



THE UNION SOUND

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The Union Sound

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President's Message

by Robert McDonough

We did it. We made it through one of the most tumultuous years of our professional and personal lives. I knew all along that if we stayed united and supported one another, we could get through anything. And together we did just that. You all have climbed mountains this year that many thought were insurmountable. We were able to do this because of each and every one of you.

For some of you, this was the last year of your career. While not at all what you probably envisioned your retirement year looking like, you powered through and educated our students and finished your careers strong. The good news is that the world is opening back up. You will be able to have a fruitful and rewarding retirement, going anywhere you want to go. You will be able to see your families and travel the world. I know you will all live life to its fullest and write the next chapter of your lives.

To the 2021 RVF retirees, I wish you a very happy and healthy retirement. May you go wherever your heart takes you.

I hope everyone takes this summer to recharge and have fun with friends and family. If there has ever been a much deserved summer break, this year is one for the books. Take some time for yourselves over the next few months. You have earned it! Please enjoy this special retirement issue of *The Union Sound*.

Marbletown Retirees

CAROL COVAS

I first met Carol Covas in the 2006-07 school year when she was my son Caleb's 2nd grade teacher at the former Rosendale Elementary. I thought she was a delightful teacher, and my son Caleb was nearly always a happy camper in her class. She was incredibly kind, patient, and encouraging with him, which says a lot, because he was a bit squirrely in those days. One thing we really appreciated about Carol was how she encouraged the children's creativity by having them create, rehearse, and perform little plays. I'll never forget visiting the classroom when it was showtime. Every child was so excited to be "on stage." Every one of them had played multiple roles in the artistic process: writing, directing, acting, and being in charge of props and change of scenes. That day was a real celebration! I've never seen such energy and exuberance in a classroom before.

Even though my kids have graduated and moved on from Rondout, I've continued to stay in touch with Carol. This year we have a student in common, so we have consulted with each other often. She still maintains the same keen interest in every child, the same loving kindness, the same deep knowledge of how children learn and grow. She has been a truly valued member of the Rosendale and Marbletown faculties.

I'm happy for Carol that she gets to pursue other passions after this school year. But she will be so very missed for her many contributions to the children, past and present, of Rondout Valley. I wish her only happiness, good health, and joy in this next chapter of life!

~ *Rebecca Horwitz*

I started working with Carol three years ago. What a joy it's been. She is the most calm, cool, and collected teacher I've ever worked with. I have never seen her rattled by any student's behavior. There are consequences, but she always remains calm. She truly loves children, and it clearly shows. Just think of a classroom filled with Japanese lessons, tap dancing, plays, and a very quiet learning environment! Although I know the closing of Rosendale was heartbreaking for her, it was Marbletown's great fortune that she landed with us.

There is much that I will miss, as I have learned so much from her. It was no surprise to me that when asked to write down what they would miss the most about school, almost every student answered with "Ms. Covas." This year has been tough, but Carol was a trooper. She worked so hard, making sure the students got the best possible education.



We all know that was no easy task! I wish her joy, happiness, and lots of snowboarding in her retirement.

~ *Kathie Hikade*

Dear Carol,

It takes a VERY special person to be the educator and influencer you have been throughout your teaching career. As your colleagues, we cannot thank you enough for the fine example you have set for us as newer teachers. Your calm demeanor that creates the most welcoming tone, your beautiful grace as a person, your spirit that holds a fun inner child, and your level-headedness that is full of reason are all ways you have made an everlasting impact on the Rondout community.

Although your presence at Marbletown Elementary will be deeply missed, we couldn't be happier for you and what this next chapter has to offer. We hope you enjoy everything that nature has to offer, such as sunny days for long runs to clear your head and snowy mountains for winter adventures. Most importantly, we wish you a retirement full of time spent with your mother and son.

You have worked so hard for so many years. You have gone above and beyond to meet the needs of all your students on individual levels. The long hours you have put in after school for planning and extra-curricular meetings have not gone unnoticed. No one deserves a long, happy, and healthy retirement more than you. We hope that your retirement years are your best years!

Love,

~ *Your 2nd Grade Team
Caitlin, Cindy, and Jacquelyn*

MAUREEN FARO

While I have only been lucky enough to work with Maureen Faro in the MES library for the last five years, our district has been fortunate to have had the benefit of her service for more than 20 years. In that time, Maureen has worked in several of the school buildings and has touched the lives of so many students and staff. I can personally say that Maureen has been my right arm (and sometimes also my left!) and has helped make our library a special, welcoming place for everyone at MES.

