Dear Colleagues,

Yes, it’s still winter, but spring gets closer every day. I’ve been looking for the spring season since November. I love the Northeast, but not the winter weather. It seems that it always takes a bit longer to get to work if there is even the slightest amount of snow. Then of course with a good snow we get a snow day and I get to enjoy the winter pleasure of snow removal. Oh well, so far it has been a fairly gentle winter. The gentlest in the past three or so years. We know there is still a bit of winter to go and this could certainly change, but it has been nice (if you’re not a skier or other winter sport lover). That’s enough about that. Many of you probably feel the same way I do, but since we can’t change it we’ll just have to make the best of it.

Many things are like that. You can’t change them so you have to make the best of it. Fortunately you can help change things. Our state economy and the difficult fiscal times we were in are not the case this year. Our state has a multi-billion dollar surplus. It seems like now there is no good reason for not supporting public education as it needs to be financially supported. There is a significant revenue surplus in this state this year. Now is the time for the governor and his advisors to pony up the needed state funding so New York’s education system can get back to the high level it was at a few years ago.

The lack of reasonable funding by the state coupled with a misguided tax cap have done a lot to reduce the ability of school districts to maintain the high levels we were used to. That coupled with an expensive and onerous APPR system has made the quality of a New York public education go down. Yes, the political actions and budgetary naivety of this governor, acting from his bully pulpit, have in fact hurt, not helped, our public education system.

So what can you do to help? I say “Remember the MAC”, that simple but effective way to speak out about issues that are important to public educators. Also, give to VOTE/COPE. The kids you help may be your own.

Also, make sure you vote in any election in which you are entitled to. You may think that your vote won’t matter. Not true. Every vote and every voter is important. Some elections are close and your vote along with others that think as you do may make the difference between getting someone in office that supports what you believe in.

This year you also need to decide who you want to lead and manage you Association for the next two years. Yes, it’s that time again and you need to participate in selecting these folks. You don’t have to stick with the names on the ballot. You can do a write in vote for any of the positions listed. It is best if you first check with that person(s) to make sure they would accept if elected. It’s always better that way.

Please do your part. I suggest you vote for people who support people who work, but that is really up to you. Most of all participate in the process. One thing is certain, if you do not vote you are letting other people pick your leaders.

Looking Forward, Doug
Important Dates for 2015-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exec Board NYSUT</th>
<th>Rep Council 900 bldg. (unless noted otherwise)</th>
<th>TRIAD Meeting Maywood</th>
<th>BOCES BOARD Meeting</th>
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<td>February 3, 2016</td>
<td>Feb. 24, 2016</td>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>Feb. 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2, 2016</td>
<td>March 16, 2016</td>
<td>March 22&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; or 29&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>March 21</td>
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<td>June 20</td>
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<td></td>
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CELEBRATION BASH
June 2, 2016—Mohawk River Country Club
“Save the Date”

Capital Region BOCES Faculty Association Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>HOME</th>
<th>WORK</th>
<th>E-Mail Address</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>H. Douglas Harple</td>
<td>899-1044</td>
<td>862-4776</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hdharple@msn.com">hdharple@msn.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Patricia Gollub</td>
<td>583-1119</td>
<td>862-4716</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Gollub02@yahoo.com">Gollub02@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVP TA/EA</td>
<td>Colleen Condolora</td>
<td>265-2358</td>
<td>356-8349</td>
<td><a href="mailto:condolora@aol.com">condolora@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVP Service</td>
<td>Sandy Smith</td>
<td>869-7421</td>
<td>229-1403</td>
<td><a href="mailto:shortmom02@yahoo.com">shortmom02@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVP Spec. Educ.</td>
<td>Flora Fasoldt</td>
<td>674-0223</td>
<td>377-9018</td>
<td><a href="mailto:electflora@aol.com">electflora@aol.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>CVP C T E</td>
<td>Jeannine Moran</td>
<td>587-7662</td>
<td>862-4816</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jmrmoran@hotmail.com">jmrmoran@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Barbara Burnham</td>
<td>334-1193</td>
<td>862-4720</td>
<td><a href="mailto:baburnham@gmail.com">baburnham@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Deborah Sorvari</td>
<td>452-8138</td>
<td>334-1296</td>
<td><a href="mailto:debmom39@nycap.rr.com">debmom39@nycap.rr.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Chair</td>
<td>Gina Hanley</td>
<td>862-5332</td>
<td>421-3446</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ghanley97@gmail.com">ghanley97@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grievance Chair</td>
<td>Kristen Lashway</td>
<td>421-3446</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Kris10Lashway@gmail.com">Kris10Lashway@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

www.crbfa.org
Dear Constituents:

