



FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE IN THE WEST TO THE LIGHTHOUSE IN THE EAST

THE BEACON

BOCES EDUCATORS OF EASTERN SUFFOLK, UNION LOCAL 3037

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

THELMA SHAW



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Welcome to the year 2008.

I hope that everyone had a restful and wonderful holiday vacation.

This is an election year for Executive Board officers and delegates. It is difficult to believe that two years have gone by and once again we are in the position to elect the people who will be **YOUR** voice for the next two years. It is your responsibility and your duty as active dues paying members to participate in these elections. Your vote is your voice in expressing your opinion regarding union leadership. Mary Harris has been appointed to the position of Chairperson of the Election Committee. Mary works at the William Floyd Learning Center and has been the Chairperson of this committee three times before. She does an incredible job and I ask that you read her article for more specific details.

The Election Committee is responsible for overseeing the petition validation, ballot design, mailing of ballots, certifying the ballots returned and finally, counting the ballots returned. Your ballot will be mailed to your home in early March via the United States Postal Service. It is **EXTREMELY CRUCIAL** that the union has your home mailing address. Ballots will not be given out via interoffice mail or hand delivered. Please take the time to vote. Remember you must supply your own stamp. This is a small investment to make for the future of this union

AS A UNION, WE DO NOT ENDORSE ANY OF THE CANDIDATES

This BEACON includes a pull out section that contains the bios of candidates running. Read them and learn about the candidate who is running for a particular office. Candidates who are seeking election will have an opportunity to campaign. This must be scheduled for after school hours at the buildings/campuses. In addition, if a candidate chooses to put out a flyer introducing themselves and giving their qualifications, this flyer **MUST NOT** be placed in BOCES staff mailboxes. This is a violation of Eastern Suffolk BOCES board policy. In addition, do not ask the building representative or officer in your building/campus to hand out these flyers. It is the candidate's responsibility to get the flyers to the membership. If you have any further questions about the procedure and requirements to run, please contact Mary Harris or check out the "BEES" constitution. Good luck to all of the candidates.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT *(continued)*

In the December BEACON I urged all our members to join Vote Cope so that we may continue to help with the proposed changes to the NCLB renewal. I am ecstatic to report that the reauthorization/renewal of NCLB will probably not occur this year. This is due to the efforts by NYSUT and its national affiliates to slow down the process. This is OUR Vote Cope money at work! The NCLB law expired at the end of September 2007. It has an automatic one year extension provision that prevents programs from terminating.

This delay is a benefit to all of our membership. Hopefully this delay will allow lawmakers to correct the problematic provisions that exist and correct the onerous parts of the NCLB law. Please don't allow this to lull you into a false sense of security. HOUSSE certification for "highly qualified" teachers continues to be under fire and we must make sure that the availability of HOUSSE for our membership stays in place. NYSUT Vice President Maria Neira assures members that "We will continue to work for the changes our members need and oppose any legislation that does not include needed changes." NYSUT members from across the state sent thousands of faxes urging Congress not to rush the NCLB reauthorization, but to take the time to "GET IT RIGHT."

In addition to NYSUT being on top of the NCLB legislation, they have also been proactive in the fight to create fair and equitable rules for the inception of the Chapter 57 Regents law that requires the Regents adopt rules for the tenure determination process. The process must include:

Evaluation of the extent to which the teacher successfully utilized analysis of available student performance data and other relevant information when providing instruction.

Peer review by other teachers as far as practicable.

Assessment of the teacher's performance by the teacher's building principal or other building administrator in charge of the program.

The Regents will be working with NYSUT to seek an amendment to the effective date of the law to clarify that the new process applies to candidates hired on or after July 1, 2008. NYSUT and your local union believe that this change is needed to ensure the rules DO NOT change for our members who are currently in the tenure track. The Regents have notified districts that they should not change their tenure determination process until the rules are adopted by the Regents which should occur in May or June 2008. You can be sure that your union is keeping abreast of these changes and continues to advocate for our tenure track teachers. As information becomes available, we will keep you informed.

As of October 2007, changes in state law for Mandated Reporters who suspect a child is being abused outside of the educational setting went into effect. NYSUT is asking local leaders to let their membership know of these changes. Mandated reporters of child abuse must now DIRECTLY report their suspicions to the Statewide Central Register for Child Abuse and Maltreatment, rather than rely on a third party. This law change clarifies murky requirements that had been up till this point the interpretation of whoever was involved.

The new law clarifies that mandated reporters include teachers, guidance counselors, psychologists, social workers, school nurses, administrators and other school personnel that are required to hold teacher licenses or certificates. The previous law did not specify what employees were included.

The new law makes it clear that our members who make a child abuse report in good faith cannot be retaliated against. A principal cannot demand that prior approval is necessary before a report of suspected child abuse or maltreatment is filed.

Mandated reporters must report their suspicions by personally calling the Statewide Central Register at (800) 635-1522. Then the mandated reporter should IMMEDIATELY notify the person in charge at their building. Telephone reports must be followed by a written report on the official form, faxed within 48 hours. The building supervisor is responsible for all subsequent processing. We are working closely with administration to lay out some guidelines for staff to follow. As those of you who have been involved in these situations are aware, they are often, if not always, difficult for staff, students and families alike.

