Letter from the editor

A Post-it Note

Ah, the flashbacks—not in a PTSD kind of way, but confirming past editorial decisions and remembering growing up while history was being made.

I saw The Post last week at the movies. I became an assistant school newspaper advisor at RCKHS in 1971, the same year as the film. Twenty-two years later, I sat as a defendant in a 3020a court proceeding that could have ended my career.

To print, or not to print, that was the question. Whether ‘tis the Pentagon Papers in the Washington Post or a political cartoon in The Tomahawk, I had the First Amendment, Canons of Journalism, four credentialed professional journalists, and a great NYSUT attorney on my side. Students were my source. It wasn’t contempt or collusion. It was reporting the news of the day and confirming the rule, like falling down confirms the rules of gravity.

Some rules apply today in our current PostScript situation. I will publish the newsletter because I know the source—you! We’re colleagues. We’re retired teachers. We’re likeminded. Been anywhere? Done anything that doesn’t violate national security? Then it leaves topics pretty wide open!

Send me something to print! It doesn’t need to be 4,700 pages long. A couple of paragraphs or no more than a page is totally acceptable.

So, what’s news with you?

1. Loosely paraphrased from William Shakespeare’s Hamlet, III, i, 56.
2. The Pentagon Papers were classified documents regarding undisclosed information about the involvement of the United States government in the Vietnam War.

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www.wcteachers.org
From The President

SUSAN ROGER
WCRT President

Dear WCRT Members,

I write to you from sunny Florida. Those of you who are lucky enough to get away will enjoy the break from winter. To those of you who are still in New York, I wish you no more big storms in the next two months.

During this past weekend we saw a shutdown of the federal government. It was for three days. On Monday the Senate and House passed a bill to fund the government until February 8. Senator Chuck Schumer and the majority of democrats backed the bill with the understanding that the "dreamers," children brought to this country illegally, would not be deported. President Trump was expected to sign the bill, but stopped short of promising to support the bipartisan deal on immigration reform. We will have to see what happens on February 8.

Happy Valentine's Day, Happy St. Patrick's Day, Happy Passover and Easter, and Happy Mother's Day!

I hope to see many of you at the Spring Luncheon on Thurs., May 17th at Christos Restaurant.

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.

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 WCT and mail to WCRT.

Renewal notices were sent out. Dues for 2017-2018 are:
$ 20.00 Yearly; $200.00 Individual Lifetime; $325.00 Couples Lifetime.
Pay lifetime and alleviate the yearly task of renewing.

Future details coming soon

Jan. 9 WCRT exec board mtg. 10:00-12:00
Jan. 23 Deadline for February 2018 PostScript
Apr. 13 Deadline for April 2018 PostScript
Apr. 24 WCRT exec board mtg. 10:00-12:00
May 17 WCRT Spring Luncheon, Christos, 11:30, $23,
May 31 RC13 Luncheon, Christos, 11:30
June 2 RCKHS faculty & staff reunion, 1:00-4:00
June 12 WCRT exec board mtg. 10:00-12:00

SAVE THESE DATES

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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 2017 NYSUT United Communications Competition Winner with two awards:
1st Place, Best Feature Writing,
I can see for miles and miles... by Barbara Searle;
Award of Distinction, General Excellence,
The WCRT PostScript to Bill Dourdis, editor.

WCRT Officers and Board of Directors
July 1, 2017-June 30, 2019
President........... Susan Roger 226-8285
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2nd. V.P......... Leslie Leventhal 297-4430
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Directors
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Jane Stockslager 297-3766
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Christine Romano 896-8371
Mary Ann Moran 297-4785

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

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2018: A YEAR WITH A NEW CHALLENGE

CLIFF FOLEY
Political Action Chairperson

When you first hear it, “right to work” sounds like it should be something positive but it has negative consequences that can be far reaching.

Right to work means that employees in unionized workplaces may not be compelled to join a union, nor required to pay for any part of the cost of union representation, while receiving the same benefits as union members who pay dues.

The United States Supreme Court will hear a case titled Janus v AFSCME (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees). This case looks to end the practice of unions being allowed to charge nonunion members a fee to cover the cost of items such as contract negotiations and representing workers in grievances.

The lawyers for Mark Janus, an Illinois state worker, are from the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, which states, “Janus and millions of other public employees are effectively being required to support a government appointed lobbyist.” Their goal is to have national right to work for all public employees.

AFSCME has a different view of the case. On its website it states, “This case is nothing more than the latest and most egregious in a long line of political attacks by billionaire CEOs and corporate interests who don’t believe that working people should have the same freedoms they do.” These include the right to make a decent living, with benefits and protection from unfair employer practices.

