

**Member Newsletter**  
**Volume III, Issue 5**  
**June 2019**

*John Kozlowski, President*  
*Joe DiTucci, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President*  
*Jennifer Ott, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President*  
*Joe DiTucci, Professional Advancement Chair*  
*Jacquelyn Lanpher, Secretary*  
*Cheri Hall, Treasurer*

## **Message from the President**

Dear Colleagues,

As another school year comes to a close, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate our new teachers for completing their first year! I also want to congratulate Russ Grasso, Dorothy Lewis, Andrea Page, Beth Hoben, Doug Lennon, and Dave Nasca for their long, distinguished careers here in Spencerport. As they head into retirement, I want to wish them well as they begin a new chapter in their lives.

I also want to recap some of the great accomplishments we can celebrate and make you aware of some of the challenges we face in the future. To say that this year was successful is an understatement! Most notably, NYSUT was able to flip the New York State Senate by eliminating the Independent Democratic Caucus (IDC). This was a huge victory because with the support we received from the newly elected New York State Senators, the APPR law was amended prohibiting the use of the Grades 3-8 test scores in our evaluations. NYSUT was also able to secure a substantial increase in funding from New York State that will help offset a school district's inability to raise local property taxes because of the now permanent tax cap. Additionally, a number of protections were put in place making it easier for unions to organize, the charter school cap was frozen which protects public schools fiscally, and a record number of teachers were elected to school boards throughout New York State. In fact, our own Matt Fink was elected to a three year term on the West Irondequoit school board! Congratulations, Matt! Your Vote-Cope contributions are what made all of this advocacy and these wins possible, so I want to thank all the STA members that contribute to this crucial fund. If you don't contribute, please contact your building representative and start contributing now!

While we have a lot to celebrate, I have to share that anti-union forces like the Empire Center are still attacking us not only in Albany, but they have already implemented a \$10 million dollar campaign to get members state wide to drop out of our union. They are sure to be emailing, calling, and/or visiting us this summer. Why? Why does any group want to break up our union? The answer is simple! Our union is the only thing that prevents these kinds of organizations from successfully attacking our collective bargaining rights, our pensions, and privatizing our public education system! They are already contacting NYSUT members throughout the state in an effort to

get teachers and SRP's to drop out of our union. The good news is that their efforts thus far haven't been very successful at all! We have lost less than 500 members state wide since the Janus decision took away agency fee! And on a national level, union membership is up by the tens of thousands since the Janus decision. When they come calling this summer—to your doorsteps or on the phone—simply tell them that you are sticking with your union. Our collective strength will continue to protect the contractual rights that have been collectively bargained over the years and our pensions.

In closing, I want to wish everyone a restful and fun packed summer!

In Solidarity,

John

*John Kozlowski, President*

## **PAC Chair Message**

As we come to the end of the school year, I want to thank everyone for the support during the year. While we did not have negotiations for a contract this year, we certainly were busy with a multitude of smaller issues.

As you know, next year we will be entering into negotiations with the district to negotiate a successor agreement to our current contract. Our PAC reps will consist of the following members: Sue Chatterton at Canal View, Stacey Leonardo at Munn, Danielle Blossom at Taylor, Laurie Scutella at Bernabi, Rob Allen at Cosgrove, and Jackie Lanpher at the High School.

I want to take a moment to thank Ryan Ewanow and Doug Lennon for their contributions to our team over the years. They represented you well, and their input was vital to our negotiations team. We will be in touch early next year with a survey to get your input on issues you would like to see addressed in our negotiations.

I wish you all the best as we “put another one in the books” as a friend of mine likes to say. Have a great summer!

