



# THE EDUCATOR

Newsletter of the Arlington Teachers' Association

VOLUME 10, ISSUE V

MARCH 2020

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Donations are requested in memory of past ATA secretary Jackie Higgins.

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## COVID-19 Consequences Are Far-Reaching

I'm not going to lie: this issue was a rush job. I usually start the process of gathering information about two weeks before I intend to go to press, and then spend a weekend laying out the issue, send the file to the printer, and pick up the printed copies a day or two later to send out to all of our schools.

I did start this issue with the usual time frame in mind, and got some great contributions from my fellow ATA members. Then everything changed. We were told to get together two-weeks worth of work to send home with our students, just in case we are out of school for an extended period of time. All district mass gatherings were suspended. More and more local schools and colleges announced closings each day. Professional sports seasons,

and Broadway performances were put on hold.

The list goes on and on, and the rapid-fire information that is available to us about the response to the COVID-19 pandemic is overwhelming. I suddenly realized that all of the

to waste the hard work of my contributors.

In the following pages you will find the usual news about the great things that ATA members do outside of the classroom, along with a report on the ATA's lobbying efforts,

and a plea for school board candidates. In addition, though, you will also see a powerful, first-hand account of one of the secondary consequences of COVID-19: racism. If nothing else, I implore you to read that story, and take it to heart, as you consider all of the uncertainty that we are faced with recently. One thing can be certain: even if we can't predict

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news that I had to bring to you in this little newsletter was going to be out-of-date very quickly if I didn't get the issue to you now, and I didn't want

the spread of the physical virus, we, as educators, can definitely stop the spread of that accompanying disease.

-Sam Falk, Editor

**CORONAVIRUS SYMPTOMS, OR SOMETHING ELSE?**

<p><b>COLD OR ALLERGIES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ITCHY EYES</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STUFFY NOSE</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SNEEZING</li> </ul>	<p><b>FLU OR CORONAVIRUS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FEVER</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FATIGUE</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BODY ACHES</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COUGH</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORSENING SYMPTOMS</li> </ul> <p><b>CORONAVIRUS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SHORTNESS OF BREATH</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HISTORY OF TRAVEL</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPOSURE</li> </ul>
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Symptoms and risks vary from person to person. Always check with your doctor. Sources: CDC, Mayo Clinic

The month's *Educator* will be available in electronic format only. We hope to offer the print version again in May.

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# Trivia Challenge

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

**How many counties are in the state of New York?**

Last month's winner, selected at random from among the correct responses received, was **Nick Zilempe** from AHS. He correctly identified **Katherine Hepburn** as the person who has won the most Academy Awards for acting. He will be the proud owner of ATA gear. Answer this month's question and you could win ATA gear too!

Submit your answer to the above trivia question to [sfalk@acsdny.org](mailto:sfalk@acsdny.org) by April 3. The winner will be randomly selected from the correct submissions.

# Annual DCSPCA Drive Has Begun

Once again, the Arlington Teachers' Association will be sponsoring a supplies drive for the Dutchess County SPCA to honor Jackie Higgins, a champion for the teachers here in our district. Jackie was the ATA's administrative assistant for many years. She was the first face people would see when they would visit our offices, and the first voice they would hear on the phone. She was always kind, greeted you with a smile, and made you feel like fami-

ly. In 2010, the ATA suffered a great loss with her

passing. As a way of ensuring her memory live on, we

### Please consider donating these desperately needed items:

- \*Brand-name dry dog food
- \*Brand-name dry cat food
- \*Paper towels
- \*Bleach
- \*Non-clumping kitty litter (Yesterday's News)
- \*Laundry detergent
- \*Clean, dry towels and blankets
- \*Hoses and hose nozzles
- \*Long handled scrub brushes
- \*Cake-sized paper plates
- \*Wee-wee pads
- \*Uncooked white rice
- \*Peanut butter
- \*Pet toys

are proud to sponsor this cause that was special to

Jackie for the 10th straight year. She loved animals, and the Dutchess County SPCA is always so appreciative of our donations as a district. Last year, we were able to donate two VERY full car loads worth of supplies.

