

The

sta Open Line

Local #2999

Affiliated with the AFL-CIO, AFT and NYSUT Local #115

Vol.7 No. 7

March 2004

Unit 7 Has Been Without A Contract for 256 Days

Mark Your Calendar

March

17 - National Board Certification mtg. - STA 3:30 - 5:00 pm
 18 - Unit 8 GM mtg. - STA 3:30 pm
 19 - Superintendent's Conference Day
 23 - TA Trng. - Tch. Ctr.
 29 - STA Ex.Bd. - 3:45 pm
 31 - Rep Training - Health & Safety Workshop - STA - 3:30 pm (call to register)

April

7 - Rep Assembly - 3:30 pm
 7 - Board of Ed - 7:00 pm
 12 - 16 - Spring Recess

National Board Certification

How would you like —

- To receive a \$1,000 annual stipend for 10 years?
- To participate in the best professional development of your teaching career?
- To reaffirm your skills as a practitioner?
- To reflect upon your teaching practice?

Everyone is invited to attend an informational meeting on Wednesday, March 17th, from 3:30-5:00 p.m. at STA. A National Board Certified Teacher, **Luci Stone**, (Rochester Teachers Association) will present information on becoming a Board Certified Teacher. Information about the Al Shanker Grant, which covers the \$2300 fee, will be shared with the group. Please call STA (x 4526) to reserve a spot. This session is sponsored by NYSUT, our Teacher Center, and STA. Any questions? Call **Lilli Rastegar** at 472-6374.

National Board Certified Teachers Do It With Class!

Lilli Rastegar
 (lrastegar@syrteach.org)

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Any
 Ideas? Let
 Us Know!

Neighbor Schools Advisory Committee

This committee was formed to meet the guidelines of the board of education regarding the closing of schools. The original purpose of the meetings was to examine the neighborhood schools concept, how to deal with declining elementary enrollment that resulted in decreased revenues, middle school enrollment bubble and to determine if these factors necessitated closing any schools. There are two teacher representatives on the 25 person committee Kevin Ahern (Clary) and Kate McKenna (STA).

District administration met in the months prior to convening the committee. A consultant was brought in to convert district student data into a "live" demographic map for each school. The agenda and timeline were determined and then the committee was called into session. One meeting was held in each of the months of October and November. December, January and February meetings were scheduled on a very aggressive timeline including holidays and vacations when members of the committee could not attend.

The committee set guiding principles for its work. They are:

- Improve achievement for all students
- Increase family and community involvement

Equitable programs/services/facilities/resources

- Quadrant neighborhood schools with defined choice
- Consistent grade alignment (pre-k-5, pre-k-8, 6-8, 9-12)
- Reduce student travel time between home and school
- Effective and efficient use of fiscal resources

A report and impact statement was produced and presented at a combined meeting with facilities and policy committees of the board of education in February. This report reflected some *preliminary planning* for returning to neighborhood schools within a quadrant approach. It also contained recommendations to close schools, notably Solace Elementary, the most successful school in the district. The teacher members joined by other committee members objected to this and other recommendations. A cost benefit analysis was requested but not provided to the committee. Nor had a study to determine the equitable distribution of resources within the district been completed, though equity is one of the guiding principles.

These two pieces- the cost benefit analysis and equity evaluation- have still not been completed (started?) and should be demanded by the board of education commissioners. They would be the cornerstone for discussions within our community. The district could gain

meaningful parent and community input and support for a well thought out plan. If a recommendation is made in haste it will be seen for what it is.

Kate McKenna noted at the Dr. King forum on February 24th that the recommendations in the original report to the board did not reflect a consensus by the committee. Dissent has been expressed on several points. Despite this, the report and impact study are being presented

to the board and the public as a consensus document purported to be the committee's work.

There are other ideas that need to be explored, perhaps coming from ideas generated at public meetings. The board of education commissioners will hear public comments on March 3rd and vote at the March 17th board meeting. Members are urged to attend both meetings.

