15 new retirees = 385 years experience

The Wappingers Congress of Teachers celebrated retirements, National Board Certifications, 25 years of service, and new tenure at Arbor Ridge on June 7.

WCT President Pasquale Delli Carpini acknowledged Ralph Capasso, who started the WCT and served as president for 17 years. “He’s the reason we’re here. We enjoy the benefits fought for by his generation. When I go to Albany for meetings and I see Tom Hobart, the first NYSUT president, he always asks, ‘How’s Ralph?’”

Pasquale also recognized the immediate past president Leslie Leventhal, who helped continue the legacy.

WCSD Board of Education Trustee John Lumia and WCRT member also stood up and took a bow.

Sue Roger, President of the retirees, was also recognized.

Finally, Pasquale noted, “In the roles we serve, we couldn’t do things without the WCT Executive Board members for their service, hours, and hard work.”

“This is the best event I attend all year. We recognize our own. We dedicate our lives. It’s what we do—not what we make. We make a difference in kids’ lives.”

Maria Delli Carpini, Janet and Ralph Capasso.

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RC13 lunch had pilot, NYSUT VP        page 4
3 awarded Capasso Scholarships   page 5

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25 years of service: Steven Schwartz, 3rd grade, Fishkill Plains; Erin O’Neil, 4th grade, Kinry; Jerilyn Gilman, 1st grade and Special Ed., Gayhead; and Milagros Torres, 2nd grade, Gayhead.

Tenure: Anisi Roman, Special Ed., Gayhead; Natalie Laff, Special Ed., RCKHS, and Maxine Foster-Hood, Chemistry, RCKHS.

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From The President

SUSAN ROGER
WCRT President

Dear WCRT Members,

I hope you are all having an enjoyable summer. It has been an exciting one for our family as our youngest daughter, Robin Sue, was married on July 7. The wedding was in Ithaca, as they both work for Ithaca College. Charles teaches Journalism, and Robin Sue is editor of the Alumni magazine. It was a beautiful event, and, of course, our daughter looked fabulous! Some of you may remember having her in class.

I hope you will take time to consider either or both of the trips in the fall. The Madava Farm tour in Dover Plains and the High Line Park Tour in NYC have some interesting things for everyone. Dates listed below and flyers enclosed.

Also don’t forget to sign up for the Fall Luncheon at Christos on Sept. 25. Please be aware of the new starting time of 11:30 am. We will shorten the meeting and Pasquale will be our only speaker.

Enjoy the rest of the summer. It always seems to go too fast. However, we are the lucky ones for our summer can extend right into Sept. See you at the luncheon.

Susan Roger

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Susan Roger

send your comments to johnrogerjr@yahoo.com or call (845) 227-5065
The critics of the standardized testing craze are beginning to rise up and speak out. We know that the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) has been concerned about the over testing of students and now they have produced a tri-fold brochure titled, Getting It Right, A Parent Guide to Student Assessment. It gives background on the current tests, what they are, why they are given and when. It goes on to answer the question, “What Can I Do to Combat the State’s Obsession with Standardized testing?” The last section is the one that really got this writer’s attention. This is headed, “Reducing Test Anxiety.” Apparently things have gotten so bad that our union needs to issue “techniques to help students combat test anxiety.”

The editorial board of the New York Times in the July 13, 2013, issue wrote a piece called, “The Trouble with Testing Mania.” After stating, “The theory behind the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was that holding schools accountable for test scores would force them to improve instruction for groups of children whom they had historically shortchanged,” the editorial went on to say that, “it has become clear to us over time that testing was being overemphasized -- and misused -- in schools that were substituting test preparation for instruction.” The big fault with the law was that it required that all students be at grade level by 2014. Anyone who has been in a classroom knows this is an impossibility. There was no taking individual differences into account.

The Times editorial continues, “Fear- ing that they would be labeled poor performers, schools and districts -- especially in low-income areas -- rolled out a relentless series of ‘diagnostic’ tests that were actually practice rounds for the high-stakes exams to come.” This has put tremendous pressure on children from elementary school on up to be able to memorize and repeat the facts required by the tests.

The July 23, 2013, Poughkeepsie Journal reported that Bard College president Leon Botstein added his voice to the movement against standardized testing, calling the tests “corrupt, out of date and discriminatory.” One of his points was that they favor “people of means” because they can pay for extra preparation for the testing. “We need tests that actually teach you something as you take them,” he said.

