the past, present and sharing that experience, learning and working on union business, no matter how small, will help the future goals we all have. Our duty to all members is to preserve and protect the work environment.

KNOW YOUR CONTRACT...
SECTION XXVIII - GENERAL STAFF MEETINGS

A. Directors' General Staff Meetings - Employees shall be given 48-hours' notice of general staff meetings called by the Director for all teachers in the department. Where possible, agendas shall be furnished 24 hours prior to the meeting.

B. Number and Duration of Meetings - The total of Directors' General Staff Meetings and Supervisors' General Staff Meetings held outside of regular working hours shall not exceed 14 in any school year. Such meetings shall begin as soon as feasible following dismissal of classes and shall terminate no later than 5:00 p.m. Logs of the date and time of meetings shall be kept. This shall be the responsibility of administration. The total of 14 meetings specified above shall include night and weekend obligations. Such night and weekend obligations shall be as per past practice, provided, however, that past practice may be changed for a building, department, or program by a departmental or program/building committee as defined by the Shared Decision-Making Agreement.

C. Supervisors' General Staff Meetings - Each supervisor shall make every effort to hold staff meetings during regular working hours. Supervisors are expected to keep the number of staff meetings held outside of regular working hours to a minimum. This provision refers to general staff meetings called by the supervisor and does not apply to such meetings as case conferences, parent conferences, etc. Employees shall be given 24-hours' notice of general staff meetings called by the supervisor to be held outside of regular working hours. No notice need be given of general staff meetings called by the supervisor to be held during regular working hours.

D. Meetings for Itinerant Teachers - Itinerant teachers who work in a number of local school buildings are to be informed by their program supervisor which staff meetings are mandatory.

KNOW YOUR CONTRACT... SECTION XXVIII - GENERAL STAFF MEETINGS continued...

E. Meetings for Teacher Aides and Bus Attendants - The total of Directors' General Staff Meetings and Supervisors' General Staff Meetings held outside of regular working hours shall not exceed 10 in any school year. Such meetings shall begin as soon as feasible following dismissal of classes and shall terminate no later than 5:00 p.m. Logs of the date and time of meetings shall be kept. This shall be the responsibility of administration. The total of these 7 meetings shall include night and weekend obligations. Such night and weekend obligations shall be as per past practice, provided, however, that past practice may be changed for a building, department, or program by a departmental or program/building committee as defined by the Shared Decision-Making Agreement.

SECTION XXIX - NEW EMPLOYEE REQUIREMENTS

All new employees shall be required to attend a maximum of four after-school professional development activities during each of their first three years of employment. These activities may include, but are not limited to, orientation, workshops, and other relevant professional development activities.

NEGOTIATION NEWS...**Our Contract Expires this year!**

The negotiation committee needs representation from all disciplines. The commitment for this committee is meetings anywhere from 4 to 10 times this year. These meetings will start at 3:00 P.M. and last between 2 - 4 hours. The executive board set up the schedule that most of these meeting will take place the last Thursday of every month this year. **Anyone that is committing to this committee would need to attend all meetings!**

If interested, contact Larry Marino at lmarino@pnwboces.org.

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 or distribution throughout the school year.

Please send retiree news for the newsletter to Winnie 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...

Our Sympathy to...

Linda Berretta who lost her father.
Joann Dong who lost her brother.
Sandra Garofalo who lost her husband.

Congratulations to...

Aubrey Johnson on the birth of a girl.
Andrew Kresminski on the birth of a boy.
Meredith Markolovic on the birth of boy/girl twins.
Laurie Slackman on the birth of a girl.

Shakuar Cooper- Bradshaw who got married.
Rebecca Downs who got married.
Jesse lebwohl- Steiner who got married.

Best Wishes to...

Laura Giordana for a fast recovery from surgery.

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

USA PHONE NUMBER: (914) 962-9579



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

IMPORTANT...

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