A court case to end this union practice was originally brought by the Republican Governor of Illinois, Bruce Rauner. A federal court ruled that he had no standing to challenge the law. After this, the case was refiled by Janus.

In 2016 a case almost identical to Janus, Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association, ended in a 4-4 tie in the top court with the death of Antonin Scalia. The January 9, 2018 Los Angeles Times stated, “Now, the court has agreed to hear a new case presenting the same issue. And this time, Justice Neil M. Gorsuch can — and most likely will — supply the fifth vote for a conservative ruling.”

In New York, which is one of 22 states that is not a right to work state, unions have the right to collect an agency fee from nonmembers. This is a required amount of money to support the union without the person actually joining. The Supreme Court in a 1977 decision known as Abood v Detroit Board of Education allowed these fees as long as it was not used for political activities.” In effect, the Janus case could have the Supreme Court ruling against its own decision from 1977.

If the outcome of Janus v AFSCME goes against unions, it would make all states right to work. The NEA Today magazine in March 2013 said that the result of right to work states that already exist shows “lower wages—for both union and nonunion workers alike—by an average of $1,500 per year.” It continues, “These laws also decrease the chances of employees getting either health insurance or pensions through their jobs—again, for both union and nonunion workers.”

There is a real danger for retirees in New York and all states under right to work. A weakened union with fewer members and less dues money loses strength in negotiations. Since retiree health insurance in Wappingers is part of the teacher contract, any reduction in benefits would impact those of us already retired. With weakened unions for active educators, there could be less concern for retirees. Add to this a loss of lobbying power in Albany. We could also see the emboldening of those who lost the constitutional convention vote. They could propose separate amendments to weaken or eliminate retiree protections. These constitutional articles currently prevent the reduction of your pension benefits and reimbursement of Medicare premiums.

In Wappingers we have had agency fee for many years and with everyone paying their fair share, the WCT has remained a strong and viable representative for both active and retired educators.

Unfortunately there is little we can do to effect the outcome of this case. It will be nine politically appointed individuals who will have the power to impact the lives of millions of union employees.

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, same as above
- NYSUT, 800-342-9810 800 Troy-Schenectady Rd. Latham, N.Y. 12110-2455 www.nysut.org
- NYSTRS, www.nystrs.org 800-348-7298 x 6250
- WCSD, Human Resources 25 Corporate Park Dr. Albany, N.Y. 12211-2395
- WCSD Board of Ed. e-mail address: WCSD.Board@Wappingersschools.org

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
**CONSTITUTION ON WCT WEB SITE:**

The WCRT Constitution/By-Laws is now available on the WCT web site under the Retirees section.

This is the Constitution that was voted on at the May 2015 Spring Luncheon. If you have any questions, please contact me at the address below.

[www.WCTeachers.org]

**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

---

**WCRT by the numbers:**

WCRT membership as of Jan., 2018:

- Membership letters go out in September.
- 611 WCRT members
- 154 yearly members
- 389 Lifetime members
- 55 Complimentary Lifetime members
- 13 Complimentary members
- 73 retirees don’t belong to WCRT & not entitled to NYSUT benefits
- 18 about to be deleted from our files for not paying dues this year.
- 149 members receiving publications & notices by U.S. mail down from 232
- 486 members email subscribers.
- 4 2017 retirees wisely chose copay

- 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.

- Register on the website wcteachers.org

- 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 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.

[www.WCTeachers.org]

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**Baby Brynn Fights Cancer**

**October 19, 2017 Update**

At the October 19 Fall Luncheon, several WCRT members expressed concern about the donation website not working. They checked and discovered an error.

Here is the correct website: [youcaring.com/sashaabrahamsonandjopieurtjens-773809](youcaring.com/sashaabrahamsonandjopieurtjens-773809)

Below are excerpts from two previous articles offering readers important background information to contribute to expenses involved with Brynn’s care and treatment.

Brynn Geurtjens, granddaughter of Hannah and Mike Abrahamson (RCK 2008 and 2005) was diagnosed at age 9 months with **rhabdomyosarcoma** in her brain and spinal cord. This is an exceedingly rare occurrence (one in a billion) with no known protocol for treatment.

Brynn is at Seattle Children’s Hospital where mom and dad took up residence at the nearby Ronald McDonald House, along with three-year-old brother Eli and Hannah and Mike.

Despite the side effects, Brynn continues to be a brave and sweet little girl. She is loved more than words can say, and her family asks for your prayers of healing.

