

# The WCT COMMENTATOR

January 28, 2011

## Amanda Jones, a True Inspiration and Hero

By Cheryl Urquhart, Fishkill Elementary School

Many of you have heard about the tragic loss of Amanda Jones, a sixth grade student at Van Wyck Junior High and a former Fishkill Elementary student. After a courageous battle of almost four years, Amanda lost her fight with Leukemia.



hope, and her courage. I may have been her teacher but it is Amanda who taught me so many life lessons. My heart is stronger and my courage greater just by knowing her.

In her father's words, "it is difficult to describe the indescribable and the unimaginable. Amanda Jones is faith, courage, hope, strength and love and her purpose in life was to make people smile."

If you would like to make a donation to the family, please send it to the Amanda Jones Cancer Fund c/o Chase Bank; 15 Merritt Blvd.; Fishkill, NY 12524. Thank you for your generosity and support.

Although words cannot express the loss felt by her family and friends, Amanda leaves behind a legacy that will never be forgotten. Her never-ending strength, endurance, and faith, in the face of unimaginable circumstances, are an inspiration for all who had the privilege of knowing her.

I was blessed to have Amanda in my first grade class. At the time, she was a healthy, happy first grader, and none of us knew that just one year later, her life would take such a tragic turn. But even through her long and arduous battle, Amanda never lost her spirit, her

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## **STAY INFORMED... IT'S UP TO YOU !!!!**

### *{A New Monthly Feature in The Commentator}*

Below are some important articles to keep you up to date with current educational issues. These issues will directly affect your job on a daily basis.

#### **NYSUT UNITED – January 2011**

[Here's what's at stake as threats to our profession grow:](#) (p.6)

**Brief Summary:** This article addresses the Attacks vs. the Facts. Topics include tenure, Triborough Amendment, defined benefit pensions, health benefits, funding for public education and student access for public higher education.

#### **NYSUT UNITED – January 2011**

[Phasing in new teacher and principal evaluation law:](#) (p. 17)

**Brief Summary:** The 4 rating classifications for teacher evaluations will be addressed. Key implementation dates will be discussed as well as listing the 7 New York State Teaching Standards that will be used to evaluate teachers in the very near future.

#### **Useful FACEBOOK links for teachers**

NYSUT United (formerly known as NY Teacher) --- <http://www.facebook.com/NYSUTUnited>

AFT – (American Federation of Teachers)

<http://www.facebook.com/AFTunion>

NEA – (National Education Association)

<http://www.facebook.com/NEA.ORG>

## Myers Gives Back to the Community

by Linda Burnham & Dawn Sala

Myers Corners Elementary School has a long history of giving back to the community, particularly during the holiday season. This year was no exception.

Terry Perri (a friend of Social Worker Gloria DiNardi) created a Gingerbread House **Replica of the Children's Home in Poughkeepsie** for a raffle. Kristen Cherry, a student of 6th grade teacher Eileen Bosch won the house. She had attended a service the day before commemorating the death of her father, and she and her mother saw her win as a special sign from him. She then decided to donate the house to the Children's Home.

The school also filled Assistant Principal Jay Curtis' pick up truck with food from everyone in the school. This annual tradition then donated the collected food to the Zion Church Food Pantry the week before Thanksgiving. Every grade level and staff member was responsible for donating different types of food items as to guarantee a good variety of pantry items.

### A House for the Children November 2010

This is my 4th annual Gingerbread House which will be raffled with all proceeds donated to **the Children's Home of Poughkeepsie**.

This year the building is my replica of the **Children's Home**. It took me 8 days to design,

construct and decorate. The only inedible parts are **the base, the lollipop sticks and the snowmen's scarves**. I hope you enjoy this year's house as much as I enjoyed building it for you.

The house is too big to weigh this year. A few fun facts for you: 6 cups shortening, 6 cups sugar (not including candy for decorating), 6 cups molasses, 30 cups flour, 30 cups Rice Krispies, 24 cups marshmallows, and 48 cups confectioners sugar were used in the construction..

Baked and Constructed by  
Terry Perri, November 2010



*Gingerbread Replica of Children's Home Created by Terry Perri*

### The Children's Home of Poughkeepsie

2008 marked the 160th Anniversary of The **Children's Home of Poughkeepsie**. On January 21, 1847, a group of Poughkeepsie women met to form the Female Guardian Society to care for the poor, abandoned and neglected in their communities, most especially the children. Their belief was that every child deserves a nurturing and caring environment.

163 years later, the underlying mission of **The Children's Home of Poughkeepsie is the same**: to serve at-risk children and their families in the Hudson River Region.