No Child Left Behind is the latest version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) which was part of the Johnson Administration’s War on Poverty campaign. Since this act is overdue for revision and reauthorization, the Obama administration, beginning in 2011, allowed states to apply for waivers giving them flexibility in meeting the NCLB goals. In the meantime the Race to the Top program was begun. It is funded as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

In many states the evaluation of teachers is being tied to the test performance of the children. The impetus for this was the Race to the Top program which pushed the states to create teacher evaluations incorporating student test scores. New York State, seeing the chance to get some incentive money from Washington, jumped on the bandwagon with the increase of student testing. Albany magnified the pressure on teachers by threatening them with the loss of their jobs if they had two years of poor evaluations. Of course those assessments would include the effects of the student exams. The New York Times opinion was that, “Test scores should figure in evaluations, but the measures have to be fair, properly calibrated and statistically valid... systems cannot be rushed into service before they are ready.”

We need to see a fair and equitable solution to the whole standardized testing and teacher evaluation problem. The morale of the education community and the future of public education can’t wait while leaders in Washington and Albany play their political games. Maybe we need a law requiring legislators to take standardized tests to keep their jobs. It could be called, “Race to the Capitol.”
RC 13 Luncheon features pilot, NYSUT VP

POUGHKEEPSIE, NY—RC 13 Spring Luncheon offered a hot and cold buffet at Christos Restaurant on May 30.

Closer to home...

Kathleen Donahue, NYSUT VP, highlighted many aspects of concern to retirees. Topics included:

Tell It Like It Is Campaign received 15,000 letters collected and sent to commissioners and Regents. She also suggested grandparents send letters about their kid’s reaction or their kid’s teacher’s versus when they taught. She also encouraged members to work with the PTA and attend a series of Town Hall meetings. NYSUT has had 100-400 members per meeting.

June 8 Albany Rally will be huge. She knows of 227 buses x 50 riders per bus = 11,350 people with no indication about the number of cars and carpools—and that’s just teachers. Lots of other unions will be represented also.

NYSUT budget: We’re all strapped by the economy. We lost 35,000 teachers in the last three years through attrition, cuts, and just leaving. We’re in the second year of a four-year plan with reduced compensation and reorganizing.

Representative Assembly: The 2014 RA is moved to New York City and will now be Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Cheaper rates on the weekend and not losing a school day were reasons for the change.

Up, Up, and Away...

Bill Hughes, guest speaker, presented “From Navy Pilot to Hot Air Balloonist: Adventures in the Sky.”

As a Navy pilot for seven years in the late 1950s-early 1960s, he spent two years with Operation Deep Freeze in Antarctica, supporting scientific exploration near the South Pole. The project was nothing military but purely meteorological.

Vignettes included propeller airplanes, runways on ice plowed by bulldozers, the crush of 65 feet of snow on a building, and construction of a building on stilts that can be jacked up. Equipment included reel-to-reel tape recorders, hand-crank phones, and special boots to keep feet warm and dry.

Storms during white-out conditions produced winds of 60-70mph, how ice breakers cleared channels to allow delivery of supplies, how glaciers’ height can vary 30 feet a year. Measuring glaciers using a hand auger shows the age of the ice similar to rings on tree trunks.

On one expedition, his group found a fish frozen in ice that was 5,000 years old.

Also interesting were examples of personal hygiene and laundry issues.

Old Antarctic explorers have periodic conventions that Hughes attends.

Contact Blue Sky Balloons, info@blueskyballoons.com www.blueskyballoons.com Launch site: Sprout Creek Farm, 34 Lauer Rd, Poughkeepsie, sproutcreekfarm.org

Yellow Dot Program

Instructions:

1. To help emergency responders provide prompt care in the event of an accident, complete both sides of this card as fully as possible and place it in your car’s glove compartment. One card should be completed for each person who regularly occupies the vehicle.

2. Place the Yellow Dot decal on the rear driver’s side window to alert emergency responders to look in the glove compartment for your emergency medical information.

3. You should review the card annually and update any information as necessary, or complete a new card for your glove compartment.

NOTE: A Yellow Dot decal can also be used to alert those who respond to an emergency in your home. Simply place a Yellow Dot decal on or beside your front door and place a completed card for each occupant in the freezer compartment of your refrigerator.

The Yellow Dot Program acts to facilitate only. All information contained herein is supplied by the participant and is the sole responsibility of the participant.
The WCT and WCRT awarded three $1500 scholarships to children of active teachers at a reception in the Roy C. Ketcham library on May 30.

