Union presidents react to Supreme Court decision

By Bill Dourdis
PostScript editor

After the death of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia and returning from NYSTU’s Representative Assembly Convention in Rochester, NY April 7-10, WCT President Pasquale Delli Carpini sat down with WCRT Post-Script Editor Bill Dourdis to emphasize several issues of importance to the WCT and especially WCRT retirees.

“Union dues are misunderstood. Dues don’t go to political campaigns. Union dues support members with arbitration, grievance, medical coverage, and contract negotiations. On the local level, dues cover operating expenses for meetings, negotiations, communications, and training reps. A portion goes to NYSTU and AFT to protect members with a lawyer for a 3020a proceeding, and a Labor Relations Specialist. VOTE-COPE is for voluntary contributions for political action to endorse and research voting records of candidates promoting education and educators at federal, state, and local levels.”

Karen Magee, NYSTU President, offered the state’s position: “In Friedrichs vs. California Teachers Association, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the right of unions to collect fair-share fees from everyone who benefits from representation, the way they have done for decades. By virtue of an evenly split, 4-4, court, it affirmed the rights of union members everywhere.

“The outcome underscores the importance of our powerful voice when we stand together.

“We’ve just begun to analyze the final state budget, but it appears that parents and teachers advocating together on behalf of students and public education have won significant gains in support for schools and crucial programs. Albany’s tone is changing and that enables us to move forward with the wind at our backs.” (NYSTU Leader Briefing for Friday, April 1.)

Pasquale emphasized ramifications of all this. “Rebels who prefer an agency fee give excuses rather than reasons. How can they expect the same level of services without paying? I’m stressing the importance of paying your fair share for health insurance, Welfare Trust Fund, vision, dental, and pharmacy prescriptions... Thank God it didn’t go through! Justice Scolia would have been the swing vote. Based on the ages of current justices, the new president will appoint two or three more judges.”

He added, “I’m relieved things will stay the way they are. Everyone is obligated to pay their fair share. We’ll be worried in a couple of years when it will come up again. We need to be ready to handle it. Vote for a president who respects unions. Help the middle class. Unions bring positive things to the community. We want to appoint like-minded people... You can’t get insurance without paying a premium.”

This also affects police, fire, bus drivers, electricians, plumbers, Port Authority, TSA, and CSEA members. It’s the same message not just for teachers.

“The two most important chess pieces are health insurance and retirees. These retirees fought for it and gave up things. They understand sacrifices and compromises like the strike in the 1970s and the chances they took. That must be respected and honored. Others came along and carried the mantle. You want to retire with dignity and a full life without worry about drugs, treatments, procedures, and a better quality of life.”
From The President

SUSAN ROGER WCRT President

Dear WCRT Members,

As I write this, the cold is back after a taste of spring. We are all looking forward to the spring flowers, and seeing the buds on the trees. My grandsons tell me that baseball and soccer have started. I know from experience that there are few perfect days for games. They are either too cold, too hot, or rainy. Such is spring.

I have been watching the election ads and debates sometimes with amusement and sometimes with astonishment. (They said what?) However, as the candidates are chosen, we must listen carefully to what each says -- federal and state.

We definitely want to know how the people running for state office stand on a Constitutional Convention. Those who are for it are not sympathetic to teacher issues or our pensions. We must elect candidates who are pro union. For example, I read an article at the end of March that quoted Chris Christie, governor of New Jersey, saying the state would take over Atlantic City’s finances with the provision that New Jersey could cancel public-employees’ union contracts. We don’t want that kind of thinking in New York.

We also want to know how they stand on the issue of privatizing Social Security. Our pensions and Social Security are what we worked hard for! Our pensions were in lieu of salary increases. Thank goodness most of us are healthy enough to enjoy them. Social Security is our right as we contributed from each paycheck during our career.

Enjoy the spring, and I hope to see many of you at the Spring Luncheon on May 3rd.

Susan Roger

PostScript

You MUST belong to the WCT to be eligible for NYSUT benefits. Make checks payable to WCT and mail to WCT.

Renewal notices have been sent out. Dues for 2015-2016 are:

$20.00 Yearly;
$200.00 Individual Life-
time;
$325.00 Couples Lifet ime. Pay lifetime and alleviate the yearly task of renewing.

WCRT Officers and Board of Directors

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WCRT PostScript

To bring WCSD retirees together for mutual assistance and socialization, and to promote the best interests of retired educators.

Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers Newsletter
280 New Hackensack Rd.
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590
(845) 227-5065

Editor: Bill Dourdis
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The WCRT PostScript is a 2015 NYSUT United Communications Competition Winner with 7 awards: (*AD =Award of Distinc tion; & 1st=1st Place). AD, General Excellence, April 2014; AD, Social Justice Issue. 320 7th Graders “Thrown to the Wolves”; AD, Overall Graphic Design, Batter Up! We’re Panik-Stricken!: 1st, Best Photo, St. Patty’s Day Parade; 1st, Best Column/Blog, by Cliff Foley; AD, Creative Writing, by Saranne Ratner; AD, Local or Chapter Issues, WCT Pres.: I Have a Dream Too!

SAVE THESE DATES

(future details coming soon)

Apr. 26 WCRT exec board mtg. 10:00-12:00
May 3 Spring Luncheon, Christos, 12:00noon, $23 (page 9 flyer)
May 24 Deadline for mid-June PostScript
May 26 Capasso Scholarship Reception, 7p.m., RCKHS library
June 2 NYSUT Retiree Council 13 Luncheon, Christos, 11:00
June 14 WCRT exec board mtg. 10:00-12:00 (print PostScript)
A short while ago my wife and I were in the mall. We ran into a former student of hers whom she hadn’t seen in many years. Immediately they reminisced about projects they used to do in science, social studies, and language classes and the follow-up field trips that made the lessons come alive. Debbie related her despair over losing these activities for her two sons who currently attend our schools. On the way home, Cathy and I discussed the lack of hands-on experiences currently missing in the curriculum.

In early April we attended old movie night at the Bardavon Theater in Poughkeepsie. Donna, the Assistant to Executive Director Chris Silva, went on stage before the main feature and talked about the importance of getting children into the theater. She mentioned that in sixth grade, her teacher took the class to the Bardavon and this had an impact on her. Now she has a career there. That sixth grade teacher just happened to be me. This further reminded me of the loss of real-life experiences that have occurred in Wappingers in recent years.

We also remember special in-school experiences. A few years ago I was asked to be on a local radio show to talk about local history. A former student, Jason, currently the Program Coordinator for WBNN and WLNA, brought home this idea when he surprised me with some homemade fudge. His inspiration was an Open Highway’s reading series story that included a simple fudge recipe that we made and, of course, finished off in class.

A recent Stephen Colbert show on CBS involved him going back to his elementary school in South Carolina to visit his favorite teacher. He visited Ms. Katsos, his 4th grade teacher in 1974, in his original classroom. He remembered being recorded when asked some questions that he had to quickly respond to. The teacher still had the cassette and played part of it.

As a retiree, involved with a Fishkill Revolutionary War museum, I can tell you there is a program in place for students to learn about the local role of our area in the American Revolution. In the past, most 4th graders in the District visited our site. That does not happen anymore. Think about your own experiences as a student. Were there trips and special events you still remember? Somehow the current Common Core and standardized testing will most likely not be the wonderful memories that our current students will have in later years.

I spoke with Kristen Crandall in the Business Office at the Wappingers Central Schools for a status update of field trips in the District. She said the curriculum has changed quite a lot eliminating requirements for field trips. Students during the last couple of years have still been able to go on trips but students, or maybe the PTA, must pay for them. If school buses are used or substitutes needed, the District sends a bill to the school. She also mentioned that the 2016-17 budget has a per-student amount of money allocated for field trips. This is another reason to get out and support the budget on May 17.

The Bardavon recognized the loss of class trips and their website states, “The Bardavon has a long history of giving all children and their families the chance to attend quality arts performances at affordable prices. With regular cuts in public school budgets for arts education and field trips, the need for reduced-price tickets and transportation subsidies has only grown stronger. So, the Bardavon is stepping up the effort to reach as many children as possible through our Field-Trip Fund.” Kristen Crandall did mention a group of junior high students last year who went to the Bardavon. They had to pay for the bus but apparently the “Affordable Tickets for School Kids” theater program paid for their tickets.

Our current teachers are doing their best to provide experiences not only educational but also memorable. If retirees are involved in organizations that can help students get a well-rounded education, they should inform schools of what is available. A student’s positive recollections of experiences in school may later show up as adult support for public education. If all young people get in the classroom is the current testing pressure with disregard for individual differences, we have to wonder what price society will pay.

