



# THE EDUCATOR

Newsletter of the Arlington Teachers' Association

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## Real Leaders Know Their People

When did the word “leader” become so fetishized? When I started in education, no one called themselves a “leader”; if the job called for it, or the need arose, they led. Today there are leadership blogs and leadership hashtags and cults of personality around people billing themselves as “thought leaders”. The fact is that you’re not a leader just because you call yourself one. It’s like calling yourself handsome—it’s not for you to judge.

Is social media to blame for this rise in self-aggrandizing? It does make it easy for anyone to promote himself as a

leader whether or not he has any actual qualifications. Perhaps the ease of facile internet attention is a factor in the perpetuation of leadership labels, but, maybe touting oneself as a leader isn’t the

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real issue: it’s the abundance of people in leadership positions who are effectively deluded into thinking they are doing the job when the reality is far from it.

In the field of education

there are many opportunities to lead. We have superintendents, and directors, and principals, and department heads, and even union leadership. In these tumultuous times of pandemic and war (not to mention all of the stressors on educators, in particular), we need real leaders more than ever. We need people not just to manage the daily workings of our schools, but to inspire us to try to excel at our jobs.

This isn’t to say that someone who calls himself a leader definitely can’t inspire others, but there seems to be an inverse relationship today between self-labeling as a “leader”

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ARLINGTON TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION  
46 Davis Ave., Poughkeepsie, NY 12603



(845) 454-7002 · www.arlingtonteachers.com · ata4547002@aol.com

## Trivia Challenge

Answer the question below correctly and you could be the proud winner of ATA gear!

**What is the dot above a lowercase i or j called?**

Last month's winner, selected at random from among the correct responses received, was **Olivia Gorlan-Delfs** from UVMS. She knew that **over 20%** of the world's population celebrates the lunar new year. She will be the proud owner of ATA gear. Answer this month's question and you could win ATA gear too!

Submit your answer to the above trivia question to [sfalk@acsdny.org](mailto:sfalk@acsdny.org) by **March 18**. The winner will be randomly selected from the correct submissions.

# Real Leaders Know Their People

*Continued from front* and actual leadership qualities.

So, what does make for an effective leader? There is need for intelligence and experience in the area that you are leading. Communication skills are good too, but those qualities are definitely not enough to ensure sound decision-making, and buy-in from those you are tasked with leading.

Let's look to history for advice. A few years ago I was at the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia, watching a very dramatic unveiling of George Washington's actual tent that he slept in during that war. The narrator mentioned that one reason why Washington was so well-regarded was that he didn't distance himself from his troops; he was known to be on the field with them and treat them all with respect. In fact, once he became president, Washington went out of his way to connect with his constituents, meeting with the public every week and even visiting all of the states at a time when traveling such distances was not common practice.

Listening to the narrator, I was hit with an

epiphany—that is the same type of behavior attributed to Robert Oppenheimer, head of the research arm of the Manhattan Project. He was known to show up in his scientists' labs at all hours, and to make a point of knowing the names of all who were a part of his worksite. There are not many similarities that immediately come to mind

positions can have on their followers better than an anecdote told concerning yet another of our great American leaders, Franklin Roosevelt. A hardened-looking man was seen weeping as FDR's funeral train passed and was asked if he knew the president. "I didn't know him," the man responded, "But he knew me."

What these three disparate leaders of past centuries practiced is still the key to good leadership today, no matter if you are rallying constituents, or scientists, or educators. If you distance yourself from those you are tasked with leading, all of your endeavors will ring hollow.

So, please, if you aspire to be

***So, please, if you aspire to be an effective educational leader, don't simply read books and blog posts about leadership—read your people. A visit to a classroom will do more for your career than a social media scan for #eduleader. And, if this isn't about career advancement, and is all in the name of doing what is best for students, even better.***

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Nothing sums up the effect that those succeeding in leadership

an effective educational leader, don't simply read books and blog posts about leadership—read your people. A visit to a classroom will do more for your career than a social media scan for #eduleader. And, if this isn't about career advancement, and is all in the name of doing what is best for students, even better.