Shea Ratynski is the son of Eileen Clancy, who teaches Special Education at John Jay High School. Shea is ranked 10th out of 810 students at Newburgh Free Academy, with a GPA of over 99! He has taken honors and AP classes every year of high school, and excelled in all of them. He is a member of several honor societies, and is a national AP scholar. He will attend NYU as an Independent, designing his own major.

Shea balances studies with many volunteer activities, clubs, and musical ensembles. He is also a nine-season varsity member of NFA’s cross country, track, and lacrosse teams, and captain for several of them. Through his sport and academic success, he has been awarded a NYSPHSA Scholar Award.

Shea’s most extensive volunteer activity is with Bike Newburgh, a non-profit organization that provides safe bicycles to people who need them for work, health, and fun. Shea has become an avid cyclist himself.

The committee was impressed by Shea’s poise and sincere sense of confidence. In his essay, Shea describes the founder of Bike Newburgh, John Schoonmaker, as someone who is “…effective because of his honesty. (John) is true to those he helps, true to himself, and true to the community he holds dear.” They clearly know the reason Shea is so drawn to working with John is that he holds those same qualities himself.

Dignitaries included Ralph Capasso, former WCT President; Dr. Dwight Bonk, JJHS Principal; and Susan Roger, WCRT President.

Pasquale Delli Carpini, current WCT President, served as Master of Ceremonies. He explained the scholarship awards named after Ralph, “a benefactor, colleague, and union activist.” Ralph served 17 years as WCT President and started the WCT.

“Ralph’s a gentleman and a scholar who made a difference in the lives of thousands of teachers, kids, and parents. We thank him and remember him for the current benefits and working conditions. He was Teacher of the Year and Outstanding Educator. Providing students with a quality education has always been his top priority.”

Monica Sobrin, ranked 15 out of 532 students at John Jay High School, will attend Fordham University to focus on Women’s Studies and a Law degree. Her mother, Anchala Sobrin, teaches Honors Algebra, Trigonometry, and AP Calculus at John Jay as well as serving as the dean.

Academically, Monica’s course load contains all Honors and AP classes. She is a member of many honor societies and is an AP Scholar.

Monica is active in both dancing and teaching in the East-West School of Classical Kathak Dance. She was the youngest student to graduate with her guru at the age of 14.

During the summer of 2010, Monica attended the Girls’ Leadership Workshop at Val-Kill. While immersed in Eleanor Roosevelt’s life and legacy, the workshop “ignited my interest in human rights and women’s studies as a future pursuit.” She plans to “stomp out gender inequality.”

Angelo Delli Carpini is the son of Pasquale Delli Carpini, an Italian teacher at John Jay High School. Angelo ranks 4th out of 532 at John Jay, with exceptional achievement in Honors, AP, and College Accredited courses. He is a member of many honor societies and is the Italian Honor Society President.

He competed in Track, Cross Country, served on Student Council, volunteered in a variety of capacities, and served as an Altar Server at St. Columba Roman Catholic Church.

Stephen Kenny, a mathematics teacher, stated in his recommendation that “Angelo clearly stands out as one of my best students ever.” He also describes Angelo as “supportive and sensitive” toward his peers and as having “a nice sense of humor and a tremendous enthusiasm for math.”

The committee was struck by Angelo’s composed grace and humility. He created an algorithmic method used to choose a college. He was led mathematically and spiritually to Boston College. At a young age, Angelo has identified that success cannot be measured in achievements alone, but by the way we live and conduct ourselves.
The Girls in Miss Corey’s Class

Alice plays the violin
She practices all week
And it is only now and then
You ever hear a squeak.

Betsy always wins at games
She hardly ever tries
And what is more amazing
She never cheats or lies.

Tara tells the funniest jokes
She knows just when to pause
I turn green with envy
When all the kids’ applause.

Peggy has a million friends
(Yet she doesn’t know her own address)
Isn’t that absurd?

Joan can shoot a spitball
And whiny like a horse
She never says “I’m sorry”
She hardly ever tries.

Sally climbs the highest trees
And plays football with the boys
Catching frogs and turtles
Are her greatest joys.

Barbara is the smartest girl
Her grades are all straight A’s
But when I try to study
My head gets in a daze.

Peggy has a million friends
From which to pick and choose
Her laughter often fills the air
She never feels the blues.

As I was thinking all these things
Miss Corey touched my head
She looked at me in such a way
To make me feel ashamed.

She never feels the blues.
Her laughter often
From which to pick and choose
Barbara is the smartest girl
I wish I had her nose.

Every time I look at her
From her curls down to her nose
Sally, she is the best.
Her greatest joys.

