



# THE EDUCATOR

Newsletter of the Arlington Teachers' Association

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## Tidings of Tolerance and Humanity

A lot of bad things have been happening in the world lately, many in our own country. Bombings, shootings, floods, racial unrest, religious intolerance, Donald Trump... It can be easy to get depressed about the state of human-kind.

But take a look at the pages of this newsletter; be reminded of the good things that we are capable of.

Although Arlington seems like predominantly a white, middle-class district, we do have students of every race and every religion, from families rich and poor and somewhere in between. To us teachers they are all just kids; we care about all of them, no matter what prejudices we are inundated with from

the media.

In the following pages you will read about the various ways that ATA members support their colleagues, their students and their community. Recently, two teachers at the

for the Grace Smith House, a local domestic violence agency.

There are many other holiday gift, food, and clothing drives going on at all of our schools, augmenting the little things that we always have on hand to give students in need.

Let us share our giving nature with those outside of the education world. An act of kindness does not have to be material, like buying a gift; it can just be spreading the innate tolerance that we exhibit in the classroom. Let us fight the onslaught of negativity in the news and elicit the humanity in all whom we encounter this holiday season, and beyond.

-Sam Falk, editor

*Take a look at the pages of this newsletter; be reminded of the good things that we are capable of.*

Arthur S. May School organized a massive "shoe box" gift drive to benefit Dutchess Outreach. La-Grange Middle School collected 18 boxes of food at our annual ATA holiday party, which were also donated to Dutchess Outreach.

In addition, our annual dress-down day before Thanksgiving raised \$2275



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# Trivia Challenge

Answer the question below correctly and you could be the proud winner of ATA gear!

**When did the first Festivus celebration take place?**

Last month's winner, selected at random from among the correct responses received, was **Xiang'e Bove** from Beekman. She correctly identified **April 19, 2016** as the date of the presidential primary in New York. She will be the proud owner of ATA gear.

Submit your answer to the above trivia question to [rmchugh@acsdny.org](mailto:rmchugh@acsdny.org) by **December 26**. The winner will be randomly selected from the correct submissions.

## Dress Down Day Delivers Donations

On Wednesday, November 25, we came together as a district and participated in a dress down day to benefit the Grace Smith House. Among all the buildings, we were able to raise \$2,275.

The Grace Smith House is a private not-for-profit domestic violence agency, which provides both residential and non-residential services to victims of domestic violence and their children. Today, Grace Smith House has grown from one crisis shelter at its inception in 1981, to two shelters, one second stage housing and a follow-up and non-

residential program. Their programs provide adult & child counseling, family court advocacy, Child Protective Services, Social Ser-

addition, Grace Smith House offers free educational services to local districts, including Arlington, where they come directly into our classrooms to discuss issues such as cyber-bullying, healthy friendships, and teen dating.

The employees at Grace Smith House were extremely appreciated of our donation, especially with so many families in crisis during the holiday season. Thank you, ATA members, for your continued support in our good works.

-Kristine Jackson,  
PR Chair

### DID YOU KNOW?

Your donation will help the Grace Smith House continue to provide:

- Children's Programs- A trauma-informed approach to serving children who have been exposed to family violence. Programs take place in their shelters and in their community programs.
- Youth Education and Prevention Programs- School-based programs focusing on bullying and relationship violence prevention and intervention. They also provide crisis response to schools when a family violence incident has occurred.

Visit [www.gracesmithhouse.org](http://www.gracesmithhouse.org) for more information

vices advocacy, life skills training, continuing support groups and education about domestic violence. In

## Seed Planted For Growth of a New ATA Gardening Group

Since 2011, when the ATA obtained our office at 46 Davis Avenue, our former President, Ron Higgins, has lovingly cared for the lawn, trees, shrubs, and flowers that beautify the property. Most of the plants and flowers were planned and planted by Ron! He's installed lovely birdhouses and a bench too!

