

April 2011

FOCUS

East Syracuse Minoa United Teachers



Volume XXIV Issue 7

Nichols' News

Now that ESM has put forth the budget plan for next year and people who are going to be laid off have been notified, we have put together some information and some meetings to inform anyone being laid off this year, and anyone who is concerned about next year. The starting point is to go to the NYSUT website at www.nysut.org and check out the information for Laid Off and Retrenched Workers.

http://www.nysut.org/cps/rde/xchg/nysut/hs_xsl/careers_12711.htm

Here at ESM there will be a District Meeting for laid off employees on Wednesday, May 18 at 4PM. NYSUT will hold a meeting at the Syracuse Regional Office here in Brittonfield on Wednesday, May 4 at 4:30PM. If you have questions please don't hesitate to call our office at Park Hill, 437.0109, the NYSUT Office at 431.4040, or our own District Personnel Office at extension 2641. Thanks in advance for being nice to Charlene...

Political Action can make a huge difference. But what can have an even greater impact is a lack of political action. We can all see what happened in Wisconsin and is continuing to happen in Ohio, Indiana, New Jersey and even here in New York City with collective bargaining rights, and seniority. We cannot afford to sit idly by and hope for the best anymore. We

must, each of us, reach down inside and decide what we can do to make a difference.

I can tell you what some of us have been doing. Last fall we rallied in Washington, D.C. We had an Extraordinary Committee of 100 Lobby Day in February and went to all of our Albany legislature's offices and put pressure on them to vote for education and against Tax Caps. We went again in March, and we will go again in May. We rallied in Albany, Syracuse, and New York's Times Square! But we didn't just march, wave signs, and make a lot of noise. We wrote letters and faxes, we made phone calls, we wrote letters to the editor, and we emailed. That constant barrage accomplished this: The proposed Tax Cap was taken out of the budget legislation. It is not a dead issue, but now it will have a separate (and we hope less hurried) debate. In addition, some money was restored to the aid to schools. This certainly was not as much money as we had hoped, but we will take it. This took a mighty effort by your colleagues, your union and many of yourselves. We are up against formidable money! They may be able to out-spend our Vote/Cope Dollars, but they cannot out-vote us. Or can they...

You see NYSUT has been keeping statistics on our voting record. Boards of Elections and School Districts keep track of who comes to the polls. While you are guaranteed

anonymity in your vote, it is possible to find out who bothers to vote. The sad truth is that as citizens, our voter turnout record is well below 20%. NYSUT members turn out in somewhat larger numbers, at just under 25%. At the Local President's Conference in New York we were given a presentation that showed that several close Senate races. Had NYSUT members turned out to vote, they easily could have swung those elections the other way. We are not losing money for education because we are losing elections; we are losing our colleagues to layoffs because we are not voting! Are you registered? Do you vote? Will you please bring a friend with you to the polls next time!

ESM United Teachers is currently working on setting up a Political Action Team. Many of you filled out the survey and sent it in to your building chair. But we will include it here for you again. Remember, you don't have to go to the rally; you can make a phone call. You don't have to get

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Nichols' News *continued...*

the bus, but you can make a sign for us to carry. You don't have to write a letter to the editor, but you can certainly support a position in the on-line forums. Although, I have to say reading those Syracuse.com forums can be pretty depressing...

We hope to be able to put groups of people together for rallies. People to send letters, postcards and faxes. We need you to come to the NYSUT office and make phone calls. Our first mission will be to get our school budget passed this coming Tuesday, May 17, 2011. Please vote "Yes!" on your school budget wherever you live!

Coming up on Friday, April 29, 2011, 3-5 pm, Congresswoman Ann Marie Buerkle will be at our NYSUT Regional office to talk about her position on Social Security. I suggest strongly that you attend and let her know how you feel about her voting record in this important matter.

How do you stay informed? Well, as they say, "There's an App For That!" Many of you are already on Facebook. I know I don't need to stress enough how important it is for you to check your security settings pretty often and be discreet in what you post in such a public place. But Facebook is a very popular social media, and one more place where you can stay in touch with what is happening with our State and National affiliates, NYSUT, NEA, and AFT. You can follow them on Facebook and on Twitter. I personally follow AFT President Randi Weingarten on Twitter and Joe Gibbons even put out Tweets from the NYSUT Representative assembly! You can follow NYSUT Executive VP Andrew Palotta on Twitter too.

