

FOCUS

**ON JERICHO
TEACHERS
AND THEIR ISSUES**

September 2006

President's Message for September

By Maryann Risi

Welcome back to a new school year. The Executive Board wishes everyone an enjoyable, productive year. Although we are a diverse group from varied backgrounds, we all share an unyielding belief in the potential of every child to achieve academically at high levels. We have instructional expertise and a

record of success...we get results! In this, a negotiating year, it is more important than ever for us not to hide our light under any bushels. Let's brag a little about what is going on in our rooms. In fact, if you are planning an interesting curriculum event that you may be inviting parents and administrators to view, please also extend an invitation to the Board of Education. (They

can be e-mailed directly) It has been brought to my attention that they would love to be included in these activities. What better way is there to share with them how good we really are? Please also let a Building Rep or Denise Ryder know of any honors you receive (no modesty allowed) so that we can share them with the district in the *Focus*. Have a great year and know that the JTA is here to serve.

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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 Denise Ryder, at ryder@jerichoteachers.org

Positive Press: The following article recently appeared in Newsday

The Quietest Classroom

Newsday.com

BY BRANDON BAIN

September 06, 2006

In Mrs. Moran's classroom, no words are spoken. At least not by her.

That's because she teaches American Sign Language, an unusual elective offered again this year at Jericho High School.

And in one of the district's elementary schools, a novel handwriting program is being continued.

As the sign language class began yesterday, 26 students stared quizzically at Moran's hand movements as she used her fingers to spell their names to take attendance. Instead of saying 'here' or 'present,' they gave her the thumbs-up or raised their hands.

Moran stays silent, except when she is laughing. She stresses the need to pay attention to her hands and face.

'You have to train teenagers to make funny faces,' she said. 'Deaf people use their faces a lot, and people who hear have flat faces. It's like charades.'

Moran first taught the class two years ago, and it was reoffered this year because of a resurgence of interest, officials said.

Students say they find it hard to get used to the silence, but add that they love the challenge.

'It's tough. I don't really know the hand motions yet,' sophomore Michelle Bojdan, 15, said. 'It was so quiet for 40 minutes.'

Also in the Jericho School District, second-graders at Robert Seaman Elementary yesterday began the next phase of a pilot program aimed at teaching proper techniques for handwriting.

Handwriting Without Tears began for these students in kindergarten and will continue into the fifth grade.

Debbie Wanderman, an occupational therapist, teaches letter formation, pencil grip and proper posture when writing.

Please send news, awards, accolades, or other "positive press" to dryder@jerichoschools.org



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Friday, October 6 is Denim Day. Wear jeans and give \$5 to support Breast Cancer Research. Sunday, October 15 is the American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk at Jones Beach. Details on both to follow.

FOCUS *Classifieds*

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Homecoming... With a Twist

By Denise Ryder

Homecoming weekend is going to be a little different this year. Traditionally, the events have occurred on Saturday and Sunday, but this year it will be held Friday, September 29 and Saturday, September 30. JTA members from all five buildings march as a group in the parade, untenured teachers carrying the banner.

This year the parade will take place on campus. In the past we met at the school, jumped on a bus, marched up 106/107, blocked traffic, infuriated drivers, then took the right fork (106) and entered the campus on the middle school side. This year we will be starting in the high school faculty parking lot (left side of the building toward the back), then we will march to the front of the building, across the front, around to the right side, past transportation to the rear of the middle school faculty parking lot. Although I love waving and smiling sweetly at angry motorists, I don't mind a shorter, less intrusive parade route. Too bad we didn't do this in 2000 when I was five months pregnant and jogged the whole way taking pictures!



The carnival will be open on Friday night (4-7) and Saturday after the parade until 6. Pay-one-price bracelets will be available - \$20 for Friday and \$25 for Saturday. The football game is on Saturday and starts at 1:00. We are playing Roslyn.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage the entire faculty to participate. Homecoming is not just a "high school" event - it is one of the rare opportunities for all teachers from all buildings to get together and have some fun! And if you have kids, I promise they will LOVE the carnival.

If you're not into school spirit, consider these two points; 1) the more teachers marching in the parade the better it looks, especially in a contract year (family and kids add to the effect - dress 'em in blue and gold), and 2) it counts as a night back.

IN ADDITION, rumor has it that there will be a *different kind* of JTA meeting after the carnival on Friday night at the historic *Faculty Room East*. If you do not know where the

Faculty Room East is, here's a hint: in 1812 it was the home of Valentine and Abigail Hicks, prominent members of the Quaker community that founded Jericho. If you still don't know...ask a librarian. They seem to know everything!

Pay Day Pizzazz

By Denise Ryder

In my book, pay day is cause for celebration! Let's show our camaraderie, our team spirit, our relief that one more mortgage payment will be on time by celebrating something we all have in common - *pay day*!

The following is a list of one pay day from each month and a corresponding fashion suggestion. Do you have to do this? No. Would it be kinda neat if everybody dressed (or accessorized) similarly once a month? I think so.

The pay days listed are the first in every month except June, which is the last day.

October 6, 2006 National Breast Cancer Awareness Day - wear jeans and donate \$5

November 3, 2006

Button that says something funny

December 1, 2006

Sports Team

January 12, 2007

Clever phrase or wording related to the area in which you teach

February 9, 2007

College or School

March 9, 2007

Your Hometown Colors or Team

April 20, 2007

Vacation/Place You've Been

May 4, 2007

Camouflage or tie-dye

June 22, 2007

Ugly Hawaiian Shirt

10 Years in the Teachers Retirement System? Happy Anniversary! Check Your Pay Stub

Thanks to union-backed legislation in 2000, employers must stop deducting the 3 percent contribution for Tier 3 and 4 members who have been retirement system members for 10 years. Remember, this means membership in TRS, not just years of service. Check your pay stub to make sure you have stopped contributing.