--Kate McKenna



Congratulations to Loretta... Retirees Are Now Represented

At it's annual convention last spring, NYSUT delegates voted to expand the NYSUT Board of Directors to include four retiree representatives. In the past, the Chair of the NYSUT Retiree Advisory Council attended the NYSUT Board meetings, but was not a voting member of the Board. The addition of four retirees who will speak for us on the NYSUT Board is a bold step on the state organization's part to ensure that retiree issues are aired and acted upon.

Former STA 1st Vice-President **Loretta Donlon** was elected in a run-off held among the 13 Election Districts which now constitute the new NYSUT Election District 51. Loretta has a long list of credentials. She served as 1st Vice-President of the Greater Syracuse Labor Council, President of the Onondaga County Teachers Association, a Board member of the United Way, Chair of a NYSUT Convention Committee, and in dozens of other capacities both at STA and our affiliates.

Loretta ran a campaign aimed at the problems facing seniors, especially retired public servants. Almost immediately upon her election she began to wage war on the **Medicare Prescription Plan**, which, despite overwhelming opposition, passed both houses and was signed into law. The legislation could cause up to 2.7 million retirees to lose their existing drug coverage because it may encourage employers to stop their contributions. Under "means testing," higher-income people earning above \$80,000 per year would pay bigger premiums, co-pays and higher deductibles than other beneficiaries.

On Nov. 19, Loretta and more than 100 NYSUT members boarded buses from around the state to join the Alliance for Retired Americans in a Washington, D.C., rally to protest the Medicare legislation. Because she believes that this new legislation will severely impact retirees like us who carry health and prescription coverage from our former employers, she has attended and initiated a number of meetings aimed at what steps we need to take next.

The new NYSUT E.D. 51 covers a great deal of upstate New York - from Buffalo to the mid-Hudson River. Loretta has met with NYSUT officials to discuss plans for communicating with delegates and members in the vast E.D., and has already initiated an electronic newsletter for retiree delegates in the E.D. We can expect regular updates from her on important retiree issues.

--Joanne M. Heisler
 STARS President

Verifying Your Contract Salary

All members of Units 1/4, 8 and 10 have received or will be receiving paychecks reflecting new second year contract salaries. It is important that each member take the time to verify that her/his contract salary is correct.

Here are dates and information for you to remember:

February 27th - new contract salary paychecks issued to units 1 and 10

March 12th - new contract salary paychecks issued to unit 8 members

On or before March 19th - first half of 2002-03 retro for unit 1 members; full retro for unit 10 members

On or before April 28th - full retro for unit 8 members

On or before September 5th - second half of 2002-03 retro for unit 1 members

On or before October 10th - retro for July 2003-January 31, 2004

Step 1- Look. Once you have your new paycheck, look at the contract salary on the bottom of the left side of the pay envelope/check. Compare it with the worksheet or profile given out at respective unit ratification meetings. The amounts should be close- plus or minus a dollar or two. If the figures vary more than that, then you need to go to step two.

Step 2- Don't call, write. Unit 1 members received a modified DATA PROFILE from the SCSD outlining how (and on what data) your raise was computed. Verify the step, column and degree information for each year. (Remember that the grid has 26 steps- 0-25 -making a member who has completed, say 8 years, land on step 8.) Members of units 8 and 10 should use the worksheets from ratification to do the same. If there are errors send your information to: contracts@scsd.us, or use school mail -Payroll-

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From the President's Desk... Kate McKenna

Book Exposes 'Dark Side' of School Politics

(Why it's so important to fill out the administrative evaluations.)

You'll be receiving your administrator surveys this month. Please take the time to communicate how folks in your building support (or don't support) your daily work.



Breaking The Silence is the first empirical report of the actual experiences of abused teachers; that is, what constitutes principal mistreatment and its impact on teachers and their work. The authors set forth their purpose very early in the text: "Our purpose in writing about principal mistreatment is to contribute constructively to solutions at all levels. We believe our findings, as troubling as they are, have special significance for practicing and prospective administrators and teachers."

Breaking the Silence: Overcoming The Problem of Principal Mistreatment of Teachers

Jo Blase and Joseph Blase
Corwin Press, Inc., 2003

The authors argue that this "dark side" of school life is often responsible for poor schools and frequently the complete undoing of many successful teaching careers. "Indeed, we found that principal mistreatment of even a few teachers often resulted in significant collateral damage to a school; widespread fear and resentment, distrust, and poor morale were common by-products of such mistreatment", write the authors.

