WCT Prez: I Have a Dream too!

By Bill Dourdis
PostScript Editor

Martin Luther King Jr., (MLK), Civil Rights leader, gave his I Have a Dream speech on August 28, 1963 to more than 200,000 people in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC.

Pasquale Delli Carpini, (PDC) Wappingers Congress of Teachers president, gave his World Class Teachers speech on Monday, February 10, 2014 before a standing-room-only crowd during a Board of Education meeting at Wappingers Junior High.

The oratorical tones and styles of both these great leaders resounded throughout their audiences. Advocating their case for the downtrodden and possibly disenfranchised was the point of their message.

PDC emphasized the plight of the retirees and their past achievements while MLK reached out on behalf of the African Americans with hope for the future. Hair color of the former or skin color of the latter were represented with focus on the value of their previous accomplishment or future potential.

Draw your own comparisons and contrasts from these excerpts:

**PDC:** “To the parents here tonight, as teachers we share your concerns and frustrations when it comes to the Common Core. In fact, through our state organization, “NYSUT’s Board of Directors unanimously passed a resolution declaring “no confidence” in the policies of State Education Commissioner John King Jr. [no relation] and calling for his removal by the Board of Regents.”

**MLK:** “When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir.”

**PDC:** “I would like to thank and recognize the veterans in the audience tonight for their selfless sacrifice to protect our rights. Because of their sense of duty and service to this country, we, as citizens are able to enjoy the freedom and opportunities this great nation offers all of us, including the right to organize and the right to peacefully assemble.”

Several veterans spoke about their service to the country and the hardships of being on a fixed income. The school board announced passage of a resolution for a tax break for vets.

**PDC:** “The Wappingers Congress of Teachers for the past two years has worked very hard towards a successor agreement to no avail. The district has ignored, not recognized and not accepted savings to the district proposed by the teachers. This is not acceptable, especially during these tough economic times. The lack of respect, recognition, and support is at the very least demoralizing.”

**MLK:** “We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now.”

**PDC:** “The Wappingers Congress of Teachers is seeking an equitable and fair settlement. A successor agreement that is both educationally sound and fiscally responsible that would allow the district to attract and retain the best qualified professionals for the benefit of our students.”

He then used lyrics from My Country Tis of Thee (America)

**MLK:** “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”

“Working Closely Together with parents, and students.

WCT can also mean World Class Teachers
“We are also here tonight on behalf

see SPEECHES on page 8

**POLITICAL ACTION COLUMN**

...“thrown to the wolves” page 6-7

Spring Luncheon at new venue page 11
From The President

SUSAN ROGER WCRT President

Dear WCRT Member,

“Spring has sprung. The grass has riz. I wonder where the birdies is!”

Well, I really hope spring is here after that terrible winter. OK, I was in Florida for 2-1/2 months, but when we left the end of Jan. (between snow storms) we were glad to get away.

As I write this the weekend after the NYSUT convention, I am appalled at the coup by the UFT in taking over the leadership of NYSUT. I fear the once-powerful teacher’s union of New York State will be torn apart with conflicts. The new officers, as far as I know, are inexperienced in state matters and in running this huge union. I hope such is not the case and long to know the reasons for this take over. Perhaps at the time we read this we will know.

PostScript

Happy Spring!

Susan Roger

Some WCRT members who want to receive the Commentator and PostScript by email have not received them. Contact www.wcteachers.org or Ronnie Dwyer at the WCT office wct@frontiernet.net if the problem continues.

Retirees give the WCRT their email address. The WCT maintains the email list for publication. Prohibitive U.S. Mail costs may soon force us to cancel postal mailings, so please consider going green to save money.

The Commentator and PostScript may be viewed at www.wcteachers.org.

WCT & WCRT publication dates for academic year 2013-2014:
Commentator and PostScript mailing dates:
Oct. 15* Mar. 15
Nov. 15 Apr. 15*
Dec. 14 May 15
Jan. 15 June 14*
Feb. 15* and one sometime in August*.