During this exceptionally difficult year, we've all needed to lean on each other a little bit more than usual. Maureen was always there to jump in and lend a hand—often going above and beyond. Working with someone with whom you share a common vision and dedication is rare and invaluable. It cannot be overstated that because Maureen was so skilled at doing her job, it enabled others to work better as well. Barbara Rice worked with her the longest and wished to share this sentiment: “Maureen and I worked together in the library for 14 years at Rosendale Elementary and then at Marbletown. She is dedicated, focused, and hardworking. She was always supportive and patient—with students (and me!)—and fun! Happy Retirement, Maureen!”

Anyone who knows Maureen knows she has a great sense of humor and, even when she perhaps wasn't 100% convinced, would be game to go along with some ridiculously silly ideas like dressing as the creepy carrots or



donning a mustache as a member of Koo Koo Kanga Roo. Anything for the kids! The students will miss seeing the “Book Fairy” bringing the library books on a cart from classroom to classroom. It is bittersweet that after nearly ten years at MES, Maureen is retiring. We are certainly sad that we are losing such a fabulous member of our school family. However, we are also excited that she will be starting this next chapter of her life, which includes becoming a grandmother again and many trips to Cape Cod. So, with love from everyone at MES we say, “Good Luck, Maureen! Thanks for all that you have done for us. We love you!”

~ Alisa Finck

This year's 12 RVF Retirees have given a combined total of 271 years of service to the Rondout Valley CSD!



Kerhonkson Retirees

SHIRLEY CURREY & ANDREA KORTRIGHT

I knew this day would come sooner or later, but for me, it's too soon! Andrea Kortright and Shirley Currey have been my grade-level teammates for most of my 17 years at KES. I am full of gratitude to have them in my life. I treasure the wisdom they have shared and their dedication to education and children. I will always fondly remember the conversations and laughs throughout the years. The days can be long, and I always looked forward to seeing them out on the playground when we could check in with each other. I also enjoyed the field trips we took together (I love you, Shirley!). Thanks to both of them, we were able to go on many! Rondout Valley and Kerhonkson Elementary School have been very fortunate to have Andrea and Shirley as teachers. Their work ethic and professionalism are supremely admirable. They regularly stayed hours past the end of the day and rarely took a day off. I cannot thank them enough for each being a role model and friend to me, and I wish them both all the best always. Happy retirement, Andrea and Shirley—it's well deserved!

~ Darlene Cummins

Andrea has been a great friend and co-worker since the day I joined the Kindergarten team at KES. She welcomed me on day one and always shared materials, resources, and advice—not just about kids and education, but also health, exercise, and recipes. Her humor always made the rough days, weeks, and sometimes years tolerable. When I think about our planning sessions on sticky notes, our K-conference in Saratoga, our K-trip to NYC with Sally and Laura, and our adventures in Old Forge with Dorothy and the girls, it fills my heart with joy and makes me smile. Andrea is an articulate and intelligent woman who I admire and respect. I commend her for her diligence, devotion, commitment, and sense of humor she maintained in Kindergarten for 33 years. Her sense of style in jewelry is also pretty remarkable. I wish you happiness, good health, and many adventures in your retirement, Andrea! You will be missed by your KES family and friends.

~ Debbie Eck

What do I say about my colleague and dearest friend, Shirley Currey? I have been working with Shirley for 13 1/2 years. When I was told I was going to be working with her I was a nervous wreck. She is such a smart woman who uses a lot of big words, lol. That September when I walked into the classroom, I told her I needed a dictionary on a rope (like soap on a rope) to look up the words she was using. That became an ongoing joke through the years.

Working with Shirley over the years, I saw her passion to teach children and push them to "their" fullest potential. She knows every child has potential and helps them to reach it. She has not only taught the children, but she also has taught me so much.

I will miss our talks, laughter, and tears. Oh, and let's not forget "Where are my glasses?" and those loud screams when you walked in the door and she didn't hear you.

Shirley, you have been a blessing to so many children and adults in your 17 years at KES. We will immensely miss your laughter, knowledge, skipping down the halls—and, yes, even your shrieking yells and wish you nothing but the best.

Lots of love, my dear friend.

