

Schalmont Teachers' Association Union Newsletter



January/February 2011



Pumping with Passion~Beating with Pride

STA: Getting to the Heart of the Matter



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The **STATIC** is the official publication of the Schalmont Teachers' Association and is published during the school year. The Schalmont Teachers' Association is affiliated with the New York State United Teachers and the American Federation of Teachers.

Mary Beth's Message

"Make your voice heard" and "Get involved" were messages Pete Rings and I heard at the NYSUT Annual Presidents' Conference on February 4, 2011. As our profession, salaries, benefits, and pensions continue to be under attack, it is more important than ever to use our collective voices to fight back to educate those who are attempting to dismantle the educational system, not only in New York State, but across the nation. Teachers and teachers' unions, as well as other public employees, collectively, are being portrayed as the reason why the state and country's economic systems are falling apart.

As a union member, it is imperative that you keep abreast of the conversations taking place in our state as the governor and legislature tackle the 2011-12 NYS budget. Whether you agree politically or philosophically on all the rhetoric in the news, the bottom line is that our profession and our jobs are under attack. Collectively, we can have a greater impact on the decisions made at the state and local level. Won't you join us?

In the next few weeks, Mike Libertucci (STA Political Action Co-coordinator) will be disseminating information on how you can help our cause. He will provide links where you can send letters to your legislators. Take a moment to send a letter that is available on the NYSUT website (www.nysut.org), and have your voice heard.

The February issue of **NYSUT United** has a great article from NYSUT's President, Dick Iannuzzi that is well worth reading. Learn the facts about the proposed tax cap and the effects it will have on our local schools. Educate yourself regarding the Taylor Law and the proposed elimination of the Triborough Amendment. If either is overturned it would be detrimental to education and to our profession.

As we enter into the spring, be mindful of the impact that this budget will have on your classes, your students, and your profession. If you have not been actively involved in STA, now is the time to see what we can accomplish together.

We are at a crossroads in public education—we need your help more than ever!

*In solidarity,
Mary Beth*

Be sure to visit the STA website for helpful information and updates: www.schalmontta.org

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**NEXT STATIC SUBMISSION
DEADLINE IS
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APRIL 6, 2011**

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Alumni Wall of Distinction Seeks Nominations

Do you know some impressive alumni? Nominations for the next group of inductees on Schalmont High School's Alumni Wall of Distinction are now being accepted through **Monday, March 14.**

The Wall of Distinction, which is located in the high school lobby, was established in 2007 during the district's 50th anniversary celebrations to not only shine a spotlight on the achievements of alumni, but also provide inspiration and motivation to current students.

To nominate someone for this honor or to learn more, download a nomination form via the district website or call 355-9200, X 4006, to receive one by mail.

Selected nominees, or their representatives if they were nominated posthumously, will be asked to attend an induction ceremony on Thursday, June 2, at 4:30 p.m. in the high school. The ceremony will be open to the public and followed by a reception.



The complete news article can be found at: http://www.schalmont.org/District/news/1011/010611sawdcallfor_nominations.htm

More information can be found at: <http://www.schalmont.org/HS/alumni/alumniwall.htm>



NYSUT launches new ad: Keep New York Learning

At the end of January, lawmakers will be greeted with NYSUT's new full-page ad campaign in the *Legislative Gazette*.

Timed accordingly, the ad will be showcased prior to the governor's released budget plan. Union officials strive to continuously remind lawmakers how imperative it is to invest in public education.



Amy Glick, Jefferson, Renews her National Board Certification

Will I ever feel like I have figured it all out? When I began my career, over 20 years ago, I thought I had it all figured out. Then I stepped into the classroom and quickly discovered the complexities of teaching children. Luckily, I teach in a district that understands and supports the need for continual professional development.

I began the process of National Board Certification when a colleague in another district coerced me into attending an information session with NBCT Judy Morley and Dr. Pat Allen from Union College. "Come on," she chimed. "It will be fun to reflect on ourselves as teachers. We'll do it together." And so I blindly began the process.

Fun? No! But I did obtain numerous chances to reflect on my teaching. For months I painfully worked through grueling entries, watched myself teach on video, analyzed student work, and scrutinized every word I said, thought and wrote. I also prepared for the knowledge-based exams. I compared it to the pain of giving birth. Was it all worth it? YES! I came out of the process rejuvenated and empowered.

Almost a decade later, I was faced with the option of renewing my certification. Just as any woman contemplates a second child, I contemplated the sacrifices that I would once again face. I learned and grew as a teacher in unimaginable ways. But, I knew that I still had so much more to learn as I began the renewal process.