March 9 through March 27 we will be collecting donations for the DCSPCA. Monetary donations are welcome and appreciated. Please write checks to DCSPCA. All donations (both monetary and non-monetary) are tax deductible.

Thank you for your continued support of our fundraising efforts and for helping us to honor the memory of the

# Charity Abounds In the Spring

The PR committee is once again proud to report all the work our members are doing in order to make our community even better. Currently, we are supporting multiple local events and organizations through monetary or material donations or through something oftentimes more precious: our time.

Along with the 10th Annual DCSPCA drive (described above) that we hold each spring, our members have been involved with Rebuilding Together each April for many years. Here, volunteers of all skill-levels work to make necessary repairs to

homes owned by local families. Rebuilding Together is a leading national nonprofit in safe and healthy housing with more than 40 years of experience. We are proud to partner with them once again, and have co-sponsored a build on April 25, 2020. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Doug Dickison at UVMS.

The ATA is also proud to sponsor local non-profit, Literacy Connections. This organization helps to develop and offer programs to support a literate society. They offer their services primarily to adults,

but do have a student-centered, no-cost tutoring services as well. Each year, they hold a spelling bee, and the ATA sponsors spellers from AHS.

In addition to the good works from outside organizations, as a membership we also sponsor the annual Gift of Hope basketball game by purchasing the jerseys used, and the Arlington Education's annual 5K race.

The PR committee is grateful for your time, your enthusiasm, and your professionalism in all you do!

-Kristine Jackson,  
PR Chair

# ATA Lobbies For Public Education

Every year, on the first Saturday in February, New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) brings regional NYSUT members and elected state representatives together for an informal conversation over lunch. This year the luncheon was held at the Wiltwyck Golf Club in Hillside, N.Y. Each of the large tables in the banquet room were set up to seat one legislator, or legislative assistant, with a group of teachers and SRPs from the different schools within the representative's Senate or Assembly district. The counties of Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Sullivan and Ulster were represented at this year's luncheon.

For the past two years I have had the opportunity to sit and compare notes on what is happening in our respective schools with teachers from Wappingers, Spackenkill, and Red Hook. This year we sat at a table with State Senator Susan Serino. Our main topic of conversation was New York State's failure to pay public school districts the foundation aid money owed to them and how that failure is impacting our educational programs, staffing levels, building infrastructure and the health and welfare of our students and colleagues.

The foundation aid owed to schools in our region ranges from \$109,483 (Rhinebeck) to \$19,359,196 (Wappingers). Arlington was owed the second highest amount of money - a total sum of \$15,909,594.

I was the first to speak to the issues at our table. I talked about primary grades not having full time ICT classrooms and ICT classrooms at the intermediate level often having to seek a variance because of the number of students per class with IEPs. I pointed out how denying a child



Photo courtesy of Betsy Marshall

ATA CAC Co-chair Betsy Marshall (right) met with State Senator Sue Serino (center) and other local teachers to discuss the state of education in New York.

speech improvement therapy has an impact on that child's ability to learn to read, write, and communicate effectively with their teachers and peers. I explained that when our schools are not properly funded there are limits placed on other intervention services as well. In some of our schools teachers have been told that children can only receive one intervention service, regardless of a child's individual need. We talked about cold classrooms on winter mornings and upstairs bathrooms being closed in the afternoon because of a shortage of custodial staff. It was not surprising when the teachers from the other districts echoed the same concerns that I spoke to when they spoke. Teachers at the secondary level also talked about seeing an increase in disciplinary problems, absenteeism, and in the number of students with other types of social and

emotional issues. They spoke about the lack of enough counselors and other support staff to meet the needs of the students in their schools.