A procedure that lays out how the communication amongst the staff and the supervisor will occur is important. The follow-up in these cases, EXTREME CONFIDENTIALITY in these cases and the "fall out" that often results can considerably alter the impact of such a report on the student's situation. The guidelines will be shared with our membership so that you are clear about your responsibilities within the law. You can find further information posted on the www.nysut.org site and a general guide for mandated reporters, including warning signs at www.ocfs.state.ny.us/.

As in previous years, the Long Island Teachers Benevolent Fund will be awarding scholarships to graduating seniors whose parents are members and who are high school seniors, graduating this year and who will be attending a post secondary institution on a full time basis. We were fortunate last year to have 3 winners. I expect the applications by the end of January. Please remember that I must sign the application after it is filled out. For an application, please e-mail me at Beeshivepres@aol.com. I will interoffice an application to you once I receive them. (remember to include your bldg. site)

Your negotiation team for the teacher's contract met at the union office on January 7th and January 13th to go over guidelines, strategies and to prepare a proposal for our first combined negotiation meeting with BOCES. Our first negotiations meeting is scheduled for March. We will be including our Labor Relations Specialist on our team. William Oquendo is now our LRS replacing Vinny Lyons. William was the local president for the Amityville Teachers' Association for 6 years. Dom, Pat and I have had the opportunity to meet with him and discuss our needs and what our expectations of him will be. William is excited about being our LRS and looks forward to being part of the BEES team. Just wait till he hears some of our unique and interesting questions!

After considerable thought and soul searching, I have made the choice to run again for the office of president. These past two years have been interesting, educational, exhausting and at times fun. I have had the opportunity to work with an executive board that has gone all out in their dedication to this membership. I have gotten to know almost all of the members on our building rep. council. These representatives also give 110% of themselves to our membership. I am proud to be associated with all of the officers and representatives that make up our team. Those of you who know me, recognize the commitment and passion that I have for this union. I will continue to uphold the standards that I have exhibited these past two years.

Thank you for your support.



EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT'S REPORT Pat Copertino & Dominic Savio



Change.....an experience sometimes feared and others times embraced. Usually when changes are imminent, questions are raised and even suspicions grow. We feel most comfortable with what we have known; less sure about the events to come. With chatter about who is retiring, program moves, and upcoming elections, comfort zones may be slightly challenged.

It is election time for the BEES Executive Board in March and will be for the Building Representatives in September. Two long standing familiar names will not be present on the ballot this time around. **Richard Debetta**, Area Vice President for Special Career Education, indicated in his last article that he will not be running for another term on the board. A special thanks to Rich for his many years of dedication to the BEES and all of the members. He has always been a strong advocate for his area and an endless source of information for all of us. His work is so greatly appreciated.

The other familiar name that will be missing on the ballot is my current Co-Executive Vice President and mentor, **Dominic Savio**. The Beacon is not a large enough publication to express the true gratitude I personally have or that of the E-Board for the service Dominic has given. He understands the mission of being one union of diverse members and advocated for each and everyone. He stands tall as one of your most powerful and passionate supporters at Central SDM, Pro Practice and dozens of commitments that come with this title, not to mention the hundreds of hours he spent 1-1 or with administrators assisting individuals. He always has our backs. Dominic has honorably earned the respect of colleagues and BOCES administrators, not hesitating to bring up touchy subjects or, on the flip side, crack a joke with the Chief Operation Officer. With much appreciation we thank you for your many years of service as a rep., E-Board member and delegate.

Your presence will be greatly missed, but we know your support and friendship are only a phone call away. Although Mr. Savio's Executive VP term ends June 30th, he will be a part of the BOCES family through his retirement in 2009.

Two other items that fall under the title of **Change** will be noticed on the BEES election ballot sent to you in early March. The first one is the reduction in the number of Executive Vice Presidents from 2 to 1. The option exists in our constitution and is reviewed each election cycle. The history behind having two Executive VPs began when BOCES I and II merged, permitting complete representation from both BOCES. The Executive VP position, as with all other Board positions, except specific Areas VPs, can be any of the 1480 members who have served a complete term as a representative, delegate or Appointee covered by either contract. With that said, they are also responsible to represent each and everyone served by both contracts.

The final topic of change found on the ballot requires membership approval. All amendments or revisions to the constitution no matter how big or small must be presented to all members and voted on. The constitution (along with Robert's Rules, The NYSUT Constitution and State Law) govern how we operate as an association. You might be saying, "Didn't we already vote on amendments?" Yes, you did, and thank you.

We make an effort to work closely with what governs us, and if something is not in your best interest we have an obligation to iron out the kinks, improve the language and recognize safeguards that members would want. For example, the current constitution without the proposed amendment changes could conceivably allow for a negotiation team to be made up almost entirely of members not in that contract. The proposed amendment would insure that the majority of the team be of their respective contract. That is just one example. The most recent Constitution Committee was made up of para professionals, teachers, itinerants, CTE, board and non-board members.

It is a *process*, and, those of us who have worked on this tedious process have persevered. By design, constitutional change is not easy, but it is necessary to serve our members best. Understanding that the US Constitution has been amended more than 26 times in the last 200 years reinforces that it is a normal and necessary procedure. With every process there are steps. After committee work there was E-Board discussion and approval, then it was sent to the 46 member Representative Council (your building reps) for discussion and approval (1/15/08). Final copies are being compiled and will be available for your review prior to the election.

