WCRT fall luncheon updates on concerns

POUGHKEEPSIE, NY--Semi-annual luncheon meetings are required by the WCRT Constitution. Wappingers retirees in attendance at Christos Restaurant on September 25 didn’t seem coerced or inconvenienced. In fact, everyone chose to be there and had a great time chatting with friends and colleagues and finding out where we’ve come in the last 25 years.

Sue Roger, WCRT President, summarized the agenda with, “We run smoothly as an organization.”

Pasquale Delli Carpini, WCT President, had remarks for the retirees during the business meeting part of the luncheon: “We had a good School opening; some local pharmacies will now give the same discount as Express Scripts, for example, Price Chopper in all locations; Janus decision: went against labor unions. Workers will not have to pay their fair share. They had agency fees. Members get all benefits while those who opt out only get the negotiated salary, no 3020a attorney, not MIGS, no Welfare Trust benefits. There is now a ‘waiving benefits list.’

Congratulations to the WCRT. You may not realize the help the WCRT is when I go to Consortium meetings and other local meetings. Other unions and districts are envious of the WCSD/WCT/WCRT when I can use you as a threat to the district because of your solidarity.”

Leslie Leventhal, 2nd VP and Program Chair, promoted the Joyce Gold tour of Grand Central Terminal on November 28. Tour costs $20 to reserve. Take the train to GCT. The tour meets in the Jacqueline Kennedy foyer, Park Avenue & 42nd Street. There is a Craft Fair throughout the terminal as well as across the street in Bryant Park. Holiday shoppers are welcome.

see COVER STORY on page 9

WCRT thanked for donations:
AAUW Poughkeepsie Branch 6
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LiveHealth Online

WCRT thanked for donations

RC13 Regional Conference: health

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From The President

SUSAN ROGER
WCRT President

Dear WCRT Members,

Now that the mid-term elections are over, we don't have to suffer with too much election mail or robocalls. We can concentrate on our families and the holiday season.

I want to wish good luck to the strong souls going to the Women's March on Washington on January 19th. It shows a lot of zeal and patriotism.

There is a bus leaving from the Kingston NYSUT office for $85. Call our office for more information.

I want to wish everyone a happy holiday season and best of health for the new year.

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 2018-2019 are:

- $ 20.00 Yearly
- $200.00 Individual Lifetime
- $325.00 Couples Lifetime

Pay Lifetime and alleviate the yearly task of renewing.

send your comments to johnrogerjr@yahoo.com or call (845) 227-5065

PostScript

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

Protect these dates (future details coming soon)

Nov. 13 WCRT exec board mtg. 10:00-12:00
Dec. 10 Print December 2018 PostScript
Jan. 8 WCRT exec board mtg. 10:00-12:00
Feb. 11 Print February 2019 PostScript
Apr. 30 WCRT exec board mtg. 10:00-12:00
May 15 Spring Luncheon, Christos, 11:30, $23
May Capasso Scholarship Reception, 7:00
May 30 RC13 Luncheon, Christos, 11:30
November 6 has come and gone and now we have a chance to sit back and think about what it means for retirees and America.

As this article is being written, the people of the United States face a shutdown of the government. The outcome of the election may be a factor in this attempt to get $5 billion to build the Mexico wall. The fact that the House of Representatives will be controlled by the Democrats makes it unlikely that such funding will be available after the end of the year. The impression was that Mexico was going to pay for the wall. That does not appear to be happening.

Due to the death of former President George H.W. Bush, an effort was underway to delay the possible shutdown until the ceremonies were completed.

With the major tax plan that went into effect last January, large tax cuts have been enjoyed by big business. The downside of this is a $1.5 trillion loss of revenue to the government. Over the next ten years, $2.3 trillion will be added to the national debt.

Okay, that is a lot of big numbers. What it means in the future is the U.S. government will have to find ways to make up for these deficits. One way which has been thrown on the table is to cut those nasty entitlement programs. You remember those: Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

Steven Rattner, of the University of Michigan Law School, put it this way, “It’s a terrible intergenerational transfer. We are going to have to be very, very substantial cuts in benefits, including programs like Social Security and Medicare, in order to reckon with that.”

There does appear to be some positive news coming from the flip in the House. The Democrats are not likely to go along with such changes to these programs vital to retirees. What happens in the future cannot be predicted.

