

May 9, 2008

Vol. 36, No. 17

# the WCT COMMENTATOR

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## Members Attend Special Education Workshop

By Meredith Inkeles

Special Education issues have been at the forefront of the union agenda this school year. A Special Education Round Table which included teachers, parents, administration, and Board Trustees was established and gradually some concerns have been resolved. To help members understand the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and recent special education changes in New York State, WCT President, Pasquale Delli Carpini, asked David Rothfuss, from the NYSUT Research & Educational Services, to speak to the membership. David is fully qualified to speak on this topic since he was and elementary teacher, a special education teacher, and worked for State Ed for 14 years - checking on district's compliance with Special Education law.

On Monday, May 5, 2008, twenty-five WCT members along with Superintendent Powell and CSE Chairpersons Carolyn Ryan and Bonnie Hart, attended David's presentation in the Large Group Instruction room in Ketcham. Attendees were given an overview of the reauthorization of IDEA in

2004 and the resulting changes in New York State.

There was a great deal of useful information presented but the most poignant statistic of the afternoon was "that just about 64% of New York State students are classified LD (learning disabled)." Everyone walked away with a new understanding of the complexities of IDEA but due to the nature of Special Education laws and regulations, there were very few finite answers but a great deal of discussion and desire to learn more.



### Special Education Resources:

[www.nysut.org](http://www.nysut.org)

NYS Education Department Office of Vocational & Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) - [www.vesid.nysed.gov](http://www.vesid.nysed.gov)

VESID Special Education Quality Assurance Offices - [www.vesid.nysed.org/specialed/quality](http://www.vesid.nysed.org/specialed/quality)



# Evans Celebrates Literacy Day

By Deanna Olmo

On Friday, April 11, 2008, students at the James S. Evans Elementary School celebrated **Literacy Day**, which focused on the theme of **Perseverance!** The first activity, an interactive read aloud, was enacted by the students' classroom teacher. Some of the book titles included: The Little Engine That Could, The Little Red Hen, Snowflake Bentley, Owl's Journey, Jackie Robinson, John Henry, and The Memory String. Students were encouraged to explain how the character(s) in the story persevered. Teachers also utilized Thinking Maps® in order to demonstrate students' thought processes. The interactive read aloud was devoted to helping students become more aware that hard work, practice, patience, and determination are all important to achieving one's success and lifelong dream. The morning's read aloud and class discussions set an encouraging tone for the rest of the day's events.

Students were engaged in a variety of literacy activities. Sixth

graders were answering challenging trivia questions. Fifth graders were on a mission in a scavenger hunt, and then participated in Jeopardy Trivia. Fifth graders also made memory key chains as an extension from the morning's read aloud, The Memory String by Eve Bunting. Fourth graders sculpted stone owl's in art, which were made out of red earth clay. Students also created "*a hands of perseverance garden*" in which they wrote words and/or phrases that have to do with perseverance on hand-shaped cutouts. Third graders learned how to set up and create their very own power point slide show presentation with graphics. They also enjoyed interactive sing-alongs. As second graders were being entertained with storytelling, others were describing character traits of John Henry on flower petals. First graders persevered through interactive games using the Smart Board and had a great time listening to stories, while playing musical instruments along with the book. Kinder-garten and self-contained classes built sentences with blocks, using the book The Little Engine That Could, while second and third grade self-contained classes were read short stories and answered questions on the Smart Board using the reading program (RAZ for Kids).

Not only did Evans students develop an

understanding of the concept of **perseverance** through the various games and activities, but also students were able to identify and share examples of how they have shown perseverance from their life experiences.

To end our Literacy Day event on an even more memorable note, Evans students had the opportunity to meet Dan Greenburg, author of Secrets of Dripping Fang and the Zach Files. Mr. Greenburg captivated students' attention and left them anxiously wanting more as he gave a thrilling book talk of his first book in the series, Secrets of Dripping Fang: The Onts. He also shared some of his writer's secrets as well as his wild adventures with lions and tigers on a ranch in Texas. Mr. Greenburg ended his presentation with a story of how he had to persevere and be persistent in his career in order to become a successful and best-selling author of children's literature. In addition, students (grades four to six) participated in a book raffle, in which seven lucky students received Secrets of Dripping Fang, Book One: The Onts. Mr. Greenburg personalized and autographed students' books.

A tremendous thank you goes out to all staff members and parent volunteers who helped make this a special day for the students at Evans. As Abraham Lincoln once said, **"I do the best I know how – the very best I can; and I mean to keep on doing so until the end."**





# Union News Updates via E-mail

Want to know up-to-date information about what is going on with the AFT, NYSUT, and WCT?

Then sign up to receive informational e-mails!

By filling out the form below and sending it in to the WCT Office, you will be "in the loop" with everything going on in the world of Teacher's Unions – reminders about meetings, legislative decisions, union election results, where to purchase fair trade items and so much more!