Some of the basic questions used in the study were: What types of principal conduct do teachers find abusive? What effect does such conduct have on teachers, teaching, and learning? How does a principal's abusive conduct undermine teachers' performance in the classroom and in the school overall? As one reads account after account of abusive supervision, it is very easy to see that the effects of such coercive management result in damaged relationships between and among teachers, toxic consequences for all aspects of the classroom, and serious prejudice of any collective decision-making process.

The authors' findings are thoughtfully and carefully discussed noting that non-physical forms of workplace abuse have increased significantly on an international scale. Teachers' accounts, revealed in interviews over a 1.5 year period, make up the heart of the book, sharing

experiences and quotes that reflect their perspectives of abusive, domination-oriented principals. Blase and Blase represent their findings from these interviews in three distinct levels of definitions and descriptions of mistreatment and abuse.

Level 1 principal mistreatment behaviors (indirect and moderate aggression) include discounting teachers' thoughts and needs; controlling teacher-to-teacher interaction; withholding or denying opportunities, resources, or credit; showing favoritism to other teachers; and offensive personal conduct. Level 2 principal mistreatment behaviors (direct and escalating aggression) include spying, sabotaging, making unreasonable work demands, and both public and private direct criticism of teachers. Level 3 principal mistreatment behaviors (direct and severe aggression) include lying, explosive and nasty behavior, threats, unwarranted reprimands, unfair evaluations, mistreating students, forcing teachers out of their jobs, preventing teachers from leaving or advancing, sexual harassment, and racism.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect revealed by this study is the extremely harmful effect on the teachers' personal and professional lives and the lack of support from colleagues. Beyond the initial wounds of injured self-esteem, damaged relationships and loneliness, are the more serious illnesses of depression, severe chronic fear and anxiety, and a range of physical and psychological problems. Perhaps not so surprising is the fact that most of the teachers studied "had been consistently and formally recognized by their school and district not simply as effective teachers but also as superior teachers". The authors note that they were veteran teachers who were highly respected, creative, and dedicated individuals.

Most importantly, the final chapter deals with what we can do to overcome the problem of principal mistreatment of teachers. Gary Anderson, writes in the Forward, that the

"first step is to get folks talking about it and show abused teachers they are not alone". The authors commit considerable time exploring ways that individuals, school districts, and yes, principals can overcome this problem. Among them are:


- Becoming informed about workplace mistreatment
- Fighting back such as *bullyproofing* yourself at work
- Being a responsible colleague if you witness mistreatment
- Convincing districts to examine the phenomena of abusive workplaces
- Having prospective and practicing administrators reflect on questions helpful to preventing abuse

One can't help but wonder who are these researchers who would dare to write on such a taboo subject. Are they a couple of anarchists who found a safe haven in academia for the sole purpose of attacking the educational hierarchy? It turns out that Jo Blase is Professor of Educational Leadership at the University of Georgia, a former public school teacher and middle school principal, and has won awards from the American Association of School Administrators for Outstanding Research. Joseph Blase, also a Professor of Educational Leadership at the University of Georgia, has won awards from Journal of Educational Administration for his research in the areas of teacher stress and principal-teacher relationships. They have coauthored several books on principal effectiveness.

Reviewed by Tom Alves
San Juan Teachers Assoc.
Executive Director
TURN principal member
To order call 805-499-9734

Nancy Peluso, President
STA x4526

Unit 8



We Make A Difference

Career Ladder News!!!

Recently, I received a call from **Linda Lemura**, Dean of Arts and Science at LeMoyne College. She expressed a desire to attract more of our unit members to LeMoyne and suggested the possibility of accepting SUNY rates for us! Not being the type to let an opportunity slip through my fingers, I quickly scheduled a meeting with Linda, **John Smarrelli**, Assistant Dean of Arts and Science at LeMoyne and **Randy Williams** and myself. As this article goes to print the details are being finalized. I anticipate that summer courses at LeMoyne will be available to us through our Career Ladder. It is exciting to have more options for classes. More information will be provided in the upcoming weeks. My sincerest gratitude goes to Linda and John at LeMoyne for reaching out to us and to Randy for facilitating the process.

