POUGHKEEPSIE, NY--NYSUT’s Retiree Council 13 held its annual Spring Luncheon at Christos Restaurant on June 2. RC 13 covers five counties in the Mid-Hudson area.

Martin Messner, NYSUT Secretary-Treasurer, mentioned several issues being dealt with by the union:

◆ Starting July 1, a new state law requires all permanently or professionally certified teachers and Level III teaching assistants working in public schools or BOCES to register online with the State Education Department. Re-registration will be required every five years, but NYSUT wants to repeal this.

◆ NYSUT finances have a $7M surplus and pensions are 87% funded, making us a powerful force in New York State.

◆ Friedricks 4-4 vote by Supreme Court was crucial because Right To Work is devastating to the union.

◆ It is critical for everyone to vote in the November presidential election.

◆ Vote NO for the Constitutional Convention. NYSUT will do everything in its power to defeat having a convention. Second Amendment rights are up for discussion as is gambling casino development.

◆ Veterans can buy back credits with TRS three for every five years of service.

Guest speaker Tony Musso presented glimpses from his book Hidden Treasures of the Catskills. Tony’s book follows his format for Hidden Treasures of the Hudson Valley Volumes 1 and 2. He has written seven books on these subjects.

In …the Catskills, he focuses on 50 hidden treasures including trout fishing in Roscoe; the Delaware and Hudson Canal Museum in High Falls formerly the Depew House Restaurant; Hurley Stone Houses; Phoenicia Train Station off Route 28; the Zadock Pratt House in Prattsville; Mount Utsayantha; the Old Stone Fort in Schoharie County; the Minisink Battle Ground; and John Roebling’s Bridge, 23 miles north of Port Jervis on Route 97 (Roebling also designed the Brooklyn Bridge).

Jennifer Shaad-Derby, Retiree Consultant, encouraged retirees to urge family and friends to vote in November.

see COVER STORY on page 4

POLITICAL ACTION COLUMN page 3

Fall Luncheon Flyer (please RSVP) page 12

I can see for miles...final part page 10
Dear WCRT members,

I hope you are all enjoying this long, hot summer. We are eating all the vegetables from our garden.

Active teachers, retirees, parents, and students gathered at the RCK annex on August 15 to unpack, sort by grade level, and sticker 21,000 books with “compliments of WCT.” These books are the result of a grant applied for by the WCT LAP committee.

The LAP committee, (Local Action Project), is sponsored by NYSUT. It has been around for the last 19 years, but this is the second year that the WCT is involved. The committee goes each of three summers for training.

The books are part of a grant from First Books, Inc. They get new, high-quality books donated from book publishers, companies, and individuals who support the program. For this grant the active teachers collected signatures of teachers, retirees, and community members to submit to First Books, Inc. The 21,000 books are going to assist teachers in building their classroom libraries.

At the LAP training this summer, the committee learned that the books were being delivered in August, with a second delivery expected in December or January, 2017.

I would like to thank the LAP committee for all their hard work to reach their goal of receiving these books for our classrooms.

I would also like to thank all of our retirees who volunteered to help with unpacking and sorting. What a fun afternoon it was!

I look forward to seeing many of you at the fall luncheon on Friday, September 23.

Susan Roger

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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.

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SAVE THESE DATES
(future details coming soon)

Aug. 15 print August edition of PostScript
Sept. 13 WCRT exec board mtg. 10:00-12:00
Sept. 15 RC13 Regional Conference, Kingston, NY, 9-2, $25
Sept. 19 New Hamburg Golf Tourney for Meals on Wheels
Sept. 23 WCRT Fall Luncheon, Christos, 11:30, $23, (see p.12)
Nov. 15 WCRT exec board mtg. 10:00-12:00
Jan. 10 WCRT exec board mtg. 10:00-12:00

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WCRT Officers and Board of Directors

July 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

President........ Susan Roger 226-8285
1st. Vice-Pres. Roger Higgins 297-8757
2nd. V.P....... Leslie Leventhal 297-4430
Rec Secy........ Flo Mondanaro 454-0352
Corr Secy......... Barbara Stuck 896-9572
Treasurer........ Tom DeRito 440-3476
Past Pres........... Alice Baker 452-5793

WCRT Rep. to WCT Representative Assembly.... Ellen Korz 297-9713

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Directors
Ruth Ehlers 831-6390
Jane Stockslager 297-3766
Jack Devine 297-5032
Margaret Nikola 221-3824

