



Rush-Henrietta
Employees' Association
Teachers Chapter
Volume 12 Issue 2
April 2011

RH TEACHER

What's Inside?

**Page 2 - 1st VP
Update and
What is a Teacher
Worth?**

**Page 3 – Human
Rights Committee
Update**

Page 4 – NYSUT AD

**Page 5 –
Communications
Update**

**Page 6 –
Grievance Update
and Teacher News**

Save the Date!

**Friday
June 10**

**RHEA Retirement
Banquet**

Brio Restaurant

PRESIDENTS CORNER

In my last column I wrote about the qualities of leadership and in these uncertain times I believe leadership that is proactive, collaborative, and solution oriented is the best option for RHEA. Leaders have to be problem spotters (finders) AND problem solvers. It is easy just to point out weaknesses, deficiencies and areas that need improvement, but Leaders have to also be able to come up with creative solutions to solve those problems. Here is a funny story I heard about problem solving:

“Once upon a time, there was a wealthy business man who took a trip to Africa for a safari. He decided to take his beloved Dachshund dog with him on the trip. One day the Dachshund was out chasing butterflies in a field when it realized it had gotten lost and could not find its way back to the camp. Just then it noticed a Leopard in the distance, which was approaching and ready to turn the Dachshund into lunch. Knowing that it could not outrun the Leopard, the Dachshund thought of a quick solution to its problem. The Dachshund found a nearby pile of bones and turned its back to the Leopard and pretended to be eating the bones. Right before the Leopard was about to spring on the Dachshund, the Dachshund said in a loud voice, “Boy that sure was one good Leopard - I wonder if there is another one around here someplace to eat?”

The Leopard stopped in its tracks and quickly ran away thinking, “I sure was lucky I didn’t try to attack that Dachshund”.

Meanwhile, a Monkey in a nearby tree had watch all this transpire, and hoping to win a few friendly points from the Leopard, the Monkey proceeded to tell the Leopard all about how the Dachshund had tricked him. With this news the Leopard was furious and started charging back towards the Dachshund. The Monkey jumped on the Leopard’s shoulders to catch a ride to the action - for this is something the Monkey did not want to miss.

Seeing the Leopard approaching at high speed with the Monkey on its back, the Dachshund had to once again think quickly about what to do to solve this new problem. Then he got an idea and he again turned his back to the approaching Leopard. At the last second the Dachshund exclaimed, “Where is that darn Monkey, he said he was going to bring me back another Leopard?”

I still smile when I read that story and I hope you did as well. The one thing that will always be constant in our lives is **Change**. To productively deal with the constant changes in our profession we need to present and offer creative solutions that will promote student learning, make progress monitoring efficient and meaningful, all while improving our working conditions. As I stated earlier, just pointing out deficiencies and weaknesses gets us no voice in the decision making progress.

I would like to take a moment to thank Marissa Privitere, our 1st Vice President, for all the hard work she has contributed to RHEA the last 4 years. Marissa is not seeking another term, but I do know she hopes to continue her work in the political action arena for RHEA.

I’ve relished the opportunity to be your president in these difficult times and hope to lead you all into a much brighter future. I am hopeful that you share my vision of a collaborative, problem solving, and proactive RHEA is the answer as we tackle that one constant: **Change**.

**Professionally and in unity,
Brad Crooks
President, RHEA Teacher’s Chapter**

1st VP Update

By Marissa Privitere

Political Action Update

The release of the Superintendent's budget sparked a significant effort by some of our members to take action to fight against what we see as program and job killing decisions. With the state cutting 1.5 billion in school aid this year and the Superintendent offering a budget with a 0% tax increase, it was clear to many of us on Executive Council that united action was going to be necessary if we stood any hope of retaining programs and jobs here in our R-H community. The General Membership Meeting was well attended as the news of the cuts was released. At the following board meeting we had well over 100 members attend to show the Board of Education that we were concerned about the decisions being made. Unfortunately, that meeting was the biggest show of support we could muster for the rest of the month. Special thanks to Joe Bellanca for writing a wonderful piece for the Henrietta Post on the cuts and the impact a tax increase could have.

Our second option for action was to lobby the state. We had approximately 10 RHEA members attend the rally at City Hall and a few less attend the rally at the Liberty Pole in an effort to send a message to the state that we need to protect both collective bargaining rights and education funding. Adam Huck, our communications chairman, has posted some photos of these events on our Facebook and RHEA webpages. I made the trip to Albany with fellow NYSUT members to lobby the legislature to restore education funds to the budget by extending the surcharge on Personal Income Tax for those making \$200,000 and above in our state. I am sad to report that the outlook is bleak. Variations of the tax were being discussed, but the amount we need to make education budgets whole is in the hands of a legislature and a Governor with interests that are not currently centered on education. If you would like specific details on the positions of Assemblyman Harry Bronson, Senator James Alesi, or Senator Joe Robach feel free to contact me privately.