Several retirees have almost had their NYSUT benefits cancelled because they neglected to pay their WCT dues. Calls to the office and checks sent in a panic have mitigated the problem. Make checks payable to WCT and mail to WCT:

WCT & WCRT
15 Route 2537
Hopewell Junction, NY 12533

Payment slips are not required.

Renewal notices have been sent out. Dues for 2013-2014 are:
$ 20.00 Yearly;
$200.00 Individual Lifetime;
$325.00 Couples Lifetime.
Pay Lifetime and alleviate the yearly task of renewing.

SAVE THESE DATES (future details coming soon)
Apr. 29 Executive Board mtg. 10:00am-12:00pm
May 15 Spring luncheon at Arbor Ridge, HJ, 12:00noon, $25p/p.
Deadline for June, 2014 PostScript
May 29 RC13 luncheon at Christos, Pok., 11:00a.m., $21p/p.
June 17 Executive Board mtg. 10:00am-12:00pm
July 17 Deadline for August, 2014 PostScript

PostScript

Editor: Bill Dourdis
wdourdis@verizon.net (845) 473-1796

The WCRT PostScript is a 2013 NYSUT United Journalism Competition Winner with 3 awards.
(1st) Best Opinion Writing, by Cliff Foley; (AoD)Best Profile, by Pasquale DelliCarpini; (AoD)Best Publication, Bill Dourdis, Editor. (AoD=Award of Distinction; & 1st= 1st Place)

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POLITICAL ACTION

Editorial views expressed are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the WCRT PostScript staff and management.

NYSUT: ANOTHER CHAPTER IN THE STORY

CLIFF FOLEY
Political Action Chairperson

The New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) held its annual Representative Assembly (RA) April 4-6. At that time a new leadership was voted in by the delegates. Many local members were taken by surprise by the ouster of President Richard Iannuzzi and the other officers. The only one to survive the purge was Executive Vice-President Andrew Pallotta, a former teacher from the Bronx.

NYSUT is now led by its first woman, President Karen Magee, an elementary school teacher from Harrison in Westchester County.

The other officers include Secretary-Treasurer Martin Messner, the past president of the Schoharie Teachers’ Association, who taught health and physical education; Vice President Catalina Fortino, a United Federation of Teachers leader from New York City; and Vice President Paul Pecorale, a special education teacher who was the President of the Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers on Long Island.

Many people want to know the why of this change. Was it sudden? Was it planned? The NYSUT United union newspaper had the two slates of officers featured in one of its editions before the RA. According to delegates and leaders in our NYSUT Region 13 Retiree Council, there was dissatisfaction with NYSUT’s handling of the Common Core issue and the new teacher evaluation procedures. The organizing of a slate to face Iannuzzi’s leadership was in the works for a couple of years. The RA, held in New York City, saw a record number of delegates, nearly 3,000, vote for the change.

The new president had a message for everyone. She said, “Our team stands for change and our work begins now. That includes taking on the tough fights and communicating clearly with decision makers at every level. We will be the voice they cannot ignore. We will defend public education and public service. Period.”

Looking back at the history of NYSUT, we do not see a great deal of leadership change. The organization came from a merger of the New York State Teachers Association and the United Teachers of New York in 1972. This writer was a delegate at that RA. Thomas Hobart was the president serving until 2006 when Iannuzzi was elected.

Over the years, national affiliations changed. It began with the 1972 merger that brought the American Federation of Teachers and National Education Association together in New York State. In 1976 Albert Shanker led a move to disaffiliate the NEA, a move that most members never knew cost NYSUT a multimillion-dollar “liquidated damages” settlement with the NEA. This was due to terms in the original merger agreement. On September 1, 2006, NYSUT merged with the NEA state affiliate NYEA and today WCT and WCRT members are part of NYSUT, AFT, and NEA.

