

Schalmont Teachers' Association

STATIC

President's Report

March 2007

Loved and Loathed

As teachers, we live under the microscope. Our society views us as a collective group held to a different standard. It has been this way since schools were formally organized and it continues to present day.

At one time, there were views of society that defined the way of life for teachers. Some of these included the hours of the day in which we would be required to be in school AND in our home and what we could read. If a woman, your marital status would determine your eligibility for employment. If a man, you were allowed one night a week for courting purposes. As we look at these views now, they seem absurd. However, as teachers, we have equally absurd views and expectations to contend with today. And each time we are involved with contract negotiations, these views and expectations slap us in the face.

Every three years, we find ourselves having to "fight" to maintain and make improvements in what has been achieved in our contract over the course of 30 years. And each time our negotiating team takes a seat at the bargaining table, we hear our contract is too rich; there is an implication that we are greedy, and STA must make concessions to secure a successor agreement. It is in the area of contract negotiations that I find us swimming in a sea of contradictions filled with irony and void of logic.

We work in a profession and State that demands we have a Master's Degree and remain current with practices and theory. We are invested in the school and community in which we work. We are staunch advocates for the children in our classrooms and in our community. And yet, when we channel this same dedication and commitment to ourselves as a collective group, we are bashed. How dare we work to have professional pay and benefits, support for professional development and —GASP— be part of an organization that advocates for teachers!

We work for a district that wants distinction within the Capital District when comparing student achievement and academic prowess, but panics when certain clauses in the contract distinguish themselves when compared to contracts in the surrounding area. It is some of these very clauses that enable teachers to deliver the gains in student achievement so desired by all, teachers included.

We work in a community where many do not understand or choose to forget that it is the collective group of professional teachers that gets things done, that implements the vision of the Board of Education, that works to help each and every individual child grow to reach his or her potential. We are not against the community; we are part of it. We are working to educate their children, and as teachers, we are proud of our contribution to the Schalmont community.

As we find ourselves bogged down in the negotiation process, we are reminded of the fact that we are loved as individual teachers and loathed as a collective group known as STA. This is unfortunate as we are one and the same.

Alisha Bahrmann

KNOW YOUR CONTRACT

Article VII

Section 7

Professional Development Plan (PDP)

Schalmont's PDP conforms to the requirement of a Professional Development Plan (PDP)- Subdivision (dd) of Section 100.2 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education.

The purpose of Schalmont's PDP is to improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers participate in substantial professional development in order to remain current with their profession.

The Schalmont Teachers' Institute, a collaboration between the district and bargaining unit, fulfills the State mandate through its:

- *policy board composition*
- *identification of teacher needs*
- *establishment of goals*
- *development and implementation of activities*
- *evaluation of program and operation*
- *articulation of professional development across grade levels*
- *alignment of professional development with NYS standards and assessments*

In the event that STI does not exist, the Policy Board shall assume the role and the responsibility of becoming the district's Professional Development Council. The Professional Development Plan is appended hereto as Appendix K and incorporated by express reference herein.

The New York State Regents requires the development of a Professional Development Plan (PDP) in every school district. The purpose is to ensure that teachers remain current and meet learning needs of students. The plan is to be developed by a team of teachers, administrators, parents, the Superintendent, college representatives, and professional development organizations. The majority of members of the team are teachers. The teachers' union must appoint those teachers.

The plan is intended to guide all professional development in the district, and it must contain the average professional development expected of all teachers, teaching assistants, and long term substitutes. Within the plan, professional development must be aligned with NY standards and assessments, student needs and teachers' needs. The plan also must describe the manner in which the impact of professional development on student achievement and teachers' practices is measured.

Required participation in professional development outside the regular school day is volitional, unless collectively bargained or compensated for. The plan must be adopted or rejected by the Board of Education each year. The fact that the regulations stipulate that teachers comprise the majority of the PDP Team is a direct result of your Vote/Cope dollars.

