Luncheon speakers shine political light

POUGHKEEPSIE, NY--Terry Gipson, a Democrat from Dutchess County, served in the NY state legislature, spoke at the WCRT Spring Luncheon at Christos Restaurant on May 3, 2016.

“There is a threat to unions. Children are not products. They have unique talents and imagination. We want teachers to teach the way we used to teach. Common Core is a mess that came along. We have to tap into individuality. Kids can’t focus now because of tests.

“In the U.S. it’s not good to standardize. We are known to rebel against a system to exercise freedom. We will try to force the country to do something about it. Proper education is about fairness, equality, and freely expressing themselves so they can go out into the workforce.

“There has to be new imaginations to create new jobs. I feel for the teachers who all want to go back to basics. Other groups want charter schools rather than public schools. “Thanks for your service to our children (as we applauded former military) for being role models and bringing that out in each child.”

Pasquale Delli Carpini, WCT president, noted that “in the last two years, Gipson has listened to us, he greeted us, while other elected officials sent a stand-in or an assistant because they had ‘another commitment.’ Terry is a staunch supporter of education. Terry, thanks for your support.”

Pasquale began with “CNN yesterday reported 273,000 workers and retirees brace for pension cuts as struggling state pension funds look to cut pensions.

“According to the Teachers’ Retirement System, our system is guaranteed. Article 5, Section 7 of the New York State Constitution says that they can do it to others but not teachers.

“In 2017 there’s a possibility of a Constitutional Convention (CC). Protect your pension benefits to be taken away from us. One scenario would turn a $3700 monthly pension into only $2000. They can’t do that by law. If they change it, they can get it.

“Also, it would cost $30-$50 million to hold a CC. Everything would be up for grabs. We must protect this very important benefit that we worked for over 30 years, so vote “NO” to the CC.

“I wrote a very boring 4-page article with research, historical info, how it came about, and ramifications. (Go to the WCT website.)

“The TRS is the best fund in the world, bar none, period! Find me a better fund, run it better, anywhere in the country. We’re fully funded! TRS amortizes over five years and it doesn’t spike up. It’s gone from 17% to 10% and may be in single digits soon. Others are two times the amount. It’s the very least in cost.

“Vote “YES” for the budget on May 17. Do you want quality of education or cuts?

see COVER STORY on page 11

POLITICAL ACTION COLUMN page 3

Capasso Scholarships awarded pages 6

I can see for miles and miles... page 11
Dear WCRT Member,

We retirees are so lucky to be on a constant vacation. We can do what we want when we want.

We don’t take this for granted as we worked hard for many years to get here. Our pensions are the reward at the end of our careers. Pension money was in lieu of salary in our youth. We worked hard for many years to get here. Our pensions are the reward at the end of our careers. Pension money was in lieu of salary in our youth.

We retirees are so lucky to be on a constant vacation. We can do what we want when we want.

Consider the presidential election in the fall. Please make sure you and your family are registered to vote. No matter which candidate you favor, it is your privilege to exercise your right to vote.

Have a happy summer.

Susan Roger

Protect your WCRT, NYSUT membership

Members with email addresses registered on the website wcteachers.org will receive publications and notices by email. Please keep email information up to date on that site.

Our files are not linked to that site, so please notify the WCT office of any changes in address, phone, or email, etc.

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 once a member registers.

WCRT Officers and Board of Directors

July 1, 2013-June 30, 2015
President...........Susan Roger 226-8285
V.P. ..............Roger Higgins 989-0786
Treasurer............Leslie Leventhal 297-4430
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From The President

SUSAN ROGER
WCRT President

CONVENTION.

Please vote “NO” on this referendum!

With the constitution open, anything could happen: pension shrinkage, taxation or elimination, change in gun rights, voting rights, sale of state lands for commercial gains to name a few. A convention would be a definite threat to us all.

Consider the presidential election in the fall. Please make sure you and your family are registered to vote. No matter which candidate you favor, it is your privilege to exercise your right to vote.

Have a happy summer.

