



The BEES Beacon

BEES

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk

Union Strong



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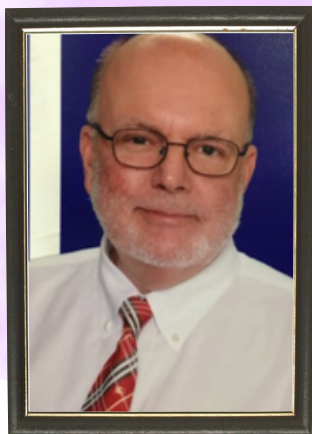
AFT Local 3037/NYSUT Local 22-220

From the Lighthouse in the East to the Lighthouse in the West

Read All About It:

- President's Report - 2
- Executive Vice Presidents Reports - 4
- First Vice President's Report - 9
- Area V.P. of Special Education Report - 11
- Area V.P. of Para-Educators Report - 13
- Area V.P. of SAS/Itinerants Report - 14
- Area V.P. of Academy/S.C.E - 15
- It *Benefits* You to Know - 16
- From the Membership Secretary - 17
- From the Treasurer's Desk - 18
- Grievance Report - 19
- From the Desk of the Recording Secretary - 20
- Let's BEE Social - 21
- The Retiree Chapter - 22

JIM BECK ~ PRESIDENT



You Are The Union

Good day my Sisters and Brothers. I write this Beacon article in a far different world than the last issue. Covid-19 has changed our world forever. 110,000 of our fellow Americans are dead and 45 million are without jobs and in danger of losing everything they have worked for. Parents, friends, coworkers, relatives and neighbors have gotten sick or died. We are in constant fear of getting sick ourselves or spreading it to others and we are not in our buildings to support each other or our students. A far different world indeed.

So, let me dive right in to tell you what we have been doing and where we plan to go. We have negotiated three different MOA'S (Memorandum of Agreement) and one letter of understanding. These documents cover Distance and Electronic Learning, Blue contract retirement extension, two PPD days to be used this school year for all Blue contract members and one PPD day for both contracts to be used next year and relaxed rules over Article 7 PD hours. We have been working tirelessly to ensure that all of our members continue to get paid and keep all of the benefits of their contracts including healthcare. We are part of the Agency's reopening committee and I attend all of the weekly administration leadership meetings. We have formed our own BEES reopening committee to hear the concerns and fears of our direct instructional staff. Many good ideas are coming out of that. We are also actively planning for all of the contingencies going forward as we look to reopen our schools in September. Please keep in mind that all of this is in addition to conducting our normal union business. Due to the rapidly changing nature of this crisis, the Executive board has been meeting weekly in order to deal with issues rapidly and effectively. We have also negotiated for our schools to close a week early on June 19th. All of this is in addition to performing our regular school duties. Needless to say, we have had some very busy days.

**UNIONS
WORK!**

JIM BECK ~ PRESIDENT



You Are The Union

The Agency is moving forward with opening all offices on June 1st according to the state's phase one reopening plans. Washable masks (3) will be provided to all staff. That will give us three months to see how things are working out.

As you know the union's annual Retiree Honorarium was cancelled, but we will still be doing a few things to honor our retirees. Plans for opening day are still undecided as state guidelines have not been finalized.

Due to the economic depression, state tax revenues are way down. No one knows if the Federal government will be providing additional aid.

These economic factors will help determine what will happen. As of this date student numbers in our programs are still looking good.

We will be continuing to provide service to all of our members throughout the summer as we prepare for reopening. Please read the Beacon, follow our BEES Facebook page and sign up for our text blasts. In this ever-changing environment it is vitally important to stay connected. I remind you that our union remains strong. Our contracts are in place and we move forward together in support of each other and in solidarity.

Unity and strength.

Jim



ASHA MAZZA-SHAW ~ EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT



Keep in Touch

Dear BEES members,

We made it. We accomplished things that were seemingly impossible at the start of all this. Now, as we approach the end of the school year, many of us have settled into some semblance of a routine teaching from home. It will likely seem strange when we are back in our classrooms, in front of our students and working face to face with our colleagues again. Like the rest of my counterparts on the Executive Board, I was deeply moved by the amount of heart, determination and professionalism that each of you brought to the table during the school closure. Being on the Executive Board gives me a unique opportunity to speak with members throughout Eastern Suffolk BOCES and gain perspectives from all different positions within the agency. I can honestly say, there was not one person who did not pour themselves into their new roles when working from home. We thank you for your dedication to the students and the welfare of the families we service; it did not go unnoticed.

As union leaders we were faced with the challenge of getting information out to our members quickly, efficiently and accurately. This has always been challenging for us, as we are such a large unit, and we are scattered throughout so many different buildings and sites. We typically rely on our excellent building representatives to bring you the information during building meetings. Not being in the buildings presented a large challenge. We are also not able to use BOCES emails to disperse union business. As an Executive Board we began meeting weekly via Zoom to develop plans to reach our membership and discuss how to best advocate for you. We had Zoom meetings with our building representatives as well, who have in turn met virtually with their building memberships. Thank you to all the building representatives who really stepped up to the plate! We also started a closed group Facebook page to post information, answer questions and present recorded information to our members. If you haven't joined our Facebook group yet, you can find the link on our website at www.beesbeacon.org, just look for the Facebook logo. Speaking of our webpage, we have also been dispersing information there since the beginning of the shutdown. The website has been organized, made more user friendly and has all the information we've put out since the school closure began. Finally, we have used our text blast system to inform members of all the rapidly changing information. If you are not part of the system and would like to get text updates from the union please text the word **BEES** to the number 33222. You will receive a message back confirming you have joined the system; we never share your phone number or information with anyone else.

