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Proud Winner of AFT & NYSUT Journalism Awards

# the COMMENTATOR

Vol. 35 No. 9

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## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Dear Colleagues,

As we begin the New Year, I would like to bring you up-to-date regarding the status of negotiations.

Presently, we are at a critical juncture in our negotiations. We have met three times with NYS Appointed Mediator Martin Scheinmann and he will be returning on January 31, 2007 for what may be his final opportunity to mediate a settlement.

The negotiating team with our NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist, Steve Berman, is working diligently towards a successor agreement that is both educationally sound and fiscally responsible in order to attract and retain the best educators available for the benefit of our school community.

One of the most important issues that we are addressing is the high cost of health insurance. We are in the process of evaluating health insurance proposals from different carriers that provide comparable level of benefits that we now have with Empire Blue Cross/Blue Shield Alternate PPO plan under DEHIC. These proposals will also be analyzed in depth by NYSUT health insurance experts to ensure that all of our requirements are met.

Keep in mind that the District cannot unilaterally change plans without our consent. Be assured that no change will be agreed upon that would compromise the benefit level or the depth of coverage - including participating physicians and hospitals.

We are seeking competitive salaries, comparable contributions to the Welfare Trust Fund, in addition to a health insurance package that meets the needs of our active members and retirees at a reasonable cost and in line with surrounding districts. We are also addressing many of the educational issues that are important to us and our students.

Thank you for your support and encouragement. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to e-mail me at [president@wcteachers.org](mailto:president@wcteachers.org) or Michael Lyons, V.P. Negotiations, at [negotiations@wcteachers.org](mailto:negotiations@wcteachers.org).

Wishing you a very successful and productive New Year!  
In Solidarity,

*Pasquale Delli Carpini*

Pasquale Delli Carpini  
WCT President

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# Mathematics and Literacy Institutes to Focus on Teachers in Grades 3-8

The classes will be held in Albany, and there is a \$125 fee for each institute. Get more information and register online at NYSUT.org.

- **A Pre-Institute Event - "Meet Jackie Robinson"**  
*Friday, February 2, 2007. 7:30 pm*
- **Literacy Institute**  
*Saturday, February 3, 2007. 10am-3:30pm*
- **Follow-up Sessions**  
*Saturday, May 5, 2007. 9am-12pm*
- **A Pre-Institute Event - "Working with Educational Technology"**  
*Thursday, February 1, 2007. 7:30 pm*
- **Mathematics Institute**  
*Friday, February 2, 2007. 10am-3:30pm*
- **Institutes Follow up Sessions**  
*Saturday, May 5, 2007. 9am-12pm*

## BlueCard PPO Access Savings Program

*FYI for BlueCross BlueShield Members*

The new ID cards will have the prefix **DHB**. In addition, as per the request of the Trust, the new ID cards will now have the 800 telephone number, **but not the fax number** on the back [as reported last month] for Caremark, the pharmaceutical provider.

**It is imperative that we remind our members to show**

the new ID cards to all of their healthcare providers and be sure to indicate the new alpha prefix and number on all claims for service after February 1, 2007. Failure to do so will cause claims to be kicked back and will slow the processing of their claims. A letter of explanation is being sent to all effected members.

\* All BC/BS pharmacy records have been converted over to the Caremark website. If you want to order your prescriptions by mail, you must register on the Caremark site, regardless of being registered on the previous pharmacy site.

**[www.caremark.com](http://www.caremark.com)**

# Nominate a Special Elementary Teacher for Better Beginnings Award

*NYSUT News Wire - January 12, 2007*

Members have until Feb. 16 to nominate an outstanding elementary teacher for New York's Better Beginnings award, which is administered by the state Board of Regents.

The Better Beginnings Program, which celebrates the life and career of former teacher Helen Bach Moss, annually offers a \$1,000 award to an elementary school teacher who is

gifted in finding and nurturing the strengths of each student. Last year's winner was Sara Cole of the Hannibal Faculty Association in central New York.

Although nominations are accepted until Feb. 16, the application does require a letter of recommendation, so NYSUT advises nominators to begin the process soon.

