From the President’s Pad...

VOTE/COPE: It can’t happen without you!

Dear Colleagues,

As public employees, almost all conditions affecting our professional environment, working conditions, and pension rights are determined by the New York State Legislature, the Governor, and the U.S. Congress. If we wish to have a positive influence on our professional future, we must take an active role in the political process.

NYSUT offers each of us an opportunity to participate in our own future by supporting the 2011 VOTE/COPE campaign. VOTE/COPE is the non-partisan political voice of the New York State United Teachers and its affiliates, funded entirely by voluntary contributions from members. Legislators in Albany and Washington know the strength of our efforts and ability to elect candidates and campaign committees that support education, labor, and social justice.

Today, more than ever, teachers and other public employees have come under vicious and iniquitous attacks. Elected officials using the current economic conditions, of both the state and the nation, are waging class warfare on educators and the public sector by attempting to destroy labor rights gained over many decades of collaborative struggle and sacrifice.

Anti-labor ideologues are attacking civil service seniority rules governing layoffs that were first adopted in the early 1900s and subsequently revised in the 1940s and 1970s, to protect against abusive practices predating layoffs on race, age, sex, religion, political affiliation, cronyism, family status, salary level or other non-objective standards. These same opponents are trying to destroy the fully funded defined benefit pension system that retired public employees count on to help them live their “golden” years with financial stability and dignity.
STAY INFORMED… IT’S UP TO YOU !!!!
{A New Monthly Feature in The Commentator}

Below are some important articles to keep you up to date with current educational issues. These issues will directly affect your job on a daily basis.

NYSUT UNITED – March 2011

Why Must You Speak Up Now: Don’t Erase Our Progress  (p.11)

Brief Summary: Attack ads are everywhere! Be able to defend yourself as elected representatives, parents, school boards, and even people on line at the grocery store go after our profession and the future of our students.

NYSUT UNITED – March 2011

Why We Defend Triborough?  (p.17)

Brief Summary: You may have heard references to the Taylor Law or Triborough Amendment by the WCT President, Pasquale DelliCarpini, or from your WCT building representative. This article will explain why management (superintendent & school board) is prohibited from reducing or eliminating contract rights or benefits while the two sides are negotiating a new contract.

NYSUT UNITED – MARCH 2011

Mythbusters: The Truth About Tenure  (p. 21)

Brief Summary:
Public Perception: Teachers work for 3 years and are guaranteed a job for life.

Public Perception: Teacher’s can’t be fired.

To find out the truths about the public’s myths read the latest version of Mythbusters.

Knowledge is power!!!

Useful FACEBOOK links for teachers
NYSUT United (formerly known as NY Teacher) ---  http://www.facebook.com/NYSUTUnited
AFT – (American Federation of Teachers) http://www.facebook.com/AFTunion
NEA – (National Education Association) http://www.facebook.com/NEA.ORG

Other useful links for teachers
AFT (American Federation of Teachers) - http://www.aft.org/
NYSUT United (New York State United Teachers) – http://www.nysut.org
Speak Up for Education and Kids (National Education Association) - http://www.educationvotes.nea.org/
VOTE/COPE (cont’d from page 1)

Wall Street hedge-fund managers, dedicated to union busting and the privatization of public education are funding multi-million dollar ads, attacking teacher unions and the ability of the public workforce to collectively bargain for better working conditions. Lawmakers across the Country are pushing legislation, aiming to redefine workers’ rights, benefits, pensions and standard of living. States such as Wisconsin, Ohio, and Indiana are not the only ones to fall victim to this ill-conceived movement. In New York, the new administration in Albany has pledged to challenge labor rights and practices, promote harmful tax caps, further cut aid to school districts, which will undermine the public education system and take away vital resources from our students.