We all agreed that we are seeing a much higher level of neediness among our students and tried to be clear about the kinds of stress that placed on our school communities.

Serino and her assistant listened and took notes and acknowledged our concerns. I have attended these legislative luncheons for many years because I know how important it is that our elected representatives understand exactly how their votes, during the state budget process, impact the children in our schools. Lobbying our legislators is an important and ongoing process.

-Betsy Marshall  
CAC Co-Chair

# Wash Your Hands, Don't Touch Your Face, and Be Anti-Racist

Fruit. Hand soap. Milk. I recited my grocery list to myself as I quickly walked into my local supermarket. Grabbing a bag of clementines in the produce section, I hurried over to pick up some antibacterial hand soap. As I

virus was on most people's minds, with the incessant media coverage and whispered rumors of where the next outbreaks were going to appear. I had picked up soap for that very reason. Instantly self-conscious, I wondered if

their eyes and saying how sick they were. In a student poll that I administered to ninety-three of my students, 93.5% said that they heard people make jokes or seen memes about the coronavirus. 61.3% went on to say that those jokes and memes were about Asians (link to poll results: <http://bit.ly/covidstudentsurvey>).

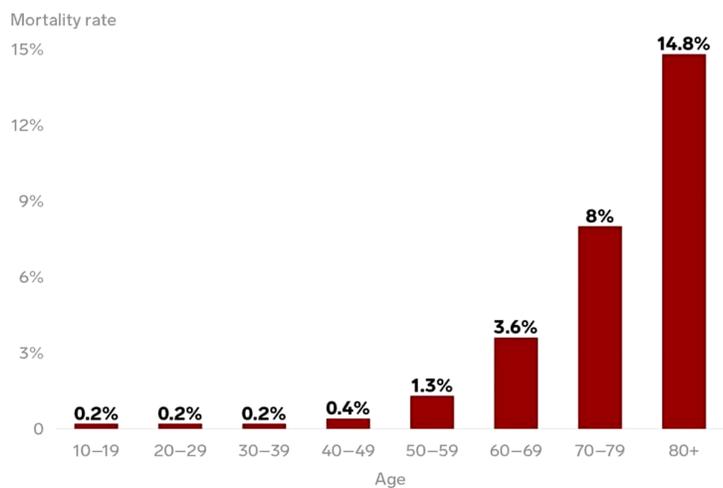
I knew that the best way to combat fear is knowledge. My brother, Dr. Johnny Kwon, is the medical director of the Emergency Department at Montefiore New Rochelle Hospital. He shared how it was vital to avoid transmission so the most medically vulnerable around us didn't get sick. To bolster this point, he sent the graph shown at left to me.

Kwon also narrowed down four basic ways staff and students could prevent the spread of coronavirus:

- Wash your hands.
- Don't touch your face.
- Try to stay away from large gatherings.
- Be cautious about travel.

The coronavirus has impacted school districts all across the country. I recently asked Dr. Lyons about the potential effect of the coronavirus on faculty and staff dur-

**COVID-19 mortality rate by age**



Source: Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention

BUSINESS INSIDER

walked towards a fellow shopper, we made eye contact. Suddenly, she tried to pull her collar over her nose and mouth. Failing that, she took in a big gulp of air and held her breath as she passed me. As I turned to look at her in shock, the woman ran out of air and coughed.

I was stunned. This woman had taken one look at me--5'3" Korean American me--and given into an irrational fear. I knew that the corona-

checked out line, paid and got into my car.