Diversity Training

Steve Gramet, Director of Pupil Services/Student Behavior, asked that I share the following workshop dates with you. The sessions are at the Teacher Center from 8:00 am to 3:30 p.m. If you are interested, speak with your principal. You can call **Debbie Carni** at ext.6353 for more information.

March 8	April 22	May 13
March 11	April 30	May 14
April 21	May 10	May 18

New Contract

As I understand it, effective 2-1-04 TA's will receive \$28.00 a day when substituting for a teacher. Keep a copy of your time card. If you are not paid in accordance with the new rate, call payroll.

Our retro for the school year 02-03 should be received by April 28, 2004. I will provide additional information as it becomes available.

Thanks for all that you do each and every day! The children of the SCSD are so fortunate to have such caring, compassionate, skilled people helping them.

Have patience—there is a rumor that Spring is just around the corner.

Next General Membership Meeting March 18th.

Yadda, Yadda, Yadda...

Building reps are familiar with the definition and practical application of the phrase yadda, yadda, yadda. A workday doesn't go by without someone discussing an issue or concern with a building rep. Yadda, yadda, yadda! What's a rep to do?

First **and foremost** keep in mind that a building rep must remain impartial. There may be issues that you have a definite opinion on or feel very strongly about but you must remain unbiased in seeking a resolution for the matter. You have to be able to represent any member in your building regarding any issue or concern as it arises. Remember too that there are two sides to every story. Checking the information you were given and hearing the other side of the story will help you resolve the situation in an equitable manner.

Secondly, developing a positive working relationship with building administration is extremely important. Being able to have a discussion around any issue will be beneficial in resolving matters at the building level. Staff needs to know that

you are a fair and honest person, simply a conduit and negotiator, who is able to remain unbiased.

Thirdly, *confidentiality* is an important "c" word in your lexicon. Administrators and staff need to know that you are able to keep confidences and feel comfortable speaking with you on any topic, no matter how sensitive it may be. The ability to do so will make you the busiest rep in the entire building, guaranteed! Another "c" word of immense importance is *compassion*. Without it you might not be able to stand up for a colleague's rights in front of an administrator. Remember, we all work under similar contracts and working conditions within our bargaining units. If one of us is asked to do something outside of assigned duties or responsibilities it affects *all* of us. Another "c" word that greatly affects what you do is *contract*. Knowing your contract is vital. Every employee should be familiar with the negotiated document that guarantees specific rights in the workplace, which mostly center on

working conditions and terms of employment. A chief rep should be familiar with contracts for Units 1, 7, 8, and 10. As you become more knowledgeable, you'll be surprised how much you've learned in a short period of time. A dog-eared, highlighted and notated contract is a good thing to own. New contracts should be available soon. **Reflective listening** is a critical tool in your building rep toolbox. While listening to members voice their thoughts you need to decide... Is it a concern? A complaint? Is it grievable? Is the person venting? Is this an issue for building committee? Is it a personnel issue? Does it affect the entire building? Is it related to building policy? Is it related to district policy? Should I offer cheese and crackers with the wine?

The next time you encounter a yadda, yadda, yadda situation think: impartial, two sides to every story, negotiate, confidentiality, compassion, contract, reflective listening and **THANKS FOR BEING A BUILDING REP!**

--Lilli Rastegar

Unit 10's "Health Beat"

Ann O'Hara, President
VanDyyn

The contracts are finally settled and it is time to extend a BIG THANK YOU to **Lin Golash**, lead Labor Relations Specialist who worked so hard on our behalf and the other members of the Unit 10 negotiating team; **Anne Beck**, **Sue Lande**, **Michelle Kearney**, and **Becky Davis**. I also want to thank all of you for being so supportive and showing up to picket in the pouring rain, writing letters and getting up to speak at school board meetings. When we get involved, stay united and speak up we get things done. *And you just proved it!* Thanks! Our unit is projected to get our retro check in one lump sum on March 19th.