Catching frogs and turtles
And plays football with the boys
Are her greatest joys.

Betsy always wins at games
She hardly ever tries
And what is more amazing
She never cheats or lies.

Tara tells the funniest jokes
She knows just when to pause
I turn green with envy
When all the kids’ applause.

Wishing help Meals on Wheels
by Charlie Powers
WCRT Class of 2001

This is The New Hamburg Yacht Club’s 10th Annual Day of Golf to benef-
it Meals on Wheels of Wappingers. All proceeds go to MOWOW. Last year we
raised $8,500.00. Our goal this year is $10,000.00.

The tournament is Friday September
13th, 2013 at Beekman Golf Club. Regis-
tration is at 10:00 a.m. with a shotgun start
at 11:00 a.m. Cost per golfer is $125.00.
Checks are payable to NHYC. A buffet
section. Whatever anyone can do to aid
our efforts will be most appreciated.

You could sense the exhaustion felt by all
after a trying year. Pasquale focused on
the summer a Crisis Team will be formed to come up with a strategy for the fall. Anything they decide will be a
positive action. He hopes to involve more
members since it has been difficult to moti-
vate much of the WCT. Only 41% of mem-
bers attended the General Membership
meeting. Less than 100 members attended
the rally. The membership needs to unite.

Three grievances have been resolved.
Advisors for unfunded clubs will get com-
pen-sation. Prior approval will be addressed
within 10 business days of Joanne Sereda’s
office receiving it. This is true of emails
as well. Members should expect payments
from her office to be received in a more
timely manner due to a more efficient com-
munication system.

Protect your WCRT, NYSUT membership

WCRT by the numbers:

WCRT membership as of May 3:
655 retirees
575 WCRT members
175 yearly members
39 yearly members not renewed
342 Lifetime members
41 Complimentary Lifetime members
17 Complimentary members
100 retirees don’t belong to WCRT
& not entitled to NYSUT benefits
24 not paid this year & soon deleted

As in the past, we are looking for golf-
ers, tee/green sponsors, program advertis-
ers, gifts and prizes for our raffle. Please
consider being a booster for $25.00 or a
donor (any amount). Checks are payable to
NYHC with Meals on Wheels in the memo
section. Whatever anyone can do to aid
our efforts will be most appreciated.

For a registration form or for any an-
swers call Skip Rottkamp at 845-297-3546
or e-mail him at skipro44@aol.com. To be
a booster or donor, mail your contribution
to Skip Rottkamp, 57 DeGarmo Hills Rd.,
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590.

By the way, if you think you are get-
ing close to needing the services of Meals
on Wheels, perhaps you should seriously
consider helping us out in some way!
News since last issue

Rhoda Post remembered
Hello Mary [Coiteux, WCRT Gifts & Contributions Committee Chairperson],
I just wanted to confirm with you that Miles of Hope has received your check for $100 for the Goals for Hope event, in memory of Rhoda Post.
Thank you so much for your support.
Lisa McHugh
MOH Bookkeeper

Editor’s note: Rhoda Post taught at Fishkill Plains and then science at Van Wyck Jr. High. She fought breast cancer bravely for 22 years.
Sons Michael and Allan sincerely appreciate that we keep Rhoda’s memory alive. It means a lot to everyone.

Stacy Vazquez, a Goals for Hope tournament honoree three years ago, said Rhoda had been her teacher at Van Wyck, and had made a lasting impression on her.

Source: Mary Darcy Schanz, next-door neighbor and friend in Beacon for 28 years and co-founder of GFH, and Rhoda’s sons Michael and Allan.

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.
New retirees share happy thoughts, smiles

I'm looking forward to closing one chapter in my book and starting a new one.

It's been wonderful, but it's gone too fast!

I plan on doing nothing. I'm very happy about that.

It's been a lot of fun playing in the Phys. Ed. sandbox for the last 40 years.

I feel great about my station in life right now. I worked for 20 years. I love what I do. I want to take this passion to North Carolina to teach teachers the art of teaching. It's the greatest profession in the world. I've edited my life and it feels good.

It's been a wonderful ride.

New retirees share happy thoughts, smiles

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Mary Ann Moran, 2nd grade, Myers Corners.

Mary Glauber, Special Ed. Fishkill Plains.


Paulette Soriano, 1st grade, Myers Corners.

Teresa Brusco, Special Ed., Myers Corners.

Fonda Muhammed, English 8, Van Wyck Jr. High.

Lorraine Blaszak, 2nd grade, Sheafe Road.

