



CTA SNIPPETS

<http://corningta.ny.aft.org/>

CORNING TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

March/April 2014 Volume 11 Issue 4

Election



Edition

2014-15 Candidates

President	Rick Gallant and Leslie Varga
Vice-President	David Rich
Treasurer	Scott Shaddock
Executive Secretary	Ben Bowers and Martha Marks
Recording Secretary	Sharon Kendrick

Ready to be more involved with your Teachers' Association?

Here are some options available to YOU:

- Let your Building Representative(s) know that you are willing to be a substitute at CTA Executive Council meetings as needed. (You would vote as a Building Representative.)
- If there is an OPEN position in your building, contact CTA Office and inquire about process—we will hold an election in your building before the end of this year. Consult your Building Representatives for more information.
- Attend any CTA Executive Council meeting—CTA Members are welcome to attend our meetings--always. (Contact CTA Office for a list of dates/times/location.)
- Next year, watch for information on the Annual Election of CTA Officers & Delegates—and request a petition to run for a position.

Election Procedures Reminder, David Rich

With the CTA Officer and Delegate Elections nearing, I wanted to take the opportunity to remind all members of the new process we, as a union, approved last year when the CTA Constitution was amended. In a nutshell, there are three CTA members who volunteered and were approved by the Executive Council to oversee the process.

Thanks to Shawn Finan (WN), Barb Smith (CFA), and Paul Spear (WH) for volunteering!

The CTA Constitution is available in its entirety on the home page of the CTA Website http://corningta.ny.aft.org/files/cta_constitution_february_2013.pdf. However, you can also refer to the chart below for the duties of the election committee and the President. The process prohibits candidates from collecting and counting ballots. Furthermore, petitions to run for office will be provided to interested members by the Election Committee members. More specific information, including dates will be mailed to your home addresses this Spring.

Election Committee: This committee shall oversee all aspects of the Officer/Delegate Election and ensure the following duties are conducted, per the chart below:

Furthermore, results are not valid until approved by a majority vote of the Executive Council and should not be revealed until said time. Committee members may not be candidates or current CTA officers or appointees. The committee will consist of a Chairperson elected by its membership and two other members. Members must be either a building representative or be nominated by their building representative and approved by the Executive Council.

Duty	CTA President	Election Committee
Election date notification to all members, per the Landrum-Griffin Act		
Create Candidate Petition Forms		
Provide Candidate Petitions to interested parties		
Collect and Verify Petitions		
Create the Ballot		
Provide Senior Building Representatives with Ballots for each voting site		
Establish a time and place in which ballots are *returned to the Committee for counting. <i>(*Ballots are not to be collected by or returned to any candidate).</i>		

Candidates for Executive Secretary

Martha Marks, West High

Dear CTA Members,

My name is Martha Marks and I am running for the position of CTA Executive Secretary. I am a Business teacher at West High School and have been a member of the CTA for twenty-two years. I have served as a CTA building rep for the past 2 years. I have enjoyed working for our members in this capacity and would like to further serve our membership as Executive Secretary.

Please consider voting for me in this election on May 1.

Ben Bowers, East High

My name is Ben Bowers and I am running for Executive Secretary for CTA. I am the physics teacher at East High. I am qualified to serve as our Executive Secretary because I am a detailed oriented person who is familiar with our constitution and our contract. I have been serving our members for the past two years as a senior building rep for our East High members. As a building rep I have kept our members informed via meeting minutes and have voiced their concerns at Executive Council. I have raised awareness regarding procedures and misprints in the contract during the last contractual vote and have headed the Heart to Heart drive at East high the past 2 years.

Furthermore, during my military service I was the aircraft electrician supervisor and aircraft inspector. These jobs require a vigilant person as those responsibilities required absolute precision in order for both aircraft and personnel to be operating properly and safely.

For those reasons I feel that I am the most qualified candidate to fill the position of Executive Secretary. To make sure your voice is heard please remember to vote on May 1st.

LESLIE VARGA, CFA



A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, shows the way.

-John C. Maxwell

Brothers and sisters of the CTA:

I ask you-what makes a union successful? Are we better off than we were a year ago? Two years ago? Three years ago? Change for the sake of change is not effective. Change in position and issues must be our focus point. Vision, commitment, experience and integrity are all changes that I bring to our Corning Teachers' Association as I commit to you as a candidate for president of your CTA.