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Committee Chairpersons
Political Action: ................. Cliff Foley
Constitution/Bylaws: ...Jane Stockslager
Gifts and Contributions...Mary Coiteux
Retiree Council 13 Liaison....Cliff Foley

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PostScript

WCRT Mission Statement: 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
williamdourdis@gmail.com
(845) 266-0430

The WCRT PostScript is a 2015 NYSUT United Communications Competition Winner with 7 awards: (*AD =Award of Distinction; & 1st=1st Place). AD, General Excellence, April 2014; AD, Social Justice Issue, 3rd 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 Presz: I Have a Dream Too!

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WCT at 1989r
WE NEED TO FIND THE FACTS

CLIFF FOLEY
Political Action
Chairperson

“I didn’t say that I didn’t say it. I said that I didn’t say that I said it. I want to make that very clear.” (George Romney, 1967)

Clarity is what we need. It would be great if all candidates for all offices would speak only facts and then give clear positions on the issues that are important to the public. With the presidential election coming in a few months, accusations and misinformation are flying around like missiles. Those who try to keep the facts straight have their hands full. Charges of candidates lying fill the airwaves and cyberspace.

There are certainly many sites online that do fact checks. Our 24-hour news media stations also bring in experts to analyze what is being said and printed. This has become a full-time job. We look forward to the three formal debates in the hopes they will provide more clarifications from the candidates for President of the United States and Commander-in-Chief of our military. We really just want straight answers.

One area where we have not been able to get facts is Trump’s tax returns. He has not released them. Hillary Clinton has released eight years’ worth. Warren Buffett has issued a challenge to Trump. He stated, “I’ll bring my tax return, he’ll bring his tax return... and just let people ask us questions.”

“Trump alone is enough to keep the entire fact-checking industry afloat. When the flamboyant billionaire gave a big speech recently denouncing Clinton, the Associated Press assigned 12 reporters just to check the veracity of his assertions,” states the Christian Science Monitor website.

In a major Trump economic speech on August 8, 2016, National Public Radio had five analysts check the facts. One example of a mistruth involved Clinton when he said, “She accidentally told the truth and said she wanted to raise taxes on the middle class.” NPR pointed out that PolitiFact had already rated this statement, he has repeat-
ed before, as a “pants on fire.” This is the worst value assigned to mistruths. You can find them at www.politifact.com. Another excellent site to track down facts is www.factcheck.org. It describes itself as a “non-profit, non-partisan consumer advocate for voters that aims to reduce the level of deception and confusion in U.S. politics.” It is a project of the University of Pennsylvania’s Annenberg Public Policy Center.

Sometimes headlines take on a life of their own as when a number of newspapers said that Trump threw a baby out of a rally in Virginia. If you go to www.washingtonpost.com/news/factchecker, you can learn the whole truth that involved the mother taking the crying baby out on her own and later coming back with the baby quietly working on a pacifier.

Other sources that check on certain facts are our own Poughkeepsie Journal and USA Today. There are groups such as the American Association of University Women (AAUW) that issues fact sheets on where the candidates stand on issues that concern them. www.aauwaction.org/

We are experiencing a far different kind of presidential campaign than any we have experienced in our lifetimes. As the election draws near, we must each make a decision about which candidate we will cast our vote for. Staying home is not an option. Your vote counts and to the best of your ability, you need to check the facts and then fill in the little circle on your ballot.

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 wct@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

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.

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 or ruthellen1@icloud.com
Two RCKHS / WCT Award recipients named

Two Roy C. Ketcham High School students were WCT Award recipients. The RCK Guidance Department was responsible for choosing the most deserving candidates. Photos were unavailable at press time.

Faith Luna

Faith is an outstanding student ranked 60 in a class of 464. She has achieved academic success while participating in extracurricular clubs, sports and also working a part-time job. She has pursued a challenging curriculum of Honors courses throughout high school. Despite her busy schedule, Faith has volunteered at local soccer camps and for events sponsored by our club Glob Initiates of Change, a group committed to positive change and reform in the world. Faith has all the skills necessary to succeed in a post-secondary education program, and she will attend Sacred Heart University in the Fall of 2016. Her career goal is to become an Elementary Education teacher. She is a sincere and caring young woman and RCK believes she will achieve much success in the future.