In addition to Facebook, Twitter, and the NYSUT Website, NYSUT has a blog: <http://blogs.nysut.org/> Many of you are aware that long time NYSUT ED 8 Board of Direc-

tor and NYSTRS Teacher Rep, Mike Corn passed on this past month. Mike came to ESM many times to give Retirement Workshops and afterwards I would treat him to his favorite dinner of calamari salad at Rico's. During those dinners Mike would give me all kinds of great advice about unionism, negotiations, political action, and retirement info. He was always upbeat and I looked forward to seeing him at every event I went to. He will be sorely missed. However, Mike would want me to point out to you that even though our Governor Cuomo continues to complain about how much our school districts pay into our New York State Teachers Retirement System, and the ERS, he has a short memory... He neglects to talk about when the employer contribution rate was once at 0.36%! Not so long ago! Thanks Mike!

In addition to the Board of Education Elections and the Budget Vote this May, we also have our own ESM United Teachers Elections. Every two years we elect officers and delegates by secret ballot. The election will be held on Monday, May 23 all day in your buildings. If you would like to run for office, please let your building representative know so that your name can appear on the ballot. The deadline to get your name on the ballot is Monday, May 2, 2011. These offices are up for election this year:

President
Executive VP of Educational Issues
(The President and Exec. V.P. run as a ticket)

Vice President of Finance
Vice President of Public Relations
Vice President of Membership Service

In addition, we will hold elections for NYSUT Representative Assembly:

4 Delegates
up to 4 Alternates

NYS Teachers Retirement System-
2 delegates

(All NYSUT members, not just ESM UT members, are eligible to vote in this election.)

AFT Convention- 2 Delegates

NEA Convention-2 Delegates

Any member in good standing of the ESM United Teachers bargaining unit may run for these offices. Please let us know through email, or through your building representatives, of your intent to run for any office by Monday, May 2 so that your name may be placed on the ballot. Building Chairpersons will post this notice publicly and place in member's mailboxes.

Congratulations to this year's OCTA Award winners **Tess McKenney** for Service and **Sue Kowalski** for Emerging Leader. Please congratulate them when you see them!

This year's NYSUT Representative Assembly was held in New York City, April 7-9, 2011, immediately following the Local Presidents and Retirees Conference. We heard from our officers and our affiliated unions about what we are doing to deal with over 13,000 layoffs state wide, and what will come in the future. While we were seated in the assembly, it was announced that both NYS Commissioner of Education David Steiner and Mayor Bloomberg's appointee Kathy Black had both resigned. This was met with loud applause. We did not hear from many politicians, but we did hear from both Commissioner Steiner and Comptroller Tom Dinapoli. Dinapoli insists that labor came to his rescue in the last election and made the difference. As a thank you he promised to audit the Charter Schools...

Don't forget to sign up for Political Action on the attached form if you haven't already!

Thanks,

John

ESM Political Action Team

“How bad do things have to get before you register and vote?”

How mad do you have to get before you give to Vote/Cope?

How scared do you have to get before you ask a friend to join you?”

The truth is, we need a grass roots campaign to back up our union leadership both here in New York State, and nationally. We don't have enough boots on the street, enough bodies at the rallies. If you have been following the news, you are well aware that all public employees are under attack, and most especially teachers. It is time. Our voice needs to be heard! Please consider joining our ESM Political Action Team. This team will not be about political party, but about what is good for schools, education, and our own bargaining unit members. There are a variety of ways you can assist us. Please help.

___ Attend union meetings

___ Help pass the school budget

___ Distribute leaflets

___ Work on the fall elections

___ Sign petitions

___ Participate in a Facebook Group

___ Check the NYSUT & AFT Web sites Regularly

___ Make signs, stuff envelopes

___ Make phone calls (from home or phone bank)

___ Write articles for our newsletter

___ Develop a phone/email tree

___ Take pictures

___ Recruit other members to participate

___ Help with organizing activities

___ Contact my elected officials

___ Write articles for our website

___ Write letters to the editor

___ Participate in a candlelight vigil

___ Help with Voter Registration

___ Wear Buttons

___ March on Albany

___ Vote

My Name: _____

School Extension _____ Home: _____ Cell: _____ My School: _____

Looking Ahead

Important Dates to Remember:

April 29-Ann Marie Buerkle~ 3-5pm at NYSUT Office

May 2-Deadline to get on ballot for ESM United Teachers Elections

May 4-NYSUT Meeting at Syracuse Regional Office~4:30pm

May 13-EXPO

May 17-Budget Vote

May 18-District Meeting for laid off employees~4pm

May 23-ESM United Teachers Elections

June 7-Retirement Celebration

ESM Retiree Luncheon

May 5th

Rico's Ristorante (Rt 290)

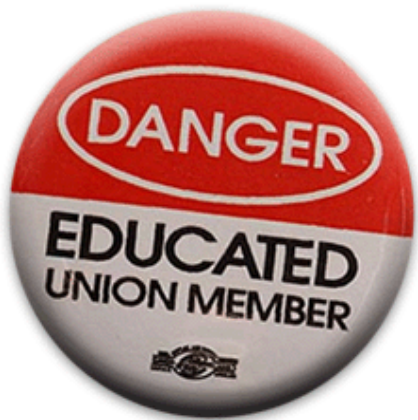
Social Hour: 12:00-1:00 pm

Lunch: 1:00 pm

Please contact Larry Loudis

with any questions at

656-3934.



