INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

3rd ANNUAL SHOP TO STOP CHILD ABUSE SALE

We are excited to announce the 3rd Annual Shop to Stop Child Abuse Sale! This HUGE sale features gently used baby, kid, teen, maternity clothing, as well as books, toys, games, DVDs, high chairs, strollers, cribs and other baby gear. We have been collecting items since November and we will be selling everything on SATURDAY, APRIL 27th from 9-2 at the JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER (JCC) on Grand Ave in Poughkeepsie.

ALL money raised is to benefit the Center for Prevention of Child Abuse of Dutchess County—the agency that works so hard to educate our district's children on how to keep themselves and their loved ones safe.

*WCT members, we need YOUR help!*

We are still accepting donations of the goods listed above. Drop off locations are:

- Hopewell EZ Storage (Rt 82 Hopewell Jct, across from McHoul's Funeral Home)
- The Little Gym of East Fishkill (Same plaza as the WCT office)
- Sheafe Road Elementary School
- Van Wyck JHS
- Coach’s Food and Spirits (Church St, Millbrook)

*We are also in HUGE need of volunteers*

Everyone, all ages welcome—especially if you have a student who needs community service hours. There are several opportunities to help:

- Saturday, 3/23- we will be meeting at Hopewell EZ Storage from 10-12 to sort through our units and organize—come on down!
- Friday, April 26th, from 4-8 pm- We need help setting up the sale! Lots of hands needed!
- Saturday, April 27th- from 9-2- We need help on the day of the sale-cashiers, clean up, etc.

Please contact Jennifer Colucci (VW) jcolucci170@gmail.com or jennifer.colucci@wappingerschools.org for more information, and LIKE us on Facebook- Shop to Stop Child Abuse Sale.
2012 PRESCRIPTION CO PAY REIMBURSEMENT

The claim for prescription co-pay reimbursement for the 2012 calendar year must be received by March 31, 2013. Forms are available on the WCT website: wcteachers.org or you can call the WCT office (845-227-5065). Receipts or a computer printout from your pharmacy are accepted. However, a printout is much easier to process and will compensate for any misplaced receipts.

If you need further information, please call the WCT office.

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

- Monday, March 18 at WJHS at 7:30PM
- Wednesday, March 27 at WJHS at 7:30PM
- Monday, April 1 at WJHS at 7:30PM
- Monday, April 8 at WJHS at 7:30PM
- Tuesday, April 23 at WJHS at 7:30PM
- Tuesday, May 7 at District Offices at 7:30PM
- Monday, May 20 at District Offices at 7:30PM
- Monday, June 3 at District Offices at 7:30PM
- Monday, June 17 at RCK at 7:30PM

VAN WYCK JHS START CLUB AND STUDENT GOVERNMENT ORGANIZE COAT DRIVE TO BENEFIT VICTIMS OF HURRICANE SANDY

Submitted by Allyson Rubin

From mid-January through February 14, the Van Wyck Junior High School START club, in conjunction with the Student Government, organized and ran a coat drive to benefit the victims of Hurricane Sandy. The event was a wonderful success! The students collected 10 boxes of winter coats for the Castle Point Veterans Administration Medical Center. Volunteers from the hospital will be delivering the coats to New York City to help those affected by this disaster.

Many students helped make this event such a huge success. Special thanks also go to Mr. Shuchat, Principal, the Van Wyck Student Government, the Van Wyck START club, Mrs. Suzanna Santos, START advisor, Ms. Ciri Tursi, START advisor, Mrs. Theresa Chirico, START advisor, Mr. and Mrs. Keith and Karen May, Student Government advisors, Mrs. Jennifer Colucci, Student Government advisor, Mr. Robert Rubin, Board of Education Member, and the Van Wyck community for their efforts in making the coat collection such a big success. Thanks also should be given to the Van Wyck SLT.
JOHN JAY HIGH SCHOOL RECEIVES PROJECT IGNITION GRANT TO PROMOTE SAFER, SMARTER DRIVING

Submitted by Nancy Beiner

Hopewell Junction, New York February 18, 2013 — John Jay High School has been selected as one of the top 26 high schools from throughout the United States and Canada to receive a $2,000 grant by Project Ignition — a service-learning teen driver safety program sponsored by State Farm® and coordinated by the National Youth Leadership Council®.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, auto crashes are the number one cause of death for teens in this country. Project Ignition is a youth- and schools-led response that connects academic goals to address the issue of teen driver safety through service-learning. This grant will support the project entitled Distracted Driving—Driving it Home! from John Jay High School — one of 26 student-designed and student-led campaigns aimed at preventing car crashes in their community.