Stephen Merrill

Stephen is an outstanding student, a leader among his peers, a talented athlete, and a fine young man. Academically, Stephen is ranked in the top 10% of his class. He has consistently enrolled in a full schedule of Honors and Advanced Placement classes throughout high school and has successfully balanced his time as a scholar and an athlete. Stephen certainly has the skills needed to achieve further academic success at the post-secondary education level. He plans to attend Manhattanville College in the Fall of 2016. Stephen is interested in becoming a physical education teacher and is an ideal fit for this profession. Stephen is outgoing and caring, and prides himself on being a positive role model to his peers and the younger children he has coached. Stephen has a passion for helping others and RCK is confident that he will achieve all of his goals in the future.

submitted by
Antoinette Sarna
RCKHS School Counselor

Cover Story

RC 13 Luncheon continued from page 1

Six of the eight consecutive NYSUT Community Service Award winners from RC 13 in attendance at the Spring Luncheon on June 2 include Mary Lou Davis, Cathy Berger, WCRT’s Cliff Folley, this year’s recipient Janice Scriber, Carole Chambers, and Matt Ostoyich. Susan Eagan, behind Janice, and Carole are on the nominating committee.

Mike Ostrander, NYSUT Member Benefits representative, offers literature and give aways at the RC13 luncheon.

Congratulations to 16 new WCT retirees who represent 371 years of experience now becoming the WCRT Class of 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Hire Date</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Retired</th>
<th>Years</th>
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<td>Karen</td>
<td>9/1/1999</td>
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<td>7. Guerette</td>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>9/1/1999</td>
<td>Van Wyck</td>
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<td>15. Roos</td>
<td>William</td>
<td>9/1/1993</td>
<td>RCK</td>
<td>7/1/2016</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WCRT by the numbers:

WCRT membership as of June 21, 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.

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May 2016 RA Meeting

As the school year winds down, the negotiating team is in full swing. The District and the WCT Team continue to meet with little being accomplished. The District would like to take away some paid programs and have the members pay more for health insurance. Nothing monetary has been considered. NYSUT did a budget analysis of WCSD and we are in good financial health. There does not seem to be any reason a fair agreement cannot be reached. There will be a General Membership meeting June 7, after a contract negotiation meeting, and any updates will be announced then.

Everyone was thanked for all the help in getting the budget passed and the new members to the BOE elected. Pasquale made special mention of the retirees who gave their time to help. He also thanked everyone who supported the Verizon workers during their strike.

Donna Kart, WCT Treasurer, presented the proposed budget. It reflects that we are all shareholders in the new building. The only increases to the members are $10 for NYSUT dues and $3 more for the AFT.

A proposal is being written for hiring permanent subs to alleviate the sub situation.

Staples has created a partnership with NYSUT. Each store receives boxes of supplies that they are giving to teachers. They need only to ask. Most stores do it three or four times a year. Pasquale is asking teachers to obtain these boxes from their local store and then bring the supplies to the WCT office. Full sets of supplies, for students who need them, can be put together and distributed.

The last meeting is around the corner. Where did the time go? Maybe some progress will be made on the contract.

Last RA Meeting for 2015 - 2016

What a fast year this has been! Again, I thank you all for allowing me to be your representative with our active members.

Negotiations continue, but nothing new is going on. The Board of Education has requested that the teachers create a survey about issues such as curriculum, the BOE, PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Services), concerns and anything important to the faculty. There was much discussion as to why the BOE doesn’t create the survey, but some RAs felt they wouldn’t know what to focus on. Nothing was decided.

The BOE also agreed to create a training for teachers who want to volunteer for a new position at the Elementary level. Needed are an ELA and a Math specialist in the Elementary buildings. There is money for the training. The position starts in September, but without a contract and language for this position, it will not be able to begin as planned. It is recommended that anyone interested should volunteer, since they will still be compensated.

As for the General Membership Meeting held June 7th, the attendance was only 26%. In a year when negotiations are ongoing, one would think the members would want to be present and involved.

The substitute teacher situation is still a problem. For the next budget, the WCT has proposed the hiring of two permanent subs for Secondary and one for each Elementary school.

We ended on a high note. The Scholarship Raffle was drawn. An RCK teacher won $325.

