

the COMMENTATOR

Do You Know We Have an EDC?

By Susan Stillerman, Oak Grove

EDC stands for Educational Development Committee. The purpose of this committee is to discuss matters pertaining to the improvement of educational programs within the Wappingers Central School District. The formation of the EDC and its goals are stated in Article 14 of our current contract. "The District and the Congress agree that the professional personnel are, and should continue to be, a major source of developments and innovations in providing the educational programs carried on in the district."

The central EDC consists of six classroom teachers and six administrators. Each school has its own EDC subcommittee which meets to discuss issues in its own building.

The six classroom teachers on the district committee are usually the chairpersons from their respective schools. Thus, the central EDC members get to discuss their concerns with their colleagues and district administrators. Dr. Cheryl Thomas is our chairperson and reports directly to Mr. Powell.

This is the second year we have been meeting. The central EDC usually meets once a month. I joined this committee with much apprehension. After serving these past two years, I have come to believe that the EDC is an important tool for teachers to use. Issues are brought

up and discussed openly. As teachers, we often feel that no one is listening to us. The EDC is giving us the opportunity for that much-needed voice.

During the last two years, the issues we have discussed have included the school calendar, the Tri State accreditation system, Professional Development Day programs, ordering supplies from the Central Warehouse, report cards, 504 plans, IEP Direct training, and Special Education TA's.

We are also in the process of establishing a buddy system so that building EDC representatives not on the district EDC will have a central EDC member with whom to work.

The EDC is certainly not a panacea for all our concerns, but it is a beginning and a forum for our voices to be heard. Please bring your issues to your EDC committee and get involved in the process. Being able to have input in educational issues makes us all grow as professionals.



Inside This Issue:

NYSUT Dues Proposal	2	Celebrating with the WCT	4 - 5
Dates to Know	2	Retiree: Mary Sue Tkacs	6
Van Wyck Helps Raise Money for the March of Dimes	2	Sheafe Road Celebrates School Spirit Day	7
Retiree: Catherine Celtruda	3	Members' Classified Ads	7 - 8
New Orleans Teachers Thank NYSUT Members at 2007 RA	3		

NYSUT Dues Proposal

In the welcome packets that NYSUT delegates received after registering in Washington, D.C., was a pamphlet by Ivan Tiger, NYSUT Secretary-Treasurer. The pamphlet explains the dues proposal for 2007-08 and 2008-09 in a question and answer format. Below is a sampling of information from the pamphlet.

Q. What is the dues proposal for this period and can you provide a recent history of dues increases?

A. The NYSUT Board of Directors is recommending a \$10 dues increase in each of the next two years beginning September 1, 2007. This increase is less than the prior request in 2005 on both a dollar and percentage basis.

Q. What are our dues spent on?

A. We heavily depend on member dues to fund the operations of the organization, yet we continually develop our non-dues sources in an attempt to keep dues rates to a minimum. The largest expense area we have is our Field & Legal Services operation with 16 regional offices, over 120 Labor Relations Specialists, 36 attorneys, and 13 regional staff directors. These expenses provide programs and services directly to you, the NYSUT local and the NYSUT membership.

Dates to Know

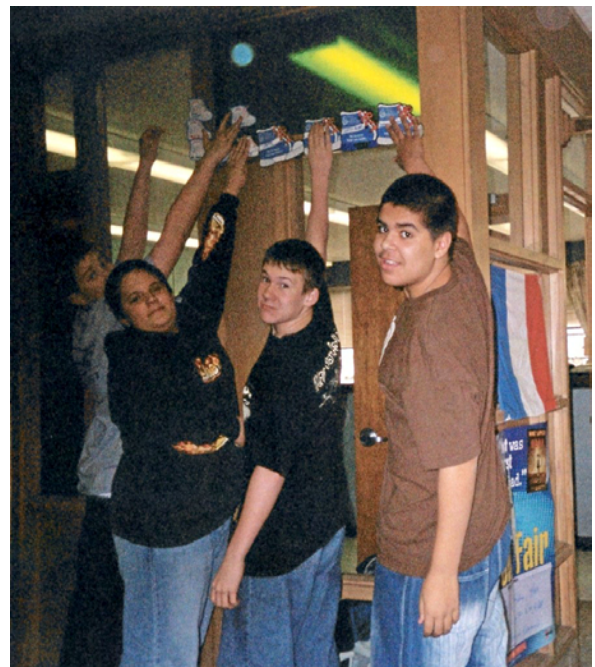
- May 21 - BOE meeting (KR, FP, & WJH)
- May 25 - Due to the April 16th storm, we have school
- May 28 - Memorial Day observed
- May 29 - R.A. meeting
- June 1 - payday
- June 11 - BOE meeting (VW, EV, VR, & OV)
- June 15 - payday
- June 19 - R.A. meeting

