Being a teacher prepared me for the aftermath of hurricane Wilma.

On October 2, 2005, my husband, Joe, and I traveled to our new home in Boca Raton, Florida, and the following day began new jobs. We worked for three weeks before Hurricane Wilma descended on Southern Florida. Attention was paid to all hurricane preparedness announcements, and we followed directions just like good students. The cars got gassed up. We bought water, batteries, candles, and ice. The hurricane shutters went up.

On the morning of October 24, we were awakened at 6 AM to the most violent wind we had ever seen or heard. The placid little man-made creek behind out home was a turbulent, white-capped cauldron. We weathered the first part of the storm fairly well. The eye came through and with it, a false calm.

Our daughters in NYC and Connecticut kept us apprised of the hurricane’s progress via cell phone, as our power had gone out with the blue/green blast of a transformer.

After the eye came through, the back wall of the hurricane arrived with winds up to 125 mph. We jumped at every crash and thump. The clay roof tiles were breaking off, flying through the air and crashing against everything. A palm tree was slowly becoming uprooted and heading for our bedroom window.

On the back end of the storm, the wind was more powerful and blew in the opposite direction that it had previously. Trees that had been blowing over before the eye were now blown back upright!

I like to think, “Nothing frightens me - I taught Kindergarten and Bridge.” However, it got very scary. We would have gotten into the bathtub with a mattress over us (tornado and wind protection 101), except we had filled the tub with water and we have a waterbed, so we camped out in a walk-in closet instead.

(Look for Part II in the December 2nd issue)
A Special Thanks
By Mike Lyons
V.P. Negotiations

I would like to thank all of you who contributed to the Lou Allen Fund. As you know, Lou Allen was a teacher, only 34 years old, killed in Iraq. He leaves behind a wife and four young sons. As of this publication, we have raised $3345.00, which will be sent to the Lou Allen Memorial Fund. At a time like this, we need to come together to help a colleague’s family.

Thank you again.

In Memoriam - Louise E. Weber

By Ed Eidle

In the fall of 1963, when I came to the WCSD as a rookie teacher of Latin, I met Louise E. Weber, who was to become my forever friend. Louise passed on to the Lord this October 1st at 90 years of age, and I was not only personally saddened, but was also saddened for the generations of WCSD teachers and students who will never know her.

Louise was such a voracious reader of both classical and contemporary literature that her personal library rivaled that of a small town. She belonged to as many as three book clubs at a time, and Barnes and Noble loved to see her coming. Nourished by much reading, Louise was always conversationally stimulating, and I savored afternoon conversations at her kitchen table in our retirement. She sent others, and me, countless notes crammed with Xeroxed and hand copied articles relevant to shared interests. Some of these treasured notes now serve as bookmarks in my own favorite books. The notes were seasoned with the same brilliance as her conversation.

Louise was a person generous with her time and her knowledge. Whatever she owned, possessed or embodied, she believed she should share with others. She was a compassionate person who made your concerns her concerns. They were to be held up to the Father in prayer. To have known her was to have received a blessing, for she empowered you to prosper. She was the poster girl for NH.25:35-36.

She was an animated person who breathed life into whatever she said and did. She loved intensely – her family, her friends, her books, the flock of wild turkeys who visited her yard each day, and her garden filled with carefully chosen perennials, each one rejoiced over as it came into bloom.

Having arrived in New York as a young girl from Alsace Lorraine, she cherished the fact that doors had opened to allow her to become a teacher and fulfill her greatest dream. Naturally brilliant, she handled five languages with facility: French, German, Italian, English and Latin. And she regularly did the New York Times crossword puzzle...in ink!

The legacy of Louise E. Weber surpasses the memories and recollections of any one colleague. A person of broad interest, she was as apt to quote a loved poem for you as to sing an aria from a favorite opera. A tiny woman of boundless energy, she talked nonstop, once prompting a workshop presenter of whom she was asking a question to respond, “If you’d take a breath, Mrs. Weber, I’d try to answer.”

Louise was a teacher’s teacher. To emulate her was a difficult challenge. She once counseled a beginning teacher with the following advice on handling students. “Most of all, love them and nurture them. After that, you can teach them your subject matter. That’s good, too.”

Fall foliage was a delight Louise and I shared. We’d take a ride on back roads in Dutchess County, stopping often to look for perfect leaf specimens. It became an annual ritual: the ride, the foliage, the leaves and finally, pressing the leaves in thick volumes selected for the purpose from Louise’s library.

I’ll treasure my leaves even more this fall.
Editorial Expressions

“Thank you for playing!” was my response to six WCT members who participated in the “Who Are These People?” Contest. Jerilyn Gilman, Brian LaSusa, Karen Neevel, Dawn Sala, Kim Sokol, and Jon Sokol identified the people in the picture first published in the September 23rd issue of the WCT COMMENTATOR.

All six names were put in a bowl, and Jerilyn’s name was pulled. She has won a $25 gift certificate to Barnes & Noble. Lucky for her, NYSUT Member Benefits has a new discount program available to members. (Visit the following site - www.memberbenefits.nysut.org - to get an additional 5% off items online.)

I hope everyone enjoys these light-hearted additions to our newsletter. However, I am a little disappointed that the six people who answered correctly were the only six WCT members to participate. I am planning another contest to appear in January. I hope at least double the amount of members will take part in this new contest.

*The people in the picture are John Neevel, Debra Cassidy, Ray Koretsky, Pasquale Delli Carpini, and I!

