Don’t touch your face or pull out your hair!

This issue highlights CV19’s effect on our members and their volunteer/non-profit organizations. Our executives and staff use their vested-interest points of view in their submissions this month.

By Bill Dourdis
WCRT PostScript Editor

“Parents send their child to school to spend the day in the company of educators. This simple everyday act removes their children from the physical control of their parents. While parents do not relinquish their responsibility for their children when the children attend school, parents share some of that responsibility with teachers and administrators. Schools take on some of the responsibilities and exercise some of the prerogatives typically reserved for parents. Over the years, this relationship, referred to as in loco parentis, has been defined and reviewed by the courts, as described in this entry.” (Education Law)

This “damned-demic” has an upside. It quarantined us. Teachers taught their students from home as well as their own kids. Kids took their parents to school. Parents now had the additional responsibility of delivering instruction to their kids. Parents finally got the idea that teaching kids isn’t as easy as when the professionals do it. Can you spell a-p-p-r-e-c-i-a-t-i-o-n, boys and girls?

The medical profession got some love these last few months when their dedication to their patients shown through as they stayed at work, some were unprovided for and unprotected with insufficient equipment to simply do their jobs. Who paid for extra teacher supplies? Many teachers go through the same situations their entire careers.

Education, Science, and Health Care are necessary in our society. One must be highly trained for these roles. Nowadays, teachers are required to have not only a B.A. as well as a Master’s Degree. It alters their social status. Having “moved up in the world” has made the stay-at-home parent loco. It gives “In Loco Parentis” a whole new meaning. The quarantine has made the parents crazy!

With the tables turned, it’s like the bumper sticker that says, “Dear Casinos, It’s no fun losing money, is it??”

We as educators have received a bit more respect as of late. Kinda reminds us of those parent-teacher conferences or Open House nights early in the school year. Frustrated parents ask us for advice on how to motivate their child. Which educational theory or excerpt from a Methods Class did you share? We had all those tricks up our sleeves back in the day.

Also, where’s the line of professional vs. personal when you’re teaching from home? Parents can access a teacher 24/7. Whatever happened to handling these questions during normal business hours?

At this writing for most of us here in New York State on May 6, Teacher Appreciation Day, a chorus of See You in September sounds appropriate. Nobody wants to have a spike or a boomerang or a recurrence or resurgence during the summer if we go back to public congregating in double-digit numbers again. With budget freezes, how do we let the custodians wax the floors and disinfect everything so the kids can come back to safe and sterile class rooms? Teachers rely now more than ever on custodial staff for their safety.
From The President

SUSAN ROGER  
WCRT President

Dear WCRT Members,

First, I would like to thank all the members and friends who sent cards and get well wishes when I broke my leg the middle of March. We stayed in Florida, and are still here at this writing. Our kids told us not to come back to New York. However, we are looking forward to going home.

After the emergency ward in the hospital and seeing the orthopedic doctor, I was put in a boot up to my knee. I was told not to put any weight on my left leg for six weeks! We got a wheelchair, and that was one of the most frustrating and humbling experiences of my life.

Dressing/undressing and bathroom time took twice as long. Plus, you didn't want to forget anything in the bathroom!

I quickly learned that the upper cabinets in the kitchen were unobtainable. I could reach the dishwasher, but not the sink or the upper cabinets. John learned a lot of skills this spring like how to use the oven and stove, the washer and dryer, and how to change the sheets on the bed. He is doing great job, and he is my hero! Oh, how would you like to wash your hair in the kitchen sink while balancing on one foot?

Like all of you, I wish this could be over soon, but still fear going to public places. I feel sorry for the WCSD having to plan for the fall. I'm sure it will be quite different than we were used to. I wish the active teachers good luck in whatever they teach. It will be a challenge.

I wish you all a happy and healthy spring. Unfortunately, we will not have a fall luncheon. Stay safe.

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 WCRT and mail to WCRT.