I learned about myself in new ways. The renewal process enabled me to evaluate the needs I have as a teacher and to seek professional growth in those areas, thus making me a more focused learner.

National Board Certification requires teachers to demonstrate their role as a learner, leader, and collaborator. Without the support of my colleagues who have worked with me, facilitated my learning, and supported my leading, I would not have been able to achieve National Board Certification.

I am proud to work at Schalmont. I am proud to be a member of our STA—it fights to ensure that we have the means available for growth, leadership and collaboration.



Woestina Elementary Teacher Collaborates with Local Radio Station to Encourage Reading and Writing



WGNA 107.7's Richie Phillips speaks to Jamie Pink's third grade class at Woestina Elementary as part of the Reading, Writing and Rhyming Tour.

Third grade Woestina teacher and STA member, Jamie Pink, recently had her class participate in the Reading, Writing and Rhyming Tour sponsored by Han-

naford and the Sean and Richie show on WGNA

107.7 FM radio. This program encourages teachers to engage in the reading and writing process in a collaborative demeanor.

As a class, Pink's students worked together to write a song. Choosing the popular Black Eyes Peas as their inspiration, Pink's students created a new song entitled, "Woestina's Got a Feeling!" Students reworked the lyrics, made revisions and refined their performance to prepare for a live recording of it for WGNA 107.7 FM radio.

On Wednesday, February 8, Rhymin' Richie Phillips from WGNA 107.7 visited Pink's class. The students proudly performed their song and also sang Woestina's Alma Mater for Phillips.

Pink's class's song and recording will be played on WGNA 107.7 FM during the Sean and Richie Show Wednesday, February 9th. The song will also appear on www.wgna.com under Richie's blog page with a little write up about the visit to Woestina.



Woestina's Got a Feeling! Third Grade 2011

We've got a feeling.
Today's going to be a great day.
We're gonna respect each other.
Even our father and mother.

Today's the day.
Let's do it right!
We've got compassion.
We never fight.

We are responsible.
We persevere.
If you want honesty,
we've got it here.

Monday, Tuesday,
Be fair everyday.
Thursday, Friday,
self-control is the way.
(Pause)

We're from Woestina.
Today's going to be a great day.
Character rules the way.
Cause we are on WGNA.

- Hey!

CLICK ON IT
TEACHER TECH TOOLS

**American Federation
for Teachers**

American Federation of Teachers is on Facebook. Like their application to receive the most current issues about educational reform and policies. Join the discussion with thousands of other professionals and let your voices be heard.



Tools for Teachers

www.aft.org/tools4teachers
AFT's ongoing project to support teachers and inform professional practice includes resources aimed at all areas of support for teachers and classroom instruction including: Classroom Management, Working Together, Teacher to Teacher, Teaching as a Career, Classroom Materials, Special Populations, and Funding Opportunities.

Basketball Event Raises \$2578 for Local Hospital

On Thursday, February 3, faculty, staff, administrators and parents came together for a fundraising charity basketball event. Organized by STA member, Stephanie Lazzari, the initial event began after her husband, then fiancé, was deployed to Haiti with the FDNY. After hearing the horrible stories about young children running through the streets searching for their parents and bodies trapped under rubble, Lazzari felt a strong desire to help.

Lazzari's heart-felt desire has transferred to her students and the Schalmont staff and community. This year, Lazzari's efforts in organizing a district-wide faculty/staff basketball game raised \$2578 for The Children's Hospital at Albany Medical Center's program "Students Care for Kids." The money will enable students to help sick children in their recovery process.

Lazzari said, "My ultimate goal is to encourage faculty, staff, administrators and parents to model the importance of coming together for a greater cause."

The packed stands and diverse faces of our community at the event certainly illustrate how one teacher can make a huge difference for a community.



COFFEE TALK

Too busy to write a full editorial? How about sharing a few sentences instead? This new column features a current question related to our profession. The first 3 people to respond to sarah.mattice@yahoo.com win a free gift!



QUESTION:
What is something a student has said or done during your teaching career that has made you smile and laugh?

HUMOR HELPS

Happy People are More Productive People



When Yvonne Conte, a motivational humorist, presented to the STA faculty and staff in September she reminded us all how

humor in the workplace leads to productivity. If you have a funny little story to contribute to the Humor Helps column, email it to your STATIC editor today! Here are two humorous stories reprinted from Reader's Digest online: <http://www.rd.com/family/11-funny-valentines-day-jokes/>.



Making the Grade

My high-school English teacher was well known for being a fair, but hard, grader.