-Sam Falk,  
ATA Communications Chair

# AHS Adds Four New Master Teachers



On Friday, February 4, Governor Hochul made an announcement that caused an elated response in four of our colleagues as they were told that they have been selected to be a part of the newest incoming group to participate in the New York State Master Teacher Program (NYSMTP). AHS science teachers Tara DiCorcia, Kaila Hastings, Michael Polotaye, and Gwen Saylor are each beginning their four year fellowship which includes performing at least 50 hours of professional development activities each year. These activities vary greatly in their format, sometimes looking like a traditional training session, but can include visiting local STEM sites, working in teams to research and collaborate on developing lessons and class resources, and much more.

The focus of the work of the NYSMTP is to help a teacher build STEM content knowledge, improve knowledge of pedagogy, and increase knowledge of students, families, and community. Our four Arlington colleagues will join the 135-member Mid-Hudson cohort that is based at SUNY New Paltz and includes teachers from a region that stretches from as far south as Rockland and Westchester counties, and north to Dutchess, Ulster, and Sullivan counties. They will attend regular meetings on the SUNY campus,

and at other locations as needed to accomplish the goals of that particular professional development session.

Each of the NYSMTP fellows will earn a \$15,000 annual stipend and will have access to resources and training provided by the NYSMTP even after their fellowship is complete.

DiCorcia, Hastings, Polotaye, and Saylor were very pleased to hear the news. They applied to the program as the application window was closing around the same time as the first COVID shutdown took place in 2020. They had to complete an application and personal statement, provide a resume, post-secondary transcripts, recommendations, and take a Praxis subject test. Then the NYSMTP selection committee would review these materials and decide if these candidates qualify for the next phase of the selection process which involves an interview and presentation. The NYSMTP continued to oper-

were back to waiting on a final decision until the good news came out in February 2022. When I visited and congratulated each of the new Master Teachers, they were all excited about the opportunity before them.

The NYSMTP events are going to begin in person meetings in March 2022 and everyone involved is looking forward to having the opportunity to continue to collaborate, learn, and grow together. Other ATA members that are current NYSMTP fellows are Lisa Gizzarelli-Drago from UVMS, and Cindy Binnie, Sam Falk, and Stephanie Marden from AHS. Principals Donna Bolner and Lisa Roloson were also NYSMTP fellows back when they were ATA members, too.

If you are interested in applying in the next round, the application window should be opening this spring, but a date has not been picked yet. The NYSMTP website provides details about eligibility requirements, but in summary, you must

For those interested in applying in the next round, the application window should be opening this spring, but a date has not been picked yet. Sign up using the QR code here to receive email updates.

The NYS Master Teacher program is open to K-12 teachers who cover STEM content.



have at least four years of experience, and for K-6 teachers: you are a teacher of record for Science, Technology/Computer Science, Engineering or Mathematics (STEM) content. For 7-12 teachers: your course load is at least 60% STEM courses. If the application process does not change from prior years, you will have to send your college and graduate tran-

scripts, and a resume and personal statement. You will need to arrange for your building principal and a colleague to fill out a recommendation form, and you will

See Master on page 7

# ATA Retirees Stay Busy

*The Educator* recently sent out a poll to the ATA retirees on our email list to see what life has been like after Arlington. Of the 210 retirees contacted, 32 provided detailed responses. They comprise retirees both recent, and from years ago; having taught at Arlington more than 20 years, or even less than 10. Twenty-nine percent reported working at another paying job after retirement. Sixty-one percent are still in the same house they were when teaching, while 32% moved out of state, and the rest moved, but stayed in New York.

Ten years on I am now very involved in a number of activities. For the first five years of retirement I volunteered for Community in Schools organization in their after school program. I wasn't quite ready to leave the elementary world so I did literacy activities with the kids, helped with homework, read to them, etc. After 5 years I was ready to try some other things. Currently, I'm on the board of my local quilt guild as well as handle the web site for the guild, I love to sew and make several quilts during the year...I have always crocheted and now use donated yarn to crochet blankets that are given to either our local family assistance organization, or Habitat for Humanity, etc. My husband and I traveled regularly until the pandemic hit-we've been to England, Switzerland, Germany, France, parts of the US such as Alaska, Baltic states, St. Petersburg, Belgium, etc...

