

LTA EXAMINER



Lynbrook Teachers Association

October 2014

The Official Newsletter of the Lynbrook Teachers Association

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION, COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

IN THIS ISSUE

Current Issues

Highlights from the President's Report and various NYSUT communications

Negotiations

The negotiating team has met, and we have begun the process of gearing up for negotiations. The next step is a really important one: we need to hear from you. We have scheduled meetings in each building.

Please make every effort to attend. Your input will help us write and prioritize the LTA's proposals. All secondary level meetings will begin at 3pm. All elementary level meetings will begin after the dismissal of students. Here are the dates:

South - Wednesday, October 15
 North - Wednesday, October 22
 High School - Thursday, October 23
 K-Center - Monday, October 27
 Marion Street - Wednesday, October 29
 Waverly - Wednesday, November 5
 West End - Thursday, November 6

Letter to the Editor

Please read and share Craig's [letter to the editor](#) that he wrote in response to the [Herald's article](#) about our teachers and our evaluation system.

Tax Cap

A state Supreme Court judge ruled against NYSUT's challenge of the tax cap. NYSUT will continue to challenge the constitutionality of the tax cap through the legal system.

Will Day

All full time Lynbrook Teachers Association members are part of the NYSUT Legal Plan and are eligible for a simple will each year and discounted rates on other legal inquiries. Please email ltamailbox@lynbrooklta.org if you are interested in participating in Will Day.

Say NO to Walmart

NYSUT has taken a stand against Walmart. Walmart is known for paying low wages, trying to block unions, and forcing the closure of small businesses. Did you know that the Walton family – who owns Walmart – has spent more than \$1 billion to support the privatization of public schools? Sign the petition here: [Say NO to Wal-Mart style classrooms](#)



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YOUR LTA



<http://lynbrooklta.org/>



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LTA Executive Board (593-1929)

President

[Craig Kirchenberg](#) (HS)

Advocate Vice President

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Educational Vice President (Secondary)

[Mike Spinella](#) (HS)

Educational Vice President (Elementary)

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LTA Building Reps

Your building reps are a great resource. Don't hesitate to contact them with any questions you may have.

High School (887-0200)

[Mary Kirby](#), [Jen Turner](#), [Kim Herrmann](#),
[Carol Ann Winans](#)

North Middle (887-0282)

[Michelle Bergsohn](#), [Liz Cardito](#), [Katie Kelly](#)

Marion Street (887-0295)

[Victoria Schiller](#), [Anthony Simone](#),
[Patricia Wierzbicki](#)

West End (887-0288)

[Dave Ajello](#), [Annmarie Roth](#)

Waverly Park (887-6589)

[Amy Garfinkel](#), [Jackie Marino](#)

Kindergarten Center (887-8065)

[Kathy Freehill](#), [Joan Kocher](#)

South Middle (887-0266)

[Kristin Affrunti](#),
[Anne-Marie Brandstetter](#), [Jen DeMario](#)

From the President's Desk

by Craig Kirchenberg

I was recently listening to the spoken word poem "What Teachers Make," by Taylor Mali. He says:

*You want to know what I make?
I make kids work harder than they ever
thought they could.
I can make a C+ feel like a Congressional
Medal of Honor
and an A- feel like a slap in the face.
How dare you waste my time
with anything less than your very best.*

His statements cut right to the root of what teachers do every day – the kinds of things that all teachers know but that anyone who does not work with children has probably never thought about. Things like:

*I make kids wonder,
I make them question.
I make them criticize.
I make them apologize and mean it.
I make them write.
I make them read, read, read.*

This poem is the most tangible representation that I have ever seen of all of the intangibles of a teacher's job. However, the reality is that our ability to effectively reach students the way that we want to is being threatened by the latest attacks on teachers and public education.