Through the steps of this process, confidentiality was kept, not because of "hidden agendas," but to avoid sharing incomplete information, and all the fallout and misunderstanding that goes with that. This Executive Board strives to put forth accurate information that best serves all of our members. The amendments were presented to the Rep Council, and after discussion, were accepted unanimously. These changes I believe will serve YOU, our membership best. Please vote to pass the constitutional amendments on your March ballot. If you have any questions or concerns do not hesitate to e-mail me at patcop@optonline.net and leave your telephone # if you prefer a conversation.

The essence of *Change*
 "When patterns are broken, new worlds emerge." by Tuli Kupferberg

CONGRATULATIONS

The following members have received mini grants from MESTRACT. It is a credit to these members receiving these awards. It continues to prove that our membership goes over and above in their dedication. They strive towards excellence in education for the students in their classrooms.

Award winners will display their projects at the Mini Grant Showcase and Reception scheduled for May 21, 2008 at the East Wind in Wading River.

Please congratulate all of these staff members on their accomplishments.

Christine Aylmer	Patrice Beach	Lillian Caban	Margaret Cannizzaro	
Peter Calvello	Paul Ceschini	Denise D'Onofrio-Zizzo	Shannon Dickerson	
Greg Efimetz	Donna Fort-Brennan	Kimberly Fletcher	Michael Frankson	
Margaret Frankman	Catherine Gilmore	Arlene Greene	Catherine Harris	
Amy Hope	Jayne Kaht	Ann Katsaros	Claire Kessler	Matt Kozak
Gayle Lambert	Kim Leonard	Roberta Leonard	Mildred Lopez	
Jodi Mazer	Kathleen Martin	Madeline Match	Jeannine McKenna	
Kathy McNeill	Danielle Miller	Ann Marie O'Brien	Kerri Oman	
Virginia Rosenberg	Robert Schindler	Victoria Schwartz	Wendy Shiffman	
Rich Simon	James Spollen	Anne Marie Strauss		



Welcome to 2008! Before you know it, we'll be celebrating at the BEES Retirement Honorarium.

Retirement is getting closer and closer for many of us. For new members, you'll see how fast it goes. Speaking of retirement, I would like to give you Part 2 of my report from the last NYSTRS conference that I attended. As you know, the state of our retirement system is strong with assets of almost 105 billion dollars. This makes our retirement system one of the most successful in the United States. But be aware, defined-benefit pension plans such as ours are on the "endangered list" in a major way. This will require the on-going proactive support and involvement of our members in the protection of our current pension system.

Some key points supporting defined-benefit pensions for public employees

- * Defined-benefit plans provide us with a guaranteed, predictable stream of retirement income, whereas defined-contribution plans shift all of the risks associated with saving for retirement on the shoulders of the employees.**
- * Defined-benefit plans are more certain. One cannot outlive the benefit and it is not vulnerable to a fluctuating stock market. In a defined-contribution plan, only the contributions are defined, the benefit is not. Also, the member may outlive the account balance.**
- * Despite many misconstrued beliefs, public pensions are not "free rides." In fact, worker contributions and investment earnings pay for 75% of our pension benefits.**
- * Our contributions and investments are in the hands of true financial experts, resulting in returns that meet or exceed industry benchmarks. Defined-contribution plans shift the burden of investment decisions to individual members, which statistically proves to pay out far lower returns.**

Supplemental defined-contribution plans such as 403B's can and do play an important role in enhancing the security of our retirement, and it is certainly recommended that our members contribute into such voluntary plans. However, as a primary retirement plan, defined-contribution plans lack many of the features important to a stable retirement.

Although there is no immediate danger, we (especially young members) need to keep a close eye on this rapidly changing climate. NYSTRS is one of eight defined-benefit systems left in New York. It would take a constitutional convention to change our current system. As difficult as it is, there is a growing contingency looking for ways to get OUR MONEY.

I continuously write about the importance of political action. Here is your chance to get involved politically by participating in our annual BOCES Lobbying Day. You will meet directly with our New York State Senators and Assemblypersons to discuss the issues which impact BOCES. On March 4th, we will be boarding a coach bus bright and early at Sherwood to head up to Albany. You will not be charged a day for attending this worthwhile event and you will be provided with food and beverages. We need 15 members from our union to go on this trip. Please contact me via e-mail at raystenberg@hotmail.com or call me at Eastport (878-6084) for further details.



I thought this month I would try to answer some frequently asked questions.

How can I access the sick bank?

In order to be eligible to access the sick bank you must be a member. Any Para-Educator/Sign Language Interpreter may join by contributing one sick day. Anyone using the Sick Leave Bank must first use whatever accrued sick days they have. Approved sick leave from the Bank will not begin coverage until the individual's accumulated sick leave is exhausted or the 21st working day which ever occurs later. All requests to access the Sick Bank must be made in writing and must include a written statement from the attending physician, estimated time the condition will last and the starting date of the absence. This request should be sent to Eileen Hayter, Human Resources, Hines Building. Please read the complete Sick Bank Leave Guidelines that starts on page 29 of our contract for more specific information.