Van Wyck Helps Raise Money for the March of Dimes

By Ellen Korz

April 29 was Walk America, the event for the March of Dimes, held yearly at the FDR site. During the month of April, the students from Van Wyck sold "booties" and "sneakers" during their lunch periods to secure donations for research. Before we began the campaign, a group of students was visited by a representative from the March of Dimes. She explained the history of the organization, how the money is used, and why it's such a worthwhile cause. They even viewed a video showing how babies benefit from the ongoing research of the March of Dimes.

Over \$500 was raised on these sales and teachers' campaigns. The students proudly hung all the booties and sneakers in the lobby of Van Wyck.



(Van Wyck students hanging up booties and sneakers)

the WCT COMMENTATOR

Wappingers Congress of Teachers * 2537 Route 52 - Suite 15 * Hopewell Junction, NY 12533

(845) 227-5065, 5066 * FAX (845) 227-1977 * e-mail: wct@WCTeachers.org * web site: WCTeachers.org

Editor & VP Internal Communications: Meredith Inkeles * Proofreader: Betsy Solomon * Distribution: Peg Nikola & Ginny Marcus, WCRT

The deadline for the June 1st issue is **Monday, May 21st.**

Retiree: Catherine Celtruda

I began my career teaching fourth grade at Thomas Jefferson Elementary, Lakeland School District, Westchester County. After marrying and moving to Maryland, I taught sixth graders in Montgomery County Public Schools at Poolesville Elementary. Two children later and after several years at home child rearing, I moved back to New York and began to work in the Wappingers Central School District.

For the first four years of my career with WCSD, I worked as a substitute teacher at Gayhead, Brinckerhoff, and Fishkill Plains. An opportunity presented itself to work full time at Gayhead Elementary in 1985. I began to teach fourth grade, and now, twenty-two years later (where did the time go?) brings me to today and my approaching retirement.

While I look forward to retirement, I will dearly miss the camaraderie of the wonderful people (both teachers and staff alike) who together make Gayhead a great place to work. I will also miss the children and the many fine parents I have met over the years.

What I will not miss are the state tests that have been a part of fourth grade life for many years now, the frenetic pace and pressure that we sometimes face in our jobs, and the inability to work quietly at our desks on a day that we are not really feeling well.

Plans for the future...to relax a little; enjoy my grandchildren; read, read, and travel; to find some meaningful activity in which to immerse myself; and to enjoy each day.



New Orleans Teachers Thank NYSUT Members at 2007 RA

During the general session at the NYSUT RA, teachers from New Orleans were on hand to thank the members of NYSUT for their continued support. Since Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans is still struggling to open schools. The United Teachers of New Orleans (UTNO), the Louisiana Federation of Teachers (LFT), and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) are working to improve the current situation and provide quality education to all children.

Schools have been slow to reopen. Many families are not moving back to New Orleans because there are no schools for their children to attend, and even if there is a school, there is no free transportation. Even though few schools are open, the state-operated Recovery School District is finding it hard to hire qualified teachers and have even lowered qualifications in an effort to fill positions. Perhaps standards could have been kept had nearly all of New Orleans' 7,500 school employees not been fired after the hurricane struck.

NYSUT members have been very generous in helping Katrina victims, but the teachers of New Orleans still need our help. Help the AFT reach the goal of \$5 million

so that each of the nearly 10,000 members who have applied for assistance can receive a grant.

Please donate to the AFT Disaster Relief Fund. Your donation will be used exclusively to help AFT teachers, school support personnel, and other members who have suffered losses in hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma.

