

# AEL Leadership Forum

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 5

AUGUST 2017

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Sept. 21, 2017**  
**AEL Executive  
Board Meeting**  
5 pm  
AEL HQ,  
2521 Riva Road,  
Suite L-2, Annapolis

**Oct. 19, 2017**  
**AEL Executive  
Board Meeting**  
5 pm  
AEL HQ,  
2521 Riva Road,  
Suite L-2, Annapolis

**Oct. 26, 2017**  
**AEL Fall Social**  
4:30-7:30 pm  
Hellas' Restaurant  
Millersville  
RSVP to bferg332001@  
yahoo.com

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**Members**

## Close Only Counts in Horseshoes

*By Will Myers, AEL President*

This year negotiations were as different as night and day from previous years. Both sides, the school system and AEL, were faced with the reality of a healthcare crisis which had to be reconciled. Although the process was difficult, an agreement was hammered out which would slowly increase healthcare costs to all employees. As part of our agreement, there would be offsetting compensation before any increase could occur. Offsetting compensation is referring to our members receiving financial compensation in another form to offset the rise in their healthcare contributions. Compensa-

tion for 2017-18 was to include a step increase for all eligible employees, or a 1% COLA for those without remaining steps. The bonus was the extra step for our veteran members hired, during or, before the FY 2008-09 school year. It must be noted that this "bump" for our long term members, was not part of the Superintendent's original budget request. It was an amendment proposed by Board Member Mrs. Sasso and approved by the Board of Education. The Superintendent and County Executive agreed to a one step increase. Any hope for this "bump" also had to be approved by

the County Council. Unfortunately, it was not. We are back to negotiations looking for some kind of financial relief to offset the increased healthcare



costs for all of our members.

Although disappointed with the failure to fully fund the negotiated agreement, we have a number of positive take aways from our collaborative efforts:

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# Negotiations Questions and Answers

## *Rick Kovelant opens up about process*

A lawyer for 45 years and AEL's attorney for 25 years, Rick Kovelant has seen it all. As a participant in this process, both at the table and in a consulting capacity, Rick has something to share regarding the negotiation process.

**How would you characterize this past year's negotiations?**

**Rick:** While the atmosphere at the bargaining table was reported as congenial, the results were, again, somewhat disappointing. You don't always achieve your goals, but it becomes increasingly frustrating when

you do arrive at an agreement with the Board and the rug is pulled out from under you. Since the Board has no funding authority, as the check book, so to speak, is controlled by the County government. Any agreed upon compensation is therefore decided by the County Council and the County Executive. These folks are not participants in the collective bargaining process. In many cases, we negotiated away contract language for a better compensation package and when the dollars are not forthcoming, you lose out in both instances. This last year we agreed to an

increase in compensation to mitigate agreed to increase in health care premium and co-pay costs. The agreed compensation, was reduced but health care costs increased. Perhaps this will be worked out in the future.

**When do negotiations start for 2018-2019?**

**Rick:** Negotiations this year will commence in September. Fortunately, they are limited to fiscal openers as opposed to "full book negotiations." These negotiations will also include discussions regarding a revamping of the Unit II salary scale. This should prove

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## **AEL Fall Social**

*at Hellas Restaurant*

**October 26th, 4:30- 7:30 pm**

Veterans Highway, Millersville, Md.

Your **best chance** this fall to connect and catch up with friends and colleagues.

RSVP by Oct 23 to [bferg332001@yahoo.com](mailto:bferg332001@yahoo.com)



## Negotiations Q and A...

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to be a very ambitious undertaking.

### **What are your hopes for the coming year's efforts?**

**Rick:** I hope that the parties approach these issues in an honest and collaborative manner as opposed to position based bargaining. These issues can be resolved through honest dialogue and a commitment to problem solving rather than the traditional position based techniques.

### **What changes could make the process more efficient or effective?**

**Rick:** I believe that as long as the BOE and AEL are at the mercy of the County government and its control over the compensation portions of the contract, there may be little hope that what is achieved at the bargaining table will be honored. The BOE and all bargaining groups have to fight to maintain the school system's ability to decide its needs and priorities. If not, then the County government should be seated at the negotiating table because, after all, it is effectively setting the educational agenda directly and indirectly by its control over

the educational budget. I would also like to see a collaborative bargaining model adopted where the parties look to identify problems and work together toward a solution. This was tried in the past, but, unfortunately, we both returned to more confrontational methods. Balancing our joint interests in providing a quality educational delivery system at the same time as providing fair compensation and benefits to those who provide this service should not be that difficult to achieve in a collaborative bargaining model.