Rhabdomyosarcoma is a soft tissue cancer generally found in people middle aged and older, rarely in babies, and it is even more rare to find it in the brain or spinal cord (only 40 known cases worldwide).

Because this is so rare, there is no treatment protocol. Doctors treat it aggressively, given Brynn’s age, combining treatments used for brain cancers as well as for more typical rhabdomyosarcomas found in soft tissue cells.

More information and/or to contribute to expenses for Brynn’s care and treatment can be found in paragraph two above in bold italic print.

---

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

1. Go to [www.wcteachers.org](www.wcteachers.org)
2. On the right-hand side, go to the “Member Login” module
3. Click on the “Click Here to sign-up” link (It is yellow)
4. Enter all of your information on the form. This is the information that we will use to maintain our records and to send email and/or text notifications. Make sure that you choose a username and password that you will remember.
5. Click submit
6. Review all of your information
7. Click Submit again
8. Wait 24-48 hours for us to verify your email and/or text notifi cations. Make sure that you choose a username and password that you will remember.
9. Click submit
10. Review all of your information
11. Click submit again
12. Enter all of your information on the form. This is the information that we will use to maintain our records and to send email and/or text notifications. Make sure that you choose a username and password that you will remember.
13. Click submit
14. Review all of your information
15. Click submit again
16. Wait 24-48 hours for us to verify your email and/or text notifi cations. Make sure that you choose a username and password that you will remember.

Hope this helps. Thanks, Nancy
Holiday time is so busy and stressful, and when one of our own passes, our community comes together to support the students and each other. Pasquale called for a minute of silence for a 48-year-young teacher, Julia Elizabeth McCord Eurillo, who had just passed away Monday, December 18. Julia worked as a special education teacher for 17 years at Roy C. Ketcham and John Jay High Schools.

Many reps were not present, and there was little business to discuss. Reps from each building gave an update as to the progress they made getting their members to sign their commitment to the union should the Janus case cause us to be a right-to-work state. Most are progressing well.

There are many First Books still at the WCT office. If you know any organization that needs them, contact Ronnie.

Just a reminder: February 23 will be the second Hungry Humans Event Fundraiser. It was a great success last year. If any retirees would like to create a team, more information will be forthcoming and we can contact the LAP committee.

See you in the New Year!  
Ellen Korz

RA Meeting  January 30, 2018

Just a few items of interest to the retirees:

- The most important is the change in the prescription plan. As of July 1, it will be mandatory to get maintenance drugs by mail order. You will get more information about this from the WCT, but you can go on the website www.wcteachers.org and follow the steps to make this change. Don’t wait until the last minute; check out the WCT website.

- February 24 has been designated as Working People’s Day of Action. Buses will leave from a variety of locations to go to NYC for the rally. If Wappingers gets enough people, we will have our own bus. This rally is in solidarity and a push back to the JANUS vs AFSCME case.

- Censorship of assigned reading material is again an issue. At the elementary and secondary levels, parents have asked for certain reading material to be dropped from the curriculum. Since Wappingers already addressed this issue years ago, there is a precedent. The parents were given an alternative choice for their children, but they will still go to the Board of Education about the issue.

- Lastly, February 23 at John Jay High School, LAP will hold the 2nd Hungry, Hungry Humans Event (similar to Hungry Hippo). Proceeds go to Sparrow’s Nest. To attend, it is $2.00. They would love retirees to volunteer their help. I would love if we could get a team to participate. Sounds like fun. It is from 6-8 p.m.

- There will be a Social Hour on March 9 with active members if anyone is interested. More information will follow.

Ellen Korz

WCRT Continues Scholarship in 2018

The WCRT offers an additional scholarship to Wappingers Central School District seniors this spring. The WCRT Executive Board has again authorized funding for three awards, one at each high school in the district. Each recipient receives a $500 check from the WCRT for tuition, books, or other college-related expenses.

WCRT sub-committee members Flo Mondanaro, Jack Devine, Leslie Leventhal, and Roger Higgins will work with RCK, JJ, and Orchard View guidance counselors to determine recipients of the award.

Award criteria, developed with input from current professional staff, are:

1. An award goes to one senior at RCK, JJ, and Orchard View. Applicants with a high school average of 80 or better, with intention to pursue a career in education or an education-related field will be considered.

2. Preference goes to students with financial need.

3. Each high school Guidance Department recommends candidates.

4. Applicants submit an essay of no more than 350 words, titled “An Educator Who Influenced My Life” or “Why Education Is My Chosen Career.” Essays are reviewed by the WCRT sub-committee, and top candidates are referred back to guidance counselors who make a final choice.

