



THE BEACON

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk
Union Local 3037



President's Report Thelma Shaw

Volume 23 Issue 2
December 2009

Inside this issue:

Unions matter

I have always believed that and I live and breathe that philosophy on a daily basis. I know that a few of our members think that the union "does nothing for me." Well, if you only knew the truth, you would be saying,

"Wow, look at all my union does for me."

Ask the members who have been ill and ran out of sick time how it feels to be paid because we have a sick bank and have their jobs kept for them while they are out. Ask the members who were represented by the union on a wide variety of allegations. These have ranged from DWI, DUI, harassment and abuse to forgery and theft to name just a few. Ask the members who have a terminal illness and have wonderful health insurance benefits and sick days. Ask the members who have a domestic partner now covered on their health insurance plan.

Ask the members who were out sick for a year and had their health insurance premium waived. The list goes on and on. We "forget" what great benefits we have in both contracts and tend to focus on what we perceive that we don't have. It is human nature to want more. I am not implying that we don't deserve all of the benefits that we have as a union fought so hard for all of these years, but we need to be realistic and look around us.

Tough times require unions to come up with tactics to save jobs and face the challenges that will come with economic downturns.

School districts batten down the hatches as they face more losses of state funding. Districts are already in precarious positions. Teamwork works and we are working collaboratively with administration to stay informed and updated as to the possibilities of mid year cuts.

Keeping members informed is imperative. Information keeps you, the member, in the loop and builds unity. We are facing alarming challenges with the proposed state budget cutbacks. Currently, the governor is looking to make mid year cuts to school districts/education totaling 686 million dollars. His philosophy is that this will rescue the state.

**We know that the proposal not only kill jobs in education,
but slows the economic recovery even further.**

President's Report	1-2
Executive Vice President	3
First Vice President	4-5
Benefits	6
Para Educators	7
Grievance	7
Special Education	8
Revised Sunshine Policy	9
Demandments	9
NYSUT Benefits	10
Letssaythanks	11

It will also cause mass disruption of services to the students we service. If you thought that education was in peril, this will cause an **EDUCATIONAL PANDEMIC of quality**. I urge you to go to our website and send letters and speak out against these cuts. Education is experiencing hard economic times which in turn effects each and every one of us.

We are skilled professionals. The educational requirements, time commitments involved in teacher preparation and ongoing professional development require more and more of our time to complete. It seems as if this year has been especially challenging thus far: transition planning, lesson plans, BIPs, FBAs and the list goes on. Paperwork has always been necessary as part of our jobs at Eastern Suffolk BOCES, but now it seems it is never ending.

We all want to just teach, but our component districts are asking us for accountability. They too are facing dire economic decisions and they want to make sure that they are getting the most bang for their buck. This goes hand in hand with our new Commissioner of Education's goal of promoting higher academic achievement. David Steiner, who replaced Richard Mills, has lost no time in establishing a new direction at the State education department level. He has visited Long Island and interestingly enough, he chose to visit a Career Academy. Eight school districts on LI have already established academies and another 3 are due to open this year.

During the month of November we held two workshops at the union office hosted by the Legends Group and with guest speaker David Daley from NYSUT. Both workshops were full and there is a possibility of a 3rd workshop in early spring. The members who attended were rewarded with lots of information. However, it became apparent to me at these workshops that our members are not reading their contracts. They are listening to the faculty room guru.

DO NOT BASE YOUR RETIREMENT DECISIONS ON THE ADVICE OF THE GURU.

If he/she is wrong, you pay the price, not him/her.

For blue contract members only: Please read and understand the following clause. On page 12 of the blue contract we have an eligibility clause for being able to "sell back" our accumulated sick days. That clause is addressed in item #2. It states, "The retirement must be effective within five years of first eligibility to retire without penalty from the NY State Teachers' Retirement System."

It has become apparent to me that many of the blue contract members don't understand what this means. This clause means that if you are a Tier 1 member your first eligibility is 55 years of age, giving you a five year window to age 60. If you are a Tier 2, 3, or 4 member, first eligibility is age 62 giving you a five year window to 67. Years of service have no bearing on first eligibility. If you **DO NOT** retire before the window of eligibility expires, you will not be paid for selling back your sick time. It doesn't matter whether you are option 1 or 2. Obviously, if you have no sick time to sell back, this eligibility clause doesn't pertain to you. The agency will not bend on this clause. It is contractual and they are abiding by the contract.

