

HEALTH & SAFETY

A NEWSLETTER FOR NYSUT'S HEALTH AND SAFETY LEADERS

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ALERT! This is your final paper edition *H & S Newsletter*

As part of NYSUT's ongoing effort to deliver timely, relevant news in a more effective and efficient manner, the *Health & Safety* newsletter will live exclusively on the web, starting with the summer 2010 issue.

You will be notified by postcard when the next issue of the *Health & Safety* newsletter has been posted on the

Health and Safety page of the NYSUT website, www.nysut.org.

All subsequent issues will be posted on the website quarterly and notification of the posting will be in the *NYSUT Leader Briefing*.

Tick season: Serious illnesses still a big concern

Now that spring is here, it's a good time to remember preventive actions that protect against tick-borne illness. Ticks can pass several disease-causing organisms that cause symptoms. Lyme disease is the most common tick-borne illness in the U.S.

Reported cases of Lyme disease continue to rise at an alarming rate—by 39 percent from 2006 to 2007. Increases have especially been seen in children. According to the CDC, 10 times more cases of Lyme disease occur than are reported.

If undiscovered, Lyme disease can result in devastating illness and disability. Yet, symptoms are often mistaken for other medical problems.

A life changing story

Marc Peimer is a Work-Based Learning Coordinator at Capital Region BOCES and a member of the Capital Region BOCES Faculty Association. An avid outdoorsman, he enjoys camping and mountain climbing. Last June he developed a sharp pain in the left side of his face. He was diagnosed with neuralgia and began treatment. Marc then developed a red rash on his face

and the pain moved down his jaw to his mouth. He was put on medication for shingles and additional tests were done to rule out other problems.



The facial pain became severe and the rash spread. Marc awoke one morning with the left side of his face paralyzed. He called the doctor, who made an over-the-phone diagnosis of Bells palsy caused by Lyme disease. A blood test confirmed it. He went on a three-week regimen of antibiotics. Marc and his doctor realized that the "rash" he had on his face was actually the "bull's eye" rash so common with Lyme.

Last summer he experienced many of the traditional effects of Lyme disease, including long-lasting body sensations of the "creepy crawlies," sharp

pains in different locations, extreme itching for short periods in various places, total exhaustion and more. Almost a year later, he still has issues from the Bells palsy, including numbness in his face, issues with his left eye and lack of taste for certain foods. Continued Lyme disease symptoms include "vibrations" in the chest and thighs, and sharp pains that limit some movement. Even though he felt like he was in good shape, this past winter Marc was not able to complete any High Peaks, still lacking the energy needed for these climbs. He's improving, but the impact of the disease was greater than he thought and the recovery is taking much longer than he hoped. Although he loves the sun, Marc avoided it last summer because his medication really increased sun sensitivity.

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Representing more than 600,000 professionals in education and health care
For more, see www.nysut.org.

Web survey on violence against teachers

Participation is key for accurate data



The American Psychological Association (APA) has partnered with NEA to conduct an anonymous on-line survey on assaults against teachers.

The APA's Violence Directed Against K-12 Teachers Task Force was working

on developing resources to raise awareness about violence directed against teachers, but found little empirical evidence specifically targeting violence directed against teachers. The Task Force wants to collect first-hand data from teachers regarding their experiences with violent incidents. Future policy recommendations on how to protect educators from assaults

by students depend on good data, so be sure to go to this link www.apa.org/ed/schools/cpse/activities/violence-teachers.aspx to access the survey. When you complete and submit the survey, you will receive access to a brochure outlining prevention and intervention strategies.

"Violence in the workplace is a serious issue that impacts many NYSUT members," said NYSUT Vice President Kathleen Donahue. "If you have an incident that you can share, I urge you to take part in this anonymous survey. Speak up, Speak out. Your participation can make a difference."

SRPs take note: A survey that addresses the unique issues of support staff (ESPs/SRPs) will be coming sometime after the teacher survey is completed, so be sure to look out for information in the coming months.

**"Speak up, Speak out.
Your participation can
make a difference."**

HEALTH & SAFETY

Health & Safety is a newsletter published periodically for New York State United Teachers' Health and Safety Committee members. NYSUT locals and staff have permission to reprint all *Health & Safety* content.

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Accommodation resource for people with disabilities

NYSUT sometimes receives calls and e-mails from members who have some level of disability and are having difficulty getting their employers to change work conditions so they can stay on the job. Many of these folks became disabled because of their job.

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a service provided by the U.S.



Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). JAN's mission is to facilitate the employment and retention of workers with disabilities. Their Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) system lets users explore accommodation options for people with disabilities in work and educational settings. While suggestions are not all-inclusive, they are extremely helpful in finding ways that people with impairments might be able to continue to work.

You can search by impairment, such as arthritis, cancer, chemical sensitivity, back problems, bladder problems, Lyme disease and pregnancy.

After choosing an impairment, select the limitation that corresponds with your needs and then select the job function, such as, "individual has difficulty working with fragrances in the workplace." Several suggestions for how to accommodate that job function impairment are given.

For each impairment, there is also a section called "Questions to Consider." These questions help the accommodation process, especially if your employer is resistant to making changes for you.

Visit www.jan.wvu.edu/soar/index.htm for further information.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

FEDERAL

H.R. 2067 (Miller) Protecting America's Workers Act: Expands OSHA coverage to include state and local public employees and federal government workers and to millions of other workers inadequately covered, such as airline and railroad employees. Also strengthens safety and health penalties, improves whistleblower protections and allows workers and their families rights that would hold dangerous employers accountable. Any improvements to OSHA have to be matched by New York's PESH regulations for public employees.

