



## *Jim Burke: A Leader for our Times*

Autumn 2014

In complicated and challenging times in the world of education, there are those individuals who give us hope and direction; they share in our journey and serve as our guides. Whether it be a Nancy Atwell, a Neil Postman, a Donald Graves, a Kelly Gallagher, that person helps us to see more clearly the pathways before us. Jim Burke is that guide and partner:

a dynamic teacher, prolific writer, ardent speaker, and fountain of inspiration. Jim Burke is indeed a game changer. Jim's

presence at the 2014 NYSEC Conference at the Marriott Hotel in Albany on October 14-16 is one of the many reasons the conference will once again serve to energize and inspire the language arts community.

In his introduction to *The Common Core Companion: The Standards Decoded*, Jim Burke speaks of his own evolution as a teacher. As a young teacher, he was given a simple list of titles and wished good luck by his department chair. Years of teaching brought huge, thick binders of standards, so heavy "that they were all but ignored." Now we have the Common Core State Standards,

leaving "a large group of new teachers feeling a bit up the river without a paddle." Burke sees his book as "that oar, or map" teachers can use to guide their way through the curriculum.

Two other oars or maps that have helped to guide educators' journeys are *The English Teacher's Companion*, now in its fourth edition, and the *English Companion Ning*, the amazing internet community that Burke created for teachers. The Teacher's *Companion* text was not a simple updating

of the previous edition. Burke says, "To offer you anything less would suggest that I had not grown, changed, or evolved these past fifteen years. I am not the same teacher I was when I wrote the first edition." The Ning is an online platform where teachers can discuss and share a myriad of



ideas, described on the site as "a cafe without walls or coffee: just friends."

Like a young Ulysses, Jim Burke knows that there is always time "to seek a newer world." And he knows that we must continue "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

On Friday, October 24, Jim Burke will give the keynote address at the NYSEC Conference.

by Paul O'Brien

Notre Dame-Bishop Gibbons High School



## *From the President*

### *Dear Members:*

Autumn. Back to school. Back to “reality.” This fall, these aspects of my life take on a slightly richer hue. As I look forward to the multi-colored, pigmented leaves of fall, the crisp air, the concept of starting over, this year, I begin with a new appreciation for the work we do and the impact we have.

Recently, a family member passed away unexpectedly. I’m not telling you to elicit sympathy or empathy. I’m telling you because it’s the reason I was sitting in front of a priest who delivered the most kick-ass eulogy I’ve ever heard wherein he, among other things, spoke of his memories of being a teenager in the 80s and hanging out in the basement of the deceased, his high school buddy, and how the father hooked them up with a “man cave” in pre-man-cave days, and how the mother always came down the stairs with food for whomever was hanging out that day. He vividly remembered their loving generosity with tenderness and affection. He’d felt cared for, wanted, and welcome. Not necessarily so remarkable, one might say, but this is not the remarkable part of my story; the remarkable part is that the parents in question were shocked by the significance of their simple actions. They had never thought twice about the meaning of providing a place to play, of being role models of kindness, or of the impact of meeting the needs of others before those needs were even identified. They had no idea they had had such an impact, and were profoundly affected by the

commendation. They were just doing what they felt was right.

You get where I’m going with this, I’m sure: For me, this story highlights the work we do as teachers. We provide safe spaces. We serve as role models of kindness. We anticipate the needs of our charges and colleagues, meeting these needs without thinking much about the significance of the work or the impact it will have. We don’t do these things because we are told to do so, or because they are listed in some set of standards. We do them because we are called to be what we are, and to do what we believe is right. And while we may not always learn directly the impact of our work, we need to be reminded that we do have an impact far beyond what we might ever imagine. That impact is being severely questioned by lawmakers and policymakers, yet we will roll into school on September 2<sup>nd</sup> and work at it anyway. And, unlike these parents who heard from an eloquent priest, we may never hear from our charges precisely how significant our work will have been.