* * *

Tenure: Teachers in California lost their tenure rights in court in June. A similar lawsuit looking to remove teacher tenure was filed in New York, backed by former CNN host Campbell Brown and a number of bigwigs in the charter school movement. NYSUT has filed a motion to intervene in the lawsuit. NYSUT President Karen Magee stated, "because of tenure, teachers can and do speak up for what their students need – and against overtesting, outdated textbooks and cuts to academic programs." It's interesting to know that New York's first tenure laws date back to 1897.

Collective Bargaining: There was a court case that went to the United States Supreme Court that basically challenged some basic collective bargaining rights. The Court kind of ruled in our favor, but I wouldn't go so far as to say that we won. It left the door open for future challenges to collective bargaining.

Free Speech: As most of you know, teachers who proctored and administered state ELA and math exams last year were required to sign confidentiality agreements, prohibiting them from discussing the test. This gag order caught everyone by surprise. Teachers should have the

ability to speak freely about all things related to instruction. If teachers believe test questions are unfair or inappropriate, they should be able to say so without fear of repercussions. That's why NYSUT has filed a lawsuit seeking to invalidate these confidentiality agreements.

Tax Cap: One may have thought that this lawsuit was going to be a slam dunk. NYSUT challenged the constitutionality of the tax cap on a couple of premises, including the fact that it removes the edict of one person – one vote. However, a judge threw out all of our arguments. The case is actively being appealed.

* * *

With all of these politicians and charter school money grabbers seeking to undermine public school teachers, how do we protect our future? Well, we should start with the end to Taylor Mali's poem, which is this statement and question:

Here, let me break it down for you, so you know what I say is true:

Teachers make a goddamn difference! Now what about you?

We also need to organize. I have formed an Internal Organizing Committee at the request of NYSUT. Local presidents throughout the state have done the same. We have set goals and have started to put plans in motion.

We are in a negotiations year, and while it shouldn't be too difficult for us to organize around negotiations, it is important for everyone to keep in mind that our issues are much bigger than one contract negotiation.

As I stated at the end of my last newsletter column at the end of last year:

*The next time your profession needs a voice,
let's be the voice together.*

*The next time your students need a voice,
let's be the voice together.*

*The next time the community needs a voice,
let's be the voice together.*

Change begins with one voice at a time.

Together we can make a difference.

In Solidarity,

Craig Kirchenberg

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



THE LYNBROOK HIGH SCHOOL NATIONAL ART HONOR SOCIETY
NIGHT OF THE PUMPKINS
 SATURDAY OCTOBER 25TH, 2014
 6 - 8 PM
 LOCATION: THE LHS FIELD
 RAIN LOCATION: THE LHS GYM
 MINIMUM DONATION : \$5
PROCEEDS WILL BENEFIT ISLAND HARVEST AND THE LYNBROOK HIGH SCHOOL NATIONAL ART HONOR SOCIETY
 OVER 200 CARVED PUMPKINS
 ACTIVITIES FOR ALL!!!!

Paint Night

Tuesday, December 2, 6-8pm, at McQuades in Lynbrook. Fundraiser for Thomas Donaldson. All staff is invited. There are spots for 60 people to paint for \$30 donation. For everyone else (non-painters), suggested donation of \$5 /person at the door for a social gathering.

VOTE

VOTE 2014

Show me
**Who's Running
 In My District** ▶

Show me
Endorsed Candidates ▶

Current Petitions on NYSUT Action Center

1. [Say NO to Wal-Mart style classrooms](#)
2. [Tell Lawmakers to Reform the Property Tax Cap Law!](#)
3. [Oppose "Back-Door" Voucher Legislation](#)

Social Justice

Many events have already taken place around the district.

WWP Football Game

This year the Lynbrook football program sponsored a Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) Varsity Football Game on September 27th at Marion Street field. They raised \$1,438.



As a very special part of the day the team wore commemorative military jerseys and welcomed back ALL veterans and service members celebrating their honor, courage, commitment, and service!

Coach **Steven LoCicero** thanks all who supported the Lynbrook Football program, WWP, and the mission to honor and empower Wounded Warriors.