“Teen driver safety is a critical issue for our young drivers. Anything that we can do to assist them in developing safe driving skills is of huge benefit. This grant will certainly assist us in this most important endeavor.” Says Mr. Dwight Bonk, principal at John Jay High School.

Nancy Beiner, the team’s advisor states that “[t]his is an amazing opportunity for us to drive home the message about the dangers of distracted driving but most importantly, it gives us the opportunity to empower the Project Ignition student members and their peers to make good decisions while they are behind the wheels, as well as when they are passengers in a motor vehicle.”

Grant applications were evaluated during a rigorous judging process and 26 schools were selected, in part, based on a commitment to service-learning and the use of proven-effective strategies in changing teen driver behavior. Students will inform, engage and motivate their peers while teachers will simultaneously link these activities to academic curriculum.

As members of the John Jay team indicate, “many people are mainly aware of drinking and driving but we have chosen to focus on the dangers of distracted driving—texting, telephone use, loud music, etc. as it relates to teen drivers and passengers. Over the past several months, we have sponsored National Teen Driver Safety Week at John Jay during Homecoming, Talent Show, and other activities where students pledged to be safe drivers and passengers and we plan to incorporate Teen Driver Safety into our school and community events while being a significant presence during proms and graduation. Our team meets monthly at the East Fishkill Library.” For further information, please contact the advisor, Mrs. Beiner, at (845) 897-6700 ext. 30116.

“Students themselves are too often overlooked as true stakeholders in their education and in creating positive change in their schools, their communities, and the world,” said Kelita Svoboda Bak, NYLC CEO. “Through Project Ignition, these young people are literally saving the lives of their peers and are in the best position to influence their behaviors and decision making at critical moments — especially before they operate a moving vehicle. With State Farm, we are honored to support their schools, teachers and other adult allies who help them turn their research and plans into reality.”

Students’ plans range from hosting a parent night for community members to using social media to raise awareness. The ten most effective campaigns that emerge from these twenty-six will be given the opportunity to receive additional funding (up to $7,500) and join the ranks of Project Ignition’s eighteen current National Leader Schools as they implement longer term campaigns.

For more information and a complete list of schools, visit www.sfprojectignition.com.
ZOMBIE IDEAS IN EDUCATION

Reprinted from Diane Ravitch’s Blog http://dianeravitch.net/2013/02/15/zombie-ideas-in-education/

I have written on many occasions that merit pay is an idea that never works and never dies. It has been tried for over a century and failed again and again. Yet it comes back. I didn’t realize it, but merit pay is a zombie idea.

There are many more zombie ideas, like the well-known adage that “the beatings will continue until morale improves.”

Today, the federal government mandates zombie policies in No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top. These programs might be called High Zombie. They rank and rate children, teachers and schools. They fire people and cause their schools to close. They do not improve education. They suck the life out of it. Maybe they are Vampire policies. Flip a coin.

Arthur Camins, who has written brilliantly on the failure of current policies, here offers his list of zombie ideas in education.

“Zombies appear to be popular today. Paul Krugman talked about Marco Rubio’s zombie economics in today’s NY Times. Among the zombie education ideas (ideas that were dead or should have been) that keep coming back to life) are:

- People are motivated to do their best by rewards, threats and punishments.
- You can fatten the pig by weighing it. Frequent measurement will improve educational outcomes.
- When students aren’t performing well on current (low) standards, setting higher standards will cause improvement.
- People who are poor have lower levels of educational attainment and get lower paying jobs. Therefore, if they all have higher levels of educational attainment they will all get higher paying jobs and won’t be poor.
- People who are successful should be given more autonomy. People who are not as successful need rules and regulations (except charter schools that should have autonomy whether or not they perform well).
- Market place competition always improves quality.
- If one school even in unique controlled circumstances can “beat the odds,” so can all schools at scale.”

SHARE MY LESSON

Dear NYSUT/AFT Member,

"My only wish is that I had Share My Lesson sooner."

Everywhere I go, teachers, classroom paraprofessionals and other educators are telling me how helpful Share My Lesson is and how it’s helping them and their students find the resources they need. And it’s no wonder:

Already, close to 200,000 U.S. educators have subscribed to the site, making it the fastest-growing online learning community for those working with students.

More than 260,000 K-12 classroom resources have been uploaded to the site, tagged by content area and grade level for easy searching.

A growing Common Core State Standards Information Center points teachers to useful resources that model approaches for teaching to the new standards.

More than 1.5 million resources have been downloaded, the average user taking 10 on each visit.