The IRS has approved the AFT Disaster Relief Fund as a charitable entity. All fund contributions made since the first hurricane's landfall are tax deductible to the extent permissible by the law. To contribute, go to the AFT web site at www.aft.org/katrina. Be sure to indicate your local on the online donation form.

Celebrating with the WCT: *End of Year Dinner Honoring the 2007 Retirees*



WCT President Pasquale Delli Carpini welcoming members, retirees, and special guests. The evening's special guests included WFW President Debra Fazzio-Cassidy, LRS Steve Berman, NYSUT Mid-Hudson Regional Staff Director Ann Harrison, NYSTRS Trustee Sheila Salenger, and WCT's 1st president Ralph Capasso.



Members from Fishkill Elementary



Members from Van Wyck - table 1



Members from John Jay



Members from Van Wyck fill two tables! They win the prize for most organized and most represented school.





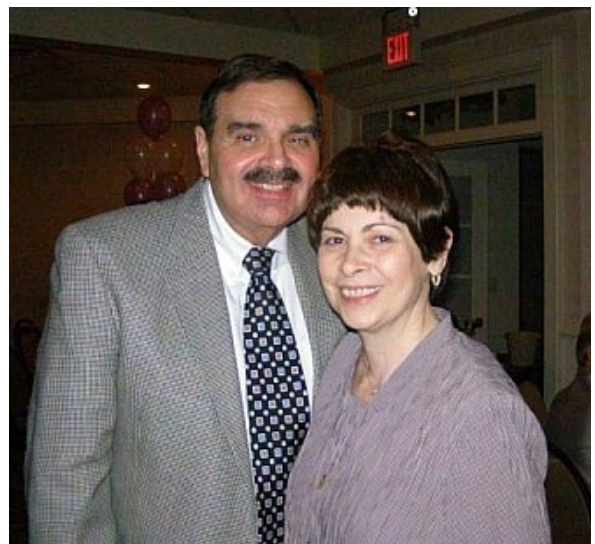
V.P. of Internal Communications, Meredith Inkeles, (Kinry Librarian) with NYSTRS Trustee, Sheila Salenger (former RCK Librarian).



WCT Office Secretary and party planner, Linda Leito, with V.P. of External Communications, Mary Ann Moran.



2007 retiree Tom Rogers, Pasquale Delli Carpini, and 2006 retiree Stephen Ciaccio



2007 retirees Bert and Rena Mazzuto



Retiree: Mary Sue Tkacs

Hum! I was asked to write about myself... That could be very dangerous! I will try to stay to the questions, but there is a lot of history here.

At the close of school, I will have 33 years 5 months of service with WCSD. My relationship with the district started as an intern in 1973, and as a long termed speech therapy substitute in January 1974. I was a graduate student at Rutgers University when Lawrence Gilmour hired me. Five months into the job, I was offered a newly created speech therapy position. I finished my graduate work at the College of St. Rose.

My first placement took me to Myers Corners and Fishkill Elementary Schools. Since then, I have provided speech services to Gayhead, Evans, and Sheafe Elementary Schools, both junior highs, and both high schools. I also traveled to St. Mary's School (WF), St. Mary's School (F), St. Columba (where I met my husband), and Randolph School.

In the early years of the Committee on Special Education, a permanent member representing each discipline was assigned. I was the assigned speech therapist. I have worked for many administrators: Mr. McGovern, Mr. Cutler, Mr. Lancto, Mr. Campanella, Mr. Barton, Mr. Raiche, Mr. Cole, Mr. Husted, Mr. Miller, Mr. Finch, Mr. Connelly, Mrs. Briggs, Dr. Mullen, Mrs. Lederstein, Ms. Buckingham, Dr. Wilhelm, and Dr. Gardner, just to name a few. There have been many special education coordinators, but none as gentle and kind as Don LaBarge.