As we view a new chapter in NYSUT’s history, we will see what changes take place. We know that State Education Commissioner John King, who received a vote of no confidence by NYSUT at the RA, has already initiated a meeting with the new leadership. Governor Cuomo has phoned the new president “to re-establish communications with NYSUT.”

We will have to watch to see what happens and we will certainly be interested in any changes that may have an effect on retirees.

So stay tuned as the NYSUT book continues to be written.

Send your comments to
cgfoley@optonline.net

NOTE:
If you are aware of a member’s illness, or the need to send a condolence card, please contact Ruth Ehlers at 831-6390.
St. Patty’s Day parade

<<Jack Devine, Ellen Korz, and Charlie Powers carry the WCRT banner to lead the WCT/WCRT contingent at the Dutchess County St. Patrick’s Day Parade in the Village of Wappingers Falls on March 1.

>>LEARNING TO SHARE AT AN EARLY AGE: Scott Cheney, VWJH, watches his four-year-old son Noah hand out pencils to young parade watchers.

Donna Kart, WCT treasurer, Mandy Scalzo, Fishkill, and Nicole Scalzo, Gayhead, decorate WCT float while driver Jim Corcoran looks on.

PENCIL PUSHERS: Nicole Scalzo, Gayhead, and Andrea Fitzsimmons, Fishkill, smile as they enjoy distributing pencils to onlookers.

SPIRIT OF THE DAY: Sign atop the WCT/WCRT float says it all.

Whether you’re Irish or Italian, everybody’s Irish on St. Patty’s Day.

Protect your WCRT, NYSUT membership

WCRT by the numbers:

- WCRT membership as of Jan 14, 2014:
  - 606 retirees
  - 579 WCRT members
  - 182 yearly members
  - 9 yearly members not renewed
  - 356 Lifetime members
  - 46 Complimentary Lifetime members
  - 13 Complimentary members
  - 77 retirees don’t belong to WCRT & not entitled to NYSUT benefits
  - 24 not paid this year & soon deleted
  - 367 members email subscribers
  - 235 members postal subscribers

Please consider email subscription. It saves us considerable spending on postage. Checks MUST be made out to WCT not WCRT. We cannot accept checks made out to WCRT. Our chapter charter is with the WCT.

You MUST belong to the WCT to be eligible for NYSUT benefits. One retiree, just last month, had her NYSUT insurance cancelled due to lack of dues payment. She subsequently paid and was re-instated. Lifetime is the best deal. Pay once and forget about it!

TOM DERITO
WCRT Treasurer

Financial Report available

As a service to any interested WCRT member, our union’s financial report is always available upon request.

Address your questions or concerns to tderito@optonline.net and we’ll make arrangements to satisfy your numerical curiosity.

see page 10 for pension and health care info.

Enjoy some of what NYC has to offer.
Sign up to receive the monthly Plum Benefits Guide.
Send an e-mail to jtkorz@optonline.net to be added to our list.

Ellen Korz
E-mail subscribers sign up slowly

WCRT officers want to cut that cost to half the current number. Officers think 20%-25% is a reasonable goal to strive for since this initiative started in October 2013. Members wishing to go green can e-mail your name, address, city, state, zip, phone number, and e-mail address to wdourdis@verizon.net or the WCRT office at (845) 227-5065.

Sign up for WCRT’s bi-monthly e-mail PostScript newsletter, produced in color—you’ll do yourself and WCRT a big favor. It saves us money and time—two critical factors for non-profit organizations. Members may opt to receive the newsletter in color by e-mail or black and white by “snail mail.” Fonts and pictures can be enlarged on your computer as a .PDF. WCRT newsletters have become magazine quality!

Newsletters arrive sooner by e-mail than postal mail. More importantly, the WCRT can have immediate contact with the membership via e-mail at no cost.

You reply is appreciated and saves the WCRT money in mailings. It saves on printing, folding, paper, envelopes, mailing labels, and stamps. The volunteer crew would also thank you for cutting down on their time spent in preparation for the distribution process.