Until next year.
In Memoriam

Sheila T. Klingman

POUGHKEEPSIE - It is with great sadness that we announce the loss of our beloved mother, wife, sister, grandmother and friend, Sheila T. Klingman, who passed away on Wednesday, June 29.

Born in New York City on February 7, 1936, to Gerard and Catherine (Clerkin) Kangley, Sheila was raised in Goshen, New York.

Following her graduation from Orange County Community College (1955) and what is now SUNY Cortland (1957), Sheila began a career teaching elementary school – first at Ocean Avenue School in Northport, New York and then at schools in Newburgh, New York, and Montgomery, Alabama. Taking time away to raise her family, Sheila continued as a substitute teacher in Wappingers Central School District at Oak Grove Elementary Schools. [She retired in 2001.]

Sheila leaves behind James, her devoted husband of 58 years, as well as her much beloved sons: Timothy, of Hyde Park, and Patrick, and daughter-in-law, Diane, of West Hartford, Connecticut. Sheila is also survived by her sister, Kathleen “Pat” Strong of Goshen, and her brother, Gene of Fort Lauderdale, and many nieces and nephews. Her greatest treasures were her granddaughter, Jacqueline, and grandson, Nicholas, both of West Hartford – they will miss their Grammie. Sheila was predeceased by her sister, Mary, her son, Christopher, and several brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law.

A heartfelt thanks to the staff of the Intensive Care Unit at St. Francis Hospital, Poughkeepsie, whose compassion and care made Sheila more comfortable in her last days.

Sheila was committed to ensuring all children had the skills they needed to succeed in life; she was especially sensitive to those challenged from birth. Donations in Sheila’s name may be made to Greystone Programs, Inc., 36 Violet Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 (www.greystoneprograms.org).

Calling hours are Friday, July 1, from 4pm to 8pm at William G. Miller & Son Funeral Home, 371 Hooker Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY. A Mass of Christian burial will be held on Saturday, July 2, at 9:30am at St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church, Cedar Valley Road, Poughkeepsie, NY. Burial will be at St. John’s cemetery in Goshen at the family’s convenience. If you wish to send an online condoleince, please visit our website at www.wmgmillerfuneralhome.com

Elaine Rippa

LAGRANGE - Elaine Rippa, 66, a resident of LaGrange since 1981 and formerly of Brooklyn, died on June 30, 2016 at Vassar Brothers Medical Center.

Born in Jersey City, NJ on April 11, 1950, she was the daughter of Dolores Chambers Ferguson of Flemington, NJ and the late James Ferguson. Elaine was employed as a teacher with the Wappingers Central School District at Oak Grove Elementary School for 24 years until her retirement in 2008. She was a parishioner of St. Kateri Tekakwitha Church.

On August 8, 1971 at St. Joseph’s Church in Union City, NJ, Elaine married Richard Rippa who survives at home. She is also survived by her sons, Paul Rippa and his wife Kelly of McDonough, GA and Timothy Rippa of Portland, OR; her grandchildren, Garrison and Tanner; her siblings and their spouses, Dolores Aversa, Robyn and Eloi Sedillos, James and Jeanne Ferguson, Richard and Linda Ferguson, Dawn and Pat Varano; her brother and sisters-in-law, Vincent and Monica Rippa, and Elizabeth Rippa; and many nieces, nephews, great nieces and great nephews. She was predeceased by her brothers-in-law, Robert and Eugene Rippa.

Elaine was a devoted wife, comforter, and a spoiling grandmother. Lynne brought them back together.

Calling hours will be held on Friday from 4-8pm at the McHoul Funeral Home, Inc., 895 Route 82, Hopewell Junction. The Mass of Christian Burial will be offered on Saturday at 10am at St. Kateri Tekakwitha Church, 1925 Route 82, LaGrangeville. Interment will be in the family plot in Calvary Cemetery in Queens.

Memorial donations may be made to the American Diabetes Association or the Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation. Please visit Elaine’s Book of Memories at www.mchoulfuneralhome.com

Harriet L. “Lynne” Stokosa

HOPEWELL JUNCTION - Harriet L. “Lynne” Stokosa, age 70, of Hopewell Junction, passed away at home on July 10, 2016 surrounded by her family after a courageous 3 year battle with cancer. She was born to Frederick and Harriet Kraft.

Lynne grew up in Delmar and was a 1964 graduate of Bethlehem Central High School. She received a B.A. in education from SUNY at Potsdam and later a master’s degree.