In closing, enjoy the holiday break. Another year is coming to a close and the new year of 2010 looms ahead. Take a moment to reflect on all that we have as a union, employees, friends, family and as a country. Celebrate all that we have and use equality, respect, compassion and kindness to help guide you in the new year.

Green is Good, Let's Keeping it Growing

On behalf of the BEES membership, **thank you** to those among us who signed up to access the Beacon online at www.beesbeacon.org . You place us on the map for saving money. Also, as "Teacher of the Year," Steve Kuhl drew on his signoff sheet, we will be saving trees.

With any worthwhile cause, the appeal for your participation is not over. At this point, approximately 4% of active members expressed interest in forgoing the paper copy. Many more members commented that it was a good idea, but have not officially let us know they are on board. Hats off to Centereach Learning Center for picking up the numbers and WHBLC members had a discussion to greatly reduce their consumption. That was exciting to hear and we welcome the opportunity for you to be among our greatest sources of savings once we have your signed forms or e-mails.

Linda Dackow, rep for our SAA and ReRout programs gave a full accounting of her members' wishes. Thank you. Although not one of our largest programs, TSP@BLC currently ranks highest in percentage of signed forms. Possibly they have a few more coming. Reps from one facility reported that **everyone** at that site would like to continue with the hardcopy. If so, we shall honor their wishes. As much as unity in a program is a most desired attribute, this is a time when the individual voice may help the greater cause.

So, as a fellow member I **encourage**, or if you prefer, **challenge** you to increase our percentage of online readership. It is your money and everyone's trees that you will be saving.

As written in the previous Beacon, you may indicate in one of two ways your desire to forgo a hard printed copy of the Beacon. Please fill out the form below with a *signature* and send it inter-office to Pat Copertino @ SAC **or** e-mail the same information from a **non-esboces e-mail** to pat-cop@optonline.net . Your union representative can also get you a form for this purpose. This signed form or e-mail will confirm your choice and be kept on file at the union office. Thank you again for your efforts to truly make a difference.

BEES Beacon is Going Green

Date: _____

I, (please print your name) _____ currently

work at _____ and choose to pass on receiving a hard copy

of the BEES Beacon newsletter. I understand I can always access the newsletter at

www.beesbeacon.org



First Vice President

Ray Stenberg

On November 8-9, I attended the annual New York State Teacher's Retirement System annual meeting in Saratoga Springs, New York. Accompanying me as delegates were BEES members Lynn Patrissi from Westhampton Beach Learning Center and Robin Mealey from the Bellport Academic Center. The three of us attended a variety of retirement related workshops and voted for Michael Corn as a teacher member to the TRS Board. Mr. Corn was whole-heartedly endorsed by NYSUT for the open position on the board and will continue to work hard on our behalf with two other teacher members.

It's essential that NYSUT endorsed candidates occupy the three teacher seats on the 10 member board because they act as a solid block of votes to represent you. They deal with issues such as blocking the ability of school districts and BOCES from taking improper actions against NYSUT members through the pension system. They help members navigate the system, especially when they are gravely ill and overwhelmed with the bureaucratic process. I experienced this first hand when I was able to assist one of our own BEES members who was stricken with a terminal illness.

I personally met with one of the teacher board members who became directly involved with an individual and ensured that his family received almost 1 million dollars after he passed away. Additionally, any time an issue comes before the board that would impact member benefits, at least one elected teacher member must agree to it before it can become effective. These three teachers work for us to make sure that our benefits continue to improve and that we constantly strive to move forward.

With that said, I would like to address the facts pertaining to the creation of a Tier 5. There have been many rumors going around about how this tier will impact everybody. After meeting with one of the TRS Board members, here are the facts.

Indirectly, this would hurt us all, but the members who will be harmed the most will be new members hired under a Tier 5. They would have to contribute to their retirement for their entire career and they could not retire until the age of 62 without penalty. So, in essence, somebody who starts working at the age of 21 would have to work 41 years if they want to retire without taking a penalty. Let's face it; we work very hard and we should be able to retire without having to be penalized for that hard work.

You may wonder then; how does this impact me? Well, it's very simple. If a Tier 5 were to go into effect, NYSUT and the TRS Board will focus all of their efforts on resolving the inequities pertaining to that tier. These inequities will be the worst ever and, because of that, other problems won't be readily addressed.