5. Each award is for $500.

6. Scholarship information is available in guidance offices. Deadline to apply and submit an essay is May 15.

The WCRT has a long-standing commitment to support the WCSD community, and this scholarship adds to numerous other scholarships we continue to support and fund.

Interested students should contact their school counselor for information.
In Memoriam

Thomas E. Brooks, Sr.

FISHKILL, NY -- Thomas E. Brooks, Sr., a Fishkill resident since 1954, died on Tuesday, November 28, 2017 at the Lutheran Care Center in Poughkeepsie. He was 92.

Son of the late Lowell and Sarah (Noyack) Brooks, he was born in Ansonia, CT on February 27, 1925. In 1943, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and served during World War II. He was the recipient of several recognitions, including the American, European, and Asiatic-Pacific Theatre Medals, the Philippine Liberation Medal, and the Victory Medal.

He was a graduate of Syracuse University, where he played football. He later earned a master’s degree in education. In 1954, he began working for the Wappingers Central School District teaching driver education, coaching, serving as truant officer, and assistant principal. He retired in 1982 after 13 years as the Principal of his beloved, Roy C. Ketcham High School.

Thomas was a parishioner of St. Mary, Mother of the Church in Fishkill where he was baptized and confirmed later in life. He was a member of the Dutchess Golf & Country Club where he enjoyed many rounds of golf with friends. Affectionately known as “Poppy,” he was a permanent fixture at all of his grandchildren’s events. Simply put, he was the best.

Thomas was predeceased by his loving wife, Frances Ann (Georgia) Brooks, on August 11, 2005. Together they created a close-knit, loving family that was steeped in tradition and celebration.

Survivors include his son, Thomas E. Brooks, Jr. & his wife Susan of Fishkill; his son, Kevin L. Brooks & his wife Susan of Poughkeepsie; his daughter, Janice Uhligsch & her husband Rudolf of Wappingers Falls; his grandchildren, Erin Shields & her husband Patrick of Cold Spring, Mark Brooks & his wife Colleen of Ballston Spa, Kevin J. Brooks & his wife Rebecca of Wappingers Falls, and Kristin Brooks of Poughkeepsie; his great-grandchildren, Brittany, Patrick Thomas, Ellie, Jack Thomas, Madeline, Gavin Thomas, Charlotte, and Jackson; and many nieces, nephews, and other loving relatives & friends.

In addition to his wife and parents, he was also predeceased by his daughter, Susan Jo Brooks, as well as his brother, Lowell Brooks, and his sister, Betty Wentworth.

Calling hours will be held from 2 - 4 and 7 - 9 p.m. on Friday, December 1 at the McHoul Funeral Home of Fishkill, Inc., 1089 Main Street, Fishkill. A Mass of Christian Burial will be offered at 9:45 a.m. on Saturday, December 2 at St. Mary, Mother of the Church, 106 Jackson Street, Fishkill. Interment will follow at St. Joachim Cemetery in Beacon.

The family would like to thank the physicians, nurses, and staff of the Lutheran Care Center and Hudson Valley Hospice for the care and compassion given to Thomas throughout his final days. In recognition of their gratitude, the family requests that in lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Lutheran Care Center, Employee Appreciation Account, 965 Dutchess Turnpike, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603 or Hudson Valley Hospice Foundation, 374 Violet Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 (www.hvhospice.org).

For directions and online tributes, you can visit Thomas’ Book of Memories at www.mchoulfuneralhome.com. (Published in the Poughkeepsie Journal from Nov. 30 to Dec. 1, 2017.)


Diana Theresa Schopen

LAGRANGEVILLE, NY -- Diana Theresa Schopen, beloved mother, age 88, passed away at her home on December 3, 2017.

Diana was born on September 13, 1929 in Mt. Vernon, NY. Her husband, Thomas Schopen predeceased her.

Survivors include her children Christine Schopen, Susan Schopen, Lauren Gould, Diane Coulter and Timothy Schopen and her grandchildren Kimberly Gould, Brian Gould, Timothy Schopen, Cassidy Coulter and Thomas Coulter.

[Diana retired from Gayhead Elementary in 1991.]

Visitation will be Wednesday, December 6, 2017 at the Timothy P Doyle Funeral Home 371 Hooker Ave. Poughkeepsie New York from 4 -7pm.

Funeral service will be held at St. Kateri Catholic Church at 10:00 am on Thursday, December 7.

Burial will be private at Fishkill Rural Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, a donation may be made in her honor to the Saint Vincent de Paul food pantry: P.O Box 428 Hopewell Jct, NY 12533, (845) 227-7863 or online at SVPfoodpantry@gmail.com

(Published in the Poughkeepsie Journal from Dec. 5 to Dec. 6, 2017.)

