

May 2011

FOCUS

East Syracuse Minoa United Teachers



Volume XXIV Issue 8

Nichols' News

This time of year we are all very busy working with our students. Some people forget how crazy the spring can be in school. I got a call from the American Federation of Teachers this week inviting me to a conference (all expenses paid) in early June. I politely declined. I pointed out to the caller that although I consider our East Syracuse Minoa United Teachers a very politically active union, and that I do go to lots of rallies, I just couldn't afford another day outside of my classroom. She wasn't surprised. She said that many of the people she called said the same thing.



Protesting the Tax Cap Protesters A Counter-Rally!

Senator John DeFrancisco was our first appointment. We started right off questioning him closely about his position on the Tax Cap. NYSUT supports a circuit breaker approach to tax reform, where the amount you pay in taxes is tied directly to your own income and where you live. NYSUT opposes the Tax Cap as outlined by Governor Cuomo Jr. The senator is in favor of the cap as he sees it as a mechanism to force local municipalities to cut or consolidate services, such as police and fire. We did not agree. I asked him why he was choosing Wall Street over Main Street, why the rich over the kids. He did not appreciate that...

But this week I did take some time to go to Albany for the May Committee of 100. Now, I hope you all know that there are many more than 100 people that show up to these legislative lobby days. We have appointments with each of our local politicians, and if we are lucky, we see the official and not the aid. We saw a lot of the actual officials this time, much to their chagrin.

We started off Monday evening with a candlelight vigil at the Capitol. It was well attended, and not as boisterous as the SEIU Rally in Syracuse in support of the Health Care Workers, or the Times Square Rally in support of Collective Bargaining Rights. But we did get good news coverage. We were well prepared for the work of Tuesday morning.



Nichols' News continued...

Things did not get easier as we visited Senator Valesky, and both Assemblymen Magnarelli and Roberts. Even people who are sympathetic to our cause feel like some things will happen anyway. We know that it takes a physical presence in Albany to influence these votes. Sometimes we get only a small change for our efforts, but we never give up.

Spring is rally season and I have been to a bunch of them. Huge numbers of people plan these things, promote them, attend them, and give speeches, all for a small blurb in the paper or maybe 45 seconds on the news. But if we don't raise our voices, then we are complicit as well as complacent.

The state-wide school budget vote is this coming Tuesday, May 17, 2011. It is very important that every one of us go to the polls, in what ever school district we work in, and support our school budgets.



NYSUT Committee of 100
Vigil in Albany



NYSUT VIGIL at the Capital

We need to get our voting record up. We are an electorate in need of improvement!

Here at ESM you will see me standing outside the polls, a legal distance away, asking people to support our school and our endorsed candidates. We have endorsed Patti Puma, and Allison Rumshick as a write-in candidate. I hope you are seeing our new lawn signs around the district. Cindy Todd is our VP of Public Relations, and she took care of getting the new signs and getting them out.

Our Cindy also hosted ESM night at the NYSUT Phone Banks while Joe Gibbons and I were in Albany lobbying. We shared the phones with Marcus. I want to thank all of those people that gave their time to make calls. It is a nice personal touch.

Judy Massena, our office secretary sent out over 800 postcards to union members in our district

asking them for support. We are all working for you. Please Vote!

Speaking of people who have stepped up, our own Becky Grossman has agreed to co-chair our Political Action Team. We need another person to help with that. Remember, agreeing to co-chair doesn't mean you have to go to all the rallies like I seem to be doing. We also serve who organize and communicate!

The ESM Retirement Celebration is this coming Tuesday, June 7, 2011 at the Doubletree. We look forward to honoring our retirees and 30 Year Employees.

Contact Judy Massena at our office (Ext. 2343 or 437.0109) to make a reservation. If you want a whole table, let us know the names of all 6 (or more) people at that table; otherwise we can't reserve a table.

See you at the polls!

John

ES-M United Teachers *Scholarship*

Are you a member of the **East Syracuse Minoa United Teachers** and your child is graduating from high school? Your graduating senior may be eligible to win an ES-M United Teachers scholarship.

Requirements are:

- Child of ESM United Teachers member
- Graduating from high school
(Note: does not have to be an ESM student)
- Acceptance into college

Please send:

- A letter explaining your eligibility and why you should be awarded an ES-M United Teachers scholarship.
- Copy of your acceptance letter to the college you will be attending.
- A letter of reference.



**Please mail the above information to:
Cindy Todd - Minoa Elementary
By June 1st**



Congratulations to Rosanne Perla

Rosanne, an Italian Teacher at the High School, was recently awarded a scholarship from the National Endowment of the Humanities, Washington, D.C. This scholarship allows Rosanne the opportunity to study in Rome, Italy this summer for one month. The title of the course is "The Art of Teaching Italian Through Italian Art in Rome, Italy." Rosanne is one of 20 teachers chosen from throughout the United States. There are 4 participants from New York and all other participants are from 10 different states. She will receive a stipend of \$3300 to apply to the hotel and transportation costs. She hopes to include more Italian Culture, especially Italian Art, in her lessons next year. She will have a final project that she will complete before coming back to the United States in August.

Important Dates to Remember:

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



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



Wanted: Pre-Owned Crib

If you have one to sell, please contact Cyndee Brazill at cbrazill@esmschools.org or 656-3326



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CONTACT INFO: Call for price info. Please refer to this ad.
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Lohart123@aol.com



JOGGING STROLLER

WANTED

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



Steve Pacelli~Licensed NYS Home Inspector

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

**East Syracuse Minoa
United Teachers**

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*The best teachers
teach from the heart,
not from the book.*

Author Unknown