Tier 5 retirement rules will not apply to members of Tiers 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Breaking News

On December 2nd the New York Legislature has approved a Tier 5 to start in January 2010. They also included a short term 25-55 option and a health benefits stipulation for retirees. Go to BEESBEACON.org for the latest information.

The creation of a Tier 5 will affect other items that impact our members, such as giving credit to those members who paid into the system for over 10 years. This applies to many of our members and we have to continue to focus our efforts on obtaining what's right for these members.

**The governor has already negotiated a Tier 5 for civil service state workers
and that, in itself, is not good.**

We will look like the bad guys for not cooperating during these tough economic times and we will be perceived negatively in the media once again for not helping the state get out of debt. Politics as usual in Albany! Speaking of Albany, BOCES Lobbying Day is on February 23rd. I need about 15-20 BEES members to join me in Albany to lobby our state representatives on a variety of BOCES related issues. If you are interested in attending, e-mail me at raystenberg@hotmail.com or call me at 878-6084 and I will put you on the list. If you go, you will be given a professional day and you will be provided with breakfast and lunch. Any member from either the yellow or blue contract is eligible to attend.

Some good news. The retirement system reported to us that they are strong and stable. In the last quarter, they have earned over 2 billion dollars in dividends which has resulted in assets of just over 70 billion dollars. It is currently one of the best performing pension systems in the entire country.

With the holidays approaching we must reflect on what's most important our health and our families. Take some time to exercise, eat healthy (I'll be the first to admit, I don't always practice what I preach), and spend some quality time with the family. Life is short and we must appreciate what we have. Think about the millions of people throughout the world who do not have a fraction of what we have. We really shouldn't complain.

Happy holidays to you and your families.

Let your elected officials know what you think.

You can send a free fax to them at:

www.NYSUT.org at the Legislative Action Center



Thanksgiving has come and gone and winter recess will soon be here. I'd like to wish you all a very happy holiday season and a joyous new year.

Retirement/Investment Seminar

I hope the members who attended the investment/retirement seminar conducted by The Legend Group got as much out of it as I think they did. I thought Dave Daily, a former trustee of the NYSTRS Board, did an excellent job describing the retirement benefits we are entitled to and how to access them. He discussed how important it is to read over your Benefit Profile, make sure that the information in it is accurate, and correct any errors before you retire. I would suggest that you go one step further and visit your retirement system's website. Both retirement systems have secure areas that allow you to keep track of your personal retirement system information.

Andrew Buttleman and Russel Sands did a great job presenting ideas on ways you should be saving and investing for your retirement. They explained how you need a multi-faceted approach to retirement planning. Your retirement plan should include more than just your NYS retirement system benefits and Social Security. It should include an individual retirement plan such as a 403B, or Roth 403B/403conversion, and a 457 plan.

There were two words that were used during the presentation which really stuck with me. They are longevity and inflation. Longevity, because it describes how we are living longer into our retirement. Not only will the average retirement be longer than our parents and grandparents, but it will probably be more active. Inflation, because the COLA (cost of living adjustment) our pension benefits receive will not come close to keeping up with inflation. Together they lead to the conclusion that if you want to retire and live the life style you're accustomed to you need to have a plan.

The New York State Teachers' Retirement System is at www.nystrs.org and the New York State Employees' Retirement System is at <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/>. If you do not have internet access the phone numbers are: NYSTRS 1-800-348-7298, NYSERS 1-866-805-0990.

Dependent College Student

Do not forget to submit the dependent college student affidavits for the spring semester. To continue the health and dental insurance of your college dependent you must submit both forms every semester.

Remember, as in everything that's important – **KEEP COPIES OF EVERYTHING**

I can be reached at Milliken Technical Center, 244-5858 or at beesvpcb@optonline.net



Area V.P. Para Educators

Gail Reissman

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the 2009 BOCES Award recipients. Rita Dwyer, who is the 2009 Para educator of the Year, has been employed by BOCES for more than 20 years and currently works at Premm. It is an honor well deserved!

The same day that we honored BOCES Award recipients, we also celebrated School Related Professional Day. Thank you to those who went above and beyond to help us celebrate our profession and make our day special.

FYI – if you haven't already done so please sign up for your E-mail account. Information from Human Resources and building administrators will be sent via E-mail as part of ESBOCES effort to go green. It is your responsibility to check your E-mail daily.

