

# FOCUS



Volume XXV, Issue 4, December 2011

## Nichols' News

Last month I posed some questions about the Occupy Wall Street movement. I didn't hear back from anybody, but there certainly wasn't any lack of news on that front. Many cities cracked down on the tent cities and had police drive people out of the parks they were camped out in. However, several other interesting things happened.

First, our governor here in New York reached a compromise with the Legislature in Albany to tax multi-millionaires. Would that have happened without the ruckus the protestors outside his office have been raising? Maybe.

Second, President Obama is playing hardball with Congress about extending unemployment benefits and possibly even dealing with tax cuts for the middle class. That scenario hasn't finished playing out yet, so I guess we shall see if the Occupy movement has had an effect. Frankly, I am not holding my breath.

East Syracuse Minoa United Teachers is continuing to build coalitions with the other bargaining units here at ESM.

In addition to meeting with the other bargaining unit presidents, I recently had the opportunity to speak to the Board of Education on behalf of the School Related Professionals. I wore my Lime



Green SRP shirt and talked about how our unit has Binding Arbitration. Last month I printed the speech I gave, so you probably already know the information. In addition, we are applying with the SRP unit to the summer NYSUT Local Action Project program. The larger point here is that we must all work together.

December's most asked question is:

Will there be layoffs this year?

The truth is nobody knows yet. We are still waiting for the Governor's budget. Once we have that we will know what ESM has to do to make our budget. While it is nice to know there may be more tax revenue to put toward schools, we have all seen the governor give us aid on one line and take it away with an "adjustment" on another line. Wall Street has been pleading poverty. I'm guessing the bonuses might not exceed 6 figures this year...

This time of year we see a lot of top ten lists. So here goes:

### Top Ten Things I Hope to Hear in 2012:

10. "And thus ends the last presidential debate..."
9. "Nobody understands why gas prices are dropping so fast, but we are all filling up!"
8. "Bank error in your favor..."
7. "Honey, I know the TV was pretty big, but this one is so much bigger I knew you would want it!"
6. "Mr. Nichols! I got into college!"
5. "My goodness it looks like you have lost a lot of weight!"
4. "My goodness, you have lost too much weight. You need to eat more..."
3. "Scientists have finally discovered an inexpensive cure for....."
2. "Snow Day!"
1. "Thanks for being my teacher."

Have a safe Holiday Season.

Thanks,

*John*

## DAYCARE Openings

State licensed  
Home Day Care  
Provider in the  
North Syracuse  
School District  
currently has  
openings for  
children 2 years  
and up.

Jacquelyn's Home  
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child care for over  
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FOCUS is a publication of East Syracuse-Minoa

All I Needed to  
Know About Life I  
learned from Santa

Encourage people to  
believe in you.

Always remember who's  
naughty and who's nice.

Don't pout.

It's as much fun to give  
as it is to receive.

Some days it's ok to feel  
a little chubby.

Make your presents  
known.

Always ask for a little  
bit more than what you  
really want.

Bright red can make  
anyone look good.

Wear a wide belt and  
no-one will notice how  
many pounds you've  
gained.

If you only show up  
once a year, everyone  
will think you're very  
important.

Whenever you're at a  
loss for words, say:  
"HO, HO, HO!"



Please forward any items  
you would like to be  
included in the next issue  
of FOCUS to  
Jami Mock at  
[jmock@esmschools.org](mailto:jmock@esmschools.org)

**Stephen Pacelli**  
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## ESM Retirees Luncheon Dates

Always the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of odd school-year months.

Upcoming dates: Jan. 5, March 1, May 3

Rico's Ristorante (Rt 290)

