Devine Intervention
A lofty look at retirement
by Jack Devine

Editor’s note: This new feature will appear periodically in the PostScript. Let us know your reaction.

My ‘job’ on the WCRT Board is to observe and report on negotiations. Since there are no negotiations taking place at this time – to avoid being excessed – I will try to keep my job by writing a column for the PostScript that will hopefully be of interest to our members who have not found complete satisfaction in the Poughkeepsie Journal and/or the Hudson Valley Hornet.

Many of us have used our retirement to travel at home and abroad. That includes my wife Beth and myself. We have avoided using tours and tour guides thus far, but there is a downside. I hereby relate an incident in Sicily that occurred when we were traveling with our two friends, Mimi and Colleen.

We had been in Sicily for about a week, having a great time. We were on our way to Palermo and I was driving. Colleen usually drives, but this was a fairly pucci-cat route so I was giving her a break. We planned to stop in Monreale to see the Cattedrale (Cathedral – showing off here) that was completed in 1183 AD! It turned out to be incredible, but that was a bit later…A little background: Monreale is to Palermo as the Bronx is to Manhattan. The analogy falters when Monreale’s topography is considered. It is on the side of a mountain and is criss-crossed with alley-sized streets laid out apparently by whim. The Cathedral is at the pinnacle, as well it should be.

When we got to the top, there was no place to park (duh). This is where we made our first mistake and it was a doozy! Mimi and Colleen got out to find a parking space and soon they were out of sight. This left Beth and myself (Beth in the back seat) in a rental car filled with luggage, in a city that could easily be described as the “grittiest” in Italy. We might as well have worn t-shirts that said, “Please rob and kill us for our camera and Euros.”

As I was mulling these thoughts over, I was ordered to “Move it!” The man was speaking Italian of course, but there was no mistaking his intent. I immediately made a poor choice and drove down a one-way the wrong way. Let me tell you about the people who greatly overreacted: First, the people going the right way. You all know how Italians register their displeasure with gestures, etc. (Pasquale?), but add thyroid-like eye-bulging to the mix and you will

see DEVINE on page 4

POLITICAL ACTION COLUMN
She has High Hopes
Bear box installed in Yellowstone

The interior of the Cattedrale is covered with magnificent glass mosaic (42,250,000 precisely) artwork.

Intrepid traveling companions Mimi, Colleen, (both Bolivian Peace Corps), and Beth (37 years, third grade teacher)
From The President

Dear WCRT Members,

I hope you are enjoying this lovely summer. Our garden has been a lot of work, but now we are picking veggies every day and literally seeing the fruits of our labor.

The newest issue to report is that the WCRT will no longer be mailing the Commentator. The executive board has been debating this for several years. First of all, as the Commentator has been getting thicker, it is unwieldy to mail with the PostScript. Second, the cost is around $1 for each envelope making it extremely expensive. WCRT members will still get the PostScript by mail or e-mail. If you wish to read the Commentator, you will have to read it on the WCT website (www.wcteachers.org).

Please make note of the new WCT office address. This will be where you return your luncheon reservation and any other information you might be mailing the WCT.

Enjoy the rest of the summer.

See you at the luncheon on Sept. 16th.

Susan Roger

NEW newsletter distribution process, renewals, dues info

If you would like to receive the PostScript or Commentator by email, you MUST register your email address with the website www.wcteachers.org. If your email address is not registered there, you will not receive any publications or notices.

Retirees give the WCRT their email address. The WCT website maintains the email list for publication. Prohibitive U.S. Mail costs may soon force us to cancel postal mailings, so please consider going green to save money.

The Commentator and PostScript may be viewed at www.wcteachers.org once a member registers.

SAVE THESE DATES
(future details coming soon)

July 25 Deadline for mid-August PostScript
Sept. 15 WCRT exec board mtg. 10:00-12:00 Deadline for mid-October PostScript
Sept. 16 Fall Luncheon, Christos, 11:30a.m., $23, Deadline for mid-October PostScript
Summer in Wappingers

As the pen goes to the paper for this article, or actually the fingers go to the keyboard, the thermometer outside is climbing into the 90’s. It is the middle of summer in Wappingers. Yes, it is also getting hot inside the Wappingers Central Schools as the redistricting plan is readied for implementation. The current superintendent of schools, Jose Carrion, stated in the July 26, 2015, Poughkeepsie Journal that the redistricting was long overdue and that ideas had “been kicked around” for years. Any time students will be moved from one building to another, the parents get upset. The most recent numbers show 570 kindergarten through grade six students and 32 teachers being shifted. These adjustments are being made to try to balance out class enrollments.