I want to personally invite you to sign up for Share My Lesson and take advantage of this incredible resource. The site’s basic content is free, and always will be, and you can be 100 percent certain that your e-mail address and personal information is safe and will never be sold. Once you sign up, within minutes you’ll receive an activation e-mail. Follow the instructions in that e-mail, and you’re all set. Hundreds of thousands of resources developed by colleagues will now be at your fingertips.

You asked your union to actively support you in your daily efforts to make a difference for students. Here it is—Share My Lesson—a concrete example of solution-driven unionism. Hundreds of teachers have had a hand in developing Share My Lesson and we look forward to your participation as well. Please sign up and share this message with a friend.

In solidarity,
Randi Weingarten
AFT President
OAK GROVE’S JUMP ROPE FOR HEART

Jumping rope is more than playground fun for students at Oak Grove Elementary School. On February 11th - 13th, 2013, students from grades K-5 participated in the Jump Rope for Heart program during PE classes and after school to fight heart disease and stroke.

Oak Grove Elementary School raised $7,538 at this year’s 21st Annual Jump Rope for Heart campaign for the American Heart Association. Oak Grove’s total in 17 years is now $135,044.

“This year’s event was a huge success,” said Dawn Turpin-Orgetas, Jump Rope For Heart Coordinator. “We’re very proud of all the jumpers and we all had a lot of fun.”

In addition to the money they raise for the association and the health benefits they give themselves, the students at Oak Grove also earned $300 for playground equipment.

The top classes and students at the school received certificates and gifts. Earning top honors this year: Nonni Schwartz (Mr. Marrinan - 4th Grade) was the top student and Mrs. Leveque’s 1st grade class was the top class.

Mrs. Turpin-Orgetas praised and thanked the Oak Grove community, from Principal Angelina Alvarez- Rooney to parents, for their help in making Jump Rope for Heart so successful.

GOOD NEWS!

- Gayhead has a brand new little baby cub to add to it’s Grizzly family. Alex and Beth Munoz (and baby sister Isabella) welcomed their new family member, Ryan Alexander, on February 13, 2013.

- Congratulations to Greg and Cara Plitsch (Kimry Road 6th grade) on the birth of their son Samuel Robert! Samuel was born February 16, 2013 weighing 6 lbs. 9 oz.
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 2013. 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 will be available in the WCT office on February 20, 2013. Please call 845-227-5065 to request an application or pick it up directly. To be considered, applications must reach the WCT office no later than Friday, April 5, 2013.

Committee members are: Margaret Loh, Alison Schukal and Carol Tarby

FISHKILL ELEMENTARY PARENTS’ NIGHT OUT

Submitted by Flip Gertler

On December 14th, WCT members from Fishkill Elementary School sponsored a Parents’ Night Out.

Students were invited to the school from 6:30-8:30 to participate in several activities. These included a showing of movies, playing educational games on the iPads, making holiday cards for veterans at Castle Point and students playing board games with teachers. The event was attended by some fifty students ranging from kindergarten to 5th grade. Parents were extremely appreciative as it gave them an opportunity to do some last minute holiday shopping or just enjoy a quiet dinner alone. Some parents liked it so much that they requested we do it every Friday night.

Students, parents and teachers all enjoyed the evening. We even had a celebrity appearance when WCT President, Pasquale Delli Carpini arrived to participate in the evening. Thanks to the following teachers who made the night a huge success; Jill Flanigan, Allison King, Lea Lasusa, Kim Mahusky, Patty Seablom, Mary Turi, and Cheryl Urquhart.
WCT, WCRT ENDORSE GRINNELL LIBRARY VOTE TO BECOME A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT LIBRARY

Residents of the Town of Wappinger and the entire Village of Wappingers Falls will have an opportunity to vote on the creation of a Special Legislative District Public Library on Wednesday, April 3. Residents will also vote for nine library trustees that will serve as the new Library District Board of Trustees. The vote will take place at Grinnell Library in the Village of Wappingers Falls.

Last year, the NY State Legislature approved, and Governor Cuomo signed legislation that will allow Grinnell Library to place a proposition before the voters to become a Special Legislative District Public Library. Grinnell wants to become a library district in order to stabilize its funding and provide the community it serves with an elected board of trustees. Presently, Grinnell is an “association” library – one of only a few in the state. The library operates as a free-standing not-for-profit with a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees. The majority of the library’s funding comes from a municipal ballot proposition passed in 2008.

“When a library is a Special Legislative District Public Library, 60% or more of its funding has to come from a public vote, and the trustees have to be publicly elected” said Roger Higgins, Vice-President of the Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers said. Higgins, who also serves on the current Grinnell Library Board, added “becoming a library district gives the public direct input through their vote and it provides the community with ownership and accountability.”

