

Oct. 24, 2008

Vol. 37, No. 4

the WCT COMMENTATOR

Inside this Issue:

Learn About or Participate in Breast Cancer Studies	3
Health Insurance Open Enrollment Period	3
Fair Trade is Not Just for Coffee and Chocolate	3
Preretirement Planning Seminars	4
2008 - 2009 Pay Days	4
Members' Classified Ads	5
Board of Education Meetings Schedule	6
Financial Advisor Dates	6

Fellow Teacher Fights Road Rage

Conrad Gagnon came to Wappingers in 1969, the year of John Jay's birth. He taught French and coached Varsity Soccer. Conrad spent time teaching at all the other secondary schools, adding ESL to his instruction skills during his 24 years of service at Van Wyck.



(Conrad displaying the PAX NOBISCUM signal)

After "graduating" from teaching in 1998, Conrad turned to his natural selling skills, and worked for the next five years at Raymour and Flanigan. During this time, he continued his forte of helping students, and other teachers as a substitute in Millbrook, Dover, Webutuck, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Poughkeepsie. He says, "I gladly got to work with the best administrator I ever knew...Gabe Ponte. He was my principal at Van Wyck and OLMC. I continue to substitute and love it."

Conrad Gagnon is on a crusade against Road Rage. In 1997, the father of one of his students was shot and killed by a Road-Rager on Route 84 in Fishkill. The assailant still remains unknown. One day, on Route 17K in Newburgh, Conrad found himself in a confrontational road-rage situation with a vehemently angry driver. This driver was proffering common obscene gestures to convey his wrath, and creating an obviously dangerous situation.

"I had no way of conveying to him that I didn't care who was at fault. Nothing was worth his livid display. Plus, how much of this anger was he taking home? Was it worth it?" says Conrad. He felt helpless and wished that there were some way of exhibiting a recognizable gesture that would, at least indicate that he meant no harm.

(Continued on page 2)



Fellow Teacher Fights Road Rage

(Continued from front cover)

Inspired by his Army combat training which required the use of silent hand and arm signals, he came up with a gesture which signals “Peace.” It’s a “Road-Rage Relief Symbol” he calls *Pax Nobiscum*. It can be exhibited as quickly as the notorious social finger, yet convey the exact opposite message.

“Peace” holds a special meaning for Conrad. In 1963, he met Dr. Martin Luther King at Saint Francis College (now the University of New England) in Biddeford, Maine. The word “hate” has always been forbidden in his classrooms and he says, “It’s the opposite of love and shouldn’t exist.”

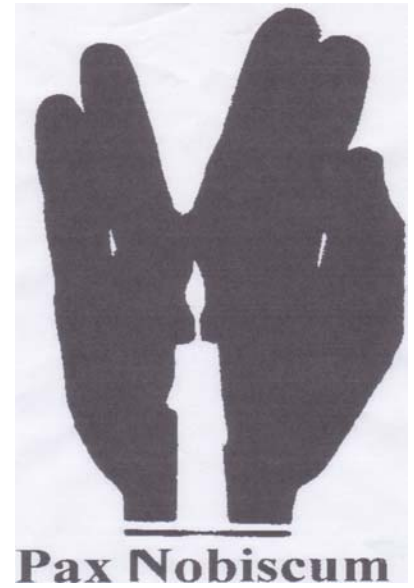
“Pax Vobiscum” is a traditional ritual Latin wish: “Peace be with you.” By changing the V to an N, the peace wish is changed from being with “you” to being with “us.”

The mission is for both parties to be aware that peace is being signaled and desired in return: “I need it as much as you do, so let us both wish each other as immediate resolution. See my hand?...PAX!”

1 **RAGER** + 1 **RAGER** = **FIGHT**
1 **RAGER** + 1 **PAXER** = **NO FIGHT**
1 **PAXER** + 1 **PAXER** = **PEACE**



Recently, Conrad was published in the *New York Teacher*. Pete Seeger, with whom Conrad has performed, is a beloved ally in this cause. You can read Pete’s personal endorsement message (in his own hand) on Conrad’s web site.