ASHA MAZZA-SHAW ~ EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT



Keep in Touch

As we prepare for reopening our schools, whether it be for in person summer school services or in September; the union is advocating for the safest protocols to be in place for students and staff. We are working with the agency on multiple committees and have formed sub-committees of our own to best address the specific needs of each program and the concerns of our membership. We will use our communication platforms to keep our members updated on reopening news.

On a more personal note, these past few months have been difficult. I know we have all been feeling stressed and exhausted. The circumstances have been less than ideal and many days it seems like, just when you get a leg up, things change again and you have to re-adjust all over again. We have had to adjust to the hurdles in our personal lives with work and home changes and we have had to adjust to the global changes with the pandemic. Now we have more unrest over racism and equality that has taken the shape of protests and marches. Change is difficult, but necessary for moving forward and learning. We have a long way to go, but we can get there together. BEE the change. Congratulations to the retirees and thank you all for your membership,

Asha



PRIDE AT WORK

AL RIOS ~ EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT



Rising to the Challenge

First and foremost I want to extend my most sincere thoughts and prayers to every single one of our members and their loved ones. Every single one of us has in some way been personally affected by the Covid-19 virus. The degree to which we have been affected may greatly vary from one to another but I believe we can all agree that we have collectively experienced a serious “wake up” call. I do not consider it an exaggeration to say that it is likely our lives and the lives of our loved ones will forever be influenced by the experience of these last few months and the months to come.

At this time of year I would ordinarily be wishing some of our colleagues a happy retirement, or commenting on how fast this year passed by, or packing up our class rooms and discussing summer plans. Instead, this year the conversation has changed dramatically.

The announcement of a National Emergency on the afternoon of Friday March 13 brought a change to our teaching lives for what, we now know, would be for the rest of the school year, at the very least.

I recall that day so clearly; it was two hours before the end of the school week and the word spread very quickly that we needed to get 2 weeks of class work together for our students. Everyone in my program and parent program pulled together. It was a scramble, one that felt surreal and chaotic, but a controlled chaos. We all helped each other; making copies, stapling worksheets, putting packages together and making sure that before our students boarded the busses all were equipped with at least 2 weeks of work. What followed for the next coming weeks was, in my opinion, a show of unity, support and care from my colleagues.

We came together and supported each other. All of us; Teachers, Itinerants, Related Service, Assistants, Aides, Technical Support Staff, Clerical, Custodial staff and Administration. We did it together. We quickly learned what teamwork was all about.

We had new vocabulary like ‘Zoom’, ‘Google Classroom’, ‘meets’, and ‘remote learning’ added to our everyday conversations. We ran out to purchase needed supplies and accessories for our computers at home so we could set-up our temporary “remote learning classrooms.” The texts and phone calls at all hours of the day poured in from parents, students as well as other teachers asking for help. The new tasks seemed endless; setting up deliveries of technology to our students, organizing envelopes of class work to be mailed out as well as the many late night efforts ensuring our work for school was scheduled and ready for the next day’s remote learning lessons. We learned of new remote ways to have our staff meetings and Professional Development classes which took on a new “Brady Bunch boxes” look.

It felt like a mad rush for some of us who have not been trained or exposed to remote teaching techniques and platforms. We had to cram and learn about as many techniques, resources and platforms in as little time as possible. For some their working day went well into the evening hours.

Other services, like Speech & counseling required instructors to get creative and figure out how to provide those services while being distant from the students. It should not be forgotten that all these newly faced stressors came at a time when our own physical, emotional and mental states were being assaulted by daily, omnipresent media reports extolling the growing and spreading threat to our lives and the lives of our loved ones.

AL RIOS ~ EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT



Rising to the Challenge

I'll never forget the hours spent watching the TV for updates of the status of the virus. All this anguish was absorbed and internalized with the knowledge and understanding that we somehow must not allow it to affect our professionalism, that we must do our very best to maintain a calm and collected outside appearance.

It was truly a collaborative, heroic effort and I believe we did an amazing job. Each and every BEES member who took the time and effort to make sure we continued to engage with and educate our students under these conditions deserves praise and congratulations for a job very well done. We had no idea what was coming down the road. We were not trained nor were we prepared to go into a 100 percent remote learning mode and yet we rapidly adapted and evolved to provide outstanding, unique and diverse services in a most impressive way. The effort and results, under the most onerous and unpredictable circumstances, were nothing short of remarkable. I have never been more proud to be part of such a group of intelligently innovative and resilient professionals.

Throughout this humbling experience I hope we all come away from this with an appreciation for all that we have. That includes our family, friends, students, livelihood and most importantly, our health. "Life can turn on a dime." We do not realize how fortunate we are until we no longer have that which we have always taken for granted.

I also hope those who think differently now understand that remote learning will never be able to replace the connections that teachers make with their students in the classroom. It became very clear to me that I gain as much from my daily interaction with my students in the classroom as I hope students gain from coming to school. Education is more than teaching students how to think and ask questions for themselves. It is more than a safe and secure location for them to go. It is more than learning how to write a story or take a test. Our classrooms provide an environment for our students to thrive, interact, socialize and communicate with their peers. They develop confidence, self-assurance and the building of self-esteem through interpersonal socialization and the bonds they build with their peers and teachers. It became evident to me that many of the students truly missed the daily connections and interaction they had when in the classroom.

