Community Days: A PR Committee Update

By: Emily Guthoff & Ellen Korz

Wappingers Falls and East Fishkill Community Days were joyously celebrated. It was a wonderful opportunity for WCT members to mingle with their communities and thank them for their support.

Thanks go out to Karen Egan, Joan Kavanagh, Karen Macleod, Adrienne Monzet, Patti Nardone, Lauren Ruggiero, Paul Secor and Lucy Zollner for their help and participation at the Wappingers Community Day on September 7. While on the east side, a big thank you goes to Carol Maiello (WCT retiree), her daughter Caroline Maiello both from Gayhead, Kathy Shekitka and Lucy Zollner from Van Wyck who helped out on September 20 at East Fishkill’s Community Day.

A gift certificate to Double O Grill was won by Dorothy Ritondo in our free raffle WCT giveaway at the Wappingers Community Day. The winner of the East Fishkill Community Day dinner gift certificate to Pizza Time Restaurant was Liz Medina, whose daughter is a freshman at John Jay High School.

(Pictured left to right: Lauren Ruggiero, RCK, & Ellen Korz, VW at the WCT booth during the Wappingers Community Day)
The AFT has set up a web site to inform members about the upcoming presidential election. Members can go to http://www.aft.org/campaign08/login.htm. You must login to gain access to the site. Required fields are your name, zip code, email address, and name of your local union, and check the box that says you are an AFT member. Once submitting this information, you have access to the following items:

- AFT Videos
- Candidate Comparison Sheet
- Candidate Questionnaire
- Debate Watching Kit

On Tuesday, October 21, there will be a Congressional Candidate Debate at the Bardavon Opera House in Poughkeepsie at 6:00pm (doors open at 5:00 pm). Participants include Congressmembers John Hall, Maurice Hinchey and Kirsten Gillibrand. Hall’s opponent, Kieran Michael Lalor, and Hinchey’s opponent, George Phillips, will also be present. This event is sponsored by the Greater Southern Dutchess Chamber of Commerce and the Poughkeepsie Journal. The debate will be free of charge; however reservations are required. For more information or to RSVP, please call 845-296-0001.

On September 15, 2008, members received an alert on green paper about phone bank coverage related to the upcoming presidential election. The process is simple. NYSUT members call other NYSUT members and ask them to consider voting for the NYSUT endorsed candidates. To find out who NYSUT is endorsing, go to http://wcteachers.org/42701/104912.html.

Phone Bank sessions will take place on the following days:
- Wednesday, October 22nd
- Thursday, October 23rd
- Monday, October 27th
- Tuesday, October 28th
- Wednesday, October 29th
- Thursday, October 30th

Sessions will take place at the following times:
- 4:00 to 5:30 p.m.
- 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.
- 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Please be sure to return your clip-off and send it to the WCT Office via interschool mail. Thank you for helping with this very important task.
Editor’s Note:
Update on “The Cost of a Cup of Coffee” by Diane DiChiara

The article, “The Cost of a Cup of Coffee” appeared in the September 16, 2008 issue of the WCT COMMENTATOR and detailed Diane’s search for Fair Trade coffee. Diane’s and my interest in this topic was peaked when we attended the Social Justice workshop presented by the Labor-Religion Coalition at the NYSUT Summer Leadership Conference. We were determined to learn more about Fair Trade items and how to bring that information back to the membership.

I passed on Diane’s article to the Anne Kelly, the Fair Trade Coordinator for the Labor-Religion Coalition. In response to Diane’s article, Anne shared with me that contrary to what the barista said Starbucks does NOT have their own Fair Trade. Instead, they have a “certification” that they police themselves and it is not as comprehensive as Fair Trade. She directed me to the Organic Consumer Association web site (http://www.organicconsumers.org/starbucks/index.cfm) that states after nearly ten years of farmers and consumers asking for an increase in fair trade coffee, only 6% of Starbucks coffee is fair trade.

To encourage and introduce members to fair trade products, the WCT is planning a Fair Trade Chocolate and Coffee Tasting. Be on the look out for upcoming details. Until them, visit the Organic Consumer Association web site http://www.organicconsumers.org/ and the Labor-Religion Coalition Fair Trade web site http://www.labor-religion.org/fairtrade-main.htm.

