NEW YORK, N.Y. April 8, 2017 — Delegates to New York State United Teachers’ annual Representative Assembly today elected Andrew Pallotta to a three-year term as president of the more than 600,000-member statewide union.

A former elementary teacher in the Bronx, Pallotta is an experienced union leader who previously served as NYSUT executive vice president, overseeing the union’s legislative and political action program. He succeeds Karen E. Magee, who opted not to seek a second term.

Under Pallotta’s leadership, NYSUT expanded grassroots member engagement and ramped up its political activism, setting new records for member donations to VOTE-COPE, the union’s political action fund.

“ать I believe in being relevant, resilient and, above all, relentless,” Pallotta said in a speech to delegates. “We will never quit fighting for those we serve, or for each other.”

Outlining a vision that emphasizes unity and activism, Pallotta said NYSUT will “move forward, speaking with one voice — a voice that raises up the concerns of working people everywhere.”

Pallotta’s slate of officers also won election:
• Sixth-grade teacher Jolene T. DiBrango, president of the Pittsford District Teachers Association and a trustee of the New York State Teachers Retirement System board, was elected executive vice president.
• J. Philippe Abraham, past director of Career Services at the University of Albany and chief negotiator for United University Professions, was elected first vice president, becoming the first higher education member to serve as a NYSUT officer.
• Paul Pecorale, a teacher from Patchogue-Medford on Long Island, was re-elected second vice president.
• Martin Messner, a teacher from Schoharie, was re-elected as secretary-treasurer.

Delegates also elected more than 70 members to the NYSUT Board of Directors.

WCRT offers 2017 Scholarship

www.wcteachers.org

L-R: Abraham, DiBrango, Pallotta, Messner, Pecorale.

Magee and Pallotta

Photos and text source: NYSUT Media Relations
From The President

SUSAN ROGER
WCRT President

Dear WCRT Members,

Spring is finally here, and I’m looking forward to some sunshine. I reminded myself that we have had blizzards in April, but I’m crossing my fingers and ordering seeds.

Two important items to remember:
- First, the new Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield new system changes which go into effect July 1, 2017. You and your dependents must start using these cards as of July 1, but not sooner. If you use your old card after July 1, services will be denied. Please make a note to yourself on your calendar.
- Second, the vote in November for or against a Constitutional Convention. In case you are not aware, we teachers and NYSUT are against it. If passed, the whole NYS Constitution is open for rewriting. This could have vast repercussions on teachers, retirees, and public education in NYS.

The recent New York United had a great article about why to vote NO. If you want to go on the website NoNewYorkConvention.org, you can get information about how to talk to friends and relatives about “NO” and how to say it persuasively and effectively.

We are afraid in the referendum on Nov. 7, an off year, that voters will be uninformed about the cost and who will make decisions on what will govern our jobs and pensions. IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO GET FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO GET OUT AND VOTE “NO.”

Finally, we will have one open seat on our executive board. This is a voting position, and the job description includes 5 meetings a year, 2 luncheons, and the mailing of the PostScript 6 times a year. There is a committee that helps with the mailing. If you are interested, please call me at 845-226-8285.

Hope to see many of you at the spring luncheon on May 18.

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 WC 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.

If you have not paid your dues by now, your name will be removed from our files and you will not be eligible for NYSUT benefits until dues are paid. Make checks payable to WCRT and mail to WCRT.

Renewal notices were sent out. Dues for 2016-2017 are: $20.00 Yearly; $200.00 Individual Lifetime; $325.00 Couples Lifetime.

Pay Lifetime and alleviate the yearly task of renewing.

PostScript

WCRT Officers and Board of Directors

July 1, 2015-June 30, 2017

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

Directors

Ruth Ehlers 831-6390
Jane Stockslager 297-3766
Jack Devine 297-5032
Margaret Nikola 221-3824
Mary Ann Moran 297-4785

Committee Chairpersons

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

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
www.wcteachers.org

Editor: Bill Dourdis
williamdourdis@gmail.com
(845) 266-0430

The WCRT PostScript is a 2016 NYSUT United Communications Competition Winner with two awards: 1st Place, Best Column/Blog, We’re at War in New York by Cliff Foley; Award of Distinction, Creative Writing, Devine Intervention: A lofty look at retirement by Jack Devine.