I wish everyone a relaxing holiday with family and friends.

In Solidarity,
Gail
Sayville Academic Center



The Grievance Corner: Wayne Kubacki

As we march forward through another year filled with change and uncertainty, and since there are no grievances to report on, I would like to take this opportunity to tell you about an event that I recently attended.

On October 19th I had the privilege of representing the BEES at a rally in support of one of our sister locals out in Sag Harbor. The teachers in Sag Harbor have been working without a contract for two years. Over 700 members from locals all across Suffolk county answered the call. I was honored to be counted among them on your behalf.

Their superintendent and board of education have taken a "give us something back and then we'll talk" attitude. Brothers and sisters, that is not negotiating, that is dictating. The teachers in Sag Harbor are in dire straits at this point because there is no movement at all. And there doesn't appear to be any light at the end of their tunnel.

As we prepare to celebrate the holidays let us remember what we all as members of the BEES have. A great deal of work went into securing the blue and the yellow contracts and the benefits that we are so fortunate to have, I fear that the next time around it won't be so easy.

Until next time, Have a safe and restful winter break and come back in January rested and refreshed.



It is hard to believe that Thanksgiving and the holiday season are already here. It often feels that this is the most hectic time of the year. In addition to our family commitments, professionally we deal with report cards, quarterly goals and objectives, CSEs, new Transition Planning Initiatives, faculty meetings, professional development, teaching and caring for our students as well as...well, you know the drill. When things are at their craziest, I like to take a few moments to reflect on the many things I have to be grateful for in my life.

Family and friends, a profession I love, a steady paycheck in this tough economy, the opportunity to work with some of the best and most caring people in education and a chance to make a difference in the life of some of our students. I hope that this year all of you find the time to take a few moments to be grateful for the things in your life and to extend some help to those less fortunate.

We enter the new year with our component districts under increasing financial pressure. Governor Paterson has proposed a \$686 million cut in K-12 school aid in the current school year. The last time lawmakers cut funding in the middle of the school year was in 1991. Special Education has already been impacted with decreasing student enrollment and this atmosphere can influence the perception to pull back additional students from our programs or to delay or even deny sending those students to us.

NYSUT and BEES are using all of their influence to push back against these cuts and we are urging all of our members, family and friends to contact their state lawmakers and add their voice to ours. That being said it 's more important than ever to keep to a spirit of solidarity, support your union brothers and sisters and stay positive.

Just a few Special Education FYI's. Everyone should be aware of the 2010 Special Education Summer Program dates. The program will run from Tuesday July 6, 2010 to Friday August 13, 2010. Attendance will, as usual, be an important criteria to determine summer employment. Speaking of attendance, the sick bank may only be accessed by members of the sick bank and only after all sick days are exhausted and 20 consecutive absences. Membership is voluntary. If you are unsure of your membership status contact your building rep.

Be aware that if you have exhausted all of your sick days the Agency has the option to withhold direct deposit.

Finally, I encourage all members to follow the chain of command and bring any concerns to their building reps IN A TIMELY MANNER. Some issues are time critical and we may have a limited time to respond to certain conditions or situations. If needed, your building rep will contact me and I will take it from there. You also have the guidance and assistance when needed from Thelma and Pat who I have seen already do more work than any six people combined.

I hope your holidays are filled with peace, hope and love.

Guidelines B.E.E.S. Sunshine

Sunshine in the form of flowers/plant will be sent in the event of sickness or in the event of a death. Members who are out sick a minimum of ten consecutive school days, whether hospitalized or not will be eligible. A member's family will be sent sunshine in the event of a member's death. Members who experience the loss of a parent, child, or spouse will also be eligible.

Process to have sunshine sent

Please contact your appropriate building representative as soon as you believe the guidelines have been met for a member to be sent a sunshine item. The building representative will contact Rod Diamant either via email @ Roddiamant@aol.com, or call him at 369-8100. Building reps should have the following information prepared: Members name, address, home phone, and reason for the sunshine item to be sent. Also, if there is any special circumstance for a specific form of sunshine. (plant)

They will be called in immediately and are usually sent by the florist by the next day.



THE 10 DEMANDMENTS OF BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT by Bob Love

About a month ago I attended the 37th Annual NYSUT BOCES Leadership Conference. I would like to share with you a short list. Most veterans have heard these before, but it is good to read them again and reflect on this sage advice.