How does seniority work?

We all have building seniority as well as Agency seniority. When an involuntary transfer or reassignment of a Para Educator is necessary from a facility or program, volunteers would first be sought. Then, based on your seniority number (not the date you came to that site), the least senior Para would transfer out. If it became necessary for the Agency to excess Para Educators it would be done starting with the least senior person agency wide. It is important to remember that seniority is adjusted for leaves of absence with out pay. Any time you are off payroll you are not accruing days towards your seniority.

Do I lose my Personal Days if I don't use them?

No, any unused Personal days rollover and convert to sick days the following year.

Do I have to pay when my class goes on a field trip?

No. We have a long standing Professional Practice Agreement that says if we are required to attend a field trip during the school year **or part of our summer school assignment** we will be reimbursed for all related expenses.

There is a Purchase Requisition Form, Reimbursement for Staff Attending Trip. This form needs to be filled out well in advance, usually by the person organizing the trip and given to the Administrator. When a receipt is required make sure you always get **individual receipts**.

As you know this is an election year and I have decided to again seek the office of Area Vice President for Para Educators/Sign Language Interpreters. I want to thank you for all the support and understanding you have given me over the last 2 years. Without you I couldn't have done it.

In Solidarity, Gail

Previous BEACONS and additional member information can be found on our website www.BEESBEACON.org

Executive Board Candidates

The Election Committee will be mailing a ballot to all current members, at their last known address. Please be sure that the BEES Office has your current information. Ballots will be mailed the week of February 25, 2008. Return your ballot in the envelope provided, postmarked **NO LATER than March 15, 2008**. Invest in your professional future by putting a First Class stamp on the return envelope. Please be a part of that future by casting your vote.

All candidates for election were invited to submit a short biography.
The election slate can be found at the end of these bios.

<p style="text-align: center;">President</p> <p>Thelma Shaw (Incumbent)</p> <p>As I look back on the past two years and the significant changes that this union has been able to accomplish, I can't help but feel a sense of pride. I am grateful and appreciative of the support and commitment I have received from our membership, Executive Board and Building Rep. Council. I have made every effort to be available to our membership each and every day of the week at any hour. The passion that I have for this union fuels the fire that drives me and earned me the nickname the "energizer bunny".</p> <p>I have created union archives from information that "someone knew", created informational packets of guidelines and criteria for our future Executive Board officers and our building representatives. I have brought our union files and records into the 21st century. My commitment and dedication are apparent.</p> <p>I would be honored and consider it a privilege if I am elected and given once again the opportunity to be President of the "BEES" for a 2nd term.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Treasurer</p> <p>John J. Olsen Jr. (Incumbent)</p> <p>Work Experience: Employed by ES BOCES since 1979 as P.E. Teacher, Teacher Coordinator, Elementary and Jr. High Classroom Teachers, Summer Coordinator, and Teacher's Assistant.</p> <p>Experience as Your BEES Treasurer, 6 years has included, but not limited to the following: Ethically managed ¾ million dollar budget on your behalf Initiated the elimination of membership list <i>inaccuracies</i> to reduce NYSUT/AFT dues overpayment Organized transparent accounting practices and generate monthly reports Worked closely with the independent accountant and received his public praise for accuracy and organization Successfully underwent 3 major Audits with marks of excellence Handle the Benevolent Fund, Yearly Budget, VoteCope Account, payroll, salary schedules, NYSUT requirements, dues, etc...</p> <p>Additional Union Participation: Budget Committee, AFT and NYSUT Delegate, Elementary Divisional SDM, Past Building Rep In addition I represented the constituency at ED 22 Meetings, BOCES Leadership, NYSUT RA and the AFT Convention.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Executive Vice President</p> <p>Patricia R. Copertino (Incumbent)</p> <p>Current Assignment: Curriculum Teacher, SLC/WFLC/Stony Brook/ITP</p> <p>Work Experience: 27 years as an educator, 17 at ES BOCES, 20 in the classroom. Positions included Elementary (ED, Mixed Ability), Tourettes Program, High School Resource and Self-Contained, Summer Coordinator/Supervisor, SETRC Trainer, District Consultant and Presenter</p> <p>Related Professional Experience: Career-long involvement in committees and activities that promote school improvement, curriculum development, behavior management, leadership and excellent in teaching.</p> <p>Union Participation: Executive Vice President, Budget Committee Chairperson, Building Representative, Building Rep. Trainer, AFT and NYSUT Delegate, Elementary Divisional SDM, Central SDM, Special Education Task Force, Teacher Pro Practice Committee, Constitution Committee, Negotiations Committee, Negotiations Team as well as representing the constituents at ED 22 Meetings, NYSUT Representative Assembly, The AFT Convention and BOCES Leadership Conferences</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Treasurer</p> <p>Michelle Tinter</p> <p>I have worked as a Para-Educator at Westhampton Beach Learning Center for the past 7 years, as well as a Para-Union Representative for the past 3 years. My qualifications for office are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Certified Katherine Gibbs graduate.* Attended N.Y. State Institute of Finance.* Employed by a Fortune 500 company on Wall Street as an Executive Assistant for the Foreign Investments Department for 7 years.* Employed 2 years as a liaison for an insurance agency maintaining accounts payable and receivables.* Consistently attend all Union Representative Council and Para-Educator Council meetings.* Member of the Para-Educator Professional Practices Committee.* Member of the building Health and Safety Committee.* Member of the building Shared Decision Making.* Attended NYSUT SRP Conference in Albany. <p>I am a meticulous, conscientious and dedicated individual who would be honored to serve on your Executive Board as Treasurer.</p>

First Vice President

Ray Stenberg (Incumbent)

During the last two years, I have been honored to serve on an Executive Board comprised of a group of ladies and gentlemen who I consider to be "true professionals". Having a cohesive and intact Executive Board is a crucial component of a strong union. At BOCES, I currently am a member of the AFG Planning Team and the departmental SDM for special education.