Save These Dates

(future details coming soon)

Apr. 1 Deadline for April PostScript
Apr 6-8 NYSUT Rep. Assembly, NYC
Apr. 18 WCRT executive board meeting, 10:00-12:00
May 18 Spring Luncheon, Christsos, 11:30, $23, elections, upcoming events announced at luncheon
May 25 Capasso Scholarship Reception, 7:00, RCKHS library
June 1 RC13 Luncheon, Christsos, 11:30
YOU HAVE THE RIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITY TO VOTE

CLIFF FOLEY
Political Action
Chairperson

“N”obody will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote except the American people themselves and the only way they could do this is by not voting.”

This quote by Franklin D. Roosevelt says it simply. In a democracy the people have the right to make decisions on how they should be governed.

In the recent 2016 Presidential election approximately 58.1% of eligible voters cast their ballots. This means almost 42% did not go to the polls. By comparison the turnout in 2012 was 58.6% and 2008 was 64%. Interestingly the United States Elections Project which, “…seeks to inform the people of the United States on how their electoral system works…” has a graph which shows voter participation in Presidential elections between 1840 and 1900 at between 70% and 80%. Of course the number of those eligible to vote in those days was greatly reduced.

Presidential selections may be one of the most important responsibilities the nation’s citizens have, but it doesn’t end there. They also choose state, county, town, and village officials.

On May 16, 2017, the people of New York will go to their local polls and vote on school board members and budgets. In the Wappingers Central School District, we have the responsibility to select four of the nine school board members to guide the district during the next year.

The Wappingers Congress of Teachers, along with the other district unions including the WCRT, interviews those wishing to be elected or re-elected, and then together the employee groups give their endorsement to ones who show a positive attitude toward education and the best interest of the students.

For the May vote, the endorsements have gone to Peggy Kelland, the current Board president; John Lumia, a board member since 2008; Tracy Pelton, also a present board member; and newcomer Keith Odums who has two children in elementary school in the WCSD.

Voting takes place from 7:30 a.m.-9:00 p.m. at Fishkill, Fishkill Plains, Gayhead, Myers Corners, Vassar Road and Wappingers Junior High. Should you need an absentee ballot, call 845-298-5000, Ext. 40145.

There will also be a budget put forth, which according to the April 11, 2017 Poughkeepsie Journal, will include a $4.69 million increase in state aide for the Wappingers district.

If you live in another New York district, your school elections will also take place on May 16. Plan to get involved wherever you live; it’s your responsibility.

Looking ahead to November 7, 2017, we will go to the polls in an off year with an item on the ballot that could have a long-lasting and even devastating effect on each of you. Every twenty years the people of New York State are asked whether we should have a Constitutional Convention. The New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and many other groups are urging a big NO vote on this item. You will hear arguments special interest and corporate groups make for why we need changes. Become educated and take responsibility for spreading the real facts about what is being called a $300-million-plus party in Albany for politicians. There will be much more on this issue in the coming months.

Some of the arguments you will hear for having the Con Con are that public employee pensions are too high (The NYSTRS tells us that the average teacher pensions are only $40,000 with other related staff making even less), the schools could save money if they didn’t have to provide health insurance coverage for retirees, and there shouldn’t be reimbursements for Medicare payments.

Yes, we have a right and responsibility to exercise our vote whenever we can. Abraham Lincoln said it very simply, “The ballot is stronger than the bullet.”
Luncheon forum for slate of officers vote on May 18

Nominating committee and slate of officers for the election on May 18 at the WCRT Spring Luncheon. Attendees will vote on two-year terms for this slate.

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2nd Vice President: Leslie Leventhal
Recording Secretary: Flo Mondanaro
Corresponding Secretary: Barbara Stuck
Treasurer: Tom Derito
Rep to WCT RA: Ellen Korz

Directors:
Jack Devine, Ruth Ehlers, Jane Stockslager, Maryann Moran, and Christine Romano

Nominating Committee:
Leslie Leventhal, Roger Higgins, and Jack Devine.

You know you're over 50
when you get up from the sofa to get your reading glasses, do six other things, forget your glasses and sit down on the sofa again.

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RA Meeting for March 28, 2017

Today’s meeting was also the beginning of the State ELA exams. Some people came in totally exhausted from the hectic day. The usual was discussed: APPR, school calendar for next year, lack of participation of new teachers, and the new homework policy that was tabled by the BOE.

None of these topics affect retirees, but it was interesting that some of these areas had decisions made by the District without any input from the WCT. The school calendar was missing days generally off, the BBQ for teachers teaching 1-3 years was poorly attended last year, but they’re hoping RAs will build support for a successful BBQ this year at their buildings, and the homework policy was not acceptable to the teachers since it didn’t take into consideration teaching styles or levels of the students.

