



THE UNION SOUND

THE VOICE OF A SOUND UNION



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Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

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Officially Off the Clock



IN THIS ISSUE:

Officially Off the Clock Photo by Robert McDonough	1
Junior High Retirees by Various Contributors	2-3
High School Retirees by Various Contributors	4-8
District Office Retiree by MaryBeth Lunati	9
Para Gathering by Marianne Hawryluk	9
Intermediate Retirees by Various Contributors	10-11
On the Statewide Stage by Victoria Robertson	11
Kerhonkson Retirees by Various Contributors	12-13
Cheers by Robyn McDonough	13
Financial Update by David Bonington	14

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nysut
Retirees
 Experienced
 Resourceful
 Engaged

Junior High Retirees

BETH CORL



Beth came to Rondout after a short stint in Florida in 2007, tall and tan, searching for colder winters and fewer beaches. She started her career at Rondout at the high school working in co-taught and made her way to the TIP program working with some of the district's most challenged students. The one constant throughout Beth's teaching career has been her commitment to high standards, in her students, colleagues, and herself. She has never been afraid to call someone out when they are not working up to their potential or engage in a hard conversation. But behind this tough as nails exterior lies a big, beautiful heart. Some of us are lucky to count Beth as a friend, and we know what a kind, generous, softy she actually is. She also never stops moving. Literally. Does she have extra hours in her day? She bakes, travels, exercises, and takes on countless projects. But she's always willing to stop whatever it is she's doing to help a student or listen to a friend. She shows up for people in the best way. She has also helped her colleagues be their best selves. When she began teaching at the middle school, she brought a wealth of knowledge to the co-teaching program, and did whatever was necessary to help kids. And her tech skills? Whoa! She was a leader and soon found herself taking on the role of tech liaison. When she began her stint as a 15:1 teacher, her team desperately wanted her back—even asking Beth to go through the grueling interview process to return. That never panned out, but it did thrust Beth into the role of an RVF rep, where she continued to hone her keen sense of justice and integrity. Since her retirement in February, we have missed out on countless cupcakes, but

fortunately her breakfasts live on with Peter Marsh, who inherited her makeshift classroom kitchen. And her students make this world a better place with Beth's imprint on their development.

~ Carie DeVries & Colleen Vitti

EDNA PLUMSTEAD

Edna has been working in the field of Special Education for many years. She worked for BOCES from 1988-2005 and then came to Rondout from 2005 to the present. Edna has worn many hats in her educational career. She has been part of the 15:1 classes, life skills classes, co-taught classes and has wrapped up her career with us in the TIP class.

Edna is a pleasure to work with. She adores the children and is willing to help in any way. She is patient, kind, and caring. Edna will go above and beyond to make sure the children are safe and happy. She is dedicated to her job as she is reliable, dependable, and very flexible. Edna is a great team player and has been a huge asset to our program. Edna will be missed greatly and we are hoping that she will come back as a sub. We wish her the best in her retirement.

~ Robyn Lukaszewski & Allison Beesmer

CHRISTINE VEDDER



I've been in Rondout for twenty-three years, and within a few weeks of walking in the door, I met Chrissi Vedder. It's so hard to put into words how much she means to me and how much we have laughed and cried together. She has been a friend, a confidante, and an absolute rock in my life. When I need help, she is the first to offer a helping

hand. She's given my daughter a perfect role model and stepped up to become her godmother! Chrissi—I'm so happy and proud of you for moving on to the next phase in your life. You certainly deserve it! While I will miss you here at Rondout, I know that we have many more adventures ahead. Barbie cruise – here we come!

~ Allison DuBois

DENISE BARRINGER

Working with Denise is knowing that you are working with someone who has the same urgency to complete work and take pride in their work. When I have needed Denise's help with running reports, typing letters, getting recommendations, creating scheduling calendars and the like, Denise has everything done before I can get back to my office. Often, I will say, "there is no rush," yet Denise has the urgency to complete things right away and will have things completed and done well within an hour even when I don't need it for days. She is very task-oriented, pays attention to detail and does a great job with every task put in front of her, often finding ways to do things better and more efficiently. When I am having trouble with the new scheduling system or other technology problem, which is often, she has been very helpful. I greatly appreciate her work ethic. I also appreciate that I can sit and chat with her sometimes about the challenges we all experience working with the middle school population. It is helpful to have her listening ear and I am grateful for that. I have truly appreciated working with Denise and I will miss her.