She was a dedicated elementary teacher in the Wappingers Central School District for over 30 years, teaching at both Brinkerhoff and James S. Evans Elementary Schools. [She retired in 2001.] She was passionate about making a difference in her students’ lives.

Soon after her retirement, Lynne and family moved to Murrells Inlet, SC, where they lived for 10 years. Lynne’s strong sense of family brought them back to Hopewell as she wanted to be closer to her son and his family, watching her 3 grandchildren grow up. This brought a wonderful sense of meaning to her life. She always thought her greatest treasures called her “Grandma”.

Lynne was a devoted wife, comforting mother, a caring sister, a true and loyal friend, and a spoiling grandmother. Lynne will be remembered for her sense of humor, kind spirit, optimism, strength, and self-sacrificing generosity.

In addition to her husband, she is survived by her son, Brian Stokosa and wife Nicki of Stormville and their 3 children, Avery, Brody, and Bryce; her daughter, Robin Stokosa of Hopewell Junction; 2 siblings and their spouses, Sue and Bob Jutton of Naples, FL and Larry and Linda Kraft of Overland Park, KS; and several nieces and nephews.

Calling hours will be on Wednesday from 6-8 pm at the McHoul Funeral Home, Inc., 895 Route 82, Hopewell Junction. A funeral service will be held on Thursday at 10 am at the funeral home. Please visit Lynne’s Book of Memories at mchoulfuneralhome.com
A tribute to talent: “Maggie” Caccamo


A Memorial Art Show was held on Saturday, June 11, 2016 from 2 - 5 pm at Unison, 68 Mountain Rest Road, New Paltz, NY 12561.

She began a 30-year career as an art teacher, retiring from the Wappingers Central School District in 1999. The art show was a wonderful tribute her family paid to Maggie and showcased her many talents. Nothing could have said more about her life and works.

Along with family and friends, former students and workmates came to show respect, some from as far away as California. The Unison Gallery was packed all afternoon.

Personally, I met Maggie at New Paltz. She was in the Silversmithing program ahead of me. I found her to be most generous with her time and expertise. Later on, I was pleased to find us working together for Wappingers. Her humor and warmth was appreciated by anyone around her.

Maggie was a creative powerhouse, not just teaching art but creating beautiful works in metal and gemstones, leather and fabric. Her extraordinary quilts reflect themes of nature and family, and evoke the elegant simplicity and composition of the Japanese watercolor paintings mastered by her father. She became a dedicated practitioner of the Japanese art of Ikebana (flower arrangement).

Maggie also created wonderful Temari (traditional Japanese embroidered thread balls). She approached all of her art with unmatched creative energy, a refined vision and imagination, as well as tasteful restraint.

The Way I See It; Never Too Old

David V. Monto
Owner
Dutchess ProPrint
1708 South Road,
Wappingers Falls,
NY 12590
845-298-8898

W hat e v e r y o u r dream is, it’s never too late to chase it. It’s also OK if you don’t know what your dream is yet… since you never know where you’ll end up tomorrow. Here are a few inspirational timelines to consider when you think you are too old to reach your dreams:

- At age 23, Tina Fey was working at a YMCA.
- At age 24, Stephen King was working as a custodian and living in a trailer.
- At age 27, Vincent Van Gogh failed as a missionary and decided to go to art school.
- At age 28, J.K. Rowling was a suicidal single parent living on welfare.
- At age 30, Harrison Ford worked as a carpenter.
- At age 30, Martha Stewart was a stockbroker.
- Julia Child released her first cookbook at age 39 and began her cooking show at age 51.
- Vera Wang failed to make the Olympic figure skating team, didn't get the Editor-in-Chief position at Vogue, and designed her first dress at age 40.
- Stan Lee didn't release his first big comic book until he was 40.
- Samuel L. Jackson didn't get his first movie role until he was 46.
- Morgan Freeman landed his first MAJOR movie role at age 52.
- Grandma Moses didn't begin her painting career until age 76.
- Louise Bourgeois didn't become a famous artist until she was 78.

Never tell yourself you're too old to make it. Never tell yourself you missed your chance. It's never too late to chase your dreams. And our printing experts are here if you need help creating print projects to pursue your business dreams. Remember, other printers may be nearby, but nobody comes close.
The PostScript focuses this News since last issue section on events and topics of interest that happened since the previous issue two months ago. It is intended to offer context to the reader regarding articles in this edition.