At this point we do not know what next year's school start will look like. Regardless of the situation, if the past 3 months is any indication of what our members are capable of we will persevere and overcome any obstacle that stands in our way. We will provide our students with the same care, empathy and thoughtfulness that we have in these last few months of this most challenging school year. We will demonstrate, once again, the extraordinary value of a professional Teacher.

Thank you for all the effort and work you have put into these last few months. Together we have moved mountains and overcome obstacles. I am proud to say I am a BEES member.

I wish you and your loved ones a safe, happy and healthy summer and look forward to working with you all next school year.



Thank You

During these unprecedented times and in the face of incredible adversity, each of you continue to sacrifice and dedicate yourselves to our children, our families and our communities.

We thank all of the educators, school-related professionals, nurses and other health care workers who continue to demonstrate their unwavering compassion, dedication and commitment to our communities on a daily basis.

memberbenefits.nysut.org | 800-626-8101



For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.

RAY STENBERG ~ FIRST VICE PRESIDENT



Many Thanks

It is Memorial Day 2020, a day that I usually celebrate the home stretch to the end of another school year. This year, unfortunately, is no time to celebrate. Millions of people have lost their jobs and are struggling to meet basic needs and over 100,000 of our fellow citizens have lost their lives to this dreadful disease. Every single one of us has been impacted in some way and even though we must take some time to honor all those men and women who have served in the American military and died for their country, we must also honor those front line workers who risk their lives each day to keep us safe and alive. There are so many heroes amongst us. A simple thank you to them means a lot.

Speaking of thank you, I would be remiss if I didn't thank our President, Jim Beck for working tirelessly around the clock with help from his VP's to protect our members during this shutdown and transition over to distance learning. By working collaboratively with the BOCES administration, Jim was able to negotiate several Memorandums of Agreement in a short amount of time. These agreements put forth hold harmless language for our members and guidelines for distance learning and the implementation of virtual related services to our students. This, along with two pandemic personal days for direct instruction members this year and an additional pandemic personal day for all BEES members during the 2020-2021 school year. This, along with the ending of this school year one week earlier shows what happens when unions form collaborative relationships with management. In these cases, we all win!

School budget votes- For the first time ever, school budget votes will take place by mail in ballots. In an effort to keep New Yorkers safe, Governor Cuomo issued an executive order delaying school board elections and budget votes statewide until June 9, 2020. The school board elections and budget votes will be conducted by mail and all qualified voters will be sent an absentee ballot with postage paid. This will make it quite easy for all BEES members and their families to vote in these important budget votes. Always remember, if budgets fail and districts have to go on austerity, they usually cut back on the number of students that they send to BOCES. Last year, 123 out of 124 Long Island school districts passed their budgets. This was great for us because districts were able to send students to BOCES for Special Education and CTE classes. It will take you less than a minute to vote. Please support your local school budget.

RAY STENBERG ~ FIRST VICE PRESIDENT



Many Thanks

On May 14th, I joined Jim Beck, Al Rios, Lisa Mongiello, and Terry Kalb at a virtual RA. For the first time ever, the NYSUT Representative Assembly was held remotely to ensure the safety of NYSUT members and to comply with the Governor's regulations. Even though this wasn't your typical NYSUT RA, we still accomplished some good things. For us here on Long Island, electing Ron Gross as the 2nd Vice President of NYSUT is good for us. Ron is a long time union president in William Floyd and also serves on the board of the New York State Teachers Retirement System. He has always had the interest of Long Island Educators in the back of his mind and we are grateful for the fact that he has moved up into such an important position.

This year, our BEES members reached an all-time record in voluntary Vote Cope contributions. Our members selflessly contributed \$29,750 to Vote Cope. These funds will go directly into the political action committee that supports elections of individuals who represent labor and educational issues. We fund both Republicans and Democrats who support public education and oppose charter schools. We want people in power who are pro-union, people who will protect our contractual rights, not taking them away. I'm proud that we reached this milestone and look forward to next year when we sign up new members to our union and hit the \$30,000 mark. Thank you to all those who contributed to Vote Cope.

This year we have quite a few members of our union retiring from service. Many teachers, teacher assistants, and classroom aides are leaving BOCES and moving into the world of retirement. As a result of union/management collaboration, these individuals will be able to take some very large sums of money with them as spelled out in their collective bargaining agreements. This, along with health insurance, will provide them with long term security as they transition into the life of a retiree. Even though we can't have our traditional end of the year honorarium, we still celebrate the careers of our fellow union members. Hopefully by this time next year, there will be a vaccine for this disease and we can have these members join us at the Lands End in June 2021 where they can really celebrate. Congratulations to the BEES class of 2020.

For those of you that are working "virtual" summer school, I hope your experience is productive and worthwhile. If you're attempting to vacation like I am, I wish you safe travels, and if you're just going to kick back and relax, stay healthy and safe! I'll see you in September.

Ray

PATTI RICHARDS ~ AREA V.P. FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION



In Gratitude

When we began the year back in September no one could predict how it would end. But over the past few months it was apparent that school, for the foreseeable future, would be changed dramatically. Although our delivery of services and instruction were completely altered, our determination to ensure our students received exactly what they needed, goes unchallenged.