In Albany, I represent you as a member of the Committee of 100 and as a delegate to the New York State Teacher's Retirement System. I am also a NYSUT and AFT delegate working on issues that affect public education in general.

I would appreciate your support as I seek re-election.

Recording Secretary

Annick Brundieck

I have been a para educator for BOCES for seventeen years. I have worked in several different buildings, including Terryville, Forest Brook, Premm, Sylvan ITP, but I am currently at the North Country Learning Center.

My experiences include being a union representative and being on SDM, as well as serving on several committees. Some of the committees that I have worked on are the technology committee, the sub-committee for negotiations, and the moves committee. I plan on working for several more years and it would be my privilege to serve on the Executive Board.

Recording Secretary

Linda Bufalo

Presently, I am a teacher aide at the Westhampton Beach Learning Center and have been an employee of ESBOCES at that site for the past 13 years.

I have attended Suffolk Comm. College as an Early Childhood Education major which has strengthened my abilities in the classroom. As a Building Representative for Para-Educators the past 5 years, I have had many experiences to enhance my knowledge of the union, and the structure of ESBOCES. Those experiences include consistent participation and/or membership to the following:

- * Representative Council and Para-Educator union meetings
- * Building Shared Decision Making
- * Special Education Departmental Shared Decision Making
- * Para-Educator Professional Practices Committee
- * AFT PSRP (National Conferences)
- * NYSUT SRP (State Conferences)
- * Contract Negotiations Sub-Committee
- * Annual NYSUT workshops

I also currently hold the executive position of Recording Secretary for the Long Island Council Of Para-Professionals. LICOP is an organization supported by NYSUT, representing para-educator locals across Suffolk County. I look forward to serving *our* membership as Recording Secretary for the BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk.

Recording Secretary

Tom Rosati

In my 20 years at BOCES I've spent quality time at Cordello, the "Annex" for BOCES 1, Forest Brook, North Country, Sayville, and currently at Premm. I'm a teacher of speech but have had stints as a classroom teacher, district based teacher, itinerant, curriculum coordinator, mentor, in-service instructor, graduate professor, summer supervisor, and memorial gardener.

I'm a life long learner finishing my doctorate this spring, which is my sixth degree. Along with my state certifications I'm nationally certified as an assistive technology provider and received an Albert Shanker grant for National Board of Professional Teaching Standards accreditation.

During my last two years as a member of the executive board, I have learned a great deal about the needs and concerns of our members.

My Union activities have included:

- Three terms as building representative
- Updating the BEACON as the editor
- Developing our website www.BEESBEACON.org
- Upgrading union technology systems
- Lobby Days

Strengthening the BEES "hive"

Knowledge is Power, Communication Key.

Diverse Locations, United as WE

Para or Teacher, Yellow or Blue

One Union focused on working for YOU

Membership Secretary

Marje Strawbridge (Incumbent)

This is my 18th year with Boces; right now I am working at WHB@Aquebogue. I was a Para Representative for five years, Social Chair for two years, and Membership Secretary for the past two. Through the years I have always tried to get involved and have been an active member of our union.

I have been a delegate, attended the ED meetings, and gone to the NYSUT RA and represented you. My past and present experience and my willingness to serve you will hopefully get me your vote as Membership Secretary and Delegate. Thank you and please remember to vote.

Benefits Officer

Bob Love (Incumbent)

Yes, "it benefits you to know." I'm running again for Contractual Benefits Officer. I've been a BOCES employee for over 20 years.

I've been in the classroom as an;

- Academic teacher
- Vocational teacher
- Paraprofessional

CTE Academic teacher

and

- Building Representative
- Area Vice President Current
- Contractual Benefits Officer

I currently sit on the Health and Safety Committee and the CTE Advisory Committee.

I have attended, on the behalf of the "BEES," annual NYSUT Health and Safety Conferences in Albany.

You have gotten to know me though the building representative council meetings, the "It Benefits You to Know" articles that I have written during the 4 years, and the retirement workshops I set up and conducted for both Blue and Yellow contract members. The many members who I have advised and given information to these last 4 years know the extent of my benefits knowledge and helpfulness. I look forward to another two years of helping our membership understand their Benefit Rights.

Benefits Officer

Lynn Patrissi

I began my employment with BOCES fifteen years ago as a Para, working with the multiply disabled population. I later became a teacher's assistant, working with both the Behavioral and ICP programs. I have been employed as a teacher since 2001.