It would be lovely for ALL OF US to con-

sider donating some time to the landscaping at our union office. Each of us could choose to do a few hours of some job we enjoy! Some of the tasks that need doing are: mowing the lawn, mulching the plant beds, edging the plant beds, weeding, planting new flowers, trimming shrubs, watering, and leaf raking/bagging.

Please think about donating some time and energy after work or on a weekend. Drop an email to the union office with your availability: [ATA4547002@aol.com](mailto:ATA4547002@aol.com) and in the subject line write Ron Higgins. If you have any questions or suggestions, you can email Laura Taravella at LMS: [ltaravella@acsdny.org](mailto:ltaravella@acsdny.org).

-Laura Taravella, LMS

# Grievance Settles Long-Term Dispute Over Class Coverage

## The Background

Our contract has long had a provision requiring the district to provide substitute teachers if ATA members are absent. It also prohibited the district from requiring members to cover the classes of absent teachers, "except in cases of emergency." Although the language of the contract was clear, there was no specific consequence in place if the district violated it. As a result, the ATA had repeatedly filed grievances relating to substitutes and class coverage since the late 1970s, but had been unable to solve the problem definitively. The outcome was always simply that the district would try better – expand the sub list, raise sub pay, etc. – but these remedies consistently proved insufficient.

## The Latest Grievance

Beginning about two years ago, the sub shortage started to become much more acute and teachers at all levels were being required to cover classes much more frequently. At some schools individual teachers had to cover classes – usually from their duty periods –

close to thirty times last year alone. A few of these instances might have been the result of genuine emergencies, but most were not; the district simply had not been able to find substitutes. Although the district made modest efforts to recruit more subs, including the first significant increase in sub pay in two decades, the problem has continued. As a result, the ATA decided to enter the formal grievance process. In late October we met with Brendan Lyons and Margaret Muenkel and a neutral arbitrator/mediator to seek a final resolution.

## The Outcome

After many hours of negotiation facilitated by the mediator and further discussions over the last few weeks, the ATA and the district have agreed to a new process that for the first time will mean that teachers will be compensated – at a rate of \$25 per period – for covering classes if there is no regular substitute. (The first instance of covering a class will be unpaid, but members will be compensated for every one after that. This was a concession that the mediator insisted

ed on.) Although a few local districts' teachers get paid more to cover classes, the overwhelming majority of districts have no such provision in their contracts. Perhaps most importantly, for the first time there is a consequence if the district does not obtain sufficient substitutes – and a financial incentive for them to do so.

## The Process

On call duty will no longer exist. (If it did the district would not have to pay for using teachers as substitutes.) Each building principal will ask his or her teachers if they would like to volunteer to cover a class during their duty, professional services, or prep periods. These people will be the first used in cases where coverage is required. If none are available, then teachers may be taken from their *duty periods only* to cover. Middle school teachers with a professional services period may only be used to cover classes if all other options are exhausted. All of these people, volunteers and non-volunteers, will be compensated.

-Robert McHugh, CAC Co-Chair

# Welfare Trust Benefits Recently Increased

The ATA's most recent contract settlement contained an increase in Welfare Trust funds. This negotiated sum is deposited by the District into the Welfare Trust account quarterly. The ATA trustees meet as needed to determine how best to provide Personal Health, Vision and Dental benefits for our members.

The Trustees who oversee the Arlington Teachers' Association Welfare Trust are:

- Ron Higgins, Chairperson
- Bob Maier, President
- Steve Hertzog, 2nd Vice Pres.
- Kristen Ouimet, Trustee
- Siouxzanne Harris, Trustee
- Ed Hotaling, Retiree Trustee

The Welfare Trust provides three basic benefits:

**Dental:** The maximum dental benefit is \$2750 for each eligible family member per calendar year. If you go to a participating dentist then there will be no charge. Participating dentists are listed on [arlingtonteachers.com](http://arlingtonteachers.com). Otherwise you will be required to pay the difference between what the plan pays and what the dentist charges.