Look at our new website; www.wcteachers.org. Support the website and the WCRT by attending luncheons and tours, maintaining your membership, contributing to VOTE-COPE, and communicating with officers.

Editor’s note: Over 40 words were highlighted in four different colors. E-mail readers saw it. Hard copy readers had to be told. They only saw black and white. Subscribe by e-mail to enjoy the benefits listed above. (Not to mention full-color pictures and the graphic in this issue!)

REPORTATIVE ASSEMBLY

RA Meeting Report for March 24, 2014

Although there seemed to be a light at the end of the tunnel, WCSD Board refused to see it.

At the February Board meeting, Pasquale Delli Carpini, WCT president, presented the terms of the proposed contract to the Board in Executive Session. It was quite clear that the Board had forfeited over $8 million in savings due to poor decisions by their negotiating team. At this point they could still save over $4 million.

The District’s lawyer, who was not at the meeting, was not truthful in providing the Board with accurate figures regarding the wasted money, and Superintendent Pochintesta did not attempt to verify that the numbers Delli Carpini presented were correct. A settlement is nowhere in sight for the disappointment negotiations will be sent to the BOE members. All staff will show their solidarity in a number of designated ways: there will be ads placed in the Poughkeepsie Journal and the Southern Dutchess News, and new T-shirts will say, (front) NO CONTRACT=NO RESPECT, (back) We Choose Teaching.

A special BOE meeting took place on March 31, just to discuss the contract.

Special thanks to the retirees for their contributions to VOTE COPE. The average donation per retiree was just short of $3 less than in-service members.

Keep New York a state of mind

ELLEN KORZ
WCRT Rep. to WCT RA

Lastly, please get the MAC app on your smart phones to take action on current issues. You will be alerted of new legislation and it’s quick to take action. You can also access this information on the NYSUT website using the Take Action Now link.

This is a very stressful time for the WCT. Although they have interviewed many prospective Board of Education members, many have had conflicting per-
HYDE PARK, NY—The January 29 assembly kicked off Wolf Journal being taught to 320 7th graders in English classes.

Maggie Howell Executive Director of Wolf Conservation Center referred to author Brian Connolly, WCRT Class of 2001, as “an amazing man and his amazing literary works. Brian taught in Hyde Park before transferring to Wappingers. Wolf Journal, (WJ), integrated the theme of his story and his message. Brian was a wolf watcher who provided Yellowstone with wolf behavior data while working with a biologist. It helps readers understand biology and predators and prey and how they play into the wilderness…Brian lost a courageous battle with cancer this summer…and I know he was a wonderful father, grandfather, and teacher.” Excerpts follow:

“We’re frightened by wolves because of Little Red Riding Hood, The Three Little Pigs, The Boy Who Cried Wolf, and most recently, Frozen.

“In the fable, the wolf eats grandma, but wolves are shy and elusive to people and not a threat to our safety…None live in this area…They’re cousins to the coyote and the fox… I’ve spent 14 years working with wolves… Dogs are the closest living relative to a wolf.”

“…Some wolves were endangered species, and we are one of several recovery programs so they don’t go extinct… They provide a vital role in nature as keystone species to support balance and biodiversity…wolves do service to the landscape.

“Wolves are to Yellowstone what water is to the Florida Everglades. The wolf population in 1920 was almost extinct. Elk eat plants and the ecosystem was spiraling out of control because no animals were hunting elk. In 1955-56 wolves introduced into Yellowstone rejuvenated the land. Wolves moved elk herds and gave plants a chance to recover. If a wolf pack claims an elk, a wolf can eat up to 20 lbs. in one meal. That’s equal to 80 quarter-pounders at McDonald’s!”

Atka, a white Arctic Gray Wolf, Canis lupus species, stole the show on stage and walked around the auditorium perimeter and up and down aisles. An Arctic Gray can handle up to -70°F weather and shed enough fur to fill a 13-gallon kitchen trash bag. Maggie placed a half-full water bottle on the stage and Atka used his 42 teeth to rip it open for a little drink. Atka’s jaw muscles offer about 1500 pounds of pressure to get at animal bones, so his second water bottle-opening trick in four seconds was just as impressive.