The 2011 legislative session will be pivotal in continuing efforts to maintain and improve educational programs. Last year we endured a $1.4 billion cut in state aid. This year, Governor Cuomo’s proposed $1.5 billion cut to education is the largest in the history of New York State. These draconian measures would devastate our schools. These massive cuts would affect class size, course offerings, support services, counseling, library services, and every measure of quality education we deliver.

NYSUT and the WCT will work vigorously and diligently to procure adequate funding for public education. Participation in VOTE/COPE will give NYSUT the resources necessary to protect and preserve the above mentioned benefits. Elected officials in Albany and Washington ought to understand that “ignorance is more expensive than education.” Therefore, your support for the 2011 VOTE/COPE campaign is critical to attain these goals. Your contribution demonstrates your understanding of the importance of political action and the vital role it plays in our professional lives.

As we continue to endure these turbulent economic times and attacks on our profession, districts in every corner of the state will face an uphill battle to pass school budgets again this year. Increasing energy costs have exhausted precious extra taxpayer dollars, including those of our own members. We rely on your support to be a positive voice in the May 17th school budget vote and the election of school board candidates.

I would like to recognize the WCT members for their outstanding efforts in last year’s VOTE/COPE campaign. With 78% of members contributing and a 25% increase of individual donations, we will be honored with the Lou Cammarasano Award, recognizing our leadership and commitment to improving VOTE/COPE. I commend the able leadership, hard work, and perseverance of Flip Gertler (VP Political Action) for this prestigious award. I am proud and privileged to represent such dedicated and proactive members.

It is important for us to keep in mind that VOTE/COPE does not favor any political party over another. Endorsements are made based solely on candidates’ voting record. I strongly urge you to contribute to VOTE/COPE – and invest in yourself and your future. Your voice and your contribution are important! As always, you may exercise your right not to contribute.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

In Solidarity,

Pasquale Delli Carpini
President

[Information obtained from NYSUT VOTE/COPE Literature]
2010 ELECTION RESULTS RE NYSUT ENDORSEES

**Congressional**

*Total Endorsements* 27 Democrats 0 Republican

*Winners* 22 Democrats 7 Republicans

**N.Y.S. Senate**

*Total Endorsements* 27 Democrats 8 Republicans

*Winners* 30 Democrats 32 Republicans

**N.Y.S. Assembly**

*Total Endorsements* 95 Democrats 17 Republicans

*Winners* 99 Democrats 50 Republicans
Cereal Drive

More information will be coming about the Summer Cereal Drive. All buildings will participate, but the cereal will be distributed to the elementary buildings. We hope this will be a huge success and benefit many families in the community. Tune in, the cereal continues. Emily Guthoff and Ellen Korz

Urgent! The WCT Scholarship Fund is very low. This year, more than ever, we want everyone to buy a $10 raffle for the 50/50. If everyone takes a raffle, you stand to win $4500. Raffle tickets should be available in April.

The money funds three $1500 Ralph and Janet Capasso Scholarships for our own members' graduating seniors. Emily Guthoff and Ellen Korz

RALPH & JANET CAPASSO SCHOLARSHIP

The WCT, in conjunction with the Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers, is offering three (3) $1500 scholarships to seniors presently enrolled in any public or private high school planning to attend college in the fall of 2011. To be eligible candidates must have a parent or legal guardian who is a member in good standing of the WCT.

The selection process for these awards will require the following:

- an application
- an essay
- a high school transcript (including senior year classes & grades)
- one letter of recommendation
- a personal interview for the finalists

Applications are available in the WCT office. Please call 227-5065 to request an application or pick it up directly. To be considered, applications must reach the WCT office no later than 5:00 P.M. on Friday, April 8, 2011.

Committee members are: Louise Rose, Emily Guthoff and Rosemary Versace-Pinczes
New Babies...

Jennifer Segal (Oak Grove) and her husband Ben welcomed their baby girl, Natalie Anne, on February 21, 2011. Congratulations!

Congratulations to Rob Fletcher (JJ English) and his wife Carly on the birth of their daughter Maya Kathryn.

