

# FOCUS



**Volume XXIV, Issue 9, June 2011**

## Nichols' News

Congratulations to all our friends who are about to cross that bridge into Retirement! We had a great District-Wide Retirement Celebration at the Doubletree. The food was great, the company was pleasant, and the honorees were special. We had a great time!

I want to especially single out our ESM United Teachers Webmaster, Brenda Almonte for recognition. Brenda designed and has managed our current site for many years now. Our website has evolved over time, and we look to continue to change and improve. Thanks Brenda!

This past May we held elections for ESM School Board and also a Budget Vote. ESM had a remarkable "YES!" vote and both our endorsed candidates; Patty Puma and Allyson Rumschik were elected.

Speaking of Political Action. Shelly Chizzonite has graciously accepted the co-chair, with Becky Grossman, of our Political Action Team. Many of you have signed up for various things that you would be willing to help with



**Tess McKenney - Service Award**



**Sue Kowalski – Emerging Leader**

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by way of political action. There are many levels of participation, and we will always take on more volunteers. Becky and Shelly will be keeping you up-to-date on what is going on and what you can do to help. Thanks to both for stepping up!

APPR! Everyone is worried about it. With summer approaching so fast and the new regulations recently passed by the New York State Board of Regents, we are all on edge about what will happen.

NYSUT has taken the position that the regulations proposed

by the governor and passed by the Regents are in direct contradiction of the law passed last year. The law that was passed so we could get Race To The Top money, and lots of it. You may remember that NYSUT worked with the State Education Department to shape that law, which included some last minute modifications to the Tier V retirement plan. NYSUT has always supported improving teacher preparation and teacher assessment. However, basing 40% of your professional review on standardized testing, rather than the original 20% negotiated, is really a disaster for educators.

So why did the Board of Regents appoint Deputy Commissioner John King as new commissioner? Why did they pass regulations that contradict the law? Why did Commissioner David Steiner resign? Why did NYC School Chancellor Catherine Black resign? Why 40% instead of 20%? Why the accelerated schedule to start things in September and not on the original time line? Boy you ask a lot of questions!

Let me try to answer some of these. The Board of Regents appointed King because they didn't want to start a new search for someone from the outside. They did not want the Governor to get more involved in the process. So, as the saying goes, "The devil you know..." There are several objections to King: He is a charter school advocate, which many of us in public education think is a scam to challenge teacher's unions. Also, he was the one who did the "No Apologies" tour of New York State last summer explaining why the state education department was changing the passing scores, or "Cut Scores" on the ELA exam after the test had already been given and scored months before. You may remember that both Dr. DeSiato and I attended that presentation, and both challenged the rationale. Shenanigans!

Commissioner Steiner had to give New York City mayor



"I went to summer school and helped a few teachers decide not to teach there next summer."

Bloomberg special dispensation to hire Catherine Black to run NYC's education department because she had no experience in schools. At her resignation, after only a few months, she said it was like learning Russian while you were going to meetings in Russian, and giving speeches in Russian. I guess not everyone is cut out for education... No offense to you Russian speakers out there...

When Black resigned, all but admitting she was in over her head, Steiner resigned within the week. Draw your own conclusions about that. But it is safe to say that despite all Steiner's efforts to get us the Race To The Top money, many of us have buyer's remorse. We did more to save jobs this year with our contract concessions, (Thanks again Governor Cuomo...) than RTTT did for us.

Governor Cuomo is pushing for schools to allow 40% of a teacher's evaluation instead of the negotiated 20%, as well as pushing for the accelerated timetable. What might happen is that some schools will be too lazy to work out an APPR plan that uses 20% standardized test scores, 20% other local testing, and 60% observations and other locally designed methods. We are lucky because ESM has been out in front of most schools in the state. In addition to an APPR plan that is already based on the Charlotte Danielson work, we have rubrics for other groups such as Nurses, School Counselors, and even Administrators.

Nobody else even has one for administrators! Why should you care? Because the principal's APPR is tied very tightly to the teacher's APPR. If we don't succeed, they don't succeed. Once again, we are lucky that our local process is not designed as a "Gotcha!" But, as has been said before in this column, the details about what happens when a person doesn't meet their performance goals are going to be where we spend the most time negotiating. Both sides know this and we want to craft something that will really work for all of us.