~ Nanette Simione

When I first met Denise, she was downstairs in the Intermediate School. I remember going to her to ask for whatever I needed help with and she would do her best to assist me. Once Denise moved into the guidance office we became closer. Denise has been a great support system for all of us for many years. She is compassionate, kind, and understanding. Denise is diligent, competent, and she assisted me with anything I asked of her—which was mostly concerning the printer! State testing was the bane of her existence, but she successfully completed that undertaking for many years. I will greatly miss seeing her in the office, however, I am happy that she can move on to this next chapter of her life! I am so grateful to have worked with you for all these years, Denise. Good luck and stay in touch! <3

~ Jaclyn Bleski

Having Denise with us in the guidance department has been a tremendous help to how we function as a group and individually. I value Denise's ability to solve problems within the administrative duties of our job. I've watched her efficiently multi-task and assist even during chaotic moments. Denise is also kind and empathetic to work/life

balance. She often asks about our families and shares hers with us. My wish is for Denise to spend her well-deserved retirement with loved ones and pursue anything that brings her joy. Denise will be greatly missed.

~ Stephanie Chan Haver

LORRAINE GRAY

I have worked with Lorrie for many years, from her time in the guidance office many years ago, to working in the APs office, and now back in the guidance office. Lorrie is a friendly face who always greets you with a smile and a *good morning*. She does her best to assist the students with lockers, working papers, and sometimes just a friendly space for them to wait by her desk. She is thoughtful in bringing little things to work that she knows you like (thanks for the chocolate and avocados) and is always grateful when you bring something small for her as well. Lorrie works hard each day and does so while also stopping to help you when you need it. She will be missed!

~ Nanette Simione

I first met Lorrie when she was the secretary in the Assistant Principal's office. Lorrie has always been friendly, sweet, and personable. She has always cared a lot about the staff and students and has always had a positive attitude. Lorrie moved into the guidance office with us and then I was able to appreciate her even more. Lorrie is a team player and thoughtful—she always supplies us with little pick-me-ups, such as Dove dark chocolate pieces. Lorrie always went above and beyond with whatever she did. State testing was always so trying and appeared to be a major undertaking, but Lorrie got through it every time, year after year! I will miss Lorrie's beautiful smile, but feel so glad that she can move on to bigger and better things! Thank you for everything over these past years, Lorrie! Good luck and stay in touch! <3

~ Jaclyn Bleski

I have worked with Lorrie in many capacities over the years. What stands out the most for me is Lorrie's connections with our students. As the assistant to the AP, Lorrie often had disgruntled students waiting in her office to be seen. I'm sure she listened to many students vent their frustrations and state proclamations of innocence! Lorrie always maintained a calm and positive regard. At times, students would seek out her office as a place to decompress. Currently, many students stop by Lorrie's desk in the guidance office to say "hello." Lorrie always treats them with warmth and genuineness. Lorrie is a treasured member of the guidance team who uses humor and empathetic listening with her colleagues. We will miss you dearly, Lorrie. May you never have to count down to a Friday again.

~ Stephanie Chan Haver

High School Retirees

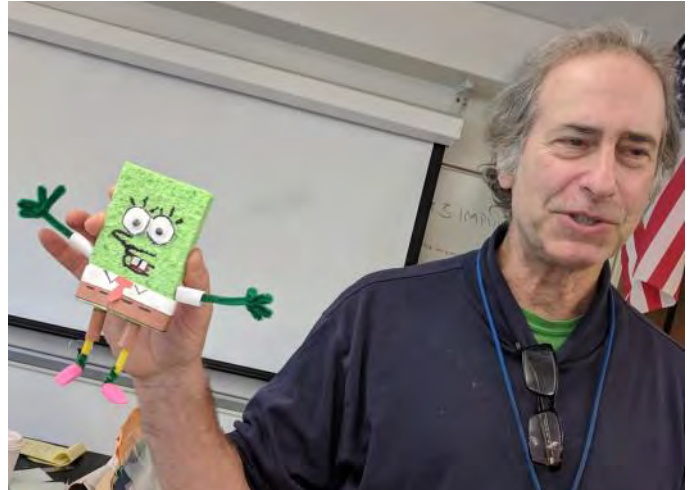
LISA SCHOONMAKER



We would like to extend our most sincere congratulations to Lisa Schoonmaker on her retirement! Initially a preschool teacher at Learning Arts Preschool, Lisa bravely started her own preschool, First Step, right in her own living room and backyard. Eventually moving into a different space, she ran the preschool successfully until her own children were in high school. Taking yet another brave step, Lisa then enrolled in college to get her teaching degree, coincidentally finishing her degree at the same time as her son, Daryl. She then joined us here at RVHS as a math teacher and has since dedicated her time and energy to our school community for the last twenty years. As a high school teacher, Lisa has spent countless hours helping students to be successful. She cares deeply about her students' success and works incredibly hard to provide them with all they need to succeed. Lisa can often be found working late into the afternoon, and sometimes evening, in her classroom providing extra help to students and making sure to prepare clear and concise lessons and feedback for her students. As the girls golf coach, she has helped our team and individuals reach sectional and state championships. We have been truly fortunate to have such a knowledgeable and experienced leader for our golf team! Lisa has also helped to raise thousands of dollars for our RVHS seniors while on the Rondout Valley Scholarship Foundation committee over the years. Her dedication to this school community is unparalleled. Lisa, now that you'll be retired, we hope you can spend your time enjoying all of your other favorite pastimes, most especially golfing and spending time with your family, grandkids, and puppy. We'll be over here, only slightly jealous, wishing you all the best in this next chapter. Congratulations!