Condolence thanks from WCRT President

Dear Retirees,

Thank you so much for the lovely card for the passing of my mom.

It meant a lot to us.

Sue & the Roger family
In Memoriam

John “Jack” Ericson

ROXBURY, NY -- John E. Ericson, age 76, died peacefully at his family home in Fishkill, NY on Sunday January 7, 2018.

“Jack” was born on March 29, 1941 in Port Chester, NY to John and Emily Ericson. He studied voice and music at Potsdam Crane School of Music and began teaching music in Penn Yan, NY. He then returned to Port Chester to teach music at the high school where he met and married the love of his life, Nancy Nethercott. They moved to Wappingers Falls to raise their children Christopher and Karin.

Jack taught music in the WCSD for over 20 years, as well as swimming lessons in his backyard pool. His beautiful baritone voice graced many church services from New Rochelle to Poughkeepsie including the wedding of his son Christopher to Bonnie Hall. He could often be heard “checking the acoustics” of auditoriums, cafeterias, hallways, ski slopes and his garden with an excerpt from La Boheme or Carousel.

He and Nancy retired from teaching and moved to Roxbury, NY where he sang in several church groups. “J.J.” then received his PSIA Level 1 certification and taught skiing at Belleayre Mountain.

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for almost 20 years. He made many friendships there and enjoyed his ski trips out West with his ski buddies. He and Nancy enjoyed yearly vacation trips in Cape Cod to visit lifelong friends and go fishing. He made friends at every stop and seemed to be “The Mayor” everywhere.

John was pre-deceased by his parents and sister, Barbara. He lost his beloved wife Nancy on April 26, 2014.

He is survived by his loving family, son Christopher and wife Bonnie, grandchildren Zachary Ericson and fiancée Megan Flaherty, Tyler Ericson, Eliza Ericson, daughter Karin Ericson and partner Erik Harkins, caregiver Lorna McDougal and his four grand-pups. John is also survived by his brother-in-law Anthony Saracini and wife Laurie, his niece Celeste Ivan and her three sons, Scott Ivan, Dillon Ivan and his wife Ally and Brendan Ivan.

More than anything, he loved his family and many friends. He cherished the time he had with them, especially the grandchildren. He touched many lives on his journey and will be greatly missed. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to Dutchess County Hospice.

Calling hours will be held from 5pm-8pm Wednesday January 10, 2018 at the Miller Funeral Home Roxbury, NY. Funeral service will be held 11am Thursday January 11, 2018 at the Jay Gould Memorial Reformed Church, Roxbury NY, with the Rev. Richard A. Dykstra officiating. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to Miller Funeral Home, Roxbury NY.

Published in the Poughkeepsie Journal and Kingston Freeman on Jan. 9, 2018.

Robert “Bobbie” Marsh

BEACON – Roberta C. Marsh, 79, died on Saturday, December 2, 2017 at the Lutheran Care Center in Poughkeepsie.

Roberta Marsh, or Bobbie, as she was known to everyone who knew her, was the eldest of three daughters born to Marion and Samuel Collins. From an early age Bobbie displayed the love of nature, and animals, which became her hallmark. Anyone who spoke to her—be it for even a few minutes—heard about Dodie and Jodie, twin fawns she hand-raised; and how she was called “Bobbie Nature” when she worked as a counselor at the Fresh Air Fund’s Sharpe Reservation camp, where she lived as a child; and, in large part was built by her father.

Among Bobbie’s many accomplishments, she graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Biology from SUNY New Paltz. She traveled across the country—all the way to Washington state—in her baby blue Jeep, sleeping under the stars along the way; and she owned and rode her own motorcycle. She was way ahead of her time.

Bobbie taught in the Wappingers School District for over 30 years [teaching Grades 4, 5, and 6 at Gayhead, Myers Corners, and Vassar Road Elementary Schools,] retiring in 1993. She was known as a tough, but fair, teacher who rewarded her students for reading books.

by taking them on field trips hiking up Mount Beacon or Breakneck Mountain; and for rides on the Day Liner.

She married her husband, George Marsh, after he successfully courted her by carrying a china cabinet on his back, up the hill to her house—in a snow storm. He died in 1995.

Family was very important to Bobbie. She never forgot to send a card or gift to nieces or nephews on their birthdays—no matter how old they got. She was the glue that kept the far-flung family members together. She cared for her parents, and husband, in their final illnesses with patience and love.