This month the Madison County Educator's Association met at the Brewster Inn for the year-end dinner. At that time, each school received a \$50 award to be given to the

valedictorian at their respective schools. The Onondaga County Teachers Association meeting will be a webinar with NYSUT about APPR, as well as a meeting with Regent Anthony Bottar. We have several pointed questions for him...I imagine he will be uncomfortable...

The hot weather certainly showed us our shortcomings when it comes to facilities! If your room is on the second floor of a building with no air conditioning, you were suffering. But more than that, your students were suffering! I took a tour of the top floor at Fremont and I think everyone there deserves combat pay. Thanks to the people who helped out by bringing in fans, opening their cooler rooms to other classes, and being flexible and working together through a tough time.

This year my oldest daughter Becky is graduating from Oneida High School. Our family has been doing all the things you do when you have a Senior. Senior pictures, Senior Dinner Dance, (apparently this means hours of dress shopping...) Senior Skip Day Argument. (She was not allowed to skip.) Planning the Graduation Party. (another dress required...) I know many of you have gone down this road before me, and many of you will follow. But I have to say that 19 years ago when Becky was born, none of us ever anticipated we would be putting up a tent in

the yard for her party in June of 2011. Congratulations to all who have a grad in the family, high school or college, and good luck to your children. I wish them well! I think mine is planning to live at home....

ESM will be in charge of the NYSUT booth at the State Fair on Monday, August 29, 2011. So please stop by and visit, we would love to see a friendly face. We'll be looking for you REO Speedwagon fans...

Have a great summer!

~ John



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



### **Top Ten Most Wanted**

Little Johnny's kindergarten class was on a field trip to their local police station where they saw pictures, tacked to a bulletin board, of the 10 most wanted criminals.

One of the youngsters pointed to a picture and asked if it really was the photo of a wanted person.

"Yes," said the policeman.

"The detectives want very badly to capture him."

Little Johnny asked, "Why didn't you keep him when you took his picture?"

# Retirement Dinner



# 2011 Scholarship Winners!

This year the ESM United Teachers are proud to announce and congratulate these eight graduating seniors on their outstanding accomplishments and receiving this scholarship:

(Letters and Checks will be mailed directly to them by ESMUT/Cindy Todd)

**Margaret Kolb** (Kathy Kolb @ PG)

**Danielle Russo** (Teresa Russo @ HS)

**Christopher Beaudet** (Janis Beaudet @ Minoa)

**Kyle Rogers** (Cindy Rogers @ PG)

**Patrick Owens** (Patricia Auger @ PG)

**William Gabriel** (Gina Gabriel @ Park Hill)

**Ashley Ristau** (Karen Ristau @ ESE)

**Tanner Squires** (Steve Squires @HS).

## Congratulations to all!

# Top 10 To Do's for Teachers During Summer Vacation

## *Use the Summer to Prepare for Next Year*

*By Melissa Kelly, About.com Guide*

Summer vacation is a time for teachers to recharge and refocus as they prepare for another group of students. Here are ten to do's that teachers can work on during this summer vacation.

### **1. Get Away From It All**

A teacher must be "on" every day of the school year. In fact, as a teacher you often find it necessary to be "on" even outside of the school setting. It is essential to take the summer vacation and do something away from school.

### **2. Try Something New**

Expand your horizons. Take up a hobby or enroll in a course away from your teaching subject matter. You will be surprised how this can enhance your teaching in the coming year. Your new interest may be the thing that connects with one of your new students.

### **3. Do Something Just for Yourself**

Get a massage. Go to the beach. Go on a cruise. Do something to pamper and take care of yourself. Taking care of body, mind, and soul is so important to having a fulfilling life and will help you recharge and restart for next year.

### **4. Reflect on Last Year's Teaching Experiences**

Think back over the previous year and identify your successes and your challenges. While you should spend some time thinking about both, concentrate on the successes. You will have greater success improving upon what you do well than focusing on what you did poorly.

### **5. Be Informed About Your Profession**

Read the news and know what's happening within education. Today's legislative acts could mean a big change in tomorrow's classroom environment. If you are so inclined, get involved.