~ Your fellow HS Math Department members

IRA BICKOFF



I feel honored to say that I have known Ira Bickoff throughout his whole teaching career. Ira started off as my teacher and mentor, and over the years became my colleague and friend. I first met Ira at the very beginning of his teaching career, when he was doing his student teaching and I was a sophomore in Earth Science. It was clear to me from the start that he was going to become a great teacher, as he was not only knowledgeable in his content area, but brought an enthusiasm (and great sense of humor) to his classes that engaged students. It was for this reason that I came back during college to observe his classes when I was doing my own observational hours for my teaching degree. He opened his doors and welcomed me wholeheartedly, showing me not only strategies for effective science teaching, but how to build connections with students as well. I have continued to observe both of these things as his colleague throughout the last few years. I saw firsthand how Ira has continually looked for ways to innovate his lessons and engage students as he carried out such activities as the physics of sledding, squid dissections, and nautical knot tying. What was more evident however, is those connections with students. Whether it be just walking down the hall with him, as he is constantly greeted warmly by students, or by witnessing his coaching of unified basketball and bowling, it is clear the students look up to him and enjoy having him as a teacher and role model.

I often joke with his students that I was (and still am) Mr. Bickoff's favorite student, but the truth is he has become one of my favorite people. He is a true teacher and great human being. I am saddened to think of being at Rondout without him, but am so happy and excited for him to

begin this next chapter.

I hope you enjoy retirement and have many more great adventures, Ira.

Your student, mentee, colleague, friend, and eclipse buddy,
~ *Krista Sheehan*

Ira—it has been a privilege to work with you as a teacher and unified coach. It all began back in the day when you took on teaching a section of Marine Science to the students in the life skills program. Attending your science classes with our students was a highlight for me as well as the students. They adored you for your fun-filled, creative origami and SpongeBob activities and lessons with real objects from marine dives you had been on. You exposed your students to experiences you had and the knowledge you acquired on those aquatic adventures. And...you always made them smile with a funny comment or joke. I'll never forget our journey to Mystic Seaport. What a wonderful experience you created for your students! Unforgettable!

I would often walk by your classroom while you were teaching physics. Usually there were Barbie dolls falling down the staircase, pigs flying, and race cars zooming down the hallway. Sleigh riding down the hill was one of your adventures in the winter. Not just fun, but you were teaching a physics concept. The rocket launches in the back parking lot...oh...just to name a few of your crazy activities. Only you, Ira, can find that playful way to teach a difficult subject and make it easy to digest. This is what your students will remember.

You will forever be...“Coach of the Decade.” I think you still have that t-shirt somewhere?! You took on coaching girls modified soccer, unified basketball and then unified bowling! Every day a new adventure in coaching! You came up with unique and fun practice plans, crazy drills, and who could forget all those nicknames for players and partners. You made the games happy and joyful in a way only you could do.

THANK YOU for all of those moments of laughter in this crazy world we live in. The 200-wing will never be the same. To many happy trails, deep sea dives, and relaxing hours in your well-deserved retirement!

~ *Marianne Hawryluk*

DEBORAH GOTTSTINE

I have known Debbie for quite some time and am blessed to call her my friend. She is an amazing woman who is so supportive of her colleagues, family, and friends. She is a

wealth of knowledge, stays calm in all situations, is always eager to help, and is a very hard worker. I want to thank her for all she has done! There aren't enough words to cover it all. I am so happy for Debbie and this new chapter in her life. She has more than earned it. I know I will miss her here, but I wish her all the best in her retirement!

~ *Amy Finkbeiner*

REBECCA LITCHFIELD

Rebecca Litchfield has been a pillar of strength and compassion for both our students and our staff. Her dedication to supporting others, advocacy for human rights, and genuine care for our students has not gone unnoticed. Her versatility as a co-teacher, skills teacher, life skills teacher, and resource teacher has made a significant impact on all those around her. Her ability to make every student feel heard and valued is highly commendable.

As we bid you farewell, it is with a heavy heart but also with the knowledge that your passion and empathy will continue to inspire others wherever you go. Rebecca Litchfield, you are a truly phenomenal woman, and your presence will be deeply missed in our school community.

Thank you for everything you have done!

~ *Renee Balestra*

There are circumstances by which you come to know someone that are just beyond reason and reality. I have had the honor of knowing, being friends with, and working with Rebecca Litchfield in one form or another since the late 80s.