The one area the District seemed to side with the WCT was APPR. The District decided to give each building a score and somehow combined with the individual’s score, no one would need a TIP plan to improve. The District does not report these scores to the State. They seem to know how to play the game.

The topic affecting us is DEHIC 2017-18 Renewal Rates. There will be a 15.98% increase in the insurance rate. This is still better than NYSHIP in price and coverage. We will still get the December Premium Holiday, but they will not know until after April 30. One reason for the increase is more utilization of the plan.

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Jim Marrinan, in charge of political action, will call on retirees to help with a project to educate people on the development of unions and what people went through to create a union. There will be a dinner/lunch in Kingston where we can give our perspective on the beginning fight and the benefits of the union. More information is forthcoming.

See you all at our spring luncheon.
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WCRT's watchdog about “insider information” affecting WCSD retirees

Rep Assembly Meeting for February 28, 2017

There’s so much news from this meeting, but most of it does not affect “The Happy People,” as Pasquale refers to us retirees.

✓ The one very important thing to remember is to open any mail you receive from Empire Blue Cross/Blue Shield. We will receive new cards because of system changes that become effective, July 1, 2017. The cards will have a new group number, new identification number, and a new customer service number. The EOB will be simplified and easier to read. The new card must be used for services beginning July 1, 2017. All your service providers must be notified of the change. Your old card will not be honored starting July 1, 2017. Your benefits and participating providers will not change. You will be able to continue to use your established log-in information. Also, you can expect an increase in the cost of the insurance.

✓ Four Board of Ed seats are up this year: John Lumia, Peggy Kelland, Babu Munusamy, and Tracey Pelton. Interview dates are March 14, 15 and 16.

✓ It was amazing to hear all the wonderful comments about the HR person who took over Joanne Sereda’s position, Dr. Dwight Bonk. This has been an easy year because he is a “human being” and easy to talk to. His assistant is leaving her position, Heather Hastie, and they are sorry to see her go.

✓ The NYSUT president, Karen Magee, is not seeking a second term. A new slate will come out as well as a slate from the ST (Stand Together) Caucus.

✓ Still on the agenda are APPR and the inconsistencies between buildings. Pasquale continues to address these issues. Recently a District Initiative for field trips was issued and $11-12,000 was allotted. This came about after a parent survey. There was confusion as to the money allotted to cover the teachers. Pasquale did not believe teachers should have to pay their way if a trip is mandated by the District; it should be included in the price the students pay. It was also suggested to have it be part of My Learning Plan and ask for reimbursement. As of now there is no more money and some students at both junior highs were not able to take advantage of the initiative.

✓ In light of the political climate, the Regional Office invited locals to participate in a Loss of Agency Task Force. Jim Marrinan, our Director of Political Action, is hoping to have our own committee to educate the members about the possibility of becoming a right-to-work state. If 51% of the membership does not pay dues, the District can dump the contract. The government will send information why you don’t have to join the union. This makes it necessary to have our own Task Force to maintain membership. Information will follow about how retirees might help.

If anyone wants to read BOE minutes, contact me.

Didn’t hear any grievances? It looks like it has been a good year.

March 28 report on page 4

Financial Report available

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

Address your questions or concerns to tderito@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.
In Memoriam
Doris (Doty) Simons  1920 - 2017

The College of St. Rose, Albany, N.Y. in 1944 with a B.A. in Music Education and subsequently obtained Masters Degrees in Education, English and Special Education at SUNY New Paltz.

Doris began her career as a music teacher at Fultonville High School. In 1947 she accepted the position of supervisor of elementary music moving to the Wappingers Central School District, from which she retired in 1984. She taught at several schools in the district and helped to open Fishkill Plains school.

Following retirement she volunteered at St. Mary’s School, Wappingers Falls NY running the annual Christmas pageant and other programs. She was a member of St. Mary’s Catholic Church, Wappingers Falls, and a member of the Catholic Daughters of America, Wappingers Falls.

On August 28, 1948, she married Edward Simons at Our Lady of Angels Catholic Church in Whitehall, N.Y. who preceded her in death.

Survivors include her children, Edward Daniel (Maureen) Simons of Wappingers Falls, and John Patrick (Kim) Simons Wappingers Falls, and four grandsons, Joshua (Christine), John Sal, Edward Daniel and Mark. She had a daughter, Doris Rita, who preceded her in death.