THE 10 DEMANDMENTS OF BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

from the "Managing Student Behavior: Best Practices in BOCES" workshop.

Always treat youngsters with respect and preserve their dignity.

Always do what is in the students' best interest.

Seek solutions, not blame.

Model tolerant, patient, dignified, and respectful behavior.

Use the least intrusive intervention possible.

Connect with your students and build strong personal bonds with them.

Instill hope for success (otherwise there is no reason for kids to behave in your class)

NEVER do anything disrespectful, illegal, immoral, ineffective, bad for health/safety, or you wouldn't want done to you.

NEVER give up on a student. Be perturbed with the actions of a student, but keep believing in his/her ability to change for the better.

CATCH KIDS BEING GOOD ...A LOT!!

NYSUT Member Discounts

You might be familiar with the discounts BEES members have for insurance and legal services. You can access your personal plans at <http://www.nysut.org>

NYSUT members can also find numerous discounts for goods and services. Here are some of the discount programs detailed at the NYSUT site.

EPIC Hearing Service Plan

Save up to 50% on testing, diagnostics and batteries. Save between 35% and 65% on name-brand hearing aids and products.

Powell's Books

Powell's Books offers e-books, audio books, DVDs, gift cards and souvenirs. What is unique about Powell's is that you can sell your used books to them.

Bose

Bose® provides special pricing to NYSUT members on its consumer products.

OfficeMax Retail Connect Program

Save from 10% to 40% off retail prices.

Dell Computers

Members can receive 7% discounts on most products from Dell Computers. Discount applies when using the link from the NYSUT Member Benefits Web site.

Barnes & Noble.com Online Bookstore

NYSUT members can save up to 40% off at the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust Barnes & Noble customized Online Bookstore

Philips Lifeline

Philips Lifeline is an easy-to-use personal response service that ensures adults living alone get quick assistance whenever it is needed.

Working Advantage

Through Working Advantage, you can get discount tickets for movie theaters, movie rentals, theme parks, online shopping, Broadway, museums, special family events and more.

Car & Truck Rental Discounts

Alamo, Avis, Budget and Hertz discount their passenger car rental rates for NYSUT members. Budget also has a discount for truck rentals

Six Flags Discounts

Discounted admissions to participating Six Flags theme parks are available.

The Buyer's Edge

This service provides discounts on a variety of consumer goods.

Heat USA

This program provides members with discounts on heating oil.

We wish all of our membership and their families,
UPSE, the Administrative and Supervisory Unit,
CSEA DP middle management, CSEA unit 8768-01, CSEA #3, our
BOCES Board members, and Administrative Council
members a healthy and happy holiday season.



Let us not forget the men and woman who are serving our country
in the Armed Forces this holiday season and keep them in our
thoughts as well.

<http://www.letssaythanks.com>

BEES

631) 475-4704

Email:BeesHivePres@aol.com

BEES EXECUTIVE BOARD

President.....Thelma Shaw
Executive Vice President ... Pat Copertino
Treasurer..... Michelle Tinter
First Vice President..... Ray Stenberg
Membership Secretary..... Marje Strawbridge
Recording Secretary.....Linda Bufalo
Benefits Officer.....Bob Love

Area Vice Presidents

Career Ed..... Fran Nilsen
Itinerants.....Rachele Always
Para Educators.....Gail Reissman
SAS.....Lisa Reilly
Special Education.....Jim Beck
Special Career Ed.....Joseph Postiglione

Retiree Chairperson.....Mary Armbruster
BEACON Editor.....Dr. Tom Rosati
Grievance Officer.....Wayne Kubacki
Social Coordinator.....Rod Diamant
Office Secretary.....Linda Cardone

THE BEACON

NYSUT-New York Teacher
Journalism Competition

*Winner of four 2009 awards
and for the second year in a row*

NYSUT WEBSITE of the YEAR
www.BEESBEACON.org

The BEACON is the official publication of
the BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk,
First Supervisory District.
Union Local 3037

Proud members of NYSUT, AFT and AFL-CIO

The BEACON is published 5 times a year.

The local is responsible for
all contents and articles
Notes, comments and suggestions
can be emailed
to BeesBeacon@aol.com,
or interoffice to
Tom Rosati at the
Premm Learning Center

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk
Union Local 3037
440 Waverly Ave.
Building 4, Suite 12
Patchogue, NY,11772