Kudos to **Donna Dooley** who has some big shoes to fill now that **Connie Palumb** has retired. You are doing a great job! Especially interesting was our recent in-service on grant writing given by **Patti Black** who is a nurse at the new charter school. Patti gave a well prepared and inspiring class that will hopefully result in some new money for health related programs. If anyone is interested in being on a committee to research and develop some grants please contact me@4168 or **Cheryl Vitaletti**.

Labor Relations Update

by Lin Ramsey Golash and David Reed

POMCO

Appealing denial of health, dental or vision claims. If you receive a rejection of a bill for benefits, or if you are being billed by a medical provider or hospital, and you believe the bill should be covered by POMCO, you may file an appeal of the denial. **THIS APPEAL MUST BE FILED WITHIN 60 DAYS OF THE DENIAL.** This appeal is reviewed by nurses &/or physicians at POMCO. If this first appeal is denied, you may file a second appeal. Again, this should be filed within 60 days. Second stage appeals are reviewed by the contractual claims committee.

Many medical providers will tell patients that they are appealing the denial, but you should still file your own appeal to guarantee that the appeal is received within 60 days. To get an Appeal Form, call the Benefits Office at x4180.

Preferred Providers – To find a physician or other medical provider who is a preferred provider for POMCO, you can use the internet. Go to www.pomcoplus.com.

Attendance and the FMLA

Poor attendance can be grounds for discipline or dismissal of employees, even employees who are permanent or tenured.

However, there are some time periods in life, when it becomes necessary for members to miss work. Here are some suggestions on how to protect your job at the same time dealing with your personal or family issues.

- 1) Personal Illness/Maternity – If you have a medical condition that will cause you to miss work you have several options:

*You may take a personal illness leave. (All of the STA Contracts now have extended leave sections.) The leave will be paid for as long as you have accumulated sick leave. Otherwise the leave will be excused but unpaid. Put the request for a leave in writing to Randolph Williams, Director of Personnel. If you worked over 1250 hours in the previous year, the first 12 weeks of this leave are covered by the **Family Medical Leave Act** (you will have to fill out an application and have it filled out by your doctor.) FMLA mandates that the SCSD cover their share of your health insurance for those 12 weeks. You will only have to pay your regular monthly amount. If the leave lasts past 12 weeks, your insurance will be covered as long as you have sick days left. If you run out of sick days, you will have to pay the full premium amount for your insurance.

*You may take an Intermittent leave. Under FMLA, if you have a condition that causes intermittent (once a month, once every two weeks, etc.) absences, you may request that the days you miss be covered under FMLA. The cumulative total of days covered under FMLA are 60 days (12 weeks). Also, if you are a direct education provider – teacher, teaching assistant, social worker, etc. – the intermittent leave has to be less than 20% of your work time. (You could not take off 1 day per week.) You will have to fill out an application and have it filled out by your doctor. FMLA should be used if you have a temporary medical condition. Put the request for intermittent leave in writing to Randolph Williams.

*You may request accommodations under the **Americans with Disability Act**. If you have a permanent medical condition, which affects at least one activity of daily living, you may qualify for accommodations under ADA. These accommodations may include some protection for sick days.

- 2) Family Illness of an Immediate Family Member (spouse, parent, child)

*You may take Personal Leave. This leave will be unpaid, but excused. Put the request for a leave in writing to **Randolph Williams**, Director of Personnel. If you worked over 1250 hours in the previous year, the first 12 weeks of this leave are covered by the Family Medical Leave Act (you will have to fill out an application and have it filled out by your family member's doctor.) FMLA mandates that the SCSD cover their share of your health insurance for those 12 weeks. You will only have to pay your regular monthly amount.

*You may take an intermittent leave. Under FMLA, if your family member has a condition that causes intermittent (once a month, once every two weeks, etc.) absences, you may request that the days you miss be covered under FMLA. An example of this type of leave is if your spouse receives monthly chemotherapy and you need to take two days off each time. The cumulative total of days covered under FMLA are 60 days (12 weeks). Also, if you are a direct education provider – teacher, teaching assistant, social worker, etc. – the intermittent leave *has to be less than 20%* of your work time. (You could not take off 1 day per week.) You will have to fill out an application and have it filled out by your family member's doctor. Put the request for intermittent leave in writing to Randolph Williams.

