



THE UNION SOUND

THE VOICE OF A SOUND UNION



October 2019

Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

Volume 44, Issue 2

Calendar of Upcoming Events

November

- 01: Early voting in NYS
- 02: Early voting in NYS
- 03: Early voting in NYS
- 05: BOE meeting @ 7:00pm at the DO
- 05: General Election voting
- 06: Donate \$5.00 to veterans and wear jeans to work
- 07: County-Wide Emergency Evacuation Drill
- 08: Blood Drive from 8:00am-6:30pm at the HS
- 11: School closed
- 13: RVF Executive Committee meeting @ 4:15pm at the RVF Office
- 15: Deadline for submissions to *The Union Sound*
- 18: School-Related Professionals Recognition Day
- 19: BOE meeting @ 7:00pm at the DO
- 21: Retired members lunch meeting @ 12:00pm at Blackboard Bistro
- 26: Harlem Wizards vs. RV Staff basketball game @ 7:00pm at the HS
- 27: School closed
- 28: School closed
- 29: School closed



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RVF Adopt-a-Highway Program

On October 19, the RVF completed its first highway cleanup. The RVF adopted a one-mile stretch of Rt. 209 between the RVF Office and Kyserike Road. We will be cleaning up our stretch of highway twice a year, with the next one being in the spring of 2020 for those who would like to join us. Thank you to all those who came out to support this endeavor, get a little exercise and fresh air, and keep our community beautiful and clean.



The Union Sound

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President's Message

by Robert McDonough

FDR once said, "If I went to work in a factory, the first thing I'd do is join a union." Since the formation of Labor Unions in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era of our country's history, there have been many periods of cyclical anti-union and pro-union sentiment. There have been many eras of battles between management and labor in this country over safe conditions, fair pay, due process, and the right to collectively bargain. Over the last decade, there has certainly been a concerted effort on the parts of some to destroy unions.

Recent US Supreme Court decisions like *Citizens United v. FEC* and *Janus v. AFSCME* could potentially cripple unions and show us just how important voting is. The winners of a Presidential election don't only choose the path of our country for the length of their own term(s), but they appoint the judges that will affect our lives for decades to come. Recent Right-to-Work laws in some US states seek the same outcome of hurting unions but through the legislative path rather than through judicial decisions. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "In our glorious fight for civil rights, we must guard against being fooled by false slo-

gans, such as 'right to work'. . . Its purpose is to destroy labor unions and the freedom of collective bargaining. . ."

In the last several years, we have seen unions stand up and fight everywhere across the United States. Most recently UAW won their dispute with GM. For those that don't remember, UAW gave concessions to GM during the Great Recession and government bailout era that they never got back, even when the company started making record profits. This past month, the Chicago Teachers Union took their fight to the streets to stand up for a fair contract, and unions from around the country wore red to show their solidarity.

In the wake of some recent political losses, unions have been stepping up, not stepping down. As we approach another cyclical moment in our country's timeline, I am happy to see unions everywhere fight for what is fair and right. I am proud to be a union member as I watch the sacrifice and loyalty spread across our land. AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka put it best when he recently said, ". . . Bosses everywhere should take note—we're not going to take it anymore." The tide is once again shifting in the right direction. Be sure to go out and vote every November and cast your voice on the future direction of our country. You can learn more about the new early voting process in New York by visiting elections.ulstercountyny.gov and our RVF Facebook page.

Political Action

by Diana Zuckerman

VOTE EARLY, VOTE OFTEN!

Come to the polls on, or even before, Tuesday, November 5, to vote in the General Election. You ask, "Before Tuesday, November 5?" Yes, New York State now has Early Voting from Saturday, October 26 to Sunday, November 3 at a variety of locations. If you live in Ulster

County, you can get more information at elections.ulstercountyny.gov about early voting, poll locations, and absentee ballots. County races are important for dealing with local issues, such as poverty, local services, and local access. Cast your vote for County Executive, County Legislature, County District Attorney, County Comptroller, and County Judge. We need elected officials who will best meet the needs of *all* of our community members. Remember, your voice matters. Express your voice through your vote! Vote early, vote often!

Health & Safety

by Robyn McDonough

IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING

We are fortunate to have an RVF-appointed COSH

representative who also happens to be a member of the District-Wide School Safety Team. If you ever have any school-related health or safety questions, concerns, or issues that you don't think are being adequately addressed by administration, please contact Rich Gohl directly at rgohl@rondout.k12.ny.us. Rich will then make the appropriate contacts and officially document the progress. Let's all be vigilant to ensure a safe and healthy workplace.