If we did all the things we are capable of,
we would literally astound ourselves.

~Thomas A. Edison

JOGGING STROLLER

WANTED

Sandy Smith is looking for jogging stroller that is in good condition. Do you have one? If so, please contact Sandy at ssmith@esmschools.org.



*Please submit any items
you have for the next issue
of FOCUS to
Jami Mock at
jmock@esmschools.org*



New financial education services offer something for everyone

If you're looking for information on financial services available to you as a NYSUT member, NYSUT Member Benefits may have something just for you. Considerable efforts have been put forth in creating new printed material as well as new presentations. Both in-service and retiree members can benefit.

403(b) Field Guide. This booklet covers all aspects of 403(b) plans and includes information pertinent to members not yet contributing to a 403(b) plan, those who are contributing, those nearing retirement, and those already enjoying retirement.

To get the free guide, you can view and print a copy from the Member Benefits website, www.memberbenefits.nysut.org, hit the "Contact" option on the site to send an e-mail request, or call **800-626-8101** for a copy to be sent to you.

403(b) Provider-Specific Workshop. Member Benefits contracted with the provider of its endorsed Financial Counseling Program, Stacey Braun Associates, Inc., to conduct these workshops upon request from local leaders. The workshop covers detailed information on five 403(b) providers chosen by the local leader from a list of 10 popular 403(b) providers. Workshops review the features of each plan, comparing fees and benefits. These workshops are designed for in-service members.

Workshops have a registration fee of \$20 per participant and a minimum requirement of 30 participants. A local could schedule this workshop as a webinar for a fee of \$250.

Workshops will not address specific questions pertaining to an individual's 403(b) plan. Members with questions regarding personal 403(b) accounts or other financial planning issues will be directed to speak with their 403(b) adviser or their financial planner. For those who don't have an adviser or planner, information on the endorsed Financial Counseling Program will also be available.

Financial Planning Puzzle Workshop. Today's economy has clarified the need for a financial plan; unfortunately, for many, beginning a financial plan remains a daunting task.

This two-hour workshop, designed for in-service members, outlines the process, covering cash management, risk management, savings, retirement and estate planning.

The Challenging Times of Financial Management – The Retirement Years. Financial planning doesn't stop at retirement. This one-hour presentation discusses the various investment options you may face during retirement along with helpful information regarding your 403(b) plan, Social Security benefits, income taxes and more.



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

Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

Mar/Apr. '11

Steve Pacelli~Licensed NYS Home Inspector

If you are buying a home, call Steve at Pine Grove for your home inspection.



Did You Know?

You Are Eligible to Join the 403(b) Plan

You are eligible to join your employer's 403(b) plan. The following are some of the benefits of participating in the 403(b) plan:

- ◆ Save money for retirement or other purposes.
- ◆ Realize immediate tax benefits by making pre-tax contributions -- Deducted automatically from each paycheck Defer up to the maximum amount (which is generally \$16,500 or less); possibly more for long-term employees or those employees over age 50
- ◆ Allow your contributions to grow tax-deferred for as long as they remain in the Plan.
- ◆ Diversify your account by selecting from a variety of mutual fund options.
- ◆ Access your account by using a loan (if available under your Plan's provisions).



Take responsibility for your financial future now!

Contact: Kitrina Vickery
Registered Representative

First Investors Corporation
5795 Widewaters Parkway
Syracuse, NY 13214
(123) 456-7890

Mutual funds are subject to market risk, which causes their value to fluctuate. Shares, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than their original cost.

For more information on any First Investors products, you may obtain a free prospectus by contacting your financial services representative, writing to the address below, calling (800) 423-4026 or visiting our website at www.firstinvestors.com. You should consider the investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses carefully before investing. The prospectus contains this and other information, and should be read carefully before you invest or send money. An investment in a product is not a bank deposit and is not insured or guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) or any other government agency.

10-00708

[Rev. 2011]



First Investors 110 Wall Street New York NY 10005 www.firstinvestors.com

The dream begins with a teacher who believes in you, who tugs and pushes and leads you to the next plateau, sometimes poking you with a sharp stick called "truth."

~Dan Rather

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CONTACT INFO: Call for price info. Please refer to this ad.
Lois Hamrak - Home- 315-492-2640
Loka1230@aol.com



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