In Solidarity,

Joe

*Joe DiTucci, Professional Advancement Committee Chair*



# Happy Trails, Retirees!



## Russ Grasso

### **What year did you join the district, and in what role?**

I started my teaching career the week following my graduation from St. John Fisher College, in 1985. I was a substitute teacher for both Gates Chili (my alma mater) and Spencerport. In November 1985, I had my first long term substitute position in fifth grade at Munn. I was filling in for a teacher who had broken her foot while picketing, during STA contract negotiations! I was a substitute teacher full time until 1991, when Gates Chili hired me as a computer teacher. I also spent two years teaching computers and fifth grade at Holy Rosary School in Rochester. Spencerport finally hired me full time in 1996, as a fifth grade teacher at Taylor. In my many years as a Ranger, I taught grades 4 and 5 at Taylor, and grade 6 at Munn and Cosgrove. The bulk of my experience was teaching fifth grade at Taylor. And yes, I have probably taught Human Growth and Development longer than any Spencerport teacher to date!

### **What will you miss most?**

I will really miss the kids. Learning is a two-way street, and I know that I learned just as much about their lives, as they did about what I was supposed to teach them. I will also miss the people I worked with. I was blessed. When I started at Taylor, I was on a team with Fred Cardella, Joanne Wolde, and Heather Wigton (Shaw). When I finished, I was working with Marlene Benson and Kristen Pettis. I have been blessed with wonderful teammates along my journey!

### **Do you have a favorite memory to share?**

So many of my past students have come back to visit me! Some, I see after a year or two, and some others, after many years! I enjoy hearing about their successes in life! I've shared in their triumphs! Among my former students are a local TV meteorologist, independent small business owners, professional musicians, and a club house manager for the New York Yankees!



### **What advice do you have for new teachers?**

Each of us comes out of college with the attitude that we are getting into teaching to change the world. We expect that our outlook on life, and enthusiasm for what we are trying to do will be infectious, and immediately

rub off on our students. There is nothing wrong with thinking that way. However, don't expect change to come over night. It is a process of time, commitment and belief in yourself. It means stumbling, learning from stumbling, and continuing on with that knowledge. Every single one of us has at least one student whose life will be changed by our instruction and attitude. You may not see the outward effect of it, but keep in mind that every kid picks up something from you. Make it something positive!

## Doug Lennon

### **What year did you join the district, and in what role?**

I started my teaching career in 1984 teaching 7<sup>th</sup> grade math in Martin County, FL at Murray Middle School. My next teaching job was Center Moriches Junior-Senior High School on Long Island where I taught anywhere from 7<sup>th</sup> grade Life Science to seniors taking a Consumer Chemistry. One year I had 5 preps. We moved back to western NY and I started subbing in Spencerport and surrounding districts in 1989. I got a job in Byron-Bergen and then Mount Morris before returning to Spencerport in 1996 to teach 7th and 8th grade science at Cosgrove along with Regents Biology at Wilson. I now teach Life Science 7 and Accelerated Science 7 at Cosgrove and have done so for the past several years. I have run the Cosgrove Courtyard and Critter Club for at least the past 15 years. As part of this club we annually hatch chickens, ducks, pheasants, and/or turkeys.

### **What will you miss most?**

What I will miss is interacting with the minds of our future. I would rather work with a kid who may not be considered "bright" but has a great work ethic and is a good person rather than work with a very bright mind who is arrogant and chooses to waste that mind. I had a student who was classified as LD but boy could he work. He never gave up and he ended up doing very well in my class and in the future.

### **Do you have a favorite memory to share?**

My favorite memories are when students come back to tell me what they are doing now.

### **What advice do you have for new teachers?**

My advice to all new teachers and anyone new at any job – learn to say these 3 words – "I don't know." They don't show your weakness, they make you stronger. And, "It's not personal, they're middle schoolers."



## Dorothy Lewis

### **What year did you join the district, and in what role?**

After being brought in by BOCES to work with a student at Cosgrove for 1997/98 school year, I started working for Spencerport in 1998. I began as a 1:1 aide in Cosgrove and later as an aide in the 15:1 classroom. Although I had a teaching degree, I could not teach until I became a U.S. citizen. In 2003, I began substitute teaching. Soon after I was hired part-time to teach John Kozlowski's 6th grade afternoon classes so that he could work on union business. In the mornings, I went to Monroe Developmental Center to work with a Spencerport student. In 2009, I began working as a Consultant Teacher at Munn Elementary School.

