



# THE EDUCATOR

Newsletter of the Arlington Teachers' Association

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## November 7 Matters

You're going to vote on November 7, right? Don't tell me that you were thinking of skipping it since nothing important is on the ballot. Unfortunately, that is the mindset of many eligible voters. "Voter turnout in local election years lags far behind the turnout we see in presidential election years," confirms Chairman of the Dutchess County Legislature Dale Borchert. Borchert is running unopposed for re-election to his seat representing the town of LaGrange in the third district. He is the parent of two Arlington graduates and was first appointed to the legis-

lature in 2009. He continues, "It's a shame because the decisions made in local government have the most profound impact on the day to day lives of the

ing door to door in your neighborhood looking to speak with you."

Big-ticket races like those for the President, Governor, or even state-wide offices get more

press, but really, county-level government can have more of an impact on our daily lives, and it is your vote that determines who will serve. Races that will be decided this year include those for city councils,

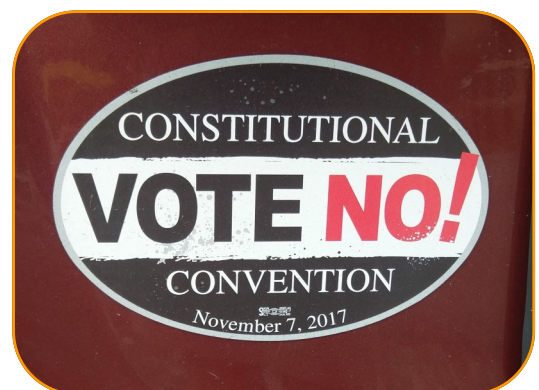
town boards, and county legislators.

What do these people do? "In Dutchess County, we manage a budget that provides a plethora of local services including Sheriff

See Matters on Page 7

*In the pages of this newsletter you will find endorsements from a local labor council, and information about ballot issues that may help in your Election Day decisions. Do your own research though. Look past the party labels and vote for candidates that you think will be best for your profession and your community.*

people we represent. We are also the most accessible public officials you can find, while national candidates rely on mass media to get their message out, you're likely to find one of us walk-



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## Trivia Challenge

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

**When was Styrofoam first sold in the U.S.?**

Last month's winner, selected at random from among the correct responses received, was Karen Chirinos from BES. The next total solar eclipse over North America will be on **April 8, 2024**. Answer this month's question and you could win ATA gear!

Submit your answer to the above trivia question to [rmchugh@acsdny.org](mailto:rmchugh@acsdny.org) by November 10th. The winner will be randomly selected from the correct submissions.

# Political Action Update: Elections

Although there are no candidates for statewide elections this November for NYSUT to endorse, the Dutchess County Central Labor Council, an affiliate of the AFL-CIO, has endorsed candidates for local elections. The endorsements, which are non-partisan, are based on the candidates' positions on labor issues. **Please remember to vote on November 7th!**

## Dutchess County Central Labor Council 2017 Endorsed Candidates

County Comptroller	Robin Lois
County Legislator-District 2	Ranald Adams
County Legislator-District 4	Hannah Black
County Legislator-District 5	Pam Kingsley
County Legislator-District 6	Rebecca Edwards
County Legislator-District 7	Paul Donnelly
County Legislator-District 8	Craig Brendli
County Legislator-District 9	Kari Rieser
County Legislator-District 10	Barbara Jeter-Jackson
County Legislator-District 12	Laurette Giardino
County Legislator-District 14	Francena Amparo
County Legislator-District 16	Fritz Zernike
County Legislator-District 17	Keltie McCormick
County Legislator-District 18	Nick Page
County Legislator-District 20	Kris Munn
County Legislator-District 23	Helen Grosso
County Legislator-District 25	Jimmy Pearson
Beacon Council at Large	Lee Kyriacou
Dover Supervisor	Linda French
Fishkill Town Council	Paul Gilbert and Jacqueline Bardini
Pawling Highway Superintendent	John Daley
Poughkeepsie Town Supervisor	Michael Treybich
Poughkeepsie Town Board	Ann Shershin
Poughkeepsie City Council at Large	Mike Young
Poughkeepsie City Council—Ward 3	Nate Alemeida
Poughkeepsie City Council—Ward 4	Sarah Brannen
Poughkeepsie City Council—Ward 6	Natasha Cherry
Wappingers Town Council	Janelle Mendez, Cheryl Wallace and Wilford Lammers

# Third Graders Influence Local Law Passage

On October 10, 2017 the Dutchess County Legislature voted 23-1 to enact a ban on the use of polystyrene food service containers (better known as Styrofoam) at chain restaurants in the county and at county-sponsored events and county facilities. While this bipartisan bill was sponsored by six county legislators, the origin of the bill (now law) began with one of Arlington's third grade teachers and her students.