*Lorelei Hauptmann*

Since retiring in 1992, I have been writing fiction and poetry, a little of which is published, and I belong to three writing groups. I have been caregiving for the past several years for my husband, Don, who also retired from Arlington. Prior to that we traveled for leisure and to visit friends and family...Following years of multiple health issues, Don recently passed away in January 2022. Up to a week before that time, he played piano and composed music every day.

*Jan (& Don) Egry*

Since retiring, my wife and I have done a great deal of travelling, merging my wife's work with amazing vacations. Our last trip ended with a flight home that found us leaving Beijing the day before they closed the borders due to COVID. We're anxious to continue with our travels as the COVID situation subsides.

*Eric Gidsig*

*Karen Widing*

(Pre-COVID) I did volunteer tutoring as a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate for children in foster care) for many students. With our local garden club, have gardened at church, historic, nursing home and public areas. Have done a lot of travel...have been to every continent at least twice. Do craft work with recycled materials.

Retirees were asked to share how they spend their time, now that they are no longer obligated to go to work every day. Here is a selection of their responses (some edited for length). Stay tuned for Part II in next month's *Educator*. Thank you to all who contributed!

After retirement, I first spent time traveling and volunteering and then I did something I never thought I would do. I signed up to substitute teach. After spending my entire career at the middle school level, I opted to sub in the elementary school right near my home. I absolutely loved it. When COVID hit, I stepped away from teaching and spent time preparing for my second career in real estate. This has kept me very busy, but also allows me the freedom to make my own schedule and continue to travel and visit my family in Florida. I have never regretted retiring when I did. I left when I still enjoyed what I was doing and now have the opportunity to put my efforts in another career.

*Nancy Diehl*

Volunteered for 12 years.  
Drove for Friends of Seniors.  
Had a Meals on Wheels route.  
Many mini trips plus week-long beach house vacation. Spoiling my granddaughter.

*Vinny Mooney*

I play pickle ball several times a week, participate in fitness classes daily, participate in two Bible study groups and one book club, last fall won age group gold medals in the 800 and 1500 meter runs at the Jacksonville Senior Games. Until the pandemic closed things, I volunteered at the local public library. The volunteers have not yet been called back. I also volunteer in several jobs in the retirement community in which I live. My spouse and I are beginning to re-enter the international travel scene with postponed trips from 2020 and 2021. If all goes as planned, we'll tour Sicily and Northern Italy, take a river cruise from Budapest to Amsterdam, and spend Christmas in Antarctica.

*Chris DeVries*

After about one year of rest and relaxation I decided I wasn't quite ready to retire completely. I got a job tutoring in a place called Tutor My Success for about a year. I really liked it but wanted more. I applied and got a full time job as a second grade teacher at a Christian School in Anemia, NY. I have been teaching there for 3 years! I still love my job!

*Caryn Presti*

I have become very involved in local politics, currently chair of my local Democratic committee, co-coordinator of Indivisible Ulster.

*Kathy Adin*

## 2021 — 2022 ATA Officers

### President

Bob Maier

### First Vice-President

Greg Nieman

### Second Vice-President

Steve Hertzog

### Treasurer

Dave Cordella

### Chief Negotiator

Robert McHugh

### PR Committee Chair

Kristine Jackson

### Community Action Chairs

Brendan Lawlor

Bill Mueller

### Welfare Trust Chair

Ron Higgins

### Communications Chair

Sam Falk

### Senior Building Representatives

ASM — A'Rehema Leach

BES — Adrienne Pisciotta/  
Melissa Maiello

Noxon — Nicolle McMorris

VFES — Pina Bruno

OPS — Nancy Thomas

Traver — Diana Judge

JDWR — Barbara Mackey

TIS — Joe Sutka

LMS — Patty Bauerlein

UVMS — Jim DeBonis

AHS — John Filor

AHS — Noreen MillsMartin

# What's Going On?

"What's Going on" is a monthly feature of The Educator. It highlights noteworthy accomplishments by ATA members. Do you know of a colleague who deserves recognition? Let The Educator know by emailing [sfalk@acsdny.org](mailto:sfalk@acsdny.org). We can't know what's going on at all of your schools without your help!

