

# FOCUS

ON JERICHO  
TEACHERS  
AND THEIR ISSUES

March 2007

## President's Message: Jericho Hall of Fame

By Maryann Risi

On the evening of April 26<sup>th</sup>, a very special event will be taking place in the Jericho Public Library. That night will be the annual celebration of the High School Hall of Fame inductions. Last year was my first time attending the ceremony and was such a wonderful experience that I wanted to share it with you and ask you to consider attending this year. It makes such a difference to the alumni and the retirees to see those of us still in service there to applaud their success stories and you can be assured of leaving with a good feeling about the place you invest so much time and energy each day.

If you have walked through the High School you may have noticed the plaque in the entryway. It contains the names of those who have earned the distinction of being named exemplary members of their graduating classes. Each year a committee of community members and retired faculty reviews applications and then has the difficult task of selecting 5 honorees from all those nominated. Each and every inductee is a credit to this institution and the teachers in it, not only for the accomplishments in their chosen fields but also for the ways they have given back to their respective communities. For this reason, they are particularly important positive role models for our current students.

Once selected, the alumni are invited to speak at the induction ceremony held once a year at

*(Continued on page 2)*

## VOTE/COPE Update

Dear Colleagues,

As your VOTE/COPE Chairperson, I recently returned from the first round of lobbying in Albany representing Jericho Teachers foremost but also Long Island K-12 teachers in general. Just a few short years ago a group of 12 NYSUT members did the lobbying in Albany for us. They wore a button, "12." Later they named the group "The Committee of 100" -- sounds more impressive. This March "The Committee of 100" brought quite a few supporters (some 750 in all) with them: teachers, PAC Chairpersons, union presidents and vice-presidents, retired teachers, VOTE/COPE representatives, SUNY and CUNY professors, and other NYSUT members.

On a brisk, cold morning with brightly shining sun, some **750 NYSUT members** descended upon the Madison Avenue entrance of the Capitol Building complex. It was quite impressive to observe busload after busload after busload of persons (15 buses in all) emptying a continuous stream of lobbyists into the vast underground caverns of the Capitol Building complex. It was about a twenty minute underground walk to the metal detectors and security area that screen entrants into the multi-story Legislative Office Building.

Throughout the day **every single** State Senator and State Assemblyperson was visited by groups of 3 to 16 lobbyists (They had been notified in advance of our visits – all appointments were scheduled and confirmed in advance.) Let me assure you that our presence was indeed noticed! Our message was delivered on a multitude of educational issues. I might add that I was proud to wear my NYSUT identification badge to each meeting since an extra strip was added to the bottom which stated in boldface red lettering, "**VOTE/COPE**

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Jericho Teachers Association

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[www.jerichoteachers.org](http://www.jerichoteachers.org)

## 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](mailto:ryder@jerichoteachers.org)

## President's Message: Hall of Fame: Not Just a High School Event

*(Continued from page 1)*

the public library. Honorees are each introduced by a current member of the senior class. The alumni then take the floor to describe their memories of Jericho. These memories include naming teachers who have been instrumental in their success. This alone was worth the price of admission. (free ?) I enjoyed hearing these former students describe the impact their teachers had on their lives. It was also great fun to hear stories of the funny or strange things they remembered about their Jericho educators. I did not know all of the teachers they spoke about but I could feel the warmth radiating throughout the room. Many spoke about individuals and experiences from their elementary and middle school days as well, so this is far more than just a high school event.

I feel so strongly about the importance of our attendance because this event is such a powerful validation of the collective efforts of so many people. Treat yourself to an evening that celebrates so much of the positive work that goes on in all of our schools each day.

## VOTE/COPE Update

*(Continued from page 1)*

**AWARD LOCAL**," referring to the high level of participation among JTA members in the VOTE/COPE campaign and the large total dollar amount donated by our members. The words did not go unnoticed.

Our first visit was with State Senator Carl Marcellino since he is on the Education Committee. A total of 16 of us met with him. There was standing room only in the office. He has been and continues to be a strong supporter for a fair share of financial aid for Long Island Schools. Apparently the Republican majority in the Senate strongly supports Long Island schools.