Bobbie was pre-deceased by her parents, Samuel and Marion Collins; her aunt Jean Lobsenz and her beloved Uncle Herbert Lobsenz, MD; her husband, George; her cousin, John Lobsenz; and, her sister, Patricia (Pat). She is survived by her sister, Nancy (Collins) Toney; her nieces and nephews Dawn, Susie, CJ, Lee, Cindy, Jill, Peter and Amy; and many great nieces and nephews; and her cousin Johnny Lobsenz’s daughters, including her beloved Paula.

A funeral service was held at 10 a.m. on Wed., Dec. 6 at First Presbyterian Church of Beacon, 50 Liberty Street, Beacon. Interment followed at Fishkill Rural Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in her memory to the Animal Rescue Foundation (ARF), The McHoul Funeral Home Fishkill, Inc., 1089 Main Street, Fishkill. For online tributes, you can visit Bobbie’s Book of Memories at www.mchoulfuneralhome.com.

(407x1921) www.wcteachers.org--WCRT PostScript PAGE 7

Robert “Bobbie” Marsh

KINGSTON FREEMAN (Published in the Poughkeepsie Journal from Dec. 5 to Dec. 6, 2017.)

54 Simmons Lane, Beacon, NY 12508 (www.arfbeacon.org) or the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, 724 Wolcott Ave., Beacon, NY 12508 (www.clearwater.org), or to your house of worship.

Arrangements are under the direction of the McHoul Funeral Home of Fishkill, Inc., 1089 Main Street, Fishkill. For online tributes, you can visit Bobbie’s Book of Memories at www.mchoulfuneralhome.com.

(www.arfbeacon.org) or the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, 724 Wolcott Ave., Beacon, NY 12508 (www.clearwater.org), or to your house of worship.
Did you know the French version of #MeToo is #Balancetonporc (translated: Expose Your Pig)? Even before I came across this Gallic tidbit, I had done some serious soul-searching in this subject area. I had no problem delegating the hottest place in hell to Harvey Weinstein, but were there some serious “creep” episodes in my journey into manhood and beyond? Did I cross any lines? Am I worthy of casting the first stone?

It’s safe to say that we all have a sexual history from a fairly early age, maybe the womb. But let me jump ahead to when I entered the male equivalent of going “from lollipops to lipstick.” I think it was my first day in seventh grade when Karen Wanberg sauntered into class. The tectonic plates had been vibrating for a while, but on that day there was a major shift. Life would never be the same. Luckily, myself, and the great majority of my friends, were clueless. I’m embarrassed to say that this cluelessness extended well beyond the seventh grade. (How far beyond the seventh grade I am not willing to let on.)

But here is what my #MeToo soul searching wrested from my dusty memories:

◆ I grew up in a house full of females: Grandmother, mother, three sisters. There was much love, but also rules. By the age of three I knew the proper care and “setting” of the toilet seat. It was just the beginning.

◆ Customs and mores are important in keeping basic instincts reined in. Let’s not forget laws. And for many, Commandments. Responsibility is good. So is fear.

◆ My seduction skills could not be called “good,” so I probably earn no credit here.

◆ I could accept “No” for an answer. A couple of times it might have been “No!” Maybe once, “NO!!”

◆ It came later on, but when I first heard Garth Brook’s Thank God for Unanswered Prayers,

◆ I said to myself, “How true, how true.”

I would not have gotten a perfect score on a TWWr (Treats Women with Respect) test that measured me in the categories of Thoughts, Words, and Deeds, but I would have done okay (Maybe not so good on “Thoughts”). To be honest, it was a simpler time. I did most of my growing up before the Sexual Revolution. Hef’s magazine was still in the planning stage, Al Gore had not yet invented the Internet. No video games. No cell phones. Victoria’s Secret was still under wraps (but we did have the lady who “dreamed she went shopping in her Maidenform bra). There were distractions, yes, but most of them were conjured up in our own imaginations. The movies, of course, were good for priming the pump. Let me just say two words: Elizabeth Taylor.

55% of the students of 4-year undergraduate colleges and universities were women in 2016. And they did (and do) better than their male classmates. Women have earned the majority of doctoral degrees since 2009. Men still lead by a substantial margin in business and engineering but that margin is closing. 51% of the current law degree candidates are women! Med school is 50-50. I would bet that equal pay for equal work is less than four years away. If men and women reach a semblance of real equality and equilibrium, it won’t guarantee a utopian existence, but it will even out the playing field. The power will be shared.