We knew each other peripherally from college. We lived in the same apartment complex at the time, on Huguenot Street, but it was the very calm phone call that I got from her one day that started a lifelong “collaboration.” The phone rings... “Hello Joe, this is Rebecca. I was wondering if you could help me out. My cat just dragged a dead squirrel in through the air conditioning vent.” I guess at the time I gave off an *I can help with a dead squirrel* vibe. We got that situation squared away and here we are thirty-five plus years later at the precipice of Rebecca's retirement.

Those who know Rebecca can speak of her passion, unwavering quest for justice, her dedication, hard work, empathy and compassion, love, and respect.

Rebecca's career has spanned three decades and she is just as passionate today as she was thirty years ago when we worked at Anderson School together.

The adventures we had with some of the most impacted

students from that residential program are some of my most cherished memories. Memories like hiking Norrie Park with a dozen or so non-verbal students, waiting for lunch to be delivered in “Cambros” (if you know you know), and taking a bus with fifteen or so of our students on a Saturday to yard sales in New Paltz. This was a difficult job, but the camaraderie amongst the staff and the relationships to the students made it easy to look past any of the shortcomings of the position.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that there are many fond memories outside of our working together, including attending Woodstock ‘94, Bacchus trivia nights, Lake Taghkanic with the kids, and several treacherous carpool commutes in the dead of winter across the Poughkeepsie bridge during the worst imaginable ice storms.

After our years at Anderson School, as with many friendships, we went on separate paths to other private schools, leave replacements, and public school—eventually losing touch while pursuing our careers. Then in 2000 when I began at Rondout we were colleagues once again.

I owe Rebecca a huge debt of gratitude, if not for our friendship I would not have continued teaching. Because of her I am in a district and a job that I love. This exemplifies how Rebecca cares for her friends, family, and students. Rebecca has been a W.I.S.E. mentor, resource teacher, case manager, classroom teacher, co-teacher, and had countless other responsibilities. She has advocated for and guided generations of students. A fierce ally, a staunch supporter of the underdog, a person unafraid to speak truth to power, an excellent teacher, and one whose greatest accomplishments lie ahead. I wish her only the best in her retirement and know that what she did for me was just a grain of sand on the beach of what she has done for so many others.

~ Joe Delessio

JAMES MALAK

I am honored to write about my colleague and friend, Jim Malak. Jimmy and I have worked together for my entire career. For thirty years, we have been colleagues and friends and he has always been a loyal confidant, and for that, I feel truly blessed. For thirty-seven years, Jimmy immersed



himself in the high school and the Rondout Valley community teaching and coaching numerous sports, including coaching the football team to its one and only NYS championship. He was also a class advisor, department liaison, and MC of pep rallies, which he led with zest and enthusiasm. He did it all, and even now, he has started his next Rondout Valley adventure as a newly elected board member. While raising his six beautiful children, he also touched the lives of thousands of students in these various roles. Jimmy is as loyal as the day is long. He has a heart the size of Texas and he always had our students’ best interests in mind. He has been a fantastic co-worker and an even better friend. Jimmy was a physical education teacher, but just as importantly, a teacher of life lessons; accountability, responsibility, and respect were some of life’s important lessons his students learned.

One of Jimmy’s most important characteristics is that he spoke the truth, stood firm in his beliefs, and had the courage to voice his opinions. People either loved Jimmy for speaking the truth or disliked him for speaking the truth. Jimmy, thank you for all of the great memories, for always being strong, and for taking a stand when needed. You hold a very special place in my heart. I wish you all the best as you go on to your next adventure in life. May you be a “Free Bird” and soar high in all of your future endeavors.

~ Sherry Cafiero

LAURA WALKER

I would like to wish Laura a very happy and well-deserved retirement. I met Laura years ago when our children were in class together at MES. Laura has been a champion for our students during her time at Rondout. She has always shared her knowledge, especially her experience working with the services for the blind and visually impaired. Laura, your wit and candor always made us smile. I hope you are able to travel and enjoy your family. We wish you all the best in your retirement!

~ Joann Redmond

Laura Walker will forever be remembered as a legend at the high school in my mind; if you couldn’t see her you could definitely hear her! Laura has a heart of gold and is always one of the first staff members to donate to any cause, especially if it had to do with one of our students or their family. I would describe her as passionate about her work and always ready, willing, and able to lend a hand. She would check in every morning and ask, “okay what do you have for me today?” During her time as a teacher’s aide at RVHS, she was a class advisor to several classes, cheer coach, advisor for the Japanese Media Club, and an advocate for many students. Laura had a robust personality and her heart was always in the right place. Our special

needs students always tugged at her heart strings. Thank you for all the great memories and I wish you health and happiness!