~ Annmarie Huffman



High School Retirees

FRANNY HERTZ

It all started in 1999 when this new spitfire of a teacher came and recruited me for a new program in our school. That program was WISE and the spitfire was Franny Hertz. She was new to our district but not new to hard work and innovative ways of teaching. She went about her business of recruiting and getting what she needed to get this program off the ground. It brought together all of the things administrators love: kids working on grand projects to show off to the community—but also everything they hated: scores of kids walking around the building not in class because they were doing interviews or research. In the middle of it was Franny who stood strong to make sure her program got what it needed to survive and thrive.

Having been involved in the WISE program since its inception and getting to know Franny, we had the opportunity to work together in the classroom. We became co-teachers in 2012 and have been together ever since. We have spent the last nine years finishing each other's sentences, debating on how to modify an assignment, watching CNN10 and playing bad cop, worse cop. One particular day I was chastising a class about not doing their homework, and I passed off to Franny thinking she was going to console them and give them a plan forward. Instead she started ripping into them also! It was a match made in State Ed.

My time with Franny has led me to know her as a teacher who loves and cares for the kids in her charge as if they were her own. She treats them with love and understanding and can take the most surly teenager and get them to open up. But when you co-teach with someone, the bond that you develop becomes very strong. We have had to share trials and tribulations in our lives because we see it in each other's face each morning. We became a team, and we relied on each other for that support.

I can't believe our time working together is coming to an end. For every B/D day for the last nine years, we have started off together, and I will miss it. I will miss our talks about our families and pets and travels. I will miss bad cop, worse cop. However, I am so excited for you to begin your life after teaching . . . for you and Ira to travel and chase your girls around the globe. I am excited for you to go after whatever that next passion of yours will be.

I end with this. Most of us teachers need to be called Mr. or Mrs _____. You never felt that need. Franny was your name and that would do. What we all need to remember is that when the students call us by our first name, it's not out of disrespect. It is out of love and comfortability. You loved your students, and they loved you back! Plus, only the best go by one name: Prince, Madonna, Cher, Ron!

Congratulations on finally graduating! Enjoy retirement and never forget us here at Rondout because Rondout won't forget the legacy you have left behind.

~ Chris Frenza

Francine Hertz and I began our careers at Rondout around the same time, some twenty years ago, so I do not have a reference of the school culture in the district Before Franny (BF). I do know that with Franny came the wonderful WISE program, service learning in its various incarnations, the much-needed Newcomers Uplifted, and a slew of other amazing projects and programs strewn about our K-12 schools like seeds of love, seeds that thrived and created an abundance of warmth, compassion and learning for our students through experiential and project-based learning. Franny has cultivated an engaging environment in our schools among our students and faculty, and she is largely responsible for the current positive climate in the district (COVID notwithstanding), but stacking her accomplishments and influences like pieces of gold does little to describe the light she shines and imbues in others.

Each end-of-August, Franny and I have held peer leader training for Newcomers Uplifted. At each session for the past 15 years or so, Franny has impressed upon these young leaders to try and imagine what our school culture might look like without this program and the good work these upperclassmen do. It's hard for them to envision a place where freshmen bullying was once normalized by "tradition"—that pernicious acquiescence of "that's the way it's always been." It's hard for these peer leaders to conjure the existence of menace and the fear held by freshmen. It's hard to prove a negative.

Hard to prove, but I have no doubt that our school culture, AF, will be greatly diminished by her absence.

~ Joe Reeder

DEANA SHELOK

As I sit here trying to figure out how to juggle my schedule so I can run over to help you pack up your U-Haul (spoiler: I'm not coming over), I'm trying very hard to figure out how to put our friendship into words. I've read hundreds of these retirement send-offs over the years and coming up with something new and unique can be difficult. But all those other retirees are not you . . . you are an original!

You've often said a woman's brain is like a bowl of spaghetti . . . it goes in 100 directions at once, just like your stories! I've been late for numerous Zoom classes, so you could (finally) get to your point (if you remember what it was in the first place)! In all fairness to you, it can be tough to get through a story while being constantly heckled, harassed, or having jelly beans thrown at your head. Running into you in the hallway usually meant forgetting about the stresses of teaching (and life) for a few minutes. I loved sharing a few good laughs at the expense of colleagues and administrators (easy pickings there), but usually family and friends were our target.