Questions-call Larry Loudis 656-3934

## First They Came....

"**First they came...**" is a famous statement attributed to pastor [Martin Niemöller](#) (1892–1984) about the inactivity of German [intellectuals](#) following the [Nazi](#) rise to power and the purging of their chosen targets, group after group. [Martin Niemöller](#) was a German pastor and theologian born in Lippstadt, Germany, in 1892. Niemöller was an anti-Communist and supported Hitler's rise to power at first. But when Hitler insisted on the supremacy of the state over religion, Niemöller became disillusioned. He became the leader of a group of German clergymen opposed to Hitler. Unlike Niemöller, they gave in to the Nazis' threats. In 1937 he was arrested and eventually confined in [Sachsenhausen](#) and [Dachau](#). His crime was "not being enthusiastic enough about the Nazi movement." Niemöller was released in 1945 by the Allies. He continued his career in Germany as a clergyman and as a leading voice of penance and reconciliation for the German people after [World War II](#). His statement, sometimes presented as a poem, is well-known, frequently quoted, and is a popular model for describing the dangers of [political apathy](#), as it often begins with specific and targeted fear and hatred which soon escalates out of control.

First they came for the [communists](#),  
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a communist.

Then they came for the [trade unionists](#),  
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a trade  
unionist.

Then they came for the [Jews](#),  
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a Jew.

Then they came for me  
and there was no one left to speak out for me.

# Education Beyond the Classroom



## Honeywell Educators @ Space Academy

Each summer, hundreds of middle school science and mathematics teachers attend the Honeywell Educators @ Space Academy program at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama. Since 2004, over 1,600 educators from 44 countries, 50 U.S. states and two territories have graduated from the program. Scholarships for these educators are underwritten by Honeywell Hometown Solutions and through contributions from more than 1,700 Honeywell employees.

During the program, teachers participate in 45 hours of intensive classroom, laboratory, and astronaut-style training and simulations focusing on space science and space exploration. Methods for presenting scientific concepts and hands-on learning sessions are used extensively to make science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) lessons more relevant and effective. All lessons and activities are correlated to National Science and Mathematics Standards and are designed to be replicated in classrooms around the world.

Applications available at <http://educators.honeywell.com>



**Honeywell**

*"This was a one-of-a-kind experience, which I hope that anyone interested in astronomy and space exploration gets the chance to participate in. I was blown away by my experiences in Huntsville and cannot wait to bring what I learned back to my 7th grade science classroom, especially now that I will be teaching astronomy again come the fall."*

**Arl Joniec**  
 Randolph Community Middle School  
 Randolph, Massachusetts

## The Scholarship Includes:

- Tuition for the 5-day Space Academy program at U.S. Space Camp in Alabama
- Roundtrip airfare • Meals and double occupancy accommodations
- Program materials • Flightsuit



## Going to Space and Beyond

Find an application and more information about the **2012 Honeywell @ Space Academy for Educators** program at <http://educators.honeywell.com>.



**Solveig Harren**  
 U.S. Space & Rocket Center  
[Honeywell@spacecamp.com](mailto:Honeywell@spacecamp.com)

*"I left the academy with an overflowing tool chest of ideas and resources, but more importantly an excitement about how I can share my experiences with my students. In addition, I now have connections with equally motivated teachers around the world. A one-week investment has multiplied into at least a year's worth of educational impact for this teacher."*

**Christianne Ottinger**  
 Glen Acres Elementary  
 West Chester, Pennsylvania



**Deadline for Applications is December 31, 2011**

Applicants will be assigned one of two sessions: June 15-21, 2012, or June 22-28, 2012.

## Grandma and Santa Claus

I remember my first Christmas adventure with Grandma. I was just a kid. I remember tearing across town on my bike to visit her on the day my big sister dropped the bomb: "There is no Santa Claus," she jeered. "Even dummies know that!"

My Grandma was not the gushy kind, never had been. I fled to her that day because I knew she would be straight with me. I knew Grandma always told the truth, and I knew that the truth always went down a whole lot easier when swallowed with one of her "world-famous" cinnamon buns. I knew they were world-famous, because Grandma said so. It had to be true.

Grandma was home, and the buns were still warm. Between bites, I told her everything. She was ready for me. "No Santa Claus?" she snorted. "Ridiculous! Don't believe it. That rumor has been going around for years, and it makes me mad, plain mad!! Now, put on your coat, and let's go."

"Go? Go where, Grandma?" I asked. I hadn't even finished my second world-famous cinnamon bun.

"Where" turned out to be Kerby's General Store, the one store in town that had a little bit of just about everything. As we walked through its doors, Grandma handed me ten dollars. That was a bundle in those days. "Take this money," she said, "and buy something for someone who needs it. I'll wait for you in the car." Then she turned and walked out of Kerby's.