In Solidarity,
Meredith Inkeles

Letter to the Editor

To the COMMENTATOR Editor:

I’d like to challenge WCT members to write articles for the COMMENTATOR to educate the membership on why their school bears the name it does. It has always struck me as odd that administrators, teachers, students, and parents spend years in a building and never know why the Board of Education selected the name. Perhaps it was a notable person, or an historic settlement that contributed to Dutchess’ history. Such knowledge contributes to school spirit and pride.

By way of background, I was one of the original members of the John Jay faculty and taught at the school until retirement in 1993. One small mission that remains a minor tradition for the Social Studies Department was to educate students (and faculty) as to the illustrious person whose name the school bears.

John Jay was, of course, one of the most notable figures of the Revolutionary generation and made enormous contributions to the fledgling United States and to the new State of New York. Each year on his birthday, December 12th, our department staged events in the library and in our classrooms to further students’ knowledge of the man and his accomplishments. Each year, I still send a blurb to be read on the morning announcements. A sample is attached below.

John Jay High School Morning Announcements
Item for Thurs., December 12, 2008

Today is the 263rd anniversary of the birth of John Jay the statesman and revolutionary leader for whom this school is named. John Jay's long and eventful life, from 1745 to 1829, encompassed the movement for American independence and the creation of a new nation — both processes in which he played a crucial role. He was a consummate patriot whose life of action helped to create this country and gave a firm grounding to a government of laws.

John Jay was among the American commissioners who negotiated the peace with Great Britain that secured independence for the former colonies. He served the new republic as Secretary for Foreign Affairs under the Articles of Confederation. He was a contributor to the Federalist Papers, the first Chief Justice of the United States, negotiator of the 1794 “Jay Treaty” with Great Britain, and a two-term Governor of the State of New York.

John Jay was deeply involved in American political affairs throughout his life and was truly one of this nation's great patriots.

I propose soliciting from an interested person in each building a small blurb such as this one and running them as an ongoing feature of the COMMENTATOR for the education of the WCT readers.

Paul Stich, WCRT
Hopewell Junction
RCK Teachers Participating in Avon Walk for Breast Cancer

Dear Friends and Colleagues in the WCT:

We are two RCK teachers who will be participating in the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer, a two day, thirty nine mile walk to raise money for breast cancer research and to assist those who are medically underserved. We will be walking for all those affected: our sisters and mothers, our daughters and grandmothers, our neighbors and friends, and yes, even the men in our lives. We will walk with determination, with pride and with hope.

In order to participate, each of us needs to raise a minimum of $1800 in donations. We are hoping you will help with a contribution. We would be happy to represent you and your hope for a cure every step of the 39 mile route, and if you’d like, we’d be honored to walk in memory or in honor of you or WCT loved ones who battled with this disease. Just send us the name(s) and we will wear them with pride, close to our hearts.

You need to know that:

- About 40,460 women and 450 men in the US die each year from breast cancer
- Every 3 minutes there is a new diagnosis of breast cancer
- There are over 2 million women in America who are breast cancer survivors
- Every 13 minutes a life is lost to breast cancer.

We need to change those numbers so they are more in our favor, better still a cure. We know the members of the WCT are caring and concerned people and we hope you will help. Checks can be made out to the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer and sent to Hannah Abrahamson or Patricia Wells at RCK. Or you can donate on-line by going to walk.Avofoundation.org. Contributions are tax deductible.

For two days we’ll walk with the strength of all those who have suffered with this disease. For two days we will walk with your hopes and dreams for a cure. For two days we will walk as one. Thank you.

In solidarity,
Hannah Abrahamson and Patricia Wells

Response to April 25th Article

Dear Hannah and Patricia,

Thank you both for the beautiful letter you placed in the Commentator. I know as you walk with pride and hope that you will meet some unforgettable women and develop many new friendships.