<p><b>No</b></p> <p>Long Speeches Program Clockwatching</p>	<p>Join the Wappingers Congress of Teachers Recognition Party 2011</p>	<p>Arbor Ridge Hopewell Junction</p>
<p>Fun! Music! Laughter!</p>	 <p><b>Last Year's Retiree Recipients</b></p>	<p>Save the Date! April 1<sup>st</sup>, Friday</p>
 <p>Party Goers</p>	<p>2010-2011 Celebrants Retirees Newly Tenured 25 Years of Service New National Board Certified Teachers</p>	 <p>The Presidents: Pasquale Delli Carpini and Ralph Capasso</p>

Retirement Parties: Did You Know?



One of last year's retirees made the Recognition Party her retirement party. Joining her colleagues from her home school were her husband and parents. This is an excellent opportunity to celebrate a retirement with colleagues, dinner, and dancing at an economical price! Interested? Contact Diane DiChiara at [secondary.DD@wcteachers.org](mailto:secondary.DD@wcteachers.org).

Wanted: Volunteers

Just have a small amount of time to give to a union activity? Don't want to be bogged down for the entire year? Then the *Annual Recognition Party*



*Committee* may be just what you need! We will meet about three times before the party. The total time commitment is about 10 hours. Come join a small friendly committee to share your ideas for creating a fun and memorable event for your colleagues! Contact Rena Finsmith at [rena.finsmith@wappingersschools.org](mailto:rena.finsmith@wappingersschools.org).

Why the WCT Recognition Party?

by Alyson McCarroll

In spring you start to see advertisements for the **WCT Recognition Party** and say to yourself "I am not going to go." Why not? We are a district of over 800 dedicated teachers. Ask yourself "Even within my own building do I know my co-workers that well?" During schools hours it is all business, but at night with good music, food, and friends the party people come out. Spend one evening with other colleagues and next year you'll definitely be coming back.



Mark Your Calendar: Annual Recognition Party

The WCT's Annual Recognition Party will be held on April 1<sup>st</sup> at Arbor Ridge in Hopewell Junction.



Of course our retirees are most joyously celebrated at this event, and this year many of our most memorable teachers will be retiring. However, do you know that other teachers are also toasted?

Come celebrate the tenure of some of our newer teachers. If you mentored a teacher who received tenure this year why not formally invite him or her to



the celebration? Another group who will be honored are teachers with 25 years of service! Come and raise your glass to a member of this distinguished group! Finally, the six teachers who accomplished National Board Certification will be celebrated. As a union we have much to be thankful for and what better way to show it then by joining your colleagues in a gathering of camaraderie?



Wappingers Congress of Teachers

Presents

**NYSUT's Defensive Driving Program**

*(Recognized by the National Safety Council)*

THIS COURSE IS OFFERED TO WCT MEMBERS AND IMMEDIATE FAMILY ONLY

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 2011

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 2011

6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Sessions will be held at Roy C. Ketcham High School, Room Large Group Instruction.

Family members are welcome to participate. A fee of \$30.00\*\* per person is necessary to cover cost of materials. (Participants MUST attend both sessions).

\*\*If you subscribe to auto insurance through NYSUT Member Benefits (METPAY), there is a \$25.00 refund.\*\*

Benefit to Participants:

Upon completion of the course, members and their family members, who are principal operators of a vehicle, are entitled to a ten percent reduction in the base rate of their liability (bodily injury and property damage), no-fault (personal injury) and collision insurance premiums each year for three years.

WCT members and their family members who complete the course may receive a subtraction of up to four points on their driving records. This applies only to points for violations occurring within the 18 months immediately before course completion. It does not affect points for earlier violations and can never be used as a "credit" for future points. Points may be reduced only once in any 18-month period.

To register, send the clip-off below and your check to the WCT office ASAP. Reservations will be accepted on a "first come, first serve" basis. No cancellations after Thursday, March 8, 2011.

Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Are you attending? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

Family Members (Attending) 1)\_\_\_\_\_

2)\_\_\_\_\_

3)\_\_\_\_\_

School (School Mail Location) \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

A check for \$30.00 per person must accompany this form. Please make check payable to **"WCT."** You must be a WCT member or WCT family member to enroll in this course.



*You're invited*



*Free Workshop for NYSUT Members*

*The Financial Planning Puzzle*

The twists and turns of the economy have clarified more than ever the need for a financial plan; unfortunately, for many people, beginning a financial plan remains a daunting task.

This workshop will outline the process from beginning to end, covering the five key areas of financial planning: cash management, risk management, savings, retirement and estate planning. You may not have all the answers you need by the end of the session, but you'll know the questions you need to be asking, which will put you well on the way to successful financial management.