~ Debbie Gottstine

CAROL O'CONNELL & LYNN WELLS



Dear Lynn and Carol,

We would like to express our deep gratitude and appreciation for the incredible hard work and dedication each of you brought to the table every single day! Your commitment to excellence and unwavering dedication have been the backbone of our office. Thank you once again for everything. We miss you both and we wish you all the best with your retirement!

Thank you,

~ Holly Miller, Megan Marquis, Alison Klein, & Jody Hoffman

PATRICIA SALOVICH

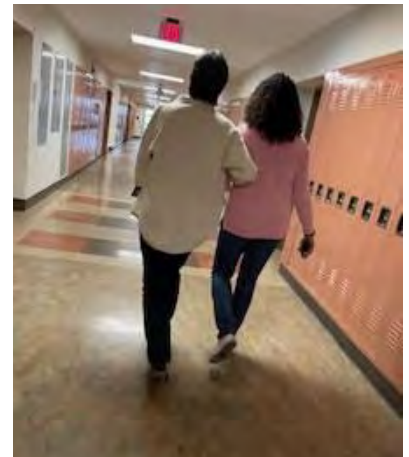
Our building, and specifically our main office, is preparing to bid a heartfelt farewell to Pat Salovich, who will be retiring after a distinguished career spanning several decades. Known for her loyalty, helpful nature, and straight-shooting honesty, Pat has been an indispensable part of the office and a beloved colleague and friend.

For many years, Pat Salovich has been part of the reliable foundation of the main office. As a secretary, she has handled her duties with exceptional skill and dedication, ensuring that the office operations ran smoothly. Her ability to manage tasks efficiently and effectively has earned her the admiration and respect of her colleagues. You and your honesty will be missed! Enjoy every minute of your retirement.

~ Renee Balestra

DEBORAH MORRIS

In 2004, during New Teacher Orientation, I had the pleasure of meeting Deb Morris, and little did we know that this encounter would blossom into a profound and lasting friendship that would forever shape our lives. During our first year, we shared a room and collaborated as part of the special education teaching team, forging a bond that felt like we had known each other for a lifetime.



Deb brought with her to Rondout a wealth of life experience. Before dedicating herself in the field of education, she was a probation officer. She also has a degree in social work. This unique background gave her an understanding of human nature and a deep empathy for those facing adversity. She arrived at Rondout with a fresh perspective, eager to make a difference with her innovative ideas. Her passion never faltered, and she continued to impact her students' lives positively until her retirement in November.

Throughout her nineteen years at Rondout, Deb taught various special education classes, including self-contained, co-taught, and resource, covering a wide range of different subjects. She exuded positivity, and created a safe and harmonious learning environment for her students. Her kindness, empathy, and sense of humor was appreciated by all. Deb left a lasting impact on her students and I know they will miss her tremendously. To say Deb is an invaluable asset to the Rondout community would be an understatement.

I will forever cherish the shared laughter, the moments of pure joy, and the moments when we found solace in each other's presence. Even the extraordinary experience of sharing an organ serves as a testament to the depth of our connection.

As Deb embarks on this new chapter of her life, I wish her a fulfilling and joyful journey ahead. May she enjoy winning games of pickleball, travel to far-off lands, and delve into the books that have been patiently waiting on her "must-read" list. Above all, I hope she cherishes the extra time she will have to spend with her beloved family, friends, and the Sassies.

Deb, as you enter this new chapter, may your future be adorned with happiness, good health, and countless adventures. I am confident that you will continue to make a positive impact on the world, just as you have done for so many years as a teacher. Your legacy will forever be etched in the hearts of those who have had the privilege of knowing you.

~ *Desiree VanDemark*

DESIREE VANDEMARK



It's with great joy and honor that I congratulate Desiree VanDemark on her retirement. Desiree and I started at Rondout Valley High School the same year, sharing a classroom that brought us close together. As a new teacher, I was lucky to have Desiree, an experienced educator from BOCES, as my mentor. She helped me find my footing in teaching, and our team with Joe Delessio and Lauren Willingham made those first years some of the best.

When new teachers came on board, Desiree moved to her own classroom. I remember her first chair—a hand-me-down with wheels that loved to send her rolling. I even rigged up a seatbelt for it as a birthday gift to keep her in the chair.

Even though our jobs changed and we weren't a team anymore, we always made time for each other. We'd catch up during prep periods, cafeteria duty, or hallway walks. Desiree's great sense of humor made her classroom a fun place, and her students loved it. They even played along with her fantasy of being married to Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson!

Our professional relationship turned into a wonderful friendship. I got to know her family well and saw her navigate the teenage years with her son, Maurice. She gave me great advice for handling my own boys. Maurice has grown into a fantastic young man, now married to Casey, and they have Desiree's first beautiful granddaughter, Baby Rae (Raegan).

Desiree is not just a great friend and mentor; she's also incredibly generous. She donated part of her liver to me without a second thought. How many can say their best friend is literally a part of them?