As I write this article, our February break will be here before I know it. It is amazing how fast time seems to be moving this school year. The mild weather so far has helped. Although, winter to me can be enjoyable, at my age shoveling an overabundance of snow is nothing but a nuisance. My back is thankful, but I feel badly for those who depend on the snow for wages. I am sure some of our members need the extra money from shoveling or plowing to make ends meet. To make some extra money, I currently tutor Mohonasen High School students. Have you ever considered approaching the district you currently work in to become a tutor? Since you are certified, you are qualified to tutor students who are ill, suspended or need extra help with their coursework. It is food for thought, if you are looking for some extra cash.

For Level III Teaching Assistants, who need 75 hours of professional development, please remember NYSUT is currently providing workshops for local educators. The workshops are each 3 hours and are being presented after your work day. The cost is $10 each and can be found on the NYSUT website www.nysut.org. As a NYSUT Education and Learning Trust facilitator, I will be presenting a workshop on Addressing Aggressive Student Behavior and Effective Communication in February and March. There are many topics at each workshop being offered such as Disability Awareness, Autism, Poverty, Diversity and Achievement. I am sure there is some area in which you wish to grow professionally that is being offered by NYSUT at a low cost for our members.

Another opportunity for those who wish to further their education or need credits has come to my attention (thanks Barb Hasselbach and Lisa Butler). Vouchers are available for Capital Region BOCES staff to utilize for coursework. The vouchers have accumulated over the years and are waiting for someone to scoop them up. If you are interested you will need to contact your advisor at Maria College in order to access the vouchers.

Speaking of tuition reimbursement, I met with Dr. Taormina in January to discuss raising our tuition reimbursement allotment. As you may be aware, contractually, Teaching Assistants and Aides are eligible for a partial tuition reimbursement each year for coursework. The amount has not changed in years and for a while the reimbursement had some stipulations placed on the amount such as workshop cost and conferences. Dr. Taormina agreed the amount should be raised so he is currently working with administration to discuss this topic. I will let you know as soon as I have more information as to when or if this happens for this school year. I also addressed with him current Teaching Assistants/Aides who have already received the tuition reimbursement this year; I feel strongly they each should be compensated for the difference if it is increased.

Wishing everyone had a wonderful February break. I am hope you found some precious time for yourself to rejuvenate and clear your mind of work. Our jobs are challenging at times and stress has a way of creeping up on us quickly. Take the time you have off and find some relaxation and fun (hopefully in a warm climate). Enjoy everyone!

In Solidarity, Colleen Condolora
Mid-Winter Greetings,

Many of us seniors know the sorrow of losing one of both of our parents, a spouse, sibling, child or grandchild. We trudge through the days ever aware of the loss of their love, their laughter, their knowledge. We are now faced with the formidable task of sorting through the things that defined them; their clothing, their books, their hobbies, their personal items and more. We must also tackle the paper work of our culture; bills, insurance, accounts, credit cards, Social Security, pensions, titles, income tax as well as carry out the final requests of their Last Will and Testament.

We have learned a great deal along the way and wish we could have been better prepared. We hope that what we have learned may someday be of use to you. We also realize, that there is still more to learn as we encounter some of the regulations that our legal system has in place.

Being a surviving spouse or being named as Executor is a great deal work. Our first task was with the Social Security office, which scheduled a phone conference to close the account. Some of you may know that your monthly benefit may increase if your spouse received a greater amount than you receive. If you had been married previously for over 10 years, and your first spouse is deceased, you may be eligible to receive a greater monthly benefit if his/her benefit was greater. You will need to have important dates and numbers ready for this lengthy phone call.