I have been active in the union for the last few years. I am currently serving my third term as a building rep. I have worked on the Election Committee and as the Eastern Suffolk BOCES delegate to the NY State Teachers Retirement Convention for the last few years. Before entering the education field, I worked in the medical field as a scrub tech, EKG tech, and a biller for a private Radiology company. Raising a child with disabilities, I have firsthand knowledge of the complexity of the health care system.

Area V.P. for Career Education

Francis Nilsen. (Incumbent)

I will be running for my second term as your area VP for CTE. This is my 18th year working for BOCES. I started as a Teacher asst. in carpentry, 3 years. Then taught Drafting for 11 years and currently teach carpentry. All of my time I have been located @ BTC.

I am certified in both Carpentry and Drafting and have been tenured 3 times

Area Vice President for Special Education

Shelly Bernstein (Incumbent)

My biography hasn't changed much since I last wrote one for the February 2006 issue of the Beacon. I have been employed by BOCES as a special education teacher since 1980. From 1995 through 2004 I served as the building representative for the district based program, SETRC and staff at Sherwood. I serve on various committees including the Strategic Planning Council, Department SDM, the Agency Health and Safety Committee, the Special Education Task Force and the ASP Committee.

I have worked on the committee to amend our constitution and am part of our negotiating team. Since March of 2005 I have had the honor of serving as your area vice president and am once again asking for your support.

Area Vice President of Para-Educators

Gail Reissman (Incumbent)

I am seeking re election for Area V.P. for Para-Educators, a position I have held for 2 years. I am also running for NYSUT and AFT Delegate.

As Area VP I've had the honor to represent you on:

- Negotiating Team
- Central SDM
- Wellness Committee
- Health and Safety
- Para Pro-Practice
- BEES Budget Committee
- BEES Constitution Committee
- AFT and NYSUT Delegate
- Past BEES Recording Secretary
- Past Building Rep
- BOCES Leadership, AFT, NYSUT Conferences

I have worked as a Teachers Aide or Individual Aide since 1986, at Wing L.C., Terryville L.C. and for the last 15 years, Sayville L.C. I am also President of LICOP, an organization of Para leaders from Suffolk County.

Area Vice President of Itinerant Teachers

Rachele Alwais (Incumbent)

Many of you know me from the work I've done on your behalf in past years. I am running for another two year term. My position with ESB is Itinerant Teacher of Blind and Visually Impaired. I protect your rights by getting the facts, collecting data, conferring with E-Board members, participating in interviews for our specific areas and working with our NYSUT lawyer.

I attend Executive Board, Building Representative Council, Itinerant and the Special Education SDM and Local EAP meetings. Information is dispersed through articles in the Beacon, e-mails and specific group meetings as needed. Some of my recent generic projects include procuring a Representative for the Itinerants that are not attached to a BOCES Facility, clarifying and defending "UDO" issues, and travel concerns.

AVP for Special Career Education

Joseph Postiglione

I have been employed by the agency for 24 years, serving as the Islip Career Center building representative for the past four years. Before coming to Eastern Suffolk Boces I was the union representative for the Teacher Assistants at Western Suffolk Boces.

Over the past 24 years I have served on many committees including Participatory Management, Public Relations on the building and divisional level. Shared Decision Making as a teacher representative before becoming the union representative on the committee.

Currently I am involved with the Special Career Education Task Force, the building and divisional Public Relations committees and the Special Career Education Restructuring Committee. Over the years I have become known as a person who goes over and above the call of duty and is outspoken at times when it comes to the SCE program. I have built a relationship of respect and mutual cooperation with each administration at I.C.C. and I am regarded as a staff member with valuable opinions.

At this time I feel I am ready to take on the responsibility of Area Vice President for Special Career Education and ask for your support.

Election Slate 2008

President- Thelma Shaw (I)

Executive Vice-President- Pat Copertino (I)

First Vice President- Ray Stenberg (I)

Treasurer- John Olsen (I)

Michelle Tinter

Membership- Marje Strawbridge (I)

Recording Secretary- Annick Brundieck

Linda Bufalo

Tom Rosati

Benefits Officer- Bob Love (I)

Lynn Patrissi

Area Vice Presidents

Career Education- Fran Nilsen (I)

Itinerants- Rachele Alwais (I)

Para Educators- Gail Reissman (I)

Special Education- Shelly Bernstein (I)

Special Career Education- Joseph Postiglione

S.A.S.- Open

NYSUT Delegates

- Evelyn Bricka
- Linda Bufalo
- Bob Love
- John Olsen
- Gail Reissman
- Ray Stenberg
- Marje Strawbridge

AFT Delegates

- Evelyn Bricka
- Linda Bufalo
- Pat Copertino
- Bob Love
- John Olsen
- Gail Reissman
- Marje Strawbridge

WHAT'S GOING ON IN SPECIAL EDUCATION?

Shelly Bernstein



There are two main issues that I would like to address in this article: upcoming elections and constitutional amendments.

Regarding elections, I urge everyone to vote. In the past, I have sat on election committees and the number of ballots received back has been less than stellar. It doesn't matter if a position is contested or not. By casting your vote, you are letting the officers and delegates know that you support them. It probably takes less than five minutes of your time and only \$.41 to show your support. Members of the Executive Board work extremely hard and often very long hours. It would be such a positive statement if the entire membership recognized that fact and took a few minutes to vote. Don't ever think that your vote doesn't matter. Get some exercise not by jumping to conclusions, but by exercising your right to vote.