Susan Roger

SAVE THESE DATES

(future details coming soon)

June 21 WCRT exec board mtg. 10:00-12:00 (print PostScript)
Aug. 15 print August edition of PostScript
Sept. 19 New Hamburg Golf Tourney for Meals on Wheels

Page: 2 Future: 5

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

WCT Prez: I Have a Dream

WCRT Rep. to WCT Representative

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

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Moving in a Positive Direction – Good News to Report

CLIFF FOLEY
Political Action
Chairperson

Often times this column has to report on negative news and impending doom for public education. This time there are good news items to present to our readers. So sit back and enjoy for the moment positive features related to education from our local area and beyond.

We begin with the recent May 17 budget and school board votes. The three candidates supported by the WCT were overwhelmingly elected. Paul Galletta, Barbara Goodman, and Eddie Sloshower beat their closest opponents by over a thousand votes. The opposing candidates did not respond to requests to meet for interviews with the unions prior to the election.

Although it is unfortunate that some people give up their right to vote by not becoming informed, it does add a little humor to the results, when we find a number of write-ins for Donald Trump, Donald Duck, Daffy Duck, George Washington, Elmer Fudd, and Daisy Duck. Our own WCRT Board member Roger Higgins got two write-ins beating out former Board of Education member Joe Incoronato who received only one.

The budget passed by over a 2 to 1 margin with the four propositions also sailing through easily. Among these were new buses and a repair reserve for the district. All of this was accomplished while staying inside the 2% tax cap. The Poughkeepsie Journal in a May 19, 2016, editorial summed it up this way, “The state’s education system has been in crisis, and home owners are still fuming about high property taxes that have driven many out of New York. Yet, as we have witnessed time and time again when it comes to supporting their own school district, voters rarely let their communities down.” Only one local district had its budget go down. That was Highland who tried for the 60% to beat the tax cap but failed even though they did get a vote of over 50%. Keep in mind the 2% tax cap was really only 0.12% due to its being tied to inflation.

On the state level, the new Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia has assured parents and teachers that major changes are coming to Common Core. In a piece in the May 27, 2016 Poughkeepsie Journal, Elia states that the number of questions on the 3-8 grade tests has been reduced and that, “New York State teachers have reviewed the questions for relevance and age appropriateness.” Her hope is that these changes will help to bring back the 200,000 students who opted out of the testing last year.

Another area of good news came earlier in the spring when New York increased state aid for the coming school year. Dutchess and Ulster Counties are getting a boost of $24 million dollars. Wappingers will see a jump of 7.99% with aid rising from $52,484,676 in 2015-16 to $56,678,130 for the coming year. Statewide aid to the nearly 700 school districts will go up 6.5% to $24.8 billion dollars.

Keeping the positive events rolling, we see a 4-4 Supreme Court decision that stopped a case that might have been a kiss of death to unions like NYSUT. The concept has a nice name, Right to Work. What its advocates want is for employees not to have to pay dues or an agency fee to a union but they would still get all the benefits for free. Those opposed to unions hope that organized labor would be weakened or cease to exist and those anti-worker forces could then dictate conditions and benefits for the employees. The workforce would have no one to fight for their rights. We have seen how this can devastate collective bargaining. In Wisconsin negative political forces were able to pass laws ending teacher-negotiating rights.

One area that is near and dear to our hearts is the New York State Teachers’ Retirement System. They recently reported that out of 1000 top pension funds they ranked #9. This included both public and private funds. The NYSTRS ranked even better, #7, among public funds. In the April 2016 issue of the NYSTRS Resource, the retirement system stated, “With $11 billion in assets at the end of the most recent fiscal year, the System is well funded,” and that should put a smile on the faces of New York’s retired educators.

Finally we can report that our current VOTE-COPE drive is doing very well and we certainly hope that more of you will join in supporting the effort that will help keep us reporting good news in the future. Keep on smiling.

