FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK: CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, JANUS V. AFSCME: WHAT’S AT STAKE

Dear Colleagues,

“Shall there be a convention to revise the constitution and amend the same?” This is the question that will appear ON THE BACK of the ballot on November 7, 2017. These simple twelve words have the potential to have a huge impact not only on our members but also on every resident of the state. When we go to the polls, we must vote NO on this question: as we are well aware of the disastrous ramifications of such a process.

If the voters approve a constitutional convention, the outcome could be catastrophic – for you – the union member and public educator. Many of the fundamental rights that our predecessors worked to achieve could be taken away by the same elected officials who relentlessly attack our profession.

Labor rights at risk:

⇒ The right to unionize and bargain collectively.
⇒ Workers’ compensation that safeguard our rights if we’re injured on the job.
⇒ Public pension protections! The present constitution (Article 5, §7), guarantees our pension at retirement so that we can live with dignity after a rewarding career.
⇒ Other states without such protection have made drastic pension changes with devastating results for active and retired members.

A waste of tax dollars:

⇒ It is estimated that a constitutional convention would cost the taxpayers in excess of five hundred million dollars.
⇒ The last time (1967) a constitutional convention took place, it cost the taxpayers ten million dollars and accomplished nothing.
⇒ Lawmakers can “double dip” and collect salaries and pension credits as elected officials and as delegates simultaneously.
⇒ Constitutional conventions don’t have mandatory end dates- delegates keep meeting and taxpayers keep paying.
⇒ Do we trust today’s elected officials to rewrite our state constitution that has served us well for so many years? Do we want politicians, misconceptions, uninformed and misled voters to threaten the fundamental rights documented in the state constitution? NO!

As NYS residents, other rights could be diminished or lost:

⇒ Environmental protections-New York State’s constitution has the nation’s strongest protections for “forever wild” areas like the Adirondacks and the Catskill. Special interest groups and developers could lobby to undo these safeguards.
⇒ Public education- the state constitution guarantees our students the right to a free public education.

Continued on page 2
FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK  

⇒ Freedom of speech and press.
⇒ Equal protection of laws.
⇒ Freedom of worship; religious liberty
⇒ State debt limits.
⇒ State budget spending caps.
⇒ Social welfare needs.
⇒ Voting rights.
⇒ ....and much more

The WCT, as a caring and responsible organization, must encourage its members, our community and the citizens of NYS to vote NO on November 7, 2017, to the question: “Shall there be a convention to revise the constitution and amend the same?”

The second issue that we need to address in the spring/summer of 2018 is the outcome of the Janus v. AFSCME case, aimed to destroy labor unions. The case is expected to be picked up by the United States Supreme Court, in its first term this October. Janus v. AFSCME like its predecessor, Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association poses a potential threat to the strength of public-sector unions nationwide.

A 4-4 split decision was rendered on the Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association last year due to the untimely passing of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia; therefore, things remained as they were. What's at stake is the principle of "fair share."

The Court, given its present composition, will most likely render a decision that could send shockwaves in every public sector of employment. It might destroy a well-balanced "eco-system" that has been effective and productive in this Country for decades.

Since the Supreme Court’s 1977 Abood v. Detroit Board of Education decision, unions have been allowed to collect dues from all private or public employees they represent. In New York State, the law says that if you choose not to be a union member, you must pay your "fair share" for the union’s work that benefits you. Those who object don’t have to contribute to political or lobbying activities, but they must contribute for the unions' efforts in negotiating higher competitive salaries, benefits, working conditions, health and retirement benefits, etc. in other words, contribute their “fair share.”

“Unfortunately, attacking the freedom of working people to come together is exactly what the Janus v. AFSCME lawsuit is all about. Although fronted by a lone state employee, the case is bankrolled by the National Right to Work Foundation and the Liberty Justice Center — the litigation wing of the Illinois Policy Institute — part of a network funded by billionaires and corporate CEOs who use their massive fortunes to tilt the playing field in their favor.” (Roberta Lynch, executive director of AFSCME Council 31, which represents 100,000 active and retired public service workers).

Can anyone of us be part of an organization in our community without paying dues? How would the organization survive, serve or address the members' needs? Yet, this is what the United States Supreme Court will be deciding late spring, early summer of 2018. If the Court sides with Janus, the outcome could be disastrous! Our members clearly understand the importance of BEING the union and the atrocities that our brothers and sisters bear in “right to work” states, where negotiated agreements are rarely respected. As a member of an effective union, we are entitled to:
⇒ Higher competitive salaries.
⇒ Representation.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

⇒ Welfare Trust Fund benefits: dental, vision, legal, copay/coinsurance reimbursement
⇒ Educational and professional support.
⇒ Health benefits, paid time off and better retirement security.
⇒ Legal services—due process and basic job protections, non-existent in non-unionized workplaces.
⇒ A voice in safety, in working conditions and in ensuring high standards for our profession and in the services we provide.
⇒ The ability to advocate for our students without fear of reprisal.

