

# FOCUS

ON JERICHO  
TEACHERS  
AND THEIR ISSUES

January 2006

## President's Message for January

By Maryann Risi

A little history - years before I arrived in Jericho, the Association contract included money for sabbaticals. These very expensive breaks from teaching were awarded based on longevity in the district. You can only imagine how much the Board of Education wanted to get rid of this perk that cost them not only a full-time teacher's salary but also the price of a substitute. After long, loud, and protracted negotiations, the agreement was made that money reserved for sabbaticals would be transferred to pay for Research and Development projects designed by and for teachers. This funding would be distributed through a competitive process that has been altered through the years. The one stable thing has

been that the money is *ours*.

This month we all attended faculty meetings and heard about the new R&D process. The Executive Board of the JTA hopes that all of you are going to take advantage of this new opportunity. The Curriculum Committee has worked long and hard to come up with a more inventive way to encourage us to acquire our negotiated funds. My hope is that all of you who would like to make use of Phase One have sent your Letter of Acceptance. If you have, please plan to **complete and submit** the R&D. In the past, there have been members who have signed on to earn some of our allotted money, and then did not complete their proposed curriculum project. These funds were returned to the district for its own use. The Letters of Intent were

instituted in an effort to prevent us from relinquishing our funds to the district. Only those who have replied will receive the funding, and the number of days will be set by the number of replies received.

Phase Two still provides for those of us who would like to pursue longer curriculum projects. This one-third of the total sum will provide the funding for teachers who have creative ideas or are planning new courses. Just as in the past, please be sure to dot all *i*'s and cross all *t*'s on your application. The process is fair as long as you follow all of the rules.

R&D money is a way to increase your salary by spending time doing something useful to help you and your colleagues. Please take full advantage of this opportunity.

## Jericho Teachers Association

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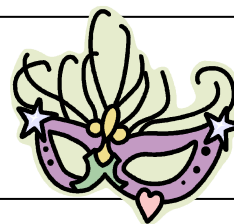
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## FOCUS

is the monthly newsletter of the Jericho Teachers Association. We welcome input, articles, viewpoints, and questions from all members. If there is an issue you would like to see addressed or if you would like to contribute please e-mail the editor, Denise Ryder, at [ryder@jerichoteachers.org](mailto:ryder@jerichoteachers.org)

**Reminder: Attendance at faculty meetings is a contractual obligation**  
(costumes remain optional)



### Wheelchair Basketball : Jericho Faculty vs. the Nassau County Kings

Our annual wheelchair basketball game is on Friday, February 10 at 6:30 in the Sam Springer Gymnasium. This is one of the few events that draws faculty members from all the buildings so come on down and cheer us on. Proceeds go to the Nassau County Kings Wheelchair Basketball team.

**JTA  
Dues  
for 2005  
were \$1,040**

## In Memoriam: Theresa Mazzola, Jericho

By Denise Ryder

Theresa Mazzola was the high school librarian from 1981 to 1998. On Tuesday, January 24 she died in a boating accident in Florida. I had the honor and pleasure of working with Terry for nearly ten years before her retirement in 1998.

Often times we speak to students of the past in hopes that they will appreciate the present. In recalling Terry's years in the library I realize how far we've come. In Terry's day the library was located where our Learning Center is now. Besides imagining the library *across from the cafeteria*, picture it *without computers!* It was not until about 1995, under Terry's direction, did we become the one of the first high school libraries on Long Island to become automated and the very first to be accessible via the Web.

Terry knew the book collection like the back of her hand (which probably came from doing inventory *by hand* for over fifteen years). To Terry, the collection was like a gathering of old friends, experts in every field that she would introduce to the students. The answering of a reference question was like the telling of a tale, especially if it was related to history. Terry loved history and was a history teacher before she became a librarian.

She was old school but not old fashioned, so when the Internet came to town she saw it as another resource to make available and accessible to her students and teachers. In an attempt to tame the World "Wild" Web in a time before search engines, she had her young protégé (that would be me) create a Web site, another first for Long Island high school libraries.

Terry was passionate about books and libraries and for many years was actively involved in LISMA (Long Island School Media Association) often serving as its president.

Terry is survived by her husband, Vince, three children, Laura, Michael, and Lisa, and five grandchildren.



The three librarians at Homecoming in 1992 - Terry Mazzola (HS), Pat Minikel (MS), and Denise Ryder (HS/MS).

## JRA Envy!

By Denise Ryder

On the right is a photo of the executive board of the Jericho Retiree's Association (JRA) taken at their holiday party. It appeared in their newsletter. I recognized all but two people in the photo and could recall what they taught and in which building(s) they worked.