Please send your comments to cjfoley@optonline.net

Please Donate

PROTECT YOUR FUTURE

Notify these groups of an address change or death of a member:

■ WCRT office, 280 New Hackensack Rd. Wappingers Falls, N.Y. 12590 (845) 227-5065 wc@frontiernet.net
■ WCT, same as above
■ NYSUT, 800-342-9810 800 Troy-Schenectady Rd. Latham, NY 12110-2455 www.nysut.org
■ NYSTRS, www.nystrs.org 800-348-7298 x 6250 10 Corporate Woods Drive Albany, NY 12211-2395
■ WCSD, Human Resources 25 Corporate Park Dr. P.O. Box 396 Hopewell Jct., NY 12533 845-298-5000 x 115

NYSUT Retiree Council 13 website: http://ny.aft.org/rc13/

Directions to new WCT office

280 New Hackensack Rd. across from the Dutchess County Airport

From Vassar Rd: Jackson Rd. (County Rt. 110), left onto New Hack Rd. toward Rt. 376.

From Rt. 9 Wapp. Falls: take County Rt. 104 at Dunkin Donuts and Perkins on New Hack Rd.

From All Angels Hill Rd: (CR 94) north to NHRd, west to 280 NHRd.

From Red Oaks Mill: Rt. 376 south past DC Airport, right onto NHRd. 280 on left.

WCT Office, 280 New Hackensack Rd.

Send an address change or death of a member to:

WCRT, Wappingers Board\'s Affairs
280 New Hackensack Rd.
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590

Phone: (845) 227-5065
Email: wc@frontiernet.net

Provide your address and phone number when sending an address change or death of a member.

Please send your comments to cjfoley@optonline.net

Please Donate

PROTECT YOUR FUTURE

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.
How many and how much?

New York public schools enroll 2,735,000 students, with 48% in poverty, 8% learning English, and spend $20,495 per pupil. Students are 49% White, 22% Latino, and 19% African American. (National Center for Education Statistics data)

New York City, which educates 40% of the state’s students, is implementing Universal Prekindergarten (UPK). It plans to serve over 50,000 4-year-olds in its full-day program in the 2014-15 school year and reach universal status in the 2015-16 by offering UPK to over 70,000 4-year-olds.

In 1998, NYS set a goal of providing UPK to all 4-year-olds in full day, high quality programs. State funding has not been sufficient to meet this goal, but in the 2012-13 school year, over 103,000 of the state’s 4-year-olds were enrolled. However, about 75% of these children attended half-day programs, according to the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER).

State Highlight

NYC is by far the largest school district in the U.S., and its 1.1 million students are 40% of the students in NYS. NYC also has 68% of the state’s Asian American students, 64% of its Latino students, 51% of its African American students, and about 62% of its students in poverty. Just over 41% of NYC’s students speak a language other than English at home, and over 14% are English Learners, as compared to 4% English Learners in the rest of the state.

Go to the website listed below, enlarge the map for New York State, and place your cursor on any district to compare spending per student by school district.

http://www.npr.org/2016/04/18/474256366/why-americas-schools-have-a-money-problem#responsive-embed-school-funding-map-20160408

Shirley A. Edwards

NEW WINDSOR, NY - Shirley Louise (Ames) Edwards, age 88, passed away peacefully on April 28, 2016, from complications of pneumonia, after a years-long battle with Alzheimer’s.

She was born on May 18, 1927, the youngest of six children of Bertha (Anderson) and Sherman Ames. After her mother’s untimely death, she was raised with the help of her eldest brother Murry and his wife Florence.

The family had a dairy farm in Richfield Springs, NY. Not being a fan of farm work, Shirley could usually be found in the house reading a book.

She was valedictorian at Richfield Springs High School, received her master’s degree from New York State College for Teachers at Albany, and taught social studies. Later she became a guidance counselor in the Wappingers Central School District. She thoroughly enjoyed her many friends and colleagues.

After retiring from education, she spent the next chapter as a successful real estate agent. Shirley married Joseph V. Spione in 1948 and they had three children, Mary, Michele and James. They lived in Hopewell Junction, where Shirley was a resident for more than 30 years. She was widowed in 1969. She was married for several years to John W. Edwards.

Shirley loved singing with friends and family. She was politically astute, had a mischievous sense of humor, a quick wit, and the brightest smile you can imagine. Aunt Shirley’s apple pie was always a favorite at family gatherings. She also became something of a gourmet cook.

The family wishes to especially thank Mom’s longtime aide Nancy, and indeed all her caregivers. We also acknowledge the wonderful staff at St. Luke’s Hospital for the excellent care they gave us all.

