Unionists Defend Educators in ABC Petition Drive


ABC-TV’s John Stossel was willing to see the teachers, but would he be one? He’ll have to get back to you on that. Stossel, co-anchor of ABC’s “20/20” newsmagazine, emerged from the network’s studios in Manhattan on March 8 to greet more than 1,000 educators protesting his biased portrayal of public school teachers in a January special report titled “Stupid in America.”

At the rally, New York State United Teachers joined its largest affiliate, the United Federation of Teachers, to present network officials with petitions signed by more than 25,000 educators demanding an apology and urging ABC News to commit itself to fair and accurate reporting of education issues.

“We are here seeking fairness,” UFT President Randi Weingarten said, “not just for the nearly 160,000 members of the UFT, but for the millions of hard-working, dedicated educators across the country that John Stossel and ABC portrayed as the root of all that ails public education.”

NYSUT’s national affiliate, the American Federation of Teachers, promoted similar protests at major ABC affiliates across the country.

Although willing to speak with Weingarten and NYSUT President Dick Iannuzzi at the rally, Stossel did not rise to Weingarten’s challenge that he spend a week teaching at a mutually selected New York City high school — even when Weingarten offered to co-teach with him for a day so he would feel “supported and prepared.”

“I know what isn’t smart in America — that we need to take to the streets to get fair treatment by the media,” Iannuzzi told the crowd. “What’s so very smart about teachers is that we continue to do our jobs day in and day out, despite the criticism, because we’re smart enough to know our kids must come first.”

Stossel defended the report in a statement released by ABC. Asked by reporters about taking up the UFT on its teaching offer, he said he would have to check with the network and get back to them.

FYI: Save the Date

• The WCT Retiree Dinner Dance honoring all 2006 retirees will be held on Friday, May 19, 2006. Details will be available shortly.
Retiree: Stephen Ciacciotteteacher - 33 years

Steve has been teaching at John Jay for 33 years, the last five years as the TC of Social Studies. He has also coached for 21 years, finishing as the Varsity Boys Basketball coach. Steve’s coaching career also includes coaching JV baseball, JV basketball, and being an assistant football coach.

Over the course of Steve’s 33 years at John Jay, he has taught American History, Participation in Government, Economics, Model Senate, and elective courses: World at War, American Indian, and Current Events.

When asked what Steve will miss, he says, “I will miss my fellow teachers and staff, and the interaction between myself and the students. I owe many of my lifelong friendships to my time here at John Jay. I will also miss the vibrancy and energy being around young people brings.”

Steve also says, “I will NOT miss the alarm going off at 5:20 AM. Hopefully my winter health also will improve by not being in an overcrowded, poorly ventilated building and classroom for half of the year. In the future, I look forward to remaining active in the area, continuing my job with the Town of Fishkill Recreation, and possibly teach part time at the college level. Politics may also be a possibility, and I will probably become more involved with my church. I additionally plan to travel much more than I have in the past. Working out at the gym will still be a major part of my life. I hope to remain in touch with many of the friends I have made in the district over the years.”

Loss of State Funding to Private Education Under Back-door Voucher Schemes


When you visit the NYSUT web page, you will see charts on these pages that represent how much additional funding each school district in New York would receive if the money proposed for two back-door voucher schemes instead was appropriated for Sound Basic Education Aid, using state formulas.

Of the two voucher proposals currently being considered by the state Legislature, Gov. Pataki’s plan would cost an estimated $400 million a year, while a plan sponsored by Sen. Martin Golden (R-Brooklyn) and Assemblyman Vito Lopez (D-Brooklyn) would cost $1.2 billion a year. How much state funding does our school district stand to lose?

- State funding diverted from our school district to private education under Governor Pataki’s plan - $390,267
- State funding diverted from our school district to private education under the Golden-Lopez plan - $1,170,800

For three weeks in February, the students at Brinckerhoff School collected money for the Pennies for Patients fund drive to help fight leukemia. With the help of a little friendly competition between classes, the students raised $3,255.38! Barbara Haan’s second grade class was the winner. They raised $597.54. Megan Calimano’s first grade class was very excited to collect $448.29, and John Neevel’s fifth grade class was pleased to collect $385.41.

