



THE UNION SOUND

THE VOICE OF A SOUND UNION



Mar./Apr. 2024

Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

Volume 48, Issue 4

NO WORK ZONE

Please join us as we celebrate our 2023-24 retirees at the annual

RVF RETIREMENT DINNER

Saturday, June 8, 2024 from 3pm-6pm
 Stone House Tavern | 4802 Route 209 | Accord, NY

BUFFET DINNER INCLUDES:
 CHICKEN PARMAGIANO, PENNE PASTA
 PRIMAVERA, LEMON PICATTA SALMON, CRISPY
 BRUSSELS SPROUTS, MIXED GREEN GARDEN
 SALAD WITH CHAMPAGNE VINAIGRETTE,
 COFFEE/TEA/SODA, & CARDOSO COOKIES FOR
 DESSERT; ADDITIONAL BEVERAGES ON YOUR OWN

RSVP to Tara Edmonds at <https://forms.gle/gKG9gNed8nsE5tPMA>
 Contact Tara at 845-901-9308 or tthibault-edmonds@rondout.k12.ny.us

by Tara Thibault-Edmonds

Please consider joining us on Saturday, June 8 as we celebrate our 2023-24 RVF Retirees! We are also looking for articles of up to 250 words that commemorate the work of our amazing retirees:

Denise Barringer - Ira Bickoff - Beth Corl - Victoria Davis - Robin DePew - Loren Dugan - Deborah Gottstine - Lorraine Gray - Lynn Harnischfeger - Rebecca Litchfield - James Malak - Louann Miszko - Deborah Morris - Carol O'Connell - Edna Plumstead - Patricia Salovich - Lisa Schoonmaker - Kim Tokle-Warner - Desiree VanDemark - Christine Vedder - Laura Walker - Lynn Wells - Marian Zajac

RSVP for our dinner [at this link](#), or click on the invitation image above.



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The Union Sound

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President's Message

by Robert McDonough

NYSUT's annual Representative Assembly (RA) was held in New York City in early May. I was in attendance, along with your other two elected delegates, Kim McEvoy and Tara Thibault-Edmonds. Robyn McDonough attended as the alternate delegate.

For those of you who don't know what the RA is, it's where nearly 2,000 NYSUT delegates from all over the state meet to vote on NYSUT's agenda for the year. Each local union receives one RA delegate for every 100 members. The RVF has just over 300 members which is why we are allowed three delegates plus one alternate. Our three delegates have staggered three-year terms, so every year you vote for one delegate during RVF elections.

To give you an example of what we vote on, last year the RVF sponsored the resolution to Fix Tier 6. It went to the floor of the 2023 RA and those nearly 2,000 delegates voted to approve the resolution that started right here in Rondout with your RVF Executive Committee's approval. Think about that for a minute. The state-wide push to Fix Tier 6 started with us, in Rondout. And in less than one year from giving NYSUT their charge, they already have successfully lobbied to fix the one piece of Tier 6 where your pension is now based on an average of the highest three years of your salary instead of the previous five-year average. For example, using current teachers contract numbers, this change amounts to roughly an additional \$1,000 annually in your pension. We are already seeing progress after the delegates voted to take on our resolution.

When NYSUT says they will have our back, they will. On the local level, your RVF reps work every day with our

administration and Board of Education. But what NYSUT brings to the table is the legal and political powerhouse that small locals like the RVF don't have. NYSUT has the power to lobby legislators, the governor, and the US Congress to actually change laws.

This year at the RA we heard from Governor Hochul, the US Senate Majority Leader, Chuck Schumer, and the Attorney General of New York, Letitia James. The common theme throughout the conference was "when NYSUT fights, they win." In fact, NYSUT recently won the fight to expand the NY Workplace Violence Prevention Law to include elementary and secondary public schools. NYSUT is also getting rid of APPR and yes, NYSUT is fixing Tier 6!

But folks...this all comes at a cost. NYSUT is effective because it uses money that members donate to Vote Cope. Your regular dues are not allowed to be spent on political action. Only Vote Cope monies can be used for these activities. I know we all spend enough money and we don't want to spend any more than we have to, but this is money well spent. Vote Cope is paying to fix your pension and workplace rights. It is paying to fix your evaluation system. It is paying to fix our hot June and September classrooms. These things are too important for apathy or to think someone else will pick it up and do it for you. It is time we all pick up the torch. It is time to pay it forward. It is time to help NYSUT, and in order to do that, we need our members to donate to Vote Cope to continue the fight. If you don't already contribute, please donate \$2 (or more) per paycheck. This can make a huge difference. If you already contribute, please consider increasing your contribution. [Please use this direct link unique to the RVF](#) to make a donation today so NYSUT can keep working for our future. Thank you.



History Corner

by Jennifer Slauson

CHATTANOOGA CHOO-CHOO- CHOOSES UNIONS

In an unexpected place, a big win came for working folks as employees at the Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee, voted overwhelmingly to join the United Auto Workers (UAW) union. This marks a major milestone as the first successful unionization effort at a nonunion auto plant in the South. With 2,628 votes in favor and 985 opposed, the workers made history, especially considering the previous failed attempts by the UAW to make inroads in Southern states over the last decade.