I was deeply troubled afterwards, so I decided to talk to my classes and show them an informative video about the coronavirus. Over the next week, students shared racist incidents they observed or heard about. A woman telling her child to hold their breath as two Asian students walked by. Anti-Asian memes all over social media. People pulling at the corners of

ing spring break and possible closings due to positive cases in our district. Arlington is waiting for guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Dutchess County Health Department as well as the Arlington Central School District physician in order to determine what the protocol would be for teachers planning to go overseas. At the time of this writing (March 9, 2020), Dr. Lyons hoped to have a protocol in place in the coming weeks. Lyons also discussed how a school or schools would be affected if there was a confirmed case of coronavirus: "If a student or staff member received a confirmed diagnosis, a school or schools might be closed for more intensive cleaning. Again, we would base any decisions on guidance from the agencies previously mentioned. We do have three snow days in the bank which could be used for such purpose. Also, any remaining conference and vacation days might be converted to school days as well, depending on timing and guidance from state ed. We are unsure how the state will handle the 180 school day requirement if districts are forced to close [due to] the virus. We are hoping for more guidance in the coming days.

There are many uncertainties due to the newness of this virus, so numerous discussions are taking place about the best course of action to take."

To be honest, I'm worried. I'm trying to make sure that my three children and I don't get sick. Who knows how people will react if one of us happens

to cough? I'm concerned about my elderly parents who fit the demographic most at risk. I'm afraid of the comments my kids and my Asian students are going to hear. An Asian friend mentioned that kids at school had played a game called "coronavirus tag" where her son was picked to be "it" because of his ethnicity. Another friend talked about how her daughter's classmates teased a girl about how her lip balm was made in China, so, in a panic, she rubbed hand sanitizer all over her mouth. I'm sad that fear mongering has incited rac-

**Helpful Resources For Educators and Students:**

- Accurate statistical information and general info about the coronavirus: <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/>
- "How Does Coronavirus Compare to Ebola, SARS, etc.?" video: <http://bit.ly/covidinfo>
- "Singapore Health Minister Gan Kim Young's speech in Parliament about the precautions to avoid [coronavirus]" on Facebook: <http://bit.ly/covidfb>

ist attacks. Four teenagers violently beat a Singaporean law student in London. An Asian woman was attacked for wearing a mask in a NYC subway station. Microaggressions and economic consequences abound. I have walked into a few situations when someone looked at me, turned to their friend and started talking about coronavirus concerns. A local Chinese restaurant that we frequent has already had to let one of its chefs go because business has been so bad. Seeing pictures of Asian people with face masks in the news does not mean one should stereotype all Asians as carriers of the coronavirus. The people in these pictures are being responsible citizens and trying to

prevent the spread of this disease. The coronavirus is also present in Italy, France and the United Kingdom. Avoiding foods associated with those regions makes little sense. Staying away from Asian restaurants only hurts small business owners and employees.

When I returned to the grocery store about a week later, I hoped to get in and out quickly, but as soon as I saw the parking lot, I knew that the lines were going to be long. I saw people pushing carts filled to the brim. I was feeling anxious, so I kept my eyes averted, picked up what I needed and went to the shortest line. The man in front of me met my eyes and I braced myself. Leaning forward, he cracked a joke about how the person in front of him was going to have a hard time eating the five bags of rice in her cart in one sitting. I smiled back and re-

laxed. Even though we were surrounded by shoppers with their gallons of spring water and economy packs of toilet paper, it was reassuring that he wasn't afraid of me and that he just treated me like everybody else.

If you haven't already done so, I encourage all of you to speak to your students about the coronavirus as well as the dangers of anti-Asian backlash. Feel free to talk about what happened to me and all of the other individuals in this article to jumpstart conversations in your classrooms. Teach students to be antiracist--beyond being kind, beyond seeing past color--in order to mitigate the hate and ignorance.