Renewal notices go out in the fall. Dues for 2019-2020 are:

$ 20.00 Yearly;
$200.00 Individual Lifetime;
$325.00 Couples Lifetime.
Pay Lifetime and alleviate the yearly task of renewing.

http://www.wcteachers.org/ 

SAVE THESE DATES (future details coming soon)

Apr. 15 Print April 2020 PostScript
Apr. 28 WCRT executive board mtg., 10:00-12:00, Apr. 30-May1 NYSUT Rep. Assembly, Albany
May 14 WCRT Spring Luncheon, Christos Restaurant, 11am 
May 20 Capasso Scholarship Reception, 7pm, WCT upstairs
May 21 Leventhal/WCRT Scholarships Reception, 7pm, WCT upstairs
May 28 RC13 Spring Luncheon

HOPE TO SEE EVERYONE IN THE FALL
“Reimagine” Education

CLIFF FOLEY
Political Action Chairperson

For the last three months, all of our attention has been focused on the COVID 19 virus and all of the problems associated with it. There has been special report after special report on the virus and the death toll with New York having sadly been the epicenter of the outbreak in the United States.

The problem is that education and other issues tend to get pushed to the back and get little attention. In New York we find this announcement in the May 10, 2020 issue of the Poughkeepsie Journal which starts off saying, “Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced this week that New York will be partnering with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to “reimagine” education in the time of the coronavirus.”

The Washington Post on May 6, 2020, reported that Cuomo was, “…questioning why school buildings still exist and announcing that he would work with Microsoft founder Bill Gates to “reimagine education,” with technology at the forefront.” He further stated that,”The old model of everybody goes and sits in the classroom, and the teacher is in front of that classroom and teaches that class, and you do that all across the city, all across the state, all these buildings, all these physical classrooms — why, with all the technology you have?”

You may remember that it was Gates and company who pushed that dubious idea called Common Core. There was an article in the Washington Post on June 7, 2014, titled “How Bill Gates pulled off the swift Common Core Revolution.” Money was the key component. The article states, “The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation didn’t just bankroll the development of what became known as the Common Core State Standards. With more than $200 million, the foundation also built political support across the country, persuading state governments to make systemic and costly changes.”

Common Core caused teachers to teach for the test. It did not take into account individual differences. It also proposed that teachers be evaluated based on the standardized tests which in many cases were above the level of many students. Their job security would depend on it. The result was a large number of teachers retiring. Finally in New York State there was a rebellion in which parents pulled their children from the exams. The high stakes testing meant that a child who was doing very well in school but underperformed on the standardized test was considered “inferior.”

Welcome to 2020 and our state leader is once more looking to the Gates people to “improve” education. In the Poughkeepsie Journal article Jasmine Gripper of the Alliance for Quality Education states, “Both the Gates Foundation and Andrew Cuomo have a history of pushing privatization and agendas that have the potential to destroy public education.” The Alliance is a statewide education advocacy group.

Cuomo is talking about a commission to reimagine the future of technology in New York, including in education. He wants to appoint Eric Schmidt to chair this group. Schmidt is the former CEO of Goggle. He is, according to Forbes, the 119th richest person in the world being worth about $11.1 billion dollars. With Gates we would have two billionaires looking at making changes to the education of all the children in the state. You do wonder what kind of suggestions they will make. There will also be an advisory board with educators on it but its role has not been made clear.

There was a reaction to this announcement from Andy Pallotta, the President of NYSUT, “If we want to reimagine education, let’s start with addressing the need for social workers, mental health counselors, school nurses, enriching the arts courses, advanced courses, and smaller class sizes.”

We know there has been a need for distance learning during this time of national emergency, but the idea that we can have an education system that might be run by Microsoft or some other tech companies without buildings and classrooms or maybe even traditional teachers certainly makes you cringe. This could be called Common Core 2 or maybe Cuomogate.