In 2003, I had the opportunity to work as a Developmental Learning Specialist (DLS) at Sheafe Road, Evans, Vassar Road, and Fishkill Elementary Schools. Part of the job was to screen all incoming kindergarten students for developmental readiness skills, provide information and presentations to preschool programs within the WCSD, and provide remedial services for the low students and enrichment activities for the higher students. The DLS worked directly with the kindergarten teacher, supporting all academics but especially the Neuhaus Reading Program. The DLS also coordinated the necessary materials for the Bridge Program candidates. The DLS monitored the readiness skills on the assigned population throughout the school year. The district cut this program from the budget in March 2006.

I am now back working as a speech therapist at Oak Grove and Myers Corners Schools. At Myers, I am actually using the room I started in 1974. Now, that is full circle!

There will always be a special spot in my heart for Sheafe Road School. It is the place where I not only taught, but it is where my children started their formal learning process... first as toddlers visiting Mom, but then as students. As older students, my sons would return to volunteer for school festivals. Sheafe Road has a long history of supporting and assisting students, their families, and staff members in need. I was very blessed to be a part of that community for 27 years. It is "a special place to learn."

In my last year, I have become acquainted with Oak Grove School. OG has embraced me, and they have helped to make my last year pleasurable. They, too, have a rich history of helping students, their families, and staff in need. I am again very blessed.

I will definitely miss the children. Children make my world complete. I am especially fond of the kindergarten-age student. As a DLS, I was able to watch the average learning curve at its best. I will miss the school community, but I know it is time to move on.

I will not miss the central administrative or Board of Education's political arena that shades the work place. Nor will I miss not being provided with the essential materials required to complete a proper student assessment. Remember the administrative catch phrase, "Keep Children First"? I will not miss IEP's, slow computers, and my current 8 X 7 foot cubicle/classroom.

Narragansett, RI will become my new home. I have lived in Dutchess County my whole life, not living more than ten miles from my birth home. Since my husband is not yet able to retire, we will maintain a small apartment near his office.

I look forward to long walks with Dover (our beagle), wiggling my toes in the sand, enjoying a glass of wine while watching sunsets over the salt pond, Sunday mornings with my husband on the boat, getting reacquainted with my adult children, visits from my cousins and teaching friends, and a good dose of volunteer work. Life has been very good to me; it is time to give back.

Sheafe Road Celebrates School Spirit Day

Each month, Sheafe Road Student Council plans a "School Spirit Day." On the last Friday in April, we celebrated Crazy Hair Day. Almost every student participated in this fun event. Pictured in the library are fifth graders Kevin Powell, Michael Pascucci, and Mason Schmitt with the librarian, Mary Ann Boylan.



MEMBERS' CLASSIFIED ADS

HOUSE FOR SALE: Lovely custom built brick ranch on the south side of Poughkeepsie. Three bedrooms, one and a half baths, hardwood floors, fireplace, many new updates, all new thermal windows, new appliances, finished basement & laundry room, two car garage, beautiful level backyard with privacy fence, professionally landscaped. Listing Price \$345,000. Call Mike Harrington 845-221-1318. Express Realty Services.

FOR SALE: two bedroom townhouse in Wappingers. Great bargain for a first time owner. No commons fees, low taxes, many updates. Must Be Seen! \$189,500. Owner willing to negotiate. Contact M. Lare 838-2521 or 227-8510.

FOR SALE: 2 BR, 1 bath on large lot in town of Saugerties, NY. Move-in conditions, detached garage. Walk to river and park, close to Catskills. Asking \$137,900. MLS 20063533. Call Henry Sobek, Licensed Real Estate Broker (845) 256-6577 or e-mail tatydelph@aol.com.

FOR RENT: a week in Ocean City, Maryland. 2 bedroom, 2 bath condo for rent by owner; on the water (bayside); great sunsets; pool; boat docks; cross the street to the beach; great location (next to Convention Center); good summer weeks still available. Call Sandy 896-1678 for information and photos.

FOR SALE: 2003 Saturn L200, Automatic, medium blue, 4dr., 40K, ABS, TC, AC, CD, Very Good Condition \$9,500. (845) 297-4261.

FOR RENT: two bedroom cape on Martha's Vineyard. Large loft upstairs. No pets. Available Sunday, June 24th to Sunday, July 1st. \$850.00. If interested, please call Lorraine Blaszak at 221-3357 or 797-2019.