## Close Only Counts in Horseshoes...

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- The School System's negotiators were congenial.
  - An agreement was reached before July 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - The healthcare increases were for the most part nominal.
  - The Board recognized the need to compensate long time employees.
  - No future healthcare increases can occur without offsetting compensation.
  - The Board recognizes it must provide some remedy for the lack of funding in this year's contract.
  - We are working collaboratively to restructure our salary scale to make it more equitable.
- We may not have tossed a "ringer" in this year's game of horse shoes, but we are closer to the stake than we have been for years. Let's hope this "era of good feelings" between the two sides continues into the future.

# Navigating the Complexities of School Leadership

## *Blasingame-White is Ready to Tackle role of AEL 2nd VP*

The job of a building administrator continues to become broader and more demanding and the potential legal and financial issues are greater, according

to AEL's newly elected 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Becky Blasingame-White.

"Whether advocating for salary and quality of life enhancements or the responsibilities associated with directives from the Central Office, AEL is there to help

new and experienced members navigate those complexities," she says.

Becky joined AEL when she became an Assistant Principal at Wiley H. Bates Middle in 2007. It was her father who reminded her that once promoted, she needed to join the union for Unit II members. She became involved in AEL leadership in 2014 when AEL was looking for a Cluster Representative and a colleague nominated her.

Her decision to run for 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President was driven by a desire to represent all members and provide a voice for elementary administrators and their unique challenges. "The impact of curriculum, programs, discipline and services have significance for Central Office Unit II members just as they do for the Principal. It is important in this position that all members of AEL know they are connected," says Becky who has

worked as an administrator at all three levels.

Born and raised in Anne Arundel County, Becky attended Belvedere Elementary, Magothy River Middle, Severn River Junior High and Severna Park High School. "I was supported by great teachers and administrators during my school tenure and I feel that my work in AEL will help build more awareness and action about the critical work that both administrators and Central Office Unit II members do each and every day to make the lives of our students and the reputation of our school system better."

Becky is a woman who loves her job. She is a self-described "soccer mom" who is married with a cat and three children, ages 14, 13 and 11.



Becky Blasingame-White

# Willing to ‘Walk the Talk’

## Meet Lou Anoff, AEL’s New Treasurer

It was time. That was one of several reasons Lou Anoff, AEL’s new Treasurer, decided to run for office in the spring. “I believe that we should all give back to the organization that serves us. I benefited from AEL and it is only fair that I step up and do my part,” says Lou.

“I also believe that if there are things that I don’t agree with in an organization, or think that things should be done differently, I can either get away from the problem or I can get involved and stop complaining,” says Lou who is an AP at Severna Park Middle. After serving on the Negotiations Team for the last year, and at the urging of AEL Administrator Bob Ferguson, Lou decided to run

for Treasurer.

Lou believes in the value of AEL. “Besides the fact that we all benefit from having a strong association, all leaders need to be aware of the problems and concerns of those that

they lead.,” he says. “The organization that speaks for us and makes us aware of the current issues is AEL. I cannot imagine not being a part of this team of wonderfully dedicated leaders. Also, sometimes being an Assistant Principal or Principal can be a lonely job. The camaraderie, fellowship, and networking available in AEL

makes the job a lot easier to manage.”



Lou’s career path didn’t begin with teaching. Before he graduated from high school, he enlisted in the US Marine

Corps. “I knew that my parents could not afford college for me. So right after high school graduation, I entered the Marine Corps,” he says. His unit saw action in Granada, Panama and Bosnia (1977 -1981). He left the Marine Corps and enlisted in the Air Force in 1982. He served for the next 17 years

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## Lou Anoff...

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as a Radar Technician on the F4 and then as an Operating Room Technician serving in Colorado, California, Germany and Arizona. His work supported action in Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

***“The camaraderie, fellowship, and networking available in AEL makes the job a lot easier to manage.”***

*Lou Anoff, AEL Treasurer*

According to Lou, two years before retirement, he realized that he needed two more years of education to do one of the three jobs that interested him. “If I were to continue my education to become a Physician’s Assistant, I knew that I would make good mon-

ey, but it would require lots of time away from my wife and children. Or, if I went the way of earning my RN I would earn less but still make a good salary however, the time requirement

was still high and it would take me away from my family,” he says.