### **What will you miss most?**

There are many things I will miss about my experiences in Spencerport. I will miss working with the great adults at Munn. I will also miss the interactions with students. Knowing I was able to make a difference in a few lives is heartwarming but these students have impacted my life too.

### **Do you have a favorite memory to share?**

One of the students I worked with in 2nd grade, won an essay contest about his father in the military. I went to Frontier Field to see him read his essay aloud to the crowd before the baseball game. He needed help to read what he had written but it was heartfelt. This young man is graduating from the High School this year. He plans to become a teacher.



### **What advice do you have for new teachers?**

Always show kindness, compassion, and acceptance. A smile and a kind word can make a huge difference in a child's life.

## David Nasca

### **What year did you join the district, and in what role?**

I started my career teaching Course 1/Computer Science at Eastridge HS in 1987. After several years, I found a job teaching Physics at Royalton-Hartland HS in Middleport, NY. After several more years, I returned to school and finished my administrative degree. I became a vice principal in Medina, NY in 1995 and then moved on to a principal's position in Perry, NY in 2000. After several years as an administrator, I decided to return to the classroom, and I started teaching in Spencerport in 2002. Along with my teaching, I also coached swimming for many years and spent a couple of seasons coaching softball and field hockey.

### **What will you miss most?**

It has been a pleasure to work with many students over the past 32 years and to see them grow into young adults as they graduate from high school. I will also miss the many great faculty members that I have worked with throughout the years and wish them the best as they continue to educate all of the young minds in Spencerport.

### **Do you have a favorite memory to share?**

It is always great to see our students in the years after they graduate from high school. Several former students have entered the medical field (doctors and pharmacists). Others work for Fortune 500 companies, a number of them are teachers, and many students have started their careers in the military.

### **What advice do you have for new teachers?**

My advice to new teachers is just remember why you began your career in education. You enjoy working with students and watching them grow as they spend their years in Spencerport. I'm not sure they realize what an impact they will have on their students.

## Andrea Page

### **What year did you start teaching in Spencerport, and in what role?**

I was hired in 1993. Back then, I interviewed with a team of teachers first, and then I had a second interview with ASI Louise Sheinman and Superintendent Harv Peris. I met my principal Milt Ryan after I started working. They were all supportive leaders, and I was thrilled to be working at Town Line School. I believe there were only four teachers hired in the district that year.

### **What grade levels/subjects did you teach throughout your career?**

I started out my teaching career as a substitute in the Finger Lakes Region as well as an Enrichment Tutor in Fairport, all grades and subjects K-6. Then, I taught two years in 3rd grade in the City-Catholic schools and 5th grade for five years in Marion. I coached 7-8th girls soccer and 7-8th grade Boys /Girls Track during that time.



I started in Spencerport as a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher, then was moved to 6th grade at Munn. During my five years at Munn, I taught SS, Science, Math, and ELA the first year. Then Science, Math, ELA, then all Science one year. We had CT Diane Virzi who pushed into our classroom. Then things changed and I worked with Wendy Ransom in what we called a Blended Classroom. We had a regular class mixed with a special ed. class together. I think we had more than 40 kids with Wendy, her aide Darlene Hengenius, and myself. It worked well, and the kids were successful.

I was also a District Technology Committee member for many years and part of a specialized group called “TLT” for Teachers Learning Technology. Louise Shienman was instrumental in providing our district-wide TLT group monthly training sessions and connecting us with other districts as we were all trying to get the district ready for this “new technology” that was exploding on the scene. She even arranged an important visit to a school in Canada to learn how to integrate technology in the classroom.

After that, I transferred back to Town Line. It had undergone an expansion and was now called Terry A. Taylor School. I taught Science, Math, Accelerated Math, and ELA. One year, Principal Jim Alexander recruited me to teach in the TRIAD program, and then I went back to the regular classroom. During this time, I served as a Science Teacher Leader as well.

