



THE UNION SOUND

THE VOICE OF A SOUND UNION



November 2019

Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

Volume 44, Issue 3

Calendar of Upcoming Events

December

- 03: Reservations due to Jen McCain for the NYC bus trip
- 07: MES Holiday Craft Fair from 10:00am-4:00pm
- 10: BOE meeting @ 7:00pm at the DO
- 11: RVF Executive Committee meeting @ 4:15pm at the RVF Office
- 13: Deadline for submissions to *The Union Sound*
- 14: RVF bus trip to NYC @ 8:00am
- 21: Retiree lunch meeting @ 12:00pm at Blackboard Bistro
- 23-31: School closed

RVF Annual NYC Bus Trip

by Jennifer Hannis-McCain

The Rondout Valley Federation is sponsoring a bus trip to NYC on Saturday, December 14. The bus will leave the middle school parking lot at 8:00am and drop everyone off at Bryant Park. We will depart NYC at 7:00pm and return to the middle school by 9:00pm.

Each guest who brings a new, unwrapped toy will receive a raffle ticket to win prizes from local merchants and restaurants. The toys collected will benefit children in our school district. Current and retired RVF members, their families, and friends are all welcome to come.

The cost of the trip is \$25 per person and checks can be made payable to the RVF.



Please send your name, number of attendants, and cell phone number to jhannis-mccain@rondout.k12.ny.us or call (845) 687-2400, ext. 4757 by December 3 to reserve your seat.



IN THIS ISSUE:

Monthly Calendar by Robyn McDonough	1
RVF Bus Trip by Jennifer Hannis-McCain	1
President's Message by Robert McDonough	2
Benefits Bulletin by Tara Thibault-Edmonds	2
History Corner by Jennifer Slauson	3
Elementary News by Michele Juric and Dorothy Mayone	3

The Union Sound

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President's Message

by Robert McDonough

October was a good month for the RVF. We successfully completed our first highway cleanup in our commitment to keep our community clean and beautiful, we had our first RVF Haunted Hayride gathering, and we wore red for Chicago, as we watched the Chicago teachers win their contract dispute.

This month, the RVF has many things to be thankful for as well. Our Saturday morning Defensive Driving class successfully helped fourteen RVF members and their families get a discount on their car insurance. The community blood drive, which the RVF provides pizza for, was once again a success. Our very own Rich Gohl was honored by Ulster County Executive Pat Ryan on Veterans Day for his service to the country. And, the RVF delivered gifts to all the secretaries and paraprofessionals on SRP Day. Perhaps some of the biggest news this month is that

the RVF Secretarial Unit successfully negotiated a fair contract with the District that lasts for the next four years.

But most importantly, this month is Thanksgiving, which is a time to spend with our loved ones. For me, family has always come before anything else, and our careers are the way we provide good lives for ourselves and families. Thanksgiving is a time to reflect on that. I believe that in life, time is just as valuable as money. When unions bargain for fair contracts, we don't only get more money but also more time for ourselves and our families, such as when three contracts ago the RVF bargained for the Wednesday before Thanksgiving off.

We must also remember that for some, the holidays are a time of sadness and a time in which families struggle to provide their loved ones with what others seem to have in abundance. I encourage us all to donate whatever we can to the various building and community collections during the holiday season for families in need. I wish you all a very Happy Thanksgiving with your loved ones. Enjoy your much deserved time off from work.

Benefits Bulletin

by Tara Thibault-Edmonds

BENEFITS OF HOLIDAY SHOPPING WITH NYSUT

As the holidays are fast approaching and we all begin searching for the perfect gifts for friends and family, don't forget that NYSUT offers a range of amazing shopping benefits for our members.

Buyer's Edge, Inc. is a program for making major purchases by phone, online, or in person. If you're looking for a major appliance, electronics, furniture, or even a new vehicle, Buyer's Edge can help you get the best possible deal. In fact, NYSUT members save an average of \$3,383 off of manufacturer's suggested retail on new vehicles. For more information, visit buyersedgeinc.com/ and use the member-assigned username 215 and password NYSUT.

Purchasing Power is another shopping program that allows NYSUT members to make major purchases that can be paid through payroll deduction or automatic electronic withdrawal over a 12-month period. Items such as computers, jewelry, brand-name clothing, and even swing sets and travel packages can be ordered through their catalog site by signing up at nysutmbc.purchasingpower.com. While this is not a discount program, first-time users can get 30% off their first order if placed before December 31. The main convenience is that of paying over time without high-interest charges or credit checks.

Even if you aren't looking to make a major purchase, NYSUT can offer plenty of other shopping benefits. NYSUT members receive 20% off of orders at 1800flowers.com with code NYSUTMB and can save up to 75% off select products at Office Depot/OfficeMax after registering at officediscounts.org/nysut/.

A new discount program through Access Development will roll out in January and offer savings at local restaurants, shops, movie theaters, and travel programs. Shop smart for the holidays and use your NYSUT benefits.