Shirley is survived by her loving children Mary Trivett and husband Mark, of Foxboro, MA, Michele Stowe and husband Sheldon, of New Windsor, and James Spione of Croton Falls, NY. Michele is especially appreciated as she spent countless hours helping to care for our mom as she moved through the course of Alzheimer’s.

Shirley loved her five grandchildren, Daniel and Eli Stowe, Elizabeth Trivett, and Samuel and Galileo Spione. She is also survived by stepdaughters Joy Bohan (husband Richard) and Val Bucigross, special friend Pamela Stewart, and many devoted nieces and nephews.

The family invites friends and family to call at Doulin Newburgh Funeral Home Inc., 318 North Montgomery Street, Newburgh, NY 12550 on Sunday, May 1, 2016 from 3 to 7 p.m. For additional information please visit www.DoulinFH.com.

She will be interred at Richfield Springs.

Donations in Shirley’s memory may be made to Calvary Presbyterian Church, 120 South Street, Newburgh, NY, 12550 to support their important work in the community. Please help us remember Shirley and a life well-lived.
WCRT's watchdog about “insider information” affecting WCSD retirees

ELLEN KORZ
WCRT Rep. to WCT RA

RA Meeting
April 26, 2016
Pasquale covered a lengthy list of items, but he breezed through most of them since he had little to report on negotiations. Apparently the negotiating team has been meeting with the District, but the District has not presented a proposal. He stated the District was not in the financial stress they were in for the last negotiations, so he expected it to go smoother. There really was nothing of substance to report as yet.

At the next general membership meeting, the speaker will be Mike Lillis from the Stronger Together Caucus. He will be speaking on “Reclaiming your profession through Union activism.” This has been a problem for us. It has been difficult to get members together whether it be work or play. We have a group that is working on activities to bring members together, but because of lack of interest, they have been unable to get members to an end-of-year party to honor the retirees or anyone else.

There was a get together at River Station for the 76 new members who had 1-3 years of service. Only 12 members showed and only one administrator.

If you haven’t already, be sure to fill out the DEHIC Eligibility Audit form. This is really important. If there is any confusion, call the number on the form.

The budget vote is May 17. Please be sure to get out and vote for the budget and Paul Galletta, Barbara Goodman, and Eddy Sloshower.

Pasquale would like all of us to support the workers of Verizon. He has been donating water and pizza. A day may be planned to join them on the picket line. More information will follow.

Some interesting information was discussed about the cameras in the hallways in the buildings. Apparently the videos and occasionally the audio can be viewed by the building principals and the District. Most teachers don’t even know the cameras are viewing them. This cannot be used to observe teachers unless violence or verbal abuse is observed. “Big Brother is watching you.”

The school year is coming to an end. Hopefully the negotiations will go well and the year will end on a happy note.

Ellen Korz

NANCY BEINER
WCT Webmaster
webmaster@wcteachers.org

WCRT by the numbers:
WCRT membership as of Apr. 26, 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.
*445 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.

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 ilderito@verizon.net and we’ll make arrangements to satisfy your numerical curiosity.

We provide communicative services to our former colleagues, philanthropic support through student academic scholarships, and donations to community libraries and Meals on Wheels.

JANE STOCKSLAGER
WCRT Constitution, By-Laws

CONSTITUTION and BOARD of DIRECTORS Voted on!
At the Spring Luncheon on May 14, 2015 the WCRT voted on the WCRT Amended Constitution. All amendments from the past 10 years were added and the new Constitution was accepted.

For a copy or clarification, use the contact information listed below.

www.WCTeachers.org or sundancewf@aol.com

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

www.wcteachers.org
Summer Camp last summer. He also worked at the Elisa Guerriero.

Steve Schwartz, Kevin, Jenifer DiGregorio, Jade, and Elisa Guerriero.

Kevin Turi is Senior Class Vice President, and Pasquale Deli Carpini, WCT President. Missing from picture is Maddie Lander.

Dignitaries and winners included Susan Roger, WCRT President, Jade Whitehouse, Ralph Capasso, who started the WCT and served as president for 19 years, Kevin Turi, and Pasquale Deli Carpini, WCT President. Missing from picture is Maddie Lander.