After several more years, the entire 6th grade moved into the Middle School, where I taught Science, Math, and ELA. Each year, my schedule changed- teaching Science, ELA, and Acc. Math one year, then Science, Accelerated Math and Math 6, then Science and ELA/Literacy, and lastly ELA when 6th grade became departmentalized. It’s been quite a journey and I’m so grateful for all the opportunities I had here in Spencerport.

**What will you miss most?**

I find myself trying to remember the last moments of teaching this lesson, or seeing that moment when something finally clicks with a student. I will miss the students, and also the enthusiasm and energy of the building. I will certainly miss my colleagues and the people in the building who work so hard to make the days flow well.

**Do you have a favorite memory/story to share?**

Many times, we teachers do not know the impact of our words and our jobs. I love seeing former students and hearing about the fantastic things they are doing with their lives. It’s also such a blessing when one of them explains specifically how you helped them in their life.

This has been happening more this year. In fact, one young man in particular has come back year after year to visit and remind me about the words I spoke to him when he was in 6th grade. I don’t recall the moment as vividly as he does, but it is such a wonderful gift to hear that the work ethic and values I tried to instill in my students helped him become who he is today. Currently, he is working for the New York Yankees, in the clubhouse with the team, and he’s loving it! We still keep in touch. And he still calls me Mrs. Page even though he doesn’t have to.

**What advice do you have for new teachers?**

Be a life-long learner yourself.



# Celebrations



Julie and Jeremy Sullivan welcomed their second child, Avery Jane, on January 27<sup>th</sup> at 11:14 PM. She was 6 lbs, 6 oz and 19 inches. She is adored by big brother Jack! Julie teaches Kindergarten at Canal View.



Becky DiNatale's son, Matthew DiNatale, is graduating in the top 10 of his class from Kendall High School. He will be attending Daemen College in the fall, majoring in Physical Therapy. Becky is a counselor at the high school.



Maggie Lane Sullivan-Esders was born on April 1, 2018 to proud parents Jessica Esders and Christina Sullivan. Jessica teaches at Munn and Christina is a Spencerport graduate.



Alex and Kelly Daniels welcomed their third child, a baby boy named Porter Joseph, on May 7<sup>th</sup>. Porter was 7 lbs, 15 oz and 20 inches long. Big siblings Drew and Anelle adore their little brother! Alex teaches Science at Cosgrove.



Jason and Susan Swain welcomed their third child, a little girl named Cora Elizabeth, on May 20<sup>th</sup>. Cora was 6 lbs, 5 oz, and 19 inches long. She was welcomed by big brother Liam and big sister Elle!  
Jason teaches Science at Cosgrove.



Gretchen Breon's daughter-in-law, Erin Emory, graduated from University of Michigan Law School on May 10<sup>th</sup>. She will sit for the Bar Exam in July and will be relocating to Minneapolis to serve a 2 year law clerk position with a Federal Magistrate Judge.

Gretchen's daughter, Fraser (Ally) Breon, completed her Bachelor's Degree in Journalism from St. Bonaventure University on May 19<sup>th</sup> in Olean, N.Y. She is pursuing all opportunities!

Gretchen teaches 6<sup>th</sup> grade ELA at Cosgrove.



Deb Rogala welcomed a new grandson on November 16, 2018. Leonardo Gonzalez Rogala was born to parents Kevin & Vanessa Rogala and big brother Franco. The newest member of the family arrived a month early but quickly gained weight, and Gramma jokes that he is a little linebacker. Big Brother Franco is very attentive to his baby brother; if Leo cries on bit, Franco is there to soothe him! Deb teaches Art at Canal View.



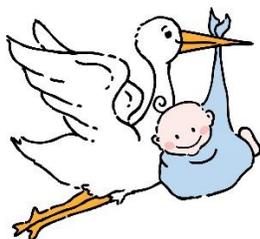
Bonnie & Bill Smith and big siblings Owen & Cecilia welcomed a baby girl, Mara Cady, on March 26<sup>th</sup>. She was 7 lbs, 12 oz.  
Bonnie teaches Kindergarten at Munn.