The relationship initiated with the Wolf

Maggie Howell

Heather was presented a posthumous award for Brian’s devotion.

Maggie called her presentation WOLF 101. She introduced her organization as home to 21 wolves, with “Atka is our best educator.”

In speaking to the assembly, Heather Jerome, Brian’s daughter, stressed “the importance of protecting the habitat of the wolves… During a phone call in 1997, he said he heard his first howl and that it changed him and his mission…For the last 10 years of his life, people from around the world came up to the spot where his telescope was perched on a tripod with a stepstool for kids…then writing to educate and inspire these kids and others on the role the wolf plays in the ecological system… Thank you and enjoy the book.”

continued on page  7
...“thrown to the wolves”
continued from page 6

in-depth, cross-curricular instruction. Others may read WJ later this year. All 7th graders watched the National Geographic video, *Wolves, A Legend Returns to Yellowstone* in science classes before the assembly.

Diane Bentivegna, retired ELA teacher, wrote the curriculum for the Wolf Conservation Center. She contacted Heather Jerome, Brian’s daughter, asking to order books. Hyde Park School District has embraced the value of interdisciplinary units for a while and have crossed curricula numerous times in the past. This however it the first time done on this level.

“For the wolf assembly,” our team of students sold calendars for The Wolf Conservation Center in November 2013 to fund the assembly. They anxiously awaited Atka’s visit for several months. Students began reading *WJ* last week as a “kick-off event,” according to Breeanne Peni, team leader.

“The unit actually started in my science class over a month ago and will continue for the next couple of months in different classes. It is not a stand-alone unit but it lies on top of and bridges other units. They started ecology vocabulary (words like predator, carnivore, consumer, etc...)

**The Wolf Pack Creed:** Respect the elders. Teach the young. Cooperate with the pack. Play when you can. Hunt when you must. Rest in between. Share your affections. Voice your feelings. Leave your mark...

Brian Connolly did just that!

Conservation Center blossomed into a partnership to bring Haviland Middle School into the spotlight as the pilot school for a service learning unit called *Tracks to the Future.*

Teachers involved are from Science, ELA, Social Studies, Math, and Special Ed) on the same team and their students receive...
Teachers UNITE at board meeting

It didn’t matter whether you carried a sign, wore a t-shirt, or just showed up! Your presence and support was felt by your colleagues and sent a strong message to the Board of Education and the community.

Wappingers Junior High auditorium almost exceeded its 1050 capacity with a standing-room-only crowd of active and retired teachers in a “respectful display of solidarity to make a presence of the WCT and WCRT.” Flip Gertler and Mike Lyons offered their quote as the theme and mission of the evening at the February 10 meeting.

Cover Story

Speeches similar from page 1

of the retirees: the district doesn’t want to recognize them as WCT members… wants to let them stand alone….. I would like to remind the district that the retirees are dues-paying members of the WCT and NYSUT and play a vital role in this community. They are over 600 strong and are a wealth of resource and knowledge to this district. They are tax payers; partake in an incredible amount of volunteer work, most of which directly benefit our children, and work extremely hard in the process of passing the school budget every year!

“To the retirees, your contributions over the years to this district will always be recognized, appreciated, and celebrated. Your professionalism, integrity, and passion for teaching, have given many students over your memorable careers, the knowledge, the courage, and the vision to achieve otherwise unachievable goals.

“The WCT is fully aware that the benefits we are privileged to have today, are a result of your hard work and perseverance. Rest assured that The WCT will always be by your side and will always fight on your behalf to protect and preserve your rights and benefits. And remember you are World Class Retired Teachers.”

MLK: “With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.”