According to West Road teacher Barbara Kurdziel, "As part of the Project Based Learning professional development course I took last spring, I chose to have my kids use their persuasive writing unit to educate the West Road community about Styrofoam. My third graders did the research, and wrote persuasive speeches and letters about the problems with Styrofoam. Students created posters that educated their school community about the environmental and health issues brought on because of polystyrene."

Aside from the fact that polystyrene is poorly biodegradable and difficult to recycle, it has been classified as a possible carcinogen in humans. Currently the only chain restaurant in Dutchess County to still use Styrofoam food service containers is Dunkin Donuts.

Kurdziel's students sent home a survey to get an idea about how many times West Road families visited the local Dunkin Donuts. They also asked the staff to save their Styrofoam cups instead of throwing them out to get a gauge of how many cups one school uses. They collected close to 200 cups in three weeks and the family survey results showed that more than 300 cups were used weekly by the



Photo Courtesy of Barbara Kurdziel

Third grade teacher Barbara Kurdziel (back center) and teaching assistant Heidi Leyden invited Dutchess County Executive Marc Molinaro into their classroom in June 2017 to hear about their students' research on the use of Styrofoam.

one third of West Road families who returned the survey.

The students took their project one step further and wrote letters to Governor Andrew Cuomo and County Executive Marc Molinaro advocating for the government to step in and help with this environmental concern. As a result, on June 22, 2017, Molinaro visited Kurdziel's classroom to share how the local government works. Kurdziel explains what happened next: "Several students presented information and concerns about polystyrene to him. He promised to consider our concerns. From there, he had one of his assistants draft the bill. He handed the legislature the bill in September; In early October, the students, now fourth graders, were invited to speak to the legislature and be present for the vote."

During the public comment section of the legislative session on October 10 the students read short comments supporting a

ban on polystyrene. There was also opposition to the proposed law, notably from members of the polystyrene container industry. In the end, the law proposed by the students passed with only Republican Angela Flesland of the town of Poughkeepsie opposing it.

Kurdziel concludes, "County Executive Molinaro will return to West Road School later this month to sign the bill into law while surrounded by the students who used their passionate and purposeful persuasive writing and speaking skills to make a big difference in their community."

Kurdziel and her students are a great example of how accessible local government can be and how significant elections, such as those taking place November 7, are. While Kurdziel took the initiative to talk to politicians directly, everyone can have an influence on government policy simply by voting.

**“Shall there be a convention to revise the  
Constitution and amend the same?”**

***Don't skip -- make sure you flip the ballot***

**Vote No on Proposition 1**

### **What's at Stake?**

- ◆ **Right to a free public education**
- ◆ **Right to be a member of a union**
- ◆ **Right to collective bargaining**
- ◆ **Safeguards to protect wild areas like the Adirondacks and the Catskills**
- ◆ **Safeguards to protect our voting rights**
- ◆ **Safeguards to protect our right to worker's compensation**
- ◆ **At risk: Public pension protections. The constitution guarantees your pension will be there when you retire!**

Given the current political climate and the influence of outside money, thanks to Citizens United, corporate special interests can spend unlimited money getting their cronies elected.



*Only you can prevent this unnecessary and risky business!  
A Constitutional Convention would cost taxpayers millions.  
Don't add to Albany waste!*

For more information check out these useful websites:

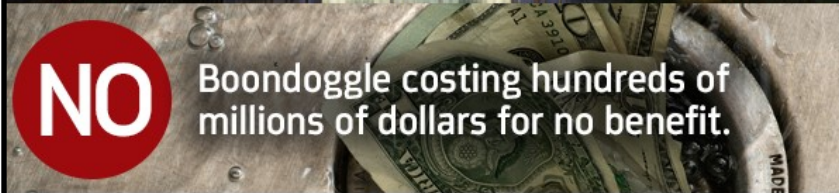
- <https://www.elections.ny.gov/ProposedAmendments.html>
- [https://ballotpedia.org/New\\_York\\_Proposal\\_1,\\_Constitutional\\_Convention\\_Question\\_\(2017\)](https://ballotpedia.org/New_York_Proposal_1,_Constitutional_Convention_Question_(2017))



**NO** Party for NY political insiders and special interest groups.



**NO** Opportunity for Albany insiders to take away our rights & protections.



**NO** Boondoggle costing hundreds of millions of dollars for no benefit.

**NO** New York Constitutional Convention!

On Nov. 7, 2017, Vote **NO** NY Constitutional Convention  
[NoNewYorkConvention.org](http://NoNewYorkConvention.org)



CONSTITUTIONAL  
**Vote NO!**  
 CONVENTION 11/7/17  
 CHANGE POLITICIANS TO CHANGE LAWS!