Selection committee and recipients are Jennifer DiGregorio, Jade, Steve Schwartz, Kevin, and Elisa Guerriero.
Leventhal Scholarship winners named

Joseph Smith is a thoughtful, mature, intelligent, and caring person. He is an extremely devoted young man to his family, school, and community. Joe has a wide range of talents and interests that gives him a tremendous versatility in the avenues he may pursue in college and beyond.

It’s hard to pinpoint all the assets that make Joe such a spectacular young man. However, no matter what is going on in his personal life, and he has been through a great deal, I know Joe will overcome whatever comes his way. The amazing thing is, he will do it with his easy-going, high-spirited, engaging way that endears him to all he encounters.

Joe Smith is a unique, special individual who will make a significant difference in the lives of others.

written by Jeff Palazzolo,
JJHS guidance counselor.

To know what’s going on within the walls of John Jay High School, ask Nicholas Fan. While many students are involved, Nicholas has taken it to a whole new level.

Nicholas is the kind of student who has a beat on what is happening or needs to happen. Then he will often spearhead a movement to set things in motion. One example was his desire to get more students involved on campus. To target those students, he single-handedly founded our Ultimate Frisbee League. It currently has over 100 members participating weekly.

Nicholas is an academically solid student. He has enrolled in a college preparatory curriculum, accelerating in mathematics and science. His activity sheet reveals the breadth and depth of his involvement in school affairs.

Nicholas Fan is constantly looking for ways to improve not only himself but those around him.

written by Heather Daley,
JJHS guidance counselor.

Retired director thanks WCRT

Editor’s note: In 1993 the official Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers chapter of the WCT was formed.

Alice Heusinger served on the WCRT Board for 20 plus years as an editor of the Postscript and a director. She recently retired from the WCRT Executive Board.

WappinGenS
Central School District

OFFICE OF M.S.T. & BUSINESS EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 396
25 CORPORATE PARK DRIVE
HOPEWELL JUNCTION, NEW YORK 12533
PHONE (845) 298-5000 x 40170
FAX (845) 897-2105

March 9, 2016

Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers
2537 Route 52, Suite 15
Hopewell Junction, New York 12533

Attn: Ms. Susan Roger

Dear Ms. Roger,

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers for your generous donation to the 2016 WCSD STEM/Science Fair. The donation was used to purchase the three plaques awarded for Most Original Idea/Experiment, one for each of our three age groups. I am very appreciative of the support your organization continues to give the students of our district.

The STEM/Science Fair was held on February 27th, and was a great success due to the hard work of the more than 200 students that participated! The vision and enthusiasm exhibited by these students was truly inspiring, and we are all very proud of the work that was displayed. I am enclosing copies of the 5-6th grade and 7-12th grade programs which were given out at the award ceremonies for you to share with your members.

Again, on behalf of the Wappingers Central School District, thank you for your generosity and continued support.

Sincerely,

Todd Mensch
District Coordinator
Mathematics, Science, Technology & Business Education

Saranne Rap
A transparent view of issues
by Saranne Ratner

Summertime Thoughts
Surely the weather is hot, usual for the season. Many people plan vacations; Most just want to relax. But for me, Every day is summer vacation…I’m Retired!

Teaching memories are reminders of what I’ve accomplished. Most of them are happy or funny. Either way – they led me to this place – a happy retirement!
Why Education Is My Chosen Career

Editor’s note: Here is a sample of one of the essays for the WCRT Scholarship from Juliann Geraci.

I have wanted to pursue a career in education since I was ten years old. Throughout high school, I bounced around with what subject and age group to teach. During freshman and sophomore years, I wanted to teach physical education. I was focused on my athletic abilities, as well as on my academic accomplishments. However, in my junior year, I decided to be a math teacher, when I became inspired by my teacher.

Although all the teachers I have had throughout my high school career were all motivating and helpful, there is one teacher who stands out the most to me. Ms. Duffy was my math teacher in junior year. She made math easy and fun to learn. I was never good at math as a freshman or as a sophomore. Ever since she was my teacher, my grades were so much better. It made me feel good about myself and I could tell it made her happy too.