Congratulations to the following ATA members for their contributions to the Arlington community and beyond.

### Arlington High

Social studies teacher Courtney Grey collaborated with Historic Hudson Valley on their *People Not Property* website to explain how she uses that resource in the classroom.

Videos she recorded can be seen at <https://peoplenotproperty.hudsonvalley.org/teacher-resources>.

For the eighth year, English teacher Katie Nixon has organized the Hudson Valley New Teacher Institute that is held at Marist College. This year's event was held on February 24 and featured educators from 12 school districts in conversations to inspire and advise the 130 new teachers that attended.

Social studies teacher Kathy Bellino is presenting at the New York State Council For the Social Studies annual convention that will be held March 10–12 in Albany. She will discuss Arlington's Seal of Civic Readiness pilot program.

### LaGrange Middle

School psychologist Linda Dixon-Dziedzic recently published an article in *The National Digest*. The article can be read at <https://tinyurl.com/2mufftcw>.

### National Board

LMS FACS teacher Margaret Romano, UVMS music teacher Mia Chong, AHS art teacher Amanda Buhler, foreign language teacher Theresa Daleo-Stock, and English teachers Sue Pung, Rhapsody Jordan-Parisi, and Tina Tamweber recently earned their Maintenance of Certificates. UVMS art teacher Shari Altieri, AHS FACS teacher Bonnie Leitheuser and AHS special education teacher Gretchen Strouth achieved their National Board renewal.

## Annual DCSPCA Drive Has Begun

For the 11th year, the ATA will be sponsoring a supplies drive to honor Jackie Higgins, a dear friend and life-long supporter of the ATA. Jackie served as the ATA's administrative assistant for many years and was an invaluable member of the office. She spread sunshine to everyone who came through the doors or called the office, always with a huge smile and a kind word. In 2010, our community and ATA family suffered an enormous loss with her passing.

As a way of honoring her memory, we are proud to sponsor this cause that was near and dear to Jackie's heart. She loved animals, and the Dutchess County SPCA is always so appreciative of our donations as a

Please consider donating any of these desperately-needed items:

- \*Brand-name dry dog food
- \*Bleach
- \*Paper towels
- \*Clean, dry towels & blankets
- \*Brand-name dry cat food
- \*Hoses & nozzles
- \*Cake-sized paper plates
- \*Laundry detergent
- \*Non-clumping kitty litter
- \*Long handled scrub brushes

district. Until March 18, we will be collecting donations for the DCSPCA. Monetary donations are welcome and appreciated. Please write checks to DCSPCA. All donations (both monetary and non-monetary) are tax de-

ductible.

Thank you for your continued support of our fundraising efforts and for helping us to honor the memory of such an important person, Jackie Higgins.

-Kristine Jackson, PR Chair

# OPS Psychologist Leads Local Pipe Band

For Overlook school psychologist Tammy Rodriguez, a vacation to Scotland in 2017 led to a new pastime that would soon become a big part of her life, and bring her family together. She became a part of the Hudson Highlands Pipe Band in February 2020, and today is the band president, setting up their events and helping to organize online lessons.

Rodriguez's oldest son Sergio was the first in the family to become interested in the bagpipes. "I remember clearly how we watched a piper play at the top of a hill in Edinburgh and we all fell in love with the instrument," she recalls, "Sergio began online lessons first, which led to myself and the others following along." Along with thirteen-year-old Sergio, and Rodriguez herself, eight-year-old Holly also plays bagpipes in the Hudson Highlands band, and ten-year-old Daniel plays the drums. Presently the pipers in the family are working with a woman in Scotland for weekly lessons over Zoom. Five-year-old Cristian is beginning on the drums, though Rodriguez has not yet been able to convince her husband to join the band with them.