I was only eight years old. I'd often gone shopping with my mother, but never had I shopped for anything all by myself. The store seemed big and crowded, full of people scrambling to finish their Christmas shopping.

For a few moments I just stood there, confused, clutching that ten-dollar bill, wondering what to buy, and who on earth to buy it for. I thought of everybody I knew: my family, my friends, my neighbors, the kids at school, people who went to my church.

I was just about thought out, when I suddenly thought of Bobby Decker. He was a kid with bad breath and messy hair and he sat right behind me in Mrs. Pollock's grade-two class. Bobby Decker didn't have a coat. I knew that because he never went out to recess during the winter. His mother always wrote a note, telling the teacher that he had a cough, but all we kids knew that Bobby Decker didn't have a cough; he didn't have a good coat. I fingered the ten-dollar bill with growing excitement. I would buy Bobby Decker a coat!

I settled on a red corduroy one that had a hood to it. It looked real warm, and he would like that. "Is this a Christmas present for someone?" the lady behind the counter asked kindly, as I

....continued

## **Grandma and Santa Claus...continued**

laid my ten dollars down. "Yes, ma'am," I replied shyly. "It's for Bobby." The nice lady smiled at me, as I told her about how Bobby really needed a good winter coat. I didn't get any change, but she put the coat in a bag, smiled again, and wished me a Merry Christmas. That evening, Grandma helped me wrap the coat (a little tag fell out of the coat, and Grandma tucked it in her Bible) in Christmas paper and ribbons and wrote, "To Bobby, From Santa Claus" on it. Grandma said that Santa always insisted on secrecy. Then she drove me over to Bobby Decker's house, explaining as we went that I was now and forever officially, one of Santa's helpers.

Grandma parked down the street from Bobby's house, and she and I crept noiselessly and hid in the bushes by his front walk. Then Grandma gave me a nudge. "All right, Santa Claus," she whispered, "get going." I took a deep breath, dashed for his front door, threw the present down on his step, pounded his door and flew back to the safety of the bushes and Grandma. Together we waited breathlessly in the darkness for the front door to open. Finally it did, and there stood Bobby.

Fifty years haven't dimmed the thrill of those moments spent shivering, beside my Grandma, in Bobby Decker's bushes. That night, I realized that those awful rumors about Santa Claus were just what Grandma said they were--ridiculous. Santa was alive and well, and we were on his team.

I still have Grandma's Bible, with the coat tag tucked inside: \$19.95.

May you always have LOVE to share,  
HEALTH to spare, and FRIENDS that care.  
And may you always believe in the magic of Santa Claus!



## Adjusting to Winter Behind the Wheel

An Important Message from Liberty Mutual:



### Adjusting to Winter Conditions Behind the Wheel

Because driving in winter conditions is fraught with hazards such as icy roads, poor visibility and the threat of snowstorms, ask yourself the following questions before you get behind the wheel and put your safety at risk.

**Is this trip absolutely necessary?** If you can wait out a storm or until roads are cleared, don't take the risk.

**Do I need to drive a car to get to my destination?** Consider public transportation if it's available.

**Are roads icy?** If so, stay put. Black ice is especially slick and dangerous on bridges and overpasses.

**Is visibility okay across my entire route?** Check local news stations or online forecasts for up-to-the-minute weather information for your final destination and locations along the way.

**How can I make the trip safer?** Give your itinerary to family and friends. Scrape the entire windshield and windows. Brush snow from the hood, trunk and headlights. Don't speed. Don't travel at night. Use main highways whenever possible.

**How can I maintain my vehicle to keep my drive safe?** Fill your coolant system with antifreeze. Clean the inside of your windshield to prevent glare. Keep your gas tank at least half full. Use snow tires or chains as directed.

**Do I have what I need if there's an emergency?** If not, build an emergency kit for your vehicle that includes a flashlight, batteries, jumper cables, flares, mobile phone charger, blankets, and battery-operated radio. And stow an ice scraper, brush and snow shovel in your trunk.

For more information, please contact your local  
Liberty Mutual Sales Representative.

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