

The WCT COMMENTATOR

January 8, 2010

Happy New Year!

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A Mural for Myers Corners Elementary School

by Linda Burnham

A spectacular mural was recently painted on the lobby wall at Myers Corners Elementary School. An Arts in Education BOCES Grant was used to fund this project. Cara Wood Ginder, a Wappingers parent and an artist who has shown her work nation wide (including at galleries in NYC) was commissioned to design and paint a mural devoted to Character education while simultaneously using our school mascot. Mrs. Ginder has also painted murals at other Wappingers schools. A contest is currently being held to name our tiger.

The students and staff thoroughly enjoyed watching the mural process which was started and completed in December.



also from the Welfare
Trust Fund

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

January 20 Times - 2
 February 17 p.m. to 6 p.m.
 March 17 Please call
 April 21 227-5065 to
 May 19 schedule an
 and June 16. 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:

January 13 & 27
 February 10 & 24
 March 10 & 24
 April 14 & 28
 May 12 & 26
 June 9 & 23

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.

Blodgett is East Fishkill Dems' Citizen of the Year

Susan D. Blodgett, retired from John Jay High School was honored to receive the East Fishkill Citizen of the Year Award in September, 2009. The Award is in memory of Dominick Cannizzaro, a 3 term Supervisor of the Town of East Fishkill from 1986-1991.

Mrs. Blodgett serves on the Architectural Review Board for the Town of East Fishkill, as vice-president of the East Fishkill Community Library Board of Trustees, secretary of the Dutchess County Mental Hygiene Board, chairman of the Children and Youth Subcommittee of the Dutchess County Mental Hygiene Board, task force member of the Building Bridges: Schools and Organizations Working Together, vestry member of the Church of the Resurrection, and co-chairman of the Special Events Committee of the Center for Lifetime Learning at Marist College. Mrs. Blodgett is also coordinator of Democratic Inspectors for the Town of East Fishkill.

CONGRATULATIONS Mrs. Blodgett!

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Ed McKenna - 845-471-7607

National Board Certification: 117 more earn teacher's gold standard!

Reprinted from NYSUT Media Relations—December 16, 2009

ALBANY, N.Y. December 16, 2009 - New York State United Teachers cheered the accomplishments of 117 New York teachers, including more than a dozen from the Capital Region, who today earned what is widely considered to be the "gold standard" for teaching excellence: certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

The 117 new nationally certified teachers brings to 999 - of more than 235,000 statewide - the number of New York teachers who have demonstrated, through extensive testing; portfolios; videotapes of their teaching; and highly detailed, reflective writing that they can - and should - be considered "master teachers."

"New York is widely known for the skill, dedication and professionalism of its teaching force. The 117 teachers we honor today are standard bearers for teaching excellence," said NYSUT President Richard C. Iannuzzi. "By voluntarily taking on this enormous challenge, and demonstrating their knowledge and ability to help students learn, they are rightly being recognized as the 'best of the best' and we congratulate them."

NYSUT Vice President Maria Neira, who unveiled the national board's Class of 2009 at a news conference at the Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School in Albany, said nationally certified teachers help to improve student achievement. Studies show that, on average, students of board-certified teachers experience learning gains equal to an extra month in class, with an even greater impact on low-income students.

"These highly skilled teachers represent all their colleagues, past and present, who have achieved our profession's highest standard," Neira said. "Quality teaching, which includes collaboration between teachers and partnerships with administrators and the community, is essential to ending the achievement gap. In Albany, Schenectady and other school districts, nationally certified teachers are leaders in helping to spread 'best practice' and improve on the already high level of teaching taking place in our classrooms."

New York Education Commissioner David Steiner noted that, "Teachers certified through the National Board receive rigorous training, and the results are evident in the classroom. And that's important because we know that nothing matters more to the educational opportunities of students than the caliber of their teachers." Steiner said that he and the Board of Regents support National Board Certification "as a way to ensure that teachers get the very complex skills they need to succeed in our demanding classrooms."

Neira, a board member of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, said National Board candidates spend between 200-400 hours of their own time having their teaching measured against high and rigorous standards through an extensive series of performance-based assessments. These assessments include teaching portfolios, student work samples, videotapes or DVDs and thorough analyses of the candidate's teaching and students' learning. The process involves written exercises that probe the depth of a candidate's subject matter knowledge, as well as his or her understanding of how to teach those subjects.

cont'd on page 6

Is it time for a financial tune-up?

Have you ever asked yourself these questions?

- Should I refinance my mortgage?
- Am I saving enough for my children's education?
- What is the best way to reduce my debt?
- Is my 403(b) retirement account invested properly?

If yes, you could benefit by enrolling in the Financial Counseling Program recently endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation.

For an annual fee, you'll get unbiased, objective advice from financial professionals who do not sell any financial products. The Financial Counseling Program is provided by Stacey Braun Associates, Inc., an investment advisory company.

Its certified financial planners and registered investment advisors provide fee-based professional financial counseling; they receive no commissions from mutual funds, brokerage firms, insurance companies or any other third party.

The **Full-Service Financial Counseling Program** includes several features. You can consult with a planner or advisor toll-free for up to six hours per year. If a planner or advisor is not available when you call, you can schedule a phone consultation at a time convenient for you.

You can request no-cost written summaries and reports on a variety of financial issues. You can receive assistance in choosing a 403(b) retirement savings program provider available



through your employer, as well as assistance on reviewing your 403(b) investment selections.

You'll gain access to Stacey Braun's password-protected Web site, which is chock-full of tips, narratives, market data, quotes, charts, news, calculators, an interactive financial planner, useful Web site links and more. There's even an e-mail helpdesk where you can get answers to basic financial questions within 24 hours.

