

Sept. 26, 2008

Vol. 37, No. 2

# the WCT COMMENTATOR

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## WCT Donated Books to Community Seniors

By: Emily Guthoff, PR Committee

Wappingers Congress of Teachers values the seniors in our community. To show our appreciation the WCT donated \$1,000 worth of new books and books on tape to the Wappingers, East Fishkill, and Fishkill Senior Centers and Wingate at Dutchess.

The show of enthusiasm by the seniors was overwhelming. They couldn't wait to look through some of the books with clips and photographs of old time movie stars. We could hear them reminiscing about the Duke and other Silver Screen stars.

It gave us a feeling of satisfaction to give back to our seniors, who have given so much to our communities.



*(Pictured on the left: Emily Guthoff and Ellen Korz with seniors from the East Fishkill Senior Center)*



*(Pictured on the right: Emily Guthoff and Ellen Korz with seniors from the Wappingers Senior Center)*



## Editor's Note

*Hearing from the Members*

So here we are with the second issue of the new electronically delivered *WCT COMMENTATOR*. I'd like to say a very special thank you to all the members who contacted me pertaining to the new format. I have received some positive feedback and insightful suggestions.

Based on conversations and e-mails, members felt that if the articles would be easier to read on the computer screen if there was more of a horizontal lay-out instead of the long vertical columns. I will do my best to incorporate this format.

If you have any suggestions or comments about the newsletter, please be sure to e-mail me at [commentator@wcteachers.org](mailto:commentator@wcteachers.org). This is also the address to send articles, pictures, good news, and ads. I look forward to hearing from you!

In Solidarity,  
Meredith Inkeles

## WCSD Teacher Publishes New Algebra Review

By: Paul Stitch

Chellie Milanese (WFJHS/RCK) has co-authored a new high school review: Integrated Algebra X-treme Review. Chellie and Monica Grazul of Arlington Central Schools (ret.) partnered in a 10 month effort to produce a ground-breaking book that preps students for the new Regents Test for the revised math syllabus.

Released this month by N&N Publishing Company, Middletown, the new book covers the 9th and 10th Grade performance indicators, with informational reminders,

practice drills, and test prep questions. Chellie's new book is her fourth endeavor, having published previous reviews in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade mathematics.

N&N Publishing of Middletown was founded by Wappingers educators from John Jay and RCK over twenty-five ago, first producing books in high school science and now offering a full line of affordable reviews for intermediate and commencement level tests and general achievement.

## Book Club Bonus Points Help the Community

By: Cathy Celtruda, Gayhead Retiree

No use for those extra book club bonus points? Consider donating them!

The AAUW (American Association of University Women) has a very active program called Leading to Reading. Over the past five years, through donations and grants, hundreds of book kits have been distributed throughout Dutchess County to daycare centers, homeless shelters, after school projects, emergency shelters, and pre-school programs. Volunteers (many of them your former colleagues: retired WCSD teachers) put together and distribute kits of new books that provide opportunities to encourage children to read, and love it too.

Some recipients of these reading kits have included the Family Development Day Care Center, Beacon Even Start, Hudson River Lodging, Astor Pre-School Program, Tubman Terrace After School Program, Catharine Street Community Center and The Children's Home of Poughkeepsie.

Share your extra book club bonus points with needy children in our community. For more information contact: Cathy Celtruda at [cmcelt@optonline.net](mailto:cmcelt@optonline.net) or 227-5941 or Betty Harrel at [bharrel28@msn.com](mailto:bharrel28@msn.com) or 462-2141. Thanks for your help!

# WCSD Co-Sponsors Battle of the Books

By: Meredith Inkeles

The 4th annual Mid-Hudson Battle of the Books Regional Competition took place on Saturday, September 13, 2008 at Ketcham High School. Battle of the books started out in the 1930's as a Chicago radio program. Now it is a reading program for students in libraries and classrooms across the country where participants read the same books and then answer questions where the correct response is always the title of a book and the author's name.

For the Mid-Hudson competition, students in grades six through eight must read the selected ten titles and then meet over the summer for team training. This year's titles were All of the Above by Shelley Pearsall, The Boggart by Susan Cooper, Code talker: A Novel about the Navajo Marines of World War Two by Joseph Bruchac, Downsiders by Neal Shusterman, Hero by S. L. Rottman, The Last Book in the Universe by Rodman Philbrick, A Northern Light by Jennifer Donnelly, Shakespeare's Secret by Elise Broach, Sleeping Freshmen Never Lie by David Lubar, and The Wizard of Oz by L. Frank Baum.

Fifteen area libraries participated in rounds consisting of 25 questions based on the assigned books. WCSD students were members of the Grinell Grizzlies and



*(The Grinell Grizzlies on the Ketcham stage answer a question read by Scott Meyer, owner of Merritt Books.)*

the Poughkeepsie Book Talkers. The Grizzlies beat the Stone Ridge Rockers and the Staatsburg Stars before they were eliminated by Butterfield Bookmarks (Cold Spring) in the 6th round. The Book Talkers beat the Kinderhook Super Squad, the Valatie Vulcans, and the Raiders of the Lost Books (Red Hook) to meet the Butterfield Bookmarks (Cold Spring) in the Grand Championship Round. After an intense round of questions, the Butterfield Bookmarks (Cold Spring) were once again named champions.