As we turn to New York State, we find that the Democrats have a majority in the Senate. In recent time that has only happened twice in 2009 and 2010. They have long had control of the Assembly. Cuomo’s re-election gives the Democrats what is called a trifecta.

There are some issues we can expect to see the new state trifecta deal with. One, which is a plus for public schools, is putting limits on the number of charter schools allowed including a cap on New York City charters. It will be interesting to see if this happens with Cuomo’s previous support for charter schools.

A subject that is of great importance to active members of the profession is the battle over teacher evaluations and the tie-in with standardized testing. The online site Chalkbeat stated, “During the last legislative session, the Democrat-controlled Assembly passed a bill repealing elements of an unpopular law that could eventually tie teacher evaluations to test scores — but it died in the Senate. With a new Senate, would the Assembly simply pass the bill again with a greater chance of success?”

One other important state education issue that will be watched is funding for schools. In particular, the balance between how much goes to New York City and how much goes to New York City schools. In particular, the balance between how much goes to New York City and how much goes to the rest of New York. That is an issue that can have an impact on property taxes and home values.

Looking around the country, we find a number of Democrats elected as governors. In Wisconsin and Michigan, where the mid-terms saw this change, there has been an effort by Republicans to limit the power of these newly elected officials. It is interesting to note that Wisconsin’s new leader is an educator outlining an incumbent who as one of his first actions in office was to take negotiating rights away from teachers and work to destroy their union.

Time will tell whether this 2018 election will see positive changes on both the state and federal levels.
Here’s how to register your email with the website:

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

Hope this helps. Thanks, Nancy

NANCY BEINER
WCT Webmaster
webmaster@wcteachers.org

TOM DERITO
WCRT Treasurer

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 or tderito@verizon.net

WCRT by the numbers:

WCRT membership as of November 7, 2018:

- 602 WCRT members
- 141 yearly members
- 382 Lifetime members
- 58 Complimentary Lifetime members
- 9 Complimentary members
- 71 retirees don’t belong to WCRT & not entitled to NYSUT benefits
- 12 about to be deleted from our files for not paying dues this year.
- 130 members receiving publications & notices by U.S. mail down from 232 members postal subscribers
- 486 members email subscribers.
- 4 2017 retirees wisely chose copay Lifetime

*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.

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 Kozr

www.wcteachers.org
October 30, 2018 RA Meeting

✓ The WCT is starting an initiative that is really remarkable. It is a not-for-profit donation fund to address tragedies that may happen to members of the WCSD or in our community. Money and/or services will be provided for devastating illnesses, catastrophes, and emergencies. We are often asked to donate and we always do. Now the active members will be able to contribute with a payroll deduction and we will be able to donate, too. The details for us will be explained soon. Donations will be tax deductible. The fund will be named, WCT HeartShip Fund. More information will follow after the first of the year.

✓ Also new is the LiveHealth Online. You can register online and download the app to your phone. This service is provided by Empire. It allows you to access care at home when you cannot get to your physician. You will have access to a video visit with a physician or therapist 24/7. This doctor can assess your condition and provide treatment and even send a prescription to your pharmacy. You can even get a PDF report at the end. Some of the teachers have used the service and found it very helpful and easy. Pasquale will find out if Medicare covers the service and then we can register. (See page 11.)

✓ Much of the meeting was spent discussing how to get members to volunteer and be involved in different projects. If they ever figure that out, I hope they tell me. It’s a problem so many organizations face. The same people always volunteer. You can’t sustain an organization that way. They are really feeling it. Only a handful of teachers participate in most events. That is why they often will ask for our help. They know they can count on us when they need to.

Enjoy the Fall.
Ellen Korz

November 27, 2018 RA Meeting

✓ Shortest meeting on record, I think. No issues that affect us, but some interesting things came up.

✓ The first was Social Media Issues. I can remember when some of us were teaching and e-mailing was becoming our way for communicating. We were told, even then, to be careful what we put out there on the school computers. Now the problem of social media is an overwhelming problem.

Part of education law says we as teachers will be good citizens and good role models. New teachers and old are reminded to never put anything out there about students or school issues, even in a closed group. The District can see these posts and can and will take action. This seems to be a never-ending issue.

✓ Another never-ending issue is insurance. This can’t be blamed on the old regime. Teachers are not being treated as professionals and are not being trusted. So what else is new? The problems that were discussed at the meeting will be handled by the union.