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.
The Friends of the East Fishkill Library
Cordially Invite You to an English High Tea

Saturday, May 7, 2016
Hosted by David & Jan Bushey
35 Carpenter Road
Hopewell Junction, NY
Seatings at Noon or 2:30 p.m.
Suggested donation: $20/person
Reservations: Contact David or Jan at 221-6123

Join us for a lovely afternoon of scones, a variety of traditional English sandwiches, dessert, tea or coffee, and social conversation with friends.
Make contributions to “The Friends of the East Fishkill Library.”
All proceeds benefit the library.

Climb into your attic!
Rummage through your attic or basement!
Look in your garage!
Dig out old treasures and bring them to the
East Fishkill Community Library
11 AM to 4 PM on Sat., April 30
To be appraised by
Bruce Gimelson
Mr. Gimelson has over 50 years appraisal experience in antiquities and collectibles.

$10 for one appraised item
$25 for three items
Questions?
Call Carol Wall 226-7240

INVITE YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR BEAUTIFICATION DAY PROJECT!

Bring a rake, shovel, hoe, or wheel barrow and garden gloves.
Come to East Fishkill Community Library
10 AM to 2 PM on Saturday, May 21.

Sr. Marion McGillicuddy
March 24, 1925 - March 6, 2016

Sr. Marion McGillicuddy, SU, a Sister of St. Ursula, died peacefully at home in Wilmington, NC on Sunday, March 6, 2016, surrounded by her sisters in Community.

Born Marion Frances Clare McGillicuddy in New York City on March 24, 1925 to the late Jeremiah and Nora O’Sullivan McGillicuddy, she entered the Society of St. Ursula on September 13, 1942, making permanent vows on December 29, 1949.

A skilled and gifted teacher, Sr. Marion taught in New York City, Kingston, NY, Providence, RI, Milwaukee, WI, Fishkill NY, Rome, Italy and did parish ministry in Wallace and Wilmington, NC. Most recently, she worked with the Hispanic community at St. Mary, Wilmington and was very involved with the Ladies’ Ancient Order of Hibernians there.

She was predeceased by her brother, Jerome and her sister, Kathleen. Her sister Frances (Reilly) of California, and her sisters in community survive her.

A Mass of Resurrection will take place on Tuesday, March 15, 2016 at 1:00 pm at the Basilica/Shrine of St. Mary. Visiting hours will be prior to the Mass on Tuesday from 11:00 am until 12:45 pm in the Basilica/Shrine.

We are grateful for the loving care and attention given to Marion by Hospice of the Lower Cape Fear Region, Home Instead and her many, many friends.

In lieu of flowers and in honor of Sister Marion’s 71 years of service to God’s people we ask that you reach out with compassion and concern to your brothers and sisters in need whichever way you might feel inspired to do so.

Submitted by Lila Hirschmann
WCRT Class of 1997

Editor’s note: Sr. Marion was a lovely older woman who taught in Wappingers (reading teacher) for a number of years. She was sent out by her order to support other retired nuns. Marion retired from Wappingers in 1997.
RA Meeting
March 1, 2016

It had been a while since the RA met, so it felt good to get together again. Some progress had been made with the District as to negotiations. They agreed to two dates to meet, but they did not send the information asked of them for the negotiating team to develop a proposal. They did remind Pasquale of the 0.12 tax cap and that there was no money. Some things never change.

We will have a new Labor Relations Specialist, Cathy Schwartz. She will be replacing Steve Berman who was our specialist for 19 years. Pasquale is very impressed with her and feels she is the best representative from the Kingston office. She is a lawyer.

This spring we are looking for three candidates for the Board of Ed. We have three positive people now, Colleen Hardman, Sommaiah Soma and Seema Rizvi. Pasquale encouraged the RAs to get their members to vote. We must take this seriously, especially while negotiating. A letter of invitation, which was distributed to all of us, was given to the District Office for prospective candidates. There will be three dates for the interviews. Once we have the candidates, members will be asked to participate in activities to promote the candidates and the budget.

The Education Development Committee met and we all received the notes from the meeting. The problem getting subsidiaries is worsening. There are state rules limiting uncertified subs to 40 days a year and new rules that limit subs to 4 days per week. HR is actively pursuing solutions to the problem. They are willing to entertain any suggestions the EDC can come up with. Maybe we as retirees can think of something creative.

Jim Marrinan, the Director of Political Action, went to a luncheon with our local legislators. He said he noticed many of them sent representatives and did not come themselves.