**NEW YORK FIRE FIGHTERS**  
**VOTE NO**  
 ON THE  
**CON CON**  
 UNNECESSARY · UNETHICAL · RISKY




**NYS AFL-CIO**  
**NO CON-CON**  
 ON NOV. 7, VOTE NO ON PROP #1

**VOTE NO**  
 ON A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

On Election Day 2017, New Yorkers will be asked if the state should hold a convention to re-write our constitution. It's a bad idea, and here's what voters need to know:

**JOIN NEW YORK'S FIGHT AGAINST A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION**




**NEW YORKERS AGAINST CORRUPTION**

We can't allow special interests to dominate the early discussion and mislead voters with false claims that this will be a "people's convention." Join us and help expose the real dangers of a constitutional convention for New York.  
 We need your help, and we need it now!

**TAKE ACTION TODAY: JOIN OUR COALITION AT**  
**[WWW.NEWYORKERSAGAINSTCORRUPTION.COM](http://WWW.NEWYORKERSAGAINSTCORRUPTION.COM)**

Think a State Constitutional Convention is the answer?  
**THINK AGAIN**



For more information, contact the NYS AFL-CIO at 518-436-8516 or visit [www.nysaflcio.org](http://www.nysaflcio.org). To receive updates about the Labor Movement, text NYS AFL-CIO to 877877.

## 2017 — 2018 ATA Officers

### President

Bob Maier

### First Vice-President

Greg Nieman

### Second Vice-President

Steve Hertzog

### Treasurer

Dave Cordella

### Chief Negotiator

Robert McHugh

### PR Committee Chair

Kristine Jackson

### Community Action Co-Chairs

Brendan Lawler

Betsy Marshall

### Welfare Trust Chair

Ron Higgins

### Communications Chair

Sam Falk

### Senior Building Representatives

ASM — Erica Dunn

BES — William Mueller

NES — Nicolle McMorris

VFES — Gwen Moschetto

OPS — Nancy Thomas

Traver — Diana Judge

JDWR — Chris Greco

TIS — Sue Ramsden

LMS — Kevin Walsh

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.

### Arlington High

Science teacher Steve Hertzog was recently selected to be part of the NY State Master Teachers' Program (NYSMTP). As part of this program Hertzog will join the newest cohort of 214

STEM teachers from across the state in collaborating at nine SUNY host campuses in professional development and regional meetings. NYSMTP participants receive a stipend of \$15,000 a year for four years.

Drama teacher Sarah Combs was announced as the recipient of Hudson Valley Magazine's Readers' Pick for Best Hudson Valley Teacher.

### Traver Road Primary

Art teacher Lauren Boland from our school attended the "Light the Night" walk in Verona, New Jersey on October 14. It is a charity event that raises money and awareness for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Her team (Team Donna), has raised over

\$900.

### Vail Farm Elementary

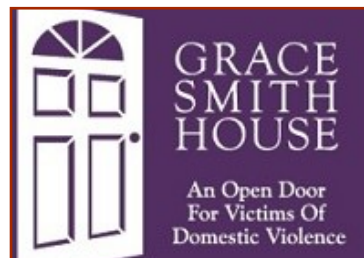
Second grade teacher Pina Bruno is participating in this year's Barbells for Boobs event through CrossFit. Barbells for Boobs is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to the early detection of breast cancer. CrossFit athletes come together to fundraise and participate in a workout in October. All fundraising efforts support much needed detection services in local communities across the country. Funds raised are vital to those who may not have the means or access to critical detection services. One in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime. Seven percent  
See Teachers on Page 7

## PR Update: Support Your Community

The PR committee has planned several events to start the school year. Unfortunately we did not participate in the year's Arlington Street Fair due to lack of volunteers, but the annual highway clean-up had a good turnout on Saturday, October 28. Thanks to Debbie Pollack for all her work in organizing this event. Many ATA members from across the district volunteered to help, and it is wonderful to see so many people either continuing to be involved in our union, or volunteering for the first time.