In solidarity,

Meredith Inkeles

COMMENTATOR Editor

Upcoming Days Off

- November 23, 24, 25 - Thanksgiving Recess
- December 26 - January 2 - Winter Recess
- January 16 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Student Loan Consolidation

AFT members can lock in a fixed interest rate and cut their monthly student loan payments by half or more. Learn more about the program today by calling an AFT-dedicated loan counselor at 800/936-4976 or visiting www.aft.org/aftplus/consolidation.

Brought to you by CFS affinity services. All participating lenders are equal opportunity lenders.

COMMENTATOR deadline for the next issue is the Monday after the paycheck. Send all information for the December 2nd issue to WCTINK@HOTMAIL.COM, or to the WCT Office by Monday, November 21st.
Wappingers Congress of Teachers Welfare Trust Fund Steps to Access Claims and Member Resources on DHClaims.com

1- Open your preferred web browser (Internet explorer, AOL, MSN, etc.)
2- Type in www.dhclaims.com for the address, and press enter.
3- You should be on a website with the logo of Daniel H. Cook.
4- Click on Log On to gain access to the website.
   a. For first time users, click on, Underneath username and password to create account. Select member from drop-down, click on search, and now proceed to fill in the require fields: last name, date of birth in format MM/DD/YYYY, four digits of member social, user name, and password are for you to create. User name can be anything, but it needs to be unique in our database, so if you will be using your first name, it’s very probable that we already have such username in our system. Adding a number at the end could resolve the problem. Password is for you to choose as well; just keep in mind it is case sensitive.
   b. If account was successfully created, proceed to log in.
   c. Please note: Due to HIPPA regulations, keep in mind that each member of the family needs to have their own account.
5- Select member from the two tabs.
6- Click on different links to the left to gain access to different parts of website.

Links:
   - Member Profile shows the member’s personal and contact information.
   - Benefits displays an abridged version of the member benefits.
   - Providers - Under construction.
   - Claims Status allows the member to view the status of their claims.
   - ID Cards - Under construction.
7- To find the status of a submitted claim, click on View Claim Status. Here you need to enter the Doctor’s last name. If this is unknown, or you don’t remember the correct spelling, enter %%% (percent sign 3 times) and a date prior to the date of service in format (MM/DD/YYYY). When you use the %, you will get all claims from the period you entered.
8- Once you find the desired claim, you can click on the claim number and then view EOB for this claim, and you will be able to view all service details, Doctor’s name, charges, benefits paid, check number, and check date.
9- Talk to us: Please send the WTF an email if you encounter any problems, and we will be happy to help you.
Regents’ Action on Superintendent’s Conference Days

Reprinted from Mid-Hudson School Bell Fall 2005 issue from the NYSUT Mid-Hudson Regional Office

On September 9th, the Board of Regents passed a temporary amendment which will permit school districts to use up to two conference days per year for the scoring of state assessments. This new regulation permits, but does not mandate, the use of Superintendents’ Conference Days for rating of state assessments in Grades 3-8. The regulation will expire June 30, 2007.

NYSUT continues to lobby for a “Regents-Like” week for the administering and scoring of the Grades 3-8 assessments in January and March.

Business Education Teachers Attend State Conference

By Maryalice Goodall

Kristen Bockemuhl (RCK), Kathleen Conroy (RCK), Maryalice Goodall (RCK), and Lynda Murphy (JJ) attended the Business Teachers Association of New York State annual conference held on October 27-28, 2005, at the Marriott Long Island Hotel in Uniondale, New York. The conference attracted over 200 business and marketing teachers from high schools and colleges located in New York State.

This year’s theme, “Business Education...You’re Hired!” was highlighted at the conference. The Keynote speaker was Mr. Thomas Suozzi, Nassau County Executive. Mr. Suozzi, a CPA and an attorney, addressed the skills students should possess before entering the work force. The business education workshop topics included: investing, credit repair, running a school store, web design, student issues, law, marketing, computer technology, accounting, and career development. A number of exhibitors displayed current curriculum materials. The State Education Department provided an update of information on the New York State Standards along with current developments in education.

2005-2006 Pay Dates:

December 2nd
December 16th
December 30th
January 13th
January 27th
February 10th
February 24th
March 10th
March 24th
April 7th
April 21st
May 5th
May 19th
June 2nd
June 16th
June 23rd

WCSD Factoid:

- When submitting your mileage for September 1, 2005 through December 31, 2005, please calculate using the 48.5 cent rate.

Go to this Purchasing Department web site to obtain your mileage sheet: http://teacherweb.com/NY/Hollowbrook/WCSDPurchasing/MILEAGESHEET.doc.
FOR RENT: newly renovated 2 bedroom cottage, $1350 with private entrance, farm setting, Wappingers Falls. Call Theresa, 462-3422 – p.m. only. Available December 1st.

FOR RENT/SALE: Wildwood Manor, 1 bedroom, 1 bath updated unit with new kitchen cabinets and new windows, self cleaning oven, dishwasher and air conditioner, pool, tennis courts, playground, low commons charges. Call June - 227-7157.

FOR SALE:

FOR SALE: bedroom set, art deco (circa 1940’s/50’s) double size bed, mattress/box spring, headboard and footboard, double dresser with round mirror, mahogany wood, good condition. Asking $300.00. Laura Ashley bedding: sheets, comforter, shams, bed skirt, curtains, round table cloth with topper, white background with blue/yellow flowers. Asking $75.00. Call 831-6057 evenings.