



HHHTA

nysut

Communicator

Volume 31, No. 2

Unity and Strength

December 2004

Notes from the Executive Board

The Negotiation Team once again would like to thank all of you for your support, patience and restraint during the prolonged collective bargaining process. Now that our union and the Board of Education have ratified the Agreement, you can look for **retroactive money** in your **December 10th paycheck**. Thanks to Kelly Fallon and her staff, the payroll changes were made immediately after the Board ratification vote. She also facilitated the publication of our new contract in record time. Teachers considering **retirement** in June 2005 are reminded to attend the **403b Employer Contribution Seminar** on December 9th in the Lecture Hall of High School East from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and the **457 Tax Shelter meeting** on December 22nd from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. also in the Lecture Hall of High School East. **Retirement letters** must be sent to Dr. Karnilow by **January 15th** in order to participate in the sick day buy out benefit in our contract... The following observations were made by Louis V. Gerstner, Jr. in an article he wrote for The Wall Street Journal on October 7, 2004. Mr. Gerstner is the founder of the non-profit Teaching Commission, former chairman of IBM and is currently chairman of the Carlyle Group. **"The only way to ensure we remain a world economic power is by elevating our public schools, particularly the teachers who lead them, to the top of American society. We have treated teaching as a second-rate profession for decades with sub-par compensation, antiquated training and arcane systems of accountability. It's**

designed for the industrial age not the age of information and innovation."

Wishing all of you a Wonderful Holiday Season and a Health and Happy New Year!

Copay Increases For Doctor Visits And Drugs

Beginning January 1, 2005, the **Copayment** for participating physicians in the Empire Plan, will go from **twelve (\$12.00)** to **fifteen (\$15.00)**. The copay for **prescription drugs** will also increase and be based on the **drug and quantity** prescribed and **where** you fill your prescription. The chart below details the changes that will take place on January 1st:

Prescription Drug Copayment Chart

Supply Dispensed	generic	preferred brand-name	non-preferred brand-name
Up to a 30-day supply from a participating retail pharmacy or through the Express Scripts Mail Service	\$5 copayment	\$15 copayment	\$30 copayment
31- to 90-day supply through the Express Scripts Mail Service	\$5 copayment	\$20 copayment	\$55 copayment
31- to 90-day supply from a participating retail pharmacy	\$10 copayment	\$30 copayment	\$60 copayment

A list of the most commonly prescribed generic and preferred brand name drugs will be on the New York State Department of Civil Service Web site at www.es.state.ny.us as soon as available later this year. Click on Employee Benefits and choose your group-specific benefits. Or, call The Empire Plan Prescription Drug Program toll free at 1-877-7-NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447).

We tried out the Express Scripts Mail Service and found it to be user friendly and efficient. It takes about a week to get your prescription filled and returned to you. However, the money you save in copays will probably make up for the inconvenience of waiting a week for your drug order. You can also re-order your prescription after you use half the quantity ordered. If you would like to find out more about the Express Scripts Mail Service call (1) 877-769-7447 and press prompt #4.

Dates to Remember

- Dec 9 403b Meeting
- Dec 22 457 Meeting
- Jan 15 Retirement Letters due to Dr. Karnilow.

Students Learn About Teaching

An innovative program, initiated by Dr. Jeff Morris, Director of Social Studies, put high school students into fifth grade classes to teach them about our election process. These "teachers for a day" had to prepare and deliver comprehensive lessons to students in all of our elementary schools. The participating students really learned some valuable lessons about our profession as detailed in the following essay written by Lauren Mahon, a ninth grade student at High School East:

What did I learn from teaching a class of 5th Graders?

After printing thousands of dittos, making colorful posters, and printing the candidate's heads on cardboard, I learned even before we taught the kids that being a teacher is difficult. Emily and I spent 4 hours on making our lesson plan that was just 30 minutes long, and after thinking that a teacher had to have a lesson plan for every day for 6 hours just sounded almost impossible! From just preparing for being a teacher I learned that being a teacher isn't always as fun as it seemed because of all the hard work you have to do to just keep the kids busy for 30 minutes.