The state budget was agreed upon on March 30th and it included a restoration of \$230 million of the \$1.5 billion in cuts to education proposed by the Governor. \$134 million of that money will be used in counties north of NYC. The celebration of an "on time" budget for the first time since 1983 should not overshadow the crisis now facing our public schools as a result of the cuts. While the state boasts "no new taxes" what it leaves out is the reality that if our schools are to remain whole, the taxing must fall to the working families in the communities. Due to the economic realities we all face, our schools will likely go without. Please stay tuned to the news and the assault on collective bargaining by governors around the country. Ohio is the latest to strip bargaining rights from public sector employees. As calls for action are made I will keep you in the loop for ways you can help. This is a time for union employees to bond as "one" and to stand up for the rights our predecessors fought for and won so that we can have decent contracts.

What is a Teacher Worth?

By Brad Crooks

The dinner guests were sitting around the table discussing life.

One man, a CEO, decided to explain the problem with education. He argued, "What's a kid going to learn from someone who decided his best option in life was to become a teacher?"

To stress his point he said to another guest; "You're a teacher, Bonnie. Be honest. What do you make?"

Bonnie, who had a reputation for honesty and frankness replied, "You want to know what I make?" (She paused for a second, then began...)

- Well, I make kids work harder than they ever thought they could.
- I make kids sit through 40 minutes of class time when their parents can't make them sit for 5 without an I Pod, Game Cube or movie rental.

You want to know what I make?" (She paused again and looked at each and every person at the table)

- I make kids wonder.
- I make them question.
- I make them apologize and mean it.
- I make them have respect and take responsibility for their actions.
- I teach them to write and then I make them write. Keyboarding isn't everything.
- I make them read, read, read.
- I make them show all their work in math. They use their God given brain, not the man-made calculator.
- I make my students from other countries learn everything they need to know about English while preserving their unique cultural identity.
- I make my classroom a place where all my students feel safe.
- Finally, I make them understand that if they use the gifts they were given, work hard, and follow their hearts, they can succeed in life.

(Bonnie paused one last time and then continued.)

"Then, when people try to judge me by what I make, with me knowing money isn't everything, I can hold my head up high and pay no attention because they are ignorant. You want to know what I make?"

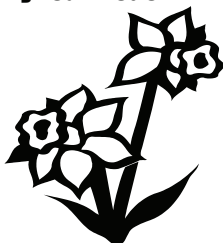
I MAKE A DIFFERENCE."

"What do you make Mr. CEO?"

His jaw dropped, he went silent.

The Human Rights and Social Responsibility Committee (HRSRC)

By Lea Theuer



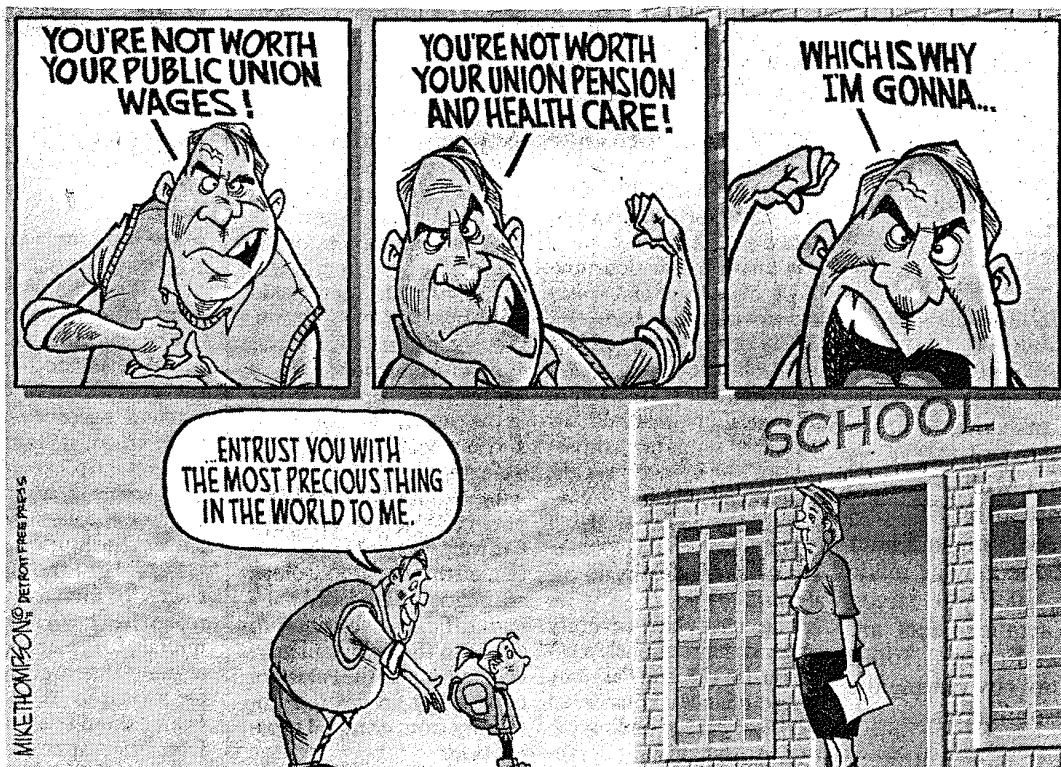
2011 Daffodil Sales a Success!