1st Vice President's Report

Kelly Carroll

NYSUT sponsored the annual Presidents' Conference at the Gideon Putnam in February, which both Alisha and I attended. During the weekend conference we heard about the achievement gap and learned more about Governor Spitzer's budget. His proposed budget calls for increased funding for charter schools (which negatively impacts home districts) finance reform, longer school days and longer school years, state-funded after school programs, universal pre-k, and cuts in property taxes.

In terms of the breakdown for Schalmont — \$8,750 is the proposed allotment for the Universal Pre-K Aid, \$22,360 for Software, Library and Textbook Aid, monies not previously budgeted; proposed increases for BOCES and Special Services Aid is \$17,681, (up 2.61%); also proposed for transportation aid may see an increase of 7.24%; overall if these proposals are passed, Schalmont will see a state aid increase of 2.67%.

HOUSSE

In the fall, members were asked to complete a HOUSSE/Highly Qualified Teacher form. The district has been working steadily to review those forms and recently informed me that they are soon to be signed and returned to teachers. Mariaville, Woestina, and most Jefferson teachers will be receiving them by the last week in March or first week in April. Shortly following that, the remainder of Jefferson and the Middle School can expect to be in receipt of theirs. SED has indicated that once a teacher is "highly qualified" the teacher remains highly qualified regardless of subsequent changes to the HOUSSE requirement. Remember that any completed HOUSSE does not have to be repeated. As with all certification documentation, please keep your signed copy of the form with your professional paperwork should there be a question in the future.

2nd Vice President's Report

Peter Rings

Planning to Retire this June???

There will be an important workshop to complete the paperwork required to open your 403-b account for your unused sick days.

- Monday June 11, 2007 at 3:30 PM in the Middle School Conference Room
- Contact Pete Rings @ the Middle School to confirm that you will be attending
355-6255 Extension 2055 or email prings@sabrenet.net

It is extremely important that you attend this session if you are retiring at the end of the school year. You can only receive your money through a 403-b account following the guidelines of the contract. All retirees should notify the district of their intention before attending this workshop. If you have not yet made your retirement decision, you may confidentially contact me for information. If you are unable to attend the workshop, an individual appointment must be set up with ING representative, Alan Yates.

MVP and CDPHP Members

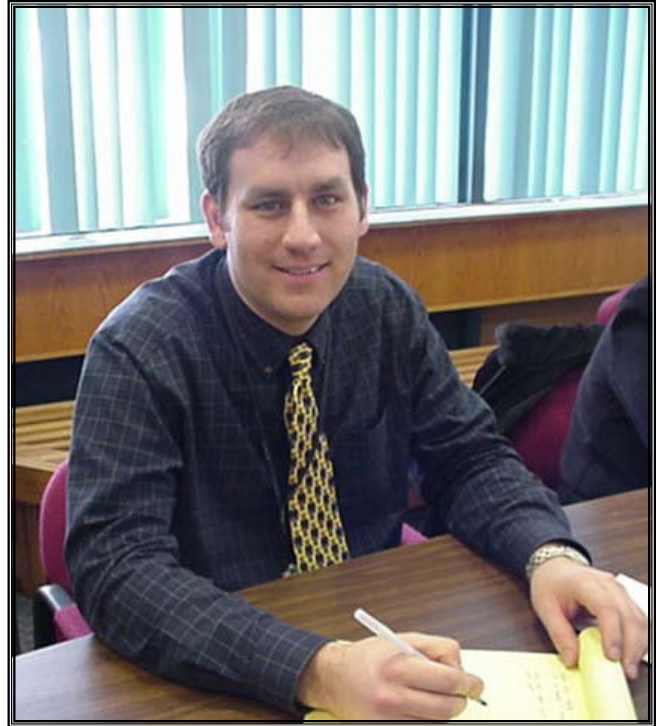
As a reminder, continue to save prescription receipts for MVP and CDPHP co-pays. Most pharmacies will give you a detailed list of your prescriptions costs. Ask your pharmacist to give you an accounting from July, 2006 to the present.

