

Hudson Teachers' Association

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A Letter from the President

by Jack Beyer

Eliminate the Gap Elimination Adjustment: It's Killing Our Schools

The Gap Elimination Adjustment was proposed by Governor David Paterson as a **one time** cut to school aid to reduce the state's budget deficit. However, the state has continued to use it the past four years to cut school districts' share of school aid to balance the state's budget. 2014-15 will be the fifth year of GEA

The Gap Elimination Adjustment has cost school districts across the state millions of dollars, over 125 million in the Hudson Valley alone this year. Like Hudson, most school districts have cut their budgets the past few years in response to cuts in state aid. Many school districts are quickly reaching or have reached a point where further cuts

will mean reductions to critical programs that impact students.

Because of unfair distribution of state aid to schools, many districts are faced with cutting programs their communities value. Districts are forced to cut programs because along with a lack of state funding, they are faced with the rising cost of education, most of which, like pension contribution

rates and unfunded mandates, are beyond their control. Additionally since the tax cap restriction has been put in place by Governor Cuomo, districts' ability to raise revenue is strictly limited.

I strongly urge you to email, fax or use your MAC app to contact your legislators an express your concern with the GEA.



Contract Corner

by Lisa Dwyer

Applications for all extracurricular positions are due in the office of the Superintendent or designee by April 15th. The Board of Education's decision for the following school year will be made no later than the last week in May. (Reference Schedule A)

Applications for all grade level chairs and department chairs shall be submitted to the office of the Building Principal, Superintendent, or his/her designee by May 1st. Appointments to all positions will be made not later than June 15th. (refer to Article 5 on page 6-7)

APPR-Review the APPR Timeline. Monitor student progress and collect evidence. Refer to Appendix G and H for types of evidence.

Negotiations Committee

Melissa Brown, JLE
Terry Ohl, JLE
Lisa Dwyer, JH
Jen Clark, JH
Chuck Peters, JH
Mike Antonelli, HS
Justin Cukerstein, HS

The Kindness Cart continues to be a hit around campus. Thanks to Strongtree coffee, the Kindness Club will continue to sell its famous Kindness Blend. Prices are \$5 for a 4 ounce bag and \$11 for a 12 ounce bag (or 2/\$20). Contact Ms. Foronda at ext. 3176 or catch the cart to take your coffee home today!



Payroll Deductions

by Lucy Rees

Dues

Union Dues for full time members who worked for the Hudson City School District from January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013 are **\$665.44** for tax reporting purposes. If you are new this year or work part time look at your December 19, 2013 pay stub for the amount of your dues.

Info-Staff Online

A web based employee self-service program that allows students to view their own information instead of having to contact the business office. The information available for viewing include attendance, payroll exemptions, retirement, payroll deductions and payroll check information for every check in the fiscal year. The information is updated weekly.

You can access Info-Staff Online at <http://infostaff.infomaticny.com>. Complete the member registration to set up your login ID and password. To register you will need to enter your name as it appears on your paycheck and the last 4 digits of your SSN#.

If you have any questions, call Kelly in payroll at ext 2116.

Info-Staff Online
Employee Information

WELCOME TO INFO-STAFF ONLINE
Info-Matic, Inc.®

Info-Staff Online provides online access to employee demographics, attendance, and payroll check information.

Member Login

Member Login:

Username:

Password:

LOGIN >

[Forgot your password?](#)

Member Registration

Member Registration:

First Name

Last Name

Last 4 of SSN

Email

Username

Password

Re-Enter

REGISTER >

Beauty and the Beast at HHS

by Andrea Mastrianni

The Hudson Jr./Sr. High School Charlatans are producing Disney's "Beauty and the Beast" on March 28th and 29th at 7:30 and March 30th at 2:00.

Danielle Delamater is playing "Belle", Owen Berth is playing "The Beast", and Billy Glasser is playing "Gaston". Thirty-eight students are in the cast.

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students.

Please come and support our students as they perform this wonderful family show!



Come to the Hudson Children's Book Festival!

by Jen Clark

This year, the Hudson Children's Book Festival is being held on Saturday, May 3rd from 10 am to 3 pm at the Hudson Junior/Senior High Campus. We will be hosting over 100 authors and illustrators ranging from picture books authors to young adult authors.