I am a retired first grade teacher from Fishkill Elementary and I have been battling Stage IV Breast Cancer for going on 10 years. I have been very blessed. God has allowed me to prosper with great medical care, wonderful support of family and friends, a school district that allowed me to work until retirement and new drugs and treatments that keep allowing me to survive. I have been on intravenous therapy continually for over 9 years and have had 6 surgeries.

The insurance program that our union, The Wappingers Congress of Teachers, has fought so hard to maintain for our teachers and retirees has afforded me the best medical care at our nation’s top cancer hospital, Memorial Sloan Kettering. Without such outstanding coverage my weekly medical expenses would be around $7500.

The Wappingers Central School District is a wonderful place to work with many caring people. I applaud both of you for giving your time and energy to such a worthwhile cause.

Thanks for walking for the cure!
Sincerely,
Alice Scheff.
Making Strides Walks

This year’s Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walks are coming up. There is still plenty of time to get involved.

NYSUT is a statewide flagship sponsor, with local unions from every corner of New York participating. Go to www.nysut.org for everything you need to register a team or otherwise get involved in your local event.

Save the Date:

- **Oct. 19**: Albany, Hudson Valley, Jamestown, Jones Beach on Long Island, Manhattanville College in Westchester, Bronx, Brooklyn, Central Park in Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island and Watt Farms in Albion, Orleans County

ACS Site on Breast Cancer

Visit the American Cancer Society’s web site (www.cancer.org) to learn more about breast cancer.

There are three sections divided as: an overview, a detailed guide and more information.

Also on the site you can learn how to donate to find a cure, participate in the fight against cancer, volunteer to work in your community during fundraising efforts, or advocate for a cure.

National Mammography Day (Oct. 17)

In Memoriam

**Louise Meade Tricard**, 72, died on Sept. 30, 2008 after a long battle with cancer. Thirty years ago, Louise came to the WCSD from the Bronx as a guidance counselor. She gave selfishly to the students at John Jay for more than 25 years, and then to the students in Van Wyck Jr. High School.

An important part of Louise’s life was the Track and Field World Championships and the Olympics. She was instrumental in obtaining equal pay for female coaches in the WCSD. She was also an accomplished author who wrote two significant reference books on women in track.

After her retirement from WCSD, she relocated to Florida with her husband John who has predeceased her in Aug. 2008. The burial service will be held in Orlando at the military cemetery at a date not yet determined.

**Patricia McGurk** passed away after a long illness September 24, 2008. Pat is remembered by many as she has been involved in library and community work in many areas: Vassar College Library, Howland Circulating Library, Fishkill Historical Society Library, Beacon Girl Scout Council and the Wappingers Central School District. She was listed in “Who’s Who of American Women” in 1976.

Her fondness for history and for organization led her, as librarian in the WCSD, to establish the local history curriculum for the then new NYS Local History Program for Fourth Grade which is still an invaluable tool for teachers. Retiring after 24 years, Pat devoted time and experience to the Fishkill Historical Society Library located in the Van Wyck Homestead Museum in Fishkill. There she transformed a collection of about 800 local history and Revolutionary War items into a very usable collection numbered by the Dewey Decimal System. The collection has been praised by historians and librarians, among them the West Point History Dept. In 1997, she authored the first book of Fishkill history entitled “Around Fishkill” which is recently republished in a second edition.

Pat’s expertise and vast knowledge of history made her an invaluable authority in the local community. She is missed by many.

Prepared for the *WCRT PostScript* by: Roy Jorgensen, retiree.
Fair Trade Reverse Trick-or-Treating

Over 600 WCT members recently received a News Update about Reverse Trick-or-Treating. This initiative has trick-or-treating children giving adults a piece of fair trade chocolate and a card informing recipients of poverty and child labor problems in the cocoa industry, affecting mainstream candy enjoyed at Halloween and around the year, and how Fair Trade certified chocolate provides a solution. The Reverse Trick-or-Treating kits are free except for the price of shipping. Unfortunately, the deadline for organizations to order kits has passed, however, the deadline for individuals is October 13th.