Andrea Page won a Gold Medal from the Independent Publisher in the category of Multicultural Nonfiction, Juvenile-Young Adult, for her book *Sioux Code Talkers of World War II*. Andrea teaches 6<sup>th</sup> grade ELA at Cosgrove.



As you celebrate milestones and achievements in your personal life this summer, send a quick email to one of these STA members so your happy news can be shared with your colleagues in the next issue of the STA Newsletter!



Bernabi- Bri Eason  
Canal View- Sue Chatterton  
Munn- Stacy Lonardo  
Taylor- Danielle Blossom  
Cosgrove- Frank Cafarella  
High School- Jackie Lanpher

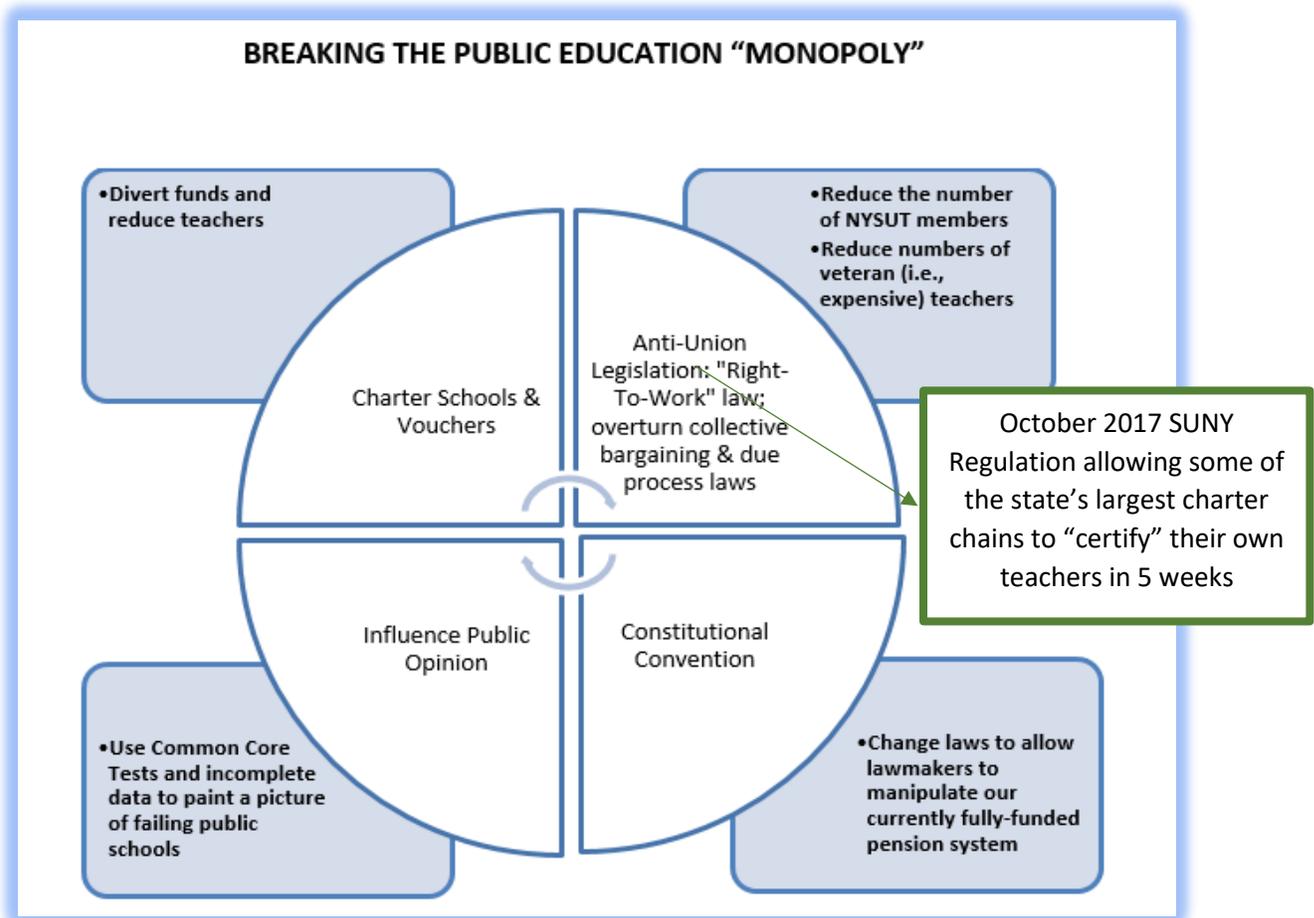


## STA Calendar of Events

**June 19<sup>th</sup>** – STA New Teacher Ice Cream Social at VICs

**August 28<sup>th</sup>** – STA New Teacher Luncheon

Our newsletter includes this infographic each issue to remind members about the organized attack to deprofessionalize public education across the country and how we can take action.



An excellent resource to stay informed and to get involved is NYSUT's Member Action Center. <https://mac.nysut.org/>. You can sign up to get action alerts sent to your cell phone each Tuesday. **When calling lawmakers or members of the Board of Regents to advocate for our profession, consider using these talking points:**

- ✓ Oppose vouchers, and ask for your lawmaker's position
- ✓ Oppose charter expansion/lifting the charter cap/increasing funding for charter schools, and ask for your lawmaker's opinion
- ✓ State your support of strong unions for a healthy middle class, and ask for your lawmaker's opinion on right-to-work legislation
- ✓ Call to inform your lawmaker that you are a constituent who supports public education; that you believe charter schools and vouchers are an unsustainable drain on resources meant for real public schools
- ✓ Tell your lawmakers to address the root cause of achievement gaps between districts: poverty
- ✓ Contact members of the Board of Regents and share issues/topics that you believe should be their focus and priority
- ✓ **Oppose the October 2017 SUNY Charter Regulations allowing certain charter schools—some of the state's largest chains—from certifying their own "teachers" in five weeks of training**

# STA Leadership, 2018-2019

## Officers

John Kozlowski, President\*  