There are other leaves available for special circumstances (child care, educational, etc.). Please contact the STA if you have circumstances in your current life that will result in you missing days at work. It is better to work out a solution before you put your job at jeopardy.

Supplemental Sick Leave

All STA members are eligible to take advantage of **Supplemental Sick Leave** if you use up your personal illness days. Each Unit has their own representative on a Sick Leave Committee which reviews applications to the Sick Leave Bank. However, because the number of days of Supplemental Sick Leave are limited, not all applications are accepted. The criteria for acceptance are catastrophic illness and financial need. If you have a pregnancy or a broken arm, you probably would receive no days from the sick leave bank unless there were complications or an extended leave. To apply write a request to **Randolph Williams**, Director of Personnel

Note: If you have any questions please feel free to e-mail me at: lgolash@syrteach.org

sta Open Line

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Joanne Heisler - STARS (retired) (STA Retirees)

Know Your Rights - Unit 1 Contract

Who will defend ME? - THE STA – and THE LAW!!

It seems that the educational work place has become an increasingly hostile work environment – teachers, teaching assistants, bus attendants, hall monitors, school nurses, administrators and a plethora of other educational professionals seem to be under assault – literally. The STA continues to bring this issue to the SCSD administration and the Superintendent's office. STA will gather information in a brief survey as well as the information you provide on an ongoing basis and will present your concerns and examples to the board in March.



But let's talk about NOW!!! If assaulted, here is what you can do to DEFEND yourself:

1. Notify your principal and complete the proper referral – incident – and worker's compensation forms. Remember to make a copy of all paperwork;
2. Seek medical attention if necessary;
3. Write a dated and detailed summary of the incident for your personal records;
4. The STA urges members who are assaulted to file charges against their assailant. To file charges, you should call the police as soon as possible – provide them with a copy of your written summary. Remember to ask for a copy of the report as well. If police do not make an arrest or suggest that you file a private criminal complaint notify the STA offices immediately. The possible charges under NY Penal Law are as follows:

§ 120.00 Assault in the third degree: *A person is guilty of assault in the third degree when:*

1. With intent to cause physical injury to another person, he causes such injury to such person or to a third person; or
2. He recklessly causes physical injury to another person; or
3. With criminal negligence, he causes physical injury to another Person by means of a deadly weapon or a dangerous instrument. Assault in the third degree is a class A misdemeanor.

§ 120.05 Assault in the second degree: *A person is guilty of assault in the second degree when:*

1. With intent to cause serious physical injury to another person, he causes such injury to such person or to a third person; or
2. With intent to cause physical injury to another person, he causes such injury to such person or to a third person by means of a deadly weapon or a dangerous instrument; or []
10. Acting at a place the person knows, or reasonably should know, is on school grounds* and with intent to cause physical injury, he or she:
 - (a) causes such injury to an **employee of a school or public school district**; or
 - (b) **not being a student** of such school or public school district, **causes physical injury to another**, and such other person is a student of such school who is attending or present for educational purposes. (* specified definitions exist)
5. Notify the STA offices of the incident as well as provide a copy of your personal report.

In order to assure administration, the board, and the public are aware of the violence you face in our schools I ask the following of each of you: If you have been assaulted in the last school year please forward a copy of the following, if able: referral with student information deleted, personal statement of event, any workers' comp resolutions or issues, police follow-up, further pertinent information.

We must work together on these serious issues...please help us protect you!! Good luck and stay safe.

--David Reed, Esq.
dreed@syrteach.org

Warm Fuzzies Found Here

S o many students, so little time
C ome and join the fun
H elp mentor a child
O ne on one, you can truly make a difference
O h, won't you give a little of yourself?
L et someone special enrich your life.

V olunteers are needed
O oh! You'll be rewarded a thousand fold
L et the warm fuzzies begin
U nique experience guaranteed.
N ever a dull moment
T ake the time
E xciting, exhilarating
E veryone's a winner!
R eap untold rewards
S imply call **Joe Lancaster**, 435-4295, fill out the form and hey! Pass it on.