Joint accounts are no problem but anything with “In trust for” will require paperwork and a copy of the death certificate. It would be wise to check the beneficiary on old insurance policies, annuities, pensions and wills. We often read of the importance of having a will, but not of updating it. Documents signed long ago can be filed away and forgotten only to discover unhappy surprises that are too late to change and must be dealt with as written. The circumstances of life are constantly changing and more so through the decades, so be aware of documents you may have signed many years ago.

A will that specifies distribution of items or collections can greatly add to an Executor’s work and stress. Some items may have increased in value, and may require an inventory and be appraised by a professional. Antiques, coin and stamp collections, baseball cards, old comic books, jewelry, iron toys, silverware, and china can be among these items.

Familiarizing yourself with some of the legal jargon you may encounter, prior to meeting with counsel, can be an asset in understanding your task as an Executor. These can include Letters of Testamentary, fiduciary income tax, Inventory of assets, probate court, probate assets, Receipt and Release forms, estate tax, the IRS Employer Identification Number are among some we have encountered.

My life these past months would have been far less stressful if I had been prepared with some of the knowledge I have imparted. There is probably a book out there called “Executors for Dummies”. Oh well, as my Stan used to say, “Too soon we grow old, too late we grow smart.”
The water contamination situation in Flint, Michigan, has deeply affected me on a number of levels. It seems a clear example that workers and workplaces, including cities, are completely expendable once corporate needs have been met or can be better met elsewhere; that the local economies in these places cannot support the government expenditures needed to provide for even a most basic biological need, safe water; that state and federal government safety net programs have once again shown that they are only capable of responding at a glacial pace and, therefore, any help that does eventually arrive does so too late to be meaningful, and that, once again, it will be the next generation who pays the price, this time, neurologically.

From 2011 to 2015, Flint was in state receivership after the collapse of its municipal budget following the community’s abandonment by General Motors. To cut costs, in April 2014 Flint’s water supply was switched from taking water from Detroit’s system to drawing water from the Flint River.

Almost immediately, people began to complain about the water’s color, smell and taste, but state officials insisted that their water was safe. It was not until September that evidence of lead poisoning became public and was acknowledged by officials. The river water was corrosive, causing lead to leach from pipes. So families in Flint drank water laced with hazardous levels of lead for nearly eight months. At least 27,000 children in the city have been exposed to lead contamination.

The dangers of lead have long been known and efforts to limit new lead containing products have had a positive effect, but the massive contamination of inner city and industrialized communities, by leaded paint and pipes in older homes, remains unaddressed. These are often in currently lower socio-economic and minority residential areas, from where many of our students come.

Lead was banned from paint in the U.S. in 1977. Although leaded paint may be and is often covered with non-leaded paint, lead may still be released into the home environment by peeling, chipping, chalking, friction, or impact. Lead may also be released through past or ongoing home renovation. Lead-contaminated household dust is the major course of lead exposure to children in the U.S. Between 83% and 86% of all homes built before 1978 in the U.S. have lead-based paint. Lead occurs in drinking water through leaching from lead-containing pipes, faucets, and solder which can be found in plumbing of older buildings. Homes built before 1986 are more likely to have lead pipes, fixtures and lead containing solder.

I have begun to wonder if some of the behaviors we so routinely observe in our acting out students might not be in some cases related to lead exposure. Childhood lead exposure has been associated with higher absenteeism in high school, lower class rank, poor vocabulary and grammatical reasoning scores, longer reaction time and poor hand-eye coordination (AAP, 1993). Blood test results considered to indicate a “safe” level for lead exposure have been progressively lowered by The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) from 60 micrograms per deciliter down to the current recommendation that it should be below 5. There are also requirements that children receiving Medicaid be screened.

I wonder how many of our students have been exposed to environmental lead based contaminants at the new lower threshold, one that pediatricians would not have even considered worth noting, but now is clearly implicated in causing the kinds of behaviors we see routinely. Studies have found neurobehavioral impairment in children with BLLs below 10 µg/dL. (Canfield, 2003; Lanphear et al. 2000) Some researchers have suggested that lead continues to contribute significantly to socio-behavioral problems such as juvenile delinquency and violent crime (Needleman 2002, Nevin 2000). The National Institute of Health lists the “Lowest Exposure Dose Signs and Symptoms: Impaired Abilities (patient may appear asymptomatic)” as: decreased learning and memory, lowered IQ, decreased verbal ability, impaired speech and hearing functions and early signs of hyperactivity or ADHD.
They note that the first signs of lead effects in children are often subtle neurobehavioral problems that adversely affect classroom behavior and social interaction. (nih.gov)