-Julie Jee (AHS)

## 2019 — 2020 ATA Officers

<b>President</b>	Bob Maier
<b>First Vice-President</b>	Greg Nieman
<b>Second Vice-President</b>	Steve Hertzog
<b>Treasurer</b>	Dave Cordella
<b>Chief Negotiator</b>	Robert McHugh
<b>PR Committee Chair</b>	Kristine Jackson
<b>Community Action Chairs</b>	<b>Brendan Lawlor</b> Betsy Marshall
<b>Welfare Trust Chair</b>	Ron Higgins
<b>Communications Chair</b>	Sam Falk
<b>Senior Building Representatives</b>	ASM — Erica Dunn BES — Adrienne Pisciotto NES — Nicolle McMorris VFES — Gwen Moschetto OPS — Nancy Thomas Traver — Diana Judge JDWR — Betsy Marshall TIS — Joe Sutka LMS — Bill Mueller 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@acsdkny.org](mailto:sfalk@acsdkny.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 School

Social Studies teacher Kathleen Bellino presented at the New York State Council for the Social Studies conference on March 13. Her talk was titled "Civic Engagement: From Your Classroom to Their Community".

### Overlook Primary

Kindergarten teacher Karen Mahar was chosen to conduct a workshop session titled "What's in Your Classroom Library? Building Diverse and Inclusive Bookshelves for Your Students" at the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Literacy taking place at Mount St. Mary College on April 18. The workshop description is, "What do your students see and read on a continual basis? Are their identities and experiences reflected in the books within your classroom? Are multiple identities and experiences of others also included through the readings? In this ses-

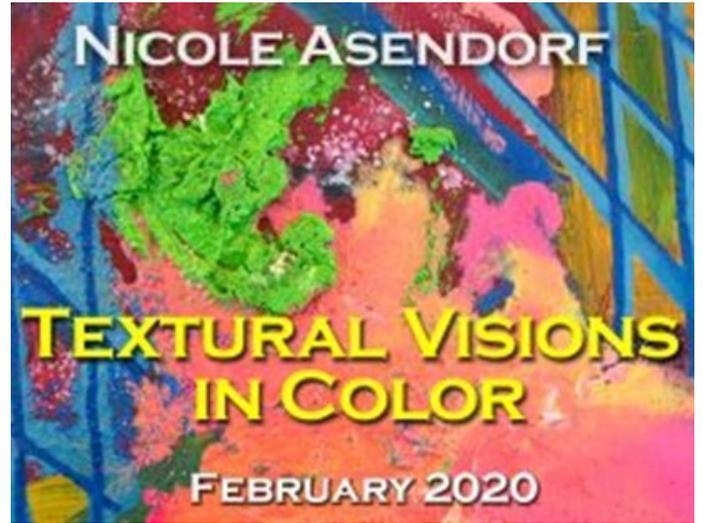


Photo by Paul Fanuele

### Arlington High School

Art teacher Nicole Asendorf had a solo exhibit titled Textural Visions in Color at the Wallkill River School of Art during the month of February.

sion, discover how you can audit your classroom library, guided reading books, and mentor texts. Ensure all your students can see multiple possibilities for themselves and others through the inclusion of culturally responsive, diverse books in your classroom!"

### Union Vale Middle

Health teacher Kathleen Vogt facilitated a three hour workshop focusing on skill based health lessons for health educators at the Broome-Tioga BOCES. It took place on March 12.

Kate Sprague-Hicks, teacher librarian at UVMS, was part of the Banned Books Symposium, at Mount Saint Mary College in partnership with South-eastern New York Library Resources Council and regional School Library Sys-

tems on Saturday, March 7, on the MSMC campus in Newburgh. The conference kicked off with Drag Queen Victoria Precise reading from a children's book that was challenged due to its LGBTQ content. Kate was part of a librarian panel discussing all aspects of working with and responding to banned, challenged, and controversial books.

### West Road Intermediate

Band director Renee Hughes was invited to speak to a class at Syracuse University on April 9. The Teaching of Brass Techniques and is a year-long class required for all junior music education majors who aren't brass majors. One of the topics that Hughes plans to talk about is student teaching and music education in public schools.