Some of the authors we are showcasing this year include Jane O'Connor who is the author of the popular Fancy Nancy series, James Howe who wrote the ever popular Bunnica series, Jane Yolen who has authored over 280 books, and Ellen Hopkins whose verse novels are fan favorites with junior high and high school students. Returning authors include Terry Trueman, Mark Teague, Laura Wiess, Barbara Dee, Joyce Wan, Nora Baskin, Bryan Collier, and Ryan Smithson. For the most current lineup of authors and illustrators, go to our website www.hudsonchildrensbookfestival.com.

We have scheduled two musical performances this year. Aaron Nigel Smith, who is involved with the PBS show Between the Lions, is returning to do an interactive musical performance for all to join in on. John Farrell, who is involved in the non-profit group Bridges of Peace and Hope, is returning to engage students in his style of movement and music.

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!! We need your help to make the 6th annual Hudson Children's Book Festival a success! We need volunteers for set-up Friday, May 2 after school. We also need volunteers the day of the festival to help with breakfast at 8 am, and to volunteer either half day or whole day from 10-3 as the festival runs. Jobs range from helping to give directions around our building, to making sure authors are comfortable, to working in the concession stand, to helping out in the exhibitor's hall, and so much more. Please contact Florence Berth at berthf@hudsoncityschoolsdistrict.com to sign up to help.

We are also in need of people to house authors for a night while they are visiting Hudson and participating in our festival. If you have a guest room and would like to house an author, please contact Jen Clark via email or extension 8202. You'll gain a life-long friend and an experience you won't forget by offering up your home!

Lastly, please encourage your students to visit the festival. They get to meet and greet some amazing authors and illustrators, participate in workshops, dance the day away, and engage in kid friendly activities in the exhibitor's hall and throughout the building. It's an amazing literary event they won't want to miss. Neither will you!!

The third grade students at MC Smith were able to engage in a science lesson about termites with the students from Bard College. Below are pictures from Mrs. Huemmer's 3rd grade class.