**Where:** NYSUT Mid-Hudson Regional Office  
201 Stockade Drive  
Kingston, NY 12401-3867

**When:** Wednesday, Feb. 9, 2011, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

**Presenter:** Evan Engler, NYSUT Member Benefits  
Coordinator of Financial Services

**There is no cost to enroll in this workshop, but seats are limited!**

**To reserve your spot:  
call**

Debra Conerty at 800-626-8101, ext. 1233

**or e-mail**

[dconerty@nysutmail.org](mailto:dconerty@nysutmail.org) (include "FPP" in the subject line)

Please provide your name, local association name, workshop date and phone number, including area code, where you can be reached in case of inclement weather.

## Breakfast with Santa

by Jennifer Langer & Shareen Whitehouse

On Saturday, December 11, children of the Evans families enjoyed a delicious breakfast with Santa. This great event was organized by the Evans PTA.



*Erin Giammichele*

The children

participated in a holiday sing-along with Mr. Clarke, listened to holiday stories read by Mrs.

Giammichele and Mrs.

Sheremeta, and had their

picture taken with Santa. There was a wonderful turnout of staff, students, and parents, and holiday fun was had by all!



*Tracy Sheremeta*

## Great News at Gayhead

by Bridget Boccini

Gayhead was recently notified that we received the 2011 JRFH/HFH AAHPERD Grant (Jump Rope for Heart/ Hoops for Hearts, American Alliance for Health Physical Education, Recreation and Dance). Our grant application was chosen in part because of our outstanding passion and commitment to Jump Rope for Heart. As part of the grant, Gayhead will receive \$1200 towards the purchase of Physical Education equipment. Additionally, I will receive \$1200 for professional development which includes registration fee, hotel accommodations, and partial airfare to the 2011 AAHPERD National Convention & Exposition. The convention is in San Diego, CA, March 29 -



April 2.

A portion of the grant application read "Gayhead students have donated over \$350,700 to the American Heart Association through it's participation in JRFH for the past 19 years. Receiving this grant will provide the physical education department with an opportunity to give something back to the Gayhead students, who go above and beyond their civic duty raising money to fund research and education to help

those with heart disease." Congratulations to the entire Gayhead community. We look forward to another successful participation in Jump Rope for Heart again this February!



also from the Welfare  
**Trust Fund .....**

The attorney will be in the WCT offices to meet with members on the following dates:

February 16	2 pm—6pm
March 23	Please call
April 27	227-5065 to
May 18	schedule an
and June 22.	appointment.

## Important Information about the WCT Welfare **Trust Fund....**

Trustees:

Christine Romano, Chairperson

Betty Seifert, Treasurer

Erin Mulligan, Secretary

Philip Gertler, Trustee

Pasquale Delli Carpini, Trustee

Ronnie Dwyer, Administrator

WCT Telephone Number:

845-227-5065

Daniel H. Cook Telephone Number:

1-800-342-6651

- You must let the WTF know of any changes in your personal information ASAP
- Student verification forms must be sent to Daniel H. Cook every semester
- Dental & prescription reimbursement forms are on-line at the WTF website
- Please direct all questions & concerns to the WCT office or directly to Daniel H. Cook

## from the... WCT Welfare Trust Fund

A financial consultant from Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. will be in the WCT office on the following dates:

February 15, 2011  
March 15, 2011  
April 5, 2011  
May 17, 2011  
June 14, 2011

Appointments are (1) hour blocks available between 2pm & 6pm on a first come first served basis.

When you call the office to schedule an appointment, we will forward a questionnaire to you. Please complete it and bring it with you to the meeting.

Since these slots fill up very quickly CALL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

The WCT office number is 227-5065.

If the above dates are not convenient for you, call Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. directly at 1-888-949-1925 and other arrangements may be possible.

## Membership Dues for 2010

Jan-Jun 12 paychecks x \$38.50 = \$462.00

Sept-Dec 8 paychecks x \$39.50 = \$312.80

Total for Year = \$776.80

This amount is NOT on your W-2, but it is on the YTD (Year To Date) portion of your 12/30/2010 pay stub.

This value may be different for anyone with extenuating circumstances.