The best news is that the new governor has proposed the largest ever increase in aid for public education in New York. The 2007-08 Executive Budget proposes a \$1.4 billion or 8% increase in aid for public education, part of a \$7 billion Educational Investment Plan over four years. The governor has devised a new "**Foundation Aid**" formula to guide the distribution of funds to school districts. The new formula is much more simple than earlier methods and assures substantial aid to high need districts while still increasing aid to wealthier districts by 3 to 4% (compared to 2% last year). Substantial increases will be tied to strategies and programs with a track record of improving student achievement including class size reduction. Of course there are a number of wrinkles that need to be ironed out, but overall NYSUT strongly supports the Foundation Aid formula. The Executive Budget proposal also shows support of several additional areas and programs of importance to NYSUT and its membership including Teacher Centers, Teachers of Tomorrow, BOCES, and Teacher-Mentor Intern.

Unfortunately the Executive Budget allows for a 150% increase in the number of charter schools allowed in New York State and a tax deduction voucher for non-public school tuition. Non-public schools are not accountable to taxpayers, not held to public standards, do not require certified teachers, and are allowed to chose who they

serve. Funds diverted to these private endeavors detract from the goal of providing a quality **public** education to **every child** in New York.

Serious concerns were also raised about any proposals that base teacher effectiveness on an inappropriate use of test data.

This first round of lobbying was largely a "show me the money" exercise attempting to secure voting for funding that will improve public education throughout New York State. A variety of other educational funding issues were also discussed with the legislators. Please contact me ([fkoppeis@jerichoschools.org](mailto:fkoppeis@jerichoschools.org)) if you would like additional information on other funding issues supported by NYSUT. These meetings were vital since the new governor wants to have an approved budget in place **on time** (April 1<sup>st</sup>). Recall that for many many years the legislature and the governor were not able to agree on a budget until many months **after** April 1<sup>st</sup>. It is vital for school districts to know early how much money they will receive so that they can more effectively plan their budgets that must be voted on in May! The next round of lobbying in May will attempt to fine tune educational goals in light of what funding actually gets approved on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

As a quick footnote -- During an evening session we got to hear from Tom DiNapoli (a "Long Island boy") who was recently approved as the new State Comptroller. He was selected with rare and massive bipartisan support from both the Senate and the Assembly, no doubt because of his widespread reputation for honesty and integrity and his extensive, competent government experience. After all, in addition to approving about 40,000 state contracts each year, the Comptroller is the "sole proprietor" of our entire pension fund. We certainly need a person in the job who is above reproach. He is expected to do much to restore trust in this extremely important position.

Please stay tuned for the next article detailing our VOTE/COPE results in the Jericho School District.

Sincerely,

Chuck Koppeis, VOTE/COPE Chairperson, JTA

# FOCUS Classifieds

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**LEARN-TO-SWIM:** Long Island's Premiere  
Learn to Swim Program will be offering swim-  
ming lessons every Saturday (starting March 3,  
2007) @10 am at the SUNY Old Westbury Col-  
lege Pool (Clark Center). World Class Instructors  
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visit the us on the Web at [www.swimowa.com](http://www.swimowa.com)

Reminder: our school e-mail addresses are our first initial followed by our last name (no space, all lower-  
case letters) @jerichoschools.org. Ads will run until you tell me to stop!

The Jericho H.S. Hall of Fame  
Seventeenth Induction Ceremony 2007

Thursday, April 26, 2007

7:00 P.M.

At The Jericho Public Library Auditorium

Inductees

LESLIE PRICHEP (Class of 1964)  
Psychiatrist / Associate Director of Brain Research

PETER SAUNDERS (Class of 1967)  
U.S. Naval Officer / Civil Engineer

FRED BERNSTEIN (Class of 1974)  
Journalist/ lawyer

JEFFREY WEINSTOCK (Class of 1978)  
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PAULA FLATOW (Class of 1980)  
Professional violinist

Congratulations to

## Diane Antonucci

Intercounty Teacher Resource Center's  
Teacher Recognition Award Winner  
2006-2007



**INTERCOUNTY TEACHER RESOURCE CENTER**

Nominated by peers and supported by an administrator, the candidates were selected for their contribution to helping students achieve high standards, promote positive change in classroom practice, and commitment to ITRC's professional development program. Their leadership, dedication and collaborative approach to their profession have helped shape the culture and structure of the educational community.

## End of Year Celebration

Honoring Retirees and Tenure Recipients

Thursday, June 7, 2007 4 - 7 P.M.



1401 Broadway Mall, Hichsville

Buffet w/choice of four entrees, unlimited soda, chips & salsa, coffee, tea, and cake  
Cash bar with "happy hour" prices

\$25.00 - make checks payable to  
"JTA - Dinner Dance"  
and send to JTA Office

R S V P no later than May 22nd