My confidence began to show in my other classes as well. She influenced me to want to become a math teacher. She always helped everyone and answered every question as though there was a major final exam at the end of the year. Not only has she made me really great at a subject I had almost given up on, but she made it exciting and enjoyable.

I love working with people to help them surpass their boundaries. My goal as a math teacher is to offset the stereotype of math being boring. I idolize Ms. Duffy. My hope is to have the same teaching ethics she has, so I can have the same effect on kids that she had on me.
page 10

Device Intervention

A lofty look at retirement by Jack Devine

I’m eighty-one (Did you know that eighty-one is the “new” eighty?). Like many of us, I have lost a lot of friends and acquaintances to the unforgiving passage of time. I think I approach this reality in a forthright manner, and I appreciate the time allotted to me and try to use it in worthy ways (which probably does not include binge-watching Game of Thrones). But each death we hear about reminds us that we are just here for a visit, and one day we will “Shuffle off that mortal coil” (W. Shakespeare) and we will not have to ask, “For whom the bell toils…” (J. Donne).

Back when our children were coming of age, “The Conversation” was about sex. The “do’s and don’ts,” and the “what if’s,” etc. Some of us were better at this than others. “The Conversation” now is what is to be done after the demise of a spouse. Beth and I have begun this conversation on numerous occasions, but we usually get no further than discussing if it would be wise to start thinking about moving into a condo. The answer is always “no,” but we have still not hammered out a good “end game” plan. It will be done and hopefully in time to keep the surviving spouse from scratching his or her head.

This month is my 60th college reunion which I am facing with some trepidation. Although I have lost a startling number of classmates, my roommates are alive and well and reasonably cogent. I am looking forward to seeing them and trading what may be described as apocryphal tales as remembered by octogenarians. The thing that got me started on today’s topic was coming across the folder with the stuff from my 50th reunion. It included a clipping from a George Carlin item that I will share with you. George, as you know, could be a bit gritty at times, but he could also be the wise philosopher. Here is his “Theory of Life,” slightly redacted:

The most unfair thing about life is the way it ends.

I mean, life is tough. It takes up a lot of our time. What do we get at the end of it?

The life cycle is all back-wards.

We should die first, get it out of the way.

Then we move into an old age home.

We get kicked out because we are too young, get a gold watch, and go to work.

We work forty years until we’re young enough to enjoy college.

We read some books, party, and chase girls/boys until we are ready for high school.

We go to grade school, become a kid, play, and have no responsibilities.

We become a little baby, and go back into the womb.

We spend our last nine months floating and finish off as an organism.

Well, I’m pretty sure George’s theory will remain just that, a theory. So what to do? Certainly not sit around waiting for the inevitable. Dan Hickey plays softball (his 84-year-old manager also plays). Roger Higgins and Paul Coiteau ski (at very reduced rates!). Wouldn’t it be more satisfying to break a leg on a ski slope than trippling over a chair in a bingo parlor? Roger Hansen flies his plane. Herb and Sue Elman travel the globe. Rosemary Evaul has worked with Masque and Mime for so long (and so well) that if she ever cut herself, she would bleed greasepaint. Skip Rottkamp (and friends) have organized the New Hamburg Yacht Club Golf Tournament for 10 years, and raised the money that keeps the wheels of Wappingers Falls Meals on Wheels spinning. Sue Roger has been the WRCT President for 9 years. She oversees the 14 Board members that zealously protect the rights of all our retirees.

I’m sure you could add your name, and your own friends’ and acquaintances’ names to this list. We have jobs, we volunteer, we travel, we take classes, we hike, we bike, we make our communities better places in which to live. Oh, and we babysit. How many of you babysit your grand children? Raise your hand. And if we do all these things until we can’t, we can look back at our lives with the satisfaction that we used our time wisely.

Let me end by saying, the last time Beth and I had “The Conversation,” we decided we were going to be cremated. But maybe not. We’ll see…

A WCRT tribute to Jim Bilik, Esq.

By Alice Baker
WCRT Past President

We have recently learned that Jim is joining our ranks of NYSUT retirees.

Many of you will recall that Jim represented us in our lawsuit, Alice Baker, et. al. VS. the WCSD and Richard Powell, WCSD Supt., July 2003-late 2006. Jim filed suit with the Dutchess County Supreme Court and the Honorable Judge Brands ruled in our favor.