To see what this program is all about, visit the web site (http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/cocoa/reversetrickortreating/) or read one of these articles:

- **OneWorld US - Thousands of Kids Will Give Chocolates Back Tonight, With a Message** [Link](http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/cocoa/reversetrickortreating/)
- **National Geographic | Green Guide 122 - Keep Halloween Fair** [Link](http://www.thegreenguide.com/doc/122/candy)
- **Daily Hampshire Gazette - Youngsters plan to turn trick-or-treat into a fair trade** [Link](http://www.dailyhampshiregazette.com/storytmp_v6.cfm?id_no=64994)
- **The Corporate Responsibility Officer - Halloween Labor Rights Campaign Treats Communities to Awareness** [Link](http://www.thecro.com/node/571)

2008 - 2009 Pay Days

- Wednesday, October 15, 2008
- Thursday, October 30, 2008
- Friday, November 14, 2008
- Wednesday, November 26, 2008
- Monday, December 15, 2008
- Tuesday, December 30, 2008
- Thursday, January 15, 2009
- Friday, January 30, 2009
- Friday, February 13, 2009
- Friday, February 27, 2009
- Friday, March 13, 2009
- Monday, March 30, 2009
- Wednesday, April 15, 2009
- Thursday, April 30, 2009
- Friday, May 15, 2009
- Friday, May 29, 2009
- Monday, June 15, 2009
- Friday, June 26, 2009

WCSD Approved 403(b) Providers

- Aid Association for Lutherans
- AXA Equitable
- Companion Life Insurance Company
- Faculty Services Corporation – Employee Benefit Account
- Fidelity Retirement Services
- Finesco Associates, Inc.
- First Investors Corporation
- ING National Trust (formerly Aetna)
- John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company
- Legend Employee Benefit
- Lincoln Investment Planning
- MetLife
- Met Life/Travelers Insurance Company
- North American Company
- Riversource Life Insurance Company of NY (formerly IDS Life)
- TEG Federal Credit Union
- Union Central Life Insurance Company
- USAA Investment Management Company
- Valic c/o Texas Commerce Bank

Revised 10/02/08
Members’ Classified Ads

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Computer (PC/Mac) Setup / Repair / Improvements Software Setup and Instruction
- Virus/Spyware Protection, Detection & Removal
- Data Backup & Recovery
- Networks: Wired/Wireless
- Mobile Computing (Laptops/PDAs)
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Ed McKenna - 845-471-7607
EdmundTMckennaJr@gmail.com

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Board of Education Meetings

Schedule *(meetings are held at the District Offices at 8:15 PM)*

- October 14, 2008 (TUESDAY) - Gayhead, Kinry, Vassar
- October 27, 2008 - Fishkill Plains, Ketcham, Orchard View
- November 3, 2008 - Fishkill, Sheafe, Wappingers
- November 17, 2008 - Evans, John Jay, Myers
- December 1, 2008 - Brinckerhoff, Oak Grove, Van Wyck
- December 15, 2008 - Gayhead, Kinry, Vassar
- January 12, 2009 - Ketcham, Orchard View, Sheafe
- January 26, 2009 - Fishkill, Fishkill Plains, Wappingers
- February 9, 2009 - Evans, Myers, Van Wyck
- February 23, 2009 - Brinckerhoff, John Jay, Orchard View
- March 9, 2009 - Gayhead, Sheafe, Vassar
- March 23, 2009 - Ketcham, Kinry, Oak Grove
- April 6, 2009 - Evans, Fishkill, Wappingers
- April 26, 2009 (TUESDAY) - Fishkill Plains, Myers, Van Wyck
- May 4, 2009 - Brinckerhoff, John Jay, Vassar
- May 18, 2009 - Gayhead, Orchard View, Sheafe
- June 8, 2009 - Ketcham, Wappingers

Financial Advisor Dates

A financial consultant from Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. will be in the WCT office:

- October 22
- November 5 & 19
- December 3 & 17
- January 7 & 21
- February 4 & 18
- March 4 & 18
- April 15 & 29
- May 6 & 20
- June 3 & 17

Appointments are one (1) hour in length from 2 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on a first come first served basis. Since these slots fill up very quickly, **call as soon as possible**. The WCT office number is 227-5065. If the above dates are not convenient for you, call Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. 1-888-949-1925 directly and other arrangements may be possible.