But back to #MeToo. Weinstein got everybody’s attention, but Matt Lauer, Al Franken, Charlie Rose, and other big names followed. Almost immediately people realized you couldn’t put all of these bad eggs in one basket. Shoving your tongue down the throat of an unwilling and unsuspecting woman is gross, indefensible, and criminal, but how do you compare it to premeditated rape? When does a bad date become sexual harassment? What causes (some) men to act in inexplicable despicable ways? These are questions “experts” (not to mention lawyers) will be called upon to find answers. But if abuse is as much about power as it is about sex, the problem may eventually get cancelled out. Here’s how:

Men are not the enemy. Bad people who are men are the enemy. I hope the more strident Me-Too-ers realize that. Every male friend I have would gladly stick a pencil in the eye of an abuser. Thanks to some courageous women and intrepid members of the “Fake” press corps, this malignancy is out in the open. I hope the predators and their abetters are sweating bullets waiting for the next shoe to drop. Whether they be of high or low estate.
Saranne Rap
A transparent view of issues
by Saranne Ratner

A Mural Dilemma

There are some educational issues that still get me riled up, even after 14 years of retirement. I heard (and then read in the newspaper) that a school board member had visited a local elementary school and was upset by a depiction of a confederate flag as part of a historical mural painted on the hallway walls (the size of the flag was in question, as compared to a depiction of the US flag elsewhere in the mural). This caused a problem about what to do with this mural.

Given the political climate this past summer (think Statue-gate), the frenzy to remove the mural began. The School leadership team met and decided the mural should remain, only to find “paint cans at the ready” and the decision to paint over the mural already made.

A district “bigwig” was overheard explaining that the mural did not meet Common Core objectives, that the map of the United States didn’t either, and besides this isn’t even taught anymore. Seriously???

American History and Geography is not taught in elementary school?? Well, there’s no test for it, but that doesn’t negate the importance of these subjects. Where better to have an artistic rendering of American history than in an elementary school’s hallways??

I can say pretty confidently that there have been no children, teachers, or parents negatively impacted by this mural... if it’s even really noticed on a daily basis... for the 20 or so years it’s been in place. It’s an artistic rendering of our history that just gave everyone pleasure. No consideration was given to the fact that this artist was paid thousands of dollars to paint it, nor to the teachers and parents who wanted it kept. Bureaucracy at its finest!!

I’m adding this to my list of ever-growing reasons why I am grateful to be retired.

Saranne Ratner

ATTENTION RCK RETIREES
SAVE THE DATE:
Saturday, June 2, 2018
1:00-4:00 p.m.

Join your former colleagues & friends for an informal “meet & greet” in the newly renovated RCK cafeteria.

Catch up with old friends; check out the dramatic changes in the building and your old classroom; find out what your “old” officemates have been doing in retirement; put together a group for drinks & dinner following the “open house”... more information to follow.

Light refreshments will be served.

PostScript sponsors contest

"Your symptoms are insomnia, high blood pressure and mental fatigue... just how long have you been a union editor?"

Readers can submit their answer/guess to wdourdis@optimum.net and win a prize. Answer will appear in the April PostScript. Submissions must include retiree’s name, address, and phone number. Your email is your official ballot. WCRT Executive Board members are ineligible to participate.
Poor Elijah’s Almanack: Congratulations on your engagement

By PETER BERGER

When the Puritans invented American public education four centuries ago, they were trying to teach their children to avoid the snares of the Devil. Since the Bible for them held the keys to righteousness, it was necessary that their children learn to read. This would benefit their individual souls and ensure the well-being of their society as a whole.

Thomas Jefferson secularized that notion of education as a public good. He believed in government by the people, and he knew that if we were to successfully govern ourselves, we’d need some pretty well-educated ordinary people, the more the better.

Most everything that’s happened since has amounted to tinkering with education’s methodology, not its purpose.

Most everything until now.

As we take public schools’ pulse today, we need again to consider why we have them. When I was a student, I knew why I was there. I also knew, as much as a child could know such things, why my school was there. Whether we were preparing for college, for the business world, or for a trade, public school existed to teach us knowledge and skills.

When I became a teacher, I brought those expectations with me. Yes, the particulars of that knowledge and those skills have changed over the ages, even in the brief interval since I graduated. Today’s Renaissance men and women need to master topics DaVinci could only imagine, and even in Leonardo’s day scholars disagreed about the finer points of the comprehensive knowledge expected of educated men.

Everyone understood that education, while then limited to the few, was how each generation passed along to the next the knowledge it had inherited and the learning it had acquired through its own study and inquiry.

Until now.