In September, eight of the ten elementary schools will be K-6 while Vassar and Kinry will remain sister schools. The two junior highs will be 7-8 buildings. WCRT members who have been retired for a while can remember when this was the basic configuration in the district. Many times over the years students were shifted from one building to another. Amazingly, everyone adapted to the changes and life went on.

There has been parent turnout at board meetings. Many of these folks are upset that their children will have to make a change. One does wonder if after the first month of school the students will be adjusted and life will go on. Most teachers would probably agree that this would be the case. It could be that the parents are more disturbed than the children.

As we approach the 2015-16 school year, we have residents who want to stop the plan. One of those is former board member Lori Jiava who has filed a complaint with the state education department’s commissioner. She claims the superintendent did not have the right to make these changes. Unfortunately, the district is incurring legal costs as her complaint goes forward.

The July 12, 2015, Poughkeepsie Journal carried the following quote from the new Commissioner Elia. She stated, “I’m a teacher, I’m an educator, and I’m not a politician. I understand the difference in these roles. I want to work very productively with the legislators and with the governor to improve what’s happening every day for the kids in the classrooms in New York State.”

The reaction of the commissioner will be interesting to note since she is new to the job. Yes, we have a new commissioner in Albany. Mary Ellen Elia takes the reins after heading a school district in the Tampa, Florida area. She began her career as a teacher in Erie County in western New York.

We will also be looking to see if there are any changes in Wappingers as a result of the transition to a new company, which was awarded the state contract to create the grade 3-8 standardized tests. The London-based Pearson Company is out and Questar Assessments of Minneapolis is in. Locally we have had parents pull their children from the testing. Most likely this will continue until major Common Core changes are made.

Here in Wappingers we will be paying special attention to the actions of the new educational leader in Albany. Let’s hope she helps cool things down.

NOTE: If you are aware of a member’s illness, or the need to send a condolence card, please contact Ruth Ehlers at 831-6390.
She has **High Hopes**

by Susan Roger

I recently met Maddy Yeager, a 2015 graduate of John Jay High School, but I knew of her for several years from my daughter, Kerri, who is a Math teacher at John Jay.

Maddy attended JJ for the first year of 9th grade, but became very ill and was hospitalized. Kerri had been her Math teacher and now became her home teacher when she was home. This lasted for 2-1/2 years between hospital stays, and she attended the last semester (yes, in Kerri’s math class). She graduated on time this past June.

During the last 2-1/2 years, she has been hospitalized many times. In 2014, as she was feeling better, she decided she wanted to give something to the hospitals in the way of helping sick children and their families. She, along with her parents, started a charity called **High Hopes**. The mission statement explains **High Hopes** is to support sick children and their families during hospitalization.

Their first two projects were a great success. They enlisted the populations of Gayhead, VanWyck, and John Jay. Last fall they asked for donations of arts and crafts or school supplies. During the winter, they donated 225 homemade Valentine’s Day cards to several hospitals.

Maddy contacted many area hospitals and donations were made to: Morgan Stanley Children’s Hospital, Maria Fareri Children’s Hospital, Blythedale Children’s Hospital, and the Ronald McDonald House in Valhalla, N.Y. One can only imagine the hours Maddy spent on the phone finding contacts. She is currently on the Columbia Board Advisory Board for their Child Life Program. Her family spent many hours helping to organize, pack, and deliver.

Currently, they are getting ready to submit paperwork to become a 503(C) non-profit organization. Because they do not have that designation yet, they cannot receive cash contributions. This is not a one-year program.

Maddy will attend Wheelock College in the fall. She will look into taking a class in non-profit business. She hopes to recruit new friends to help. This fall they are collecting coloring books and crayons and handmade birthday cards. If you would like to contribute, you can contact Maddy at: **www.highhopesupport@aol.com**.

Devine Intervention

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understand my sense of threat. On the side of the road there was a group (a coven?) of “older” women, dressed in black that I can only describe as “crones.” Going the wrong way on a one-way street in Monreale is not only against the law, it is apparently sacrilegious. Their wagging bony fingers unnerved me so that I stalled the car.