In late November and early December, a constitutional amendment committee met. Due to a change in our constitution that was mandated by NYSUT, the committee was formed to address the required change and to see if any other revisions were warranted. As nothing is ever perfect, the committee did recommend some other changes. These recommendations were brought to the Executive Board, discussed and approved. On January 15, the recommendations were presented to the Representative Council for their approval. After discussion, the Representative Council approved the recommended changes. For these changes to be finalized, approval by the general membership is required.

I will assume that by the time you read this that you will have already received a packet from your building representative that outlined the recommended changes. Any questions or concerns you had should have already been discussed with your representative. If you still have any remaining concerns or questions, please contact me. I would be more than happy to answer your questions or discuss any of the rationales used in writing the proposed changes. As a member of the Executive Board, as well as a member of the constitutional amendment committee, I support these changes 100% and would hope that you do, too.

The vote for these changes will appear on the same ballot as for the election of officers and delegates. Each individual change will not be listed separately. You must vote to either accept or reject the recommended changes in their entirety. The recommended changes will be labeled "January 15, 2008 Recommended Amendments/Revisions to the BEES Constitution."

One final thought - it's ASP time. I know the angst that causes for many of us, not to mention the additional work. I have no brilliant suggestions to make the tasks easier, but I would suggest that you start early, work with your colleagues so you truly create a complete profile of the student, do a little at a time and be thankful that we only have to do this once a year. Until next time...

AFT Scholarship and Grant for College and Continuing Education

The 2008 Robert G. Porter Scholars program for AFT members and their children are available.

Four **\$8,000. scholarships** are available to graduating high school seniors, and **\$1000. grants** are available for AFT members who are continuing their education. The application deadline is **March 31, 2008**. You can download the application at www.aft.org/aftplus/scholarships, or by clicking on the link at our website www.BEESBEACON.org.



I hope you all had a relaxing winter recess. It's that time again and I find it hard to believe that it has only been two years. I'm referring to the upcoming Executive Board elections. Let's get out there and vote. Heck you don't even really have to get out there, the ballot is mailed to you and you mail it back. While the process is simple I'm not saying it's easy. You need to do your research. Read the biographies in this issue of the Beacon. Ask questions about the candidates; ask the candidates questions, become informed. Don't think your vote is unimportant, it's important to me and to your Executive Board (current and future). We need every member to vote, so get out there and show some solidarity.

Not the Only One

I know you guys love reading my article, but I thought I'd let you know that I am not the only one writing about your benefits. NYSUT's paper New York Teacher has columns on Member Benefits, Teachers Retirement System, and back by popular demand the Employees Retirement System.

One More Time

But this time I want everyone who reads it to tell two friends, and have them tell two friends....

Copy it – Walk it – Punch it – Follow it

I'm talking about those important papers that Human Resources needs to process your requests. You know, stuff like payroll, benefits, retirement. Make sure they get your paperwork, follow up on the process and make sure you have a back-up copy of it.

Sick Leave Follow-up

After my article last month there have been several questions about how the sick bank works.

1. *If I find out I am going to be out a long time can I join the sick bank?*

Yes, you can join the sick bank any time. HOWEVER, if you join after the first two months of employment you will have to **wait one year** before being eligible to use it.

2. *How come I have to use my sick days up and then wait 20 days to use the sick bank?*

You don't. Any sick days you use would count as part of the 20 days. Let's say you have 20 days and you are out with a prolonged illness or injury. You would get paid for those 20 days and on the 21st day you could begin borrowing from the sick bank. If you only had 19 sick day you would not be paid for the 20th day out, but on the 21st day you could begin borrowing from the sick bank. If you have more than 20 sick days accumulated you must use them first before accessing the sick bank, and then you could begin borrowing from the sick bank.

3. *Why can't I use the sick bank a few days at a time?*

You can not use the sick bank like that because the contract language, which binds BOCES and the Union, says you can't. Approximately 12 years ago the guidelines were negotiated and first written into our contracts (Yellow and Blue). Since that time the contract language says, "Approved sick leave from the Bank will not begin coverage until the individual's accumulated sick leave is exhausted or the twenty-first working day, whichever occurs later."

4. *If I can use the sick bank when I'm sick for a long time won't it run out of days?*

No, there are two reasons why. First, you are only borrowing days from the sick leave bank. You have to pay them back – 30% of your accrued sick days at the beginning of each year. Second, you can only access the sick leave bank until you are eligible for disability benefits – approximately 90 days from your last day worked.

Note: The guidelines for membership, administration, and use of the sick bank are in your contract, please read it so you are aware of how to use this contractual benefit.

Retiree Health Insurance Bill

You know spring is close when you start hearing about the reauthorization of the retiree health insurance bill. The law expires on May 15, 2008. This reauthorization bill must be passed to extend the law that provides a moratorium that prohibits educational employers from diminishing health insurance benefits or contributions made on behalf of retirees and their dependents, unless there is a corresponding reduction in benefits for active employees (and thus subject to collective bargaining). In other words without this law employers could cut health insurance benefits for retirees at their whim.

http://www.nysut.org/cps/rde/xchg/nysut/hs.xsl/contactelectedofficials_9285.htm

More about Retiring with Health Insurance

If you are currently being covered by your spouse's health insurance, either because you have taken the health insurance sell-back waiver or because you are a paraeducator hired after July 1, 1992, and are retiring this year, you need to contact human resources two months before your retirement date and evaluate switching to health insurance coverage.