The LAP Project (Local Action Program) has put together a few more events. March 11 they brought items to an animal shelter. March 18 they assisted with the Teen and Young Adult Dance held at Wappingers Junior High. This is a dance for Down’s Syndrome teens and adults. There will also be an event to help Sparrows Nest. The date was not announced. They had a good year getting volunteers to participate and hope to continue with more events.

Donna Kart, WCT Treasurer, consulted with a tax consultant since some things have changed due to owning the WCT building. All is well and our taxes are paid.

Here’s how to register your email with the website:

1. Go to www.wcteachers.org
2. On the right-hand side, go to the “Member Login” module
3. Click on the “Click Here to sign-up” link (It is yellow)
4. Enter all of your information on the form. This is the information that we will use to maintain our records and to send email and/or text notifications. Make sure that you choose a username and password that you will remember.
5. Click submit
6. Review all of your information
7. Click Submit again
8. Wait 24-48 hours for us to verify your membership. You will receive an email advising you that you are good to go. At this point, you can come back to the website and login.

Hope this helps. Thanks, Nancy

ELLEN KORZ
WCRT Rep. to WCT RA

WCRT by the numbers:
WCRT membership as of Mar. 29, 2016:
622 WCRT members
177 yearly members
375 Lifetime members
51 Complimentary Lifetime members
15 Complimentary members
69 retirees don’t belong to WCRT & not entitled to NYSUT benefits
10 names removed from our files for not paying dues this year.
*145 members receiving publications & notices by U.S. mail down from
*232 members postal subscribers
370 members email subscribers.

*Notice the reduction in printed newsletters. We encouraged members to “go green” and help us save on mailing costs. We all benefit from their cooperation.

If you know a retiree who is not a member, please encourage them to reconsider joining WCRT/NYSUT for their benefit and ours.

JANE STOCKSLAGER
WCRT Constitution, By-Laws

CONSTITUTION and BOARD of DIRECTORS Voted on!

At the Spring Luncheon on May 14, the WCRT voted on the WCRT Amended Constitution. All amendments from the past 10 years were added and the new Constitution was accepted.
Poor Elijah’s Almanac: The death of courtesy

Source: This article appeared in the Eagle Times on March 15, 2016. The Eagle Times is a daily newspaper based in Claremont, NH, serving the twin states of New Hampshire and Vermont.

Bob Ruopp, WCRT Class of 1998 who lives in Sunapee, NH, submitted this article from their Education columnist.

By Peter Berger

Back in the last century, Poor Elijah was strolling down the sidewalk across from the local recreation center when he was addressed by several anonymous youths.

He could hear their comments about his face and form, but he remembered what once had passed for the greatest playground commandment, “Sticks and stones may break my bones,” so he pretended not to notice, believing that answering the mob may break my bones,” so he pretended not to notice, believing that answering the mob would lower him to their level.

Once in his car, though, he had to drive past the corner where the boys were roosting. That’s when they cranked up the volume and saluted him with a significant finger.

I know he wasn’t shocked. He’s saluted me privately the same way on bad days. I also know he’s been treated worse. But something made him turn around this time.

He said he felt like Popeye – “That’s all I can stands, and I can’t stands no more.” And when he stopped and stepped out of his car, and the youths fled inside, he felt inexplicably and immensely better.

This isn’t a tirade on the shameful manners of modern youth. Yes, many modern kids are rude, and rude kids should be held responsible for their rude behavior. But children don’t hold the patent on discourtesy. And they suffer more because of it than we do. They’re less able to defend themselves.

Courteous used to mean the way you were supposed to behave in the king’s court. There were always two reasons for good behavior at court. The first was respect for the king. The second was he could separate you from your head if you didn’t act as if you respected him.

Acting respectful when you don’t feel respect might sound hypocritical, and we like to think we put an end to hypocrisy back in the 1960s. That’s when we decided that courtesy was phony, that open and honest contempt was somehow preferable to half-hearted decency.

Everything unfettered and candid, however coarse, insensitive, or self-serving, became virtuous. Anything the least bit diplomatic, anything less than brutally frank, no matter how generous or practically tactful, became false.

When it comes to stamping out hypocrisy, I know what I’m talking about. I’ve stamped out more hypocrisy in other people than almost anybody I know. Sadly, I haven’t been nearly as successful when it comes to the man in the mirror.