The CDC now advises that children with more than 5 µg/dL of lead in their blood be considered at risk. The effects of low blood lead levels, particularly on childhood behavior and emotional problems, aren’t well understood. A recent study found that at 6.4 µg/dL more emotional, anxiety and behavioral problems were exhibited. Even a small increase in blood lead concentrations of 1 µg/dL was associated with significant increases in teacher-reported emotional and anxiety problems. Girls were more likely to have internalizing problems such as anxiety and depression and boys were more likely to have externalizing problems such as attention and conduct issues (nih.gov).

“This research focused on lower blood lead levels than most other studies and adds more evidence that there is no safe lead Level. Even low levels of lead in blood have been shown to affect IQ, ability to pay attention and academic achievement. And effects of lead exposure cannot be corrected” says Dr. Kimberly Gray of NIEHS (cdc.gov).

I imagine many of us would probably intuitively agree with the study that found that “Current lead exposure accounts for a very small amount of variance in cognitive ability (1–4%), whereas covariates such as social and parenting factors account for 40% or more (Weiss 2000).”, but you never know....

Unfortunately, we can watch and see what happens as the children of Flint proceed through their academic years.

Sources:
Meeting started with budget reports.

**Career, Technical and Education**

**Advanced Alternative Energy:** Biomass and Biofuels; Nuclear Power; Solar Power; Wind Power; Battery Technology; **Manufacturing & Machining Technology:** Quality Manufacturing Processes; Green Production and Maintenance Practices; Materials and Job Layout; Turning, Milling and Grinding; Computer Numerically Controlled Machining; **Gaming, Multimedia and Web Design:** Programming and Coding; Screen Writing; Game Design; Mobile Game Design; Modeling; **Sterile Processing:** Cleaning. Decontamination and Disinfection; Preparation and Packaging; Document and Record Maintenance; Sterilization Process; **Welding and Metal Fabrication:** Quality Manufacturing Processes; Green Production and Maintenance Practices; Materials and Jobs Layout; Stick, MIG, TIG and Orbital TIG Welding; Welding Operations and Metal Fabrications

**Adult Education HSE/ESL Adult EPE Award**

Target Reimbursement 80,886 contact hours; 1,300 students = $798,155; Literacy Zone City of Albany = $99,925; WIA Title II Grant = $243,440

**Initiatives**

- Increase educational gain, testing, and either post-secondary education/training or employment. Alignment to the adult education CUNY/ACCES curriculum.

**Workforce Development**

Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory; HVAC Excellence Certification; Machining; Welding; Sterile Processing Technician – DOH Grant

**Health Career Services**

LPN programs Full and Part Time: $1,695,980; Adult PCA/HHA/C.N.A: $85,000; Sterile Processing Tech: $57,370; CPR/AED/First Aid: $9,000; DOH Grant – 6/30/16 $74,680; Total Program Budget: $1,922,030

**Initiatives**

- Develop the Conceptual Framework for the Health Career Center. Pilot the Adult Central Sterile Technician program from DOH grant. Develop rigorous tests for the LPN program utilizing Blooms Taxonomy. Progress in raising standards in LPN program. Design syllabuses for the LPN program, per NYSOP, to accurately reflect a post-secondary program. Respond to written report for NYSOP site visit.

**ESS Services 2016-2017**

**Educational Support Services** includes a broad range of services including direct student services, staff development, school operations support and services that enhance the learning environment

LEADERS Laura Combs, Deputy Director Aaron Bochniak, Deputy Director Kimberly Bramfeld, Library & Arts Kathy Gomes, RSE-TASC Mindy Iannotti, ENL Laura Lehtonen, STEM Connor Miller, Instructional Student/Staff Wellness and Positive School Climate; Educational Supports and Enrichment; Library Services; Instructional and Curriculum Support Staff: 52 FTE; Total Division Budget: $12,114,858