Making Strides



Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk at Jones Beach Took place on Sunday, October 19th.

[Click here to donate to our team.](#)

Share a Smile



Students at South Middle School are working on "Share a Smile" through the month of October. Kids share pictures of their smiles to benefit the Fly a Kite Foundation in honor of Zachary Bernstein.

ALS Ice Bucket Challenge



West End's principal, teachers and staff participated in the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge on September 12th. The 4th & 5th grade students dumped the buckets of ice water on the heads of the West End staff members to raise money for the ALS Foundation. West End raised \$482.

Lee National Denim Day



Teachers and staff across the district participated in Lee National Denim Day on October 3rd. This year \$1621.00 was collected by organizer **Jackie Miller**, who thanks everyone for their continued support.

The Lynbrook School District has been participating in Lee National Denim Day for 15 years, in which time we have raised over \$20,000.00.

COMMUNITY SERVICE HELP

NYSUT has recognized our commitment to community and social justice by awarding us with the community service award for the last few years. We would like to continue to build off of that. If you are interested in helping the LTA build our community service and social justice program, please e-mail: ckirchenberg@lynbrooklta.org

LHS Staff Bake Sale Raises Almost \$1,000



Money for students and families in need

The students at LHS enjoyed tons of delicious treats at a gigantic bake sale on Friday, October 10th. Math teacher, **Lisa Friedman**, was moved to organize the event for an LHS student who is going through a particularly difficult time right now. Over thirty five teachers and staff baked for the sale, with even more teacher volunteers helping at the event. It was a huge success. They raised almost one thousand dollars.

Bakers: Val Russo, Karen Aquino, Mary Kirby, Jessica Sanders, Patti Rosalbo, Danielle Reinert, Melissa Marr, Janet Fusswinkel, Carol Cornell, Kelle Barth, Koren Pena, Mrs. Lovergine, Rae Carrechia, Christina D'Angelo, Maria Morrengiello, Nancy Hargrove, Joy Levine, Lauren Reganato, Tara Bridges, Amy Lubin, Joanne Penso, Dorothy McCarthy, Tina Mattheos, Karen Goulet, Lisa Friedman, Raquel Weiss, Sue Malizia, Debbie Geiser, Deb DeBetta, Jordan Richman, Paul Rotstein, Alyssa White, Brian White, Susan Ehrlich, Gretchen Hofmann, Barry Wyner.



Colleague Corner

New Babies

Jeanette Meszaros (LHS) had her third baby, Julianna Rose on August 16th.

Mike Franklin (LHS) and his wife Dana welcomed Leo Max to their family on August 4th.

Christine Gallehugh (LHS) welcomed her first baby, Lucy, in July.

Nicole DiMichele (KC) had a baby girl in September, Taylor Ryan.

Heather Clare, school psychologist (MS), is happy to announce the birth of her twins. A boy, Matthew, and a girl, Meadow, were born on September 9th.

Retirement

Congratulations to LHS nurse, **Janet Fusswinkel**, who will be retiring on Oct. 24th.

Weddings

Andrea Gray Schnall (South) got married on April 13th.

Sarah Jane Marques Crow (South) got married on April 25th.

Anne-Marie Calitri Brandstetter (South) got married on July 3rd.

Dan Mottola (South) got married on July 4th.

Jen Fusco DeMario (South) got married on November 2nd.

Amy Rosenbaum Lubin (LHS) got married on July 19th.

Fourth grade teacher (WE), **Kathlyn Daley Passalacqua**, got married on September 27th.



National Awards for the LTA Examiner

Our newsletter, the LTA Examiner, has won two awards from the AFT Communications Awards Contest.

President **Craig Kirchenberg** won second place for "Best Column" in the [May 2013](#) newsletter.

Newsletter Editor **Susan Ehrlich** won second place for "Best Layout" in the [March 2013](#) newsletter. This was the first issue that used the new layout.