Pasquale Delli Carpini, WCT President, added “Grinnell Library provides many programs and services that benefit our students and their families. The library’s Homework Help Center, Story Hour for young children, ESL classes and GED classes are just a few of the programs that will not only continue, but will strengthen and grow as Grinnell moves forward as a District Library.”

Delli Carpini and Higgins urge teachers and their families to support Grinnell’s efforts to become a Special Legislative District Public Library, and we remind everyone to vote at Grinnell Library on Wednesday, April 3 from noon to 9 pm.

SCHOOL AID DATA—NEW YORK STATE EXECUTIVE BUDGET 2013-14

For Wappingers:

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ALBANY — New York’s small-city, suburban and rural school districts expect to spend an average of $155,355 this year to implement the state’s new teacher and principal evaluation plans, a report Thursday from the state School Boards Association found.

The one-year costs outpace the four-year federal grant provided for funding the program by nearly $55,000, according to an analysis of 80 school districts outside the state’s “Big Five.”

“Our analysis ... shows that the cost of this state initiative falls heavily on school districts,” said Timothy Kremer, the association’s executive director. “This seriously jeopardizes school districts’ ability to meet other state and federal requirements and properly serve students.”

The evaluation system is a requirement for receiving funds from President Barack Obama’s Race to the Top initiative. In 2010, New York was awarded $700 million in Race to the Top grants. About half of the funding will go to local districts over four years to implement the evaluation system and other initiatives.

The average grant in New York, excluding the state’s five largest city school districts, is $100,670. That’s $54,685 short of districts’ average implementation costs, the report said.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who pushed for the evaluations, said through a spokesman Thursday that the reforms have “injected accountability and innovation” into the education system.

“We have decades worth of special interest-fueled spending increases and sub-par graduation rates that show why these reforms are needed,” Cuomo spokesman Richard Azzopardi said in an email. “Districts need to continue to find ways to reduce costs without compromising quality and performance in the classroom.”

Cuomo tied an increase in school aid this year to districts’ ability to reach agreements with their local unions. Only a few school districts missed the Jan. 17 deadline, including the massive New York City district, which still lacks a plan. There is a court battle over whether the state may withhold $240 million from the district.

A study in the fall found that 18 districts in Westchester, Rockland and Putnam counties expected to spend $6.5 million this year on teacher evaluations and other Race to the Top reforms. Those districts are getting a total of $520,415 over four years in federal Race to the Top dollars.

South Orangetown Superintendent of Schools Kenneth Mitchell, who wrote the study, called the reforms a “grand and costly experiment” with limited benefits. “More and more school districts are prioritizing meeting mandates in budgeting, rather than focusing on instructional priorities,” Mitchell wrote.

Most districts negotiated one-year plans, so they will have to renew plans by next year or again risk losing a state-funding increase.

School districts said they incurred additional compensation costs, as well as those associated with developing new assessments, buying software and training, some of which required travel to Albany. The costs for the 80 districts included in the analysis ranged from $15,500 to $626,583.

“When we talk about unfunded — or, in this case, underfunded — mandates, this is exactly what we mean,” Kremer said.

Jody Siegle, executive director of the Monroe County School Boards Association, said complying with Race to the Top requirements has cost districts in the Rochester area “far, far more” than what they’re getting in funding.

She said some districts have complained the grant funding does not even cover transportation costs.

New York State United Teachers has been supportive of the evaluation system, but spokesman Carl Korn said the state has not provided the time and resources necessary.

“Instead of devoting the resources to getting it right, what we see is a ‘just do it’ position,” Korn said, “and it’s students and teachers that are going to feel the pain.”
MEMBERS’ CLASSIFIED ADS


FOR SALE: 2 cushion sage green couch, hardly ever used, in perfect condition. 90 inches X 37 inches. $400 OBO. Call 831-8199 or 845-235-2910.


For Sale:

For Sale: 4 window air conditioners, 5000 - 9000 BTU's (3 use remotes, included). $75 each or all four for $250. Call 845/494-2174.

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Tuesday—Prime Rib Night

Wednesday—Italian Night

Thursday—Turkey Thursday with the Fixin’s

Friday—Free Happy Hour Hot Buffet and Drink Specials at the bar from 3:30pm—6:00 pm

Saturday—One of a kind stuffed burgers

Tuesday & Thursday—10% off lunch orders (eat in or take out)

Monday—Wednesday—Early Bird Special from 4-6 pm. Full course meal only $11.95!