History Corner

by Jennifer Slauson

DON'T FORGET THE CRANBERRY SAUCE

With cold winds blowing and crimson leaves falling, the crisp light of autumn calls us to once again settle into our snug, warm homes, hearths alight, and celebrate our national origin myth: Thanksgiving. And like any good myth, ours comes full of observance and ritual; heroic stories, Pilgrim plays, and harvest-hued turkey hands adorn refrigerators filled with the makings for the reenactment of the Thanksgiving Feast. Sweet and tangy, chunky or jellied, no modern American Thanksgiving meal would be complete without an unobtrusive side of cranberry sauce.

Cranberries have a long and favored history in New England. Originally harvested from common lands, they were consumed and exported, and they helped to sustain the poor. After bogs were privatized and actively cultivated in the 1840s, the harvest required labor for an intensive but relatively short period. Early vineyards relied on local communities and families, but as bogs grew and profits soared, new sources of labor were needed. As historical timing had it, America was flush with a low-wage labor pool of new immigrants. The diverse cranberry workers—Polynesian, Finns, Russian, Swedes, Italian, French Canadian, Cape Verdean, Oneida Indian, Poles, and Puerto Rican—had learned from their mill and factory

counterparts and began organizing along ethnic lines in the early 20th century. By the Depression, waves of layoffs pushed workers to strike. Nearly 150 workers walked out on Ocean Spray's Bog No. 1 in 1931. Two years deeper into the Depression, 1,800 Cape Verdean pickers united with the Cape Cod Cranberry Pickers Union and affiliated themselves with the American Federation of Labor. Like many industrial workers, 300 pickers demanded pre-Depression wages and walked off the job after the Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Association refused to negotiate. The next day, 1,200 more pickers walked off; news rippled across the bogs, and soon a complete harvest shutdown loomed. Growers, with press and police support, went on the attack against the "outsiders" and "agitators." The National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933, which sought to alleviate the Depression, guaranteed workers the right to collective bargaining, and in the fall of 1934, pickers added collective bargaining to their list of demands. Still, there was no movement, and more attacks occurred—some violent.

So, what changed? Strikers didn't settle and growers didn't pay better, but by the 1940s, most growers switched from hand-picked dry harvesting to wet harvesting, where the bog is flooded and ripe berries float to the surface and are then scooped up. Some berries were damaged, but once cooked and packed in a can, no one knew. Wet harvest required fewer workers, and canning increased profits and added the ubiquitous ruby-cylinder to our Thanksgiving tables. So please don't forget the cranberry sauce . . . or the cranberry workers.

Elementary News

by Michele Juric and Dorothy Mayone

VANAVER CARAVAN HITS THE STAGE AT RVHS

The annual Around the World Dance Festival by Vanaver Caravan took place at Rondout Valley High School on November 7. All third-grade students from Kerhonkson and Marbletown Elementary Schools participated in this festival. The countries and dances showcased were the Philippines with a Tinikling Folk Dance by Laurie Knapp's class; Pakistan with a Pakistani Dance by Dorothy Mayone's class; Morocco with a Moroccan Wedding Dance by Michele Juric's class; Russia with a Troika Dance by Mary Schoonmaker's class; Ecuador with the Sumac Llacta Chola Cuencana Dance by Jen Husta's class; Ireland with the Sweets of May Irish Step Dance by Maria Dunham's and Haley Johnson's classes; and Korea with the Fan Dance

performed to the song "Arirang" by Cindy Palm's class.

Each group spent October and November studying the country where their dance originated. This is incorporated in our social studies curriculum. The students compared and contrasted each country to The United States regions. The classes also studied the culture, language, geography, and history of each nation. The teachers observed incredible social and emotional growth over the duration of the two months in learning the dances. Throughout the years, it's been positively noted that this experience helps to build a community bond within each classroom as well.

The teachers are thankful for this program and what it offers our students. Not only does it offer academic and personal growth for individuals but also growth for the greater group performing as one. Thank you to Bill and Livia Vanaver for bringing the arts and dance into our schools and for working with our students to help teach them about the different cultures around the world. The children had a blast!



NEW Endorsed Program

Get ready to Access ... big savings!

NYSUT Member Benefits is pleased to announce the launch of our newest endorsed program -- **Member Benefits Discounts & Deals provided by Access Development!**

This money-saving benefit is available exclusively to NYSUT members and features the nation's largest private discount network.

These deals can be accessed either online or from the palm of your hand through Access Development's MB Deals mobile app. Visit mbdeals.enjoymydeals.com to learn more.

Register your account on the Access website with your NYSUT ID number using the URL above. You will then be able to enjoy exclusive access to savings of up to 50% on shopping, restaurants, movie tickets & entertainment, travel, oil changes & vehicle maintenance, and much more.

Have a favorite local business?

One of the best features of the MB Discounts & Deals program is the ability to recommend your favorite local business, restaurant, coffee shop, etc. to potentially join the Access Development network.

Register your account on the Access website by March 31, 2020 to be eligible to win prizes -- visit the Member Benefits website for more information!

Learn more by calling **800-626-8101** or visiting **memberbenefits.nysut.org**.

For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.

Nov./Dec. '19

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