Covid-19 has brought home a new reality for all. When the school doors closed back in March, many of us had to brush up on technical skills over a weekend, so we could perform in the age of digital learning. But while doing that, we also reinvented ourselves and our roles. We were not only teachers, but curriculum developers, IT support for families, therapists for parents who were struggling, and office workers. Over the past few months, our days grew longer, paperwork piled on, and yet we still managed to care for our own families. We learned how to balance digital teaching and the needs of our families who were home as well.

I, along with many of you, have been directly affected by Covid-19. Whether you have had the virus or lost family members, the impact has touched everyone. However, no matter the impact, we showed up for work in hopes of helping our students.

If I can remind you of anything, it's that, our work is vital and your diligence and compassion is why I am privileged to call all of you friends or colleagues. As this year comes to an end, I want to congratulate our retiree's. I wish you all the best with your future endeavors and I look forward to coming together to celebrate with you next year.

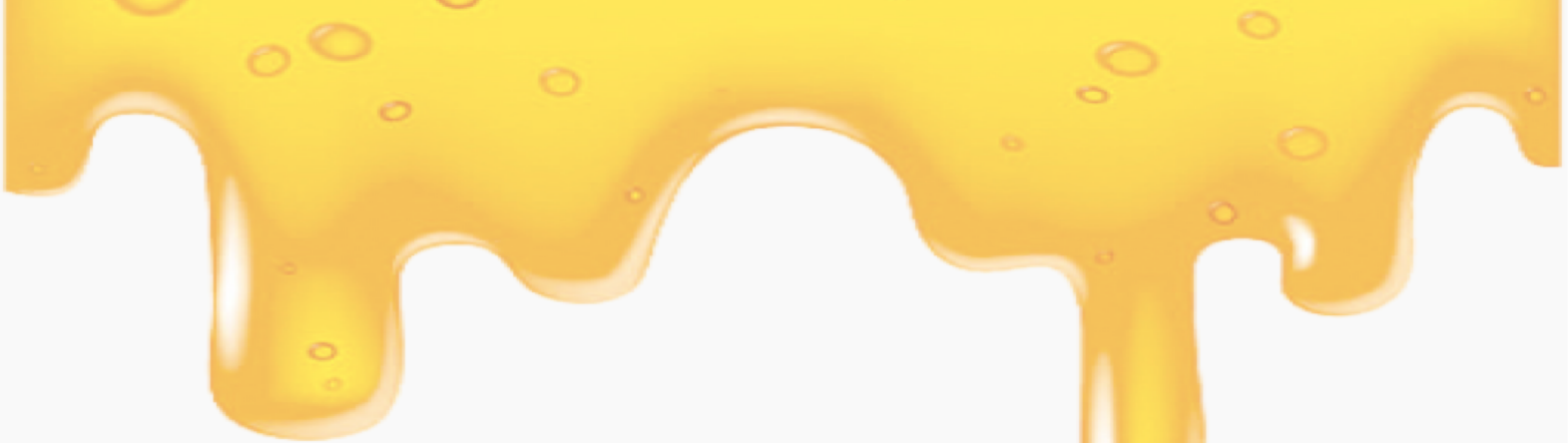
I also want to thank the BEES membership for their unconditional support as the Area Vice President for Special Education. I have learned a great deal over the past year, and I look forward to the continued journey forward.

Please know, even though the school year is ending, your union will continue to work tirelessly for you throughout the summer and beyond. We will continue working on new and innovative strategies for best practices in reopening schools and preparing for challenges the new year may present.

I wish you all a well-deserved break and happy summer. Take time to enjoy, life is so very precious.

Thank you,

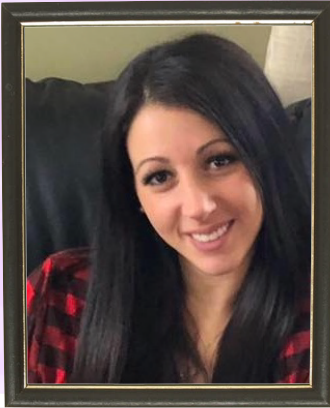
Patti



Thank You
For "Bee"ing
Part of Our Union



AMANDA PICA ~ AREA V.P. FOR PARA EDUCATORS



We Support You

We have reached the final lap of the 2019-2020 school year. It has been a wild ride to say the least. I would like to start off by acknowledging all the hard work you have put in over the last few months. Even during these uncertain times you rose to the occasion and provided the best support you could for all staff and students. We should all pat ourselves on the back for finishing out this year strong, well done! As we continue on this journey there are a lot of unanswered questions. I ask for your patience during this process as we adjust to our "new normal." It is important to keep yourself informed and stay in touch with your building representatives; www.beesbeacon.org is also a great resource for information. As I finish out my first year as Area Vice President, I would like to thank all the Para building representatives for their constant support and dedication. They are a crucial link between the Executive Board and the membership. As we enter the summer months I hope you can find sometime to unplug, relax, and enjoy some sunshine. Before our school year comes to a close I would like to acknowledge our retirees and graduating students. Your meaningful work and valuable teachings has improved all the lives you have touched. Wishing you wonderful days ahead filled with good health and happiness.

warm regards,

Amanda





Moving Forward

Honestly, I don't know where to begin. It has been quite a whirlwind of a year. I would like to thank all 132 members who attended my virtual Itinerant meeting on May 27th, it was definitely one of the largest turnouts I have ever had. I also think we need to give ourselves a much deserved pat on the back for all the hard work, countless hours and dedication while being there for our students. I truly believe we have been the lifeline for many of them and their families. Like I said in my meeting, there were many days I peeled myself out of the bed in the morning, turned on my laptop and started what seemed very much like ground hogs day, and before I knew it, it was Friday. No one could have predicted that this was how our school year was going to end but it did. I think when we get a second to reflect on what we have accomplished we will all be amazed at our own resilience.