✓ Discussed was also the procedure reporting issues, such as teacher v. administrator. All will go through HR as reported by the teacher, with guidance from a union representative.

✓ Lastly, the HeartShip Fund that was created is open for our donations. We are to send a check to our Treasurer and that will go into the fund.

Have a safe and good winter.
Ellen Korz

PostScript

In Memoriam

Ruth I. Foster

RHINEBECK - Ruth I. Foster, 87, passed away peacefully on Tuesday November 20, 2018. Born in Hughsonville, NY she maintained a close relationship with many of the dear friends she made while growing up in that small town and in Wappingers Falls. She was predeceased by her beloved husband Robert D. Foster, Sr. in January of 1993.

She is survived by Son Robert, Jr. and wife Patricia (Walsh), Daughter Sherry Sculley and husband Patrick, Son Jerry and wife Ellen (Brown), Son Bill and wife Tammy (Rose). Ruth is also survived by grandchildren Kenny, Danny, David, Michael, Abby, Brian, Ben, Zach, step grandchildren Erik, Jess, Nick, Molly and 22 great grandchildren. She will be affectionately remembered as Grandma Paparazzi, lovingly taking pictures at every event.

Ruth was a kindergarten teacher for 20 years in the Wappingers Falls School District. She enjoyed swimming, golf and the monthly gatherings with her long time high school friends (also known as 'the girls'). She treasured spending time with her family on vacations to Lake George and Maine, as well as those famous July 4th picnics.

Ruth was a member of Zion Episcopal Church, Wappingers Falls, where she enjoyed singing in the choir and served on the Alter Guild for several years. She also volunteered at Vacation Bible School at both Zion and the Poughkeepsie Reformed Church.

A memorial service will take place at Zion Episcopal Church, 12 Satterlee Place, Wappingers Falls on Saturday December 1, 2018 at 2:00 pm with a gathering in the Parish Hall immediately following.

In lieu of flowers please consider making a donation to the Alzheimer’s Association, Dutchess/Ulster Regional Office, 2649 South Road, Suite 101, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601.

To send the family a personal condolence or for directions, please visit our website at www.StraubCatalanoHalvey.com. Published in the Poughkeepsie Journal on Nov. 25, 2018

www.wcteachers.org -- WCRT PostScript
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In Memoriam

HOPEWELL JUNCTION, NY – Eleanor MacFarland, 81, entered Eternal Life Wednesday, October 10, 2018 in the Hospice Inn at St. Peter’s Hospital. Born in Albany, NY she was the daughter of the late James and Helene Sill Cundiff.

Eleanor was a graduate of both Vincentian Institute and The College of St. Rose. She taught First Grade for many years in the Wappingers Central School District. She enjoyed gardening, but most especially spending time with her beloved grandchildren and family.

She was the wife of John J. MacFarland; dear mother of John J. MacFarland III, James M. MacFarland, Catherine MacFarland, and Gail Ann Testo (David); beloved grandmother of Sean Gerard Siry, Jacqueline H Siry, Abigail Margaret Testo and Davin Eleanor Testo; sister of Kathryn Stratman; aunt of Jennifer, Chuck and Shannon.

Relatives and friends are invited to visit with Eleanor’s family Sunday, October 14, 2018 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm in McVeigh Funeral Home, 208 North Allen Street, Albany, NY 12206.

Funeral services Monday, October 15, 2018 at 9:15 am from McVeigh Funeral Home, Albany thence to the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes, Albany, NY at 10:00 am where her Funeral Mass will be celebrated.

The Rite of Committal will be held in St. Agnes Cemetery, Menands, NY immediately following the Funeral Mass.

Those wishing to remember Eleanor in a special way may send a contribution to the Hospice Inn at St. Peter’s Hospital, Gift Processing Center, 310 S. Manning Blvd., Albany, NY 12208.

To leave a special message for the family, please visit www.McveighFuneralHome.com.

Published in the Poughkeepsie Journal on Oct. 12, 2018
September 19, 2018

Ms. Mary Coiteux
Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers
280 New Hackensack Road
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590

Dear Ms. Coiteux:

Once again, we are the grateful recipients of a generous donation from the Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers.