**Vision:** Coverage provides for \$325 per family out of pocket expenses per year for vision care. The year for vision coverage begins October 1 and ends September 30. You must send in receipts with the Vision Claim form to get reimbursed.

**Personal Health:** Coverage provides for \$400 per family out of pocket expenses per year for personal health costs. The year for personal health coverage begins October 1 and ends September 30. Also, you must send in receipts with the Personal Health Claim form to get reimbursed.

These benefits include a \$25 increase to the personal health account and an increase of 10% to the dependent dental schedule, as decided upon by the Welfare Trust Trustees.

For any additional assistance, contact Ron Higgins at the ATA Office.

-Ron Higgins, Welfare Trust Chair

PAGE 4 **ATA Holiday Party 2015**





These photos and many more can be found on the ATA's website at [www.arlingtonteachers.com](http://www.arlingtonteachers.com)

## 2015—2016 ATA Officers

### President

Bob Maier

### First Vice-President

Greg Nieman

### Second Vice-President

Steve Hertzog

### Treasurer

Kathleen Blank Cicala

### Chief Negotiator

Donna Doerrier

### PR Committee Chair

Kristine Jackson

### Community Action Chairs

Betsy Marshall

Robert McHugh

### Welfare Trust Chair

Ron Higgins

### Media Specialist

Sam Falk

### Éminence Grise Emeritus

Robert McHugh

### Senior Building Representatives

ASM — Johanna Pungello

BES — William Mueller

NES — Nicolle McMorris

VFES — Pam Goetz

OPS — Nancy Thomas

Traver — Diana Judge

JDWR — Chris Greco

TIS — Sue Ramsden

LMS — Carmine Anastasio

LMS — Steve Bronzi

UVMS — Jim DeBonis

AHS — John Filor

AHS — Noreen Mills Martin

# What's Going On?

*"What's Going on" is a monthly feature of The Educator. It highlights noteworthy accomplishments by ATA members. Do you know of a colleague who deserves recognition? Let The Educator know by emailing [sfalk@acsdny.org](mailto:sfalk@acsdny.org). We can't know what's going on at all of your schools without your help!*

Congratulations to the following ATA members for their contributions to the Arlington community and beyond.

### Vail Farm Elementary

Fifth grade teacher Mike Barley has been chosen as Q92.1's Teacher of the Month for December. One of his students, Victoria McNamara, wrote a letter nominating Barley for this honor. It was announced on the radio at the beginning of December and the award ceremony took place at the school on December 15. The station personalities, Joe Daly and Michelle Taylor, stopped by school to present Barley with this honor.



Photo courtesy of Amanda Buhler

### Arlington Art Department

The Arlington Art Department, in partnership with the Arlington Education Foundation, sponsored the Alexander Juried Art Exhibit, featuring artwork from grades K-12. The opening was on Tuesday December 8 at the Arlington High School auditorium lobby. This 14th annual exhibit provides Arlington students the opportunity to professionally showcase their artwork and highlights the value that the arts bring to our community. The opening is for students, families, teachers, staff and the public. Thank you to the Apollo Quartet for their amazing performance. This Annual Juried Exhibit is curated by Arlington's Art department, and is a fine representation of our award-winning and renowned art program. The exhibit is named in honor of Yvonne Alexander who began the event in 2002. Alexander was an Arlington art teacher from 1988 until 2007. The following art teachers have dedicated their time and expertise to keep this show alive for many years: Kate Thyberg (West Rd and Traver), Sheri Altieri (AHS and UVMS), Amanda Buhler (Titusville, Overlook, and West Rd.), Ted Braggins (AHS, pictured), Aimee Nyarady (Noxon and Overlook), Lorraine Almond (Vail Farm), Ed Meyer (AHS), Linda Simoneau (Beekman and Vail Farm), Carol DiPalo (Overlook, now retired), Jill Freeswick (LMS), Chris Rifenburg (UVMS), Brett Booth, (UVMS), Jason Kolachik (ASM and Noxon), Sean Bayliss (AHS), Heidi Every (LMS), Sali Wohlbach (AHS), Eric Cline (LMS), Sue LaRocca (UVMS), and Corissa Appler (AHS).