I’m writing this column on a rainy August morning, contemplating the events of the summer, the work I’ll do in the next few weeks to get ready for school, and the meetings and plans I’ll make in the hopes that the 2014 NYSEC Conference will be as great as it always is, and I’m thinking of you: I’m thinking of all the teachers who will work their hearts out this coming year, and who may not know the comfort of the significance of their work. I’m writing to tell you that you matter. That you are important. That you will do great things even when you are unaware of doing so. That you will, in some cases by your very nature, impact people to be better than they otherwise might have been just by being dedicated to excellence

*(continued on page 4)*

# Announcements!

## Programs of Excellence Winners

Six outstanding programs have been selected for recognition at the 2014 NYSEC Conference in October.

These **Programs of Excellence** are:

**“Humanities”**

Bay Shore High School, Bay Shore CSD

**“Writing Lab”**

Briarcliff High School, Briarcliff UFSD

**“Exploring Character Development with Charles Dickens and The Common Core: A Christmas Carol and Great Expectations”**

Manhasset Middle School, Manhasset SD

**“Massapequa High School’s Trilogy of Charity”**

Massapequa High School, Massapequa CSD

**“Essay Writing for College”**

Oyster Bay High School,  
Oyster Bay-East Norwich CSD

**“TJL Word of the Day Program”**

Thomas J. Lahey Elementary School,  
Harborfields CSD



*One of last year’s award winners*



## NYSEC Fellow Award

**Kjersti VanSlyke-Briggs**

SUNY Oneonta



## Mini-Grant Winners

NYSEC has recently completed its work reviewing Mini-Grant applications for the 2014-2015 school year. The criteria used to evaluate the applications include purpose, outcomes, impact on students, evaluation, and budget. We are pleased to announce that the following projects have been selected for funding:

**Secondary**

Marie Netto, W.C. Mephram High School,  
Bellmore-Merrick CSD



## **Reserve your room TODAY for the 2014 NYSEC Conference!**

**Join us at our new venue, The Albany Marriott**  
<http://www.nysecteach.org/2014-conference.html>

**Click on Albany Marriott Hotel Reservation link and secure your stay!**

*If your attendance is funded by a school purchase order, save your confirmation information and follow the procedures required by your district.*



## **President's Message, continued**

in your profession and in your person. And I'm writing to tell you that you have compatriots in NYSEC, that you have shoulders to lean on, that you have colleagues around the state with whom you can confer and from whom you can learn even better and more creative ways to continue to do the very excellent work you do. Come to the NYSEC Conference in October and be reminded of how significant your work truly is.

I wish you an impactful, rewarding, and peaceful year! ~ mgb

**Sincerely,  
Michelle Bulla**

**"Cape Cod Shoreline at Maguire's Landing, Wellfleet, MA"**





## News From VP ELEMENTARY

By: Michelle Peterson

I began my career as a middle school English teacher, and then a switch in my job assignment three years ago placed me as an administrator at the primary level. After over a decade working with teenagers, I thought that nothing could shock me ... until I started working with six and seven year olds. It has been rewarding and eye-opening to work with children at the beginning of their school career. Though not unlike middle school students, their energy is both exhilarating and exhausting. Working at the primary level has also solidified some beliefs that I have always known to be true.

First, I've always known that what we do at the beginning of a child's educational career sets the foundation for their school career, and after working with first and second graders for the last two years, I have a clearer understanding of that truth. Our youngest learners need literacy instruction that includes text-rich environments, exposure to vocabulary, and a strong understanding of phonics. They need books, books, and more books! In my district, many of our students live in poverty, and without the school they would not have access to many of the experiences and materials that their middle and upper class counterparts take for granted. I work in the world that Kelly Gallagher describes in his book *Readicide*. Outside of school our students often have limited access to reading materials; therefore we try to provide the "book flood" with our lending library and reading incentive program. We know that without access to texts, our students will continue to suffer from "word poverty" and fall farther and farther behind each year.