During the month of March, twelve district employees took orders in our twelve buildings for Daffodils to benefit the American Cancer Society. Thank you to Christy Anderson-Evans, Kristin Dioguardi, Kathleen Donovan, Kimberley Fiscus, Susan Gabbert, Tracey Gaulin, Bob Graham, Nancy Panzer, Jeanne Schwasman, Lea Theuer, Vicki Waller and Doris Waud for coordinating flower sales in your buildings, as well as to all those who purchased flowers! Together we sold more than \$1500 worth of daffodils as employees and union members of the Rush-Henrietta School District. Once again, RH Schools have shown their caring and support through social responsibility and community service.

American Cancer Society's Relay For Life

The American Cancer Society's Relay For Life is a life-changing event that brings communities together through the fight against cancer. At this year's event, teams of about 10-15 people will camp out at our local **Henrietta Town Park (the Veteran's Memorial Park)** overnight from 6:00PM May 14, 2011 to 6:00AM May 15, 2011. Registration for the event can be done online at relayforlife.org at anytime leading up to the event or starting at 4:00PM May 14, 2011 at the event. Since cancer never sleeps, participants strive to stay awake throughout the night with planned ceremonies dedicated to celebrate, remember and fight back against cancer, as well as various activities and fundraisers for all ages.

Please contact Lea at <hltheuer@frontiernet.net> for more information!



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.

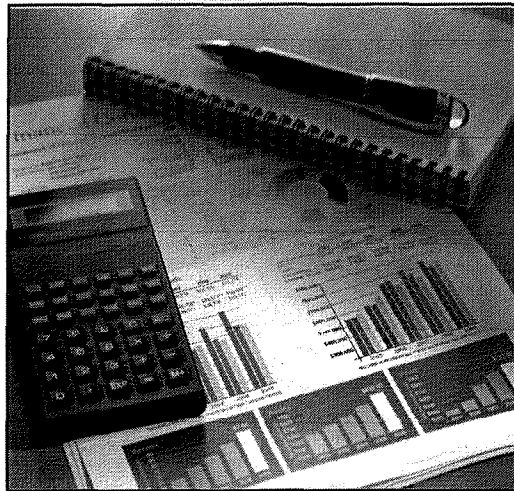
403(b) Field Guide. This booklet covers all aspects of 403(b) plans and includes information pertinent to members not yet contributing to a 403(b) plan, those who are contributing, those nearing retirement, and those already enjoying retirement.

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.

**MEMBER
BENEFITS**
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Working to Benefit You

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

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

By Adam Huck

The last few months have seen many updates to the way RHEA communicates to its members. Our website has been updated with many new and current features. We can be found at www.rteachers.org. The calendar has been updated to include T-Shirt Days, union socials, and other events that are important to members. Under Representation, you can find building and district level union representation.

Many members want to get involved, but are unsure what exactly to do. A new feature has been added to the site called GET INVOLVED! In this section there is a list of many great ideas for all members to be a part of the advocacy process. One of the best ways to get involved is to write to elected representatives. On this page, you will find links to contact them.

Please check the site often, as it will be undergoing further changes and updates in the coming months!

New Features

Your RHEA wants to make sure all members feel involved and up to date on all current information. To accomplish this, two new sites have been set up. Both of these sites can also be accessed with many smartphones.

The first is on Facebook. As of this writing, we have over 50 followers on our RHEA Facebook page. The purpose of this page is to provide members an opportunity to get up to date information about rallies, union socials, and any other special events. Also, pictures have been added, and will continue to be added, showing RHEA members at rallies and in the community. Another great resource for this site is that we are now linked to other union Facebook pages and can pass on videos, songs, articles, and a wealth of other resources important to our members. To go to our page, simple type Rush-Henrietta Teachers in the search box.