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Text Coach to 33938

As one of the Hudson Valley’s top DJ and area entertainment companies, Enriquez Entertainment has performed at numerous WCT Weddings, retirements, Sweet 16’s, Bar/Bat mitzvahs, Dances/Proms, Holiday Parties & more! Contact us today for your next event!
MEMBERS’ CLASSIFIED ADS continued

FOR SALE: Violin — Full size. Excellent condition. (Otto Ernst Fischer Stradivari). Includes bow (Becker) and case (Heritage) with humidity gauge. Originally $1159.50. Asking $800.00 OBO. Call 845-223-6423 (Jill).

HOUSE FOR SALE: Fishkill - 2 Bedrooms, 2 Full Baths. 1,000 sqft. COMPLETELY RENOVATED inside and out - including new electric, plumbing, Andersen windows, siding, insulation, furnace and central air. Large work kitchen with granite counters and floor; including cherry cabinets and stainless steel appliances. Oak hardwood floors throughout, tiled bathroom floors and custom tiled shower in master bath. Many extras include laundry room on main level, fenced in back yard, two Trex decks, barn shed, full basement and attic for storage. Brand new driveway and stone paver sidewalk just completed. $249,999 Make an offer 845-897-2815. See full listing and pictures for 364 Cedar Hill Rd. Fishkill, NY at Zillow.com.

FREE: 7ft. artificial Pine Christmas tree with stand, if you pick it up. Call Eloise @ 226-8655.

FOR SALE: 2003 Nissan Xterra SE 4WD. 76K miles, red, gray interior, 6 disc Rockford Fosgate sound system, electric windows, cruise control, tow package, great in snow. $7850. Call 845-226-8766.

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MODULE  NYSED  TESTING  TESTPREP

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Wappingers Congress of Teachers Recognition Dinner
Honoring 2013 Retirees,
Members with 25 Years of Service,
Members Granted Tenure,
& National Board Certified Teachers.

Friday, June 7th, 2013
6:00 P.M.-11:00 P.M.

Cocktail Hour with Carving Station
Top Shelf Open Bar

Dinner Choice: Chicken Marsala, Prime Rib, Salmon Cake & Coffee

Price: $40.00 per person- Free for 2013 retirees
RSVP to the WCT Office by Friday, May 17, 2013

Please return this lower portion of the invitation with your payment. Checks are to be made out to “WCT”. Reservation accepted until Friday, May 17, 2013.

Name: _________________________________
Number attending: _____________
Building: _______________________________

Dinner Entrée Choice:

Chicken Marsala: ________
Prime Rib: _______
Salmon: _______
FROM THE WCT WELFARE TRUST FUND

A financial planner from Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. will be at the WCT office on the following dates:
• March 20, 2013
• April 24, 2013

Appointments are one-hour blocks available between 2:00-6:00 pm on a first-come first-served basis. Appointments are available at no cost to you; this is a benefit through the Welfare Trust Fund.

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.

The planner can advise you on any financial topic in an objective fashion since sales are prohibited under this program.

Since these slots fill up very quickly, call as soon as possible! If the above dates are not convenient for you, call Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. directly and other arrangements may be possible.

Stacey Braun has no affiliations with any 403(b) providers.

DIRECTIONS TO THE WCT OFFICE

⇒ The WCT Office is in the Heritage Square Complex at 2537 Route 52 in Hopewell Junction.
⇒ Heritage Square is a short distance east of the intersection of Routes 376 and 52 and west of the Taconic State Parkway.
⇒ Enter the lot and make the second right into the parking area.
⇒ Enter the main entrance of the building. The sign over the entrance reads “PRUDENTIAL.”
⇒ Take the stairs of elevator to the 2nd floor.
⇒ Go right all the way to the end.
⇒ Look for the “Wappingers Congress of Teachers” sign posted on the Suite 15 door.

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

⇒ 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 at WCTeachers.org
⇒ Please direct all questions & concerns to the WCT office or directly to Daniel H. Cook.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Daniel H. Cook
(1-800) 342-6651

Davis Vision
(1-800) 999-5431

Health Advocate
(1-866) 695-8622

Mirkin & Gordon (attorneys)
(914) 997-1576

Stacey Braun Associates (fin. consultant)
(1-888) 949-1925

WCT Office
(845) 227-5065
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: $5.00 per issue.

For prompt placement of advertisements and articles in upcoming issues of the WCT COMMENTATOR, e-mail the information to commentator@wcteachers.org. Information can also be sent to the editor at the WCT Office. Do not send articles or ads through the GroupWise email system.