David J. Swarts, New York State Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, told Conrad, “We will take your suggestion of having a Road Rage Relief signal into consideration.”

Conrad explained, “I have three adult children who are New York State drivers. My teenage daughter got her driver’s permit in June. My other teen daughter gets hers next year. My granddaughter gets hers in ten. Shouldn’t we all, drivers and passengers, travel more safely on our roads by putting on our mental seat belts? If you agree with the PAX concept, please write letters of support - good-old handwritten letters; they’re the most effective at motivating influential people. This is now a genuine ‘grass-roots’ movement, so use the site to link up and motivate friends and family to get involved, no matter where in the world they live.”

“Educators of the WCT and WCRT, please help. This will save lives! Wouldn’t it be reassuring to see a smiling PAX “candle” behind every steering wheel...including our own? PAX it on!”

He requests that you visit his web site at www.ConradPaxNobiscum.com. Pax Nobiscum, POB 1004, Millbrook, NY 12545 (845-677-3893)

Learn About or Participate in Breast Cancer Studies



By Hannah Abrahamson

The Dr. Susan Love Research Foundation, a highly recognized research group, is trying to recruit one million healthy women to find out what causes breast cancer, and then ways to prevent it. Most research now focuses on treatment of the already diseased breast. Researches have limited access to healthy women, but we can all help. By

going to www.armyofwomen.org we can sign up to be notified of future studies in our area. Women will always have the option to choose to participate or not in a given study. It takes a minute to sign up. Do it now. Dr. Love said she believes there will be a cure for breast cancer IN HER LIFETIME. Wouldn't THAT be awesome!

Health Insurance Open Enrollment Period

November is the month you have the opportunity to change your health insurance plan. There are four meetings scheduled with representatives from MVP, CDPHP and Empire Blue Cross & Blue Shield (Blue Choice PPO). There will be a question and answer period following a brief presentation from each representative.

Anyone electing to change their health insurance plan must complete an application and return it to Carleen Scherer in the Business Office by Wednesday, November 26. Applications may be obtained in the Business Office for any one of the three plans. If you have any questions, please contact Carleen at (845) 298-5000 extension 113.

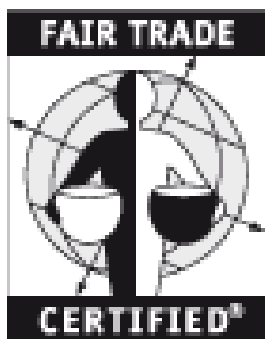
If you elect to change your insurance plan, it will become effective January 1, 2009. You will be covered by your present plan through December 31, 2008.

If you do not wish to change your insurance plan, you do not have to call Carleen Scherer.

Schedule of Meetings:

1. November 3, 2008 - District Office - 10AM - Conference Room B
2. November 7, 2008 - Van Wyck - 3PM - Library
3. November 12, 2008 - Myers - 5:30PM - Library
4. November 14, 2008 - Oak Grove - 4PM - Library

REMINDER: Please remember, there is a three month waiting period if you want to change from individual to family coverage without a qualifying event or have a buy-out and wish to enroll for health insurance with a January 1, 2009 effective date. You will have to submit an application for health insurance by October 31, 2008 to Carleen Scherer in the Business Office. Please keep in mind there is a three month waiting period for these changes. Please call Carleen if you have any questions.



Fair Trade is Not Just for Coffee and Chocolate

The next time you want to send someone flowers, look for the Fair Trade Certified™ label. 1-800-FLOWERS currently offer four Fair Trade Certified™ bouquets. Fair Trade Certified™ products directly support a better life for farmers and farm

workers in the developing world through fair prices, community development and environmental stewardship. The bouquets are produced in accordance with Fair Trade criteria and certified by TransFair USA, the only independent third-party certifier of Fair Trade products in the United States.