PostScript policy for staff and management will not endorse any person and will not include political platforms. Any other editorial views expressed are those of the writer with a byline as a column or letter to the editor.
A SUMMER “MOURNING LINE” FOR THE AGING…

Recently I found a “birthday card” with the top 25 songs for “people your age.”

Among the selections were

(1) “MOANY, MOANY,”

(2) “LET’S GET PHYSICALS,”

(3) “WHO LEFT THE MILK OUT” & (4) “WAKING UP IS HARD TO DO!”

I decided to come up with my own versions of the TOP 12 SONGS from the 50’s & 60’s for those of you who lived during those fun years. This is what you probably HEAR NOW!

Number 12 Yes, Sir, That’s my WALKER!
Number 11 Moody LIVER
Number 10 See you later – ELEVATOR
Number 9 Put your BALM on my shoulder
Number 8 Zing went the strings of my DRESS!
Number 7 Save the last STALL for me!
Number 6 I’ve got my QUILT to keep me warm
Number 5 Who’s HORNY now?
Number 4 I REALLY don’t know…WHERE or WHEN!
Number 3 I hear you KVETCHING -- but you can’t come in!
Number 2 Shake, rattle & FALL!
Number 1 I got my THRILL with a little BLUE pill!

News since last issue

Source: Poughkeepsie Journal
I can see for miles and miles...

Second of a two-part series by Barbara Searle
WCRT Class of 2011

On Thursday last week as we traveled the final leg from Bucksport to Bar Harbor, I found myself at one point cycling alone, somewhere in the middle of our entire group, relishing the blue skies, crisp morning air, and rocky Maine landscape. As I skirted yet another pile of stones and another hole in the road and another pothole patch, I reflected on how many of these bicycle obstacles we had avoided over the last 2300+ miles with each other's help in verbal and hand-signal warnings. The magnitude of what we were all about to accomplish slowly settled into my consciousness.

Of course, we'd always known that we were on a mega-journey. However, we tried to stay focused only on what we had to do that day: how many miles to the next turn, shoulder or no shoulder, chipseal or cement-segments or cream, traffic, stop signs, hills, detours, potholes, rumble strips, sand, pebble piles, manhole covers, grated bridges, rough tarmac patches, glass, steel-belted tire remnants, the next restroom availability, the next SAG stop... signing in at 45 hotels, remembering tonight's room number, rescuing buried luggage at day's end, freezing Camelbacks in room refrigerators, finding ice machines for water bottles, not leaving anything behind in the room (chargers, night lights, electric toothbrush bases), scouting out breakfast offerings...deciding on laundry machines or tub/sink washing, signing up on the list for washer/dryer use, getting quarters for the machines, combining clothes with others to make one full load...cleaning the bikes, adjusting derailleurs, charging the headlight, changing dead light batteries, changing flats, checking for fraying tires... heat, headwinds, rain, cold, hypothermia, leg cramps, shorts or crops, long sleeves or arm warmers, rain or wind jacket...filling snack bags, making sandwiches, pumping tires, loading luggage into the van in the morning, turning on lights, adjusting mirrors, checking in/out with the SAG driver at each stop...

The minutiae of the daily routine controlled our lives, and necessarily so. If and when our thoughts wandered to the larger picture, we suddenly discovered that... “Wow! We just finished Florida!”... or...“Yay! We’re back on the Atlantic Coast again!” when we reached North Carolina after having gone inland through the hot, rural, depressed sections of Georgia and South Carolina. We could see and feel our progress as we headed north, crossing one state line after another with celebratory photo ops and enjoying those delicious margaritas as we toasted our larger accomplishment.

The whole time we cycled the flat South, save a few areas of Georgia, I wondered how I’d ever be able to traverse the north-south line of ridges in Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, let alone the coastal hills of New Hampshire and Maine. For me, every day after Day One became a personal best; yes, I had ridden a 60-mile day before but not two in a row, let alone five that first week. Not so surprising, of course, our leg muscles became stronger and stronger with each day’s ride. The weeks added up, and before long we tackled the Virginia hills, crossed the half-way point in Alexandria, and bike-panthed our way through D.C. We were relieved when we hit Pennsylvania, but the relief was short-lived. The Phoenixville, PA, to Sturbridge, MA, strenuous, seven-consecutive-day-traverse across these north-south hills challenged even the best of us.