### **6. Maintain Your Expertise**

You can always learn more about the topic you teach. Check out the latest publications. You might find the seed for an excellent new lesson.

### **7. Choose a Few Lessons to Improve**

Pick 3-5 lessons that you feel need improvement. Maybe they just need enhancing external materials or maybe they just need to be scrapped and rewritten. Spend a week rewriting and rethinking these lesson plans.

### **8. Assess Your Classroom Procedures**

Do you have an effective tardy policy? What about your late work policy? Look at these and other classroom procedures to see where you can increase your effectiveness and decrease time off task.

### **9. Inspire Yourself**

Spend some quality time with a child, your own or someone else's. Read about famous educators and inspirational leaders. Check out these inspirational books and inspirational movies. Remember why you got into this profession to begin with.

### **10. Take a Colleague to Lunch**

It's better to give than to receive. As the school year approaches, teachers need to know how much they are appreciated. Think of a fellow teacher who inspires you and let them know how important they are to students and to you.

## Summer is the perfect time

Summer is the perfect time for so many things – gardening, vacationing, swimming, catching up on reading, and whatever else one wants to do but can't seem to find the time for during the school year. That's why summers seem to go so fast, because we're so busy!

But summer is also the perfect time to pay attention to those things that we don't have time for during the rest of the year, such as, (groan), our finances. It's so easy to go day-to-day without making any long-term financial plans, setting up a budget, saving for a rainy day, etc.

Fortunately, the **Financial Counseling Program** endorsed by *NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation* can be of great assistance in getting your financial house in order.

When you enroll in the plan, you'll receive toll-free access to certified financial planners and registered investment advisors who will address your various financial questions and situations. You'll also have options for in-person consultations. And you have the added comfort of knowing these professionals are there solely to help you, not to line their pockets by pushing you in one direction or another.

**These financial professionals do not sell any financial products;** hence, they receive no

commissions from mutual funds, brokerage firms, insurance companies or any other third party. These are the professionals of Stacey Braun Associates, Inc., the provider of the Financial Counseling Program.

Stacey Braun Associates is an investment advisory company established in 1977. It provides fee-based

professional financial counseling.

The plan also includes no-cost written summaries or reports upon request; access to Stacey Braun's password-protected website, which features all kinds of helpful information and calculators; an e-mail helpdesk; and free admission to regional educational workshops.