More than ever before, rest assured that the leadership of the WCT has been diligently working and is ready to address these issues. In order to protect and preserve our hard-fought benefits and constitutional rights, the membership must participate when called to action. I’m confident that by working together we can succeed and achieve our common goals. Let’s have Great Expectations and a wonderful 2017-2018 academic year!

In Solidarity,

Pasquale Delli Carpini
WCT President

KNOW YOUR BUILDING REPS

BRINCKERHOFF—Kim Sokol and John Neevel
EVANS—Tracy Sheremeta and Shareen Whitehouse
FISHKILL—Lea LaSusa and Amanda Scalzo
FISHKILL PLAINS—Patricia Dean and Nora Bitting
GAYHEAD—Lucretia O’Dell and Norma Albin
JOHN JAY—Rena Finsmith, Nancy Beiner, Sonia Martire, Eric Feldman, Kerri Roger, and Tim Kermani
KETCHAM—Christine Zandstra, Katherine DeGroat, Nicole North, Marilyn Norton, and Jerry Richard
KINRY—Meredith Inkeles and Sue Smith
MYERS—Dianne Nurre and Matthew Keeney
OAK GROVE—Anne Marie Dunn and Paul Lander
ORCHARD VIEW—Rob Light
SHEAFE—Jon Sokol and Sherry Clark
VAN WYCK—Joe Testa, Matt Frey, Sue Santos
VASSAR—Mary Wexler and Ken Licari
WJH—Ellen Mead and Linda Burke
WELCOME TO OUR NEW TEACHERS

By Diane DiChiara

On August 22, the Wappingers Congress of Teachers welcomed 31 new teachers to our district. The new teachers spent the morning at district office and then travelled by school bus over to the union office. Upon arrival, they were welcomed by members of the WCT Executive Board and our administrative assistant, Ronnie Dwyer, and served lunch. This year, all new teachers will be provided with a union mentor to assist them in "all things union." This new program is being provided by the WCT through our New Teacher Coordinator, Kate DeGroat (RCK). Look for more info in the upcoming weeks. Both Dr. Dwight Bonk and Susan Wagner (HR) joined in the luncheon as well.
COMMUNITY DAYS: WAPPINGERS AND EAST FISHKILL

By Rena Finsmith, RA

Community Day 2017 in our school district was a huge success! The WCT participated in the town of Wappingers Community Day on Sept 9th. We saw many young faces enjoyed getting a free book and pencils to use in school.

East Fishkill Community Day was on Sept 16th and despite the very hot and sticky weather, we were able to put smiles on people’s faces as we tossed out free John Jay Rally Towels to future and current Patriots.

Thank you to all the WCT members who supported community day.

**Gayhead:** Norma Guerra-Albin

**Van Wyck:** Sue Santos, Kathryn Shekikta, Emily Guthoff

**RCK:** Christine Zandstra and Kate DeGroat**

**JJ:** Heather Dahl, Linda Gilmartin**, Juana Banco, Diane DiChiara, Diane Sampson, Jennifer Malizia, Sonia Martire, Jason Jutt**, Amanda Harden, Alyson McCarroll, Beth Lohmeyer, Dawn Murtaugh

**=helped out at both community days

We really would like to see at least one member from each building for next year’s events as the students enjoy seeing their teachers and it gives us an opportunity to see and get to know members in our local.
EAST FISHKILL COMMUNITY DAY: WAPPINGERS LABOR COUNCIL
by Diane DiChiara

Just a little over a year ago, the WCT initiated a new concept - to form a Wappingers Labor Council with the other NYSUT locals in the district. The idea sprung from training for the Local Action Project (LAP). The idea is simple: TOGETHER, WE ARE STRONGER. Eventually we added the other non NYSUT locals to our council. The locals include STEPS, WAA, WCA, WCT, WFEA, WFW, Wappingers Office Unit, WRPNA, and the WTAA. We are 9 unions with one mission: to challenge and empower our students so that they can grow into thoughtful and contributing members of our community. The council has met every 4-6 weeks including the summer. Recently at the Community Days, the community saw several of our locals sitting side-by-side with the teachers. These included the teaching assistants, cafeteria workers, and the custodians/bus drivers.
WCT HELPS ANIMALS DISPLACED BY HURRICANE HARVEY

On September 15th, WCT members dropped off donations from all our schools to the Duchess County SPCA. These donations will assist in the care and feeding of animals displaced by Hurricane Harvey in Texas.