Upon leaving Sturbridge, we faced seven days of cycling divided by a rest day in Freeport, and I found myself thinking, “OK, Barb, you got this...” It was just a matter of taking one day at a time, one hill at a time, knowing that, as Chanda had put it, I “would never have to go up that hill again,” and “It’s about cadence, not speed.” Singing those mantras, I put my two-wheeled chariot into granny mode and chugged up the 8-13% grades, sometimes at a mere 3 mph like the little engine that could -- and did. I learned not to fear the hills anymore; they can be climbed, they can be conquered, and I can win.

The bicycle journey heightened our senses. We inhaled scents of farm animals, honeysuckle, pine forests, magnolias, and salty air. We soaked in the sun, sand, surf...and rain, sometimes sweating in 95-degree heat and other times bundled up with three-layers, gloves, and buffs. The array of sleek thoroughbreds, belted Galloway cows, bulls, goats, deer, woodpeckers, turtles, hogs, a bear (!), as well as the plethora of scurrying squirrels and chipmies trying to escape the onslaught of two-wheelers. Coastal seafood and Elle’s mighty smorgasbord of nutritional and flavorful dishes satisfied our palates and filled our bellies. We battled noisy headwinds, lusted after crashing waves, jumped at gunshots in the woods, cringed at roaring trucks approaching from behind, and smiled at birdsongs and rustling leaves. The nature of our trip forced us to slow down, look and listen, and the reward magnified our appreciation for Nature’s gifts.

And so, as I sketched those last bicycle tire obstacles on the way to Bar Harbor, I felt immeasurable pride, gratitude, and relief. The physical challenge, including the century ride in North Carolina, speaks for itself. Whatever possessed me to sign up for such a trip, I don’t think I know even now, but I think a small part of me thought I could do it if I just stuck to the one-day-at-a-time “chunk” method I used to teach my students when they felt overwhelmed with all their responsibilities. It worked for me, too.

I’m filled with gratitude toward the guides who carefully led and fed us from Ft. Lauderdale to Bar Harbor, who cared for us and our bicycles, and who supported us with their encouragement and counsel. The group of women gelled very quickly, and I appreciate their friendship and camaraderie, their laughter, their helpful nature, their “we’re in this together” attitude. Very special thanks go to Linda, Chanda, and Kim, my cycling “family” within the larger group...we supported each other in ways too numerous to count.

I’m very grateful to friends and family who not only believed in me and supported me with tech support and notes and good wishes and coffee and dinners and visits but who also supported my fund-raising campaign to help my brother. He is closer to realizing his dream of becoming un-housebound with these gifts, and I’m humbled by the generosity of all. Of course, I’m particularly grateful to Betsy who took the bon voyage group photo in Ft. Lauderdale, drove my car back home from Florida, took care of the house and the dogs while I was away, and drove up to Bar Harbor to get me last week. Without her consistent support and encouragement, I never could have started, let alone completed, this epic journey.

Finally, I’m relieved! I am safely home, having completed my goal without flat tires, without illness, and without falling! And while I ate like the proverbial horse, I still lost 8.5 pounds! Yay!

For more details about our daily journeys, go to my blog (with photos): www.frombarbsbars.com

I used this tour as a fundraiser for my brother who has suffered from MS since 1989. To read his story, his challenges and goals, go to: www.gofundme.com/sytb2xc.

Dan, at right, is my nephew-by-blood, brother-in-reality. His wife, Chanda, at left, did the first half of the trip with me. Before we cycled the final leg to Bar Harbor, they drove there from their home near Boston. On the tour’s last day, they cycled south on their tandem while we cycled north, we met in Ellsworth, and then they rode with me the last 15 miles.
Poor Elijah’s Almanack: Letting the Kid Out

Source: This article appeared in the Eagle Times on July 19, 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 Sunappe, NH, submitted this article from their Education columnist.

Summer vacation just started, and our pharmacy’s already stocking spiral notebooks. According to one lemonade ad, the Fourth of July means summer’s almost half over.

Somebody needs to buy these guys a calendar.

Poor Elijah enjoys summer, and the break helps him refresh and better prepare for the onslaught of memos, meetings, and adolescents. Children are actually the least taxing part of his job. Administrators cause far more mischief, especially when they’ve been left unsupervised for a couple of months.