As we move forward and into virtual summer programs and planning for next year's opening day I encourage everyone to stay connected with the union. Your E-BOARD has been meeting weekly to stay on top of the never ending changes due to COVID 19, CDC regulations and the governor's mandates; we have tried our best to keep you informed on the BEES Beacon webpage and social media platforms so please visit these resources often. We have also had meetings with your building reps. so it would be a good idea to provide your personal email to your representative so they can provide you with the updated information they are given. Also, for those of you who have not signed up to receive the text blast we encourage you to by texting BEES to 33222. We are a large agency scattered all over New York state so we try our best to keep you informed, but we need your help to ensure we have a way to contact you. We assure you we are not selling or sharing your information with anyone. We just need a way to reach you other than your ESBOCES email as we cannot use this email as a way of communication.

Moving forward and planning for school opening in September we have started a union committee to help organize our concerns and needs to make this a positive and safe transition. Again, we can plan but with the never ending changes we must await the regulations and requirements put forth by the governor and the CDC. I have heard from many members expressing their anxiety and fears of having to return to face to face academics/services and these are all real valid concerns and I am sure having many factors out of our control has added to these feelings. I encourage everyone, including those working summer school, to take care of themselves! Hopefully everyone will have more free time, maybe you will no longer have to homeschool your own children, maybe you can see loved ones and friends safely, whatever it may be that helps reduce your stress and brings up those good feelings, make time for it. If you feel you need assistance please reach out to EAP, it is confidential and there to help. We all need to reboot and be the best we can be for ourselves, our families and our profession. So, I say stop and smell the roses, get some fresh air, good nutrition and exercise because you deserve it.

I want to end on a positive note but I would truly be remiss to not pass on my condolences to those of members who have experienced a loss during this time; you are all in the thoughts of your BEES family.

If you need to contact me my email is beesvpitin@gmail.com

If you would like your seniority number the latest list I have is dated 5/8/20 please email me.

ROSARIA BROESLER~ AREA V.P. FOR ACADEMY/SEE



Good Things Await

Dear CTE Colleagues,

Here it is Memorial Day weekend and we are still in the throes of this terrible pandemic. Like you, I feel suffocated and deprived of anything and everything that was normal. My heart goes out to those of us that have lost loved ones and friends. It all seems so senseless and confusing. That being said, I cannot tell you how proud I am of all of us and how we hit the ground running when it came to online teaching and adapting to the various platforms that were for most of us, baptism by fire! I have been invited to virtual tours, guest speaker meetings and amazing lessons that could not be closer to "hands on." To say that I was impressed with the creativity and dedication to our students is an understatement.

As proud as I am, I must tell you that I was not a bit surprised. Most of us are tried and true "industry people." We cut our teeth in the real world where completing a job under any circumstances often meant the difference between a pay check or not. When a carpenter arrived at a job site and didn't have the right material he didn't stop the job. He improvised or ran to the supplier while the workers continued on. Time was money. CTE People are resilient and resourceful. And that my colleagues, is exactly why you made this all work. You knew the importance of the continuation of learning for our students and everyone figured out a way. It is all truly amazing!

The old adage that "something good comes out of something bad" could not be truer for me. In the midst of this crisis I sewed and provided homemade masks to healthcare workers (who were unable to secure PPE) across Long Island and as far as Colorado. In doing so, I met amazing new friends and hopefully helped to save some lives. High School Alumni of mine donated hundreds of dollars in supplies toward my cause and I got to reunite with them (albeit through glass) after 45 years! I then turned my focus to raising money for ST. Jude Children's Hospital and raised \$2,000 to date. All while my 85 year old Mom sat with me as my assistant. We spent many quality hours together talking and reminiscing about our lives. Priceless time that I will cherish always.

I hope that you too have had a similar experience perhaps enjoying family time, cleaning out closets, getting a new puppy or even getting to know a loved one a little bit better. I know for me, being positive has gotten me through this and my faith keeps me vertical! What September will look like in terms of education is a wait and see, but whatever we face, I truly believe that we as CTE Instructors will once again present our best to our students and continue to adapt to whatever the situation presents. Thank God for technology. Please stay healthy and feel free to reach out to me if there are any union issues you may have concerns about.

Rosaria

NICK DEBLANCO ~ MEMBER BENEFITS OFFICER



It Benefits You to Know

Greetings valued members,

My thoughts are with all of you and your families during these trying times. Your union is working very hard with all of our members' interests at heart. Some things to consider while we negotiate these unprecedented times. Financial strains are felt by all, and some are finding difficulties with commitments to pay bills. As union members there are some things you can adjust to help with those commitments.