# National Board Certification Process Changes

Congratulations to the newest National Board Certified teachers in Arlington: Margaret Fallon (AHS), Marcia Brant (AHS), and Julie Jee (AHS).

Over the past few years, there have been some changes to the National Board Certification process. These changes are updates that relate to changes in education and the Common Core. There are now three entries and a written exam for National Board. One entry relates to differentiated instruction, one with Common Core practices, and one regarding community in-

volvement in the school. In the past, all four entries had to be completed during the same school year. Now you

**Congratulations to :**

***Marcia Brandt (AHS)***  
***Margaret Fallon (AHS)***  
***Julie Jee (AHS)***

**For achieving National Board Certification**

can choose between doing one to four entries in a school year. The process

usually begins in May and continues through the following May.

The Shanker Grant continues to be available to defray the cost of going through the process. The only out of pocket cost that is not reimbursable through the grant is a \$75 application fee.

If you have questions about this new process, and/or are interested in attending an awareness session please contact Stefanie Rice at [srice@acsdny.org](mailto:srice@acsdny.org) or Colleen Napora at [cnapora@acsdny.org](mailto:cnapora@acsdny.org).

-Colleen Napora, AHS

# ASM Teachers Inspire Students to Give Back



Photo by Erica Dunn

Arthur S. May fourth Grade teacher Julie Smith and third grade teacher Melissa Maggiacomo have begun a school-wide community service project with the goal of increasing the students' awareness of giving back to others. Inspired by a "shoe box ministry" project at another local school, Smith and Maggiacomo first enlisted a teacher at each grade level to join a committee. They then typed up a "donate your shoe box" letter to be sent home with students and invited a representative from Dutchess Outreach (where donations will go) to speak at a school-wide assembly on December 4. In a short amount of time over 250 shoe boxes were collected. Letters went home with students indicating what items each grade level should bring in to fill the boxes...soap, tooth brushes, shampoo, gloves, scarves, etc. Finally, on December 17 the entire school will join in packing and wrapping the boxes. They will also be including pictures, letters, poems...something personal from each child so that every child is part of this worthy cause.

# Dates to Remember

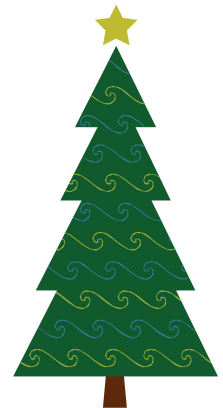


## DECEMBER

22nd—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., CAO  
24-31st—Winter Recess - No School

## JANUARY

1st—Winter Recess - No School  
12th—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., LMS  
18th—Martin Luther King Day - No School  
19th—ATA Executive Council Meeting, 4 p.m., AHS Room 1432  
26th—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., ASM  
26-29th—Regents Week



## FEBRUARY

1st—Deadline for June 2016 Retirement Decisions  
9th—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., VFE  
15th—Presidents' Day - No School  
16th—ATA Executive Council Meeting, 4 p.m., AHS Room 1432  
23rd—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., CAO



# Announcements

Stay informed! Like us on Facebook or check out [www.arlingtonteachers.com](http://www.arlingtonteachers.com) for forms, photos, calendars, and more.

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*Don't have an ATA shirt? Call the ATA Office and they can send one to you. Just specify size and polo or tee.*

**The staff of  
The Educator would like  
to wish all ATA  
members a happy and  
healthy  
holiday season.**

*Please welcome  
Kathleen Vogt to the  
position of ATA  
Photographer. Vogt is  
an 8th grade health  
teacher at Union Vale  
Middle School.*