



THE UNION SOUND

THE VOICE OF A SOUND UNION



January 2020

Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

Volume 44, Issue 5

Calendar of Upcoming Events

February

- 03: Budget Committee meeting 6:30pm at the DO
- 07: KES Valentine's Day Social 6:00pm-8:00pm
- 09: JHS Jazz Band Spaghetti Serenade at the Ellenville Elks Lodge;
4:30pm and 6:00pm dinner seatings
- 11: BOE meeting 7:00pm at the DO
- 12: RVF Executive Committee meeting 4:15pm at the RVF Office
- 14: MES Be My Valentine Dance 6:00pm-8:00pm
- 17: School closed
- 18: Superintendent's Conference Day
- 21: Deadline for submissions to *The Union Sound*
- 21: High School Musical 7:00pm *My Favorite Year*
- 22: High School Musical 7:00pm *My Favorite Year*
- 23: High School Musical 2:00pm *My Favorite Year*
- 25: BOE meeting 7:00pm at the DO

Care Packages for the Troops

by Cindy Carubia

George Burkett, Rondout Valley High School Junior and former student of Kerhonkson Elementary School, rallied the Kerhonkson community to donate care packages for our recently deployed men and women serving in the U.S. military. Goods such as snacks and personal-care items will be sent to our troops with appreciation and heartfelt good wishes from Kerhonkson Elementary. Plans for another collection and drive in the near future are in the works. Please contact [Dorothy Mayone](#) for more information about donating.



Pictured left to right (back row): Dorothy Mayone, Laura Mehalak, Angela Flanagan, HS junior George Burkett, Anne Gullickson, Cindy Carubia. *(Front row):* Zulma Martinez, Melissa Frument, Debbie Eck.

(Photo submitted by Dorothy Mayone)



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The Union Sound

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President's Message

by Robert McDonough

I hope everyone's New Year is off to a good start. It's hard to believe that we are almost done with the first semester of this school year already. The new RVF website rvfederation.com is now up and running. Please take the time to surf around and get used to navigating the site. We have included a search bar on the website to easily find the information you need. The RVF website has important information for our members and links to [documents](#), such as the RVF Constitution, our three contracts, APPR documents, [FAQs](#), [Rights](#) and [Benefits](#) pages, RVF representatives, and more. We added a [Retiree](#) page for those of you wanting information about retirement and for our many retirees. Photographs of our members at RVF events and [The Union Sound](#) newsletters will also be archived on our website.

As a reminder to our members approaching retirement age, remember to set up a meeting with TRS or ERS in Albany to best meet your retirement needs. The RVF has created a [retirement information sheet](#) with resources to guide you in the right direction while making your decision, and the RVF will also be offering an annual retirement workshop to assist members with the process. If this is your first year

of eligibility for retirement, the deadline for the incentive (February 1 in the [Teachers Contract](#) and "5 months prior to retirement" for the [Paraprofessional](#) and [Secretarial Contracts](#)) is approaching fast.

One last thing to remember in this increasingly litigious environment is the use of school email. Over the years we have been told, for [FERPA](#) (*Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act*) reasons, not to write a student's name in the email subject line. We have always been told to write "student" or use the student's initials. What everyone must remain conscious of is [FOIL](#) (*Freedom of Information Law*), which challenges what we were once told to do. Parents can and are using FOIL to obtain all district emails that reference their child. They can FOIL every email that has their student's name, initials, or student id number. That is why it is so important that our emails remain professional and do not contain any negative personal judgments that could be used against us in any type of disciplinary situation. When a FOIL request goes in for any initials (for example, 'JS') all emails with those initials will be pulled out of the server and read through by administration. The emails that reference 'JS' are then provided to the person who made the FOIL request. Please use caution and good judgment when using school email.

Thank you all for everything you do every day for our students and our profession. I hope you all are having a great start to 2020 both personally and professionally.

Benefits Bulletin

by Rich Gohl

Save the date! The RVF will be sponsoring a spring defensive driving course on Saturday, March 14, from 8:00am-3:00pm at the RVF Office. A future email will be sent out with the final details of the cost, who to make checks payable to, and the deadline for signing up. We need a minimum of ten people to run the course. Family members are allowed to participate. If you have any questions, please email [Rich Gohl](#).

Also, you can click [here](#) for the online version of the defensive driving course that you can take at your leisure for the cost of \$21.95.



History Corner

by Jennifer Slauson

THE LEGACY THAT MARCHES ON

"But it is not enough for me to stand before you tonight and condemn riots. It would be morally irresponsible for me to do that without, at the same time, condemning the contingent, intolerable conditions that exist in our society. These conditions are the things that cause individuals to feel that they have no other alternative than to engage in violent rebellions to get attention. And I must say tonight that a riot is the language of the unheard. And what is it America has failed to hear? . . . It has failed to hear that the promises of freedom and justice have not been met. And it has failed to hear that large segments of white society are more concerned about tranquility and the status quo than about justice and humanity." — "The Other America," March 10, 1968

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had strong ties to the American labor movement and gave this speech to supporters and the Local 1199 in New York City, a union consisting largely of black and Latino healthcare workers. Dr. King made a call to action to mobilize a multiracial movement of America's poor, New York City being one of many stops in his Poor People's Campaign. Another stop in his travels was Memphis, Tennessee.

On February 1, 1986, two sanitation workers were crushed by a truck compactor that had a faulty shutoff switch. The incident, along with the low pay (65¢ per hour), no overtime, no sick time, and allegations of abuse and racism, prompted 1,300 mostly black garbage collectors to strike. They demanded recognition of their Local 1733 union, a pay increase, and better working conditions. Memphis mayor Henry Loeb refused to negotiate as 10,000 tons of garbage piled up in the streets. Strikers marched draped in signs that read "I AM A MAN" echoing the statement of Rev. James Lawson, an ally of King, that "at the heart of racism is the idea 'A man is not a man.'" This strike was a race conflict and a rights' conflict where workers were demanding not just workplace improvements but all the same dignities, rights, and courtesies that citizenship guarantees.

After six weeks of strikes, marches, and protests, Dr. King went to Memphis. He spoke to 25,000 people where he called for a boycott of specific Memphis businesses that had failed to recognize black people's humanity—again insisting that there could be no civil rights without economic equity. Ten days later on March 28, King led another march that unfortunately turned violent, culminating when police shot and killed a 16-year-old boy and tear-gassed and then beat protesters with billy clubs in



the sanctuary of the Clayborn Temple Church as they gasped for fresh air. Mayor Loeb responded by declaring martial law and calling in 4,000 National Guard troops. The night of April 3, King and supporters gathered at Mason Temple where he gave his now-famous "Mountaintop" speech, foreshadowing his own death. The following evening at the Lorraine Hotel, Dr. King was shot and killed.

In the wake of the aftermath, black and white leaders of the community pleaded with Mayor Loeb to concede to the union's demands, but still he refused. The National Guard issued a 7:00pm curfew in Memphis. Riots broke out across the country. Four days later, 42,000 marchers led by Coretta Scott King silently marched through the streets of Memphis in honor of Dr. King and demanding Loeb accept the sanitation workers' demands. A deal was finally reached on April 16; the city recognized the union and guaranteed better wages, and the strike was over. King's legacy marched on, and at the core of his philosophy was the concept that color, class, or culture did not determine a person's worth but rather their commitment to making life better for all. As teachers, we do this every day, and for that, I am deeply grateful to you.



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