One day I received a B minus on a theme paper. In hopes of bettering my grade and in the spirit of the valentine season, I sent her an extravagant heart-shaped box of chocolates with the pre-printed inscription: "BE MINE." The following day, I received in return a valentine from the teacher. It read: "Thank you, but it's still BE MINE-US."

~Contributed by Brad Wilcox



A Little Nuts About Love

Driving through Southern California, I stopped at a roadside stand that sold

fruit, vegetables and crafts. As I went to pay, I noticed the young woman behind the counter was painting a sign. "Why the new sign?" I asked. "My boyfriend didn't approve of the old one," she said. When I glanced at what hung above the counter, I understood. It declared: "Local Honey Dates Nuts."

~Contributed by Theodore Bologna

Are you up to the challenge?

If you're like most people, you make New Year's resolutions only to break them soon after. NYSUT Member Benefits challenges all NYSUT members to make and keep this one resolution: I resolve to draw up (or update) my will.

The importance of having a will to protect your loved ones and your wishes cannot be stressed enough. This is especially true if you have children under the age of 18. A will allows you to name a legal guardian(s) for your children. It also ensures that your estate will be distributed according to your desires. Without a valid will, these very important, personal decisions are made by the state.

The Legal Service Plan endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits Trust is a convenient vehicle to help you meet this challenge. It provides one simple will or update, free. A simple will provides for the proceeds of one's estate to be distributed to specifically named beneficiary(ies), with an alternate distribution plan in the event the primary beneficiary predeceases the writer of the will. With a simple will, proceeds are to be distributed outright with no conditions attached. Placing a condition on a bequest requires a trust, which can be obtained from the Legal Plan for a fee.

In addition to the simple will, you'll receive a durable power of attorney, living will and health care proxy, all important documents to have in place *before* the need for them arises.

The plan also gives you access to unlimited, toll-free legal advice from plan attorneys. These attorneys will make phone calls and write

The Legal Service Plan provided through Feldman, Kramer & Monaco, P.C. is a NYSUT Member Benefits Trust (Member Benefits)-endorsed program. Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement of 33.33% of annual participation fees received for this program. All such payments to Member Benefits are used solely to defray the costs of administering its various programs and, where appropriate, to enhance them. Member Benefits acts as your advocate; please contact Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 if you experience a problem with any endorsed program. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

third-party correspondence, at no charge, to resolve personal legal situations on your behalf before they become major problems. In addition, when you enroll in this plan, you receive two coupons for free, hour-long consultations with a plan attorney.

Is there a real estate transaction coming up in your near future? Do you have any traffic violations? You can receive legal assistance on a variety of personal legal matters when you enroll in the Legal Service Plan. If the matter can't be resolved over the phone or with a letter, you will be referred to a plan attorney in your area, who will charge you \$200 an hour or 40 percent off the usual hourly rate, whichever is lower. Optional riders for Elder Law services and for business protection can be added to your legal plan coverage.

Don't put it off any longer! Draw up your will. Enroll in the Legal Service Plan and use its service to help you, or do it

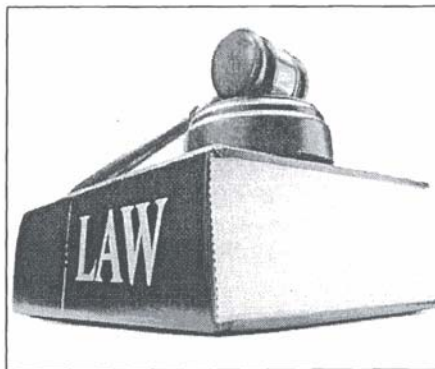
another way, but just do it! The peace of mind you'll have once you know you have taken care of your loved ones far outweighs any unpleasantness associated with making up your will.

If you happen to belong to a local association that provides a group legal service plan to you through the local or its benefit fund, remember to take advantage of the plan's benefits.

If not, you can enroll in the voluntary plan online at www.memberbenefits.nysut.org, or view and print a descriptive brochure and enrollment form online.

You can also call NYSUT Member Benefits at 800-626-8101.

**MEMBER
BENEFITS**
nysut
Working to Benefit You





A Message from the STI

**A Closer Evaluation on
Leading in a Culture of Change
By: Bronson Knaggs, STI Director**

While recently reading Michael Fullan's book, *Leading in a Culture of Change* (2001), a number of ideas I have been thinking about were solidified and I was able to check my bearing again, read-just the sails, and press forward. He states, "Schools are beginning to discover that new ideas, knowledge creation, and sharing are essential to solving learning problems in a rapidly changing society." Schools, like successful businesses, "must become *learning organizations* or they will fail to survive."