Our next district-wide

initiative is our dress-down for charity event on Tuesday, November 21. The PR committee voted to



support local charities and organizations on a rotating basis, so this year we will once again collect money for the Grace Smith House in Poughkeepsie. Established in 1981, 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. You will be getting more information from the PR representative from your building shortly. Please consider contributing to this very worthy cause!

If you have any questions or concerns, or are looking for volunteer opportunities, please contact Kristine Jackson at [kjackson@acsdny.org](mailto:kjackson@acsdny.org).

-Kristine Jackson, PR Chair

# November 7 Matters

*Continued from Front* patrols, road maintenance, social services, arts, tourism, agriculture, and education just to name a few. While the county doesn't directly fund institutions of primary education, the county is the lead sponsor agency of Dutchess Community College," adds Borchert.

In addition to deciding how your tax dollars are used, local government can pass regulations regarding environmental issues. They don't do this alone though; while electing officials that will represent your priorities is the first step, on the local level there are a lot of opportunities for citizens to work with their government representatives. This makes it even

more imperative to have a say in who those representatives are. A great example of cooperation between local government and ordinary citizens is the story of West Road teacher Barbara Kurdziel and her third grade class (Page 3) who were able to help enact a law to ban the use of Styrofoam. Several municipalities in the area are also making decisions on whether to allow solar energy farms and are looking for input from constituents.

"Ultimately, the character of the community we live in is shaped by local government, which is why I sought to serve at this level. I would encourage all Dutchess County residents to take an interest in our local

government and contribute to our discourse," concludes Borchert. Of course, his message holds true for residents of any county.

In the pages of this newsletter you will find endorsements from a local labor council, and information about ballot issues that may help in your Election Day decisions. Do your own research though. Look past the party labels and vote for candidates that you think will be best for your profession and your community. On November 7 make sure you exercise your right to help choose those who will represent your views.

-Sam Falk, editor

## Arlington Teachers Do Great Things

*Continued from Page 6* of those women will be under the age of 40. Bruno is dedicating her fundraising efforts to these underserved and overlooked faces. She lost her mother to breast cancer in 2007.

Special education teacher Jennifer Sullivan and kindergarten teacher Charlene Stratton were inspired by recent events

to organize a blood drive at VFES on October 19.

Fifth grade teacher Gwen Moschetto recently did a "Book Tasting" day in her classroom. She and her co-teacher, Jen Schafer, dressed up as chefs and decorated the classroom as a cafe. They scattered five or six chapter books at each table and the students "sampled"

them by reading a few pages. They had a menu to fill out as well. By the end of the session (40 minutes) each student had sampled five books and jotted notes about them. They ranked the books one to five and picked their "main course." This was the one book that they really want to read.

### Unity Pub Brings Members Together

On Friday, September 15 more than 50 ATA members gathered at La Puerta Azul in Salt Point for the first Unity Pub event of the year. The ATA provided free appetizers and the opportunity for members to catch up with colleagues that they may not get to see often since Arlington is such a large district.

Another Unity Pub will be scheduled in the coming months and we would like your input. Please email [ataupdate@gmail.com](mailto:ataupdate@gmail.com) with suggestions for venues within the district and any other comments you may have.



# Dates to Remember



## NOVEMBER

7th—*Election Day*

Superintendent's Conference Day

10th—No School—Veterans' Day

14th—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., BES

21st—Dress Down Day to benefit Grace Smith House

22-24th—No School—Thanksgiving

28th—ATA Executive Council Meeting, 4 p.m., AHS room 1432

Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., CAO



## DECEMBER

7th—Elementary Parent/Teacher Conference Day

8th—Children's Holiday Party, 5 p.m. - 7 p.m., West Road

12th—Children's Holiday Party Snow Date

Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., VF

14th—Elementary School Half Day



# Announcements

**The Welfare Trustees have made the following changes to the Welfare Trust:**

- Beginning January 1, 2018 the existing employee dental schedule will pay for both employees and their dependents.
- Beginning October 1, 2017 the Personal Health account increased by \$25 to a total of \$425.
- The Vision account will remain the same.

**Volunteers are needed to serve dinner at the Lunch Box in Poughkeepsie from 4 - 6 p.m. on November 10 and December 8 and 11. Contact Colleen Napora at AHS to sign up.**

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