As a human service organization that depends on funders, we face many challenges. But we remain steadfast in our commitment, and we are encouraged by the progress of our students, the dedication of our volunteer tutors, and the support of so many in the community.

This year more people can read in our community than last year. An next year, we will say the same. Because of people like you, more people reached their personal literacy goals.

When adults learn to read, the entire family benefits. The parents become independent, contributing members of the community. They gain self-esteem and confidence. Their children do better in school, and become more successful adults. Instead of fear, failure, and frustration, the family reaches their potential. We see this first-hand, over and over again.

On behalf of all of our students, we thank you for your kindness, for your generosity, and for choosing to be a part of Literacy Connections. Most especially, for your continued support. I cannot thank you enough.

Sincerely,

Debra Paskowski
Bookkeeper / Office Manager

This letter hereby acknowledges your contribution of $100.00, and assures that you have received no goods, benefit or compensation of any kind in return for your donation.
Marion Isabelle (nee Paddock) Duerksen

GUELPH, ONTARIO, CANADA-- Passed away peacefully on November 27, 2018 at the Guelph General Hospital in her 92nd year.

She was predeceased by her beloved husband Walter (2015), her parents Jack and Sarah Paddock and her brothers William, Frank, John Roy and George Robert (in infancy). She will be sadly missed by her son John Douglas Duerksen, her daughter Dr. Tracy Lynn Duerksen, her sisters Helen McLean and Blanche Mayer, her niece Jean Ann (Anthony) and her great nephew Bruce. She will be fondly remembered by the extended Duerksen family.

Isabelle graduated from the Hamilton Normal School in Elementary Education. She earned her A.R.C.T. from the Toronto Conservatory of Music, University of Toronto, and the Bachelor and Master of Science Degrees in Education from the State University of New York, New Paltz, New York.

She spent many years teaching, both in Canada and the United States, retiring in 1992. She touched the lives of many young children through her long and successful teaching career.

She enjoyed reading, cooking, knitting, bridge, the symphony and her friends.

Friends will be received at the Wall-Custance Funeral Home & Chapel, 206 Norfolk St., Guelph on Sunday, Dec. 2, 2018 from 2:30-4:30 pm and Monday, Dec. 3, 2018 from 10-11 am. Funeral service will be held in the funeral home chapel at 11 am. Reception to follow in the Wall-Custance Family Reception Centre. Spring interment at Crown Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations to a charity of your choice in Isabelle’s name would be appreciated.

Published in the Poughkeepsie Journal on Nov. 30, 2018
Luncheon provides fun, food, friendship, fellowship

Cover Story

continued from page 1

Table Talk...

A WIN-WIN: Terri Milliken, recent retiree and first-time attendee at a WCRT Luncheon at Christos, said, “Now it’s a lot less stressful. I’m looking to work in the community in a different way volunteering. I’ll be able to go camping, or do hobbies I couldn’t do because of no time. Looking forward to reading good books.” She was asked to pick the 50-50 raffle ticket and she won!

B.J. Fenton also believes in “…eat dessert first!....”

East Fishkill Public Library District
Gloria W. Goverman

Dear Ms. Coiteux,

Many thanks to you and the full membership of the Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers for your recent donation to the Library.

Your ongoing support is very important to us as we serve the community.

Gloria W. Goverman
East Fishkill Public Library District
348 Route 376
Hopewell Junction, NY 12533

Terri Milliken, recent retiree and first-time attendee, with Mary Ann Moran, Sue Roger chats with Toni Kelly, Caroline Hernandez, and Eileen Zipes.

Ellie Maslinoff, Flo Mondanaro, and Maureen Skora catch up together.
RC 13 Conference focus: health care, wealth care

NYSUT Regional Conference for Retiree Council 13
October 11, 2018
The Chateau, Kingston, NY

Janice Scriber and Vicki Schulte, RC13 Co-Presidents, remind attendees to vote on November 6.

Jennifer Shaad-Derby, NYSUT Retiree Services Consultant, served as Master of Ceremonies.

Michael Ostrander, NYSUT Member Benefits director, at his Community Outreach table display.

NYSUT Member Benefits Legal Service Plan endorsed Steven Kramer, of Feldman, Kramer and Monaco, P.C., shares current information related to estate planning.

Kenneth DeStefano, NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist Assigned to Health Insurance, presented topics on Medicare, Social Security, and secondary medical insurance.