From the beginning schools were built to be a place of learning but when we start asking questions about what is being learned we

soon find that students do not own the learning. As soon as I became a teacher adults introduced me to

their children with the tag line, "he is a teacher." This statement was followed by kids reacting with respect, "I want to be a teacher when I grow up because they know everything." Or some children withdrew as though I might give them yet another homework assignment and they had not done the last several. Now I put them on the run from the beginning with a simple question but often terrifying question, "What did you learn today?" I usually don't get an answer but after some digging I can sometimes manage to drag them back into the world of school they have isolated themselves from and force a response that eases the embarrassment of the moment. My question makes proud parents wilt, tax-payers fume, and kids hope I never pull that one again. Of course I ask again and by about the fifth time preparations are made before I ask. I stole the idea from Thomas Guskey who jokingly told us that the Principal should stand at the front door and ask every student leaving for the day to answer that

exact question or turn around and go back inside. On our opening day I told you the story about my cousin's child, Madeline, wishing on a star that she could be in school already. When I asked her what she had learned a few days ago, she gave me the standard shrug. This was followed by her mother telling me that she does not like school anymore. This well adjusted, social, and confident young girl from an affluent suburban community could not wait to go to school for over two years and now she was hoping for another snow day. That evening she added lunch and the bus to her list of dislikes about school. Talk about the pace of change.

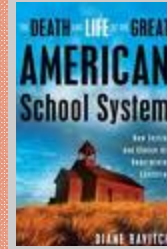
Guskey also said the principal should stand at the back door on Friday and ask teachers what they had learned that week. His point was that if we were

going to truly be learning communities we needed to also be learning and sharing that information with others. Our industry has been slow to share the expertise that we have with each other. While we have relied on our teacher center and others like it to build capacity and share knowledge by teachers teaching teachers, it is now important to look for additional ways for educators to collaborate with their peers. The challenges and changes that we face are much too large for us to tackle independently. We must effectively and efficiently harness the power of the internet to network nationally and globally with other educators in our profession to share best practice, develop curriculum, improve instruction, and promote professional growth. As Diane Ravitch recently stated in her new book, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education* (2010), decisions about schools should be made by

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educators, not foundations, corporations and politicians. The problems we face will require collaboration from home and help from each other to design curriculum and implement quality instruction. The nations that have excelled in the past decade have invested their resources in teaching, not testing consortiums.

FOR FURTHER READING



***The Death and Life of the Great American School System* by Diane Ravitch**

"...With passion and insight, Ravitch analyzes research and draws

on interviews with educators, philanthropists, and business executives to question the current direction of reform of public education...Ravitch analyzes the impact of choice on public schools, attempts to quantify quality teaching, and describes the data wars with advocates for charter and traditional public schools. Ravitch also critiques the continued reliance on a corporate model for school reform and the continued failure of such efforts to emphasize curriculum. Conceding that there is no single solution, Ravitch concludes by advocating for strong educational values and revival of strong neighborhood public schools. For readers on all sides of the school-reform debate, this is a very important book." ~Vanessa Bush, *Booklist* Reviews at amazon.com



***Leading in a Culture of Change* by Michael Fullan**

"Michael Fullan's work is remarkable. He masterfully captures how leaders can significantly improve their learning and performance, even in the uncontrollable, chaotic circumstances in which they practice. A tour de force."~Anthony Alvarado, chancellor of instruction, San Diego City Schools; Reviews at amazon.com.

STA CELEBRATIONS

BABIES

WEDDINGS

"A baby is like the beginning of all things—wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities."

~Eda J. Le Shan

"I love thee to the depth and breadth and height my soul can reach."

~Elizabeth Barrett Browning



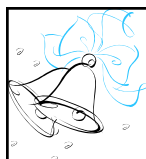
Congratulations to **Courtney Deming (MS)** and her husband, Justin, on the birth of their daughter, Emery Ellen, who was born on January 26, 2011. Emery weighed in 8 lbs. and is 19.5 inches long.



Congratulations to **Andrea Bryson (MS)** and her husband, Tom, on the birth of their son, Joseph Thomas, born on January 31, 2011. Joey weighed 8 lbs. and is 20 inches long.



Congratulations to **Adam Dolan (HS)** and his wife, Jess, on the birth of their daughter, Ava Elizabeth, who was born on January 22, 2011. Ava weighed 7 lbs. 12.5 oz. and is 21 inches long.



Congratulations to **Sylvia DeLaRosa (HS)** who married Freddy Rivera, her high school sweetheart, on December 20, 2010. Although the engagement was announced, the couple decided to surprise their parents and kids with a wedding ceremony held during Christmas vacation.



Congratulations to **Sue Hennessy (JE)** who married Mark Hopper on January 1, 2011.