Vision

True leaders have vision. They have a clear and exciting idea of where they are going and what they want to accomplish. My vision for CTA includes:

- Transforming the presidency from *reactive* to **proactive**. I have watched as our leader has failed to present a clear vision for the needs of our members. It is time that your individual and collective voices are heard!
- Our members should drive how we operate as a union and have major input on decisions that affect us. Input from members will be gathered in an organized way. Your input will be used to make decisions.
- **Top-down curriculum implementation must stop.** WE are the experts. WE are the professionals! **We have to stand strong and keep repeating why we are right!**
- **APPR observation and score inconsistencies must be taken seriously and addressed.**
- Member voice, engagement and community outreach are critical to our association's strength and presence.
- Defend public education through the support of coalitions.
- I will convene a public relations committee to spearhead opportunities for involvement and work to ensure we are visible in our community by assuring our volunteerism is recognized in our local media.
- I will revive our relationship with PTA and implement strategies to strengthen our partnership and showcase our talents.
- I will encourage professional discussions/debates.
- I will be your voice at Board of Education meetings, representing YOUR strategically gathered facts and opinions. I will represent you with tact and poise.
- I will work to ensure a smooth transition to the new middle and high schools, and that teacher concerns are addressed relative to the new facilities. **I will spend my summer preparing for that transition.**
- I will make myself available for member concerns.
- My vision to revitalize our mentoring program would include a new teacher/mentor event and planned classroom visits for opportunities to listen, collaborate and support new teachers and mentors.

LESLIE VARGA, cont.

Commitment

When I lost the election for president in 2012, I vowed to continue my commitment to CTA. I will not waiver from my dedication to unionism.

- I attend officers' and executive council meetings.
- I Write articles for Snippets.
- I stay current and advocate on issues that affect our membership and profession.
- **I answer emails and phone calls. I advocate for members.**
- I gather and organize input from middle school teachers relative to current APPR practices. This input is shared with the APPR committee **in an effort to implement much-needed reform.**
- I listen to concerns from dedicated mentor teachers who are fearful that our **mentoring program is suffering from lack of leadership.** I commit to revitalizing this program by working hard to give it the attention that it deserves.
- I commit to focusing my attention to the needs of members.

Experience

- Have nearly three decades of classroom experience at both elementary and middle school levels in the Corning-Painted Post School District.
- Represented Carder School as **building representative to executive council** for 15 years.
- **Serve as grievance chairperson** for 12 years representing teachers in TIP plans and ensuring our collective bargaining agreement is upheld.
- Shadowed the negotiations process for 2 contracts and currently **serve on the negotiations team.**
- NYSUT delegate representing CTA at the NYSUT RA in NYC.
- Appointed to the previous APPR committee. **Represent middle school teachers on the current APPR committee.**
- Attended several NYSUT trainings to better prepare me for my roles in CTA.
- Worked alongside executive council members and our vice president, Dave Rich in **revising CTA Constitution election procedures.**

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LESLIE VARGA, cont.

Integrity

- I am honest.
- I am hard working.
- I am an advocate for teachers and students.
- My agenda will be 100% transparent.
- I am a sixth grade teacher and am evaluated by the current APPR system. **If elected president, I will INSIST that, as long as this flawed system is forced on our members, the mentor coordinator position will be held to the same standard of evaluation through observations and portfolio requirements!**
- I work **FOR** you.
- **I answer emails and phone calls.**
- I will assure confidentiality of sensitive member issues.
- I am a **team player** who has worked for many years alongside officers and executive council.
- **I will *always* remember that I am a teacher.**

It is time for meaningful change!

Please vote on May 1

RICK GALLANT

Fellow CTA Members....

As I say often to all who will listen and some who won't, I am extremely proud to be the president who represents the guidance counselors, helping teachers, speech teachers, psychologists, social workers, speech therapists, and teachers who all make the Corning Teachers' Association the unified, powerful, and vibrant organization that we are. These past three years have been "something". The challenges and successes that we have seen have been unlike any we have seen in my thirty years as a teacher and teacher-union activist.

Here are just a few of the major issues we've faced:

- **APPR...** this state-mandated evaluation system that was implemented last year has been an exercise in wasted time, negative energy, and futility relative to its intended purpose (if that purpose is to improve instruction). With that said, CTA and CPPSD have worked together to give it some connection to that purpose. Your negotiation team is constantly requesting and gathering feedback in an attempt to negotiate a system that will be as equitable and meaningful as possible for all of our members. I am also working very closely with NYSUT to "de-couple" state test scores from our evaluations and to open back up the state laws that begat APPR.
- **Contract...** we ratified a new contract last fall. It is a two-year contract which expires next June 30. We will begin negotiations next fall. Like last time, we will gather as much input as possible from all of our members as we move forward into negotiations. And like last time, I will be at the table with our negotiator Sharon Campbell. Last year we were coming off consecutive years of massive layoffs. In order to ensure that not happening again, CTA agreed to modest increases in insurance-related contributions. We also agreed to minimal, if any, salary increases. That strategy proved to be effective as there will be no personnel cuts this year. We will, however, be looking to restore the salary increases we did without on our current contract.
- **Curriculum...** the state mandated common core learning standards- based testing began last week. CTA has been working extremely hard to make sure that the input of our expert practitioners is not only listened to, but utilized. This is a very polarizing issue. CTA has not "taken sides", but has continued to push administration to listen to us about what we think is the best way to meet state standards. I am also working with NYSUT to lobby the legislature to have teacher-developed materials used as the basis for curriculum, not testing or curriculum "factories" like Pearson or Expeditionary Learning.