As retirees, we still have an interest in the children and their education. Stay tuned to see what the actual details of “reimagination” will be.
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

FYI: April’s PostScript was sent to 436 recipients by email. Follow the steps above to ensure the WCRT can save postage and you get it in color.

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.

Attention WCRT members receiving the PostScript by postal mail. Please use the invitation enclosed in your newsletter for all up-coming luncheons & events. The WCRT is going green and saving postage costs.
WCRT's watchdog about “insider information” affecting WCSD retirees

ELLEN KORZ
WCRT Rep. to WCT RA

RA Meeting
May 26, 2020

It was quite interesting to have a meeting on Google Meet. 48 teachers attended. I think that was the most ever. Everyone had questions about the future of the WCSD.

First the District Budget was discussed. Most important to know is that your ballot must be in by June 9, not postmarked by then, but in. NYSUT is helping to send out 16,900 postcards for us, to remind people to vote. There will also be digital ads.

It is more important to vote yes for this budget than ever. If this budget doesn’t pass, programs and staff will be eliminated. 44 positions are on the chopping block. If the budget passes, 11 positions will be eliminated through attrition. What I didn’t ever know was a whole Department can be eliminated if it isn’t mandated. If no additional funding becomes available, we may be on a contingency budget. Please tell everyone to vote yes.

Also, it was recommended that we vote for the incumbents, Peggy Kelland, John Lumia and Keith Odums. A name from the past, Ved Shravah, asked for an endorsement, but that is not happening. Pasquale will be creating a video about the vote.

There was a lot of discussion about the closing of school and grades. Although the Executive Board met with the District to discuss this, principals had their own ideas. All will be ironed out. Teachers have also been asked to go to the buildings at designated hours to pick up what they want and clear their rooms. Not sure all will go back for anything. No end of school has been officially decided. They are waiting on the Governor for some direction. The WCT will be present for any meetings concerning the opening of the 2020-2021 school year.

Our WCT Political Action representative, Jim Nurre, attended a meeting with Sue Serino. She said we are counting on Federal aid. She had somewhere to be and left quickly without many answers.

I took the liberty of telling the group how grateful we retirees were for all they were able to do during this pandemic. Yes, we are lucky not to be teaching, but they have put in so much more than ever before, while still taking care of their families.

Hope everyone is doing well and staying safe.

Ellen Korz
CV19’s effect on WCRT members and their volunteer/non-profit organizations

New Hamburg Yacht Club dock installation has been on hold and the club has been off limits during the shutdown. The governor opened marinas and boat clubs this week and docks will be put in on Sat., May 2. Club members include WCSD retirees Bob Blose, Joe Corrigan, Jack Devine, Herb Elman, Rose Marie Gardner, Roger Higgins, Charlie Powers, and Skip Rottkamp. And what do we all have in common? None of us has a boat! Roger Higgins, WCRT 1st Vice President, and NHYC Trustee.

There are three trustees who serve three-year terms that are staggered—one elected each year. It gives continuity/stability to the board whose other officers are elected annually to one-year terms. Oversight & fiduciary responsibility are the two main responsibilities of the three trustees.

As many of you know, I have been on the two Boards of CAPE (Council on Addiction Prevention & Education) and their Southern Dutchess Coalition. This spring was to be their major fundraiser and of course it had to be cancelled.

In Dutchess County, the substance abuse crisis is real. If you look at the obituaries in the Poughkeepsie Journal, you can see many deaths due to the crisis. You probably all know of someone who has been directly affected by this disease. Now with the added stress of the Corona virus, many of those addicted and in recovery are confronted by depression and are in desperate need of support. CAPE is under the umbrella of OASAS (Office of Addiction Services and Supports), which has been running commercials on TV with information on getting help. Locally we need financial support to maintain our programs. I hope you will be able to help this worthwhile non-profit group, who has worked so hard for you in our community and in our schools. You can go to their website at www.capedc.org for information and/or to make a donation.