Desiree, you deserve all the happiness in your retirement. Your kindness, humor, and support have made a huge difference in so many lives, including mine. Congratulations on a fantastic career, and thank you from the bottom of my heart (or should I say from the bottom of your liver)!

~ *Deb Morris*

The stories of Desiree VanDemark and Deborah Morris are deeply and forever entwined, and we would like to honor them here together. Each joined the high school as special education teachers in 2004 and they became fast friends. Deb previously worked in probation and Des at BOCES. They soon found out they both attended the same college in Albany while earning their masters degree. Deb spent many years teaching math while Des taught English, each of them working in many different special education programs. Together they helped hundreds of students solve for x and get through that dreaded ELA Regents exam. Deb—with her detail-oriented, calm presence, and Desiree—straightforward in pink sparkles.

Just as they supported their students, they supported each other. Their professionalism, grace, and good sense of humor helped them through countless new initiatives, numerous administrators, and life's many changes. Colleagues became real friends and nearly twenty years passed. When Deb developed complications from polycystic kidney disease that forced her to look for a living donor for a liver transplant, Desiree was the first person to step up. She went through the testing process with great confidence, certain that her "Livvy" would be a match. It was a surprise to everyone but Desiree when the match was confirmed. Again, each handled this difficult surgery in her own way, with style and grace. It is fitting that we wish a happy retirement to these lifelong friends in the same year, grateful to Rondout Valley for bringing them together. We will miss your dedication to your students, colleagues, and each other.

~ *Carie DeVries & Heather Schauman*

District Office Retiree

LOUANN MISZKO

Congratulations to Louann on her retirement. It is well deserved after all the years of dedication to Rondout Valley and to our department. You have been an awesome co-worker, mentor, and friend. You are the heart of our department. You will be missed beyond words.

Cheers to your future!

~ MaryBeth Lunati



On May 31st, the para unit celebrated another year in the books at Arrowood Farms Brewery. It was a beautiful day with a hard-working group of people.

Intermediate Retirees

KIM TOKLE-WARNER



Congratulations on your retirement! As you enter the next chapter of life, just remember that no matter who comes into *my* life you will always be at the top of my list. Thank you for all your help with my computer problems (expect calls at least once or twice a week). I will remember all the fun we had as a team over the last fourteen years including Halloween, wearing matching t-shirts, and of course our tutus. Here's to relaxing and enjoying your family. Some of my favorite lines of yours are: *OMG what?, We made it, We got this ...stay strong, I will be alright* and *We can't make this up*. Congratulations, my friend. Enjoy your retirement. Love you to the moon and back.

~ Barbara Cusber

MARIAN ZAJAC

Congratulations to Marian Zajac on her retirement. Marian has been with the district for twenty-six years in various capacities. I first met Marian in 2009 when I was a substitute teacher at the high school. She was one of the first people to welcome me and made sure that I had someone to go to if I needed any help. I recall taking a walk with her at lunch that day and immediately feeling like she was an old friend I had known for years. It wasn't long after she came to the middle school that she began sharing her tasty cooking with me and others.



Marian's dedication to students and colleagues will be missed. She was active in the Improv Club and helped with many school plays. You never knew where you would see Marian, as she covered countless classes when there was a need. Although I will miss her cheerful spirit and witty humor, retirement is well deserved. I wish her all the best.

~ Colleen Parete

LYNN HARNISCHFEGER



Lynn, congratulations on your retirement! We are so incredibly happy for you. It has been a joy to be a part of your amazing professional journey. From hiking the Mohonk preserve with a gaggle of Ganders (rain or shine),

to tracking ABC data, to joining in on all of the push-in groups, to the daily rigamarole of special education, you have rolled up your sleeves for every challenge. We're all incredibly grateful for the mark you left on us and all of your students. Nothing but the best—that's what you always gave. And that's what we wish for you as you retire. Enjoy your next adventure! Spread your wings and fly, our beautiful butterfly.

~ Heather Creese & Kim Gorney

Lynn will be missed a lot next year, and years after, but we know she has given so much to so many children. It's wonderful that she will be able to go in new directions and have the time to enjoy her own family, including her two grandchildren!

The kids have always loved Lynn. She started their day with a warm hello and then kept careful watch over them the whole day long, even making sure they got on the right bus when school was over. Teaching with Mrs. H. has been a pleasure. She knew when the children needed help or when they weren't quite sure how to do something, and

she made sure kids who were feeling a little lost had someone who cared about them right by their side.

Lynn not only knew just what the kids needed, but she also could tell when Nancy or I could use some guidance. Days moved along better because Lynn could always find a way to steer the class in the right direction. And the kids knew that if someone started to head in the wrong direction, as sometimes happens, Lynn would quickly guide them back on the right path again.

Students from years past would often come back to visit "Mrs. H" for a quick hello and a warm hug. They would remember how she would listen to them, make them laugh, and encourage them to always try to do their best.