Joe DiTucci, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President\*  
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Joe DiTucci, PAC Chair\*  
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Gretchen Breon\*

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Gretchen Breon

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Sue Chatterton, Canal View  
Stacy Lonardo, Munn  
Danielle Blossom, Taylor  
Doug Lennon, Cosgrove  
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### Newsletter Editor

Emmy Thevanesan

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Sue Chatterton, Canal View  
Stacy Lonardo, Munn  
Danielle Blossom, Taylor  
Doug Lennon, Cosgrove  
Kristin Cocchiara, Wilson

\*Denotes Executive Council vote



## Protect Your Loved Ones with Union-Endorsed Benefits

**Insurance...** it's often the type of product you hope to never have to utilize. In the event you do need it, though, it's important to have the insurance product that best meets your needs and those of your loved ones.

NYSUT Member Benefits endorses a variety of **crucial insurance programs** that provide important protection for NYSUT members and their families, including life, auto and home, disability, long-term care, dental and vision plans, and more.

### *The Power of the Union*

Regardless of whether you're participating in one of our endorsed insurance programs; legal or financial services; or many shopping, entertainment or travel offerings, NYSUT members receive a quality product and enjoy the **"Power of the Union"** behind them.

The **"Power of the Union"** should serve as a steadfast reminder to all NYSUT members that we are your advocate. Unlike when purchasing products available to the general public, NYSUT Member Benefits is here if you ever have any issues or concerns with our endorsed programs. You aren't just a member to us... you are part of our union family.

Member Benefits is here to offer assistance with the student loan crisis. Visit our website for more information.



To learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services, visit [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org) or call 800-626-8101.

For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.