Another thing that I learned from this teaching experience was that it is hard to teach. I never thought that being in front of 28 kids, four years younger than me would be so difficult. You wanted to please every child and make sure that everyone had a chance to read, talk or answer the question, but it is difficult! Some kids called out the answers, some kids were the only people that raised their hands, and some kids didn't do anything. It wasn't so easy being the teacher instead of the student for once, and now that I saw the teacher's view of the classroom, I learned that it is hard to get every student to participate because not everyone wants to participate and sometimes you have to help them along. I learned that teachers have to call on students with their hands down because it helps the kids become more comfortable in the class and then the teacher knows that the kids understand the topic too.

Being a teacher wasn't as easy as I thought it would be. After spending numerous hours on preparing the posters, the nerve-racking part was being in front of the class trying to make everyone happy. I learned that I have a new respect for teachers after this experience because they have to prepare a lot for a class and they have to let everyone in the class participate willing or unwillingly.

Know Your Contract

Article 16

Leaves: Sick Leave/Personal Leave (with Compensation)

F. Effective July 1, 2004, those unit members attaining the age of 55 or older during the period of September 1, 2004 to August 31, 2005, and who retire during said year under a N.Y.S. Teachers Retirement System may apply for and receive a retirement benefit upon submission of a request for the same on or before January 15 of the retirement year with an effective retirement date of June 30.

2. Retirement benefit shall be equal to the monetary value of one-third (1/3) of the teacher's accumulated sick leave to be paid to the teacher at his/her then per diem rate of

pay. No teacher shall receive a retirement benefit greater than the monetary equivalent of one hundred seventeen (117) days of his/her accumulated sick leave. The retirement benefit will be paid on or about June 30th of the year of retirement.

3. Teachers who retire effective June 30, 2005; or June 30, 2006, or June 30, 2007; or June 30, 2008 and have notified the District on or before January 15th of the retirement year, are eligible for an additional benefit equal to the monetary value of his/her last year's unused sick and unused personal days allotment to be paid to the teacher at his/her then per diem rate of pay. These days may exceed the maximum delineated in F2.

A Whale of a Lesson

Suffolk Edge Newsletter

A young student was talking to her teacher about whales. The teacher said it was physically impossible for a whale to swallow a human because even though it was a large mammal its throat was very small. The student stated that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. Irritated, the teacher reiterated that a whale could not swallow a human; it was physically impossible. The little girl said, "When I get to heaven I'll ask Jonah." The teacher asked, "What if Jonah when to hell?" The little girl replied, "Then you ask him."

Buy "Union" for the Holidays

NYSUT Leader 11/5/04

Holiday shoppers can please friends and family and save good-paying jobs by **buying union made gifts for the holidays.**

"Buy Union Week", November 26 - December 5 targets the busiest 10-day shopping period of the year. Shoppers will spend a projected \$1 trillion on gifts, food and other items for the winter holidays.

Under the slogan "Give the Gift of Good Jobs," Buy Union Week seeks to channel as many holiday shopping dollars as possible toward the purchase of union-made goods and services.

An all-union Internet shopping site - www.ShopUnionMade.org - was set up this fall by the Union Label and Services Trades Department, AFL-CIO, to make it easy for consumers to find and buy union made items.

"If people spread the word and pledge to buy at least one union-made gift for the holidays, we will have a large positive impact on jobs. We need a grassroots movement to make it happen," said Matt Bates, secretary-treasurer of the Union Label & Services Trades Departments."

Support for the Hills Foundation

The Hills Foundation provides funding for educational programs for students in the Half Hollow Hills School District that are not provided in the annual budget. To support this worthy organization, the education store, **L.L. Weans**, is offering a **10% discount** on any one item when your total is at least \$25.00. They will also donate **10% of your total purchases** to the Hills Foundation. This offer is good at their 239 Airport Plaza store (Route 110) in Farmingdale on **Sunday, December 19th only.**

Check Your PAYCHECK

If you have a star (*) next to the insurance deductions on your paycheck, that is telling you that you are paying for your insurance premiums with pre-tax dollars. **If you do not**, you are not paying with pre-tax dollars. **Please contact Mr. Light's office (592-3030) for the necessary forms that will allow you to start paying with pre-tax dollars.**

Classified

For Sale: C.W. Post Credits, contact Peg Anderson at Vanderbilt or Otsego, or call 757-7004.

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