Doty loved teaching and her students were “her kids.” For many years she played the organ at St. Mary’s Church and Mt. Alvernia, including countless masses, funerals, weddings, and other services. She was a avid Jets fan and attended home games for many seasons. Doty enjoyed winters in Palm Harbor and New Port Richey, Fla. She will be greatly missed by her former students, friends, and family.

Calling hours are Wednesday 2 to 4 and 6 to 9 PM at Delehanty Funeral Home 64 E. Main St., Wappingers Falls.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be offered at 9:30 AM on Thursday, March 30, at St. Mary’s Church, Wappingers Falls.

Burial will follow in St. Mary’s Cemetery.

Memorial donations may be made to Hudson Valley Hospice Foundation, 374 Violet Ave., Poughkeepsie, N.Y. 12601.

Edward Murphy  July 6, 1948 - March 23, 2017

Edward John Murphy, 68, of Marlboro, NY passed away unexpectedly, March 23, 2017 in St. Martin. Ed was born July 6, 1948 in Cold Spring, NY to Alice L. Murphy and Edward S. Murphy. He was the beloved husband of Bernadette A. (Gentile) Murphy for 41 years. Edward was a 1966 graduate of Beacon High School and was a Vietnam-era Veteran of the U.S. Air Force. After his military service he earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees at SUNY Albany.

Edward was a 1966 graduate of Beacon High School and was a Vietnam-era Veteran of the U.S. Air Force. After his military service he earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees at SUNY Albany. He touched the lives of many students in the Wappingers Central School District where he passionately taught business, mentored, and advised from 1975-2003.

Ed was a member of the Father Hanley Council of the Knights of Columbus, UNICO, The American Legion and St. Mary’s Church in Marlboro. He loved traveling, cooking, gardening, fishing, and hunting. He was a natural athlete who played baseball, racquetball, boxed, and wrestled during his lifetime.

He will be fondly remembered as a passionate entertainer who always had a joke to tell or a song to sing. He was committed to living each day to the fullest. In his wallet he carried a newspaper cutout that read “Yesterday’s the past, tomorrow’s the future, but today is a gift. That’s why it’s called the present.”

He is survived by his wife, Bernadette Murphy, son, Joseph Murphy of Arlington, VA, daughters, Megan Murphy of Newburgh & Cara Murphy of Providence, RI, sisters, Sandra (Eugene) Trifilo of Glensham, Donna (David) Bamond of Fishkill, Patricia (Richard) Roza of Milton, Doreen Murphy of Glensham, sisters-in-law, Maria (Richard) Thatcher of Albuquerque, NM, Sara (Robert) DeLuise of Wappingers Falls, brother-in-law Ben (Greta) Gentile of New Rochelle, granddaughters, Juliana & Ariana Walker of Newburgh, eleven nephews and nieces, several loving relatives and caring friends.

He is predeceased by his parents, Edward & Alice Murphy, and nephews, Frank Trifilo & Christopher Usifer.

Calling hours will be held on Sunday April 2nd from 3pm-7pm at the DiDonato Funeral Home, 1290 Route 9W, Marlboro. Funeral services will take place on Monday April 3rd at 10:30am at St. Mary’s Church in Marlboro. Burial will follow in St. Joachim Cemetery in Beacon.

Published in the Poughkeepsie Journal from Mar. 31 to Apr. 2, 2017
[Ed retired from JHHS 2003.]
In Memoriam

MT. ZION - Susan Jeanette Martin, age 64, of Mt. Zion, IL, passed away on Thursday, March 16, 2017 at her home in the arms of her family.

Susan was born on November 13, 1952 in Lansing, MI, the daughter of Arlyn and Norma Huyck Donovan. She graduated from East Lansing High School, Central Michigan University (summa cum laude) and the University of Michigan (master’s degree).

She spent her work career as a school librarian in Michigan and New York State school systems, and as a university librarian at Texas A&M. The majority of her 30 plus year career was spent connecting children with the right book to excite their imaginations and interest in reading.

Susan’s other passions included quilt making, needlework, travel, and family. She was a kind and loving daughter, sister, wife, mother, grandmother and friend, and many survivors will be warmed by one of the dozens of quilts she created as gifts.