His third area of interest was teaching., according to Lou. “I knew that I would not make as much money, but I would be able to be there for my children.” He made his choice and earned a dual degree in Education and Special Education. “I start-

ed teaching 6th grade the Monday after my retirement from the Air Force. I taught 6th and 7th grade in Vail, AZ for four years before moving back to our home in Bowie.”

He worked in Howard County for the next five years, teaching math to 6th and 7th grade students, then moved to AACPS as an Assistant Principal. He notes he had the pleasure of being an AP at George Fox Middle School for six years, prior to his current school, and is now at Severna Park Middle School.

He and his wife, Debra have four children and “two of the BEST grandchildren anyone could ever have, Collette and Vivienne.”

**Mark your calendars: AEL Fall Social, Thursday, Oct. 26 4:30-7:30 pm**  
Free for Members. RSVP to Bob Ferguson, [bferg332001@yahoo.com](mailto:bferg332001@yahoo.com)

# Welcome New Members

**Emily Able**, Assistant Principal, Monarch Global Academy

**Jason Anderson**, Principal, Rivera Beach  
Elementary

**Erkan Derin**, Principal, Chesapeake Science  
Point

**Tamba Elliott**, Assistant Principal, Ridgeway  
Elementary

**Eileen Gagnon**, Principal, Hilltop Elementary

**Jamie Miller**, Assistant Principal, Solley Elementary



## AEL Mission Statement

The Association of Educational Leaders exists to ensure all Unit II employees are fairly and equitably treated in the course of their employment.

We commit to accomplishing this mission on behalf of Unit II employees by ensuring:

1. Adherence to our Negotiated Agreement.
2. All Unit II employees are adequately and equitably compensated for their responsibilities and work load.
3. Personal and professional needs shall be respected.
4. Fair, consistent and equitable practices shall be adhered to when dealing with hiring promotions, assignments and evaluations.
5. Fair, consistent, equitable practices in dealing with matters relating to discipline and conflict resolution.
6. Fair, consistent, equitable practices in resolving school and community conflicts.

The Association of Educational Leaders  
2521 Riva Rd., Suite L-2  
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### 2017-18 AEL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE/BOARD/STAFF

Will Myers (2017-21)	President	(P, South River HS)	(o)956-5600	<a href="mailto:wtmwants@aol.com">wtmwants@aol.com</a>
Nelson Horine (2017-21)	1st VP	(P, Anne Arundel Evening HS BOE)	(o) 222-5384	<a href="mailto:linnea.horine@gmail.com">linnea.horine@gmail.com</a>
Becky Blasingame-White (2017-21)	2nd VP	(P, Hebron-Harman Elementary)	(o) 859-4510	<a href="mailto:bblasingame-white@aacps.org">bblasingame-white@aacps.org</a>
Edie Picken (2016-20)	Secretary	(AP, South River HS)	(o) 956-5600	<a href="mailto:epicken@aacps.org">epicken@aacps.org</a>
Lou Anoff (2017-21)	Treasurer	(AP, Severna Park MS)	(o) 647-7900	<a href="mailto:lanoff@aacps.org">lanoff@aacps.org</a>
Patrick Bathras (2016-20)	Director at Large	(P, Severna Park HS)	(o)544-0900	<a href="mailto:pbathras@aacps.org">pbathras@aacps.org</a>
Jennifer Hernandez (2016-20)	Director at Large	(C, Div of Curriculum)	(o)222-5424	<a href="mailto:jhernandez3@aacps.org">jhernandez3@aacps.org</a>
Kevin Wajek (2017-2021)	Director at Large	(C, Secondary Mathematics HS)	(o) 224-5464	<a href="mailto:kwajek@aacps.org">kwajek@aacps.org</a>

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Kevin Wajek	(C, Secondary Mathematics HS)	<a href="mailto:kwajek@aacps.org">kwajek@aacps.org</a>

There are several Open Cluster Representative positions, please contact Bob Ferguson for more information.

#### STAFF

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