Beth, finding a reserve of strength, volunteered to get out and help me back our KIA up the necessary forty feet. When she opened the back door it short-circuited the rear hatch which popped up to display all our worldly possessions for the local population to consider. It was here that I thought of the bottle of Polish vodka I had bought that very morning. It was in the back (“Made in Poland, yes, but for the world to enjoy”). Would I be a bad person if I knocked the neck of the bottle off on the rear bumper and took a few slugs? Just enough to stabilize the stress? Tempting as that was, I re-gathered (with Beth’s help) my few remaining wits and avoided a national incident by backing up -- to the cacophonous sound of a dozen horns beeping – far enough to turn around. Thirty minutes later – after going back down the hill and then back up – we found a parking space, Colleen and Mimi, and a place to have lunch. And, thank goodness, a bagno (bathroom). And none too soon.

I would be remiss if I didn’t tell you the Cattedrale was spectacular!

To experience the beauty of the Cattedrale di Monreale is worth the effort to get there.
NEW YORK STATE TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM

LAST RA FOR THE 2014/15 SCHOOL YEAR
June 16, 2015

Although this was the last RA meeting for the school year, there were still unsettled issues. The RA elections have not been run because some teachers still do not have permanent placements. The District still has not submitted a list confirming the new assignments. If Nancy Beiner, the Webmaster, does not have the names for the ballot by the last week of school, the elections will not take place until September. To accomplish this, a motion had to be made to suspend the constitution. As of now, there is no one from Kinry Road who wants to run for the RA until they are sure of their placements for the next school year.

Pasquale talked about the meeting of the Board of Regents. After looking at the studies, they agree that testing should not be the major portion of a teacher’s evaluation. The outcome was that in order to get an extension to implement APPR, the District will have to file for “hardship” and will then get an extension. It is likely that NYSUT will end up in litigation with State Education over this and other issues. Due to all that is going on in education today, there are diminishing numbers in education programs and in the next few years there will be a shortage of teachers.

Parents are still protesting against the redistricting plan, which does not seem to lessen class size. The District is not removing the modulars, which was supposed to be part of the plan. Some want the WCT to protest. This is not really a union issue.

Building administrators observed willing teachers in other buildings for a calibration walkthrough exercise. Teachers would like some feedback as to what occurred, what they were looking for, what comments were made, etc. They also requested workshops to help teachers prepare for the APPR implementation.

The retirees were recognized and given gifts. I welcomed them into the WCRT unofficially and told them their information packets would be mailed to them. They look forward to joining us.

Hope you visit our new office at 280 New Hackensack Road in Wappingers, when it opens the end of July.

Respectfully,
Ellen Korz

Saranne Rap
A transparent view of issues
by Saranne Ratner

What I Did on my Summer Vacation

For most retirees, summer vacation is every day, so my vacation plans are for the Fall: September, a trip to Houston, San Antonio, and New Orleans, and October, a cruise to New England / Canada. Summer is more of a laid back relaxing time.

Of course, I had a fly in the ointment. I got called for Grand Jury duty for 8 weeks, obviously overlapping my travels. Confirmations of my journeys have been sent and hopefully I can be rescheduled with no penalty. I think it will be an interesting experience for me -- Law and Order, Poughkeepsie.

So what I did on my summer vacation is relax, enjoy being retired, as always, and look forward to the fall and the trips I'm taking!

Saranne
Bits ‘n’ pieces

To receive any WCT/WCRT publications by email, you must now register your email address at www.wcteachers.org even if we already have your email address.
You will not receive anything electronically if you are not registered on the website.

NEW WCRT SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED

You may remember reading about a new and additional scholarship that your WCRT Executive Board approved earlier this year. This new scholarship was awarded to a graduating senior at RCK and at JJ high school, and was also open to applicants at Orchard View. The scholarship targets seniors who plan to pursue a career in education.

The scholarship committee included WCRT members Jack Devine, Flo Mondanaro, Leslie Leventhal, and Roger Higgins. The committee met several times to develop criteria for the award and reviewed the essays that each applicant was required to submit.

“We had a great representation of seniors from both high schools, and it was clear from the applicants’ essays that they all have a deep commitment for teaching,” said committee member Jack Devine.