![Image of donations]

RCK donations

Vassar Road donations

Kinny Road donations
FROM THE DCSPCA

By Leslee Stolarski

The images coming out of Texas during Hurricane Harvey were shocking. Not long after, Hurricane Irma struck Florida and left, even more, people with flooded and damaged homes. For many of these people, returning home is going to take months if not years. As we have all seen on television, their pets cannot enter many of the shelters or short-term housing they are forced to use. This is where the SPCA comes in. They foster many of these animals until their owners can get back home. I have been overwhelmed by the generosity of the Wappingers Congress of Teachers and the entire Wappingers District. Thanks to all of you, the local SPCAs have the supplies they need to get the pets through this very tough time.

"By 2020, mental and substance use disorders will surpass all physical diseases as a major cause of disability worldwide." (SAMHSA)

In 2014 Dutchess County was listed as a high drug trafficking area along with Long Island and Western NY (E. Trumpetto CAPE).

WCT’s Local Action Project (LAP) is looking to form a new committee that will work in collaboration with CAPE (Council on Addiction Prevention & Education of Dutchess County) in strategic prevention in our schools and community.

Please send email of interest to Diane.DiChiara@wcsdny.org by October 15th.

Want more information about CAPE? http://capedc.org/ or 845-765-8301

LAP UPDATES

By Kerri Roger, JJ

Kindergarten Books

As a special gift, the book Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten by Joseph Slate was given to our new incoming students of Wappingers. This is the second year that the WCT LAP team has purchased these books to give to our kindergarteners. This gift is to help encourage reading and help with the excitement of going to school. It describes how the teacher gets ready for the first day of school. Within the story it has a great way to practice the alphabet. It is also meant to help with any fears that incoming students might have coming to school for the first time. We hope that our students enjoy this special gift and we would love to hear any feedback from your classrooms.

WCT Apparel

This is the third year we are opening our WCT clothing store. Go to the WCT website and look for the WCT Apparel tab on the left of the screen. We have long sleeves, T-shirts, Sweat Shirts and Polos. This year, because we got such a great response, we are including our Tie Dye T-shirts. There is also a coupon code to receive your $9.50 coupon toward any of the items in the store. Read your email to get the code to use in our store. Don’t forget to write in the notes your school so we can deliver the shirts to you. Enjoy shopping!
A VOICE FROM THE PAST

By Leslie Leventhal, WCT Past President

In August of this year, I realized a childhood dream and went to the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. I had read the book as a sixth grader for the first time and reread it many more times. I often felt that I could feel Anne talking, almost as if she was talking to me. As a sixth-grade teacher, when we made it to World War II, I would illustrate the horror of the war by showing the Millie Perkins, black and white version of "The Diary of Anne Frank." Inevitably, at least one child would ask, "Where's the color?" Some would mumble, "I think this is going to be boring." But soon enough, they were all deeply engrossed in the film. Each day, I would stop it in time to have a discussion of what they had seen. On the next day, the questions would come pouring in. Some children cried at the end. I wiped tears from my eyes no matter how many times I had seen the film. Some great writing assignments came from seeing and discussing this film. In an age of Common Core, I don't know if I could have made time for this. I can only hope that it made a lasting impression at least on some.

I visited the site shortly after the incident at Charlottesville. I was horrified and nauseated when I saw the Neo-Nazis marching through the town, and I listened to their chants. I could not believe that this was happening. Then a friend of the family told me how there was a service in progress at the local synagogue and a group of Nazis stood outside the temple. When local authorities did not provide much assistance, the congregants planned to exit the synagogue in the rear. The Rabbi took the Torahs, and they all fled. How could this be possible in the United States of America? Then I listened to our president the next day and could not believe what I heard from him. How could he not condemn Nazis? Does he not know anything about world history? For me, this not a Republican or a Democratic issue. It is an issue of bigotry and hatred that I never thought in my lifetime I would see or hear.

Maybe this did not affect you as much as it affected me. But one would be very naive to believe that the hatred that was being spewed was only toward Jews. I would suggest reading the book The Lilac Girls by Martha Hall Kelly. You will clearly see that this bigotry has no boundaries. I suppose, to many, World War II has almost become a faint memory. But I would challenge those who teach about it to make sure that the Holocaust should never be forgotten. Our country is still a "melting pot," something the alt-right clearly disdains.

"Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it."
George Santayana

Remember Charlottesville.
“Backpack Full of Cash,” a powerful new documentary film, offers an in-depth look into the very real perils of privatizing and defunding public education, and sounds a warning for New Yorkers. The film [was] shown at 7 p.m., Friday, Sept. 8 by the New York State Writers Institute at UAlbany's Page Hall. The screening [was] free and open to all.