In addition to the plan described here, a

**403(b) Limited Financial Counseling Program** is available.

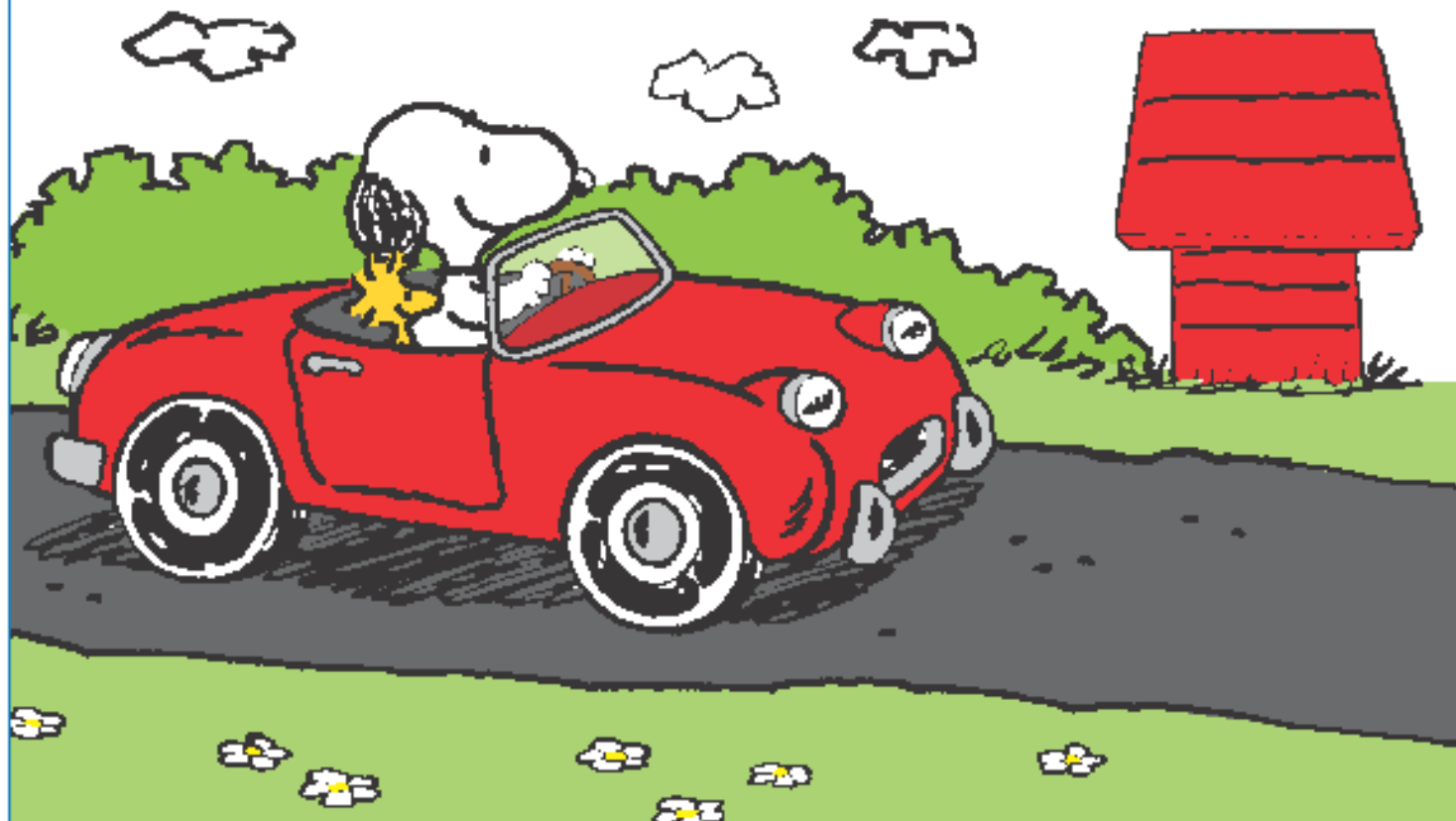
So why not take a little time out of your busy summer and see how you can benefit from the Financial Counseling Program?

For more information, call NYSUT Member Benefits at **800-626-8101** or visit [www.memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://www.memberbenefits.nysut.org).



*For information 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.*

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### APPETIZERS

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**Loaded Fries:** French fries topped with crispy bacon and cheddar cheese sauce. 5.99

**Beef Empanadas:** Half moon shaped pastries filled with savory beef. Served with roasted garlic chipotle dressing. 6.99

**Artichoke Dip:** Fresh baby spinach, artichoke hearts, and a hint of garlic blended with cheddar, mozzarella, and cream cheese. Served with crispy tortilla chips. 6.99

**Utica Greens:** Braised escarole and romaine mix sautéed with garlic, onions, hot cherry peppers, and pancetta. Topped with parmesan cheese. 6.99

**Rotisserie Buffalo Wings:** 10 jumbo ohtoken wings roasted and then deep fried to a crisp perfection. Served with celery and blue cheese. Choose from mild, medium, hot, or barbeque. 7.99

**Fried Calamari:** Calamari dipped in a light batter then deep fried. Served with a warm homemade marinara sauce. 7.99

**Shrimp Ceviche:** Most famous Latin shrimp cocktail marinated in a citrus sauce. 7.99

**Crab Cakes:** Jumbo lump Maryland blue crab meat with a blend of fresh herbs and red chili oil. 7.99

### SANDWICHES & BURGERS

**Turkey Burger:** Seasoned turkey burger served on a rosemary ciabatta roll with a roasted garlic chipotle mayo. Topped with lettuce and tomato. 6.99 Add cheese .75

### SOUPS & SALADS

**French Onion Soup:** Baked French onion with croutons and melted Swiss cheese. 4.99

**Mediterranean Seafood Soup:** Fresh shrimp, cod, calamari, and shellfish in a delectable seafood saffron broth. 5.99

**House Salad:** Fresh romaine and mixed mesclun, topped with grape tomatoes, red onions, carrots, black olives, cucumbers, and croutons. Served with your choice of dressing. 4.99