The WCT has been without a contract for the last two years. African Americans were 100 years behind the times before The Civil Rights Act was enacted July 2, 1964, less than a year after this famous speech.

MLK: “And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.”

The WCT and WCRT hope that a contract agreement will be forthcoming soon.

Here come da judge!

Hi Bill!

As a WCSD retired teacher, I would like to share good news about my son in the PostScript.

I am attaching a photo of my son, Sean Staples, with his son, Sam. On January 2, 2014, Sean was sworn in as a magistrate judge in Washington, DC’s Children’s Court.

Sean attended Myers Corners School, Van Wyck JHS, and graduated from John Jay.

He graduated from Syracuse University and Catholic University Law School in Washington, DC.

He is married to Mary-Frances Wain.

Thank you & hi to everyone,

Lila Hirschmann,
WCRT Class of 1997
News since last issue

Source: Poughkeepsie Journal
The Friends of the East Fishkill Library
Cordially Invite You to an
English High Tea

Date: Saturday, May 3, 2014
Hosts: Jan and Dave Bushey
Venue: 35 Carpenter Road,
         Hopewell Jct., NY
Seatings: Noon, 2:00 or 4:00 p.m.
Suggested Donation: $20/person
Reservations: Contact Dave or Jan at 221-6123

Come join us for what will be a lovely afternoon of scones, a
variety of traditional English sandwiches, dessert, tea or coffee,
and social conversation with your friends.

Your contribution should be made to: “The Friends of the East
Fishkill Library”. All proceeds are for the benefit of the library.
Thursday, May 15, 2014
12:00noon **back to old time!

Arbor Ridge Caterers,
17 Route 376 & 52  Hopewell Jct., NY
Huge Hot and Cold Buffet Lunch served at 12:30noon
Cost per person is $25.00.
Soft drinks included.  Cash Bar.
Free parking on the premises.
All facilities ground floor accessible.  No steps or stairs.

NO GUEST SPEAKER--JUST FOOD AND FUN!!
A short business meeting and a 50-50 raffle will be held.
Bring non-perishable food items (cans, boxes, bags) and/or shampoo, soap,
and other personal care items to be donated to local food pantries.

Please send check payable to WCRT to
attn: Leslie Leventhal,  WCRT,  Heritage Square,
2537 Route 52,  Suite 15  Hopewell Jct, NY 12533
and must be received no later than May 8, 2014.
Spouses, guests, and significant others welcome.

WCRT SPRING LUNCHEON
Thurs., May 15, 2014
$25.00 Per Person
Guests are welcome

Name(s):________________________________________ Phone Number:_________________
Address:__________________________________________________________________________
Number of Reservations: _______ Amount Enclosed: $ _______________
NYSUT Member Benefits is excited to announce the endorsement of the member shopping program powered by PayCheck Direct for roll-out this spring 2014.

This program – part of the national retail powerhouse Bluestem Brands, Inc. family, which also includes Fingerhut and Gettington.com – allows individuals to purchase what they want now and pay interest-free over 12 months.

Through PayCheck Direct, NYSUT members & their families will have access to more than 7,000 name-brand products such as appliances, televisions, computers, electronics, furniture, and much more.

Members would have the option of paying for any items they purchase interest-free over a 12-month period; bi-weekly payments would be made via automatic checking account withdrawals.

PayCheck Direct offers a 30-day in-home trial on many products; flexible return policy; no interest fees, credit checks, down payments, or finance charges; and toll-free customer service representatives located in the U.S.

As part of this endorsement, PayCheck Direct will mail merchandise catalogs to the NYSUT membership four times per year.

NYSUT members are encouraged to shop and compare prices before making a purchase with this program and consider it as an alternative to using their credit card.

We are excited to be launching this new program in spring 2014! Join our MAP (Member Alert Program) Alert email service to be among the first to learn more about this program (visit the Member Benefits website for sign-up instructions).

You can also visit memberbenefits.nysut.org in the coming weeks for details on how to use this service or call 800-626-8101 with any questions.