Why have a boring retirement party? You could have a DJ who will raise the roof and bring back the 3 decades of music that kept you going!!
Leave with a BLAST!!

Contact: **Memory Lane D.J. Services - Mr. Ramirez,**
Wappingers Jr. High Phone #:
845-255-6732

McGuiney Fencing

Mark D'Onofrio

Sean Keenan

Free Estimates - 914.490.5854

Over 20 Years Experience

Specializing in pools & residential fencing
Wood, Vinyl, Aluminum, & Chain Link

Very Reasonable Prices

FOR SALE: Hagtantown- 4B/2.5B, den, office, FR w/fp; new - granite kitchen, bamboo floors, and baths. C/A and more at 59 King George Rd - \$429,900. Open Houses May 12,13,19,20 from 1-4pm and by appt. 845-797-8034 Susan.

Continued on page 8

MEMBERS' CLASSIFIED ADS (continued from page 7)

Free Estimates
Chris Capasso
 Interior & Exterior
 Painting
 Gutter Cleaning, Roofing,
 Siding, Windows
 Power Washing & Staining
 Phone 845-242-8228

**SHIRLEY
 ROSICKE**

**PHOTOGRAPHY
 PORTRAITS**

Seniors, Families, Children
 Created in the studio or on location

Specializing in
WEDDING Photography.

Shirley Rosicke
 845-226-5019
www.ROSICKE.com

FOR SALE: One Mount Saint Mary College graduate course voucher, valued at \$1800.00, for sale @ \$1200.00 OBO. Contact 845-527-2192.

FOR SALE: Vero Beach Fl. Ocean condo, rental available, 2 bedrooms, 2 baths. \$850 plus tax per week. Available for sale \$225,000. Email me for pictures, waltfranca@yahoo.com.

FOR SALE: 2003 Mercedes C230 Kompressor, 4 cyl. 4 door, automatic, sunroof, black on black. 40,000 miles. Call 831-6057 for details.

FIREWORKS: Friday, August 24th @ 7:05 PM. Hudson Valley Renegades Baseball game. Reserved grandstand tickets \$10.00 each to benefit Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Call Kerry @ 223-9817 for more information.

Spook Hill Frames
 We will frame almost anything! 10 % WCT discount at all times!
 Call 297-1956

Like to Travel? Book Online!
www.reimertravel.com
 Vacations, Getaways, Cruises,
 Rental Cars, Flowers, &
 More!

It's a buyer's market in SW Florida! Beautiful new condos, houses, or realistically priced resales from the 150's. Call anytime with questions or e-mail for a list of properties to meet your specifications. Linda and Neil Cahill, EXIT Realty, greater Ft. Myers/Naples area. Call (914)-475-4484 or (239)-369-5639; Neil@exitierealty.com.

Never Clean Your Gutters Again!

**Dutchess
 GutterHelmet Inc.**

Gutter Protection Systems
 The First. The Best, The #1
 Gutter Protection System in
 the World

Joe Schmid - (845) 297-0500
www.gutterhelmet.com
gutterhelmet@verizon.net

***Special 15% discount to WCT Members**

LITTLE DEPOT
 Lionel, Williams, K-Line
Trains

6000 part inventory
REPAIR SERVICE
 by appointment only
OLD TRAINS BOUGHT
thelittledepot@earthlink.net
845-226-5019

KEEL SYSTEMS, LLC

Computer Setup/Repair/Improvements
 Software Setup and Instruction

Virus/Spyware Protection,
 Detection & Removal
 Data Backup & Recovery
 Networks: Wired/Wireless
 Mobile Computing
 (Laptops/PDAs)
 Digital Photography/
 VHS to DVD



Ed McKenna
 845-471-7607
Edmundmckenna@optonline.net

Kurt Hauptfuehrer
Audio and Video Recording

11 Park Drive, Apt. 103
 Pleasant Valley, NY 12569
 (845) 723-4081
KHAUPTFUEHRER@hvc.rr.com



Weddings Plays Concerts Recitals Audition Recordings
 Professional Equipment Custom Editing Titles and Graphics
 Custom Labels Digital Quality DVD production