In Remembrance of Daria Bogart

by David Mahoskey

At times, Daria Bogart could be a real tough person to read, unless you were an adolescent that lacked structure, possessed minimal coping skills, couldn't follow basic rules, and often used foul language. If this were the case, then Daria Bogart would be the one person in the world that you truly trusted. As a co-worker and friend, I can tell you that Daria Bogart pulled no punches and wore her emotions on her sleeve. If she disagreed with you, oh boy! Would she let you know it! Maybe this is why the kids who struggled with relationships gravitated to her. Daria Bogart was as honest as they come, and the troubled kids not only knew but also *felt* her sincerity.

After many years of working closely alongside Daria, I came to the understanding that she truly loved four things in life. In no particular order, Daria loved her family, working with our most challenging students, the fall season, and last but certainly not least, Bob Dylan. Regardless of the amount of daily stress at work, when speaking about her son Dylan and her daughter Caitlyn, Daria's voice would soften and her face would absolutely sparkle as she shared stories of her beloved children.

In 2008, I came up with an idea of merging our Intermediate and Junior High behavior management programs to participate in a flag football game that would be played on the last school day before Thanksgiving. George D'Alessandro and I would constantly talk in his classroom about how the fall season was such a great time of year for football. Mostly because I wanted an excuse to ditch my school walkie-talkie the last day before Thanksgiving break, the first ever Rondout Valley Turkey Bowl was born.

My goal was to equally split all of the students and staff from both programs into two teams and play a friendly



game of flag football. After this idea was pitched to the staff involved with these two programs, George's teaching assistant, Daria Bogart, approached me and said, "Hey, Mahoskey, not only do I have to put up with you coming down to our classroom to talk about football every day,

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you're now telling me that I am required to play in a football game? That isn't happening, buddy!" (There were actually a ton of inappropriate words that I had to leave out.) Daria then said, "You little boys have fun playing your games. I'll be inside stuffing my face with some homemade apple crisp and ice cream, and whoever would like to join me is free to do so!"

Because of Daria, our event concluded with all participants eating some small, tasty homemade bites that Daria provided. I sat back and knew that we were on to something big as I watched about twenty students smile, laugh, and talk about how much fun they had.

Year after year, the Turkey Bowl started to snowball. As for the football part, we went from borrowing gym pinnies, to using old football jerseys, to designing and printing our own team shirts. Teams now included former students and staff members who would come over from the high school or elementary schools to participate in our annual event. Many other staff members now joined in helping with the production of the Turkey Bowl. Home and careers and art teachers dedicated time to help our event become more festive. The Life Skills program, led by Deb Storrs, was responsible for introducing the first-ever cheerleaders to the football game. Steve Stephens, our then day time custodian, also became a Turkey Bowl staple.

The biggest advancement in our Turkey Bowl was the after-game meal. Daria had decided that staff and students would prepare an entire Thanksgiving meal with all the fixings made from scratch to be consumed after we ran around chasing one another on a makeshift field. Weeks prior to our event, kids and staff members peeled potatoes, cut apples, cooked cranberries, cut lettuce, made gravy, and baked many delicious desserts. On top of cooking and playing football, we were now making place settings, table centerpieces, and invitations to invite many other special adults that were not necessarily involved in our day-to-day behavior management operations. It was a ton of work on everyone's part, and words cannot describe the payoff of watching the final product of a "family" putting differences aside to enjoy each other's company—not to mention a really yummy meal that was made for us, by us.

In the past few years, for many different reasons this tradition has faded away. Also, Daria Bogart is no longer with us as she lost her battle to cancer. Although I came up with the idea of having a Turkey Bowl, Daria was the driving force behind it. The Turkey Bowl had a life of its own and left all that were involved with life lessons that

could only be learned through experience. Thanks to Daria Bogart, I learned that some of our toughest kids need the most amount of love that we can give, especially during the holiday seasons. Because Daria taught me a lot about giving back to others, I feel that it is my duty to honor her for the unconditional love that she gave to our very toughest students by bringing back the tradition of staff and students working side by side to create a meal of thanks to be enjoyed by our school family. This November, with the help of many Junior High staff members and five special education classes led by George D'Alessandro, Robyn Lukaszewski, Chrissi Vedder, Ashley Woodill, and Beth Sulpice, the first annual *Daria's Dinner* will take place.

As Daria would often say to the students throughout the year, "Be thankful." I am thankful that I had a chance to know Daria Bogart.



History Corner

by Jennifer Slauson

TRICK OR TREAT!