It was evident that you were the one everyone could count on, no matter how dirty the job. You would often be first to volunteer to pick up a class or two when we were short on subs, take on an extra duty, or even sit in on a dreaded CSE meeting when most of us walk the other way. A few weeks into this school year, you were asked (begged) to take on an extra class. With every fiber of your being, you did not want this extra responsibility during the crazy COVID year. You shut your door, screamed, shouted, waved your arms, possibly cursed a few times, then opened the door and said "of course" you would take the extra class to help out, because that's what you do! You're loved and admired by our entire school. Your relationship with your students is remarkable. Over the years, you've hired multiple ex-students for landscaping and other odd jobs around your house. During morning bus duty, most of your students would even grunt a hello in your direction at 7:25am . . . that's impressive!

I'm sure your U-Haul will be loaded soon (perhaps a field trip for your English class), and Deana 2.0 will be underway. I'm confident that the combination of sandy beaches and crisp ocean air is enough to give you a lifetime full of happiness and memories. While you leave behind a void that will be tough to fill, don't worry about us (cliche alert: Don't cry because it's over, smile that it happened). I'm thrilled that you have this golden opportunity to move on and put yourself first. As Morgan Freeman once said, "Get busy living, or get busy dying!" Now get out there, and let Delaware know you've arrived!

Personally, I'm just happy I (finally) got the last word.

~ Joe Burns

Teachers spend about 1,300 hours at work during the school year. For some of us, that rivals the amount of time we spend at home. As a result, many of us consider our colleagues to be our second family. We laugh together, get annoyed with each other, and cry with each other when things go off the rails. Certainly, we miss those that retire or move on to other experiences. It is therefore with mixed emotions that I write to acknowledge a pending loss to our Rondout family as Deana Shelok prepares to embark on a new beginning.

I can assure any that have never worked with Deana directly that she is simply an amazing teacher. I had the pleasure of working with Deana in an AIS class years back, and I thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Deana was so fun to plan with, and our collaborations always produced lessons that were far better than anything I could muster on my own; she brought creative energy and humor to our planning sessions. These qualities also penetrated the classroom where struggling ELA students felt at home and genuinely nurtured in her presence. On those hectic days when our plans needed to be a bit more flexible, Deana had the skill of rolling with the moment, following my lead or taking the lead herself to assure that our students' immediate needs were met. I can honestly say that AIS instruction with Deana was just plain fun. She made me a better teacher, and all these years later I reflect on this with a smile on my face and genuine gratitude for the experience.

While I will certainly never forget my teaching experiences with Deana, my enduring memory will have little to do with co-teaching an AIS class; it will rather have everything to do with Deana's character. While we've all had our knocks in life, Deana's been thrown a few extra speed bumps along her travels. It has been Deana's response to those moments that will stay with me forever. Deana has shown me that a smile triumphs over tears. I've gotten so used to seeing that smile over the years that I find it hard to imagine our hallways without it. Yet I know that Deana will continue to do what she does best; she will bring that smile to her new colleagues. She will brighten new hallways and continue to be an ambassador of goodwill because she truly knows no other way.

As with family, we don't really get to choose our colleagues: we're stuck with each other! I feel so grateful to have been 'stuck' with Deana. Despite knowing her for 15 years, I can honestly think of nothing other than good things to say about her. Her consistent kindness and professionalism have been an inspiration for me as I'm sure they have been for the rest of us. We will miss her very much, and we certainly wish her the very best as she embarks on her newest adventure.

~ Doug Serson

LUCY VAN SICKLE

Lucy Van Sickle came to RV High School 29 years ago, bringing a vast amount of clinical knowledge and expertise with her. Lucy attended the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing. She worked at Kingston Hospital in the Intensive Care/Coronary Care Unit. Lucy has experience as an EMT and is a vital member of the Marbletown Fire Company. She's also worked at the Ulster County Jail, Camp Huntington in High Falls, and substituted at RVCSD before being hired. Lucy has been an active RVF member and is a pilot and published author. This extensive and varied nursing and life experience has enabled her to shine as the high school nurse.

Lucy has been an experienced voice of skill and knowledge for our nursing department. We have been blessed to have had the opportunity to work with and learn from Lucy. She has common sense, the ability to work autonomously, and a sense of humor in abundance—all vital to her practice as a school nurse over the last 29 years.

Lucy has left her mark at RVCSD and has proven to be an invaluable asset to our school and our community. As a published author of *Marbletown*, a pilot, and a Board of Education member starting in July, who knows where retirement will lead her?