I also know that when it comes to the Common Core Standards, many people worry about how realistic these standards are for our

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**REGISTRATION FORM**  
**Argue, Research, Analyze, & Create:**  
**Building Global Awareness in ELA**  
**October 22-24, 2014**

**The Albany Marriott Hotel**

**On-line Registration available at [www.nysecteach.org](http://www.nysecteach.org)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School/ Institution: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Current NYSEC Member Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ If yes, membership expires on: \_\_\_\_\_

(Needed to send your receipt) (If yes, date membership expires: \_\_\_\_\_)

**EARLY Registration (must be postmarked or processed online by October 8th)**

**Circle appropriate amount below**

	<b>Full Conference</b>	<b>Single Day</b>
___ Member	\$140	\$100
___ Member Renewal/New Member	\$180	\$140 (both include \$40 membership)
___ Retiree	\$130	\$90
___ Retiree Renewal / New Member	\$150	\$110 (both include \$20 membership)
___ Pre-Service Teacher	\$60	\$40 (both include membership)

**REGULAR / ON-SITE Registration (beginning October 9<sup>th</sup>)** \_\_\_ Thursday \_\_\_ Friday

	<b>Full Conference</b>	<b>Single Day</b>
___ Member	\$190	\$150
___ Member Renewal/New Member	\$230	\$190 (both include \$40 membership)
___ Retiree	\$180	\$140
___ Retiree Renewal / New Member	\$200	\$160 (both include \$20 membership)
___ Pre-Service Teacher	\$60	\$40 (both include membership)___

*Registrations include all events, workshops, and meals*

**Payment & Submission & Receipts**

Total Submitted: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Payment Method: \_\_\_ check \_\_\_ PO (**must** accompany this form)  
*Please note payment via credit card is possible; simply register & pay online*

Mail check / PO and Registration Form to: NYSEC Conference Registration  
 550 Victory Circle  
 Ballston Spa, NY 12020

Receipts mailed to Home Address; bring to registration upon arrival.  
 Any questions, email [prand@nycap.rr.com](mailto:prand@nycap.rr.com)

# More Awards!

## Educators of Excellence



### Administration

**Theresa Donohue,**  
Commack Middle School

**Marlene Feinberg,**  
Massapequa Public Schools

**Karen Meier,** Herricks High School

**Elsie Rodriguez,**  
Monroe-Woodbury Central School  
District

### Elementary

**Denise Bowles,**  
Thomas J. Lahey Elementary School,  
Harborfields CSD

**Paul Gronau,**  
Wood Road Elementary School,  
Ballston Spa CSD

**Courtney Mackey,**  
Morris Central School

**Tracy Zambelli,**  
James H. Vernon School,  
Oyster Bay-East Norwich CSD

### Middle School

**Diana Aiello,**  
East Northport Middle School

**Kathleen Crimmins,**  
Sewanhaka Jr/ Sr High School

**Julie Koster,**  
Unadilla Valley Central School

**Stephen Haglich,**  
H. Frank Carey Jr/ Sr High School

**Elisa Pepe,**  
Schalmont Middle School

### Secondary

**Maria Bagneschi,**  
Ticonderoga High School

**Eileen Burke,** Mineola High School

**Anna Caruso,**  
New Hyde Park Memorial High School

**Robert Feinstein,**  
Northport High School

**Jessica Freese,** Marlboro High School

**Julie Hamilton,**  
Greenville High School

**Nicole Maresca,**  
W.C. Mepham High School

**Linda Neidl,**  
Notre Dame- Bishop Gibbons School

**Steve Tomb,** Johnsbury Central School

**Laura R. Wilson,**  
Westfield Academy & Central School

### College

**Dr. Peter Lynch,** Molloy College

**Dr. Kelly Wissman,**  
University at Albany



*(One of last year's award winners)*



## VP Elementary, continued

youngest learners. Every day, especially during a time of tax caps and economic difficulties, we struggle with ways to provide the students with the support they need to make appropriate academic gains. Fortunately, during the past two years, I have had the privilege of working with the team that creates the classroom videos for EngageNY. This process was scary, stressful, time-consuming, and ultimately enlightening for both our t eachers that participated and me. As a former secondary classroom teacher, it was encouraging to see our second graders learn to highlight key information, have text-based conversation about literary texts and engage in thoughtful discussions with their classmates. Before working through this process, I was concerned about how well our primary students could grasp these



skills. After participating in this process, I realized that the videos on EngageNY are powerful professional development because they allow educators to see the students in action. It can be easy to say “they can’t,” but when you use these videos for professional development it allows you to show your colleagues “they can.” In addition, as a former secondary teacher working with primary students, I know that planting these seeds early will not only help these skills become natural for our students, but also develop learners that can handle the challenges of college and career readiness.