For more information about what Battle of the Books is or about the Mid-Hudson Battle, visit <http://midhudson.org/departement/youth/bob/Main.htm>.

## NYSUT Offers Discounts at Barnes & Noble.com

NYSUT members and agency fee payers can save money by buying books, music and videos online. If you need back-to-school supplies, college textbooks, books on your favorite interests or that new bestseller - you should be able to find them all at up to 40% off at the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed Barnes & Noble.com customized Online Bookstore.

Eligible products include books, textbooks (new and used), DVDs, music, gifts and more.

- NYSUT members receive an additional 5% discount by using the link off the Member Benefits web site.

- You also save with free shipping when you spend \$25 or more on any products that include the Fast & Free Delivery message box - see the customized site for details.

- Orders with eligible products will be delivered within three business days of leaving the B&N.com warehouse. Add books to your shopping cart to view the discounted prices.

If you intend to bookmark the site as a favorite, be sure to do so by clicking on the "Please click here to bookmark this website" link posted on the customized online bookstore. This will ensure you save the correct site that provides the Member Benefits discount. Please be aware that this offer is not available in Barnes & Noble retail stores.

To visit the Member Benefits-endorsed Barnes & Noble.com Online Bookstore and check out some great deals online, go to [www.memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://www.memberbenefits.nysut.org) and click on the Discounts tab.

# New Tenure Determination Law Use of Peer Review

(NYSUT Information Bulletin No. 20018 - August 8, 2008)

By: Sylvia Saunders

It's a whole new tenure review process for teachers whose probationary period began on or after July 1.

Under a new statewide law that sets minimum requirements, the tenure determination process for teachers providing instructional services in school districts and BOCES must now include:

- an evaluation of the extent to which the teacher successfully uses analysis of available student performance data and other relevant information when providing instruction;
- peer review by other teachers, "as far as practicable"; and
- an assessment of the teacher's performance by the building administrator.

NYSUT successfully pushed for amendments to the new law to prohibit school districts and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services from using student test scores to grant or deny tenure.

The union also successfully fought to change the effective date, which would have created widespread confusion if applied to teachers already in the tenure process.

Now, the new standards apply only to teachers whose probationary period began on or after July 1 of this year.

NYSUT Vice President Maria Neira noted the process for evaluating teachers remains a mandatory subject of collective bargaining.

Both NYSUT and the State Education Department agree that "as far as practicable" means that peer review by other teachers can occur only when collectively bargained.

NYSUT's Educational Services department is planning a one-day seminar in December to provide research-based information on peer review and implications for collective bargaining to teams from interested locals.

The union will share examples where some locals have negotiated peer review programs that contribute to a two-way, more supportive induction and mentoring process. Neira said professional development will be needed so teachers can learn the best ways to analyze and use student test data to improve instruction.

Over the summer NYSUT's Education & Learning Trust and the American Federation of Teachers offered data training. More will be scheduled.

NYSUT has posted an information bulletin on tenure at [www.nysut.org](http://www.nysut.org), under the Resources section. The law sunsets in two years, meaning the Legislature may revisit it in 2010.

## Are You Done Paying Your 3%?

If you are a Tier 3 or 4 member, you will stop making 3% required contributions when you attain 10 years of credit or membership, whichever occurs first. When you reach this milestone, you will receive a letter from the NYSTRS. If you have gotten this letter, be sure your paycheck read 0.00 under deductions for TRS EMPLR.



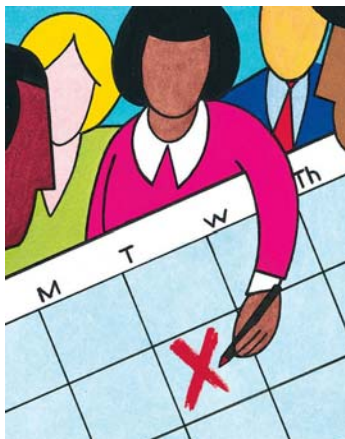
# Board of Education Meetings

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

- October 14, 2008 (TUESDAY) - Gayhead, Kinry, Vassar
- 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

## 2008 - 2009 Pay Days

- Tuesday, September 30, 2008
- Wednesday, October 15, 2008
- 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



## Financial Advisor Dates

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

- October 8 & 22
- 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.

# Look at what's available to you!

Through your membership in NYSUT, you have access to a variety of programs and services endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits Trust. Every endorsed program is monitored on a regular basis for participation, member satisfaction, utilization and product competitiveness.