Jenn Soltish (JJ Guidance) and her husband Brian on the birth of their son Landon Joseph on March 15. Congratulations!

Sign the 'We Are One' Pledge

Recent attacks on workers' fundamental rights in Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana and elsewhere have inspired and motivated tens of thousands of union members and allies to stand together to protect fairness, justice, democracy and workers' voice. Help take this moment and turn it into a movement. Join us and participate in nationwide "We Are One" activities the week of April 4. Sign the "We Are One" pledge to make a difference together.

{visit www.aft.org to “sign”}

Century 21 Alliance Realty Group
For Sale: 1 bedroom Condo
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$134,500 (negotiable)
Great Location
Close to all WCSD Schools
1st floor unit, updated bathroom, kitchen, new windows, fresh paint and Pergo floors throughout.
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We will frame almost anything!
10% WCT Discount at all times!
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Mark D’Onofrio—Sean Keenan
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Over 20 Years of Experience
Specializing in Pools and Residential Fencing
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Important Information about the WCT Welfare Trust Fund...

Trustees:
Christine Romano, Chairperson
Kim Mahusky, Treasurer
Erin Mulligan, Secretary
Flip Gertler, Trustee
Pasquale Delli Carpini, Trustee
Ronnie Dwyer, Administrator

WCT Telephone Number:
845-227-5065

Daniel H. Cook Telephone Number:
1-800-342-6651

- You must let the WTF know of any changes in your personal information ASAP
- Student verification forms must be sent to Daniel H. Cook every semester
- Dental & prescription reimbursement forms are on-line at the WTF website
- Please direct all questions & concerns to the WCT office or directly to Daniel H. Cook

from the... WCT Welfare Trust Fund

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

April 5, 2011
May 17, 2011
June 14, 2011

Appointments are (1) hour blocks available between 2pm & 6pm on a first come first served basis. When you call the office to schedule an appointment, we will forward a questionnaire to you. Please complete it and bring it with you to the meeting.

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. directly at 1-888-949-1925 and other arrangements may be possible.

also from the Welfare Trust Fund......

The attorney will be in the WCT offices to meet with members on the following dates:

April 27
May 18
and June 22.

Times:
2 pm—6pm
Please call 227-5065 to schedule an appointment.
Get Your WCT Gear

Short sleeve tees, long sleeve tees, and lanyards are available for purchase at the WCT Office. Shirts range in size from small through 3X. Please stop by the office to make your purchases. Payment for these items must be a check made out to WCT - cash will not be accepted.

WCT Gear is available at the WCT Office:

- $9 for short sleeve tee
- $12 for long sleeve tee
- $2 for lanyards

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Ed McKenna - 845-471-7607

MANE CONNECTIONS

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Across from John Jay HS

- Cuts, color, & highlights for every age and every style
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Phone: 845-797-3755
E-Mail: BAMMA1968@aol.com
Wappingers Falls NY
FOR RENT: LBI New Jersey house with two separate levels. Each level sleeps eight, has air conditioning, sit-in kitchen, two bedrooms, deck, and living room with cable TV and DVD player. Both levels share an outdoor washer/dryer, grill, and refreshing outdoor shower. The house is located at 102 East NY, which is six houses from the beach on the ocean side. Please contact Chris at (845) 542-0412 if you would like to learn more about this ideal vacation spot.

For Sale or Rent: Pok/C, 3-level townhouse, 3 BR, 1.5 bath, no HOA fees, walk-out finished basement, great neighborhood. Security and references required, for rent: $1400/mo includes utilities, or for sale: $184,900 call (845) 483-1311

Caretaker Needed: East Fishkill Historical Society in Hopewell is in need of a caretaker for the main house, barn, and schoolhouse. Must live on premises—1BR, upgraded Bath, LR, EIK, heat included. Rent is $400/month beginning April 1st. References required with 1/month security. Call 227-4136.

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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.