Lilli Rastegar
lrastegar@syrteach.org

Contract Salaries

continued from page 1

Contracts/CF at the district office. Staff there will handle all inquiries. If you want to send STA a copy, feel free to do so, knowing that the staff and officers will work with the district to get any necessary corrections made as quickly as possible. This will take some time so please be patient, again. All discrepancies will be worked out.

Step 3- Now the complicated part. Unit 1 members who earned degrees, tenure, new hours or longevity stipends will see discrepancies in the 2002-03 salary figures. The figures on the buff sheet that arrived with your paychecks were computed on June 2002 information. Your salaries last year reflected your increased earnings. This will be fixed when it comes to computing you retroactive pay.

Step 4- Breathe deeply. Unit 4 members should have received a letter from the district stating that we were working on some grid placement issues. I assure you that these will be resolved as soon as is humanly possible, with checks reflecting your new salaries being issued upon resolution of this problem

All of us need to remember that Unit 7 has been without a new contract since June 30, 2003. The next negotiating session is March 8th. We'll keep you posted and are planning a rally at the April Board of Education meeting if the contract is not settled by this time.

--McKenna



Unit 7's 'Food for Thought'



LouAnn Coleman, President
Henninger x 4343

The Unit 7 members who are serving on the Syracuse City School District Menu Committee are listed below. The committee is looking for one more member to satisfy its requirements. If you are interested in serving on the committee and would like more information regarding it, please feel free to call **LouAnn Coleman** on her cell phone at any time. The number is 278-5036

Cindy Piper (Clary)
Joe Wasiluk (Fowler)
Joyce DeDell (Fowler)
LouAnn Coleman (Henninger)

Terry Landow (Nottingham)
Pam Bilger (Lincoln)
Helen Durr (Lincoln)

Unit 7 negotiations are still in progress. We'll keep you informed of any new developments when they occur.

--Bernard Washington



\$30,908.83

Wake up to more.
Investing \$3 per day for 15 years means you actually set aside \$16,425.00. But compounding (hypothetical 8% rate of return, compounded daily) can turn that number into \$30,908.83.*

In the Syracuse area contact:

Helen Chambers, CFS
315-682-2872

Thomas DiNapoli, Jr.
315-431-6360

Stephane Lasher
315-431-6365



**MEMBER
BENEFITS**
nysut
Working to Benefit You

ING

Give up your morning coffee? Never.

But matching the cost of a cup of coffee with an investment in yourself could turn three bucks into more than thirty thousand when you're ready to retire. One of the prime ingredients is compounding over time. That's why we brewed up the Opportunity Plus Tax-Deferred Variable Annuity. Even a modest, consistent contribution could deliver big benefits... from reducing your taxable income today, to increased earning potential (and potential growth on those earnings), to helping you reach retirement goals tomorrow. Opportunity Plus was developed especially for NYSUT members and agency fee payers, with a host of options and features designed to provide practical financial benefits over your lifetime. Contact your ING representative to find out how a little bean counting can make your next cup of coffee taste a lot richer.

* Hypothetical illustration not reflective of past or future performance. If product fees and expenses were included, performance shown would be lower.

Variable annuities are long-term investments designed for retirement purposes. Early withdrawals may be subject to a 10% federal penalty if taken prior to age 59½. Money distributed from the annuity will be taxed as ordinary income in the year the money is received. Account values fluctuate with market conditions, and when surrendered the principal may be worth more or less than the original amount invested. An annuity is not necessary for the plan's favorable tax treatment, but offers other features that may be of value to you.

Opportunity Plus is a tax-deferred variable annuity issued by ING Life Insurance and Annuity Company (ILIAC). All fees and expenses associated with the program, including those of the Trust, are detailed in the current prospectus, which should be read carefully prior to investing in Opportunity Plus. You may obtain a current prospectus from your local ING representative. Securities offered through ING Financial Advisers, LLC (member SIPC). Insurance products offered through ING Life Insurance and Annuity Company.

Systematic investing does not assure a profit, nor protect against loss in a declining market. You should consider your financial ability to continue purchasing through periods of low price levels.