This fall, Americans will purchase 600 million pounds of Halloween candy, 90 million of which will be chocolate. Undoubtedly, some of that chocolate will come from the two plants still operating in Hershey, Pennsylvania. In 1903, Milton Hershey began construction on a company-town for his growing chocolate business that he envisioned as a self-sustaining community that was both prosperous and deeply committed to philanthropy and education. Life was pretty sweet in Hershey. Many looked to it as a model community for the early 20th century—one powered by a highly successful corporation and devoted to the welfare of its people. Hershey provided high wages, homes along quiet streets, and benefits, such as pensions and health insurance, long before they were common in American industry. But the real-life Willy Wonka was also perceived as overbearing and paternalistic and increasingly too controlling of workers' lives. With the onset of the Great Depression, life in Hershey became more difficult. Wages and hours had to be cut and schedules became more erratic. This coupled with management's entanglements in workers' daily lives

made unionizing look more and more appealing.

Early in 1937 under a CIO umbrella, the United Chocolate Workers Union was formed and began to negotiate with Hershey executives. Soon after agreeing to wage increases, some union organizers were laid off. For workers, these fishy layoffs were the proverbial straw that led to a sit-down strike in April 1937. Some 600 of the 3,000 workers occupied the chocolate factory, halting production. By April 7, *The New York Times* was reporting that things in Hershey were heating up, and the local dairy farmers who depended on the factory along with Hershey loyalists marched in protest of the strike. Protests continued, and at 11am on the sixth day of the strike, 3,000 to 4,000 angry dairy farmers and non-striking workers armed with clubs and makeshift weapons stormed the factory. Strikers, outnumbered four to one, were forced out of the factory. After surrendering with hands held high, strikers faced a gauntlet, where they were pelted with sticks, stones, pebbles, and un-patriotic jeers and slurs.

In the end, even though Milton Hershey's utopia was shattered, the workers of his chocolate factory joined the Bakery and Confectionery Workers International Union with the AFL, making it one of the first American candy companies to unionize.

UNION-MADE HALLOWEEN
AFLCIO.ORG/HALLOWEEN

- Baby Ruth
- Bit-O-Honey
- Butterfinger
- Hershey's Kisses
- Jolly Ranchers
- Kit Kat
- Red Vines
- Smarties
- Sour Patch Kids
- Tootsie Rolls
- York Peppermint Patties

AFL-CIO

Benefits Bulletin

by Robyn McDonough

PETS ARE PART OF THE FAMILY TOO

Having a pet is a great responsibility and can sometimes be costly. That's why NYSUT has partnered with Nationwide to offer a few different pet insurance plans to meet your individual needs. According to NYSUT's information page on this topic, "Pets of any age are eligible for coverage through the Nationwide pet insurance program. Nationwide's medical plans provide benefits for accidents

and illnesses, ranging from ear infections to cancer.

Optional Pet Wellness plans provide benefits for preventive care such as routine exams, vaccinations, and blood work." There is even a multi-pet discount that members can qualify for. To get a price quote, visit poi8.petinsurance.com/benefits/nysut. Fill out and submit the short application, and a representative will contact you.

As is with most pet insurance companies, pre-existing conditions are not covered. That's why it's important to be proactive and get the insurance before your pet may need it. For more information, visit memberbenefits.nysut.org/program-service/insurance/nationwide-pet-insurance.

To My Soldier

by Rich Gohl

We are miles apart between sea and land
 Not knowing and always wondering where you might land
 We are mothers and fathers, husbands and wives
 Brothers and sisters who worry all night
 Our eyes fill with tears and our hearts fill with pride
 Knowing you are protecting our peace with your precious life
 We count the days, then we count the hours
 Till we can see you again and forever be ours
 It's Veterans Day and you're not around
 There are plenty of others with boots on the ground
 We honor and love each one of them
 Embracing them all as if they were our kin
 A letter arrives from you on the front
 Words of assurance, words of love, words that come from God above
 The day arrives when you return home
 You look different and distant and a little withdrawn
 But you embrace each one of us with
 Love in your heart
 Knowing you served and did your part.

Rondout Valley Central Schools 2019 Veterans Roll Call

High School:

Sergeant - Rich Gohl
 U.S. Army
 2nd Ranger Battalion, Joint Special Operation
 Command
 Ft. Lewis, Washington and Ft. Irwin, California

SRO:

Deputy Michael Wilbur - PFC
 U.S. Army
 1/156 Field Artillery
 Kingston, NY

District Office:

Sergeant - Jennifer Mazur
 101st MI BN
 Wurzburg, Germany

Sergeant - Louann Miszko
 U.S. Army
 MEDDAC

Marbletown and Kerhonkson Elementary:

Sergeant - Stephen Protoss
 United States Marine Corps
 Marine Barracks 8th & I, Washington, D.C.