STI Names New Director

The Schalmont Teachers' Association and the Schalmont Central School District are pleased to formally announce the appointment of Bronson Knaggs as Director of the Schalmont Teachers' Institute.

Bronson graduated from the College of Saint Rose in 1999 with a B.A. in Social Studies Education. He earned his M.A. in History from The University at Albany in 2003. In his spare time, Bronson enjoys travel and has visited the Scandinavian countries, Greece, Italy and Western Europe.

Bronson has been employed in the district for 8 years and currently teaches Psychology, Sociology and Economics 12 in the high school. He has been the advisor to the Key Club, has served on numerous building and district committees, and currently chairs the STA Scholarship Committee.



As the new STI Director, Bronson will work with STI Policy Board Co-chairs Eileen Scheffer, Susan Cook; Ann Schulman, Technology Program Specialist, and the other members of the STI policy board to develop and implement professional development opportunities for STA members.

When the editors asked Bronson about his foresight with regard to our teacher center, he offered the following thoughts:

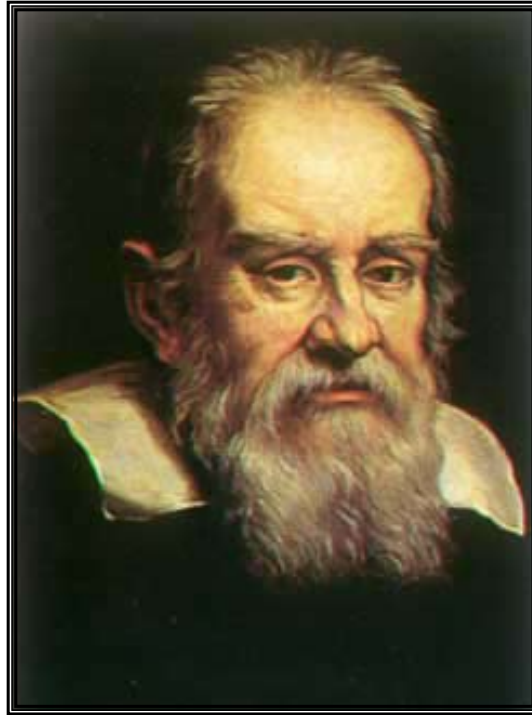
"What is the next step? When this question is answered with purpose and direction it leads us toward a goal. As educators we share a common goal--student achievement. How do we improve student achievement? While we may try hard alone, our results will be more effective when we work together. Every significant gain in student achievement is a collaborative effort that moves us toward a common goal.



As I thought of my first message to you as Director of the Schalmont Teachers' Institute, the expression "The Way Forward" kept coming to mind. Currently, the STI is working with the district to build a multi-year blueprint for professional development. As we finish this plan and map out our future, we want to know how we can assist you in making the next step on your professional development journey. In the coming weeks I want to have as many conversations as possible seeking input for the direction of the STI."

bkknaggs@sabrenet.net

Recently Announced: Galileo Award Poster Competition



Students are going global with *Geographic Information Systems*, and there is a poster competition to celebrate their accomplishments.

The state *GIS* Association is inviting middle-level and high school students and their teachers, and undergrad college students and their instructors, to participate in the first annual *Galileo Award Poster Competition*.

Participants submit electronic images of a poster or map at 400 dpi. The size is limited to 11x17 inches. Posters may be on any subject but should illustrate the students' use of *GIS* to effectively communicate a theme of a classroom topic. Entries are due April 27.

Details, including how to download the entry form, can be found at the following web address: www.nygis.org/galileo_award.htm.

The information above is from *New York Teacher*, March 8, 2007.



Here's a thought:
If the #2 pencil is the most popular, why isn't it #1?