A second site has been set up to give members current information. We can also be found on Twitter. RHEA can be found at twitter.com/rteachers. The updates on this site are limited to 140 characters so updates are brief. Our Facebook and Twitter pages have been linked so that any update to Facebook can also be found on Twitter. This is to accommodate those that may not feel comfortable on Facebook.

Remember that we are ALL union representatives and it is crucial for us to stay informed and make our voices heard.



	<p>The biggest value for the littlest members of your family.</p>
	<p>For as low as \$11.95 a month, your pet can have its own insurance.</p>
	<p>For more details and benefits go to:</p>
	<p>aft.org/members</p>
 <p>A Union of Professionals AFT + Member Benefits</p>	<p>+ INSURANCE</p>
	<p>More value for your membership</p>
<p>AFT + is your advocate. For information on all AFT + programs, call 800/238-1133, ext. 8643, or e-mail aftplus@aft.org. The AFT has an expense reimbursement and/or endorsement arrangement for marketing this program. For more information, please contact AFT Financial Services at 800/238-1133, ext. 4493; send an e-mail to disclosureinfo@aft.org; or visit www.aft.org/benefits/disclosure.</p>	



GRIEVANCE UPDATE

By Jon DeVecchio

Teaching Without a Contract. Could it Really Happen Here?

RH Teacher
Official publication of the Rush-Henrietta Employees' Association, Teachers' Chapter. Affiliated with New York State United Teachers, American Federation of Teachers & AFL-CIO.

RHEA Office – Sr. High School
334-1000 or x5291
Fax: 334-1000

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Admin. Assistant	Sue Peltzer

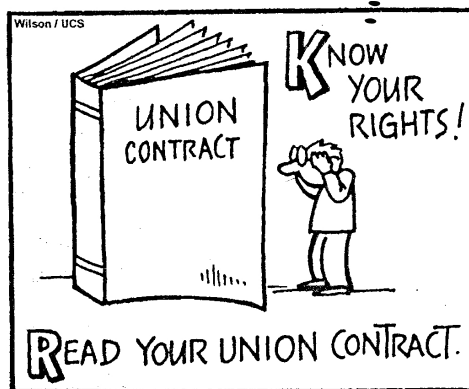
Your new teaching hours are 7 am to 5 pm. You have no unassigned time from when you arrive to work until you go home. Every morning you have a faculty meeting. Your class sizes have doubled to 50 students. If you need time off from work, you can have it as long as you take it without pay. If your students fail, you could lose your job without consideration of what lead to the failures. And you're doing all of this at half of your current salary.

Is that how you want to spend the remaining years of your teaching career? The reason why our teaching conditions are what they are is directly related to our teachers' contract, also referred to as the "Agreement." Yep. That booklet you get every few years that specifies everything from "Academic Intervention Services" through "Worker's Compensation".

If you thought teaching was a challenge already, imagine what it would be like without a contract. You don't have to look too far--simply open up your *NYSUT United* monthly magazine to keep informed. The articles in the most recent issues have presented jaw-dropping scenarios. There is a strong movement to remove sacred teacher protections. NYS is currently considering serious changes to your profession. If certain groups had their way:

- We would not have a contract at all. Decisions about salary, work environment and benefits would be totally out of our control.
- If we had a contract and it expired, districts could ignore the expired contract until a new one was ratified. In the interim they could direct us to do just about anything desired. And what would motivate them to ever settle a new one?
- Tenure and Seniority would be a thing of the past. Experience and dedication in the teaching profession would be acknowledged as irrelevant.
- Our retirement benefits would be destroyed, even though our hard-earned TRS investments pay 86% of retiree income. Taxpayers are lead to believe they shoulder a larger burden.

As your grievance chairperson, I stand up for our contract. In this article, I stand up for all contracts. **Value your contract. Read your contract. Know your contract. Without it, our profession would be very different.**



TEACHER NEWS

- Congratulations to Jason Collins, a 4th grade teacher at Fyle, on his April 9th wedding to Lisa. Best wishes on you future together. Enjoy that honeymoon in Aruba!
- Goodbye and good luck to Cara Gutowski Gladstone as she joins her husband, Kevin, in Cleveland to start a new chapter in their life. Cara will be leaving Leary School on April 15th. She has made many friends over the last 8 years and she will be missed!

Is something happening in your building that you would like to recognize in our newsletter? Send news tips to speltzer@rhnet.org.