On the other hand, many jobs are more stressful than his. Most workers manage without 10 weeks off for refreshment.

If Poor Elijah’s defense of summer vacation rested on the benefits for teachers, I wouldn’t write it. If I thought year-round school was in the nation’s best interest, I’d say so. Instead, year-round school promises “drastic changes,” few likely benefits, and many unnecessary complications.

Critics of summer vacation complain it’s a relic of a bygone era when children were needed on the farm. Their argument ignores two facts.

First, by the time compulsory public education was the rule for most American children, Jefferson’s republic of farmers had already given way to cities and smokestacks. Second, the custom of taking the summer off actually began when turn-of-the-20th-century middleclass Americans attempted to emulate the summer migrations of the Vanderbilts and Rockefellers.

Year-round boosters cite the new millennium’s “explosion of knowledge” to justify extending the school term. Yes, history is two generations longer than when I graduated, and we’ve discovered some new science, but having too much information isn’t a recent development. Teachers in the old days never had enough time to cover everything either.

Extended year advocates claim that scrapping summer recess would promote higher achievement and cure the “lack of memory retention from June to September.”

Unfortunately, most students who forget things between June and September are already currently forgetting them over Christmas vacation. Year-round proposals that cut summer recess don’t add any days to the school calendar. They just plug in more interruptions throughout the calendar, which arguably would result in more bouts of student amnesia.

Beginning in the 1980s, California experimented with eliminating summer vacation. San Diego found attendance in its year-round schools “15 percent lower” than in its schools with “traditional calendars.” Eighty percent of its year-round schools produced “test scores below the district average.” Oakland similarly reported “lower scores” in schools where students attended through the summer.

A University of California study diplomatically determined that “most year-round schools” have done “less well than expected.” Only one Los Angeles school “remained on a year-round schedule by 2015.”

Studies tracking student achievement yield mixed reviews at best. In a 1999 University of Minnesota compilation of 69 independent analyses, 42 concluded year-round schooling produced “no positive impact.”

A 2007 Ohio State University study found “no differences in learning between students who attend school year-round, and those who are on a traditional schedule,” though year-round set-ups do appear to benefit “at-risk students” for whom “learning may not otherwise be fostered at home.” A Johns Hopkins study confirmed that the summer learning “backslide” mostly afflicts low-income students.

Advocates add that schools should be open during the summer because they’ve become “hubs for healthcare and other services.” However, operating a school housed clinic all year, assuming we choose to do that, doesn’t require or justify running the school itself all year, especially since “year-round” schools aren’t open any more days than “traditional” schools.

Offering summer services to some children, whether medical or educational, shouldn’t require that every child attend school in the summer.

Fiscal watchdogs suggest schools could save money by staggering sessions and operating year-round. These promised benefits also haven’t materialized. Staggered sessions pose problems for families with more than one child, and if you expect teachers to work more days, you have to pay them more.

Some argue we need summer sessions to keep children busy. They say boredom leads to trouble. Even if this were true, it doesn’t mean schools should pick up the slack.

Besides, I disagree that boredom’s a bad thing. I spent a fair amount of my youth sitting on the curb, complaining there was nothing to do. Sometimes I made bad choices, but mostly we talked or found something benign to pass the time. Through it all I learned the valuable lesson that I was responsible for keeping myself busy and out of trouble.

Boredom is a feature of the human condition. It keeps cropping up, no matter how old you get. Learning to cope with it is a life skill.

Summer was never the season when schools gave children back to their parents. Parents gave their children to schools for a time and a purpose. Yes, there may be an academic cost if students aren’t in class 12 months a year, but what’s the cost of consigning children to a social institution year-round from a toddler’s first steps until the day he leaves home as an adult?

Who will be bringing up baby?

If you’re looking for daycare, consider this. I hope my students respect me, and I like to think I’m pretty good at teaching them English and history, but bringing them up is your job.

Educators talk about teaching the whole child.

The best place for the whole child is home.

If it isn’t, that’s a problem no school can solve.

Peter Berger teaches English at Weathersfield School. Poor Elijah would be pleased to answer letters addressed to him in care of the editor.
Friday, Sept. 23, 2016  11:30 a.m.

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155 Wilbur Blvd.  Poughkeepsie, NY 12603

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280 New Hackensack Rd.  Wappingers Falls NY 12590
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