Rodriguez says that, while learning the bagpipes has been one of the most challenging things she has done in her life, it is also one of the most rewarding, and it has connect-

ed her family together in unexpected ways. In addition, she states, "This experience has not only showed me the value of family, but also the importance of honoring your culture. Being of Scottish, Irish, English, and Finnish ancestors I can say with great certainty that my family is truly getting a feel for what those cultures bring to our lives, having the opportunity to visit each of those countries over the last few years."

She attributes her interest in different cultures to childhood experiences "learning from my parents the value of appreciating differences in others, respecting varying beliefs and finding unconditional love in the most conflictual situations." In fact, her parents' encouragement of her passion to visit new places even led to her living in Mexico as a young adult, and meeting and later falling in love with her husband.

"If I have learned nothing else," Rodriguez summarizes, "it is to embrace differences, soak in culture (be it yours or another) and find gratitude in how these unique differences make this world such a wonderful place. I expect you'll see us around in some performances showcasing traditional Mexican dance, speaking a bit of Finnish or sharing some English treats in the near future!"

In the coming weeks the Rodriguez family will be marching with



Photo courtesy of Tammy Rodriguez

OPS psychologist Tammy Rodriguez and three of her four children show off their Hudson Highlands Pipe Band uniforms.

their band in many local St. Patrick's Day parades. The band is always looking for new members, and those interested can reach out to Rodriguez.

# AHS Adds Four New Master Teachers

*Continued from page 3*

also need to take a Praxis subject test, which is a source of anxiety for some. Let me reassure you, as a recent "graduate" of the NYSMTP, that the application and selection process is holistic in nature, and utilizes all of the application components in making the decision. The Praxis test is one of many measures used to determine acceptance into

the program.

For me, my four year fellowship in the NYSMTP was a magnificent experience that helped provide a mid-career boost and build a terrific network of people and resources to help improve my practice and the experiences for my students. Of course it was difficult to manage my time with work responsibilities, having two school-aged kids, coaching, ATA du-

ties, etc. However, the quality of the experiences along with the stipend made it all worth the effort. I would encourage you to consider applying if you are eligible and you can feel free to reach out to me at [shertzog@acsdny.org](mailto:shertzog@acsdny.org) if you have any questions.

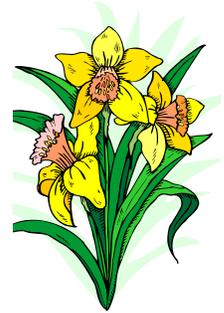
-Steve Hertzog,  
ATA Second Vice President

# Dates to Remember



## MARCH

- 11th—Superintendent's Conference Day
- 15th—ATA Executive Council Meeting: 4 p.m., AHS Room 1432
- 16th—School Budget Public Forum: CAO
- 18th—Professional Development Half Day
- 22nd—Board of Education Meeting: 7 p.m., CAO



## APRIL

- 5th—Board of Education Meeting: 7 p.m., BES
- 11th-18th—Spring Break
- 18th—Board of Education Candidate Petitions Due: 5 p.m., CAO
- 19th—ATA Executive Council Meeting: 4 p.m., AHS Room 1432
- 26th—Board of Education Meeting: 7 p.m., OPS



## MAY

- 10th—ATA Executive Council Meeting: 4 p.m., AHS Room 1432
- Board of Education Meeting: 7 p.m.

# Announcements

### Don't Forget To Re-Register!

**NYS law requires that all teachers re-register every five years in order to maintain their Professional or Permanent certificates, and that time is up.**

**Make sure to go to <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/teach/> by the end of the month prior to your birth month to re-register.**

**Stay informed! Follow us on Facebook and Twitter or check out [www.arlingtonteachers.com](http://www.arlingtonteachers.com) for forms, photos, calendars, and more.**