## Jingle Bells VideoConference

by Suzann Shaw

On December 13th and 15th, classrooms throughout our district participated in a **"Jingle Bells"** videoconference. The vc was based on the book **"Jingle Bells"** by Iza Trapani. In the book, children travel around the world and learn about how the people in that country celebrate Christmas. Each participating class chose one of the countries in the book, learned about their traditions, and presented a five minute presentation of the country selected. Mrs. Smith's class studied Sweden, Mrs. Seipp's class studied Italy, Mrs. Hanna's class and Mrs. Carroll's second grade



class studied the Philippines. The idea for the vc came from Laura Dodge, and Betsy Zingaro created the wiki/blog page and provided the technical and creative assistance needed. Mandy Dwight emceed the event and provided support. Ms. Trapani, the author attended the event. She read and sang to the students and also answered questions about the book and the writing process. At the end, all of the students and teachers sang the song together. In all, it was a very collaborative event that provided a wonderful learning experience for our students.

**W C T**

PASQUALE DELLI CARPINI, PRESIDENT

**W**APPINGERS **C**ONGRESS OF **T**EACHERS**TRAVELERS** 

The *Travelers Benefits Plus Group Auto & Home Insurance* is still being offered to all current and new members of the **Wappingers Congress of Teachers!**

Your association has partnered with **The Valley Group** to implement this program that allows you to take advantage of special insurance rates not offered to individuals. As a **WCT** member you can receive additional savings on your personal auto and homeowner's insurance.

**The Valley Group** is a full-service insurance agency that can assist you with all of your personal and commercial insurance needs.

Currently, The Valley Group agency handles all of the Commercial Insurance programs for the **WCT**. You will find that their agency can provide you with competitive rates and exceptional service.

*Have you reviewed your Personal Auto & Home Insurance lately?*

We encourage you to visit their website at [www.valleygroup.com](http://www.valleygroup.com) and request a competitive quote for all your insurance needs by clicking the **WCT Members** link.

The Valley Group can also be reached at 800-855-9293 or by emailing Tina Ludwig at [thadden@valleygroup.com](mailto:thadden@valleygroup.com).

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## Get Your WCT Gear

Short sleeve tees, long sleeve tees, and lanyards are available for purchase at the WCT Office. Shirts range in size from small through 3X. Please stop by the office to make your purchases. Payment for these items must be a check made out to WCT - cash will not be accepted.

WCT Gear is available at the WCT Office:

- **\$9 for short sleeve tee**
- **\$12 for long sleeve tee**
- **\$2 for lanyards**



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## MEMBERS' CLASSIFIED ADS

For Sale: iPod Touch--brand new (unopened package) 8 GB; no fees for portable access to the internet. (845) 494-2174

For Sale/Rent: Vero Beach Florida Condo on the Beach with pool and patio, 2 Bedrooms, 2 NEW Bathrooms and New Kitchen all renovated 2010 Ocean View, sale price \$149,000. Jan/Feb rental available view on line [www.vacationrentals411.com](http://www.vacationrentals411.com) property # 20907 contact me for special rental price.  
Call: (845) 462-2510 or email at:

[Waltfranca@hotmail.com](mailto:Waltfranca@hotmail.com)

Continuing Education: Winter/Spring courses for Wappingers Continuing Ed are now online ([wappingersschools.org](http://wappingersschools.org)) Anyone interested in teaching their own continuing ed course should contact Jeff at [jeffrey.behnke@wappingersschools.org](mailto:jeffrey.behnke@wappingersschools.org)

DJ Wanted for WCT Recognition Party If you are interested, leave your contact information (asap) with Ronnie Dwyer at the WCT Office (845) 227-5065

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## WCT COMMENTATOR Policy

The content of the *WCT COMMENTATOR* shall reflect the official positions and policies of the WCT, with the following three exceptions:

1. The President of the WCT should present his/her views in a message to the members from time to time, but not less than bimonthly.

2. Signed Letters to the Editor (of responsible length) containing personal views from members and subscribers shall be published subject to laws of libel.

3. Members of the WCT may place articles adhering to the Canons of Journalism concerned with WCT positions, policies, and issues of interest to teachers in the Commentary Section. (For both Letters to the Editor and the **Commentary Section, the writer's name and WCT affiliation shall be attached, and an editor's note shall accompany these sections indicating that "The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the official views and policies of the WCT."**)

Reprints of articles from the *WCT COMMENTATOR* are allowable only with the permission of the WCT President.

## WCT COMMENTATOR

### Advertising Policy

The *WCT COMMENTATOR* advertising policy as adopted by the Executive Board is as follows:

Noncommercial (Personal) ads for WCT MEMBERS only will be run for two issues at no charge.

Commercial (Business) ads for WCT MEMBERS only: guaranteed placement for half of the school year, \$35.00 per half year payable Sept. 15th and Feb. 1st or \$5.00 per issue.

## 2010-2011 Newsletter Schedule

1/28/11

2/25/11

3/25/11

4/29/11

5/20/11

6/17/11