~ Rita Stoddard RN, KES Nurse
 Lauri Mulholland RN, MES Nurse
 Marge Gilliland RN (retired)
 Liz Kelder RN (retired)
 Maryellen Fitzgerald RN (retired)

Lucille Marie Mathuran (better known as L U U U U C C C C E E E E E the high school nurse) was born in Putnam, Connecticut. As a child, Lucy was active in English equestrian show jumping competitions. She also managed the football team at Putnam High School. After graduation, Lucy attended Hartford Hospital School of Nursing and graduated in 1976 as a registered nurse. She worked at Hartford Hospital for two years as an RN in the operating room, and then transitioned to the newborn ICU at the University of Connecticut Health Center. In 1979, Lucy moved to Kingston, NY, to try her hand at her first marriage. It was during this time that she worked in the intensive care unit and operating room at Benedictine Hospital.

After the birth of her first child, Kara, Lucy continued working per diem at both Kingston and Northern Dutchess Hospitals. In 1983 she gave birth to her second child, Christopher. It was at this time Lucy returned to Kingston Hospital as an ICU nurse where she worked until 1991. Following this endeavor Lucy started as a substitute nurse in the Rondout Valley Central School District. It was in 1992 that Lucy commenced on the amazing journey of being a full-time school nurse. While serving as an RN in this

capacity, Lucy fulfilled her role and duties with great compassion and empathy, providing a bag of ice and two Tylenol to all students who entered through her doors. She provided emotional support and immense kindness as parents were notified of their child's condition as the student waited to be picked up by mom or dad.

During her time at RVCSD, Lucy also worked every other weekend at the Ulster County Jail (some say this was court mandated). In addition to all of this, she fell in love and married her second husband, the love of her life, Russ Van Sickle (practice makes perfect). She has also been active with the Marbletown Rescue Squad where Lucy held positions as a Driver, EMT, and 1st Lieutenant. After 30 years of selfless service, she is now a lifetime member. Of course, this wasn't the end of her service to the community. She is now the Assistant Chief of the North Marbletown Fire Company where her husband is the Chief. (A little strange I say. However, when they do look at one another you can see the flame is still lit—pun intended.) She also serves as a Fire Commissioner for the District.

Lucy also was a breeder of Dalmations and raised puppies for Guiding Eyes. She has adopted horses from the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation, and her last horse Beau at 28 years old is still going strong. (But the old gray mare just ain't what she used to be.) Now listen, I was talking about the horse!! We don't know how she does it, but she also has managed to begin a business venture, Rising Sun Farms, where she sells ceramics and crystals.

Besides all of this, in 2014 Lucy started taking flying lessons at Ellenville Airport. And in 2015 she performed her first solo flight. Because of her radical flying techniques, she was thought to be a UFO.

For the past 10 years, Lucy has spent her summers as a nurse at Camp Huntington in High Falls. After retirement from RVCSD, she will continue her nursing journey as the Health Director at the camp. While at RVCSD, Lucy served many years as a Class Advisor, RVF Union Building Rep, RA Representative, as well as an organizer of the Christmas Elf Project.

As you can see, Lucy has served with honor, dignity, and compassion throughout her career. Her selfless service to the school district and the community exemplify the true spirit and characteristics of what nursing stands for. Lucy, you are admired by one and all and have left your legacy. Now in this phase of your life it's time for you to soar the skies, enjoy your hobbies, aggravate Russ, and embrace life.

~ Ron Perrotta

Intermediate/Junior High Retirees

PETER COSTELLO

To the tallest person I have ever known:

It has been 28 years since I started teaching at Rondout. One of the first people I met on my first day was Pete Costello. My first impression of the man was . . . who is this guy? A student or a faculty member? After all, he was not very tall. It seems so long ago that I sat at the same table with Peter on opening day, not knowing anyone and trying to figure out who this black-haired person with a rat's tail and a little notebook in his front pocket was. Man, was he short, but he changed my life forever and countless other lives too.

Pete has stood tall next to me for all the major events in my life. He was in my wedding party and stood tall in front of my family and friends and gave a reading. He was standing tall next to my wife and me when our children were born. When my dad passed away suddenly, Pete stood tall and helped console me as I grieved the loss. He has stood tall next to me as a staff member at the Junior High. Whether it was all those multi-colored exam schedules, his unreadable handwritten notes about students, or, him confronting a parent that was overly aggressive toward me in a meeting, Pete always stood tall next to me.