We wish the world for Lynn and hope she visits from time to time. We know she deserves all the great adventures she will have in this new chapter of her life.

All our best,

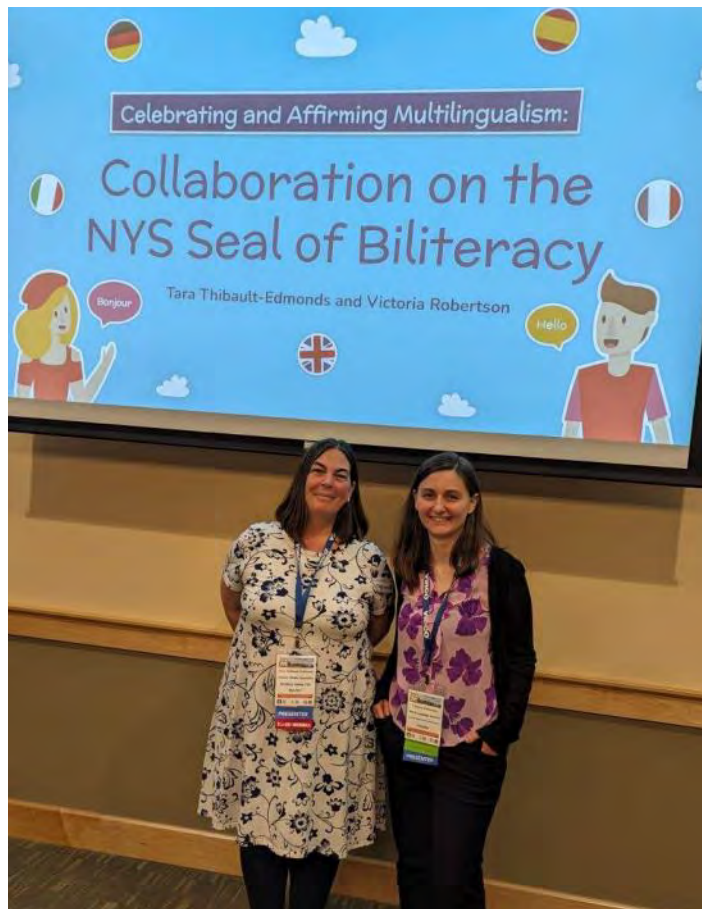
~ Nancy Hickey & Fred Burstein

On the Statewide Stage

by Victoria Robertson

PRESENTING A COLLABORATION ON SEAL OF BILITERACY

From May 16-18, Tara Thibault-Edmonds and Victoria Robertson traveled to Lake Placid to attend the New York Library Association/Section of School Librarians (NYLA SSL) Annual Spring Conference, where they presented a session on "Celebrating and Affirming Multilingualism: Collaboration on the Seal of Biliteracy." Their session was well attended, and they were able to provide school librarians from around the state with background on the NYS Seal of Biliteracy, an award given to high school graduates who have demonstrated attainment of a high level of proficiency in English and one or more world languages. They shared the requirements for developing and running a Seal program, and ways that librarians can collaborate with English and World Language teachers to help our ENL and Heritage Language students develop their literacy skills in order to find success in earning the Seal of Biliteracy. The conference provided a wonderful opportunity for networking with other districts and brainstorming ways that we can all pool our resources to help our multilingual students be successful.



Kerkonkson Retirees

LOREN DUGAN



I have had the honor of working with my longtime friend, Loren Dugan, for the past three years. However, her career started long before that! Loren began her journey as a teaching assistant at KES with Dorothy Mayone in 2nd grade. She then moved on to work with our beloved friend, Sally Kemple, in kindergarten. After many field trips, thousands of learning centers, lunch and recess duties, and countless shoe-tying escapades, Loren moved on to Rosendale Elementary School, where she continued her kindergarten path assisting Heidi Racioppo. KES was lucky to get Loren back again a few years later, where she completed her kindergarten experience with Andrea Kortright!

Loren was finally “promoted” to first grade after all those kinder-adventures! She brought along her expertise of working with young children. I feel so fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with Loren! I think of her as the child whisperer! She was always able to redirect our kids discreetly and move on! Even on the most stressful days, Loren could make me laugh!

I will miss working with you!! Congratulations and enjoy your well-deserved retirement, Loren!!

~ Debbie Eck

ROBIN DEPEW

Robin has been my long-standing colleague and friend for more than two decades! She has been the yin to my yang, and we have had some great years collaborating together. You learn the measure of someone’s character when you

work closely and go through so much together over time and Robin proved to be the girl you want on your team. She always goes to bat for you. On more than one occasion, she showed herself to be the kind of friend who said, “Let me help you...here’s what you might want to do.”

Watching Robin’s strengths, her confidence, lightning-fast analysis, and laser focus, it was clear to me she could run anything and solve most dilemmas single-handedly.