It's a Baby Girl!

Congratulations to Bruce McAllister and his wife Debbie, on the birth of their baby girl, Kaylee Eileen, born January 17, 2007. Kaylee joins older brother Jacob, who just turned three years old.

Office Max Offers Discounts

Watch your mailbox for the March 29th New York Teacher! In it you will find your savings card for items purchased at Office Max. NYSUT Member Benefits Trust just endorsed a program through the company called Office Max Retail Connect program. With your card, you will receive 10 to 40 percent off designated items. The discounts are based on Office Max's NYS contract. Cardholders will get the lower price, whether it is the sale price or the contract price.

To begin using your card, bring it to the Print and Document Services counter at any Office Max where they will laminate it at no cost to you. If you are interested in online shopping, contact Member Benefits at 800.626.8101 or email benefits@nysutmail.org.

First New York Federal Credit Union Announces New Building Representatives

First New York Federal Credit Union would like to thank the two new First New York Building Representatives in the Schalmont School District. Becky Vojtisek will be representing Mariaville Elementary School and Eileen Rings will be the representative from Jefferson Elementary School. They will be available to teachers to answer questions regarding credit union membership, in addition to posting the monthly credit newsletters. Other building representatives include Cindy Tygert, High School; Carol Carelli, Middle School; Shari Lontrato, Woestina Elementary; and Laura Hungershafer, District Office.



In Recognition of her efforts in recruiting both Becky and Eileen, Carol Carelli was named "Credit Union Rep of the Month" for January.

Education is not the filling of a bucket but the lighting of a fire. - W.B. Yeats

STA Executive Board December 11, 2006 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Alisha Bahrmann, Kelly Carroll, Pete Rings, Mary Beth Flatley, Becky Vojtisek, Lori Bittner, Kathy Cathell, Laura Hemphill, Carol Carelli, Thom Borkowski, Deborah D'Arcangelis, Mike DiCocco, Becky Remis. Jason Beck, Carol Russell, Michael Foley.

I. Meeting called to order at 3:55 P.M.

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Becky Vojtisek and seconded by Deborah D'Arcangelis. Motion carried.

III. Reports

A. Treasurer (Mary Beth Flatley)

- Distributed budget and working budget

B. First Vice President (Kelly Carroll)

- Working on policy for Professional Development Plan (PDP) and with the Policy Board subgroup.

C. President (Alisha Bahrmann)

- Administrative/Association Liaison Committee
 - Met on December 7
 - Group discussed the topic of volunteers in schools - benefits, concerns and legal issues
 - Members felt it was a beneficial conversation
 - The committee will continue this discussion at the next meeting with a focus on procedures
- Grievance Update
 - Arbitration scheduled for April 27. This is regarding co-pays for prescriptions and hospitalization.

IV. Disaster Relief

Alisha shared specifics in the damage June Krone and her family have suffered as a result of the floods during the summer. In response to what still needs to be done in their recovery efforts, STA would like to organize a campaign to solicit voluntary donations from members. June wrote an account of what she has been through for the December STATIC. Alisha will prepare a flier for distribution in January.

V. Negotiation Update and Planning

STA Chief Negotiator, Mike Foley, talked about the first mediation session and what would follow. The Executive Board talked extensively about the process and planning for the future.

January 4 - negotiating day

January 24 - next meeting with mediator

VI. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 5:55 P.M. by Laura Hemphill and seconded by Carol Carelli.

STA Executive Board Meeting Minutes January 2, 2007

Members Present: Alisha Bahrmann, Kelly Carroll, Pete Rings, Becky Vojtisek, Lori Bittner, Kathy Cathell, Laura Hemphill, Carol Carelli, Thom Borkowski, Deborah D'Arcangelis, Mike DiCocco, Jason Beck, Kevin Meachem, Becky Remis, Michael Foley, Michele Williams

I. Meeting called to order at 3:50 P.M.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (December 11, 2006 meeting)

- Motion made by Becky Vojtisek and seconded by Deborah D'Arcangelis
- Motion carried.