Therefore as we continue to navigate the shifts of the Regents Reform Agenda, I encourage teachers to reach out to your professional organization to help you. Post an article on the **NYSEC** Facebook page, or share best practices from your classroom. Engage with @nysec\_tweets and other educators on Twitter to discuss what is happening in your schools. Come to the **NYSEC** fall conference (October 22<sup>nd</sup> through 24<sup>th</sup> at the Albany Marriot) and network with other colleagues across the state. During these challenging times you need support. Know that **NYSEC** is here to help.

*Michelle Peterson*  
*VP Elementary*

# *The English Record*

## Call for Papers



**Next Deadline: 15 October 2014**

### **Aims**

*The English Record* publishes original peer reviewed contributions that focus on the field of English education. *The English Record* features articles on pedagogy, essays, commentaries, program descriptions, reflective narratives, book reviews and occasional student work. Please check the website [nysecteach.org](http://nysecteach.org) for more information.

### **Submissions**

Manuscripts should be submitted electronically to Dr. Kjersti VanSlyke-Briggs via e-mail at [vanslykb@oneonta.edu](mailto:vanslykb@oneonta.edu).

Manuscripts should be prepared using MS Word. All parts of the manuscript should be double spaced. Please number all pages consecutively. Each manuscript should include a cover sheet with the author's name, affiliation, position, preferred mailing address, telephone and e-mail address. All other pages should contain a running header with working title and page number.

Identifying information should not appear elsewhere in the manuscript. Please include an abstract on the cover page of no more than 100 words.

Manuscripts must conform to APA standards. Manuscripts that do not utilize APA will be returned.

All images, tables, figures and additional materials should be sent as separate files with a figure heading and notation within the manuscript for preferred placement.

### **Permissions**

As the author, you are required to secure any necessary permissions to reproduce any student work or materials from other sources.

### **Proofs and Complimentary Copies**

A proof will be sent for accepted manuscripts to the author for review. All corrections or changes must be submitted within 48 hours. Each corresponding author will receive a copy of the issue after publication.



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lrpb1@aol.com

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Michelle Peterson  
mpeterson@westburyschools.org

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viceed@aol.com

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Michelle Bulla  
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christine.zandstra@wappingersschools.org

**NYSEC News**

Michelle Kaprinski  
michellek914@aol.com  
John Harmon  
jpharmon@att.net

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schappell@mw.k12.ny.us

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Kjersti.VanSlyke-Briggs@oneonta.edu

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## Membership Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Home address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name of school or affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

School address \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Business phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Indicate type of membership. Check all areas that apply:**    \_\_\_ new \_\_\_ renewal

- |                                   |                        |                     |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| ___ One year membership \$40      | ___ college/university | ___ Teacher         |
| ___ Retired membership \$20       | ___ secondary          | ___ Department head |
| ___ Student membership \$15       | ___ middle school      | ___ Librarian       |
| ___ Institutional membership \$80 | ___ elementary         | ___ Principal       |

**Mail this form with a check made out to NYSEC to:  
Patricia Rand, 550 Victory Circle, Ballston Spa, NY 12020**



## end notes

Transition to editor

*I am honored to take on the role of Editor of the NYSEC Newsletter publication. I come on board as an Assistant Principal with over 15 years in the Secondary English classroom.*

*If you are a NYSEC veteran, you are aware that John Harmon has contributed just as many years of service to our newsletter during his career in education. His keen wit, wisdom and expertise have positively impacted our readers. It is my hope that my experiences, along with your contributions will continue to provide our members with engaging, current material and opportunity for reflection.*

*"Life is a gift, and it offers us the privilege, opportunity, and responsibility to give something back by becoming more." ~ A. Robbins*

*Michelle Kaprinski and John Harmon, NYSEC News editors*

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### **NYSEC Conference!**

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