I grew up respecting a lot of people in my little world. I also grew up knowing I had to be polite to many people I didn’t like, and that if I weren’t inclined to be courteous out of respect, then I’d at least better be courteous out of fear of parental losing my head. I think that looming fear made me easier to get along with.

Today on the playing field, at the supermarket, in the unreal glare of reality television, and in the political arena, we exalt personal empowerment, the ultimate license for self-gratification and bad manners.

Mediocrities degrade themselves for a flash in the spotlight, stars grapple for the microphone, athletes flaunt their egos in the end zone, and those who would be President shout each other down, engage in playground taunts, and otherwise conduct themselves like five-year-olds.

When pretenders to the seat of Washington and Lincoln can boast in public about the size of their genitals, what was once a question has become a fact of American life. We at long last have no shame, no sense of decency.

What we see at school prefigures and reflects the decay of morals, restraint, and humility that degrades our wider world.

As long as we continue to make excuses for discourtesy, disruption, and violence at school, our schools will decline. As long as we continue to applaud the vaunting, bullying egos vulgarly strutting their way to the White House — in particular, Mr. Trump — we will not be great.

I would rather live in a world where people respect each other, but given a choice between silent insincerity and the obnoxiously honest expressions that polluted Poor Elijah’s sidewalk that day, I vote for silence.

Given the loudmouthed vulgarity that women commonly suffer in public, I vote again for silence. Given the choice of brutal words and arrogant gestures or decent peace and quiet, a nod of the head, a door held for a stranger, what choice is there?

The courteous happens close to home. We need to expect it first of ourselves, and after that of others, including our students.

Here in this election season, we need to demand it of our candidates. We need to muster the courage to stand up and reject those who poison the air with incivility and cooly provoke the mob.

Discourtesy isn’t a superficial vice. It’s rooted in arrogance, vainglory, and contempt for other people -- all other people.

Behold your leader.
Tuesday, May 3, 2016  11:30 a.m.

Christos Restaurant,
155 Wilbur Blvd.  Poughkeepsie, NY 12603

Huge Hot and Cold Buffet Lunch served at 12:00 noon
Cost per person is $23.00.
Soft drinks included.  Cash Bar.
Free parking on the premises.
All facilities ground floor accessible.  No steps or stairs.
Valet parking for handicapped guests.
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
new office address:  attn: Leslie Leventhal, WCRT,
280 New Hackensack Rd.  Wappingers Falls NY 12590
(and must be received no later than Apr. 26, 2016.
Luncheon for WCRT members and their guests.)

WCRT SPRING LUNCHEON  Tuesday, May 3, 2016
$23.00 Per Person  Guests are welcome with a member

Name(s):________________________________________________ Phone Number:_________________
Address:_________________________________________________________________________________

Number of Reservations: _______  Amount Enclosed: $ _______________

(new)
News since last issue

Source: Poughkeepsie Journal
The Value of NYSUT Membership

You may not be aware that your NYSUT membership allows you to enjoy the benefits of the more than 40 programs & services endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits, including a variety of quality, competitive insurance plans.

Member Benefits strives to provide the highest-quality programs for NYSUT members and closely scrutinizes all proposals from reputable vendors before any endorsements are given.

While we work continuously to maintain quality benefit programs at competitive prices, you are encouraged to shop and compare before making any purchasing decisions.

MetLife Auto & Home®

If you are looking for potential savings on your auto or homeowners insurance, consider enrolling in the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed MetLife Auto & Home Insurance Program.

This program offers special group rates on personal property and liability coverage not available to individual MetLife policyholders. NYSUT members can choose from a variety of coverages that include auto, homeowners, boat, renter's, and much more.

Policyholders can earn extra discounts for good driving, multiple policies and anti-theft devices. MetLife Auto & Home recently raised the multi-policy discount on its homeowners insurance with auto from 7% to 15%. The multi-policy/multi-product discount on auto insurance with home remains at 8%.

Visit the NYSUT Member Benefits website at memberbenefits.nysut.org or call 800-626-8101 for specific details about this program or other Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services.

MetLife Auto & Home is a NYSUT Member Benefits Trust (Member Benefits)-endorsed program. Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement of 5.5% of total premiums for this program. All such payments to Member Benefits are used solely to defray the costs of administering its various programs and, where appropriate, to enhance them. Member Benefits acts as your advocate; please contact Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 if you experience a problem with any endorsed program.

Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.