To download application materials, visit:

[www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/TEACHING/BBA/bbaindex.htm](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/TEACHING/BBA/bbaindex.htm).

For more information  
Download application materials at the State Ed Web site

## Read Across America 2007

*NYSUT Leader - January 19, 2007*

March 2 is the date for NEA's Read Across America 2007. Ten years ago, NEA and its members started a reading revolution. From a one-day celebration of Dr. Seuss's birthday, March 2, "Read Across America Day" has become a year-round literacy campaign. Visit [www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org) to find 10 ways you can get involved in the 10th anniversary.

Saturn auto retailers will once again be distributing free "Cat Hat" posters to union educators in conjunction with the event. They will distribute

the posters in lots of 30 for education association members who want them for their classroom parties. With a few snips and some tape, the flat poster becomes a three-dimensional, red-and-white stove-pipe hat - a la Dr. Seuss' Cat in the Hat.

NYSUT members may visit any Saturn facility starting Feb. 15 to pick up the posters while supplies last.

For poster info, call (800) 738-1817 or e-mail [teacherposters@aol.com](mailto:teacherposters@aol.com).

## New Order Form

Be sure to check the WCT site for the new shirt order form since a number of the styles have been discontinued. <http://wcteachers.org/20401.html>

## Scholarship Opportunity

The Union Plus Scholarship Program, sponsored by the Union Plus Education Foundation, is open to students attending or planning to attend a four-year college or university, a community college or a technical college or trade school. The program is open to members, spouses and dependent children of unions participating in any of the Union Plus programs. The amount of the award ranges from \$500 to \$4,000. This is a one-time cash award sent to individual winners for undergraduate study beginning in the fall of the same year. Winners are chosen based on academic achievement and potential, character, leadership, social awareness, career goals and financial need. Applications are judged by a committee of impartial post-secondary educators. The deadline for applications is January 31, 2007. Go to <http://aft.org/aftplus/scholarships/unionplus.htm> for more information.

## Good News!

Congratulations to **Tara Hart** (KR), on the birth of her little girl, Julia Claire, born on December 7, 2006. Julia weighed 8lbs., 6oz., and was 21 inches long.

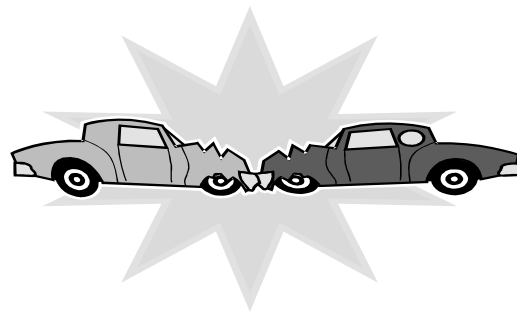
## Dates to Know

January 30 - R.A. meeting  
 February 2 - Superintendent's Conference Day  
 February 9 - payday  
 February 16-19 - Presidents' Day Recess  
 February 12 - BOE meeting (MC & FP)  
 February 22 - BOE meeting (VW & EV)  
 February 23 - payday  
 February 27 - R.A. meeting  
 March 9 - pay day  
 March 12 - BOE meeting (WJH, VR, & OV)  
 March 23 - payday  
 March 26 - BOE meeting (KR & BR)  
 March 27 - Superintendent's Conference Day & R.A. meeting  
 April 2-9 - Spring Recess  
 April 6 - payday  
 April 10 - BOE meeting - (JJ & SR)  
 April 20 - payday  
 April 24 - BOE meeting - (RCK, OG, & MC)  
 April 24 - R.A. meeting  
 April 26 - 28 - NYSUT's Representative Assembly  
 May 4 - payday  
 May 7 - BOE meeting (GY, FS, & BR)  
 May 18 - payday  
 May 21 - BOE meeting (KR, FP, & WJH)  
 May 28 - Memorial Day observed  
 May 29 - R.A. meeting  
 June 1 - payday  
 June 11 - BOE meeting (VW, EV, VR, & OV)  
 June 15 - payday  
 June 19 - R.A. meeting

## Crunch, Bang, "Oh No!"— AFT + Community Advantage

GMAC, the AFT + auto insurance provider, takes pride in its caring claims performance. "Every employee within the GMAC claims department has the same commitment—to keep our customers' lives moving, in a genuinely caring way. We do that by treating you like family; we care about you and your safety and security. We do all of this in ways that demonstrate empathy, provide opportunity for education, and leave you feeling empowered to keep moving," says Sheena Poe, chief claims officer for GMAC Insurance Personal Lines.

