



# Happenings

Affiliated with NYSUT, AFT #2937, AFL-CIO

[www.pjta.us](http://www.pjta.us)

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## Message from the President

PJTA has been busy as we all prepare for our Winter Recess!

### Officers

**President:**

**Regis Foster**

**1st Vice President:**

**Jenny McElroy**

**2nd Vice President:**

**Carol Brown**

**Recording Secretary:**

**Debra Cassara**

**Corresponding/  
Social Secretary:**

**Claire Dillon**

**Treasurer:**

**Joseph Becker**

**Grievance Chair-  
man:**

**Robert Avdoyan**

### Audit Committee

The audit committee met, reviewed the books and found no mistakes. I would like to thank Dawn Higgins, Carrie Sarbello, Scott Spears, Austin Carroll, and Lindsay Wylie for taking their time reviewing the books. Thanks goes to Joe Becker for doing a fantastic job as our Treasurer.

### Negotiations Update

Since we are at impasse, PJTA and the district are in the process of choosing a mediator. Once a mediator is chosen, negotiations will continue.

### VOTE-COPE

Many of our members do not realize how VOTE-COPE is important to our union. VOTE-COPE stands for Voice of Teachers for Education – Committee on Political Education.

VOTE-COPE support comes in the form of phone banks, mailers, commercials, print ads, and direct contributions to campaign committees. VOTE-COPE does not take positions regarding wars, gun control, abortion, death penalty, etc... NYSUT respects everyone's views on all of these issues.

The money supports both the Democrats and Republicans. Often NYSUT will give a contribution to incumbents as they hold the most powerful positions. Every year at times NYSUT has to put up a battle in a hostile environment. Powerful Congressional leaders want to reduce our salaries and benefits, remove tenure rights, reduce/change our defined benefit pensions, utilize vouchers, and eliminate Triborough protections.

A huge portion of our VOTE-COPE contribution is returned directly to our local. Twenty percent is rebated automatically, and another twenty percent may be requested for local educational issue campaigns.

## President's Message

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Some VOTE-COPE accomplishments:

- Legislative accomplishments like Triborough (This makes sure that when our contract sunsets, the language in the contract is kept until a new contract is in place)
- A permanent Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for our pensions
- Safe-guarding tenure rights
- Annual education budgetary increases from Albany virtually every year.

Without NYSUT's ability to effectively lobby in Albany, our union would be ineffective. Our dues, by law, are not allowed to be used for lobbying, VOTE-COPE depends on the contributions of every member to stay strong. Please give generously to this year's VOTE-COPE campaign!

### **Toy Drive**

The annual toy drive is wrapping up. The toys will be distributed by the Port Jervis Elks Lodge #645 and if the increased number of people at food banks is any indication, the need this year will be greater than ever. Many families will benefit from your generous donations. I want to personally thank you for your generosity.

### **Food Drive**

PJTA will join with NYSUT to participate in the annual food drive to help our local food pantries in the community. Generally, the food supply at these local centers is low after the holidays. There will be a designated drop off site in each building for either food items or money donations. The drive will run from January 10, 2017 – February 10, 2017. Jenny McElroy, 1st Vice-President, will be in charge of coordinating this activity. You will receive more information about this after the New Year!

### **Thank You!**

I thanked the members of the Representatives' Council at the close of our December meeting, reminding them that PJTA could not run without them.

At this time of year, I feel especially grateful to our Building Representatives and Executive Board, as Faculty Cabinet, Building Education Planning Team (BEPT), District Leadership Team (DLT), Professional Development Planning (PDP) committee, Academic Intervention Services (AIS) committee, Mentor Committee, and members of the following committees within our local: scholarship, sick bank, and audit. It's an alphabet soup of non-glamorous jobs, and most do not have a stipend attached. On behalf of all PJTA members, I thank you dedicated folks for the time you volunteer to keep our union strong and fully represented.

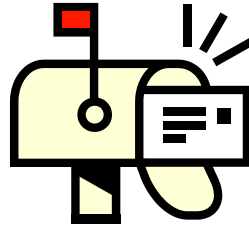
On behalf of the Port Jervis Teachers' Association, I wish all of our members a peaceful holiday and prosperous New Year!

You all deserve it!

In Solidarity,

*Regis Foster*

## **Correspondence**



### **Cards Sent**

### **Sympathy**

Erin Cross—loss of her uncle, Walter Lowerre  
Stephanie Murphy—loss of her grandparents  
Keaton Sheehan—loss of her aunt

### **Congratulations**

Bethany & Eric Harget—birth of their twin boys, Owen Thomas & Levi James  
Megan & Brian Bartsch—birth of their son, Andrew Christopher  
Catherine & Chris Stellato—birth of their daughter, Sofie Bryanne  
Jessica & Josh Eli—birth of their daughter, Katherine