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This issue’s out-takes: a bonus for e-mail subscribers

Dear readers,

This bonus page is for e-mail subscribers because they can handle whatever I send them.

I’d like some feedback on your thoughts about this concept. Printed hardcopies limit me to eight black-and-white pages. I can be more flexible electronically. You get the benefit. Let me know what that benefit is for you.

Let other retirees know about the color(s) and the convenience. Drop me an email note also. Tell me what you told them.

Enjoy the leftovers.

Bill Dourdis, PostScript editor
wdourdis@verizon.net

John Lumia commented to active teachers receiving tenure and 25-year awards. “Never stop learning. Stay in the profession. The State puts some impediments on teachers. Thank you. The profession isn’t easy. I retired seven years ago. Every day is now a Saturday with no Sunday night plans, tests, or papers. I hated August as I counted down the days until September and my first pay check. Congratulations, and thank you for your service.

Table Talk...

Master of Ceremonies Rena Finsmith planned the event along with her assistant Alyson McCarron.

Pasquale Delli Carpini, Nan Lieber, and Ellen Korz.

John Lumia, Marilyn Norton, and John Lumia.

<<<Joan Perrini and her husband John Reynolds. Joan is Retiree of the Year and on the NYSUT Board of Directors of Retirees, and ED 52. Joan represents corporate sponsor AFLAC who donated the champagne.

<<<Mario Diana, Marilyn Norton, and John Lumia.

<<<Teresa and Mike Lyons and Ray Koretsky.
Visit 800 acres of scenic nature and culinary wonder at Madava Farms. You will trace the journey Crown Maple Syrup makes in a single day from tree to bottle inside the world’s largest sugarhouse. State-of-the-art technology and artisanal practices produce quite possibly the purest maple syrup on earth.

We will have a tour and tasting and a farm style lunch provided by a Culinary Institute of America chef. Produce that is raised on the farm is incorporated in every luncheon. After lunch, you are free to stay and wander through the gardens and the beautiful trails.

- This is a very special outing planned for September 18, 2013.
- Reservations due no later than September 4.
- We will meet at Madava Farms at 11:00a.m.
- Walking tour lasts about 90 minutes and then lunch will be served.

(name(s) ____________________________________________
Number attending @ $31.00 per person _________________________
Amount enclosed _________________________ phone # _________________

Make checks payable to WCRT and send to:
Leslie Leventhal, 56 Pye Lane, Wappingers Falls 12590
Wednesday, September 25, 2013
11:30a.m. **note the new time!

Christos Restaurant,
155 Wilbur Blvd. Poughkeepsie, NY
Huge Hot and Cold Buffet Lunch served at 12:00noon
Cost per person is $22.00.
Soft drinks included. Cash Bar.
Free parking on the premises.
All facilities ground floor accessible. No steps or stairs.

NO GUEST SPEAKER--JUST FOOD AND FUN!!
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
attn: Leslie Leventhal, WCRT, Heritage Square,
2537 Route 52, Suite 15 Hopewell Jct, NY 12533
and must be received no later than Sept. 18, 2013.
Spouses, guests, and significant others welcome.

WCRT FALL LUNCHEON
$22.00 Per Person
Guests are welcome

Name(s):________________________________________________ Phone Number:_________________
Address:_________________________________________________________________________________
Number of Reservations: _______ Amount Enclosed: $ _______________
MORE WCRT FALL FROLIC
October 10, 2013
HIGH LINE PARK,
NEW YORK CITY
(Tour chosen based on member suggestion)

The new High Line Park began its life as an industrial elevated railroad that traveled above the street traffic and through the buildings that it served. Today this new city park on the old railbed serves as an international model for creative reuse of industrial structures. This has become an amazing woodland, grassland, and urban wonderland. Our tour will walk into the newly opened extension of this remarkable transformed space.

The tour will end at the fabulous Chelsea Market with good places to eat and shop.

This tour is limited to 25 people.

WHERE: NYC. Meet at the Jeffrey NY (store) 449 West 14th St. between 9th and 10th Avenue.

WHEN: October 10, 2013 at 11:00 a.m. SHARP!! (Please allow sufficient travel time) Registration deadline October 1.

COST: $18.00 per person, checks made payable to WCRT.

NAME(S) _________________________________________________________________
Number attending @ $18.00 per person _______________________________________
Amount enclosed ________________________ phone # _________________________

Make checks payable to WCRT and send to:
Leslie Leventhal, 56 Pye Lane, Wappingers Falls 12590