If Stacey Braun holds an educational workshop in your area, the admission fee will be waived if you wish to attend. Also, you can request an in-person consultation with a Stacey Braun planner at a mutually agreed-upon location. This service is limited to 90 minutes and carries an additional fee.

If you only desire advice regarding 403(b) retirement savings programs, the **403(b) Limited Financial Counseling Program** is available at a reduced price. This option includes toll-free phone consultations to discuss 403(b) programs only (six-hour limit) and assistance in selecting a 403(b) program provider available through your employer, as well as assistance with investment allocation of 403(b) assets. Web site access, e-mail helpdesk and in-person consultations are not included in the limited plan.

For information on this and other programs, visit www.memberbenefits.nysut.org, call us at **800-626-8101** weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., or use the **Contact** feature on our Web site.



The Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. Financial Counseling Program is a NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation (Member Benefits)-endorsed program. Under an agreement with Stacey Braun, Member Benefits has an expense reimbursement/endorsement arrangement of 10% of annual participation fees received plus \$9 per direct bill participant. All such payments to Member Benefits are used solely to defray the costs of administering its various programs and, where appropriate, to enhance them. Member Benefits acts as your advocate; please contact Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 if you experience a problem with any endorsed program.

Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

Jan/Feb '10



Thank You!

I would like to thank all WCT and WCRT members who sent get well wishes during my recent illness. A special thank you to Pasquale who checked on my progress every day. Although the actual surgery was frightening, I am recovering.....albeit slowly. The doctor informs me that I should be back to "normal" in 6 months. Thank you all again.

Lorraine Daley

"Sweet Generosity of Spirit"

by Andrea Fitzsimmons & Pat Gullick

The Fishkill Plains Faculty and Staff have participated in the second annual "Sweet Generosity of Spirit" bake sale. The teachers and staff brought in baked goods that were sold over two days during lunch time. The students loved to gobble up the goodies baked by their favorite teachers, assistants, and office staff. Each item was sold for twenty-five cents and all proceeds went to families in the Fishkill Plains community who are experiencing financial hardship. It is a day for giving back to the families that have given so much to the school throughout the year!

National Board Certification (cont'd)

Neira noted that only half of all candidates for national certification pass on their first try, but just the attempt is a powerful professional development experience.

Neira said the Albany Public School Teachers Association, led by Cathy Corbo, and the school district negotiated a \$3,000 stipend to be paid to all nationally certified teachers. Similar incentives for national certification exist in about 180 school districts statewide.

In addition, many districts provide release time for candidates to work toward national certification. NYSUT assists National Board candidates by offering awareness programs, support and advice through on-line discussion forums, conferences and professional development through its Education & Learning Trust. The union works with teacher centers to support candidates through the challenging board-certification process.

"School districts that recognize the value of having nationally certified teachers are beginning to reap the benefits. We are starting to see concentrations of nationally certified teachers in Albany, Schenectady and other places that offer local incentives. The end result is that these districts are seeing increased success in their efforts to raise student achievement," Neira said.

NNYSUT, the state's largest union, represents more than 600,000 teachers, school-related professionals, academic and professional faculty in higher education, professionals in education and health care and retirees. NYSUT is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association and the AFL-CIO.

For more information, visit www.nysut.org/nbpts and www.nbpts.org.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Three of our own WCT Members Achieved this honor and deserve our kudos!

CONGRATULATIONS TO: Shahna Newton, Maryellen Bova, & Ann Liebergot

Dear WCT Member,

Did you know...

that presently over 60% of the chocolate grown worldwide is being harvested through the use of child labor?

that similar statistics exist for the coffee industry?

When fair trade practices are introduced and worker cooperatives are formed these children have the opportunity to move from farm fields and into classrooms to receive an education.

The NYSUT Fair Trade Project "builds support for the fair trade movement among union members, their families, and communities. International worker-to-worker solidarity trumps the ravages of corporate monopolies as union members 'walk the walk' with workers around the world."

In February NYSUT will be sending a small delegation of its members to Nicaragua to visit fair trade coffee cooperatives and their community schools. I am pleased to share with you that Martha Bilsback, a third grade teacher at Myers Corners, has been invited to be part of this delegation.

The WCT is asking you to consider making a donation to a Fair Trade Fund which we have established. 100% of the monies donated to this fund will be sent with the delegation to Nicaragua and given directly to the schools that they will be visiting. At rural schools where these cooperatives are located, students and teachers learn and work in very primitive schools with few books and limited school supplies. Our financial contributions will make a lasting impact on their lives.

On behalf of the Executive Board and myself, thank you for your generosity.

In Solidarity,

Pasquale

Pasquale Delli Carpini,
President Wappingers Congress of Teachers

Name & School: _____

Please make your check payable to "WCT" with "Fair Trade" in the memo line and send it to the WCT office by Wednesday, February, 3rd. Your donation is completely tax deductible.

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 though 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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2010 Newsletter Schedule

January 8, 2010	April 9, 2010
January 22, 2010	April 23, 2010
February 5, 2010	May 7, 2010
February 19, 2010	May 21, 2010
March 5, 2010	June 4, 2010
March 19, 2010	June 18, 2010

we're on the web

www.wcteachers.org

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MEMBERS' CLASSIFIED ADS

For Rent: Large Town of Poughkeepsie (Cherry Hill) 1 BR condo, fresh paint, new refrigerator, no pets/smoking. \$825/month. Includes heat & hot water. Lease & security required. Contact Stacy at (845) 473-8946

The dates for the final two defensive driving courses for 2009-2010 school year are as follows:

1. Mondays, Mar 15 and 22
2. Tuesdays, Jun 1 and 8.

More information and dates to register will follow soon.

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