For more information or a free, no-obligation quote from the AFT + auto insurance program, call toll-free 888/847-9991, or visit [www.gmacinsurance.com/aft](http://www.gmacinsurance.com/aft).



## Mileage Rate Change

Beginning January 1, 2007, the mileage reimbursement rate has been increased by the IRS to 48.5 cents per mile.

For your convenience, mileage forms are available in the Forms section on our Purchasing Department web site and the previous and current mileage rate is available in the Accounts Payable section. To access our web site from the District web page, click on Purchasing (under Administration).

If you have any questions, please contact Purchasing.

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### *the* WCT COMMENTATOR

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The deadline for the February 9th issue is **Monday, January 29th**.

Please send articles to the Meredith Inkeles at the WCT Office or to [commentator@wcteachers.org](mailto:commentator@wcteachers.org)

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**January 1 – June 30, 2006 \$369.60**  
**Sept. 1 – December 31, 2006 \$264.00**

**Total \$633.60**

## WCT Membership Report (1/15/07)

By Alice Baker, WCT Membership Chairperson

### 100% Membership Schools:

Brinckerhoff	John Jay HS
Fishkill School	Van Wyck JHS
Fishkill Plains	Wappingers JHS
Evans	
Kinry Road	
Myers Corners	
Sheafe Road	
Vassar Road	

### Agency Fee Payers (Non-members):

Gayhead 1	RCK 2
Oak Grove 1	

## NCLB: What It Will Take to Get It Right

As the education community marks the fifth anniversary of the No Child Left Behind Act on Jan. 8, the AFT continues to press policymakers on our members' concerns about the law and to identify research-backed solutions.

AFT president Edward J. McElroy reiterated the union's position on NCLB in a Jan. 5 message to AFT leaders, where he noted that although the AFT supports the goals of No Child Left Behind—including high academic standards, meaningful accountability and well-qualified school staff—the “NCLB train has slipped off the tracks.”

The way to get back on the tracks, he said, is by improving assessments, accountability, school interventions, staffing and funding.

Everything in this law hangs on adequate yearly progress (AYP), the law's mechanism for holding schools accountable. But “AYP is fundamentally flawed,” said McElroy. “We need to change AYP so it doesn't continue to misidentify schools that are making real progress and steer resources away from the schools and students who need them most.”

The law needs to provide research-based help for schools, like smaller class sizes, targeted resources for struggling students, high-quality professional development, and better early childhood programs. The law's current interventions “are not research-based and, to date, have generally proven to be ineffective and unworkable.”

The law also needs to address teaching and learning conditions, school leadership, professional preparation and support if we are going to close the achievement gap. Compensation for everyone, but particularly for paraprofessionals, has not been commensurate with this law's increased qualification requirements, says the union.

Finally, the law should provide the resources needed to meet the new, rigorous requirements for students and teachers.

Although other organizations and coalitions have issued documents and statements on No Child Left Behind, the AFT chose to prepare its own set of recommendations. In addition, the union also will be urging the new Congress to make the necessary changes to the law.

(Reprinted from the January 12, 2007 issue of *AFTCN Wired*)



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### It's a buyer's market in SW Florida!

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**FOR SALE:** Immaculate 2BR home, 1.5BTH, off Cedar Ave, Po'k w/ both deck/patio, fenced back yard \$240,000. www.forsalebyowner.com #20736868 - call 702-8146.

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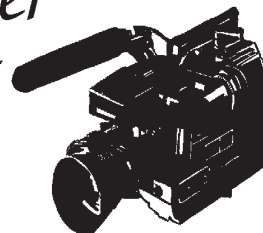
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