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, Governor, and the U.S. Congress. If we wish to have a positive influence on our professional future, we must take an active part in the political process.

NYSUT offers each of us a way to participate in our own future by supporting the 2007 VOTE/COPE campaign.

VOTE/COPE is our political voice, a non-partisan political action arm of New York State United Teachers which is funded entirely by voluntary contributions from members. Our legislators in Albany and Washington know the strength of our efforts and our ability to elect candidates and campaign committees that support education and labor.

VOTE/COPE was crucial to our historic success in the 2006 election year. It played a key role in electing a new Congress, one that we hope will take this country in a positive direction. In New York State, the races for the governor, the attorney general, the comptroller, and the state Legislature overwhelmingly went the way of NYSUT-endorsed candidates.

Endorsements are made by the NYSUT Board of Directors, following a thorough procedure which includes a statewide endorsement conference involving the participation of local presidents, a statewide political action committee, and NYSUT’s Legislative Department. Incumbents’ voting records on important education and labor bills are given great weight in considering possible endorsement. Following NYSUT’s Endorsement Conference, the Board of Directors acts on the final recommendations of the Political Action Committee and the Executive Committee.

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 records.

VOTE/COPE gives us the resources to support candidates, on both sides of the aisle, who have demonstrated through their actions that they stand with us on important issues. These issues include state aid for education and health care, decent working conditions, retirement security, prescription drugs and affordable health care coverage.
Save the Date

- Gayhead Elementary School would like you to save the date to honor our retirees: Cathy Celtruda, Sandra Jankowski, Norma DePalma, and Caryl Roll. We are celebrating at The Links on Friday, June 8th. Invitations and information to follow.

- Sheafe Road Elementary School would like you to save the date to honor our retirees: Betty Federico, Mary Sue Tkacs, Dotty Lattin, and Maria Cadmus. We are celebrating at the Villa Borghese on Saturday, June 2nd at 6:00pm with a dinner buffet, cash bar, and DJ. Invitations to follow.

FYI

The Bank of New York, the financial institution that handles the accounts for the Welfare Trust Fund, is merging with Chase Manhattan Bank. Due to this change, there may be a delay in processing some paperwork. We thank you for your patience and understanding.

-Welfare Trust Fund Board of Directors

Good News!

- Michael and Sharon Roe, and big brother Christopher have a new addition to the family. David Jonathan arrived on November 18, 2006. Sharon is a first grade teacher at Oak Grove.

- David Barysh and Dana Moccio were married in the snowstorm on Valentine’s Day! David is a fifth grade teacher at Oak Grove.

- The article on the 2005 Alzheimer’s walk written by WCRT member, Walter Franca, has received an Award of Merit in the “Health Article” category from the New York Teacher Journalism Competition. Also, the WCT web site, WCTeachers.org, has been awarded first place in the “Best Web Site” category from the New York Teacher Journalism Competition. The awards will be presented at the 2007 RA in Washington, D.C.

Enjoy the spring recess!

In addition, VOTE/COPE has helped win a permanent cost-of-living adjustment for retiree pensions, built momentum for greater investment in our schools, and spearheaded an historic override of vetoes that restored $1 billion in education and health care funding.

On a local level, we saw a record number of budget defeats in our area, including our own. Inflation and increasing energy costs have exhausted precious extra taxpayer dollars, including that of our own members. This burden could be a factor in the May 15th school budget vote and election of school board candidates.

The 2007 legislative session will be pivotal in continuing efforts to maintain and improve educational programs. NYSUT will work diligently to provide adequate funding for public education. Our participation in VOTE/COPE will give NYSUT the resources necessary to attain the above mentioned goals.

Your support for the 2007 VOTE/COPE campaign is critical to add to NYSUT’s record of legislative successes. A great deal has been achieved, but much needs to be accomplished.

Your contribution demonstrates your understanding of the importance of political action and the vital role it plays in our professional life.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

In Solidarity,

Pasquale Delli Carpini

President

[Information obtained from NYSUT VOTE/COPE Literature]
The Wappingers School District lost one of its most colorful members this past January. Friends and family were shocked and devastated by Bill Cruickshank’s untimely death. Bill was recently retired as a 6th grade teacher who taught 35 years at Gayhead Elementary School and Van Wyck Jr. High School. His team teachers remember him as a mentor and a friend. Kelly Sheehan, speaking at his memorial service said, “Bill had this presence about him that can only be described as dignified. He stood tall with a straight back, demanding respect, and was worthy of it. I will never forget this amazing man who added so much to my life.” Jenn DeSoto Kershenheiter, Bill’s teaching partner for 11 years, remembered, “Bill was a father figure who was always there for me with advice and support. He taught me not to sweat the small stuff, there’s more to life than school, live my life in my own way. He will always be in my thoughts.”

If you were a friend of Bill’s, you were a friend for life — unconditionally. Good friend and 30-year teaching colleague Jack Devine described Bill as, “witty, smart, articulate, steadfast, and generous to a fault”. Beth and Jack recalled, “How he loved his friends and especially loved the children of his friends. He was the Pied Piper who knew how to make them laugh. They are deeply saddened.”

Kathy and Joe Corrigan met Bill in college (SUNY Plattsburg). Joe roomed with Bill during their first year of teaching. (That is a separate story all to itself!) Kathy and Joe remember, “Bill’s personality was larger than life. He was generous with his time and used his boundless energy to help others. We will miss his friendship, his humor, and his spirit.”

Charlie and Janet Powers reminded us that, “Bill was always there to lend a helping hand in time of need. When his friends came back from vacation, they would find their lawns mowed, sidewalks shoveled, plants watered. He was the first volunteer when a work party was being set up.” All this was done with a sense of humor that was unique to “Wild Bill,” as he was affectionately known to his friends.

And that is how we will remember Bill. He left us too soon, but we are grateful for the good times we spent together.

His wife, Rafie, thanks all who have supported her through this difficult time. She hopes that we will “embrace our memories, be warmed by his infectious smile, and always know that every passing life leaves something behind that is beautiful.”

British psychiatrist Cohn Parkes said it best, “Grief is the price we pay for love.” Bill, we loved you, we grieve you, and we will miss you.

FOB (Friends of Bill)
"The union that works together...
...plays together"

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE
WAPPINGERS CONGRESS OF TEACHERS
END OF YEAR PARTY

When: May 4, 2007
Where: Sinapi’s Arbor Ridge, Hopewell Junction
Time: 6 PM – 11PM

Butler Cocktail Hour
Open Bar & Live Entertainment (all evening)
Penne ala Vodka & Salad
Dinner: Prime Rib, Chicken Marsala, or
       Salmon in a lemon caper sauce
Coffee Table, Cake, full Viennese Table

Price: $50 per person

****************************************************
Please return this portion of the invitation with your payment.

NAME: ___________________________________________

Number attending: _____ Building: ____________________

Dinner entrée choice:

Chicken: _______ Salmon: _______ Prime Rib: _______

RSVP to: WCT Office by April 27, 2007.

Please make checks payable to the “WCT.” Reservations
cannot be accepted after April 27, 2007. Sorry for the
inconvenience.
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To request more information, please call: (800) 626-8101

E-mail us at: benefits@nysutmail.org or visit us on the Web at www.memberbenefits.nysut.org.

Some benefits may not be available in all local associations.

For information about these programs or about contractual expense reimbursement/endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits Trust or refer to your NYSUT Member Benefits Trust Summary Plan Description.
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