Pete is the most loyal, spiritual, and good-humored person I know. He truly is a giant among us, for whenever I needed him, students needed him, his family and friends needed him, or my sons needed him, Peter would stand tall next to all of us and give us whatever help we needed. He cast a shadow that is so great because he is just a good person.

Not seeing him wandering the hallways of the Junior High will be difficult for me, but I know somewhere he will be standing tall in his retirement laughing and enjoying life.

~ Joe Catalfomo

From my first day in the Middle School 23 years ago, Peter became a mentor and friend to me. He helped in any way possible to make me feel comfortable and learn all that I needed to know. He has been invaluable as a colleague and friend.

To speak of Peter as a colleague, he has a very good rapport with staff, students, and parents. Peter has a great balance between showing empathy and support for our students, while also taking a direct approach in helping

them to make changes and see what behaviors or approaches to their education and their social wellbeing may be more effective. I have seen him work well to diffuse situations that were volatile with families and to find a solution that works for the student within the confines of the school.

In speaking of Peter as a person, he has a calm demeanor that is supportive and kind. When anyone is stressed, whether it be a colleague at work or a friend outside of the workplace, Peter has an approach that lends support. People are comfortable talking with him due to his genuine regard for their feelings. In addition, although not all people see this side of Peter, he has a sense of humor that adds to his personality. We have had many laughs together.

Peter Costello has been an incredible employee for Rondout Valley. Having served the district for 32+ years, he is now at a juncture where he has chosen to retire. To say that he will be missed is an understatement. His kindness, empathy, and genuine regard for others will be irreplaceable.

~ Nanette Simione

Peter is a great team worker, collaborating with all involved for the best end result. He knows EVERY aspect of his job and more. When asked to move to the High School during a district "shuffle" of employees, he went with his head held high and without resistance, although he would have rather stayed in the Middle School. He returned knowing even more than he had known before he left and used his new knowledge to help even more than in the past (if that is even possible). As a coworker, I am lucky to be closely associated with him and his great sense of humor that makes coming to work every day a pleasure. Peter quietly performs his job at such a high level that it is easy to overlook his exemplary service to this district. I haven't, and neither have many others.

~ Bonnie Markle

A haiku for P.C.

guru of guidance
a constant professional
Peter Costello

~ Dave Mahoskey

LAURA CULLEN

Laura Cullen has been a quiet presence in our school district since 1999. She began as a substitute teacher and then took up full-time residence in the English department at the high school. She may perhaps be best known for her popular Mystery & Suspense elective course, in which she took students through the plot twists and dark crevices of Agatha Christie novels and Alfred Hitchcock films. Five years ago she volunteered (yes, volunteered—crazy, right?) to move to the JHS to breathe fresh life into her career and teach 7th and 8th graders. It was amidst these squirmy middle schoolers that Laura found her niche. I remember her saying, “Colleen, I feel like I am a teacher again.” Laura approached teaching with a genuine desire to teach kids, and teach is what she wanted to do. Not everyone may know that Laura was one of the last old school grammarians teaching in our district who can perfectly diagram a sentence (even though Eileen Kaisik is a close second), and Laura did her best to impart a 21st century abridged version of English grammar to as many students as possible before she retired.

GEORGE D’ALESSANDRO

I had the privilege of working with George for over 15 years. Together we created a successful program, integrating the students from our individual classrooms. Whether it was poetry readings, plays, book clubs, or holiday trivia, we found a way to incorporate fun and laughter into our days.

George’s kindness, patience, and humor made him a favorite amongst the students as well as his colleagues.

When Laura wasn’t teaching, she was reading. That may not be a surprise considering she was an English teacher and found joy and comfort among the pages of a book—but she outread us all. Chances are that if you pick up a used book inside the entrance to Emmanuel’s, Laura has read it and probably even placed it there for you to read next.

Since retiring in October, Laura has been at home with her ever-present doggy; her husband, Bill; her son, Charles and his wife, who have returned home to High Falls after years of living in Japan and China; and her beautiful new granddaughter, Luna. Laura’s reading life might be interrupted by her granddaughter’s constant motion, but I think it’s safe to say that Laura knew it was the perfect time to retire.

We all wish you the very best, Laura! Thank you for your service to Rondout.