The students, especially those in Mrs. Calimano’s class, had a great time out-raising the fifth graders in Mr. Neevel’s class. It was a very rewarding activity for everyone, and a terrific cause of which to be a part.
Retiree: James Ranucci
Teacher - 35 years

James has been working for the Wappingers Central School District for 35 years as a physical education teacher. He started in 1971 at Kinry Road and then moved to Van Wyck in 1979. From 1986 until 2004, James has been working at John Jay High School, and he is currently the Athletic Director there.

When asked what James will miss when he is retired, he said, “I will miss the great teaching staff and coaching staff at Jay. I will also miss the great students and the parents that ‘get it’ at Jay. We are blessed with amazing athletes and coaches in this building.”

As a retiree, James says he will not miss “parents that just ‘don’t get it!’ It’s unfortunate that a handful of parents can ruin what so many accomplish.”

For the future, James’s plans are incomplete at this time, but he says, “I would like to take courses in photography and carpentry, hopefully travel and really getting to know my grandchildren in Texas. My wife, Jennifer, and I look forward to spending quality time together without a 4:00 or 5:00 AM alarm clock.”

Teachers are Superheroes

AFT, Office Max, Marvel comic books, NEA, and Teachers Count are sponsoring an essay contest for sixth through eighth graders to nominate their teachers as the Office Max Superhero Teachers of the Year. Winning entries can win a variety of prizes, and the grand winner and entrant will be featured in an upcoming Marvel comic book. For more contest details, visit www.teacherscount.org/contest.

Wanted...

A few good people to help with stuffing envelopes on an "AS NEEDED BASIS." The WCT office needs some volunteers to help with mailings.

Please call the office, 227-5065, to have your name put on a list. You will only be called when we need help with a large mailing. Thanks for your help.

the WCT COMMENTATOR

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COMMENTATOR deadline for the next issue is the Monday after the paycheck. Send all information for the April 7th issue to WCTINK@HOTMAIL.COM, or to the WCT Office by Monday, March 27th.
New benefit introduced - Equifax Credit Watch Gold
NYSUT members receive lowest price in the country

According to the FBI, one in five families has been a victim of identity theft. One of the best ways to combat identity theft is to regularly monitor your credit report for changes you did not make.

To help you take immediate action in the event of an identity theft, the trustees of New York State United Teachers Member Benefits recently endorsed Equifax Credit Watch™ Gold. This 24/7 credit monitoring service alerts you within 24 hours of key changes to your Equifax Credit Report™. You can enroll in this service at the lowest price in the country - $59.45 annually, with a free, no-obligation 90-day trial period.

Equifax Credit Watch Gold makes monitoring your credit report easy by automatically alerting you to key changes in your file --- for instance, if someone tries to obtain credit in your name --- so you can act before serious damage is done. Credit card fraud is the most common type of identity theft, and this service can alert you to changes in your credit card balances. Don't let this damaging crime wipe out your identity or good credit. Look into Equifax Credit Watch Gold today.

Equifax Credit Watch Gold includes:
- E-mail alerts within 24 hours of key changes to your file.
- Monthly "No news is good news" monthly message if there are no alerts, plus identity theft protection news and tips
- Unlimited access to your Equifax Credit Report
- Dedicated Customer Care toll-free hotline available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Up to $20,000 Identity Fraud Expense Coverage with no deductible (certain limitations and exclusions apply)† at no additional cost to you

Equifax Credit Watch Gold normally retails for $99.95 for 12 months of service, with a 30-day free trial period, but NYSUT members receive the deeply discounted price of $59.45 for 12 months with a 90-day free trial period. You can enroll by debit or credit card. Upon completion of the 90-day trial, unless you cancel, your credit or debit card will be charged the annual $59.45 fee.

For information about Equifax Credit Watch Gold and other personal credit management products, call NYSUT Member Benefits at (800) 626-8101, e-mail benefits@nysutmail.org, or visit www.memberbenefits.nysut.org online and click on the Discounts & Travel tab. Accessing the Member Benefits site ensures you will receive the special NYSUT pricing.