The awards carry a $500 contribution to college expenses, and were presented to the winning seniors at their school awards ceremony or as part of the commencement program.

The scholarship recipient from JJ is Lisa Russo, and the recipient from RCK is Gabrielle Nassi.

Save the Date
Sat., Sept. 19, 2015
Wappingers Central
75th Celebration
Plan to attend
Watch for more details

Enjoy some of what NYC has to offer.
Sign up to receive the monthly Plum Benefits Guide.
Send an e-mail to jtkorz@optonline.net to be added to our list.
Ellen Korz

Financial Report available

As a service to any interested WCRT member, our union’s financial report is always available upon request.

Address your questions or concerns to tderito@optonline.net and we’ll make arrangements to satisfy your numerical curiosity.

Protect your WCRT, NYSUT membership

WCRT membership as of June 9, 2015:
609 WCRT members
186 yearly members
367 Lifetime members
44 Complimentary Lifetime members
12 Complimentary members
79 retirees don’t belong to WCRT & not entitled to NYSUT benefits
370 members email subscribers
232 members postal subscribers

Please consider email subscription. It saves us considerable spending on postage. Membership checks MUST be made out to WCT not WCRT. We cannot accept checks made out to WCRT. Our chapter charter is with the WCT.

You MUST belong to the WCT to be eligible for NYSUT benefits.

Lifetime is the best deal. Pay once and forget about it!

NEW PROCEDURE:
Even if we already have email addresses in our WCRT database, members MUST register their email address through the www.wcteachers.org website NOW or they will not receive email publications and notices.

SAVE THE DATE
Sat., Sept. 19, 2015
Wappingers Central
75th Celebration
Plan to attend
Watch for more details

TOM DERITO
WCRT Treasurer

JANE STOCKSLAGER
WCRT Constitution, By-Laws

CONSTITUTION and BOARD of DIRECTORS Voted on!

At the Spring Luncheon on May 14, the WCRT voted on the WCRT Amended Constitution was voted on. All amendments from the past 10 years were added and the new Constitution was accepted.

Membership dues checks MUST be made out to WCT, not WCRT.
Otherwise, they will be returned to you and you will need to issue a new check.

New Hamburg Annual Day of Golf for Meals on Wheels
August 28
Hi everyone,

I know it’s been a long time since I’ve written. First, note my new email address. This past year I resumed use of my maiden name so I am again offici ally Heather Connolly. It feels really good to have dad’s name as possible. I can’t believe it’s been two years since he passed; that just doesn’t seem possible.

I’m still working on getting more interest in the books, and I have recently hired a woman to help me try to find an agent to help promote the books. It turns out it is a full-time job and one that I just don’t have the amount of time to donate myself. But I am hopeful that we can find an agent who is as passionate about the books as I am (and you are) and give them the time and attention they so deserve.

I got an email yesterday that put a huge smile on my face. The bear box that we took donations for last year has been installed with a lovely plaque on it honoring dad. I think it looks wonderful and I want to thank everyone who helped organize this and who donated money to make this happen. Dad would be so humbled by this gesture and having his name forever in the place he loved so much.

I hope you are all enjoying your summer and finding some time to sit quietly in nature...

Heather Connolly
drhconnelly@gmail.com

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Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2015     11:30 a.m.

Christos Restaurant,
155 Wilbur Blvd.  Poughkeepsie, NY 12603

Huge Hot and Cold Buffet Lunch served at 12:00noon
Cost per person is $23.00.
Soft drinks included.  Cash Bar.
Free parking on the premises.
All facilities ground floor accessible.  No steps or stairs.

A short business meeting and a 50-50 raffle will be held.
Bring non-perishable food items (cans, boxes, bags) and/or shampoo, soap,
and other personal care items to be donated to local food pantries.

Please send check payable to WCRT to
new office address:  attn: Leslie Leventhal,  WCRT,
280 New Hackensack Rd.  Wappingers Falls NY 12590
(and must be received no later than Sept. 9, 2015.
Spouses and significant others welcome.

WCRT FALL LUNCHEON
$23.00 Per Person

Name(s):________________________________________________ Phone Number:_________________
Address:_________________________________________________________________________________
Number of Reservations: _______ Amount Enclosed: $ _______________