The WCSD appealed the decision and Jim again represented us before the Appellate Court in Brooklyn in Sept., 2005. That court also ruled in our favor and the WCSD was directed to resume reimbursement of Medicare Part B premiums in Oct., 2006.

It took close to four years with total support from the WCT and NYSUT to finally settle all of the litigations and now, all WCSD retirees 65+ are receiving semi-annual reimbursements from the WCSD along with some spousal reimbursements.

A personal note to Jim, Thanks for the Medicare (reimbursements).

(Reference to Bob Hope’s Thanks for the Memories theme song.)
Cover Story
continued from page 1

Other topics during the short business meeting focused on the recent DEHIC audit for premiums. A new company took over the audit. They conduct an eligibility report every five years as standard practice. It verifies dependents, if any, have died or aged out, and the amount and number of claims.

If there are any questions, don’t use the phone number on the back of your card but the number on the form.

Jack Devine also thanked attendees for their food pantry donations.

Table Talk...
Pictures taken at WCRT Spring Luncheon at Christos Restaurant on May 3.

Rosalia Gasparini, Cheryl and Stan Zmudzinski share a moment before lunch. Standing in background is Bob Ruopp as he registers with Roger Higgins, WCRT V.P. Bob’s trip from Sunappe, NH, to Christos Restaurant is approximately 228 miles and takes 3 hours and 45 minutes.

Johanna Wermuth, Tanya Iorano, standing, and Jennifer Slater chat before lunch.

I can see for miles and miles...
First of a two-part series.

by Barbara Searle
WCRT Class of 2011

Five years ago as I approached June retirement, never did I think that, from mid-April to mid-June 2016, I would be cycling from Ft. Lauderdale to Bar Harbor, but that is exactly what I’m doing.

As I write this piece, I have pedaled over 1600 miles so far. I have reunited with fellow John Jay retirees, Kathy Corbett, Judy Pond, Stella Humphries in NC, Betsy MacNamee’s niece and family in Richmond, and with friends I met on the WomanTours Death Valley trip last November. Future plans include a rendezvous with my brother’s family in Pennsylvania and my family in Poughkeepsie with a ride across the Walkway on May 29.

WomanTours organizes tours of varying lengths all over the world for women over 50. For one week in September 2014, Betsy MacNamee and I enjoyed tandeming the Eastern Shores of Maryland, and last October, we explored five days in Death Valley National Park on single bikes. We thoroughly enjoyed both trips for the organization, guide expertise, camaraderie, and locales. So, I decided to tackle a biggie: a seven-week, 2528-mile epic journey up the Atlantic Coast.

Starting in Ft. Lauderdale, we rode 62-67 miles daily up the Coast, inhaling the sun, surf, hotel pools, and flat roads. We spent our first rest day learning the history of St. Augustine, the oldest city in America. After Fernandina Beach, FL, we turned west into Georgia and South Carolina, finding a few little hills in Georgia, a lot of farms, and a few bike-chasing dogs who stopped short at our piercing whistles. Gratefully, we found the Coast again in Shallotte, NC, and again luxuriated in sun, surf, and seafood in Carolina Beach and Topsail Island, NC.

A few of us celebrated our first century ride, 100 miles in one day, from Topsail Island to New Bern. A few nights later we spent our fourth rest day in Williamsburg where we soaked up American Revolution history touring the Colonial section.

From Williamsburg, we discovered cycling paradise on the 60-mile bike path to Richmond -- no trucks, no cars, very few intersections. Unfortunately, the day of the Richmond-Fredericksburg route turned cold and stormy very quickly, so most of us ended up taking a “bump” in the van. We cycled an interesting, incredible 30-35 miles on connecting bike paths through D.C. from Alexandria, VA, to Maryland. As I finish writing this piece, we are in Columbia, PA, on another cold, rainy day, waiting for the six brave souls to finish the route.

If you’re interested in more details about our daily journeys, go to my blog (with photos): www.frombarbsbars.com

I am using this tour as a fundraiser for my brother who has suffered from MS since 1989. If you’d like to read his story, his challenges and goals, go to:

www.gofundme.com/sytb2xcs.

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