Olympic Ceremony Held to Kick Off M.C. Smith Read-A-Thon



Lisa Dolan



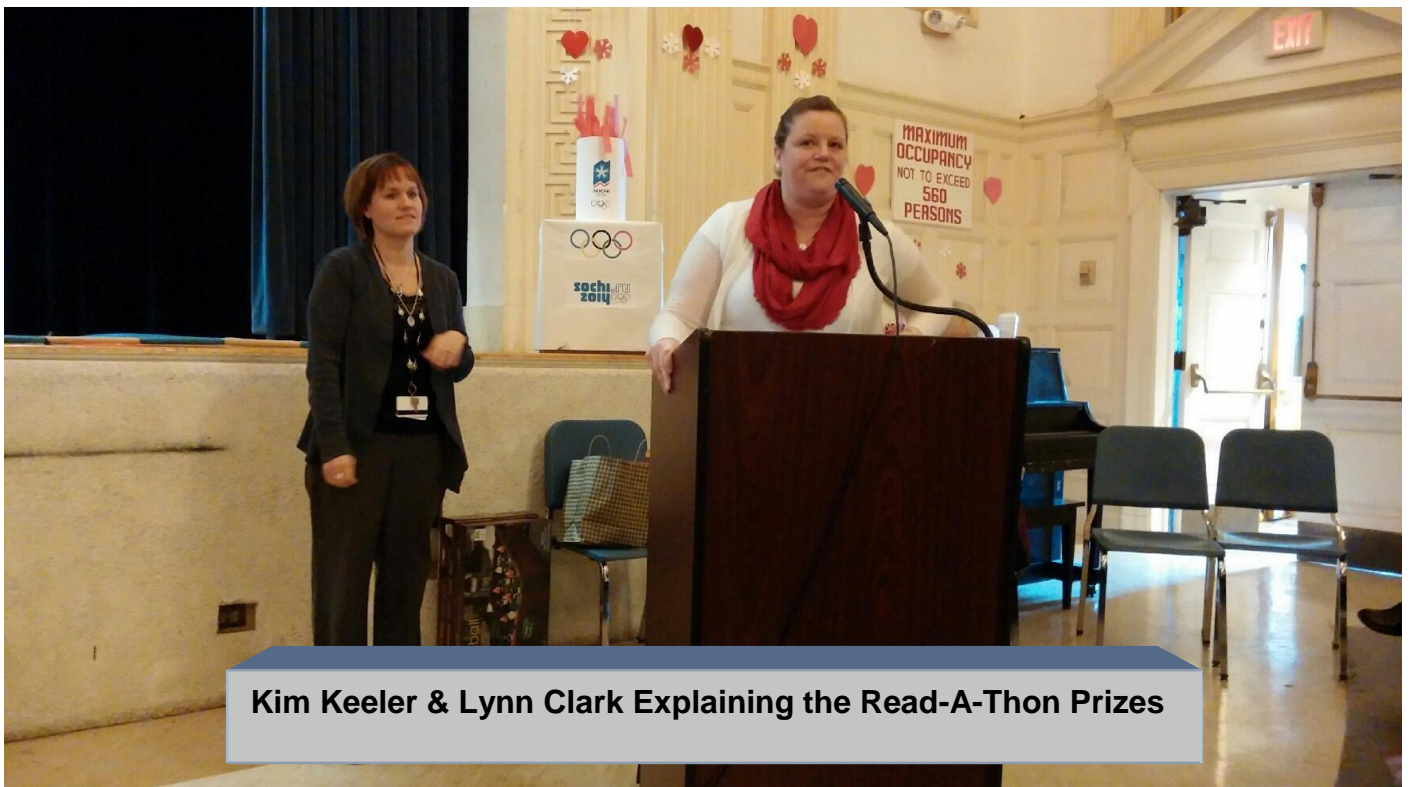
Sue Hungerford

Emcees & Event Planners





Olympic Photos Courtesy of Ellen Huemmer





Edgar Acevedo Singing America



**Scott Vorwald
& the Jazz
Band**



Gordon Pratt Showcasing His Juggling

**A HUGE Thank You
to Kohl's
for
Financial &
Manpower Support**

Kindness Club- Hudson High School Special Education Life Skills Class

On the move! The Kindness Club has been busy, busy, busy. Here are some of the highlights.

Taste Testing- Thanks to Cathy Drumm, the students have been offering up free samples of possible additions to the cafeteria menu. The Life Skills Class has invited their general education peers to taste test items from pizza to pierogies to pancakes. The "taster's" completed surveys and the Kindness Club then analyzed the data with the help of their Computer teacher Mr. Fenson and reported back to the Food Service Department.

Work Studies on and Off Campus-

The Kindness Club continues to spread kindness through their work on and off the campus.

Jahlisa is the Campus Courier. Under the supervision of Ellen Miller, she handles the school's interoffice mail.

Jared is the Milk Man. He helps stock the school lunch program's milk. A special thanks to George Keeler and Art...for supporting this work study.

Tristin recently made his debut as the High School's Meteorologist. With help from Ellen Miller and peer mentor Taylor diMonda, his forecasts have been right on the money!

The Kindness Club continues its bottle and can drive with the help of Rebecca. During the holidays, the club collected over \$130 worth of cans and bottles. They enjoyed the spirit of the season by shopping at local businesses and wrapping the items for 8 Hudson children. This round of returnable cans and bottles will sponsor the Ronald McDonald House.

Tomorrow Tomorrow Animal Rescue farm is where you will find the club on Tuesdays. They really enjoy their work as they feed and brush the horses, muck the stalls and care for the other animals on the farm. Kentavis has overcome his fears of horses and can now be seen asking for kisses from his favorite horse!

Good will at Good Will- The students continue their work each and every Wednesday at Hudson's Good Will store. The newest member of the club Christina is enjoying learning the ropes and working with her teammates.

Special Olympics training begins- A very special thank you to our recently certified coaches Shawn Briscoe, Brian McSween and Scott diMonda along with volunteer Cathy Drumm. The student athletes are raising money and looking for sponsors and volunteers as they train for the May 10th local games at HVCC and the May 17th games at Shenendehowa. The athletes have their eye on a possible adventure to the State games on June 6th at The University at Buffalo. See Ms. Foronda or Shawn Briscoe if you would like to sponsor our team. Sponsors get a free student designed t-shirt!

Broadway here we come! Thanks to a grant that we wrote and a generous donation from the Abatecola's The Kindness Club will be heading in style to see the Broadway production of The Lion King. The students designed and made their own shirts with help from Trudy Beicht from Time Consulting that they will proudly sport when they make their way to the big city on March 5th!