**Mixed Mesclun Salad:** Fresh mesclun with segments of mandarin oranges gently mixed in a passion fruit vinaigrette. 4.99

**Classic Caesar Salad:** Crisp romaine hearts tossed in our own Caesar dressing and finished with parmesan cheese and croutons. 5.99 Add grilled ohtoken for \$2.99

### PIZZAS

**Cheese Pizza:** A traditional favorite served with marinara sauce and topped with piping hot mozzarella cheese. 8.99 Add pepperoni for \$1.50

**Buffalo Pizza:** Brushed blue cheese topped with, diced shallots, pulled buffalo ohtoken, and fresh mozzarella cheese. 9.99

**Classic Pizza:** Our delicious traditional pizza topped with Basilio sausage, pepperoni, mushrooms, onions, peppers, oregano, and fresh mozzarella. 10.99

**Classic Burger:** 8 oz. of Drovers Hill Farms dry aged ground beef grilled to your liking. Served with lettuce, tomato, onion, and pickle. 7.99 Add cheese .75 Add bacon .75

**Cuban Sandwich:** Smoked ham, roasted pork, pickles, mustard, and aged swiss pressed in a hoagie roll. 7.99

### ENTRÉES

**Chipotle-Peach Chicken:** Grilled chicken breast with a savory chipotle-peach glaze. 14.99

**Sesame Ahi Tuna with Mango Salsa:** Toasted black sesame crusted Ahi tuna topped with mango salsa. 17.99

**Scallops Bercy:** Seared sea scallops with a demi glaze sauce served with caramelized shallots, parsley, and cooked in a savory white wine. 17.99

**Pork Ribs:** Full rack of pork ribs, braised and grilled with a sweet, hickory barbeque sauce with a coleslaw garnish. 18.99

**Pork Osso Bucco:** A generous portion of pork seared, then slow braised with root vegetables. Topped with a fire roasted tomato demi glaze. 18.99

**Filet Mignon:** Three filet mignon medallions, 3 oz. each, covered in a demi glaze sauce with caramelized shallots. Cooked as per your request. 19.99

**NY Strip:** A 12 oz. USDA prime cut steak served with a creamy, cracked five peppercorn sauce. Cooked as per your request. 19.99

Entrées served with side salad and your choice of one of the following sides:

Roasted garlic mashed potatoes, Spanish rice, French fries, steamed vegetables, or pasta with marinara sauce

**Spanish Seafood Paella (serves 2-3 people):** Typical Spanish specialty- rice with saffron, calamari, cod, shrimp, and shellfish. (Please allow 25 minutes for preparation) 48.99

**Chicken Panini:** Grilled ohtoken breast, red onion, spinach, roasted red peppers, provolone, and pesto oil on focaccia bread. 7.99

**French Dip:** Slow roasted shaved prime rib on a grilled hoagie roll with a side of au jus and horseradish sauce. 7.99

**Chicken Wrap:** Grilled or crispy ohtoken breast wrapped in a spinach tortilla served with lettuce, tomato, red onion, cheese, and your choice of dressing. 7.99

### PASTA

**Cheese Ravioli:** Four cheese ravioli baked with fresh marinara, mozzarella, and parmesan cheeses. 9.99

**Chicken Riggies:** Plump pieces of ohtoken breast sautéed with sweet and banana peppers in a vodka riggie sauce. 13.99

**Chicken Parmesan:** Breaded ohtoken breast topped with marinara, mozzarella, and parmesan, then baked to golden perfection. Served over penne pasta. 13.99

**Chicken & Broccoli Alfredo:** A classic favorite. Grilled ohtoken breast, fettuccine pasta, and fresh broccoli tossed in our creamy alfredo sauce. 13.99

**Chicken Francaise:** Herb and parmesan egg battered ohtoken breast, served with sautéed baby spinach over ocellini pasta. 14.99

**(Cajun) Seafood Pasta:** Fresh seafood served over al dente fettuccine pasta in a creamy white sauce. Choose to either have your seafood pasta prepared traditionally or a spicy Cajun style) 16.99

**Quesadilla:** Juicy grilled ohtoken breast, tomatoes, onions, green peppers, and melted cheddar cheese served between two tortilla shells. Served with guacamole and sour cream on the side. 7.99