<<Pharmacist Dr. Parul Schulte speaks to the importance of vaccinations for older adults, particularly influenza, pneumonia, and shingles.

Paul Pecorale, NYSUT Second Vice President, addresses issues that could affect retirees and in-service members.

RC 13 Spring Luncheon is scheduled for Thursday, May 30, 2019, at Christos' Restaurant, 155 Wilbur Blvd, Poughkeepsie, NY.
Sign up for LiveHealth Online
It's easy and takes just a few minutes

Using LiveHealth Online, you can have a private and secure video visit with a board-certified doctor or licensed therapist on your smartphone, tablet or computer with a webcam. It's an easy way to get the care you need at home or on the go.

When your own doctor isn't available, use LiveHealth Online 24/7 if you have pinkeye, a cold, the flu, a fever, allergies, a sinus infection or other common health condition. A doctor can assess your condition, provide a treatment plan and even send a prescription to your pharmacy, if it's needed.

How to get started

Rather than waiting to sign up when you're not feeling well, register today so you're ready for a visit when you need one. To sign up, visit livehealthonline.com or download the free LiveHealth Online app to your mobile device. Next, you:

1. Choose Sign Up to create your LiveHealth Online account. Then enter information like your name, email address, date of birth and create a secure password.
2. Read the Terms of Use and check the box to agree.
3. Choose your location in the drop-down box of states.
4. Enter your birth date and choose your gender.
5. For the question “Do you have insurance?” select Yes. Be sure to have your Empire member ID card handy to complete your insurance information. If you choose No, you can still enter your insurance information later.
6. For Health Plan, in the drop-down box, select Empire.
7. For Subscriber ID, enter your identification number, which is found on your Empire member ID card. Select Yes if you are the primary subscriber or No if you are not the primary subscriber.
8. Insert a service key if you have one. If you don’t have a service key that’s OK, this is optional and not required to register.
9. Select the green Finish button.

If you're feeling anxious or having trouble coping on your own and need some support, you can have a video visit with a therapist using LiveHealth Online. Make an appointment in four days or less at livehealthonline.com or on the phone at 1-844-784-8409 from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., seven days a week. Evening and weekend appointments are available. You can get help for anxiety, depression, grief, panic attacks and more.

Empire
BlueCross BlueShield
An Anthem Company
Shopping & travel benefits designed for NYSUT members

NYSUT members and their loved ones have access to dozens of endorsed shopping, travel & personal programs available through NYSUT Member Benefits. And unlike with purchasing products available to the general public, there's no need to go it alone when Member Benefits has your back.

Member Benefits acts as your advocate for any program you participate in, and we'll do our best to quickly resolve any issues or concerns you may have. Whether you are participating in one of our shopping/entertainment/travel offerings; auto, homeowners or life insurance plans; or financial or legal services, NYSUT members have the "Power of the Union" behind them.

The following is just a small sampling of the endorsed programs available to the NYSUT membership.

**Purchasing Power Member Shopping Program**
Are you looking to purchase a new laptop computer, washer/dryer or refrigerator? The Purchasing Power Member Shopping Program allows NYSUT members to purchase products such as these and many more while paying for them through the ease of payroll deduction or ACH withdrawals. NYSUT members save 20% on their first order with Purchasing Power.

**Abenity Discounts**
Seeking exclusive member discounts on tickets to the latest blockbuster movies or theater events, the hottest concerts & sporting events, or the coolest theme parks & attractions? NYSUT members have access to thousands of nationwide and local discounts with the Abenity Discounts program. Abenity also offers an app for iPhone or Android smartphones available at no charge.

**Grand Circle Travel**
The Grand Circle Cruise Line & Grand Circle Travel program is committed to providing international travel, adventure and discovery opportunities that offer impactful and intercultural experiences. This program offers NYSUT members and their loved ones the opportunity to save $100 per person on tours or receive a discounted rate on specific trips if acting as a group organizer.

**Cambridge Credit Counseling**
NYSUT members are eligible to receive free, no-obligation debt and student loan consultations with one of Cambridge's certified counselors. Cambridge also offers a unique web portal available at a reduced rate that can help explain the various options when paying down student debt, including student loan forgiveness programs, income-based repayment options and more.

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The Power of the Union

To learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services, visit [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org) or call 800-626-8101.

For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.