III. REPORTS

- A. Treasurer (Mary Beth Flatley) Report given by Alisha Bahrmann
 - Nothing different from December's budget
 - Lori Bittner inquired about getting more itemized budget information (report of assets)

- B. Secretary (Michele Williams)
 - Received thank you cards from Pat Pangburn and Suzanne Mason
 - Card sent to Melanie Dorrance

- C. Vice President (Pete Rings)
 - Report of an unapproved financial person coming into buildings before vacation. They are supposed to get prior approval to do school visitations because we are trying to limit the number of people. Having flyers passed out by different representatives in mailboxes is okay.
 - The NYSUT contract for endorsement is out for bidding. We may want to see how that works out before endorsing anyone to come into the buildings.

- D. 1st Vice President (Kelly Carroll)
 - Certification/HOUSSE form letter is going out to members

- E. President (Alisha Bahrmann)
 - New meeting dates for the rest of the year were passed out.
 - Kelly and Alisha will be attending the local President's meeting on February 1st and 2nd.
 - The STA may want to consider developing/writing a resolution for the RA (Representative's Assembly). They are due by January 19 so we don't have enough time for this year but, perhaps, next year.
 - Tax guides will be made available to members. Fill out the interest card and send to Alisha.
 - LL Bean orders: A partial order is in. Help will be needed when full order comes in.
 - A flyer regarding donations for June Krone will be placed in mailboxes. Carol Carelli and Deborah D'Arcangelis will be the contact people for the Middle School. Kathy Cathell will be the contact person for Jefferson.
 - We are looking to schedule building rep. training for May. This will be open to current Executive Board members and anyone else interested in running for building rep.
 - Two TIP (Teacher Improvement Plans) are in place now. These are confidential. If a member asks a building rep. to attend a meeting with him/her, building reps. should be listeners, but decline participation in a conversation regarding TIPs. If a member wants a rep. to be present to sit in on a meeting, the rep. may and cannot be declined by a principal.
 - STI Policy Board training will be scheduled. Mike Moon is coming on January 11th and meeting with the Policy Board. Eileen Scheffer (STI Co-Chair), Mary Martini (Mentor Program), and Laurie Hughes (IDEA Grant) will give us updates in upcoming months.

STA Executive Board Meeting Minutes January 2, 2007 (continued)

IV. STA Appointed STI Co-Chair Position

Motion: "The STA Executive Board approve an annual stipend of \$1,000.00, retroactive to July 1, 2006, to be paid to the STA appointed Co-Chair of the STI Policy Board."

- Motion made by Kevin Meachem
- Seconded by Deborah D'Arcangelis

Discussion:

- Alisha Bahrmann states that the position takes a great deal of time and should receive some compensation considering what the STI makes available to/for teachers. It is a leadership position and STA has historically compensated leadership positions.
- Mike Foley noted that the STI Policy Board By-Laws states that the co-chairs for the Policy Board are the Superintendent and STA President or their designees.
- Carol Carelli asked if Mary Martini is paid for the Mentor program.
- Mike Foley states that payment provides a direct connection to the union and keeps the individual accountable to the union. It is a good means of checks and balances.

-Motion carried.

-Kelly Carroll asked if Policy Board training will be open to the Executive Board members or only the Policy Board members. Answer: Right now it will probably be open to Policy Board members because it may have to be a teleconference.

V. Follow-Up From December Planning Meeting

Motion: "The STA Executive Board approve the creation of a special committee known as the Crisis Committee. The charge of the committee is to work with the negotiating team and Executive Board to plan and coordinate concerted activities for the 2007-2008 school year as the negotiating team works to secure a successor agreement."

Motion made by Kathy Cathell and seconded by Carol Carelli.