<p><b>Insurance plans</b> include term life, catastrophe major medical, disability, auto, home, boat, personal excess liability, long-term care, WrapPlan term life insurance coordination plan, accidental death &amp; dismemberment, vision, and retiree dental.</p>	<p><b>Financial and legal services</b> include online banking, mortgage services, credit monitoring service, consumer credit counseling services, and a legal service plan.</p>
<p><b>Discounts</b> include OfficeMax, Bose, Dell Computers, Barnes &amp; Noble.com, Working Advantage (discount tickets and more), Lifeline Medical Alert Service, car and truck rentals, Six Flags, The Buyer's Edge Buying Service, and HEAT USA. Be sure to check the Member Benefits Web site, <a href="http://www.memberbenefits.nysut.org">www.memberbenefits.nysut.org</a>, for particulars on these discounts, because some you can only receive by linking off the Member Benefits site. Many have unique ID numbers.</p>	<p><b>Other services</b> include MAP (Member Assistance Program), an e-mail information service; payroll and pension deduction of Member Benefits-endorsed programs, which often yield reduced premiums or additional coverage; Consumer's Guides on Automobile Insurance, Homeowners and Renters Insurance, Legal Services, Long-Term Care Insurance, Long-Term Disability Insurance and 403(b) Plans; and MetDESK (Division of Estate Planning for Special Kids).</p>
<p><b>Workshops include</b> Defensive Driving, Identity Theft, and Unraveling the Mysteries of Credit and Credit Reports. Workshops are scheduled by your local president, chapter leader, retiree council leader or retiree chapter leader.</p>	

**To request more information, call Member Benefits at (800) 626-8101, e-mail [benefits@nysutmail.org](mailto:benefits@nysutmail.org), or visit [www.memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://www.memberbenefits.nysut.org).**

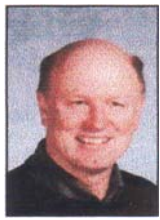
Some benefits may not be available in all local associations.

For information about these programs or about contractual expense reimbursement/endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits Trust or refer to your NYSUT Member Benefits Trust Summary Plan Description.

Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed programs.



# Members' Classified Ads



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**Ed McKenna - 845-471-7607**

**EdmundTMckennaJr@gmail.com**

**FOR RENT:** Georgetown Square townhouse for rent. 3 bdrm, 1.5 bth, 3 levels, great southside POK. location, off street parking. Great deal. Call Mike at 462-3106.

**FOR SALE:** Southside POK - an updated "Arts and Crafts" style home with original features: oak woodwork, stained glass, cobblestone porch, and fireplace. 3bdrm, eik, lr,dr, sunroom with radiant heat, 1bt, central air, finished storage areas. \$275,000 below assessed value move in, mint condition, a must see! Call 845-473-2251 or Rita at 845-473-1650, 845-905-8762.

**FOR SALE:** Husqvarna Model 400 computerized sewing machine. It is in like new condition. I paid \$850. It was the absolute top of the line. It is easy to use and comes with all of the booklets, etc. Asking \$300 OBO; Two year old Total Gym ELITE for sale. It is like new (only used twice). Has all accessories included! Asking \$100 OBO. Please call (845)661-2567 leave a message.

**FOR RENT:** one bedroom/one bath, EIK, LR, hot water included, no pets, in East Fishkill Historical Society Palen House on 3 acres; \$400/mo; one month rent/one month security. Call 227-5374.

**CONDO FOR SALE:** Completely renovated 3 bdr 2 1/2 bath townhouse in Fox Hill everything brand new stainless steel appl. granite counters, ceramic, wood and carpet. Private fenced yard. \$252,000 Ellen 914-475-1081.

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## WCT COMMENTATOR Policy

The content of the *WCT COMMENTATOR* shall reflect the official positions and policies of the WCT, with the following three exceptions:

1. The President of the WCT should present his/her views in a message to the members from time to time, but not less than bimonthly.
2. Signed Letters to the Editor (of responsible length) containing personal views from members and subscribers shall be published subject to laws of libel.
3. Members of the WCT may place articles adhering to the Canons of Journalism concerned with WCT positions, policies, and issues of interest to teachers in the Commentary Section. (For both Letters to the Editor and the Commentary Section, the writer's name and WCT affiliation shall be attached, and an editor's note shall accompany these sections indicating that "The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the official views and policies of the WCT.")

Reprints of articles from the *WCT COMMENTATOR* are allowable only with the permission of the WCT President.

## WCT COMMENTATOR Advertising Policy

The *WCT COMMENTATOR* advertising policy as adopted by the Executive Board is as follows:

Noncommercial (Personal) ads for WCT MEMBERS only will be run for two issues at no charge.

Commercial (Business) ads for WCT MEMBERS only: guaranteed placement for half of the school year, **\$35.00 per half year payable Sept. 15th and Feb. 1st or \$5.00 per issue.**

For prompt placement of advertisements and articles in upcoming issues of the *WCT COMMENTATOR*, e-mail the information to [commentator@wcteachers.org](mailto:commentator@wcteachers.org). Information can also be sent to Meredith Inkeles at the WCT Office. Do not send articles or ads through the GroupWise e-mail system.

## 2008-2009 Newsletter Schedule

October 10, 2008	October 24, 2008	Nov. 7, 2008
Nov. 21, 2008	December 5, 2008	December 19, 2008
January 9, 2009	January 23, 2009	February 6, 2009
February 20, 2009	March 6, 2009	March 20, 2009
April 3, 2009	April 17, 2009	May 1, 2009
May 15, 2009	June 5, 2009	June 19, 2009

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