Ellen Korz, WCRT Rep. to WCT Representative Assembly

Hudson Valley LTC Ombudsman Program

I have been a certified Ombudsman for the NYS Ombudsman Program for over 15 years. I volunteer as an advocate for older adults living in long-term care facilities and find it very rewarding and worthwhile. Ombudsmen are resident-centered and resident-directed advocates, enabling the voices of residents to be heard regarding their resident rights and the quality of their lives and care as residents.

Due to this unprecedented pandemic, ombudsmen have been restricted from our weekly visits to residents and families. We are concerned that the isolation necessary to prevent the virus from spreading will create loneliness, fear and sadness. Families are feeling frightened and frustrated not being able to visit, hug, and comfort loved ones.

The corona virus is a huge threat to residents in long-term care facilities. Such facilities are responsible for safeguarding residents, and they are doing so by implementing precautions set forth by the Communicable Disease Center and NYS Department of Health. Regulations have been temporarily lessened and some resident rights are being compromised in the name of safety. Ombudsmen are needed now, more than ever.

NYS Certified Ombudsmen are a federal and state mandate for all long-term care facilities. Once certified, an ombudsman is assigned a facility for weekly visits. Volunteering is a rewarding and challenging way to give back to the community. Once the pandemic cloud lifts, if you feel a calling to become an ombudsman, call 845-229-4680 and speak to Gloria or email gloria@ltcc.org

Barbara Stuck, WCRT Director
CV19’s effect on WCRT members and their volunteer/non-profit organizations

“I miss my volunteering for AAUW (American Association of University Women) groups of Leading to Reading and Court Watch. It breaks my heart that many children are not getting the many free books we distribute!”

I am also one of the (5) bridge authority commissioners. We’re appointed by the governor and approved by the NYS Senate. We serve without compensation and act as the board of directors would act in any corporation: set policy, approve budgets, borrow $$. I was first appointed by Gov. Patterson and reappointed by Gov. Cuomo.

New York State Bridge Authority has seen a 52% decrease on our Hudson Valley bridges and a 47% decrease in revenues since we began social distancing and quarantining.

God willin’ and the creek don’t rise… those words will hopefully be heard on September 11, a date in our history and also the date of our 2020 Golf Tournament for Meals on Wheels of Wappingers Falls. A patriotic theme is planned to commemorate all involved in the tragedy of Sept. 11, 2001. The Golf Committee is optimistic that the Tournament will be played, perhaps with some modifications because of the COVID 19 virus.

GOLFERS… SAVE THE DATE!!!

Charlie Powers, member of the NHYC Golf Tournament Committee, and WCRT member.

Last year’s donation from New Hamburg Yacht Club Golf Tournament to Wappingers Falls Meals on Wheels was $10,000.

Scholarship Committee update

The WCRT scholarship deadline is approaching, and seniors at RCK, JJ, & OV should contact their school counselor for an application and information. In spite of the current uncertainty regarding the school calendar, the WCRT continues to support our students and their families through our scholarship program. The WCRT is committed to work with the school counselors and the applicants to make sure that those candidates who apply are given consideration, and that the scholarships will be awarded just as soon as conditions allow.

The WCRT Scholarship Committee

Our Current Normal

Can you believe how greatly our lives have changed? Routines are restructured. Offices and classrooms are now located in our homes. All are affected.

Virtually everything is done at a social distance or remotely. All of us are in this together. Stay safe everyone!

Mary Ann Moran
WCRT Director

Actions slow, passions still high

I miss my volunteering for AAUW (American Association of University Women) groups of Leading to Reading and Court Watch. It breaks my heart that many children are not getting the many free books we distribute!

I am so concerned with the rise in Domestic Violence during this pandemic. Family Court is only doing emergency orders of protection! Troubling times.

WCRT scholarship is going ahead. No applications yet, that I know of.

Flo Mondanaro,
WCRT Recording Secretary
A NOTE FROM THE LUNCH LADY

When I was growing up, my grandparents and their siblings would leave the heat of the summer in Brooklyn and go to hotels in the “country,” better known as the Catskills. Some of you may remember the better-known hotels like Grossingers, Browns, or the Concord. There were other smaller ones too but they all operated in about the same way.