This photo got me thinking. I will list the people (left to right). See if you notice what I noticed.

Maureen Tracy (HS Social Studies), Mary LaRocca (Jackson second grade), Barbara Murphy (HS English and Social Studies), Phyllis Mandel (HS Chemistry), Rudy Cesarini (HS Chemistry), Carol Spielberger (MS/HS Math), Sue Segal (Seaman nurse), George Batjiaka (HS Assistant Principal), Marty Billig (Assistant Superintendent of Business Affairs), Eleanor Altesman



(HS Business), and Tony LaRocca (MS Social Studies). Ada Shapiro (Jackson nurse) is not pictured.

Here it is - former teachers and former administrators [happily] playing on the same team! How nice is that! Look at the faces. Barbara Murphy is beaming (she should be, she and Estelle Rankin just published another book). Look at George Batjiaka's grin. Even Mary Billig is smirking. They're having a good time!

Not only because they no longer have to put up with the "issues" and "challenges" we face on a daily basis, but they finally get to put into perspective any "differences of opinion" they may have had (I am not saying these folks had arguments, I am saying our JTA members don't always see eye-to-eye). After retirement they began to concentrate on their similar interests and relax.

No longer do they see themselves as teach-

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ers, administrators, central office staff, etc., but as a strong, cohesive unit working, for example, to protect social security, to fight the Medicare Modernization Act, and to protect their contractual rights

As I continued to read their newsletter it hit me - I'm jealous!

And if that weren't enough...

- a group went skiing together in Utah

- 173 retirees raised more money for VOTE/COPE\* than our 300 "active" members

- The JRA held a holiday party that was nearly as well attended as our JTA end-of-year celebration (and 44 of them live out of state!)

(and my personal favorite)

- members contribute articles and

photos regularly to their newsletter!

Where am I going with this? Initially my point was, "why wait until we're in the JRA to begin to really enjoy ourselves as colleagues and friends." However, considering the atmosphere around here (especially in the high school) where it feels like we're living on a firing range, I think maybe I'd just like to retire.

\*VOTE-COPE is New York State United Teachers' voluntary political action fund, which pools contributions from members across the state to support local school budgets and pro-education candidates. It also supports political action on behalf of education, health care and labor issues.

## R & Ds 2006 – 2007 in a Nutshell

Funding for Research and Development Grants for the 2006 – 2007 school year will be made available to faculty in three ways.

### Phase I: Non-Competitive

Any faculty member who is interested in applying for Phase I funding must return the "Letter of Intent to Participate" form (this should already have been done). These forms will be used to determine the number of faculty who would like to participate in and receive the "non-competitive" days available. The exact number of days which are available for each individual faculty member will be calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Two-thirds of the total number of days available for 2006 – 2007}}{\text{The number of faculty who express an interest and are approved for funding for Phase I}} = \text{The number of days available for each faculty member}$$

The number of faculty who express an interest and are approved for funding for Phase I

The days will be calculated and the participants will be notified in early February of the **exact number of days** for which they will be eligible. **By February 28**, faculty members who are eligible for Phase I funding must **submit a grant proposal** which must include the names of all grant applicants, a brief description of the topic(s) and desired outcomes (s) of each proposal, and a description of the product (s) which will be produced and submitted.

Elementary school faculty members will submit their Phase I proposals to their building principals; middle school and the high school faculty will submit proposals to their Curriculum Associates. Completed projects are due **October 13, 2006** and will include the product (s); and a log of dates and times (after July 1, 2006) when work was completed.

### Phase II: Competitive

One-third of the days available for 2006 – 2007 R & D grants will be available for "creative, mandated, or necessary" projects which require time in addition to that available in Phase I. The traditional R & D application, review and approval process will be used for Phase II. The deadline for Phase II proposals is **March 28**. If revisions need to be discussed with the applicants, this will occur on April 4. Revisions are due back to building principals/CAs April 10 and will be forwarded to the Curriculum Committee on April 11. On April 24, the Curriculum Committee will meet to review revisions and forward recommendations to Superintendent. The Curriculum Committee will meet on May 1 to discuss Superintendent's reactions and on May 2, the faculty will be notified of Phase II funding. **Completed Phase II R&Ds are due May 1, 2007.**

### Phase III: Non-competitive Phase

The balance of the unused days will be made announced to all faculty in a manner similar to the one used this year for our nine-hour, "mini" R & Ds. **Completed Phase III R & D s are due March 30, 2007.**