Susan is survived by her husband Kevin Martin of Mt. Zion; mother, Norma Chamblerin of East Lansing, MI; daughter Elizabeth Alaimo, and grandsons, Anthony James and Jackson Lee Alaimo, all of Kerhonkson, NY; brother Michael Donovan of Olympic Valley, CA; and many beloved aunts, uncles, nephews, grandnephews and grandnieces. She was preceded in death by her father, a brother Christopher Donovan.

Cremation will be accorded prior to ceremonies. The family will host a memorial gathering at 1:00 pm on Saturday April 8 at Plymouth Congregational Church, 2001 E. Grand River Ave., Lansing, MI. Later gatherings in the Decatur, IL and New York State areas are pending, and will be announced. To celebrate Susan’s artistic and creative spirit, attendees who have them are requested to bring a quilt or needlework created by her.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in Susan’s name to Decatur Memorial Hospital Hospice, 2300 N. Edward Street, Decatur, IL 62526 or ALS Association St. Louis Regional, 2258 Weldon Parkway, St. Louis, MO 63146.

Please visit lincollandcs.com to offer your condolences.


[Susan Martin was a librarian at Wappingers Jr High from 1989-1999. She then went to Oak Grove Elementary from 1999-2007 when she retired.]
Simplifying your life insurance options

As an educated consumer, you realize the earlier in life that you purchase life insurance, the cheaper the premiums will likely be. You’re also aware that life insurance offers financial protection for your dependents upon your death, helping to cover the costs of funeral and burial expenses; assistance to help with your children’s education; and offering financial assistance with paying debts and other expenses.

It can be overwhelming, though, trying to determine the best type of life insurance policy. Let’s take a look at some of the different types of life insurance options available.

#1: Whole Life Insurance
   - This type of insurance is usually the most costly since policies are guaranteed to remain in force as long as premiums are paid. Whole life insurance offers permanent protection with premiums that never increase and builds cash value you can borrow against while you are living (like a loan). Important: Understand that you will reduce your death benefit if you don’t repay loans with interest and will no longer have coverage if you surrender the policy.

#2: Term Life Insurance
   - This type of insurance pays a benefit in the event of the death of the insured during a specified term, offering a fixed rate of payments during that time period. Once that period ends, coverage at the previous premium rate is not guaranteed and the insured would need to get further coverage. Term life insurance (and its level term life cousin) is designed only to protect your dependents if you were to die prematurely -- offering NO cash value.

#3: Level Term Life Insurance
   - Like term life insurance, level term life insurance pays a benefit in the event of the death of the insured during a specific time period. Premiums may not be increased during the time period due to change in your age or health status.

#4: Universal Life Insurance
   - This type of insurance offers a way to protect your dependents while building tax-deferred cash value. While the cost of a universal life plan needs to be covered so the policy remains in force, the policyholder has the option to adjust how much he or she will pay in premiums each year. Policyholders can also access a portion of the balance without affecting the guaranteed death benefit as the cash value accumulates over time.

Keep in mind that NYSUT members & their spouses/certified domestic partners can help protect their dependents from life’s uncertainties with a variety of NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed life insurance plans. Many of these plans offer group rates not available to the general public along with additional convenience and savings opportunities.

For more information about these plans, visit the Member Benefits website at memberbenefits.nysut.org or call 800-626-8101.

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.
Thursday, May 18, 2017  11:30 a.m.

Christos Restaurant,
155 Wilbur Blvd.  Poughkeepsie, NY 12603

Huge Hot and Cold Buffet Lunch served at 12:00noon
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.

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 May 11, 2017.
Luncheon for WCRT members and their guests.)
March 17, 2017

Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers
280 New Hackensack Road
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590

Attn: Ms. Mary Coiteux, Chairperson
WCRT Gifts and Contributions

Dear Ms. Coiteux,

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers for your generous donation to the 2017 WCSD STEAM/Science Fair. The donation was used for the purchase of plaques awarded to students with the Most Original Idea/Experiment, one for each of our three age groups. I am appreciative of the continued support your organization gives to the students of our district.

The WCSD STEAM/Science Fair was held on March 4th, and was a great success, with more than 200 students participating! The vision, enthusiasm and hard work exhibited by these students were truly inspiring and we are very proud of the work that was displayed. I am enclosing copies of the 5th-6th grade and 7th-12th grade programs which were given out at the awards ceremonies for you to share with your members.

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

Sincerely,

Janice Lawler
STEAM Professional Development Specialist

To devote a portion of one’s leisure to do something for someone else is one of the highest forms of recreation.
Gerald B. Fitzgerald

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