**2016 – 2017 Allocation of Expenditures**

Salaries 30.92%; Employee Benefits 14.81%

**Management Services**

Employee Benefit Management, Actuarial Services, Substitute Coordination, Grants Development, Regional Labor Relations and Negotiations, Fixed Asset Inventory, Teacher Certification, Communications, Health, Safety & Risk Management, Records & Information Management, Cooperative Bidding, Shared Business Official, Residence Verification - $8.7 million with 87.7 FTE’s

**Initiatives**

- Continue looking organizationally at opportunities to enhance effectiveness and reduce cost structures; Development of new services and related support in all of the management services programs. Through the use of webinars and video conferencing able to support not only components and JMT, but the entire state on topics such as: Smart Schools Bond Act, Tax Cap and GASB. Infrastructure for future growth/changing environment. Continue multi-directional expansion of services and skills of staff

**Question and Comments**

Q. Cosers that are decreasing, are any going into negative fees?

A. No – There is capacity built into them with shared Communication and Grant Staff.

Q. Does this report include other BOCES?

A. Yes and No. Other BOCES do not generally buy from us. A Coser will increase or decrease by services other BOCES purchase.

Dr. Dedrick spoke about the Center for Advanced Technology at Mohonasen that the District is building will have CTE Classes in one third of the building. Schenectady CCC will also be holding classes and HVCC is also interested in adding programs. There will be HS students during the day and Adults in the evening.

**District Superintendent**

1. Draft 2016-17 Regional Calendar handed out for their information only.

   a. We are waiting for the State to designate the last day of school for June 2017. The last day is usually Regents rating day and a few times they have made Thursday and not Friday.

   b. Vacation periods are in common with three surrounding BOCES.

   c. Final Draft will be on the February Agenda.

2. Goals for 2016-17 for Board of Education.

   a. Will as to approve 2015-16 for the 2016-17 year.

   b. Serious melt down – close to 3 mile island!!

   c. Dale Breault and David Versocki gave an overview of what happened.

      i. A piece of hardware failed that has redundant backups (they also went down)

      ii. NERIC had been proactive last year and had updated existing hardware to prevent this type of situation from happening.

   d. By 2:30 PM that day all vendors were involved. By 10:30 PM hardware was fixed and after that staff restored all services to all districts. Return to full service by 3 AM next morning.
Meeting opened at 4:30 PM

Chapter VP Reports
Spec Ed Teacher – Flora
Met with Peter Taormina regarding Safety – Handle with Care program. Protocols and Procedures. Staff need to be more consistent in completing forms across the division.

Q. Are BOCES staff responsible for DASA Training (Dignity for All Students Act) $80 fee for one day training? There is no policy on this.
A. After much discussion on this it was recommended that all staff work with their Principal/Supervisor, as this is a new requirement for all staff who work with students. There should not be a fee for new staff and if you sign up using My Learning Plan, you will not be charged a fee.

Also of note, all conference requests are to be pre-approved by supervisors.

TA/Aide – Colleen
• Met with Peter regarding Tuition Reimbursement. Two TA’s has asked her how to be reimbursed. Since there was in the past a maximum of $100 for the entire year, she had asked for this to be raised to $200 per year. Peter will meet with Lynn Wells to review this.

Representative Council Meeting NOTES
January 20, 2016 by Susan Kusalonis

February 27-28th – Conference at the Otesaga in Cooperstown – Run by NYSUT. There are openings and we are allowed six members.

Notice regarding TA ShowCase – Colleen had received some suggestions from Principals on staff who would have good projects to present.

Budget Committee – Deb
We need volunteers for Budget Committee Kevin Rendon, TA – we need three more. Also, any changes in budget need to be given to Deb by the February meeting.

Audit Committee – Deb
Will be meeting at 900 by 3:15 PM – date will probably be prior to the next rep council meeting.

New Business
• A motion was made to start a committee to represent itinerant staff for future negotiations. There are many problems as they move from district to district. Since there are three contracts involved, group agreed this would be helpful in the future.
  Motion Passed
Matt Finn will be the Committee Chairperson
• Teachers Contract is on third revision and Doug hopes to have a hard copy for Teacher Chapter members within the next month or so.

Submissions by Susan Kusalonis
Student Incentive Award
2016

Two (2) $1,500 awards are given yearly, one (1) is for need and one (1) is for scholarship.

TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT (please print or type):

Student name ___________________________________________________________   Date of Birth __/__/__
Permanent address ___________________________________________________________________________
Student email ____________________________ Parent/Guardian email: ____________________________
Parent/Guardian (Association member) ____________________________    Occupation ____________________
Spouse of member ____________________________________________    Occupation ____________________

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) combined yearly income

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<th>Income Range</th>
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<th>$20,000 - $30,000</th>
<th>$30,000 - $40,000</th>
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<td>$80,000 - $90,000</td>
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Above $100,000

Number of sibling’s _________ Full-time post-secondary students_______
Where_______________________________________________________________

List any special financial circumstances
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

College or training program you plan to attend______________________________________________________________
Years of study required _______    Major field of study ____________________________
Anticipated yearly costs ____________________________ Have you been accepted? ____________________________
List any other financial aid ____________________________________________________________________________
List school and community activities below:

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Responsibility to Organization</th>
<th>Years of Involvement</th>
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List any work experience:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Job Responsibility</th>
<th>Date of Employment</th>
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On a separate sheet of paper, write a statement with approximately **150 words** describing your goals in this field and your plans for the future. Please attach statement to the Student Incentive Award form.

**Student Incentive Form Instructions:**
- Please print or type **legibly**.
- Fill in **all** information.
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) combined income **must be listed even if parents/guardians are separated or divorced**, unless the student is supported solely by the parent/guardian who belongs to the Association.
- Please be sure to supply any pertinent information. It is important to list any special financial circumstances. This information is used with parent(s)/guardian(s) combined salary to determine need.
- A **transcript** of student grades should be forwarded with this application.
- Application, transcripts, and any other pertinent information should be mailed to:
  
  Erica Kane  
  94 East State Street  
  Gloversville, New York 12078

**Application and Transcripts due Monday, May 2nd**

**No applications will be accepted after Monday, May 2nd**

Any Questions, please contact: Erica Kane at ericalynnkane@gmail.com
5 Benefits Of Being a NYSUT Member

1. Higher pay & better benefits
2. A contract you can rely on
3. A strong voice at work
4. Professional learning

5. NYSUT Member Benefits
NYSUT members & their families can choose from a variety of insurance, financial, legal, and shopping & travel programs designed with the NYSUT member in mind -- including term life insurance, auto insurance, legal & financial services, car rentals, vacation packages, and much more!

Member Appreciation Month is back again this February!
Since it was such a big hit last year, we’re doing it again! Member Appreciation Month is coming February 2016.

This year will be even bigger because it’s a leap year... that means more chances to win even more great prizes!!!

Once again, Member Appreciation Month will be filled with a series of special prize drawings for items donated by Member Benefits and our endorsed program providers. Prizes will include gift cards, Beats headphones, a Go Pro camera and more.

To be eligible for these drawings, all you need to do is participate in our voluntary MAP Alert email service.

We will announce the winners of these special prize drawings exclusively on the Member Benefits website throughout the month of February.

It’s the strength of the more than 600,000 NYSUT members that makes it possible for Member Benefits to offer more than 40 endorsed programs & services designed with you in mind.

For more details about this exciting event, visit the Member Benefits website at memberbenefits.nysut.org or call 800-626-8101.

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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February Checklist

Register your Drone: New rules require registration for all unmanned aircraft systems (drones) used outdoors and weighing more than 0.55 pounds and less than 55 pounds. Anything 55 pounds or heavier is already subject to FAA oversight.) Deadline: Friday, February 19, 2016, for drones that their current owners cooperated before December 21, 2015. Other drones must be registered before being operated outdoors. Information: www.FAA.gov/uas.

Turn down the heat: Drop pounds along with utility bills. Studies have found that mild exposure to cold indoors burns extra calories.

Save on cruises: Late winter is “Wave Season,” when cruise lines offer free upgrades, onboard credit and reduced fares. Consult a travel agent or check deals at CruiseComplete.com or CruiseCritic.com.

Start a herb garden: Basil, oregano and thyme are among the flavorful herbs that can be sown indoors. Resource: GrowAGoodLife.com/growing-herbs-from-seed.

Sunshine Chairperson
If you know of someone who could use a little cheering up, our sympathy, or a get well card, please contact:
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