For information about contractual expense reimbursement/endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please call NYSUT Member Benefits.

† Insurance underwritten by Travelers Casualty and Surety Company of America and its property casualty affiliates, Hartford, CT 06183. Nothing stated herein affects the terms, conditions and coverages of any insurance policy issued by St. Paul Travelers, nor does it imply that coverage does or does not exist for any particular claim or type of claim under any such policy.
**Dates to Know:**

Remaining 2006 Board Meetings  
March: 27th  
April: 3rd & 25th  
May: 8th & 22nd  
June: 12th & 26th  
July: 10th  

March 28 - RA Meeting  
April 10-17 - Spring Recess  
May 19 - Retiree Dinner  

**WCT Tax Factoid:**  
WCT Membership 2005 Dues  

January – June  
12 x $29.80 = $357.60  

September – December  
8 x $30.80 = $246.40  

**Total Dues $604.00**  

**WCT Shirts**  
Shirt forms available online at...  
http://nysut.org/wappingers/shirtform.pdf  

**2006 Pay Dates:**  
April 7th  
April 21st  
May 5th  
May 19th  
June 2nd  
June 16th  
June 23rd

**Emergency Assistance Act Passed**

Success! The U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill that extends disaster unemployment benefits for not only 140,000 Katrina survivors, but for 25,000 survivors of Rita as well. The U.S. Senate passed the House version of the bill by unanimous consent, and President George W. Bush signed the bill into law.  

There is an enormous amount of work left to be done to rebuild the Gulf Coast and the lives of those displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. While this extension is a vital help to those who lost their jobs in the storms, we must continue to fight to help those who lost so much. You’ll hear more from us in the future about ways you can take action to help them.

Thank you for all that you do.  
In solidarity,  
Working Families e-Activist Network, AFL-CIO

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**FOR SALE:** Tickets to Hudson Valley Renegades Fireworks on Friday, July 14, 2006. Tickets $7.00 each ($4.00 a ticket to benefit the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation). For information, email Kruppert39@aol.com or call 223-9817 if interested or for information about the Hudson Valley Renegades Tickets. Order Tickets by May 22nd!  

**FOR RENT:** (perfect for retiree) Venice, Florida 55+ from April to Nov. One bedroom, living room w/sleeper, furnished, heated swimming pool, tennis court, shuffleboard, fishing dock, boat ramp, community center, etc. Bike to Venice Beach 8 minutes, nonsmoker, no pets. 3 bikes. $800/per month. Call Liz (845) 473-4696 for more details.

(Continued on page 6)
MEMBERS’ CLASSIFIED ADS (continued from page 5)

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**FOR SALE:** Moving - furniture for sale. View at www.frontiernet.net/~R1chard. Call Pam at 227-5218.

**FOR SALE:** Voucher for three graduate credits at Long Island University. Expiring June of 2006. Voucher is good for full tuition and registration fees. Can only transfer to a teacher, administrator, clinician, or intern in the WCSD.
Call Paul at 518-851-7148.

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**FOR SALE:** Ariens Snow Thrower, 24”, 2 stage, 6 hp. Old but works well, 4 forward, 2 reverse speeds. All metal, no plastic. Needs some minor adjustment for smooth gear meshing. Asking $200. Call 845-471-9462. E-mail sidekicker3@juno.com.

**FOR SALE:** Rustic Red Sofa & Rustic Red Plaid oversized chair w/ ottoman. All pieces have honey oak bun feet. Bassett custom made furniture only 2 years old! Great condition...Great price! Call 223-5973.

**FOR RENT:** Weekly summer rental in Ocean City, New Jersey. Two bedroom, one bathroom upstairs duplex. Awesome location, short walk to the beach and boardwalk. To look inside and check out the rates as well as availability, visit www.ocnj.com. Once there, click on “summer 2006 rentals,” then check 2 bedroom, 1 bath. Next, look for “406 4th Street.” If interested, call Ann at 255-4105.

**FOR SALE:** 2001 Toyota Tacoma 3.4L, 6 cyl. Auto, 4wd, double cab, cap, rhino bed liner. 66.5k miles, loaded, excellent condition. Asking $18,000. Call 226-3028