Producers Vera Arnonow and Sarah Mondale, a former NYSUT member who also directed the 90-minute film, [led] a panel discussion following the screening.

NYSUT plans to sponsor additional screenings across the state this fall. Watch nysut.org for details.

The film, narrated by actor Matt Damon, focuses primarily on cities that have experienced large-scale expansion of charter schools — Philadelphia, Nashville and New Orleans — the "hotspots," Mondale calls them.

"The film is a great discussion starter. It's a cautionary tale of where privatization of public education can lead. People have reason to worry," she said. Mondale, a teacher whose parents were public school teachers in Minnesota, started work on "Backpack Full of Cash" after she saw the pro-charter propaganda film "Waiting for Superman."

"It made me mad," she said.

After securing much-needed donations and funding — "We all went into debt making this," Mondale said — "Backpack Full of Cash" is now making the rounds in states across the country.

Mondale was a member of the White Plains Teachers Association and taught French in middle school. She left the classroom earlier this year in order to meet the growing demand for screenings— about 500 requests at last count.

"It is so timely because of [U.S. Education Secretary] Betsy DeVos" and her privatization agenda, Mondale said.

An accomplished filmmaker, Mondale directed and co-produced the award-winning PBS series, "School," a PBS prime-time film "Marcel Proust" and the Emmy award-winning "Asylum" and "Megamall."

For more information, visit www.backpackfullofcash.com.
GOOD NEWS!

- Congratulations to Lauren and Christopher Wengert (both of the WCSD Music Dept.) on the birth of their son, Noah, on July 16, 2017.
- Congratulations to Steve and Shannon Cohen (Fishkill) on the birth of their son, Aidan, born on September 2, 2017.

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WCT EXECUTIVE BOARD 2017—2018

President: Pasquale Delli Carpini (JJ)
Treasurer: Donna Kart (VW)
VP Secondary: Ray Koretsky (RCK)
VP Elementary: Flip Gertler (FS)
Director of Internal Communications: Kim Mahusky (FS)
Director Political Action: Jim Marrinan (OG)
Secondary at Large: Diane DiChiara (JJ)
Secondary at Large: Ann Liebergot (VW)
Elementary at Large: Michelle Ross (GY)
Elementary at Large: Theresa Stowell (FP)

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THIS MONTH IN LABOR HISTORY

http://www.unionist.com

September 4, 1894—Twelve thousand New York tailors strike over sweatshop conditions.

September 4, 1949—More than 140 attendees at a benefit for a civil rights group are injured in the “Peekskill Riots” in Peekskill, N.Y. The victims were among the 20,000 people leaving a concert featuring African-American Paul Robeson, well-known for his strong pro-unionism, civil rights activism and left-wing affiliations.

September 5, 1882—Between 20,000 and 30,000 marchers participate in New York's first Labor Day parade, demanding the 8-hour day.

September 7, 1916—Federal employees win the right to receive Workers' Compensation insurance coverage.

September 9, 1973—United Auto Workers President Leonard Woodcock is named in Pres. Richard Nixon’s “Enemy’s List,” a White House compilation of Americans Nixon regarded as major political opponents. Another dozen union presidents were added later. The existence of the list was revealed during Senate Watergate Committee hearings.

September 17, 1868—At a New York convention of the National Labor Congress, Susan B. Anthony calls for the formation of a Working Women's Association. As a delegate to the Congress, she persuaded the committee on female labor to call for votes for women and equal pay for equal work. But male delegates deleted the reference to the vote.

September 21, 1912—Mother Jones leads a march of miners’ children through the streets of Charleston, W. Va.

September 22, 2006—Eleven Domino's employees in Pensacola, Fla., form the nation’s first union of pizza delivery drivers.
THE WCT WELFARE TRUST
FUND TRUSTEES

Flip Gertler—Chairperson
Theresa Stowell—Treasurer
Erin Mulligan—Secretary
Kim Mahusky—Trustee
Pasquale Delli Carpini—Trustee
Ronnie Dwyer—WTF Administrator

LOCATION OF WCT OFFICE
280 NEW HACKENSACK RD
WAPPINGERS FALLS, NY 12590
Located directly across from Dutchess County Airport
On the right 2.5 miles from Rt 9
On the left .25 miles from All Angels and 376 Intersection
Next to Mid-Hudson Podiatry

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

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<tr>
<td>WCT OFFICE:</td>
<td>845-227-5065</td>
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<tr>
<td>DANIEL H. COOK :</td>
<td>800-342-6651</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIRKIN &amp; GORDON: (LAWYERS)</td>
<td>914-997-1576</td>
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<tr>
<td>DAVIS VISION :</td>
<td>800-999-5431</td>
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<td>STACY BRAUN ASSOC : (FINANCIAL)</td>
<td>888-949-1925</td>
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