Sandboxes are not for toddlers. Brandon received a special invitation from Sandbox Strategies in Manhattan. He has been invited to tour the facility and try out some new games that haven't even hit the shelf. Brandon will be traveling in February via train to check out the latest and greatest in the gaming business.



Let us sell your wares! Kindness Incorporated School store is coming soon. The Kindness Club will be fabricating a mobile school store. Here you will be able to purchase traditional school supplies along with other school spirit type items. If your club has something that you would like us to sell, we would love to help you sell your wares.



Superb Seniors Food Service Work Study- Brandon and Tristin continue to learn skills as they work in the campus cafeteria. You can find them loading the vending machines, sorting and washing produce and even making cookies!

403(b) Administration by Benetech

eBenefits Resource™ from Benetech, Inc., will be the primary source for your 403(b) administration needs. This site features many forms and resources related to your 403(b) account.

1. Go to <https://www.ebenefitsresource.com/rcgsweb/btlogin2.pgm>
2. Click “**Create Account**” on the left side of your screen. The “**New Account Set Up**” screen will appear. Enter the requested information. Be sure to select a password you will be able to remember, as you will need it to access your account in the future. All information is required. If you do not have a valid e-mail address, enter “None”. Please note; you must be pre-enrolled in **eBenefits Resource™**. If you receive an error message stating that you must be pre-enrolled please contact your payroll department to ensure that they have entered you into the system. Once they have done so, you may then create an account.
3. Log into **eBenefits Resource™** from the “**User Login**” screen.
4. Once you are logged in, select “**My 403(b)**” from the menu on the left of the screen. This is where you will be able to access a variety of forms and resources related to your 403(b) account.
 - **Salary Reduction Agreement:** This form can be used to elect a new salary reduction, discontinue a current salary reduction, change the salary reduction amount, or change Investment Service Provider to another approved Service Provider within the Plan.
 - **Distribution Request:** This form is used to request a distribution of some or all assets in your 403(b) account. In order to qualify for a distribution, you must meet certain criteria. Please check with your Service Provider or contact Benetech to determine eligibility. Completion of this form does not guarantee a distribution.
 - **Loan Request:** The loan request form is used to request a loan from your 403(b) account. In order to qualify for a hardship withdrawal, you must meet certain criteria. Please check with your Service Provider or contact Benetech to determine eligibility. Completion of this form does not guarantee a distribution.
 - **Hardship Distribution Request:** This form is used to request a hardship distribution from your 403(b) account. In order to qualify for a hardship withdrawal, you must meet certain criteria; Completion of this form does not guarantee a distribution.

If requesting any of the above forms, you must complete the form in its entirety and submit using the same password you use for your eBenefits log in. To check the status of your request, you can select “**View Previous Requests**” from the menu. Here you will be able to see a summary of all requests made and the status of those requests.

In addition to accessing all the above forms for your 403(b) account, you will also have access to:

- an approved Service Provider list;
- an Education Center containing information on investing and 403(b) plans;
- 403(b) Frequently Asked Questions; and
- Service Provider contact information.



NYSUT Member Benefits is excited to announce the endorsement of the member shopping program powered by PayCheck Direct for roll-out this spring 2014.

This program – part of the national retail powerhouse Bluestem Brands, Inc. family, which also includes Fingerhut and *Gettington.com* – allows individuals to purchase what they want now and pay interest-free over 12 months.

Through PayCheck Direct, NYSUT members & their families will have access to more than 7,000 name-brand products such as appliances, televisions, computers, electronics, furniture, and much more.

Members would have the option of paying for any items they purchase interest-free over a 12-month period; bi-weekly payments would be made via automatic checking account withdrawals.

PayCheck Direct offers a 30-day in-home trial on many products; flexible return policy; no interest fees, credit checks, down payments, or

finance charges; and toll-free customer service representatives located in the U.S.

As part of this endorsement, PayCheck Direct will mail merchandise catalogs to the NYSUT membership four times per year.

NYSUT members are encouraged to shop and compare prices before making a purchase with this program and consider it as an alternative to using their credit card.

We are excited to be launching this new program in spring 2014! Join our MAP (Member Alert Program) Alert email service to be among the first to learn more about this program (visit the Member Benefits website for sign-up instructions).

You can also visit memberbenefits.nysut.org in the coming weeks for details on how to use this service or call **800-626-8101** with any questions.