There were activities, shows, and best of all there was food and plenty of it. It was a full American-type meal plan which included breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks. Each day, you could have as much as you wanted. You could try any of the items on the day's menus without restrictions. And there were always desserts.

The last time I visited my beloved Grandmother at a hotel, she and her sister were waiting for us in the grand lobby. It was midmorning. There were many people seated there. Some were reading the newspaper, others were chatting, and another group was snoozing after breakfast. The place was packed.

I asked my Grandmother why all these people were sitting in the lobby. It was such a beautiful day outside. She looked at me and smiled and said, “They are waiting for lunch.”

Twice a year the WCRT has a luncheon. In the last several years we have had it at Christos in Poughkeepsie. Chris, the owner, is a terrific businessman and a gentleman. He is a pleasure to deal with and talk to. He serves a buffet for us that could rival the best wedding. The members who attend rave about the food, the many choices, and the overall quality of what we are offered. The atmosphere in the room is very upbeat. People are glad to see one another and the room is filled with friendly chatter. Everyone has a good time. We have a brief business meeting and then the eating begins. I often hear people say, “See you in the spring” as they leave. Groups of people get there early enough to reserve a table.

So all this sounds pretty good. But the reality is that the WCRT has over 600 members and I worry before every luncheon if we will have a decent number of people.

Generally we have between 45-60. Chris gladly accommodates. As you know, the Fall luncheon has been canceled for obvious reasons. I am truly hoping that the spring will bring us all relief and that seeing each other will be a celebration of what we have endured.

Thanks to our editor, the Postscript goes on, so you will know if a new luncheon is planned. Please try to join us, see old friends, and let's start again in the new normal.

I look forward to seeing all of you there.

Leslie Leventhal
WCRT 2nd V.P.

CH of P Navigates Through Challenging Times

By now, we are all aware of the havoc and tremendous loss the COVID-19 pandemic brought to our communities and our world. At the Children’s Home of Poughkeepsie, we acted quickly to this emerging threat by closing our campus to all outside visitors. We needed to put the health, safety, and well-being of our kids and staff at the forefront.

We knew we needed to essentially lock down our campus. This was no easy task, as the Home provides 24-hour residential care to kids in the foster care system. We knew that a good majority of our staff would have to remain working on campus, as the Children’s Home and the work that is done is considered essential. We were able to reduce the number of staff (and ultimately, density) on our campus, by requiring all staff who could work from home to do so. All staff who were required to work directly with the children have been paid at premium rates.

As the days passed, we worked to secure Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for all of our staff. We continued to purchase PPE and expect to need almost 6,000 units per month on an ongoing basis. Additionally, we have put into place strict guidelines for staff and youth, including monitoring temperatures, reporting all illnesses to our human resource team, and self-isolating if necessary.

Our campus remained busy, just like homes across the country. Our staff managed schooling needs, planned safe recreation activities, and used virtual tools to provide the much-needed therapy our children are used to. To say this hasn’t been easy is an understatement, but our team at the Children’s Home rallied together and remained dedicated to ensuring our mission remained a priority; to provide a safe and nurturing environment that improves lives and empowers at-risk children and families in the Hudson Valley and surrounding communities.

In the coming days we will begin to bring back staff that have been working from home. We realize that “back to normal” is not something we will say. As we continue to navigate these uncertain times, our focus will continue to keep our kids, their families, our staff, and their families safe.

by Walter Joseph, Executive Director, and Erin Cafarelli, Director of Development and Public Relations (Erin was a student in Janet’s sixth grade class at Evan’s Elementary School.)

Submitted by Janet Powers, Associate Member of The Children’s Home Board of Directors, and WCRT member.

“WRECK”reation 2020

In 1978 while teaching at John Jay High School I started a second job—Part-Time Recreation Director for the Town of East Fishkill.