The I.R.S. has adjusted the requirements for flex spending accounts, the BEES beacon webpage has these changes posted for your information. http://www.beesbeacon.org/uploads/1/2/1/3/121340227/changes_to_flex_spending_2020.pdf

You can also consider reductions to your retirement accounts if necessary. Speak with your financial advisor for specific ideas that fit your circumstances.

Federal and State Tax filing dates have been extended until July 15, 2020 and can allow time for making decisions. NYSUT has a web page devoted to tax deductions you may not have been aware of nysut.org/deductions - it is a great resource for both now and in the future. Share these items with your tax preparer. You can also reference I.R.S. article 17 on their website for self-service advice.

Both retirement systems have some tools for members who find themselves with financial difficulties. Rules have changed regarding loans from your retirement account. These are big decisions and should be reviewed with your financial and tax advisors. You can access contact information On the N.Y.S.T.R.S. website; community@nysstrs.org or by telephone 1-800-348-7298. In the event you have not opened an N.Y.S.T.R.S. account portal, now is a good time. For N.Y.S.L.R.S. members, the website is <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/members/> Telephone 1-866-805-0990

Whenever a crisis arises, scammers ratchet up their game. Be aware of scammers trying to obtain your information! The retirement systems, social security administration and your financial institutions are never going to ask for your information outside of their portals, most have a two factor authentication that will send a code to your phone or email account. If you are still suspect, contact the organization directly and verify the request.

For those asking about unemployment; our members are still employed contractually, which is a wonderful thing. Paychecks, insurance and benefits are all in place and stable. Many people in our communities are not so fortunate. Contractual employees do not qualify for unemployment benefits at this time because there is an expectation of employment in September. As your union leaders, we have reached out to state and federal representatives to find out if our summer school, or any other contractual members qualify for benefits in any way. At this time there is no clear path. Filing for benefits while still contractually employed may be considered fraud and can come with consequences. The board does not advise one way or another regarding filing; it is our job to provide you with the information we gather so you can make an informed decision for your personal situation. We are diligently looking for relevant changes that affect our members. We will disperse any worthwhile information we find immediately. We are working to our best ability to meet your needs as best we can.

Stay safe, Stay healthy and stay informed.

NICK

Contact: Beesco@gmail.com

LISA MONGIELLO ~ MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY



More Than Membership

As I write this article, I reflect on the fact that this year is like one our world has never seen. The challenges we have faced, and those that continue to arise solidify the fact that now, more than ever, we need to stand together.

As a union member, it is very important that you understand that **YOU** are the union. We have an amazing executive board that works diligently to support and protect our members, but a union is only as strong as its members. The best way you can participate is by staying involved and informed on union activities and events.

Despite the unprecedented obstacles of this school year, we have signed up over 200 new union members. Our building union representatives have played an incredible role in staying connected to our members and working to make sure that we provided all newly hired staff with the opportunity to join us. Our executive board has worked tirelessly the last few months and they are a group of people I am proud to work alongside and learn from.

Your membership matters. We need you to stay involved and be active participants. You can do this by reading your contract, contacting our union leadership with questions and concerns, attending meetings and staying connected to our website, text blasts, and Facebook group. Next school year, we will be voting on and electing building union representatives and you can consider becoming one. I encourage all our members to stay involved and active, this is the strength of our union.

I want to encourage our members to take the time for an active period of rest as we end this school year. The past several months have taken a great toll on our nation and us as individuals and I urge you to take the time to care for yourself. Lastly, I'd like to congratulate this year's retirees! I wish you health and happiness in your new journeys.

I stand with our members.

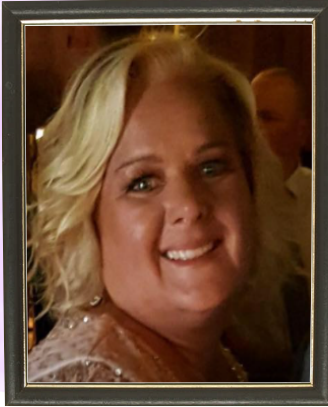
In solidarity,

Lisa



As a reminder, school board and budget elections are June 9; statewide primaries are June 23. Your voice in our local communities, state, and nation are so important, please vote!

MICHELLE TINTER ~ TREASURER



Sticking Together

As I begin to write my last BEES Beacon article for the 2019-2020 school year, a tradition that usually brings the school year to a close, I truly cannot believe that this year is ending with a worldwide health pandemic. Although our days and weeks have been challenging, our BEES constituents have once again risen to the occasion. Whether it has been remote learning, zoom rooms or google meets, we have risen to support and to educate our students and have gotten the job done!

Your Executive Board has collaborated and successfully resolved a multitude of issues during this unforeseen time. Whether it's Blue or Yellow contract issues, this Executive Board comes together to solve the problems. Personally, I have never been more proud to stand and work next to each and everyone of these individuals and I look forward to our continued success working together to represent our union members.

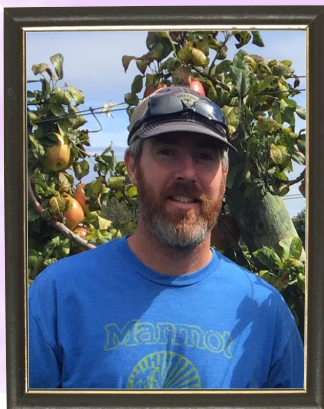
Although this school year comes to a close in the most untraditional way, many of our union members, friends and colleagues are retiring from service. Unfortunately, we cannot honor you this year at our end of the year Retiree Honorarium, however I would personally like to congratulate you and wish you all much health, happiness and enjoyment into retirement! Thank you for your years of dedication and service to the agency and for being supportive union members. I look forward to honoring each of you at our **2020ne** Honorarium.