Congratulations to **Lori DeMeo Hurley (JE)** who married Richard Hurley on October 17, 2010 at the Saratoga National Golf Club.

STA Raises over \$3900 for Breast Cancer



Melissa West (L) & Lorinda Gandrow (R) pose for a photo. Their collaborative efforts inspired many STA members to help fight for a cure for cancer.

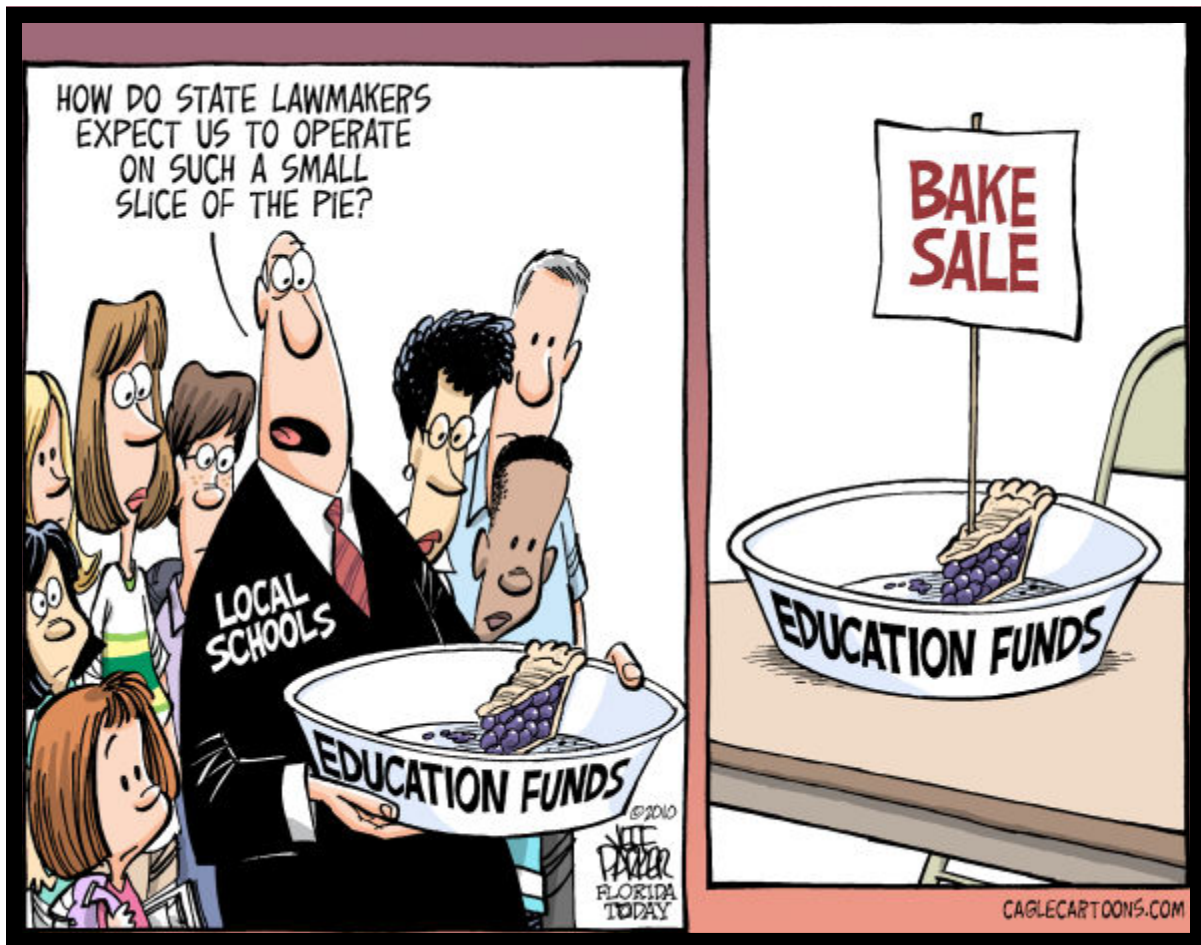


The final numbers are in! This year's "Making Strides for Breast

Cancer Walk" generated over \$3900 in donations from participants in the October, 2010 event.

Many thanks to Lorinda Gandrow and Melissa West for their organization of the event and motivating spirit. Also "thank you" to STA members and friends and families for generously donating to a very worthwhile cause.

KOOKY CARTOON



Obtained from <http://www.cagle.com/news/SchoolBudgetCuts/2.asp>.



Free Notary for STA Members

If you are an STA member and need a notary, please do not hesitate to contact the following STA members directly:

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