Well, here we are 42 years later (20 years since I retired from teaching) and I’m still "recreating!" The job has been rewarding and memorable in so many ways, but what’s happening this year has put everything into its true perspective.

The Summer Children’s Camp that we’ve run for 40+ years has been cancelled; our fun Easter Egg Hunt in April was cancelled; the East Fishkill Memorial Weekend Soccer Tournament has been cancelled; our Men’s Summer Basketball League (40 years) and our Summer Co-ed Volleyball League (30 years) are both cancelled; all bus trips (Broadway plays, Yankees and NY Mets baseball games, Saratoga, Casinos, etc. are cancelled; our Lake Red Wing Park (swimming lessons, swim team, fun in the sun, etc.) which always opens Memorial Day won’t open until July— if at all; Summer concerts and July 4 fireworks are still questionable!

I’ve enjoyed being a part of all these fun programs and events all these years and this COVAR-19 has greatly affected the plans of all ages. We’ll survive. The Senior Center that is closed will re-open. The empty ball fields will get full action again and the campers will all be back in full force next summer.

What positives can come out of this crisis? Well, One, the environment and the air are getting much cleaner. Two, we now ALL know just how valuable toilet paper really is, and Three, at this year’s East Fishkill Halloween Party and Parade there will be NO SHORTAGE of "MASKS"!

Stay Safe!
Bill Green
Feature Writer
Class of 99

PostScript
CV19’s effect on WCRT members and their volunteer/non-profit organizations

Political, yes, Action, no!

For all of us there has been an impact of the COVID-19 virus. For starters the NYSUT Region 13 Retiree Council activities, along with all NYSUT functions, have been put on hold until September. This included the annual spring luncheon. The WCT and WCRT involvement in political action during school budget votes has radically changed.

I am a board member of the Hudson Valley Photography Network, which includes photo clubs from Westchester to Albany. We had to cancel a May conference with a nationally known photographer. The attendance at these is usually about 150 people. As president of the Mid-Hudson Photography Club, the decision had to be made to cancel all meetings and other outings. This was also true of the Dutchess Regional Professional Photographers where I serve as a board member.

My position as vice-president of the Fishkill Historical Society, which owns and operates the 288-year-old Van Wyck Homestead Museum, means I am involved in another set of decisions about whether the museum will be able to open to the public this season. We have already had to cancel meetings and events due to the virus.

Cliff Foley, Chairperson WCRT Political Action

Special elections move to June 23

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Gov. Andrew Cuomo postponed the state's April 28 presidential primary election – and five special elections – until June 23, the day of the state's own primary elections.

One of the specials involves NYSUT-endorsed John Mannion, president of the West Genesee District Teachers Association, who is running for a vacant state Senate seat in Central New York.

NYSUT also endorsed Michael Marcatonio in a special election for Assembly District 12 on Long Island.

Other special elections include a congressional seat in Western New York and vacant Assembly seats in Queens and Rochester.

Winners of the specials will need to run again in the November general election for a full two-year term.

May 29 is the last day to postmark your voter registration for June 23.

June 16 is the last day to postmark a request for an absentee ballot.

June 22 is the last day to pick one up in person. Visit elections.ny.gov.

Watch nysut.org for news of union endorsements as the voting date approaches.

Source: www.nysut.org

Info on MATILDA.

The Masque and Mime Society deeply regrets that their spring production of MATILDA had to be postponed because of the Corona Virus.

People who purchased their tickets online with BookTix should have received their money back. Those who bought tickets with cash will have to return their tickets to Masque and Mime, whenever we get back to school.

We have not been allowed in the building, so we can't deal with that yet. All costumes are still at school.

Whether it be redone as a fall show -- providing there is a return to the building -- remains to be seen.

We thank everyone for their support and concern.

Rosemary Evaul, Producer for The Masque and Mime Society, and WCRT member.

WCSD School Board Election

As you may know, the School Board and budget elections will be held by mail with June 9 as the official date.