Luckily for us as her co-workers and the children of KES, she was on our team! She wore many hats throughout her career but “coaching,” (whether in a gym, a classroom or most recently in curriculum development) was a role Robin was perfectly suited for. She has been encouraging, supportive, and fair as a mentor across all disciplines at the elementary level, assisting teachers and administrators in all the ways she was needed.

Robin has shown time and again that she won’t shy away from a challenge, and one year in particular, Ms. Mayone, Ms. DePew and I dove into an innovative team-teaching approach with our third graders. We each chose the subjects we were most passionate about and taught all sixty-one students in blocks over that day. Robin excelled in the math curriculum, Dorothy Mayone enthusiastically taught language and spelling skills, and I taught literature units and writing. We all improved our lessons, cheered each other on (even panicked a couple of times), and poured our hearts into that collaborative year together. It was tremendous work but such fun - and we became good friends who trusted each other in our roles as a team.

Kerkonkson Elementary School benefited in ways that are immeasurable and unforgettable from the years that Robin devoted her energy and love - and it goes without saying that she has a deep and unwavering commitment to her



family and friends.

You will be missed Robin, but you leave behind a wonderful legacy. Enjoy your new chapter which is yet to be written! I am grateful for you, my friend.

~ Cindy Carubia

VICTORIA DAVIS

Congratulations on your retirement, Victoria! Your pleasant nature and willingness to help out whenever needed will not be forgotten. Enjoy this next chapter in your life, you deserve it!

~ Your colleagues at Rondout Valley

Cheers to Summer!

by Robyn McDonough

To my team: thank you for yet another stellar year of working together to keep our union family apprised of what's going on at the district and state level. No matter what life threw at us, and we were thrown A LOT this year, we rallied and supported each other to get the work done. I am grateful for you all and look forward to what next year brings.

To our retirees and the rest of the RVF: put aside some quiet time for yourself by using the [Calm App](#) and set your intentions each day. I wish you all a happy, restful summer full of many laughs with family and friends.

Cheers!



This year's 23 RVF Retirees have given a combined total of 427 years of service to the Rondout Valley CSD!

Financial Update

by David Bonington, CFP®

Stacey Braun Associates, Inc.

IT'S A (RE)BALANCING ACT—PART 2

I could easily have titled this article “An Rx for Employee X.”

If you missed the last issue, we left Employee X in a predicament. “Employee X” is a hypothetical 55-year-old who for 25 years contributed funds into a workplace retirement plan while specifying a 75% Stock/25% Bond allocation. (Employee X also has a 401(k) account from a prior employer, which was funded using a 90% Stock/10% Bond split between the ages of 22-30.) The total value of these accounts has grown nicely over time, but Employee X was recently startled to see that the Stock portion of these accounts was a sky-high 95%.

How did this happen? As they are likely to do over time, the Stocks grew at faster rates than the Bonds. The account “pie charts” are both bigger - but the percentage of each that Bonds represent are now mere 5% slivers. Meanwhile, at 55, Employee X’s risk tolerance is not what it was at 22, 30, or 40-something; the safety of Bonds is gaining appeal. What should Employee X do? Re-Balance!

Precise re-balancing strategy depends on (1) the percentage of assets that Employee X wants to hold in Bonds and (2) the speed with which this result is desired.

Strategy #1 (Slow but Steady): If Employee X plans to work another ten years and would be satisfied *gradually* restoring an approximate 75%/25% split at retirement, *future payroll contributions* could be shifted 100% to Bonds. This strategy might restore the Bond portion of the

accounts to a percentage somewhere between 20%-30% at the time of retirement.

Strategy #2 (Immediate Action): If Employee X decides that any Stock percentage above 75% is simply too high, there is no choice: Stocks will have to be sold, with proceeds applied to buy Bonds. (For extreme shifts, however, depending on market conditions, this strategy might be better carried out over a few weeks or months rather than on a single day.)

Strategy #3 (Hybrid Approach): This strategy would combine features of the first two, with a near-term reduction in Stocks to maybe 80% (using Strategy #2) and Strategy #1 setting in motion a further but more gradual increase in Bonds. This approach could reduce the Stock percentage to less than 60% at retirement - which might also be a desirable goal.

There is no one-size-fits-all strategy – each one must be customized to account for the portfolio at hand and the investor’s goals and risk tolerance. The main point of this article is that a careful study of portfolio composition is worthwhile. Over time, need for near-term (or eventual) re-balancing becomes visible in most portfolios.

If a Stacey Braun planner can assist you by shining - what else? - an “X-Ray” through your portfolio pie chart to help assess re-balancing need, why not make an appointment this Summer?

Free, confidential Telephone or Zoom sessions with a Stacey Braun planner can be arranged by calling 1-888-949-1925.

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