This victory is huge for the labor movement in a region where being anti-union has been the norm for ages. While the UAW has a strong presence in big automakers like GM and Ford in the North, breaking into auto factories in the South has been difficult. The UAW is hoping the Chattanooga win will help their mid-May vote at the Mercedes-Benz plant near Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and a half dozen more plants over the next two years.

What makes this even sweeter is that it comes just six months after the UAW scored big wins for better wages

and benefits with the Big Three for its workers in the Motor City. UAW President Shawn Fain described the Chattanooga vote as a “historic step” and urged everyone to keep fighting.

This victory isn’t just about Chattanooga, it’s about showing how workers have power and strength in solidarity.

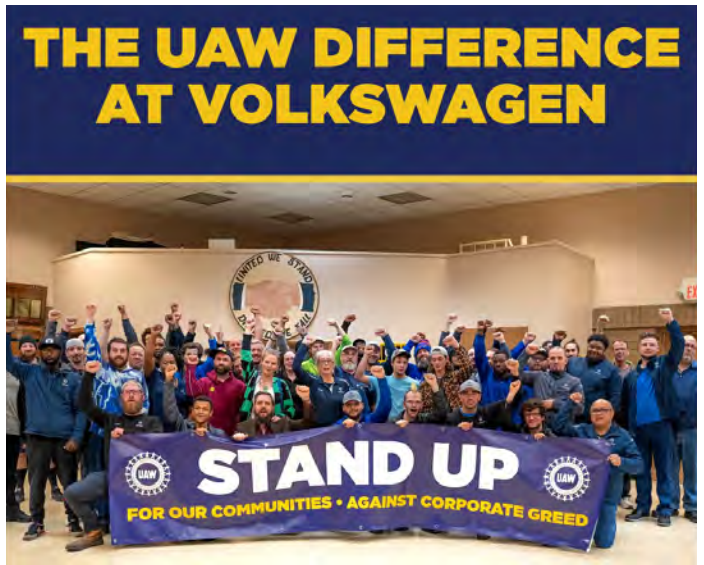


Image from uaw.org/why-were-voting-yes-for-a-voice-at-volkswagen/

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Bookmark it! The AFT Professional Learning calendar is up to date with all upcoming AFT and Share My Lesson events in one convenient location. Each self-care webinar is only an hour long, and you can watch live or on-demand at your convenience. Namaste!

Financial Update

by David Bonington, CFP®
Stacey Braun Associates, Inc.

IT'S A (RE)BALANCING ACT—PART 1

In keeping with the *Spring is a Time for Renewal* theme from my last article, I am switching attention this time from savings accounts to retirement accounts—and possibly old IRA accounts, as well. It might (or might not) be an appropriate time to rebalance your portfolio, but it would be a good time to check whether rebalancing should be considered if it has been some time since you last looked.

To a reaction of, “Huh? What is he talking about?” – no worries, I’ll explain. Rebalancing involves shifting the Bond vs. Stock proportion of one’s portfolio to establish (or re-establish) a mixture which is suitable, and which takes into account that an individual’s age, goals, and tolerance for risk are variables *which change over time*. It sounds complicated, but it’s actually easier than I just made it sound. Let’s look at an example which allows key principles to do the talking and show why rebalancing might be worth consideration.

- Employee X is a 55-year-old union member with 25 years of service who enrolled in a workplace retirement plan at age 30.
- Employee X’s (factually accurate) research at the time determined that, dating to 1925, Stock holdings grow at roughly twice the annual rate of Bond holdings. Employee X then determined that a suitable personal asset allocation was 75% Stocks and 25% Bonds.
- All of Employee X’s bi-weekly payroll contributions since age 30 have been allocated 75% to Stocks and 25% to Bonds.

- Employee X also has an old 401(k) plan which was funded while working for a private-sector employer between ages 22-30, which was aggressively invested (and why not at those young ages?) in 90% Stocks and 10% Bond selections.

Over time, Employee X has read and filed away account statements, and at age 55 is quite satisfied with the substantial account balances which now appear. However, although the account values are large, on closer look the *composition* of the accounts is approximately 95% in Stocks! What? How could that be? Answer: because the Stock holdings grew at a faster rate than the Bond holdings for almost three decades.

Employee X hasn’t necessarily made any investing mistakes—in fact, Employee X may deserve a measure of congratulations! However, Employee X is now 55, and not 22 or 30 anymore. The relative safety that Bonds offer might now, at 55, be at least as appealing as the growth-but-with-downside-risk proposition that Stocks offer.

Employee X is an example of an investor due for, and who would be well-served by, rebalancing.

But here at my word limit, I’m going to have to make you wait until Part II, in the next issue, to see how Employee X can remedy this situation! And while you are waiting, make a financial counseling appointment for yourself in the meantime.

Free, confidential Telephone or Zoom sessions with a Stacey Braun planner can be arranged by calling 1-888-949-1925. No financial products are sold and there is no sales pressure.



RVF elected reps joined with statewide RA delegates and NYSUT leadership in NYC to set the priorities of the union for the year.



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