RICK GALLANT, continued

- **Combining the Middle and High Schools...**CTA has been working from the outset on the move into new, combined facilities for middle and high school students and staff. We were there from the first feasibility study and continue to be integrally involved on both building design teams. CTA has had constant input on staffing and scheduling for both of these buildings, as well as offering new and extended opportunities to members outside and inside of the contractual day.

There are many, many other issues that face our members on a daily basis. As CTA president I help our members navigate issues dealing with certification, insurance, salary or payment, contract clarifications/disputes, scheduling, member interactions, discipline, coaching, co-curricular, and all sorts of other things. All of these interactions with members are held in strict confidence. You have shown in me great trust, and I hold that very dearly. As your president you can trust me.

Almost everything I do as CTA president, almost every day, comes down to relationships.

I have extremely productive working relationships with the CPPSD administrative team. I have worked hard to cultivate these relationships so that the voices of CTA members will be heard and taken into consideration on most all decisions that are made. We are the most powerful group in CPPSD. With that power comes responsibility. I am very proud of the relationship we have with our fellow bargaining units (CTAA, CSEA, and even CAA). It is essential that we lead the way in ensuring that all employees are treated with honor, dignity, respect and fairness.

CTA has an outstanding relationship with PTA, parents in general, the media, and even the school board. All of these groups have seen how we are willing to work together. How we exemplify that the good of the whole is more important than the good of the parts. It is this understanding that affords us the favorable reviews these groups give us.

Over this past weekend I was elected to the board of directors for the New York State United Teachers. This is our parent organization at the state level. The relationships I have with our state officers, with presidents from around the state, and with locals statewide give us resources far beyond the CPPSD borders. We have influence with the legislature and with our state officers that other locals do not have. This will help us at our local level.

I am extremely proud of the relationships I have developed with all of our members, no matter what our position. I have always been accessible at all times. I have always listened to the complaints, questions, suggestions, and even compliments that our members put forward. Our members can (and do) tell me what is on their mind and I always take an analytical, CTA-based approach to it. I take nothing personally. I also understand that our members are much more knowledgeable about matters pertaining to them individually that I am. I listen to members. I use everyone's knowledge to move forward our causes individually and collectively.

RICK GALLANT, continued

We've come a long way through tough times in the last three years, but we've done it together. We still have a long way to go, and we will do that together as well. I thank each and every one of you for all you have done to take the Corning Teachers' Association forward. I thank you all for the guidance you have given me.

On May 1st, I ask for your vote for CTA president so that we can continue on together. I am extremely excited to continue working for you, our members, and every day brings a new energy.

I would also like to propose a forum or two for Leslie and I to sit down together with members. I think that will help you realize that I, indeed, am the best person to continue to lead as president of CTA. If that is something that interests you, let Shawn Finan, chairman of the CTA election committee, know, and we'll see if it can be worked out. Thank you.



CTA = Corning Teachers in Action..

Dan Cohen, Severn —

I'm Dan Cohen, School Social Worker at Severn Elementary, and I'm currently registered as a Community Athlete with the Wounded Warrior Project. I'll be participating in events throughout the Spring, Summer, and Fall of 2014 to raise money for this worthy cause. Currently, I'm signed up for 3 events, the Salon 96 Run for the Wild 2014 on 4/6 (I'm doing a half-marathon), a Goruck Light event on May 17th, and the Wineglass 5k on October 4th. I'll be signing up and doing additional events as well as time goes on.

In fitting with the military theme, I've hired a retired Navy Seal as a personal trainer, and a majority of my training will be based on the workouts done in the military. I'm not alone in this either, my family and friends are doing different events with me, and my youngest daughter is doing a good portion of the Seal training alongside of me. We're having a lot of fun, and I hope you'll be willing to donate a few dollars in support of the Wounded Warrior Project. All donations, large or small, are equally appreciated. Hooyah -

<https://support.woundedwarriorproject.org/individual-fundraising/DanCohen/>

Coming Soon:
New endorsed shopping program



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.