Today, the paper tiger Common Core notwithstanding, schools are more intent on keeping students “engaged” than actually teaching them. We talk about a “challenging learning environment,” but for all our talk of high standards and “proficiency-based graduation requirements,” students can fail to meet those standards and still move on from grade to grade. We just can’t use the word “fail” anymore.

We’re advised to “put the student in the role of the teacher.” But it’s tough to teach when you don’t know much. You can’t explain concepts you don’t understand.

I try to engage my students in discussions. I coax them, cajole them, goad them, and joke with them. I let them explore and present their opinions while I listen. But the day they can explain history better than I can is the day I should go home. Putting students in groups so they can teach each other while I walk around and “facilitate” sounds progressive and swell, but in practice it too often means 12-year-olds are spending their class time misinforming each other.

We piously eliminate content from subjects like history and science. We pride ourselves instead on teaching students “thinking skills” and insist it’s more important that they’re “learning how to learn.”

You can’t think without something to think about. Learning things is the best way to learn how to learn.

Finally, in a retro message from the 1970s, we’re exhorted to make what we teach “relevant to students’ lives” because that’s what they “love to learn about.” Like most adolescents and post-adolescents, my students’ understanding of their lives is limited. That said, I try to connect what we’re learning to their experiences. Tomorrow I’ll again remind them that nations behave like people.

Let’s forget for a moment, though, the forgivable limitations of my students’ experience. Let’s forget the absurdity of purging schools of content knowledge.

There exists a certain malignancy in tailoring education to the interests and priorities of students. Content shouldn’t be served up to be relevant to them. Students need to make themselves relevant to the liberal arts and sciences. They need to recognize their small place in the great scheme of human endeavor and scholarship.

The world’s knowledge towers above them. They grow in stature by aspiring to its heights, not by waiting while their teachers and their school reduce the wisdom of the ages to one of their daily choices. What shall I wear? What shall I post? What shall I learn?

NEA Today recently identified traits schools “need to succeed.” Suggestions include a “welcoming front office,” celebrating the priority given public relations over substance in today’s schools, a “future-focused curriculum,” which doesn’t mean the liberal arts and sciences, and a “welcoming climate” where children can “feel safe and respected,” the most hypocritical expectation of all, given the license to disrupt and maraud that behavioral fashions like “collaborative problem-solving” grant the most aberrant students.

I have suggestions, too. We need to stop wringing our hands over bullying even as schools’ counseling culture licenses bullies to torment their classmates. We need to stop manipulating grading systems in a naked attempt to eliminate failure by redefining it. We need to stop reducing schools to daycare centers. We need to stop placing recess and fresh fruits and vegetables above academic learning and decent behavior.

We need to warn our students that engaging in their education is what they have to do, not what schools are supposed to do to or for them.

Their own well-being is at risk. So is the future for all of us.

If that’s not sufficient cause for them to engage, all may already be lost.

Peter Berger teaches English at Weathersfield School. Poor Elijah would be pleased to answer letters addressed to him in care of the editor.
Membership has its privileges!

Your union is steadfast in its fight for better contracts, safer working conditions, fair pay, advocacy, and upholding the labor rights of the dedicated women and men proudly working in the education and health care industries on a daily basis.

But your NYSUT membership does so much more! It also provides you with the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of more than 40 endorsed programs & services offered by NYSUT Member Benefits, including a variety of quality, competitive insurance plans.

As an Example: With the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed MetLife Auto & Home insurance program, NYSUT members receive special group rates on auto insurance, homeowners insurance as well as motorcycle, boat, personal property and other types of insurance -- rates that are NOT available to the general public.

That is why we encourage you to always look for the “Endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits” logo before you or your loved ones make any purchasing decisions.

Visit memberbenefits.nysut.org or call 800-626-8101 for specific information about this program.

Newly endorsed Member Shopping Program available for use!

We heard the requests of the NYSUT membership and spent months diligently researching new member shopping program options. The NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation is pleased to announce that the Purchasing Power Member Shopping Program is now available for use by eligible NYSUT members.

Purchasing Power is an online shopping option that offers another way to purchase brand-new, brand-name products and pay for them over time through the ease of payroll deduction or ACH withdrawals. Eligible NYSUT members can enjoy access to products such as computers, appliances, jewelry, furniture, televisions, electronics, travel packages and much more.

While Purchasing Power is not a discount program, it can save you money and stress compared to high-interest credit cards or rent-to-own stores. As always, you are encouraged to shop and compare before making any purchasing decisions.

Visit nysutmbc.purchasingpower.com or call 800-537-3135 to learn more.

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 17, 2018    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 10, 2018.
Luncheon for WCRT members and their guests.)