# smART Pals Link Students Through Creative Pursuits

AHS art teacher Amanda Buhler started the smART Pals program last year as an art and writing partnership designed to encourage more learning in art and to improve writing skills. The program pairs AHS art students with elementary students. According to Buhler, "Some of the elementary students struggle with writing, and this program gives them a positive reason to read and compose letters, create stories and answer questions. We created a writing and art journal for them and will be bringing them art based activities and games for the 'Art Carnival'. My high school students find purpose in their projects and show their 'best selves' on this trip."

Last year TIS 5th grade teachers Lina Wirszyla and Joshua Platt participated, and this year Buhler has added 3rd grade teachers Juliet Menasche



Photo Courtesy of Amanda Buhler

Arlington High School junior Kadin Sanchez worked with Titusville Intermediate students as part of the smART Pals initiative on March 6.

and Chris Shave. Fellow AHS art teacher Jordan Denitto also wanted to participate this year and is paired with Platt's class.

Buhler is set to take her Studio in Crafts/Art students to work with the third graders on March 18.

## School Board Candidates Sought

It's school budget season again, and with that comes school board elections. It is vital for the continued health of our schools that we elect school board members who keep the best interests of the students and employees in mind while also considering the impact on tax-payers. With the current emphasis on mental health and school safety, along with the trend of "right-sizing", many important funding decisions will have to be made. Along with that is the need to maintain an engaged workforce. The results of last year's focus group study shed light on many areas that the school board has the power to make improvements on. To

provide the best experience for our students we need school board members who will listen to the concerns of the district employees and who truly care about Arlington.

We all know someone who fits that description, whether he or she is a family member, friend, or neighbor. Often these people don't know how much we need them though. That's where you come in: the ATA is requesting your help to identify possible school board candidates and to talk to them about running.

This year the terms of current Arlington school board members Peter Bodnar, Pauline Herr, and Jennifer Eraca are up. Please contact the ATA Office at

845-454-7002 or [ataupdate@gmail.com](mailto:ataupdate@gmail.com) if you know of anyone who would be interested in running for a position. It is a great opportunity for people who care about their children's future and their community as a whole to make a difference.

To be eligible, candidates must live in the district and not be currently employed by Arlington. In order to be on the ballot in May a petition must be obtained from Central Office and returned there with 100 signatures by April 20. ATA members are available to help with that task.

# Dates to Remember



## MARCH

- 19th—School Budget Public Forum: 7 p.m., CAO
- 20th—Professional Development Half Day
- 24th—Board of Education Meeting: 7 p.m., UVMS

## APRIL

- 3rd—~~HOPE Basketball Game: 4:30 p.m., AHS~~
- 6th-13th—Spring Break
- 14th—Board of Education Meeting: 7 p.m., CAO
- 18th—District Arts Fair: 11 a.m. – 4 p.m., LMS
- 20th—Board of Education Candidate Petitions Due: 5 p.m., CAO
- 21st—ATA Executive Council Meeting: 4 p.m., AHS Room 1432
- 28th—Board of Education Meeting: 7 p.m., TRPS



## MAY

- 12th—ATA Executive Council Meeting: 4 p.m., AHS Room 1432
- Board of Education Meeting: 7 p.m., OPS



# Announcements

*The Educator needs you!*

Would you like to help spread the word about the good things ATA members do at your school? Just email ATA Communications Chair Sam Falk at [sfalk@acsdny.org](mailto:sfalk@acsdny.org) anytime you have information to share!

## WELFARE TRUST INFORMATION: DEPENDENT CHILD

- WHEN A DEPENDENT CHILD REACHES THE AGE OF 19 AND IS A FULL TIME STUDENT, SUBMIT A STUDENT STATUS INFORMATION FORM TO THE ADDRESS ON THE FORM. THE FORM MUST BE SENT EVERY YEAR THE DEPENDENT IS A STUDENT ONCE THEY REACH THE AGE OF 19.
- AS LONG AS A DEPENDENT CHILD IS A STUDENT THEY ARE ELIGIBLE FOR BENEFITS UNTIL THE END OF THE YEAR THEY TURN 25 YEARS OLD.

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