Discussion:

- o Mike DiCocco asked who is responsible for coming up with the mission statement for the committee. Answer: The negotiating team
- o Mike Foley stated that the committee needs a chairperson and/or facilitator and that he or she should not be the STA president.
- o Carol Carelli suggests that having co-chairs for the committee may encourage people to take on the task.

- Motion carried.

VI. Building Concerns

-Carol Carelli shared the results from the tee shirt survey. We can't get Misses style tee with long sleeves. She will send out another survey and needs everyone's response.

VII. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn made by Mike DiCocco and seconded by Kevin Meachem.
- Motion carried.
- Meeting adjourned at 5:55 P.M.

STA Executive Board Meeting Minutes

February 5, 2007

Members Present: Alisha Bahrmann, Kelly Carroll, Pete Rings, Becky Vojtisek, Lori Bittner, Laura Hemphill, Carol Walker, Carol Carelli, Thom Borkowski, Deborah D'Arcangelis, Kevin Meachem, Becky Remis, Michael Foley, Michele Williams

I. Meeting called to order at 3:50pm.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (January 2, 2007)

- Motion made by Becky Remis and seconded by Kevin Meachem
- Motion carried.

III. REPORTS

- A. Treasurer (Mary Beth Flatley) Report given by Alisha Bahrmann
 - Checking account total will be the budget sheet
 - At the end of the year when accounts close we'll get the report of the checking account
 - Executive Board members are to fill out the STA Equipment Inventory sheet and give it to Mary Beth Flatley.
- B. Secretary (Michele Williams)
 - Received thank you card from Bill Conover
 - Card sent to Trish Dehn
- C. Vice President (Kelly Carroll)
 1. PDP work continues
 2. Jacki Bayle requested Woestina teachers turn in report cards the day before they were to go home. She was informed that turning report cards in early was not a practice at the elementary level.
 3. Kelly Carroll and Alisha Bahrmann attended the NYSUT sponsored Presidents' Conference at the Gideon Putnam. They heard about and received information regarding:
 - a. Achievement gap and Gov. Spitzer's budget. This budget calls for: increased funding for charter schools, finance reform, longer school days, longer school years, state-funded after school programs, universal pre-k, and cuts in property taxes. Schalmon is receiving \$8,750.00 allotted for Universal Pre-K Aid, and, \$22,360.00 for Software, Library and Textbook Aid (money not previously in the budget). BOCES and Special Services Aid increased \$17,681 (up 2.61%). Transportation aid with summer increased 7.24%. Overall, if these proposals are passed, Schalmon will see a state aid increase of 2.67%
 - b. March 2nd is the 10th Anniversary of NEA's "Read Across America." This program began as a one day celebration of Dr. Seuss' birthday and has become a year-round literacy campaign. More details can be found at www.nea.org/readacross/index.html
 - c. A NYSUT sponsored Health and Safety conference will be held at the Crown Plaza March 9-10th.
 - d. Regent's Report Card noting the changes that will be recommended with the Congressional delegation in anticipation of the Reauthorization of NCLB
- E. President (Alisha Bahrmann)
 1. Nicole Eschler (STI Director) resigned effective 2/9/07
 - Alisha read the resignation letter
 - From the union's perspective, Nicole was doing well; with all the things she needed to be doing.
 - Susan Cook and Eileen Scheffer (STI Co-Chairs) sent out a letter stating there would be a brief meeting prior to the meeting with NYSUT's Kathy Graham Kelly this month to determine the re-posting of the Director's position.
 2. Two reps. have resigned from the STI Policy Board. Katie LeRoy will move from being a Member At Large, to being Woestina's representative and Kelly Carroll will be the new Member At Large.

STA Executive Board Meeting Minutes February 5, 2007 (continued)

3. IDEA Grant

-the committee is exploring a flat rate for grants instead of the 1/200th of salary model currently being used.

-Laurie Hughes wants our feedback regarding going to a fixed rate

-STA's position is that the committee decides the rate as per contract language.