Please be aware that you can only sign up with a NON-SCHOOL E-MAIL ACCOUNT. No GroupWise e-mail addresses will be used! E-mail addresses will be kept private and you can unsubscribe at any time by sending an email to [unsubscribe@wcteachers.org](mailto:unsubscribe@wcteachers.org).

Please return this portion of the page to the WCT Office to receive important updates from the union.

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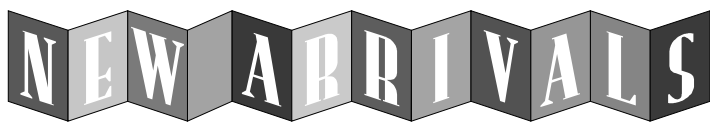
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## Good News!

• Congratulations to **Nikole Seipp**, first grade teacher at Gayhead Elementary, and husband Rob, as they welcomed their son, Austin Michael to the world on April 27th, 2008.

• Congratulations to **Krista Robinson**, Art teacher at Gayhead Elementary, and husband Wayne as they welcomed Jackson Anthony to the world on April 19, 2008.

• Congratulations to **Mary Jane McFarland**, Science Teacher at John Jay, and husband John on the birth of their son Peyton Xavier. Payton was born April 18, 2008 and weighed 6 lbs, 13 oz.



Only 32 more days left  
of the 2007-2008  
s c h o o l  
year!



## Dates to Know

### MAY:

- **WCT Recognition Dinner - May 16, 2008**
- BOE meeting - May 19, 2008 (VW, JJ, & OG)
- Budget vote - May 20, 2008
- pay day - May 23, 2008
- no school - May 23, 2008
- no school - May 26, 2008

### JUNE:

- pay day - June 6, 2008
- BOE meeting - June 9, 2008 (MC, EV, KR, & OG)
- pay day - June 20, 2008
- pay day - June 26, 2008

## Members' Classified Ads

**FOR RENT:** The Villages Florida. 2 bedroom 2 bath ranch home w/golf course view. Check out the best place for retirement living, and only 1 hour to Orlando and the attractions. Golf cart included in rental. Come see what former retirees, the Schinella's, Frappier's, Ridolph's, Pauldine's, Meier's and Knickerbocker's have come to know and love. Contact Mike for information at 352-217-7738.

**WEEKLY SUMMER RENTAL:** 2 bedroom duplex steps to the ocean and bay beaches of Surf City, Long Beach Island, New Jersey. Reasonable rates. Take the Garden State Parkway to exit 63. Less than 3 hours from southern Dutchess County. Call Olga 845 226-8030.

**FOR SALE:** oak dining room set, two piece lighted hutch/buffet. Dining table with two leaves and six bow back chairs. Asking \$450.00 for all. Call Linda at 724-5661.

(continued on page 5)

# Members' Classified Ads continued

**FOR SALE:** Lovely custom built brick ranch on the south side of Poughkeepsie. Three bedrooms, one and a half baths, hardwood floors, arched doorways, two-zone heating, 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. Great House!! Reduced price \$285,000. Call Dan 845-656-2391.

**FOR SALE:** one bedroom co-op in Rombout Village, this unit has a view of the Hudson River from deck, hardwood floors, crown molding, new kitchen appliances, central air, community pool, tennis courts, lovely country setting. Asking \$138,000. Call Joe at 845-416-3081.

Discount hotel accommodations for Wyndham Sugar Bay Resort & Spa, St. Thomas Virgin Islands. Good for travel from July 2 - July 18. For reservations call 1 800 927 7100. The discount code is Reiki Certification. If you need more info, call 454 1732.

**ROOMMATE NEEDED:** Room available at Fox Hill Condo's in Pok. \$700/month all included. Fully furnished. No smoking, no pets. Contact Kristie at 416-4072 with questions.

**FOR SALE:** Air conditioning, refrigeration tools & parts. Owner retired. Too much to list. \$4,500.00. For more info & complete list call: (845) 453-3441.

**FOR SALE:** GE Chest Freezer, 48 in. long, 32 in. high, 28 in. deep - GOOD CONDITION. \$100.00 Call: (845) 226-8769.

**FOR RENT:** Vacation in Ocean City, Maryland. 2 bedroom/2 bath CONDO, on the water (bayside). 1st floor unit, next to pool, beautiful sunsets, just cross the street to the beach - centrally located, close to everything. Contact Sandy for information at 896-1678.

**FOR FREE:** Beautiful coal stove - cast iron with ceramic tile covering - made in Germany. If interested, contact Ellen Korz at Van Wyck.

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**GARAGE SALE: 5/16 & 5/17 (rain date - 5/30 & 5/31).** Furniture, household items (domestics), games, children's books, collectibles, patio furniture. **11 Earlwood Dr.** off Boardman Rd. - POK, NY.