At this point there are only three candidates for the WCSD Board of Education. They are the current members and we are able to support them.

We have been in contact with Pasquale as we make plans for a very different campaign to get the budget passed.

Failure of a positive budget outcome could mean cuts of possibly $9Million. It was put this way: If this happens, you will not recognize the WCSD.

We will keep you posted. It will be important to get every positive voter to return a ballot.

STAY SAFE, WELL, STRONG, HOME!!
For the last five or six Aprils, RCK guidance counselor Kate deGroat organized a food drive by the WCT for the benefit of the Zion Food Pantry in Wappingers Falls. Very successful food drives must hastily add.

With COVID 19 arriving with such disastrous force, it was obvious that this would be a bye year for the WCD food drive and a lean year for the Zion Food Pantry. But not so fast. I heard whispers that a Fund Me drive had been organized to virtually work around the deadly virus and thus continue to aid the Food Pantry.

I called Kate to congratulate her for her out-of-the-box thinking, but she immediately gave credit to math teacher Rena Finsmith who came up with the Fund Me idea. It was a great idea.

The Zion Food Pantry received a check for $10,071 that was (if I may say so) like manna from heaven. The fee that went to Fund Me was about $350, and was paid by the WCT to keep the amount of the check over $10,000.

This bit of news helped ease some of the grief that we all feel about the thousands of COVID 19 deaths and the racial unrest we are witnessing on our city streets.

We are in some tough times, and we should be grateful for any victories that show the kindness of the human heart.

Perfect time to complete the U.S. Census

By Ned Hoskin
ned.hoskin@nysut.org

The nearly unprecedented demands on our society, our economy, and our government created by the COVID-19 crisis coincide perfectly with the 2020 U.S. Census survey.

The coronavirus pandemic underscores the importance of our nation's health care system and its ability to respond to crisis. One of the best ways to guarantee that doctors, nurses, and hospitals can provide the best care possible is in all of our hands.

Take a few minutes to help ensure an accurate 2020 Census count.

The census officially kicked off April 1. Most households will be able to complete the survey online. It takes mere minutes.

In coming weeks, Census employees will follow up with households that have not responded.

Why is it so important? Billions of dollars in health care funds are based on Census data. If we aren't all counted, New Yorkers stand to lose critical health care resources. That puts us all at risk.

But it's not just health care. It's public education; it's legislative representation; it's infrastructure and services.

"That's why I'm urging all New Yorkers to do their part to ensure an accurate 2020 Census count so that essential services such as public education and health care are funded in full," said North Colonie Teachers Association member Thea MacFawn. "Our children's futures and the health of our loved ones depend on it."

"Filling out your Census form is the easiest way for you to improve health care in New York, feed hungry children in our schools, and ensure fair representation in Congress," said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta.

For more information, go to nysut-counts.org.

Source: NYSUT United, Official Publication of NYSUT
Corona Comics

**Non Sequitur** by Wiley Miller

*(Image of a cartoon featuring a man saying, “Six more weeks of social distancing.”)*

**Jeff MacNelly’s Shoe** by Gary Brookins and Susie MacNelly

*(Image of a cartoon featuring a woman saying, “It’s looking like I’ll be able to retire on forty-five hundred & month.”)*

**Dennis The Menace** by Hank Ketcham

*(Image of a cartoon featuring a man saying, “I’m working my way through college, too... I’m still paying off my student loans.”)*

**The New 60**

*(Image of a cartoon featuring a person saying, “One sec... I have my discount card right here on my phone...”)*

**Editor’s Note:** My birthday is also February 2.
Thank You

During these unprecedented times and in the face of incredible adversity, each of you continue to sacrifice and dedicate yourselves to our children, our families and our communities.

We thank all of the educators, school-related professionals, nurses and other health care workers who continue to demonstrate their unwavering compassion, dedication and commitment to our communities on a daily basis.

memberbenefits.nysut.org | 800-626-8101

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