In closing, I would like to thank all our members who continue to "stick with their union", it is greatly appreciated!

In Solidarity,

Michelle

KEITH FLYNN ~ GRIEVANCE OFFICER



The New Normal

During these uncertain and perilous times, there are many questions left unanswered. Even though NY is starting to open up the economy, we are still feeling the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. There is a lot of uncertainty in the near future.

The term "the new normal" has been coined to sum up the new way of life, for at least the immediate future. If you are a fan of the show *Stranger Things*, the "Upside Down" is the world where there is an alternate dimension in parallel to the human world where the Mind Flayer and Demigorgons want to cross over and invade the entire Earth. Although there is no Mind Flayer or Demigorgons, there is an infectious disease that has invaded our life and totally turned our world upside down. Hopefully temporarily, but life as we know it has changed.

Unfortunately, many of us have either experienced the loss of a loved one, or seen their high school or college senior miss out on cherished, traditional memories. Our retirees are also affected where they will have to postpone their retirement celebrations and miss out on those handshakes, hugs and final goodbyes at their buildings. The staff being thrust into initiating distance learning, whether it be instruction, counseling, occupational therapy, speech, etc. Social distancing, face masks, meat shortages and people feeling like they scored winning lottery ticket when finding baby wipes or toilet paper at Costco. Myself included. This has been a life altering experience for all.

This was my first year on the Executive Board. Not only was it a tremendous learning experience, I learned how hard we work to support our members. It truly was an eye-opening experience. I am also the building representative at Sequoya. So when the pandemic hit, there was a tremendous amount of good questions and concerns that our members had. Which leads us to the planning for September. There is a laundry list of concerns that members have when we return to school in September. Since we are such a diversified agency with a ton of different services offered to our component school districts, we all want to make sure that our members and students can return to school in the safest possible manner. Your union has already organized a committee to address every possible concern with upper administration. Stay tuned...

Advocacy Day seems like an eternity ago. I just wanted to point out that it was my first time heading up to Albany to meet with our local politicians and it was an amazing experience. The students tell their story and personalize their experience how BOCES has changed their lives. I would recommend the experience for everyone before they retire.

Lastly, as a father of 5 children, I am incredibly grateful that when the economy came to a screeching halt in March, that we continued to receive our paychecks. Knowing that I would still be paid during these anxious and uncertain times was reassuring. It's just one of the many benefits that we receive as union members.

I want to congratulate all our retirees and wish you the best of luck on your future endeavors. I wish you all a healthy summer.

Keith

ANGELA RITCHIE ~ RECORDING SECRETARY



We Appreciate You

Dear Fellow BEES Members,

As Recording Secretary of this Executive Board, I was able to hear all the issues and concerns our members were having as we all experienced a way of life that seemed unimaginable. This Executive Board has met every week since the start of the distance learning and we have come together to try and extinguish the fears and rumors while reaching out to our members with the correct information as it became available. Our roles as educators have changed drastically and it was hard at times to know exactly what was expected of us. We don't yet know what will lie ahead in the coming school year. Many of our members were also dealing with extreme stress in their home life. Some have children that needed guidance with their school work, elderly parents that needed to be looked after, and family members risking their lives to help others. I have been humbled by the work and the kindness that our fellow members and this Board has shown these last few months. I know parents have expressed their appreciation and gratitude for the tremendous effort we have shown to ensure their children are receiving, to the best of our ability, the education they deserve. This Executive Board will continue to work to protect your rights, hear all your concerns, and provide all the information members need to move forward. Thank you for all you do and for "sticking with the union". May you all have a safe, healthy, and peaceful summer.

Angela

**UNION
STRONG
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PROUD**

DANIELLE IBBA ~ SOCIAL CHAIRPERSON



Let's BEE Social

Wow, what a year it has been? This was the craziest school year of our lives and one that will go down in history. We made it through together and I am honored to work with so many BEES professionals that always put the students first no matter what.

The summer will fly by and before we know it, it will be time to start the 20-21 school year. For some of us, the end of this school year means new beginnings, whether in a new building or new position or you are at the end of a wonderful career, and you are heading down that path of retirement. For those of you finishing up your first year with Eastern Suffolk BOCES, I hope the year was a great success! We would like to wish you all a safe, happy and restful summer.

Due to the pandemic this year we had to cancel the 2020 BEES Retiree Honorarium. Although this is sad news, we do not want you to think we forgot about our amazing retirees. The union would still like to honor all the years of dedication you have shown Eastern Suffolk BOCES and the BEES throughout your years of service by sending a gift to your home by mail. You will also be gifted your first year of dues to the BEES Retiree Chapter run by Retiree Chapter Chair, Terry Kalb. We want to keep in contact with you so you can join us at the 2021 BEES Retiree Honorarium where we plan to honor you publicly. To those members of the BEES that are retiring, we wish you a happy and healthy retirement. We, of course, welcome your membership under your new hard earned title of "retiree". Keep a look out for the retiree gift that will come in the mail!