Once you are retired you can not pick up health insurance through BOCES. Should your spouse lose their health insurance or pass away and you do not have your own health insurance policy you will be with out coverage.

Your Retirement

Have you scheduled your retirement counseling? If you are within five years of retirement you should schedule a session by calling – 1-800-348-7298 ext 6270 if you are in the NYSTRS or – 1-866-805-0990 if you are in the NYSERS

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

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions for future issues you can contact me at beesvpcb@optonline.net. If you need to reach me concerning any personal benefits issues, you can email me or call me at Milliken Technical Center 244-5858.

ITINERANT REPORT**Rachele Always**

On January 29, at the Union office, an election will be held for the representative of itinerant teachers not attached to a BOCES Facility. A mailing went out to the teachers involved with an invitation to run for this position. The result of the election will be reported in my next Beacon article.

The mileage rate as of January 1, 2008 for travel reimbursement will increase from \$.485 to \$.505 per mile. Did you know? If an Itinerant Teacher travels to one building each day, but to different buildings during the week he/she is reimbursed for mileage after the daily deduction. For example: If you travel to Premm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and travel to NCLC on Tuesdays and Thursdays, you would be reimbursed for travel beyond your daily deduction.

The Hearing Department has an increase in their enrollment, and will be hiring. The posting for this position is already out. Interviews will take place soon.

The BEES Itinerant VP represents the following Teaching areas:

Art**Blind and Partially Sighted****Deaf and Hearing Impaired****ESL****Foreign Language****Health****Home and Careers****Music****Physical Education****School Media Specialists-Librarians****Speech and Hearing Handicapped**

A happy & healthy 2008 for all. Retirees were mailed an information sheet in September about dues and joining the retiree chapter. If you have not returned the form, please send your \$30 check payable to BEES c/o my address, 120 S. High St., Lindenhurst, NY 11757-5006. PLEASE do so ASAP. This will avoid problems with your NYSUT benefits. NYSUT's policy is when your district has a Retiree Chapter you must be a member to qualify for benefits.

Retired teachers are needed to correct Math tests during March-April 2008. Please call (631) 957-4366 if you are interested.

Two more items I would like to include are an update by Dorothy Zuckerman on health care issues, and a touching story involving this statue that was sent to a retiree from his former student. It helps demonstrate the lasting impact that we can have on our students. The letter from the student can be found on our website.



Among the many issues being discussed this election year, health care reform continues to demand attention and promise. In this great country there are 47 million Americans who have no insurance. Those of us who have guaranteed health insurance coverage are among the rarified few. We have all heard the stories from relatives, friends and acquaintances who have had to postpone or to rethink a treatment because insurance didn't cover the procedure or the cost was too high or, worst of all, there was no insurance protection.

Congress made attempts this year to provide health care for millions of uninsured children only to have their efforts vetoed by President Bush. Early preventive health care can not only protect from and prevent serious health complications but can bring down the costs of treating these illnesses in the future.

A study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that people between the ages of 55 and 65 who had no health insurance experienced greater health decline, developed more complications and died at an earlier age than those in that age group who had coverage. By the time they would be eligible for Medicare at age 65, this group's health care costs would be greater than if they had been insured before age 65. Instead of encouraging the expansion of benefits for all retirees, thus improving the quality of health for all retirees, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission recently announced a regulation that would allow employers to provide health benefits "only to those retirees who are not yet eligible for Medicare" while also stating that retiree health benefits could be "altered, reduced or eliminated" for those 65 or older receiving Medicare. At the same time the Bush administration has been making forceful attempts to undermine traditional Medicare, the most successful government health program, in an effort to provide health care through private providers.

Rapidly rising health care costs continue to have disastrous effects on working families. Good private coverage is unaffordable and often available. More employers are dropping their coverage and putting the cost responsibility on the workers. Retirees on fixed and/or eroding pensions are especially being hurt by this reversal of health care while premiums rise.

Over the next months, the insurance and drug companies will hurl their campaigns of misinformation and confusion at us in an attempt to stall health care reform once again. We must stay alert to the propaganda and find the arguments to turn it around. We must continue to demand that our chosen candidates, our leaders, our representatives in New York and Washington make a commitment and a promise to provide guaranteed health insurance coverage for all Americans.

IT'S UP TO US NOW! THE MOMENT WILL COME IN NOVEMBER!

Dorothy Zuckerman, NYSUT Retiree Services Consultant

631-273-8822; e-mail: dzuckerm@nysutmail.org

BEEES

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Union Website

www.BEESBEACON.org

**The deadline for articles to be published in the
April issue is March 15, 2008**

Articles and ads must be submitted electronically and
have your name and BOCES site .

Notes, comments and suggestions can be sent
by email to **BeesBeacon@aol.com** or interoffice to
Tom Rosati @ Premm Learning Center

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