Preretirement Planning Seminars

These daylong meetings are designed to help active NYSTRS members age 45 and older prepare for retirement. During the course of the day, discussions are devoted to: System benefits; financial planning; legal affairs; adjusting to retirement; Social Security; and, other pertinent topics. Please note that these seminars are not designed for one-on-one retirement counseling. Spouses/companions are eligible to attend. Seminars are held 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., with registration from 8 to 8:30 a.m. There is no fee to attend, but you must register in advance. Go to www.nystrs.org or call (800) 356-2138, Ext. 6180.

Albany - October 20 & December 9

Fishkill - October 31

Tarrytown - December 11

TO MAKE A RESERVATION: Register online or please call the Retirement System in Albany at (800) 356-3128, Ext. 6180 and specify the seminar you wish to attend. Telephone reservations can only be made weekdays during the normal business hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. When calling, please provide your EmplID (preferred) or Social Security number, date of birth, home address and home telephone number. Also indicate if your spouse/companion is attending. If your spouse/companion is also a member, please have the above information for him/her too. Please bring a photo ID and your most recent Benefit Profile with you to the seminar. If you make a reservation and subsequently cannot attend, please call the number above to cancel so we can offer this reservation to another member.

2008 - 2009 Pay Days

- Thursday, October 30, 2008
- Friday, November 14, 2008
- Wednesday, November 26, 2008
- Monday, December 15, 2008
- Tuesday, December 30, 2008
- Thursday, January 15, 2009
- Friday, January 30, 2009
- Friday, February 13, 2009
- Friday, February 27, 2009
- Friday, March 13, 2009
- Monday, March 30, 2009
- Wednesday, April 15, 2009
- Thursday, April 30, 2009
- Friday, May 15, 2009
- Friday, May 29, 2009
- Monday, June 15, 2009
- Friday, June 26, 2009



*Have a Happy and
Safe Halloween!*

What happens when 150,000 people
book a vacation together?

+ You get some amazing discounts.



A Union of Professionals

AFT +
Member Benefits

buy where it counts!
www.aftplus.org



AFT has an expense reimbursement and/or endorsement arrangement for marketing this program. For more information, please contact AFT Financial Services at 800/238-1133, ext. 4493; send an e-mail to disclosureinfo@aft.org; or visit www.aftplus.org/disclosure.

Members' Classified Ads



KEEL SYSTEMS, LLC

Computer (PC/Mac) 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

EdmundTMckennaJr@gmail.com

Are you thinking of buying or selling a home now or in the future?

For a market analysis of your home or a referral to buy a home, call me or e-mail me:

Chuck Deppe

845-227-3859

ctdep1@optonline.net

25+ years of Real Estate experience, locally and nationally
A WCT member for 40 years

"Every day is a new day in real estate!"

Chuck Deppe

Licensed Real Estate Salesperson
Houlihan Lawrence Realty
Route 52

Hopewell Jct., NY 12533

FOR SALE: *Norman Rockwell and Bertha Hummel Collector Plates— call for more info. *Ensoniq MR76 weighted synthesizer electronic keyboard. Great piano sounds. Comes with original manual - stand included—\$275. *SANYO HT27547 27" Flat Tube TV—\$80. *VERY LARGE set (2) CRATE Amplifier/Speakers—\$300. Call Rich at 229-5940.

FOR SALE BY OWNER: 1 bed, 1 bath co-op in Rombout Village. Park like setting, steps from historic Mt. Gulian and Hudson River. New floors, ceramic tiled kitchen and bath, freshly painted, central air. Close to I-84 and Metro North. Enjoy the inground pool, tennis courts and dog run. Commons fees are tax deductible. Asking 126,000. Call Jenn- 914-204-5932.

FOR SALE: Vermont Castings Defiant Wood Stove. Rubber Mats for Volvo XC-90 - front, rear, and cargo area. Weather Tech Front and Rear Window Rain Guards. Four 17 inch 1000 Miglia Rims, 225/45 7R17 Avon Tires for Audi A4 Quattro, will split. 18 ft. pool, no liner, 2 speed pump, soar heater, manta pool cleaner, vacuum accessories. Pool ladder and stairs. Loop lock cover. Outdoor Christmas lights for roof and bushes. Call 845-896-7664.