~ Colleen Vitti

George is about to begin a new adventure—one that does not include snow days, snow shoveling, or writing lesson plans (in that beautiful handwriting of his). Florida awaits with its sunshine and literally no lawn maintenance.

Enjoy retirement, George! You will be missed.

~ Dawn Delamater



District Office Retirees

PAT CYMBAL

I consider myself fortunate and blessed that not only is Pat a colleague but also my friend. Together we have watched our children grow up, shared good times and challenging times, and supported each other through many milestones in our lives. I first met Pat when she subbed for me when I was having my first child and then again for me when I had my second. I always knew my desk was left in good hands!

Pat spent many years subbing in our district and finally took the plunge to become a full-time employee where she worked in several offices, including the guidance office and

high school assistant principal's office. She was our attendance clerk for some time and then finished her career as the district's switchboard operator. If you couldn't find Pat in one of the offices, you just had to check a school gymnasium where you would find her cheering for either Chris or Amanda at one of their athletic games. Pat has been blessed with two beautiful grandchildren and a wonderful daughter, who temporarily put her life on hold in order to care for and help support Pat during a difficult time in her life. Pat is a warrior and a fighter who has made it through these challenges with both style and grace. Wishing you many blessings, my friend!

~ Debbie Gottstine

PAT SHOWERS

Sometimes people come into your life for so many different reasons. When I first met Pat Showers, our kids were busy playing sports together, quickly cementing a bond between us. From there, our friendship just flowed. Could it be that her accent reminded me of my childhood? You know the word *buttab* or those other old-time Brooklyn sayings? To have had the opportunity to not only work with a colleague but a friend for so many years made a job seem more like a hobby. Hardworking, doing what needs to be done, and a get-it-done attitude capture the work ethic that emulates who Pat is. Can we say Superintendent's Conference Day

and not include Pat Showers? It usually came hand in hand, you know, kind of like bread and *buttab*. This is a time to reflect on how much you have contributed to not only our profession but also who you are: kind, considerate, and always going the extra mile. I will miss our everyday lunches but look forward to spending more time as friends just relaxing. Thank you for being my friend professionally and personally. May this new journey only bring you what you deserve—only the very best with health, happiness, and a beautiful growing family.

~ Kim McEvoy



Not sure where to start with your summer to-do list?

Whether it's assisting NYSUT members with everyday essentials, important choices about insurance needs, or making prudent decisions about financial and legal concerns, NYSUT Member Benefits can help.



Scan the QR code below to learn more about the following endorsed programs and services.

Saving you money: MB Discounts & Deals

With the Member Benefits Discounts & Deals program, NYSUT members can save up to 50% at more than 700,000 merchants nationwide (including thousands throughout New York State). Save on groceries and food delivery; restaurant dine-in or takeout; gasoline, oil changes and vehicle maintenance; clothing and shoes; and much more. You can even request that your favorite merchant join the network.

Saving you money: Every \$\$\$ counts

Whether your summer plans include home renovations, replacing or upgrading appliances, getting a new car, stocking up for the return to school, or even just hanging out and enjoying some time off, Member Benefits has a variety of endorsed programs -- **Purchasing Power, Buyer's Edge Inc., Office Depot/OfficeMax, Bose, Powell's Books** -- that might be able to minimize the impact on your wallet and maximize your enjoyment of the all-too-fleeting summer months.



Protecting your family: Insuring yourself and your family

Member Benefits endorses a number of competitive insurance programs that are available to NYSUT members. These include **auto/home/renters, life, disability, long term care, dental, vision**, and even **pet insurance**. Some of these programs are also available to or cover spouses/domestic partners of members, dependent children, dependent parents, and grandparents. Most offer payroll & pension deduction as payment options.

Planning for the future: Have a plan for wherever life takes you

It's never too early or too late to make a plan. Just starting a career or looking at retirement? Beginning to pay off loans or building a nest egg? Looking to buy a new home or refinance the one you're in? Welcoming a new child or adopting? Now would be a good time to look into the ways to put a plan in place or make adjustments to your existing one. Explore the Member Benefits **Financial Learning Center** for assistance; while you're there, check out our **Legal Service Plan** and **Financial Counseling Program**.

NYSUT Member Benefits offers dozens of programs and services that are available to NYSUT members and their families, including the following options:



To learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services, visit memberbenefits.nysut.org, call 800-626-8101 or scan the QR code above.

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