-Kevin Meachem suggested having it 1/200th of a certain step and that way as the contract improves so would the rate.

-Carol Carelli pointed out that summer school currently operates at 1/200th of step 5 which is a similar concept.

4. Talking Points for the month are in the packets.

Recommended Motion: "The STA Executive Board agenda for Monday, February 5, 2007 be amended to include approval of MOUs as agenda item 4. Remaining agenda items will be renumbered.

-Moved by: Carol Carelli

-Seconded by: Becky Vojtisek

-Motion carried.

IV. MOUs

A. STA members being asked to serve as Auditorium Technician by the District

B. University in High Schools Facilitator

C. Personnel Issue

Recommended Motion: The STA Executive Board approves the Memorandum of Understanding for the University in High Schools Facilitator, the Auditorium Technician and Personnel Issue.

-Moved by: Laura Hemphill

Seconded by: Becky Vojtisek

-Motion carried

V. Negotiations Update (Mike Foley)

o Mediation was on the 24th of January. The mediator chatted with both sides. The district maintained the same position as they held last February (15% health contribution, health plan reductions, reduce NBC stipend, longer teaching day for MS and HS, and token salary increase.)

o Next mediation session on March 13th.

VI. Building Concerns

-Carol Carelli will place the order for tees and asked if we will do a bagel breakfast for distribution.

Answer: These decisions will be turned over to the Crisis Committee.

VII. Adjournment

-Motion to adjourn made by Kelly Carroll and seconded by Michele Williams

-Motion carried.

-Meeting adjourned at 5:05pm.

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to Benefit
You!**



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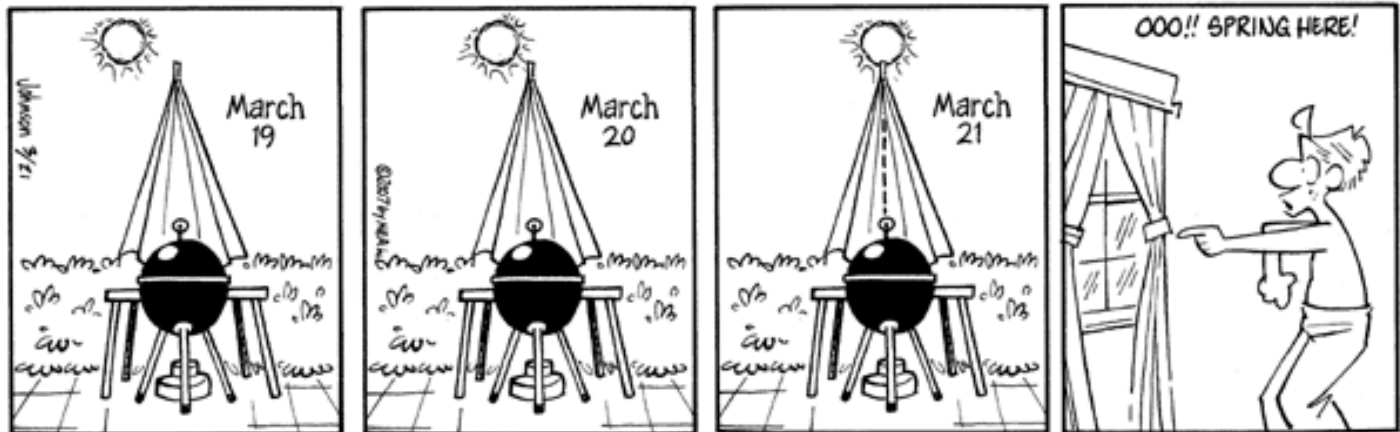
(800) 626-8101

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Some benefits may not be available in all local associations.

For information about these programs or about contractual expense reimbursement/endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits Trust or refer to your NYSUT Member Benefits Trust Summary Plan Description.

Kooky Cartoon



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Happy Spring!



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.

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