Free Estimates

CHRIS CAPASSO

Interior & Exterior Painting
Gutter Cleaning, Roofing, Siding,
Windows
Power Washing & Staining

Phone: 845-242-8228

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 20% discount to WCT Members

Absolute Masonry Services

"Experienced Masons Serving the Hudson Valley"

Stone * Cultured Stone * Brick * Gardens
* Patios * Walls * Walkways * Concrete *
Block * Stucco * Fireplace & Chimney
Veneer * All Masonry Repairs

Scott D Cafarella - Masonry Contractor

Phone: (845) 883-0086

Cell: (845) 401-7787

E-mail: Vmason77@aol.com

FOR RENT: Carriage House - Studio (Utilities Included) \$895/month. Single Occupancy. Private Entrance/ Building. Off Street Parking. Furnished/ Utilities included. Large Private Deck. Private Bath; Living, Kitchen, Dining, Office Areas w/ Loft Bed. Family Basic Cable Included. Easy Access to Main Roads. No Smoking, No Pets & No Waterbeds. Serious Inquiries Only. Available: 10-1-08. Phone: 845-849-2781.



STACY McCUSKER

Licensed Sales Agent & WCT Member

(845) 452-1156 BUSINESS

(845) 453-9113 CELL

(845) 452-1631 FAX

stacy.mccusker@coldwellbanker.com



CURRIER & LAZIER REALTORS®

4 Commerce Street, Suite B-2

Poughkeepsie, NY 12603

www.coldwellbankerhudsonvalley.com

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

LITTLE DEPOT

Lionel, Williams,

K-Line

Trains

6000 part inventory

REPAIR SERVICE

by appointment only

OLD TRAINS BOUGHT

thelittledepot@earthlink.net

845-226-5019

**Wappingers Congress
of Teachers**

2537 Route 52, Suite 15
Hopewell Junction, NY 12533

**NYSUT 13-270
AFT 1989**

phone:
(845) 227-5065

fax:
(845) 227-1977

email:
wct@WCTeachers.org

WCT President:
Pasquale Delli Carpini

**Editor & V.P. of Internal
Communications:**
Meredith Inkeles

Proofreader:
Diane Davis

Distribution:
Peg Nikola & Alice Heusinger,
WCRT



**We're on the Web!
see us at:**

WCTeachers.org

Board of Education Meetings

Schedule *(meetings are held at the District Offices at 8:15 PM)*

- October 27, 2008 - Fishkill Plains, Ketcham, Orchard View
- November 3, 2008 - Fishkill, Sheafe, Wappingers
- November 17, 2008 - Evans, John Jay, Myers
- December 1, 2008 - Brinckerhoff, Oak Grove, Van Wyck
- December 15, 2008 - Gayhead, Kinry, Vassar
- January 12, 2009 - Ketcham, Orchard View, Sheafe
- January 26, 2009 - Fishkill, Fishkill Plains, Wappingers
- February 9, 2009 - Evans, Myers, Van Wyck
- February 23, 2009 - Brinckerhoff, John Jay, Orchard View
- March 9, 2009 - Gayhead, Sheafe, Vassar
- March 23, 2009 - Ketcham, Kinry, Oak Grove
- April 6, 2009 - Evans, Fishkill, Wappingers
- April 26, 2009 (TUESDAY) - Fishkill Plains, Myers, Van Wyck
- May 4, 2009 - Brinckerhoff, John Jay, Vassar
- May 18, 2009 - Gayhead, Orchard View, Sheafe
- June 8, 2009 - Ketcham, Wappingers

Financial Advisor Dates

A financial consultant from Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. will be in the WCT office:

- November 5 & 19
- December 3 & 17
- January 7 & 21
- February 4 & 18
- March 4 & 18
- April 15 & 29
- May 6 & 20
- June 3 & 17



Appointments are one (1) hour in length from 2 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on a first come first served basis. Since these slots fill up very quickly, **call as soon as possible**. The WCT office number is 227-5065. If the above dates are not convenient for you, call Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. 1-888-949-1925 directly and other arrangements may be possible.