Our first Annual LI Ducks game has been rescheduled to August 29, 2020 6:30pm. We will have some fun giveaways and fireworks. This will be a night out for the family to enjoy. I hope to see many of you there. For any upcoming events please check our web page: <http://www.beesbeacon.org/>
Welfare:

The loss of a loved one is an emotional time, and one of the worst things we may go through in life. It is with that thought that we would like to reach out to our families in need in a timely manner. There are guidelines for sending out cards or a small token to the family of a member. In the past I have gotten several requests that I was not able to send out in a timely manner because the guidelines below were not adhered to. Please make sure that you include all of the information listed below so that we may pay our respects to the families in their time of need. Thank you.

Guidelines for welfare:

A bereavement card will be sent in the event of a member's spouse, parent, child, or sibling's death. In the case of a member passing, special circumstances will then apply.

The procedure for a sympathy card to be sent is as follows: Members should contact their building representative as soon as they believe a member meets the above guidelines and a bereavement card should be sent. The building representative should contact me via email at daniellesocialchairbees@gmail.com with the member's name, address as well as the name and relation to the deceased. In the event it is a member that has passed, I still need their name, address and a home or cell number of a member of their family so that we can acknowledge their service with us in a special way. If you need more information, see your building rep, check out our BEES website or feel free to send mean email. My email address is: daniellesocialchairbees@gmail.com

Have a great, healthy, and safe summer,

Danielle Ibba-Morabito

TERRY KALB ~ RETIREE CHAIRPERSON



Congratulations Retirees

Dear BEES Retirees,

I hope this email finds you healthy and sheltering at home. These are difficult days for our still working colleagues who juggling remote teaching and typically have school age children nearby while they work from home. As retirees, we may have less of a daily impact, but greater worries about getting sick. For those who live alone, managing the long months of isolation are especially difficult. Please check on those neighbors and friends who may really need that caring voice, and someone to talk to regularly. To those of you who may have suffered a loss of a family member or friend during these already stressful times, I know all of us extend our deep condolences to you in this time of grief and isolation when you most need support and hugs.

Here are some important updates about cancelled or postponed events!

Our May 19th BEES retiree meeting was cancelled. We will have our election at our Fall meeting, please stay tuned for the to be announced date, likely later in the fall when I hope we can gather safely with precautions in place.

NYS School Board and Budget elections which were also scheduled for May 19th will now be held on June 9th statewide, as a MAIL-IN election. You should soon get details from your home district.

The RC22 (Retiree Council 22 of NYSUT East End District Retiree Chapters) has also postponed their June meeting and officer elections for sometime in October, to be held at OUR union office as host, NOT the Riverhead Public Library. Date to be announced later this summer. The free breakfast for brand new retirees hosted annually by RC22 in early September will likely be scheduled for later in the fall when health and safety permits- we hope the Rocky Point Zona East restaurant will be available. Other retirees will be invited to participate for an at cost fee.

The June 2020 Honorarium is CANCELLED. This school year's BEES new retirees will be acknowledged in June 2021 at next year's honorarium. Meanwhile, each will receive a gift card and a free first year membership in our Retiree Chapter as a consolation for the cancelled celebrations this June.

TERRY KALB ~ RETIREE CHAIRPERSON



Congratulations Retirees

NYS Primary Elections are now scheduled for June 23rd. ALL REGISTERED VOTERS will receive a postage paid application for a mail-in ballot. Return the application and you will receive your ballot in time to vote by mail. No absentee excuse is needed. There are Federal, State and local primaries in both parties across the state, AND at this time by court order, there WILL be a Democratic Party Presidential Primary vote for NYers on that ballot. There will also be in person voting for those who choose not to vote by mail. If you live out of state for part of the year, and still vote in NY elections, make sure you obtain your absentee ballot.

NYS CENSUS! MAKE SURE YOU ARE COUNTED!

By now you should have received your form to be completed by your household. Federal funding for public needs like education, libraries, highways, elections, social services, eldercare, community public health, etc. are linked to the population count. We will lose representatives in Congress if we undercount our population. Undercounting hurts our state! BE COUNTED now!

STAY CONNECTED to our UNION!

As your representative, I have been participating as a BEES Executive Board member at every meeting, now being held weekly instead of monthly on Zoom. Many issues discussed impact us as retirees, as the financial security of our BOCES and our union effects our continuing health insurance and other benefits.

Please circle LABOR DAY on your calendar as the time to mail in your BEES Retiree \$35 dues check made out to BEES for the school year! What better way to celebrate Labor Day than to support your union! Mail to me at **PO BOX 798, Wading River NY 11792**. If you have forgotten for this year, send in a double check NOW to cover 2020-21 too.

Join our closed group on FaceBook- search for BEES Retirees and add your name to join. It is ONLY for BEES Retirees, please don't add friends or family who are not retiree members of our union.

RC 22 also has a FB group, search for NYSUT RC22 to join there. Five dollars of your BEES dues goes to RC22 and makes you a member there as well.

NEW! Sign up for BEES Retiree text alerts! **Text the word retirees to number 33222** to sign up for the latest BEES text alerts only for our retiree members.

Read the BEACON online at beesbeacon.org

Questions? Call me at 631-929-4295. Email me at terrykalb@yahoo.com and put me in your email contacts so my newsletters don't get routed to your spam box.

Best wishes for your health, and a safe return to the other side of this pandemic crisis!

Terry Kalb
BEES Retiree President

terrykalb@yahoo.com

BEES

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