Currently, 22 of 29 members of the NY delegation have signed on to the bill. The following have not signed on: Nydia Valequez (D-12), Peter King (R-3), Nita Lowey (D-18), Scott Murphy (D-20), William Owens (D-23), Dan Maffei (D-25) and Christopher Lee (R-26). If your representative is on this list, please and ask him or her to sponsor this important worker protection bill.

H.R. 4247 (Miller)/ S.2860 (Dodd) Keeping All Students Safe Act: Previously titled, "The Preventing Harmful Restraint and Seclusion in Schools Act," this bill has passed the House and was supported by both AFT and NEA. It was proposed because of reports and hearings that exposed cases of inappropriate restraint and seclusion of schoolchildren, often by untrained staff.

NYSUT members in all K-12 schools should watch for further information as the Senate bill is also expected to pass. This would significantly change how schools are able to deal with students regarding use of restraints and isolation, or seclusion rooms.

As NEA says, "While the bills are not perfect, they attempt to address situations in which restraint and seclusion are used inappropriately, usually by untrained or under-trained staff. They also encourage the use of programs and procedures that provide a safe learning environment for students, school employees and staff."

Passed House; referred to Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

STATE

A 2136 (John)/ P 502124 (Addabbo): Establishes workplace violence prevention programs in schools in order to ensure a safe work/learning environment for all. Currently, K-12 schools are excluded from the workplace violence prevention regulation that covers all other public employees in New York. If passed, schools would have to follow the existing regulation, enforced by PESH, which requires employers to involve unions and assess their workplaces for violence risks, provide adequate training and have written violence prevention plans. Referred to Assembly Ways and Means, Senate Finance Committee. Members of these committees need to hear from NYSUT members to move this bill.

A 5343-A (Koon)/ S 5298-A (Squadron)
Environmental health tracking system: Provides for the development of an environmental health tracking system within the Department of Health to gather environmental data that correlates disease data.

Passed Assy; Referred to Senate Health Committee on 2/25/10

SRPs play \$20,000 Pyramid game



Pam Lavin, a member of the North Syracuse Teaching Assistants Association/NSEA, and Sue Demski, a member of the Westhill Employees Union, play the \$20,000 Pyramid Game during "Ergonomics for SRPs," at a recent NYSUT workshop for the Syracuse SRP advisory committee.

Alert: Last paper edition of newsletter

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County health rankings

For the first time, you can compare the overall health of your county with other counties in New York and compare the factors that contribute to health. Each county receives a summary rank for its health outcomes for four different types of health factors: health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and the physical environment.

The project is a joint venture of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute.

Find your county at: www.countyhealthrankings.org.



Green Labor Journal

The National Labor College announced the publication of *Green Labor Journal*, a monthly online journal that examines issues of sustainability, energy use and climate change from a labor movement perspective.

Each month, the publication will cover the following topics: a feature article on green jobs and the new green economy; Cleantech Tracker; Affiliate Actions; NLC Green Education and Training; AFL-CIO Center for Green Jobs; and a "Did You Know?" section on important events and news items.

Find the *Green Labor Journal* at: www.greenlaborjournal.org.



EPA's NEW IAQ and Student Performance website

U.S. EPA IAQ Tools for Schools Program's newest resource, the Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) and Student Performance website, offers the latest scientific evidence showing the relationship of IAQ to key factors that influence student health and performance. Use the site

to learn how IAQ impacts student health and performance, so that you can make the case for comprehensive IAQ management in your schools.

http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/student_performance/index.html



Greenroads rates road projects

Road construction is a more than \$80 billion annual industry in the United States. Yet there is no true green rating system for highways and roads.

University of Washington researchers and the global engineering firm CH2M HILL have developed Greenroads, a rating system for sustainable road design and construction. The system outlines minimum requirements to qualify as a green roadway, including a noise mitigation plan, storm water management plan and waste management plan. Environmental, economic and social impacts are included. Additional points are given for voluntary actions like minimizing light pollution, using recycled materials, incorporating quiet pavement and accommodating non-motorized transportation.

The first complete version of Greenroads is available at www.greenroads.us.



Green School & University

This monthly e-newsletter focuses on green practices at America's education institutions. The publication provides school and university administrators and architects with valuable research and resources regarding incorporating green, sustainable, high-performance practices into their design, construction and operations for their institutions. The latest issue features an article about a study ranking sustainability reporting efforts of liberal arts colleges.

Find it at <http://asumag.com/enewsletters>.

Tick season: Serious illnesses still a big concern

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Advice for others

Marc isn't sure when he was bitten by a tick. The bite could have occurred a few weeks to a few months before symptoms started. Prior to his symptoms, he helped a friend clear small trees and bushes and hiked in the woods several times a month. Marc always checked his arms and legs, but thinks the tick probably bit his face, and remained hidden in his beard. It's a place he never thought of. He says, "Remember to check for ticks where they are least likely to be found."

He doesn't blame his doctor for not thinking of Lyme disease early on, but has this advice for others: "If you have been outdoors and are having symptoms that do not really fit any specific category, be sure to ask for a Lyme disease blood test. I would have saved significant time, energy, discomfort and health care costs if the test was done sooner."

Free online training available

The Lyme Disease Association has a free educational online module: "How A Tick Can Make You Sick: Lyme Disease Prevention Lesson for Children and Adults." It includes a four-section slide show module designed for grades 6-through-adult. The presentation can be opened for viewing or printed, has pre- and post-tests and an audible pronunciation guide. A resource section is also included. The LDA offers this module free and recommends its use by schools, scouts, park systems and the public.

Find it at: lymediseaseassociation.org/ledu_home.html

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